



## **A Spotlight On...**

Coaching in the UK, 2017: A Spotlight on Gender

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## Summary

UK Coaching commissioned YouGov to survey 20,000 adults and 1,000 children in 2017. The primary aim of the survey was to explore the participant experience of receiving coaching and the experience of being a coach. The survey also asked members of the public their views of coaches and coaching in general.

The survey incorporated a broader definition of coaching, to include anyone involved in or receiving coaching across the whole sport and physical activity sector.

This report presents the key findings from coaches and coached-participants and has a specific focus on gender.

For further information about the Coaching in the UK study, please see the UK Coaching website: <https://www.ukcoaching.org/resources/research/coaching-in-the-uk>

## Key findings

### (1) The Coaching Workforce

- Nearly 6 million women and over 7 million men coached sport or physical activity at some point in their lifetime, representing 23% of the adult female and 31% of the adult male population in the UK.
- There are over 1.7 million active male coaches and 1.4 million active female coaches in the UK that have coached sport or physical activity in the previous twelve months alone (representing 7% and 6% of the population respectively).
- London has the greatest proportion of female coaches (7%) and the North East has the lowest proportion (3%).
- Overall, using a broad definition of coaching, the workforce is relatively diverse in terms of gender (54% male, compared to 46% female).
- Male and female coaches share a similar demographic profile in relation to age, ethnicity and physical or mental health condition.
- Male coaches were significantly more likely to be from higher social grades, compared to female coaches (70% and 58% from higher social grades respectively). Thus, female coaches are more diverse in terms of socio-economic status.
- Female coaches tended to start coaching at a younger age: the mean age of starting coaching was 26.9 for women and 28.2 for men.

- Exploring the reasons why coaches first became involved in coaching, men were significantly more likely than women to say “to stay involved in sport or physical activity” and women were significantly more likely to say “career development”.
- The most common job title cited by female coaches was a “helper” (24%); whereas the most common job title cited by male coaches was a “coach” (27%).
- Female coaches were significantly more likely to coach in school sessions as part of PE and outside of PE compared to male coaches (34% and 17% respectively), whereas male coaches were significantly more likely to coach in sports clubs (37% and 16% respectively).
- On average, women coached more hours in a paid capacity and significantly less hours in a voluntary capacity than men.
- 62% of female coaches reported that they do not have a formal coaching qualification, significantly higher than the proportion of male coaches (54%). An equal proportion of male and female coaches had qualifications at levels 3, 4 and above.
- Female coaches reported a significantly higher level of understanding of both younger children aged 5-9 (64%) and pre-school children aged 0-4 (51%) than male coaches (53% and 35% respectively).
- Most coaches reported a positive experience of coaching and the majority of male and female coaches reported that their coaching made a difference to their participants (81% and 75% respectively).
- The most commonly cited challenge by female coaches was the cost of training /qualifications (36%), whereas the most commonly cited challenge by males was balancing work/home life (40%).
- A lower proportion of females (37%) said they would like to spend more time coaching in the future compared to males (47%).

## **(2) Coached-participation**

- In the 12 months prior to the survey, 5.8 million women and 3.5 million men received coaching, representing 21% and 14% of the adult population in the UK respectively.
- Significantly more women were in receipt of coaching in the previous twelve months, than men.
- Males in receipt of coaching were significantly more likely to be of a higher social grade (71%) compared to females (65%).
- Females in receipt of coaching were significantly more likely than males to have a physical or mental health condition (33% female compared to 27% male); and to be aged 65+ (18% female compared to 14% male).

- Both males and females in receipt of coaching were overwhelmingly positive about their experience, with significantly more women rating their session as good (76%) than men (70%). Only 1% of males and females rated their session as poor.
- Overall, those who receive coaching report a very positive experience.
- Women were significantly more likely than men to agree that their coach motivates me to be better, encourages them to come back, and that they enjoy being coached.
- Men were significantly more likely than women to agree that their coach listens to them and supports them to achieve their individual goals.
- Women were significantly more likely than men to agree that coaching improves skills/performance, improves fitness, physical health, and mental health and wellbeing.
- Those in receipt of coaching had “stickier” sport and physical activity habits than those not in receipt of coaching: they were more likely to do more sport and physical activity; have increased their activity levels since the previous year; and would like to do more sport or physical activity in the future. Women were significantly more likely to agree with all of the above than men.
- A significantly larger proportion of female participants (84%) would recommend their coach to others compared to male participants (80%).
- Both males and females were most likely to choose a coach based on experience (72%). A significantly larger proportion of females were more likely to choose a coach based on personal and people skills (72% and 66% respectively).
- Both male and female participants thought it was more important that a coach understands them (56% and 57% respectively) than it was to have the same characteristics as them such as personality, gender, age, life experience and background.
- Men were significantly more likely than women to say it was important their coach had a similar personality to them; and women were significantly more likely than men to say it was important they were the same gender as them.
- Women were significantly more likely than men to report that a great coach was “friendly and approachable” and “creates a warm and welcoming environment”. Men were significantly more likely than women to report “gives constructive feedback”, “improve skills and ability”, “treats participants as individuals”, “get good results”, and “know rules of the game”.
- Over three quarters of females no longer in the receipt of coaching said they might be encouraged to receive coaching again in the future (81%). Reducing the cost of sessions was the most common factor cited by males and females that might encourage them to take part in sessions in the future (45% and 55% respectively).

