

Coaching in the UK, 2019

Participant Survey

Introduction

In 2019, UK Coaching commissioned YouGov to undertake the largest ever survey into coaches and coaching, building on a previous survey conducted in 2017. A nationally representative sample of over 50,000 adults and 2,000 children were surveyed about their experience of receiving coaching and their experience of being a coach.

This report presents a summary of the key findings from the participant section of the survey. It includes participants who have recently been in receipt of coaching and those who have received coaching at some point in the past. It includes the key findings from both the adult and the children's section of the survey.

The full statistical report is available on the UK Coaching website and separate reports are available for coaches.

Methodology

The survey aimed to measure the incidence of coaches and coached participants in the UK, to analyse any changes since the research was last conducted in 2017, and to develop an in-depth understanding of the characteristics and experience of the coaches and participants.

In 2017, a survey of 20,688 UK adults aged 18+ and 1,000 children aged 7 to 17 was conducted online between 2 and 21 August, 2017. The results were weighted to be representative of the UK population by gender, age, region and social grade.

In 2019, a similar approach was taken but with an increased sample size of 50,797 adults in the UK aged 18+ and 2,000 children aged 7 to 17. The research was carried out online from the 9 August to the 16 September 2019. The results are weighted to be representative of the UK population by gender, age, region, social grade and ethnicity.

For further details about the methodology, and a glossary of terms, please see the statistical report on the UK Coaching website.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by Sport England.

UK Coaching commissioned YouGov to undertake the survey fieldwork and analysis. The questionnaires were developed by UK Coaching, in consultation with other partners. UK Coaching would like to thank YouGov for their support and advice throughout the development process.

This report is written by UK Coaching, based on analysis of the data conducted by YouGov and additional analysis conducted by UK Coaching.

Adults in receipt of coaching

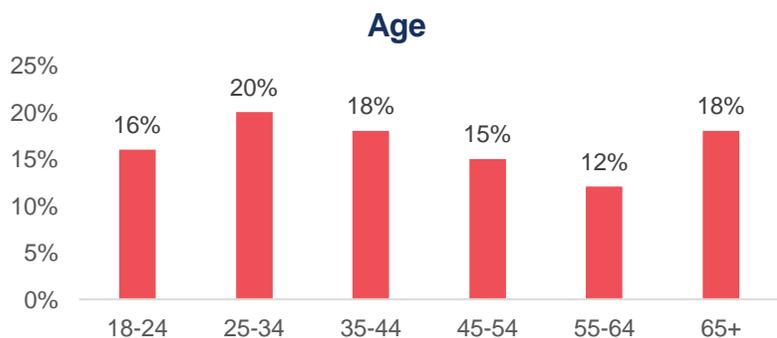
Around one in six (17%) of UK adults received coaching, instructing, training or teaching in sport or physical activity in the 12 months prior to the survey.

This equates to an estimated **nine million adult participants who received coaching** across the UK in 2019, a slight decrease from 2017.

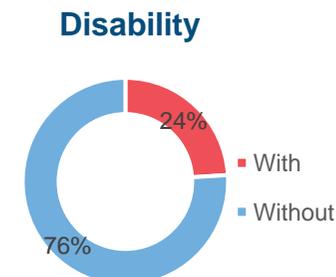
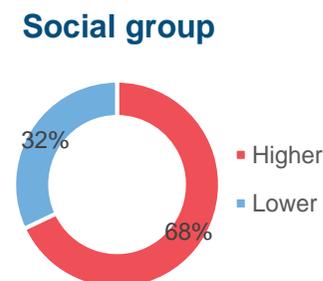
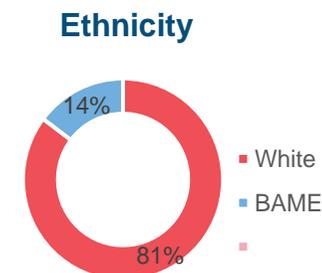
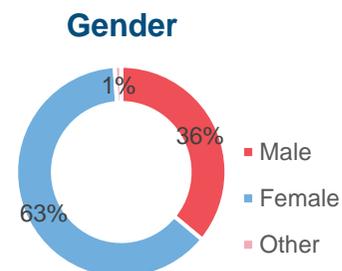
Demographic profile

Of those who received coaching in the previous 12 months, 63% are female and 36% are male. The proportion of BAME participants is the same as the national average of 14%. Around a quarter (24%) of those who participated in the previous 12 months have a disability or health condition, compared to around 20% nationally.