## Introduction

In 2017, UK Coaching commissioned YouGov to undertake the largest ever survey into coaches and coaching. A nationally representative sample of 20,000 adults and 1,000 children were surveyed about their experience of receiving coaching and their experience of being a coach. The survey also asked the public about their perceptions of coaches and coaching in general.

This was the first major piece of research to encompass a broader definition of coaching, which included anyone involved in or receiving coaching across the whole sport and physical activity sector. It recognised that participants receive coaching in a range of different settings and that coaches play a number of different roles, from coaches in sports clubs, to community activators and helpers, PE teachers, and exercise and fitness instructors. All contribute towards an active nation.

This report presents the key findings from coaches and coached-participants and has a specific focus on gender.

Separate reports are available for:

- The coaching workforce
- Adult participants who have received coaching
- Children and young people who have received coaching
- The general public
- A spotlight on ethnicity

For further information about the Coaching in the UK study, please see the UK Coaching website: <https://www.ukcoaching.org/resources/research/coaching-in-the-uk>

## Methodology

YouGov conducted a survey of 20,688 UK adults aged 18+ in August 2017. The results are weighted to be representative of all UK adults (aged 18+).

The survey was administered online, using a questionnaire distributed to members of the YouGov panel of 800,000+ individuals. An email was sent to panellists selected at random from the base sample according to the sample definition, inviting them to take part in the survey.

Sample sizes:

- All participants: 20,688
- Coached participants: 3,788
- Coaches: 1,350
- Children and young people (aged 7-17): 1,047

In order to explore all forms of coaching, 'coaching' has been defined for the purposes of this research as: "Coaching, instruction, training or tuition in ANY sport or physical activity. This can include any environment, such as formal sports club settings as well as informal community settings. It can include any sport or physical activity, including recreational or competitive sport, exercise, fitness, gym, dance, etc."

Below are the definitions for various terms used throughout the reports:

- Active coaches: people who have coached in the past twelve months.
- Inactive coaches: people who have coached in the past five years, but not in the past twelve months.
- Coached-participants: people who have received coaching in the past twelve months.
- BAME: Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic groups (used to refer to members of non-white communities in the UK).
- Social grade: defined by the Market Research Society as a series of demographic classifications based on the occupation of the head of the household. The categories are classified as follows: AB: upper middle and middle class; C1: lower middle class; C2 skilled working class; DE: working class and non-working class. For the analysis, they have been grouped into higher grades (ABC1) and lower grades (C2DE).
- \* denotes a statistically significant finding (i.e. the difference between two or more results is a real difference and does not appear by chance.)



## **Coaching in the UK: A Spotlight on Gender**

### **The Coaching Workforce**

## The Coaching Workforce

The first section of this report focuses on people who coached sport and physical activity in the twelve months prior to the survey, or at any point in their past.

The survey revealed that nearly 6 million women and over 7 million men coached at some point in their lifetime. This represents almost a quarter of the adult female population (23%) and almost a third of the adult male population (31%). As a proportion of the population, significantly more men coached sport and physical activity, than women.

The table below presents the total number of coaches in the UK who coached, instructed, trained, taught or led any sport or physical activity, in any environment, to children or adults, by gender.

**Table 1.1: Incidence of coaching in the UK, by gender**

Last time coached	Male		Female	
	N	% of population	N	% of population
In the past 12 months	1,677,268	7*	1,438,102	6
In the past 2 years	551,383	2	475,401	2
In the past 3 years	575,278	2	442,913	2
In the past 5 years	574,071	2	429,550	2
Longer than 5 years	3,984,127	17*	2,993,328	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,362,127</b>	<b>31*</b>	<b>5,769,976</b>	<b>23</b>

*Base: all those who have coached at any point in their lifetime. Population figures are based on ONS mid-year population estimates (18+) in the UK.*

The data above suggests that there has been an annual turnover of coaches entering and leaving the workforce each year of around 1 million: c600,000 men and c400,000 women.

It is interesting to note that there is a large pool of coaches that are no longer actively involved in coaching (18% of the adult female population and 23% of adult male population).

### Active Coaches, by gender

Examining only “active” coaches (those who coached within the previous twelve months of the survey), the survey found 1.7 million active male coaches and 1.4 million active female coaches (7% and 6% of the adult population in the UK respectively).

There are home country variations, as shown in the table below. Northern Ireland has the lowest proportion of female coaches (5%). The proportion of female coaches in Scotland is higher than that of male coaches (8% and 6% respectively).

**Table 1.2: Active coaches by home country, by gender**

Home Country	Male		Female	
	N	% of population	N	% of population
England	1,488,348	7*	1,333,241	6
Wales	96,960	8	76,395	6
Scotland	125,972	6	181,873	8
Northern Ireland	55,343	8	36,739	5

*Base: all those who have coached in the last 12 months. The total for all home countries does not equate to the total in table 1.1 above, due to rounding. Population figures are based on ONS mid-year population estimates (18+) in the UK*

### Regional data, by gender

Within the regions of England, the proportion of active coaches varies. London has the greatest proportion of male and female coaches (10% and 7% respectively) and the North East has the lowest proportion of female coaches (3%).

Interestingly, the East Midlands is the only region where there is a greater proportion of female coaches compared to male coaches (6% and 5% respectively).

**Table 1.3: Active coaches by home region, by gender**

Region	Male		Female	
	N	% of population	N	% of population
North East	71,687	7*	32,610	3
North West	166,505	6	145,594	5
Yorkshire and the Humber	125,335	6	109,218	5
East Midlands	91,696	5	114,607	6
West Midlands	133,233	6	115,458	5
East	187,846	8	148,086	6
South East	276,508	8*	218,280	6
London	336,320	10*	240,797	7
South West	240,797	8*	113,606	5

*Base: all those who have coached in the last 12 months. The total for all regions does not equate to the total in table 1.1 above, due to rounding. Population figures are based on ONS mid-year population estimates (18+) in the UK.*

## Profile of active coaches, by gender

The survey found that just over half of those who coached in the previous twelve months were male (54%), and just under a half were female (46%).

Male and female coaches shared a similar demographic profile in relation to age, ethnicity and physical or mental health condition. However, a greater proportion of female coaches were in the age 25-34 bracket, and slightly less aged 55+, compared to male coaches.

Male coaches were significantly more likely to be from higher social grades, compared to female coaches (70% and 58% respectively). Thus, female coaches are more diverse in terms of socio-economic status.

**Table 1.4: Profile of UK active coaches, by gender**

Active Coaches	Male (%)	Female (%)
Gender	54	46
18-24	20	20
25-34	20	24
35-44	23	22
45-54	15	15
55-64	12	10
65+	11	9
White	78	77
BAME	22	23
Physical or mental health condition	25	27
No physical or mental health condition	66	64
Higher social grades	70*	58
Lower social grades	30	42

*Base: all those who have coached in the last 12 months.*

## Age started coaching, by gender

The age that people started coaching is presented in the table below. A greater proportion of female coaches (17%) started coaching before the age of 16, compared to male coaches (14%); whereas a greater proportion of male coaches started coaching between the ages of 17 and 21 (25%) compared to female coaches (23%).

The mean age of starting coaching was 26.9 for women and 28.2 for men.

**Table 1.5: Age started coaching, by gender**

Age	Male (%)	Female (%)
16 and under	14	17
17-21	25	23
22-25	15	15
26-30	12	13
31-40	18	18
Over 40	15	13

Base: all those who have coached in the last 12 months

Exploring the reasons why coaches first became involved in coaching, the most popular reasons cited by male coaches were “to support their local team” (28%) and “began coaching other participants whilst still playing” (27%). The most popular reasons cited by female coaches were “to stay involved in sport or physical activity” (20%) and for “career development” (19%).

Men were significantly more likely than women to quote “to stay involved in sport or physical activity” and women were significantly more likely than men to quote “career development”.

**Table 1.6: Reasons first became involved in coaching, by gender**

Reason	Male %	Female %
To stay involved in sport or physical activity	25*	20
Career development	13	19*
To contribute to my local community	20	18
Progressed from volunteering	19	18
Began coaching other participants whilst still playing	27*	17
To support my local club/ team	28*	16
As a result of child’s involvement in sport	18	16
I was inspired by my own coach	16*	12
Other	11	16*

Base: all those who have coached in the last 12 months. Respondents could select more than one option; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%

### Coaching roles, by gender

Coaches were asked to select a job title that best described their coaching role. A wide variety of job titles were selected, from helpers, school teachers and fitness instructors.

The most common job title cited by female coaches was a “helper” (24%); whereas the most common job title cited by male coaches was a “coach” (27%).

Men were significantly more likely than women to describe their role as a coach, personal trainer, advanced/senior coach, head coach, performance coach or specialist coach.

Women were significantly more likely than men to describe their role as a teacher or PE teacher.

**Table 1.7: Coaching job titles, by gender**

Job Titles	Male %	Female %
Helper	21	24
Assistant Coach	16	13
Coach	27*	13
PE Teacher	5	12*
Activators/ Facilitators	14	12
Fitness or Exercise Instructor	9	10
Teacher	7	10*
Sports Leader	11	8
Trainee Coach	6	6
Personal Trainer	8*	5
Advanced/Senior Coaches	7*	3
Head Coach	6*	2
Performance Coach	5*	2
Specialist Coach	9*	2
Other	12	17*

*Base: all those who have coached in the last 12 months. Respondents could select more than one option; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%*

### Coaching Environment, by gender

Coaches were next asked about where their coaching activity takes place. Female coaches were significantly more likely to coach in school sessions as part of PE and outside of PE compared to male coaches (34% and 17% respectively, combined data).

Male coaches were significantly more likely to coach in sports clubs than female coaches (37% and 16% respectively).

Female coaches were also more likely than males to coach within community groups; and males were more likely to coach in outdoor spaces and in private leisure centres/sessions than females.