Those from lower social groups are underrepresented: 32% compared to a national average of 43%. Participation in coaching decreases from ages 25-34 to 55-64, but increases again at ages 65+.



2017		2019	
Incidence	UK population estimate	Incidence	UK population estimate
17.80%	9,200,000	17.36%	9,100,000

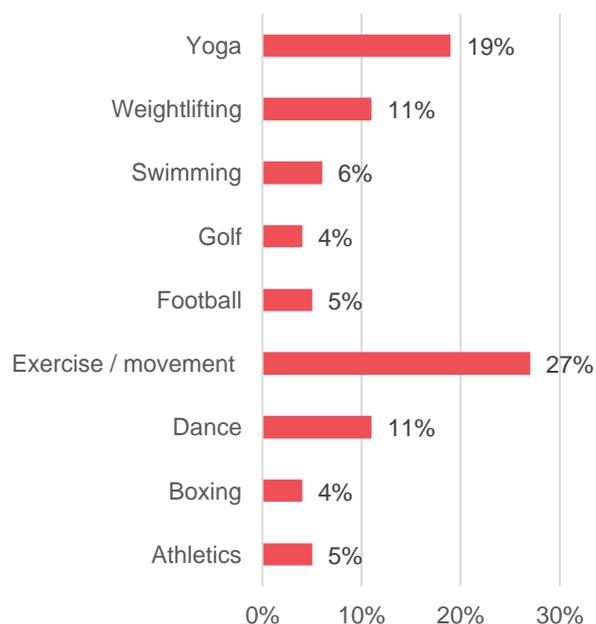


Between 2017 and 2019, there has been:

- a slight increase in the proportion of coached participants who are female (by 1 percentage point) and slight decrease in those who are male (by 2 percentage points).
- a slight decrease in the proportion of coached participants aged 18-24 and 25-34 (by 2 and 1 percentage point respectively); and an increase in those aged 65+ (by 2 percentage points)
- a decrease in the proportion of coached participants from a BAME background (by 3 percentage points).

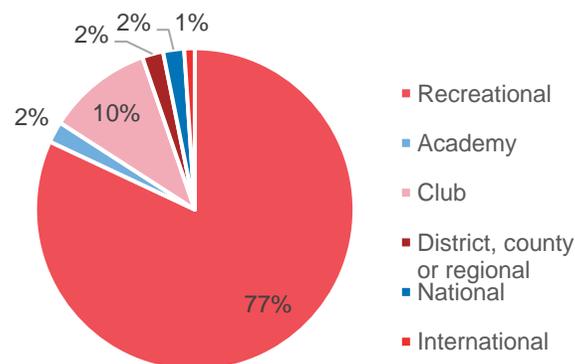
What sports/activities do they receive coaching in?

The most popular coached activities are exercise / movement (27%), yoga (19%), dance (11%) and weightlifting (11%).



What level do they participate in?

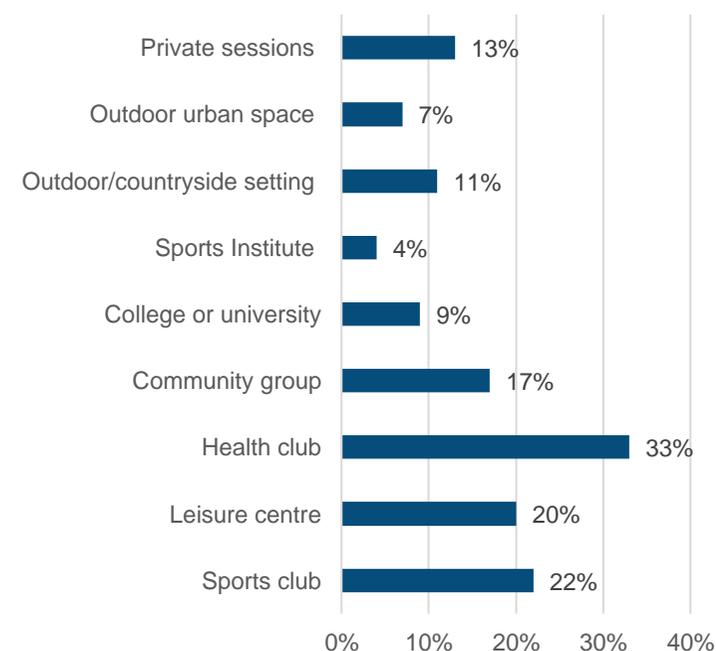
The majority of coached participants take part at a recreational level, with one in ten taking part at club level.