**Table 1.8: Where coaching takes place, by gender**

Place	Male %	Female %
School sessions (as part of PE)	8	21*
Sports clubs	37*	16
Community group, youth group or similar	13	16
School sessions (e.g. outside PE, Active Schools)	9	13*
In an outdoor/ country setting	9	9
Local Authority leisure centre	8	8
In an outdoor/ urban space	11	8
Private leisure centre, gym or health club	10	7
Private sessions with my own clients	10	7
Further or higher education sessions	4	4
In a talent/ performance environment	2	3
Sports institute or similar	3	2
Other	13	16

Base: all those who have coached in the last 12 months.

### Coaching hours, by gender

In a typical week, both female and male coaches were most often coaching for one to two hours (39% and 32% respectively). Women were significantly more likely to do so, compared to men. Male coaches were significantly more likely to coach over ten hours per week.

Interestingly, around one fifth of female and male coaches (21% and 19% respectively) reported no regular hours in a typical week, suggesting that they coach on a more ad-hoc or sessional basis.

**Table 1.9: Coaching hours in a typical week, by gender**

Hours	Male %	Female %
No regular hours	19	21
1-2 Hours	32	39*
3-5 Hours	15	13
6-9 Hours	5	4
Over 10 Hours	29*	24

Base: all those who have coached in the last 12 months

### Volunteer v's paid coaching, by gender

On average, women coached more hours in a paid capacity than men: the mean number of hours coaching per week in a paid capacity was 7.2 hours for women and 6.6 hours for men.

On average, women coached significantly less hours in a voluntary capacity than men: the mean number of hours coaching per week in a voluntary capacity was 7.5 hours for women and 14.5 hours for men.

### Coach qualifications, by gender

The table below presents the level of coach qualifications, by gender. 62% of female coaches reported that they do not have a formal coaching qualification. This is significantly higher than the proportion of male coaches without a formal coaching qualification (54%).

It is interesting to note that whilst a greater proportion of male coaches have a level 1 or level 2 qualification (significantly more at level 1) than female coaches; an equal proportion of male and female coaches have qualifications at levels 3, 4 and above.

**Table 1.10: Type of qualification, by gender**

Qualification	Male %	Female %
No Qualification	54	62*
Activator/ Leader qualification	6	7
Level 1 (Or equivalent)	12*	8
Level 2 (Or equivalent)	9	7
Level 3 (Or equivalent)	5	5
Level 4 (Or equivalent)	3	3
HE/FE Degree or Diploma	5	5
Other	5	4

*Base: all those who have coached in the last 12 months*

### Understanding participants, by gender

Active coaches were asked to what extent they felt they understood the specific needs of different aged groups. Female coaches reported a significantly higher level of understanding of both younger children aged 5-9 (64%) and pre-school children aged 0-4 (51%) than male coaches (53% and 35% respectively).

Male coaches reported a significantly higher level of understanding of adults aged 18-50 (82%), young people aged 14-17 (71%) and older adults aged 50+ (65%), compared to female coaches (65%, 63% and 52% respectively).



**Table 1.11: Coaches Understanding of different age groups, by gender**

Participant age groups	Male		Female	
	% some/good understanding	% little/no understanding	% some/good understanding	% little/no understanding
Older children (10-13)	66	34	66	34
Adults (18-50)	82*	18	65	35
Younger Children (5-9)	53	47	64*	36
Young People (14-17)	71*	29	63	37
Older adults (50+)	65*	35	52	48
Pre- School Children (0-4)	35	65	51*	49

*Base: all those who have coached in the last 12 months*

Likewise, active coaches were asked the extent to which they felt they understood the specific needs of different groups of people.

Overall, female coaches were more likely than males to report they had some/good understanding of women and girl groups only (71%), and people with a learning disability (47%).

In contrast, male coaches were more likely than females to report that they had some/good understanding of people from low income groups (66%), people who are inactive / infrequently inactive (62%), people from black and minority ethnic groups (70%), people new to sport / physical activity (73%), and talented/high performance athletes (53%).

**Table.1.12: Coaches Understanding of different groups, by gender**

Participant groups	Male		Female	
	% some/good understanding	% little/no understanding	% some/good understanding	% little/no understanding
Women or girl groups only	64	36	71*	29
People new to sport / physical activity	73*	27	62	38
People from black and minority ethnic groups	70*	30	62	38
People who are inactive / infrequently inactive	62	38	58	42
People from low income groups	66*	34	58	42
People with a learning disability	44	56	47	53
People with a Physical Disability	44	56	44	56
People with a long-term illness or health condition	43	57	43	57
Talented players / high performance athletes	53*	47	37	63

*Base: all those who have coached in the last 12 months*

### Experiences of coaches, by gender

Active coaches were asked a series of questions regarding their experience of being a coach. The most common response given by both male and female coaches was that their coaching made a difference to their participants (81% and 75% respectively).

It is interesting to note that female coaches were less likely to agree with all of these statements, compared to male coaches. These were significant differences in most cases.

**Table 1.13: Experience of being a coach, by gender**

Experience	Male		Female	
	% Agree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Disagree
I feel my coaching makes a difference to my participants	81*	3	75	4
I look forward to coaching	72*	5	64	9
Coaching keeps me physically active	67	10	67	9
I would recommend coaching to a friend or colleague	68*	5	59	6
I have the right resources/ equipment to coach effectively	66*	12	59	13
I am able to deliver the style of coaching I aspire to	66*	7	58	11
I have a choice in deciding when and where I coach	63*	17	52	24
I have sufficient opportunities to coach in my chosen sport/ activity	61*	11	51	14
I am recognised for the contribution I make to helping others through coaching	56*	14	47	18
I feel proud when I tell other I am a coach	54	7	50	9
I would like some help form others when I coach	45	21	43	21
I feel part of a network or community of coaches	42	27	38	28
It's hard to balance coaching alongside my other commitments	43*	32	34	25
Working as a coach I sometimes feel alone or isolated	25	47	21	47

*Base: all those who have coached in the last 12 months. This table excludes neutral responses.*

### The challenges coaches face, by gender

Active coaches were asked what they thought were the main barriers or challenges facing coaches in the UK. The most commonly cited challenge by female coaches was the cost of training /qualifications (36%), whereas the most commonly cited challenge by males was balancing work/home life (40%).

**Table 1.14: The challenges coaches face, by gender**

Challenges	Male %	Female %
The cost of training /qualifications	37	36
Balancing work/ home life	40	35
Lack of investment in facilities and equipment	33	33
The voluntary nature of coaching/ lack of pay	33	31
Dealing with parents (behaviour or interference)	29	26
Behavioural issues of players / participants	23	22
The length of time it takes to undertake qualifications / training/ CPD	27*	21
Lack of support from employers, clubs or national government bodies	24*	18
Declining participation rates	22*	14
Lack of opportunity to take additional training/ CPD	17	17
Lack of experienced or qualified coaches	17	15

Base: all those who have coached in the last 12 months

### Future coaching activity, by gender

Active coaches were asked if they would like to spend more time coaching in the future. A lower proportion of females (37%) said they would like to spend more time coaching in the future compared to males (47%).

### Reasons for stopping coaching, by gender

The following section focuses on inactive coaches (i.e. those who coached within the previous five years, but not in the last twelve months).

Inactive coaches were asked why they had not coached within the previous twelve months. The most common reason cited by both male and female coaches was “I no longer had enough time” (34% and 33% respectively).

Although the cost of training/qualifications was cited as the top challenge for active coaches in the UK, only 9% of female and 8% of male inactive coaches cited this as the reason they were no longer involved in coaching.

**Table 1.15: Reasons why they had not coached in previous 12 months, by gender**

Reason	Male %	Female %
I no longer had enough time	34	33
I move away	18	19
I felt I was getting to old	13	11
I got injured	10	9
Qualifications and training were too expensive to keep up to date	8	9
There was too much responsibility being a coach	6	9
I fell out of love with coaching	10	7
I didn't get enough support from my club/ organisation	6	6
Problems with parent or participants	6	6
My child stopped playing the sport	7	6
There were not enough participants to keep the session going	7	4
Problems with other coaches/ the club/ employers	4	3

Base: all those who coached within the past 5 years, but not the past 12 months. Respondents could select more than one option; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100.

### Back to coaching, by gender

Finally, inactive coaches were asked whether they would like to return to coaching again in the future: 30% of males and 22% of females said they would. Nearly one half of females (47%) said they would not be interested in coaching again in the future, a significantly higher proportion than males (42%).

When asked, what might encourage them to start coaching again, females were most likely to say training to update or refresh skills and time off, or payment for delivering sessions; whereas males were more likely to say payment for delivering sessions, payment of expenses and training to update or refresh skills.

**Table 1.16: What might encourage inactive coaches to start coaching again, by gender**

<i>Encouragement to start coaching again</i>	Male %	Female %
No, I don't want to get back into coaching	26	37*
Training to update or refresh my skills	14	13
Payment for delivering sessions	15	12
Payment of expenses	14*	10
Help or support from others (i.e. parents or volunteers)	8	9
Opportunities to try a different sport/ activity	10	8
Time off or support from my main employer	12*	8
Getting "Back into coaching" sessions	8	7
Access to new learning opportunities	11*	7
Support from a coach developer or mentor	8	7

Base: all those who coached within the past 5 years, but not the past 12 months. Respondents could select more than one option; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%

## **Coaching in the UK: A Spotlight on Gender**

### **Coached-participation**

## Coached-participation

This section of the report focuses on people who received coaching in sport and physical activity in the twelve months prior to the survey, or at any point in their past.

Over 30 million adults have received coaching in sport or physical activity at some point in their lifetime (representing around 60% of the adult population in the UK). In the 12 months prior to the survey, 5.8 million women and 3.5 million men received coaching, representing 21% and 14% of the adult population in the UK respectively. Significantly more women were in receipt of coaching in the previous twelve months, than men.

It is interesting to note, that while there is a similar proportion of adult men and women who have received coaching overall, significantly more women than men received coaching in the most recent past.