Women are more likely than men to take part at a recreational level (83% compared to 66%); whereas men are more likely to take part at club level (16% compared to 6%).

Where do they receive coaching?

Participants are most likely to be coached in a private health club. This is followed by a sports club or a local authority leisure centre.



Women are more likely than men to be coached in dance (15% compared to 4%) and men are more likely to be coached in football (12% compared to 1%).

Time spent coached

Participants are most likely to spend 60 to 119 minutes a week in coached activity (29% are coached 60 to 119 minutes in a typical week).

Two in five participate in one coached session a week (42%) and over a quarter (28%) participate in two to three coached sessions a week.

Most important qualities of a coach

Participants considered the most important qualities of a coach as: personal and people skills; level of experience; qualifications and training; and understanding specific needs.

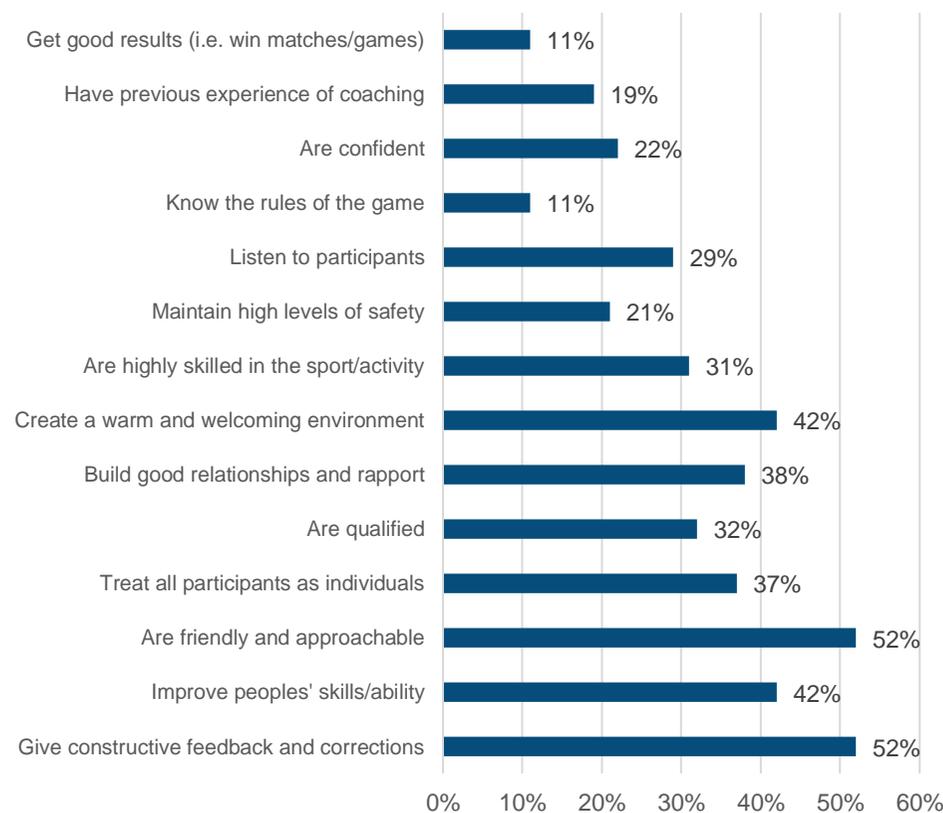
Comparing the data to 2017, understanding specific needs has increased significantly as a coach quality. Qualifications and training, level of experience, and personal and people skills have all declined during the same period.