**Table 2.1: Participants in the receipt of coaching, by gender**

Last time received coaching	Male		Female	
	N	% of population	N	% of population
In the past 12 months	3,540,900	14	5,777,258	21*
In the past 2 years	1,190,653	5	1,397,724	6*
In the past 3 years	1,012,573	4	1,058,129	4
In the past 5 years	1,255,363	5	1,333,014	5
Longer than 5 years	8,195,021	34*	6,258,279	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>15,145,145</b>	<b>62*</b>	<b>15,738,707</b>	<b>60</b>

*Base: all those who have received coaching at any point in their lifetime. Population figures are based on ONS mid-year population estimates (18+) in the UK.*

Examining only recent recipients of coaching (those who received coaching within the previous twelve months of the survey), there are home country variations as seen in the table below. Wales has the lowest proportion of adult females in receipt of coaching (17%) and Northern Ireland has the highest (25%). In contrast, Northern Ireland has the lowest proportion of adult males in the receipt of coaching (11%) and Scotland has the highest (15%). With the exception of Wales, significantly more women are in receipt of coaching in each home county, than males.

**Table 2.2: Coached- participation by home country, by gender**

Home country	Male		Female	
	N	% of population	N	% of population
England	2,976,695	14	4,666,343	21*
Wales	157,559	13	216,452	17
Scotland	314,929	15	522,885	23*
Northern Ireland	76,097	11	183,695	25*

Base: all those who have coached in the previous twelve months. Population figures are based on ONS mid-year population estimates (18+) in the UK.

### Regional Data, by gender

London has the highest proportion of both female (27%) and male (17%) adults in receipt of coaching among the English regions. With the exception of the North East, significantly more women are in receipt of coaching in each region, than males.

**Table 2.3: Coached participation by region, by gender**

Region	Male		Female	
	N	% of population	N	% of population
North East	163,855	16	206,532	19
North West	333,007	12	553,255	19*
Yorkshire and Humber	250,671	12	436,871	20*
East Midlands	220,070	12	382,022	20*
West Midlands	288,671	13	438,739	19*
East of England	375,691	16	592,343	24*
South East	483,715	14	800,360	22*
London	571,743	17	928,790	27*
South West	344, 511	16	454,424	20*

Base: all those who have coached in the previous twelve months. The regional total might not add up to the total in above, due to rounding. Population figures are based on ONS mid-year population estimates (18+) in the UK.

### Profile of coached participants, by gender

Examining the demographic profile of those who received coaching in the previous twelve months, the majority were female (62%) compared to male (38%).

Males in receipt of coaching were significantly more likely to be of a higher social grade (71%) compared to females (65%). Females in receipt of coaching were significantly more likely than males in receipt of coaching to have a physical or mental health condition (33% female compared to 27% male); and to be aged 65+ (18% female compared to 14% male). Similar proportions of men and women in receipt of coaching were from BAME backgrounds (17% and 18% respectively).



**Table 2.4: Profile of coached participants, by gender**

Active Participants	Male %	Female %
Gender	38	62
18-24	21*	16
25-34	21	21
35-44	19	18
45-54	13	14
55-64	12	13
65+	14	18*
White	83	82
BAME	17	18
Physical or mental health condition	27	33*
No physical or mental health condition	64	59
Higher social grades	71*	65
Lower social grades	29	35*

Base: all those who have received coaching in the previous twelve months

### Experience of receiving coaching, by gender

Both males and females in receipt of coaching were overwhelmingly positive about their experience, with significantly more women rating their session as good (76%) than men (70%). Only 1% of males and females rated their session as poor<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 2.5: Participants rating of coaching received, by gender**

Ratings	Male %	Female %
Good	70	76*
Neutral	29	22
Poor	1	1

Base: all those who have received coaching in the previous twelve months

Exploring their experience of coaching in further detail, both male and female participants reported overwhelmingly positive responses across all factors. Both males and females were most likely to agree that their coach motivated them to do better (81% and 85% respectively).

It is interesting to note that women were significantly more likely than men to agree that their coach motivates me to do better, encourages them to come back, and that they enjoy being coached. Men were significantly more likely than women to agree that their coach listens to them and supports them to achieve their individual goals.

<sup>1</sup> A ten-point scale was used. 'Good' was any rating between eight and ten. 'Poor' was any rating of three or lower. The neutral score of four to seven was recorded by 25% of coached participants.

**Table 2.6: Experience of receiving coaching, by gender**

Experience	Male		Female	
	% agree	% disagree	% agree	% disagree
My coach motivates me to do better	81	2	85*	2
My coach encourages me to come back	74	3	81*	2
I enjoy being coached	74	5	80*	4
Coaching meets individual sport and physical activity needs	77	3	77	3
My coach pushes me to do more	76	5	78	4
My coach listens to me	74*	4	71	4
My coach supports me to achieve my individual goals	74*	4	70	4

Base: all those who have received coaching in the previous twelve months. Excludes neutral responses

### The benefits of coaching, by gender

Coached participants were asked to consider the benefits of coaching. Both male and female participants were most likely to agree that the coaching they receive helps to improve their skills/performance. It is interesting to note that women were significantly more likely to agree with all of the other statements than men.

**Table 2.7: The benefits of receiving coaching, by gender**

Benefits	Male		Female	
	% agree	% disagree	% agree	% disagree
The coaching I receive helps to improve my skills/performance	86	2	87	2
The coaching I receive helps to improve my fitness	78	4	87*	2
The coaching I receive helps to improve my physical health	77	4	86*	2
The coaching I receive helps to improve my mental health and well-being	65	6	76*	4

Base: all those who have received coaching in the previous twelve months. Excludes neutral responses.

Next, participants were asked to rate their own physical and mental health. The findings were compared between those in the receipt of coaching in the past twelve months; those who participated in sport and physical activity in the previous 12 months; and those who had never received coaching.

Across all factors, those in receipt of coaching scored more positively than those who participated in sport and physical activity and those who never received coaching. This was the case for male and female participants.

**Table 2.8: Benefits of coaching by participant group, by gender**

Benefits	Male			Female		
	Coached last 12 mths %	Participate last 12 mths %	Never received coaching %	Coached last 12 mths %	Participate last 12 mths %	Never received coaching %
Rated own physical health as excellent or good	41*	35*	23	34	30	21
Rated own mental health and well-being as excellent or good	52*	50*	46	47	45	46
Done more sport and physical activity in the last 12 months	47	35	33	48*	39	36
Would like to do more sport and physical activity	76	74	67	77	75	69
Time spent in sport and physical activity (minutes per week)	237	201	174	210	175	138

*Base: all those who have received coaching in the previous twelve months.*

### Participants view of their coach, by gender

Participants' positivity about the coaching they received continued when asked to consider their coach. A large proportion of female (85%) and male participants (84%) reported that they had confidence and trust in their coach. A significantly higher proportion of female participants (84%) would recommend their coach to others compared to male participants (80%). Furthermore, a significantly higher proportion of female participants (61%) reported that they felt part of a team or community through coaching than male participants (53%); whereas significantly more males than females felt they had a good relationship with their coach.

**Table 2.9: Participants views of their coach, by gender**

Participants views	Male		Female	
	% agree	% disagree	% agree	% disagree
I have confidence and trust in my coach	84	2	85	2
I would recommend my coach to others	80	2	84*	2
I have a good relationship with my coach	77*	2	74	3
Through coaching, I feel part of a team or community	53	12	61*	11
Through coaching, I have access to a range of social opportunities	44	19	41	21

Base: all those who have received coaching in the previous twelve months. Excludes neutral responses.

### Choosing a coach, by gender

The survey asked participants the most important things they looked for when choosing a coach. Both males and females were most likely to choose a coach based on experience (72%). Interestingly, a significantly larger proportion of females were more likely to choose a coach based on personal and people skills (72% and 66% respectively).

**Table 2.10: Considerations when choosing a coach, by gender**

Choosing a coach	Male %	Female %
Experience	72	72
Personal and people skills	66	72*
Qualifications and training	64	65
Someone who can understand me	56	57
Good reputation	39	45*

Base: all those who have received coaching in the previous twelve months. Respondents could select more than one option; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%.

Both male and female participants thought it was more important that a coach understands them (56% and 57% respectively, table 2.10 above) than it was to have the same characteristics as them such as personality, gender, age, life experience and background (table 2.11 below).

Whilst a very small proportion of responses overall, men were significantly more likely than women to say it was important their coach had a similar personality to them; and women were significantly more likely than men to say it was important they were the same gender as them.

**Table 2.11: Further considerations when choosing a coach, by gender**

Choosing a coach	Male %	Female %
Has a similar personality to me	13*	10
Is the same gender as me	5	8*
Is a similar age to me	6	6
Has a similar life experience to me	6*	4
Is from a similar background to me	5*	3

Base: all those who have received coaching in the previous twelve months. Respondents could select more than one option; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%.

### Great Coaching, by gender

Participants who received coaching were asked what they thought made a great sport and physical activity coach. The findings include a combination of technical coaching skills and social skills. Female participants most commonly responded with “friendly and approachable” followed by “gives constructive feedback and corrections”. In comparison, males most commonly responded with “gives constructive feedback and corrections” and “improves skills and ability”.

Women were significantly more likely than men to report “friendly and approachable” and “creates a warm and welcoming environment”; men were significantly more likely than women to report “gives constructive feedback”, “improve skills and ability”, “treats participants as individuals”, “get good results”, and “know rules of the game”,

**Table 2.12: Participant views of great coaches, by gender**

Great coaches	Male %	Female %
Friendly and approachable	42	54*
Give constructive feedback and corrections	55*	51
Create a warm and welcoming environment	31	43*
Improve skills and ability	48*	41
Qualified/trained	37	40
Treat all participants as individuals	34*	40
Build good relationships	35	37
Have previous experience of coaching	20	20
Get good results (i.e. win matches/games)	16*	10
Know the rules of the game	18*	9

Base: all those who have received coaching in the previous twelve months. Respondents could select more than one option; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%.

### Participants no longer in the receipt of coaching, by gender

Over 7 million people (3.8 million women and 3.5 million men) reported they received coaching in the last 5 years, but not in the last 12 months.

Over three quarters of females no longer in the receipt of coaching said they might be encouraged to receive coaching again in the future (81%). However, a substantial proportion (19%) said they would not be interested in receiving coaching again. Slightly more (23%) of males no longer in receipt of coaching had no interest in receiving coaching again.

Reducing the cost of sessions was the most common factor cited by males and females that might encourage them to take part in sessions in the future (45% and 55% respectively); followed by providing sessions at a more convenient time (24% and 33% respectively) and introducing more fun (17% and 22% respectively).