Most important qualities in a coach	2017	2019
Qualifications and training	65%	61%
Level of experience	72%	68%
Personal and people skills	70%	68%
Has similar values to me	17%	17%
Has a similar personality to me	11%	11%
Is a similar age to me	6%	5%
Is the same gender as me	7%	7%
Is from a similar background to me	3%	3%
Has similar life experiences to me	4%	4%
Understands me and my specific needs	57%	62%
Has a good reputation in the community	42%	41%

Women are more likely than men to consider personal and people skills as important (71% compared to 64%) and having a good reputation in the community (44% compared to 37%). Men are more likely than women to place higher importance on having similar values (19% compared to 16%) and having a similar personality (13% compared to 10%).

Coached participants considered the most important qualities that make a great coach as giving constructive feedback and corrections; and being friendly and approachable. Getting good results and knowing the rules of the game are considered the least important to coached participants.

Qualities of a great coach



Experience of coaching

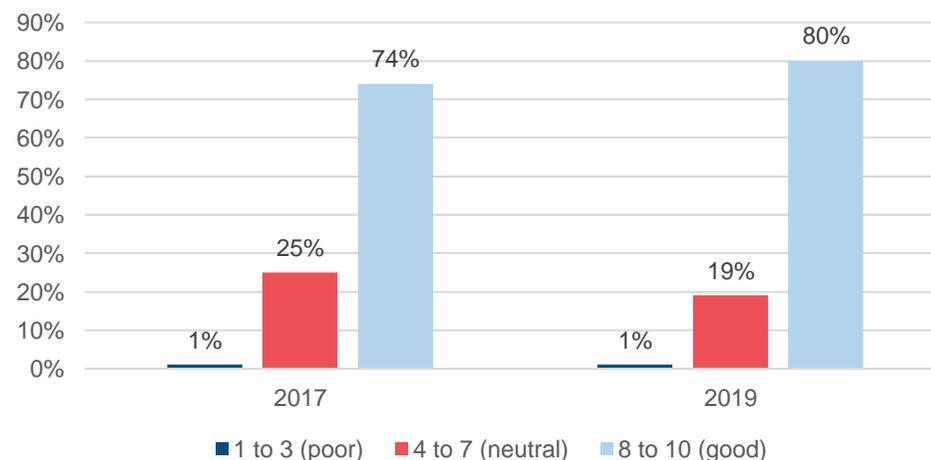
Overall, participants are extremely positive about the coaching they receive. Across all statements about their experience of receiving coaching, participants reported higher levels of agreement in 2019, compared to 2017.



Coached participants are now significantly more likely to agree that they enjoy being coached (83% in 2019 compared to 77% in 2017).

Rating of last coached session

Most coached participants rated their last coached session as good, with 80% giving a rating of 8-10 out of 10. This is significantly higher than in 2017 when three quarters (74%) rated their last session as good.



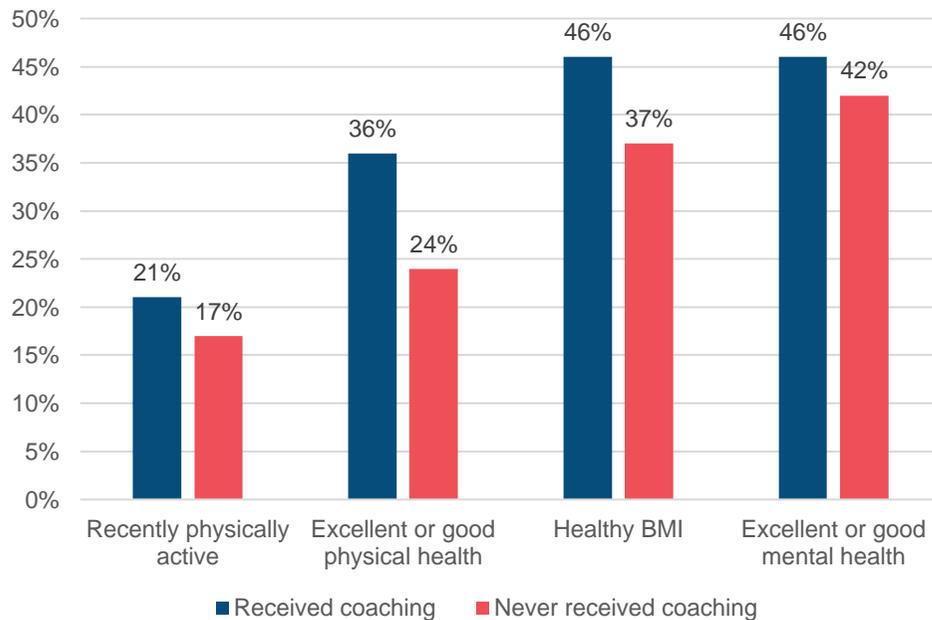
Those who participate in dance or exercise, fitness and personal training are more likely to rate their last session as good (84% for both). However, those who participate in invasion games are less likely to provide this rating with three quarters (74%) giving a good rating and a quarter (24%) being neutral with ratings of 4-7.

Impact of coaching on adults

People who receive coaching are more likely than those who have never received coaching to be: recently physically active, to rate their physical health as excellent or good, to be a healthy BMI, and to rate their mental health as excellent or good.

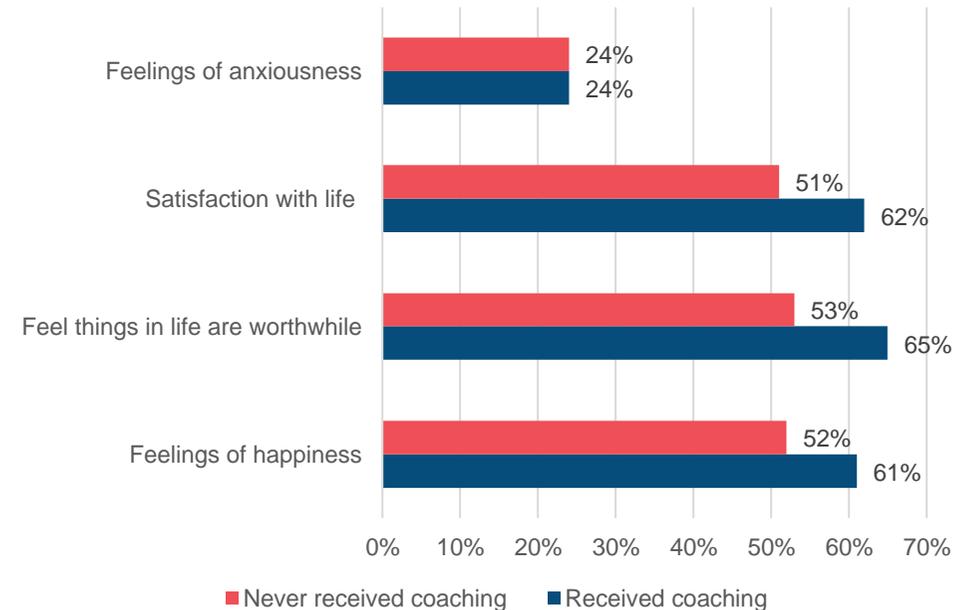
Coached participants are significantly more likely to rate their physical health as excellent (10%), compared to those who have not been coached for over five years, or never (4% respectively).

Physical and mental health



Those who receive coaching are more likely to rate themselves positively on a range of well-being measures compared to those who have never received coaching. They are more likely than those who do not receive coaching to report feeling happy, feel that the things they do in life are worthwhile, and feel satisfied with life.

Well-being



Those who take part in more coached sessions (two to three a week) are significantly more likely to report feeling happier, with two thirds (65%) of those who take part in two to three sessions a week stating they felt happy yesterday compared with 60% who only take part in one session a week.

Competence and confidence

Overall, those who have received coaching are more positive towards physical activity than those who have never been coached.