Interestingly, while males and females cited the same top three factors, the proportion of females was significantly higher than males for each factor.

**Table 2.13: What would attract people back into coached sessions, by gender**

Factors	Male %	Female %
Reduce the cost of sessions	45	55*
Provide sessions at more convenient times for me	24	33*
Introduce more fun	17	22*
Introduce more social activities	11	14*
Improve the facilities	15	13
Provide more sessions	12	13
Improve the quality of coaching	13	9
Reduce the number of competitions or events	6	5
Introduce more competitions or events	7*	3
Not interested in receiving coaching again	23*	19

*Base: all those who have received coaching in the past five years, but not the previous twelve months. Respondents could select more than one option; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%.*

### Participants who never received coaching, by gender

Of those who had never received coaching in the past, the vast majority (75% of females and 73% of males) said they would not be interested in doing so in the future. Asked why they would not be interested in receiving coaching, the most common response by males and females was that they prefer to exercise/ play sport on their own (37% and 33% respectively).

Women were significantly more likely than men to cite cost as a factor; whereas men were significantly more likely than women to say it is not for people like them, or they don't need a coach.

**Table 2.14 Reasons why they are not interested in receiving coaching, by gender**

Reasons	Male %	Female%
They prefer to exercise/do sport on their own	37*	33
It costs too much	20	27*
They think it is not for people like them	32*	26
They don't need a coach for their sport/activity	24*	19
They don't have time	14	13

*Base: all those who had never received coaching. Respondents could select more than one option; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100%.*

## Discussion

This statistical report provides a high-level summary of data from the Coaching in the UK study, with a specific focus on gender. Coaching in the UK was the largest nationally representative survey conducted of coaches and coaching in the UK. It was the first research to include a broader definition of coaching, recognising changing government policy and the wider work of UK Coaching, supporting coaches across the whole sport and physical activity sector. The survey set a new baseline of data, which will enable UK Coaching and the wider sector to monitor and measure progress. It is hoped that the survey will be repeated on a regular basis.

This Spotlight on Gender report complements the original reports on the coaching workforce and coached-participation: see <https://www.ukcoaching.org/resources/research/coaching-in-the-uk> for further information.

Using a broader definition of coaching, this report reveals a coaching workforce which is much more diverse in relation to gender, than previous research has suggested. There are over 1.7 million active male coaches and 1.4 million active female coaches in the UK, representing 7% and 6% of the adult population respectively. Previous research focused on coaching within traditional sports club settings and used a narrow role definition of a “sports coach”. These studies underrepresented the number of coaches operating in different environments and contexts, under a range of different role titles, across the whole sport and physical activity sector. Some of these studies excluded female-dominated activities, such as Zumba instructors working in private health clubs, dance teachers operating in church halls, and keep-fit instructors operating in local community centres. All use coaching skills and all play a vital role in supporting an active nation.

Overall, whilst the coaching workforce is much more gender diverse than previously understood, there are some contexts and environments that are not as diverse in relation to gender. For example, in the North East of England, in sports club settings and within more senior, advanced, or specialist coaching roles. More research is required to understand the challenges and barriers of female coaches in these specific areas.

It is interesting to note that the female coaching workforce is more diverse in relation to socio-economic status compared to the male coaching workforce, with larger proportions of women from lower social grades involved in coaching. It would be worth exploring in greater detail their routes into coaching, and their motivations and experiences of coaching, to



understand how we might attract and sustain more people into coaching roles from lower social grades.

A significantly greater proportion of female coaches reported that they do not have a formal coaching qualification, and a greater proportion of male coaches had qualifications at levels 1 and 2. However, an equal proportion of male and female coaches had higher level qualifications, at levels 3, 4 and above, although it is not known whether they are coaching at the equivalent level of their qualification.

It is also interesting to note that female coaches coach more hours in a paid capacity than men and significantly less hours in a voluntary capacity. Female coaches are also significantly more likely than male coaches to reference “career development” as a reason to start coaching. This suggests different motivations and expectations of coaching, which should be considered when planning promotional and recruitment campaigns.

In relation to coached-participation, significantly more women than men were in receipt of coaching in the previous twelve months of the survey, with 5.8 million women and 3.5 million men receiving coaching in the UK (representing 21% and 14% of the adult population respectively). Furthermore, women report a more positive experience of coaching compared to men, with significantly more women than men rating their last coached session as good. Women were significantly more likely than men to agree that coaching improves skills/performance, improves fitness, physical health, and mental health and wellbeing, demonstrating the wider impact of coaching.

Whilst both men and women are more likely to choose a coach based on experience, than qualifications, women are more likely than men to choose a coach based on personal and people skills. Women are also more likely to value certain qualities of a coach, such as being “friendly and approachable” and “creating a warm and welcoming environment”. This highlights the importance of prioritising the attributes of the coach in relation to their softer skills and understanding of participant needs, rather than their qualifications, technical skills or demographic profile.

Overall, the findings suggest that coaching is an overwhelming positive experience for both the coach and the participant. It also suggests that providing more opportunities for people to take part in coached-activity, may help to increase female participation, and in addition may help to improve the experience of sport and physical activity more generally.