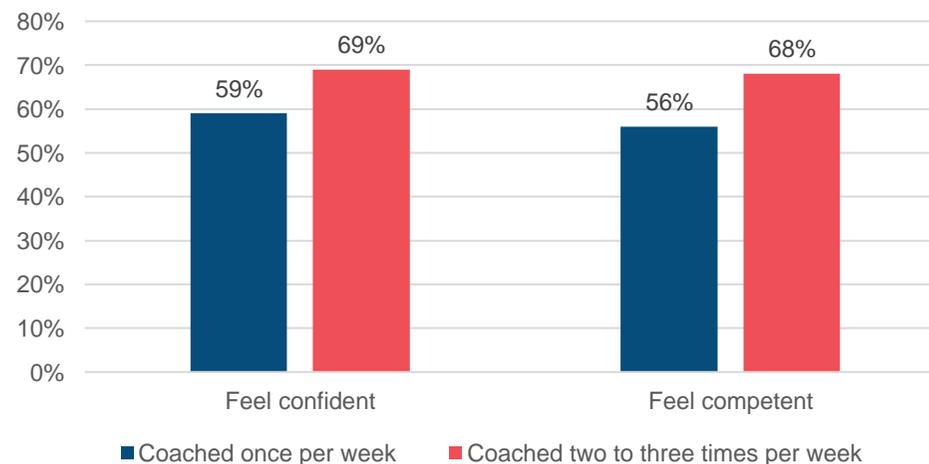
Agreement statements on physical activity	Coached	Never coached
It's important to me to exercise regularly	86%	72%
I feel that I have the ability to be physically active	85%	76%
I feel that I have the opportunity to be physically active	83%	69%
I enjoy taking part in sport and physical activity	80%	58%
I would like to do more sport and physical activity	74%	68%
I feel guilty when I don't exercise	70%	59%
I look forward to sport and physical activity	70%	47%
I feel confident when taking part in sport or physical activity sessions	64%	43%
I am able to take part in sport and physical activity to a standard I am pleased with	61%	46%
I do more sport and physical activity now, than I did this time last year	44%	35%
I have considered giving up sport and physical activity in the last 12 months	12%	13%
I exercise because I don't want to disappoint other people	12%	10%

Compared to those who have never received coaching, coached participants are more likely to:

- feel confident when taking part in sport or physical activity
- feel able to take part in sport and physical activity to a standard they are pleased with
- feel that they have the ability to be physically active
- agree that exercise is important to them
- agree that they have the opportunity to be physically active

Feelings of competence and confidence increase significantly by number of coaching sessions. Those who participate in more coaching sessions per week are more likely to feel competent and confident when taking part in sport and physical activity.

Feelings of confidence and competence by number of coaching sessions per week



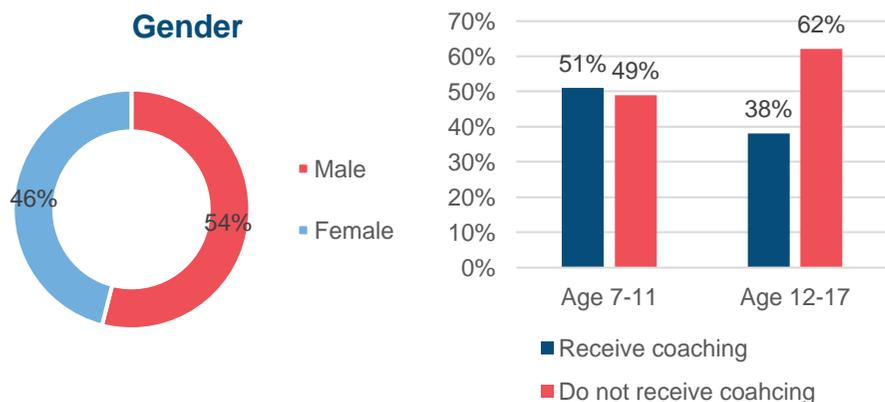
Male participants are significantly more likely than female participants to feel they can take part in sport and physical activity to a standard they are pleased with (67% of men, compared to 58% of women); and are more likely to agree that they feel confident when taking part in sport and physical activity (74% of men, compared to 58% of women).

Children's participation in coached sport and physical activity

Forty-five percent of children aged 7-17 take part in activities outside of school, led by a coach.

This equates to an estimated **3.8 million** children in receipt of coaching in the UK.

Children in receipt of coaching are more likely to be male (54%) than female (46%); and younger children aged 7-11 (51%) are significantly more likely than older children aged 12-17 (38%) to participate in coached activities.



While there has been no change in the proportion of older children taking part in coached activity; there has been a decrease in the proportion of younger children aged 7-11 who report being coached outside of school (from 60% in 2017 to 51% in 2019).

Reasons for taking part in coached sport and physical activity

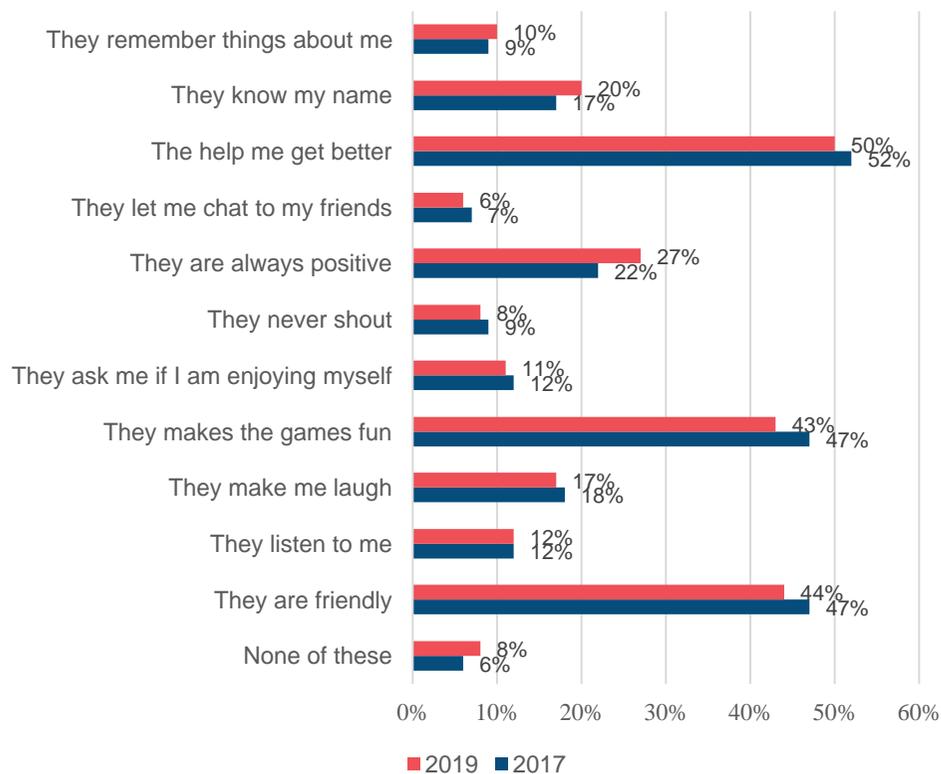
When asked why they take part in physical activity outside of school, the most popular response given was that it is fun. This is particularly true for younger children aged 7-11, although it has declined for both groups in 2019.

Reasons for activity	2017		2019	
	7-11	12-17	7-11	12-17
I love the sport or activity	61%	52%	56%	46%
It's fun	81%	65%	78%	62%
I'm trying to get better	41%	35%	43%	36%
I want to be successful	20%	18%	18%	17%
It helps me stay fit	41%	56%	44%	56%
I want to look good	8%	20%	6%	19%
It's good for your health	42%	55%	49%	55%
My friends do it	32%	34%	34%	33%
I like to compete	22%	24%	20%	21%
I have to / have no choice	6%	5%	5%	5%
My family encourage me to take part	-	-	53%	43%
I like the coach	-	-	13%	12%
I'm good at it	-	-	40%	36%
Other reason(s)	3%	3%	2%	4%

For both age groups, the second reason they give for being active outside of school is that it's good for their health (52% overall).

Younger children's experience of coached sport and physical activity

For younger children (age 7 to 11), the quality that they like most about their coach is that they help them get better. Other key qualities reported are that they are friendly and that they make the games fun.

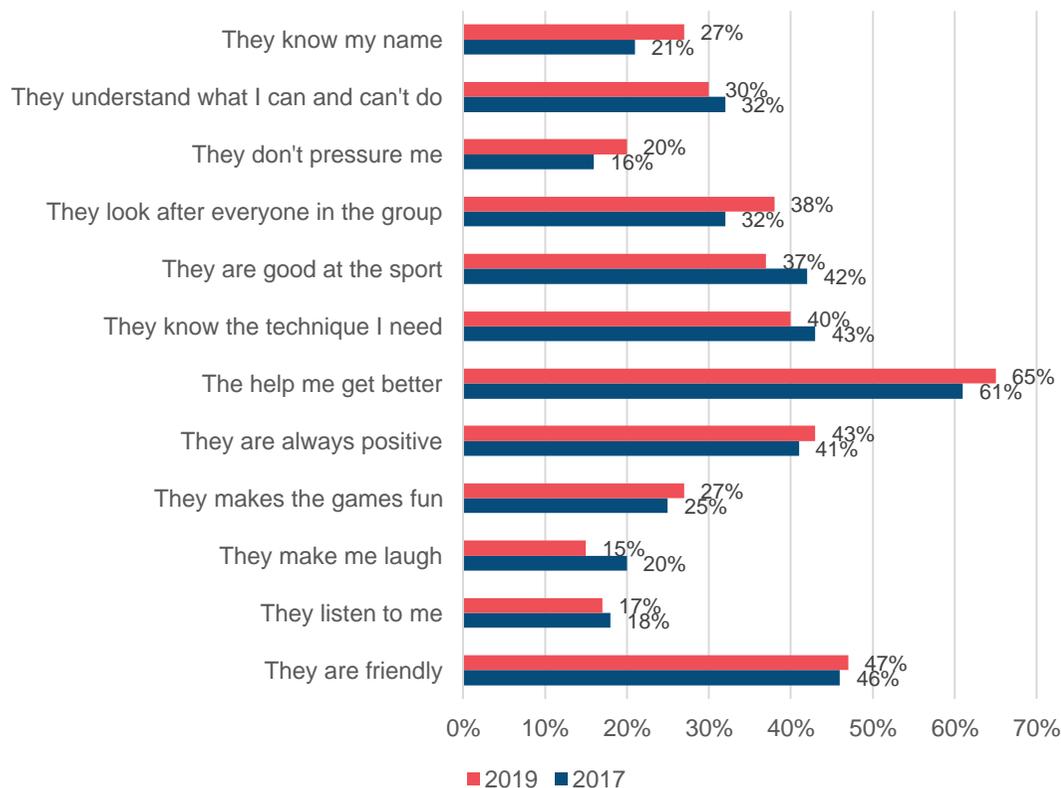


In 2019, there has been a significant increase in the proportion of children who report that a key quality of their coach is that they are always positive.

Older children's experience of coached sport and physical activity

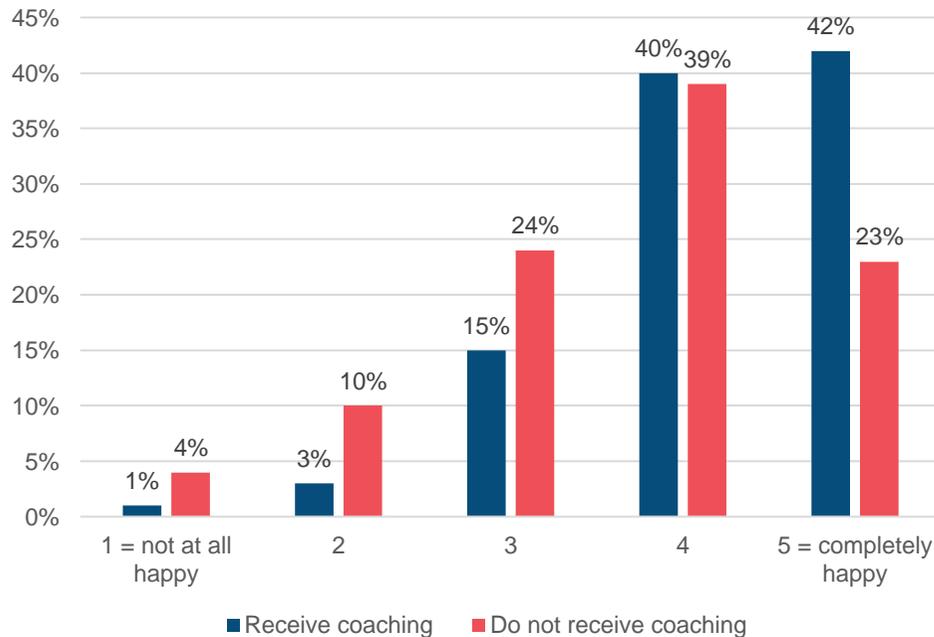
For older children (age 12 to 17), the quality that they like most about their coach is that they help them to get better. Other key qualities are that they are friendly and that they are always positive.

Since 2017, there has been a significant increase in the importance of the coach knowing their name.



Impact of coaching on children

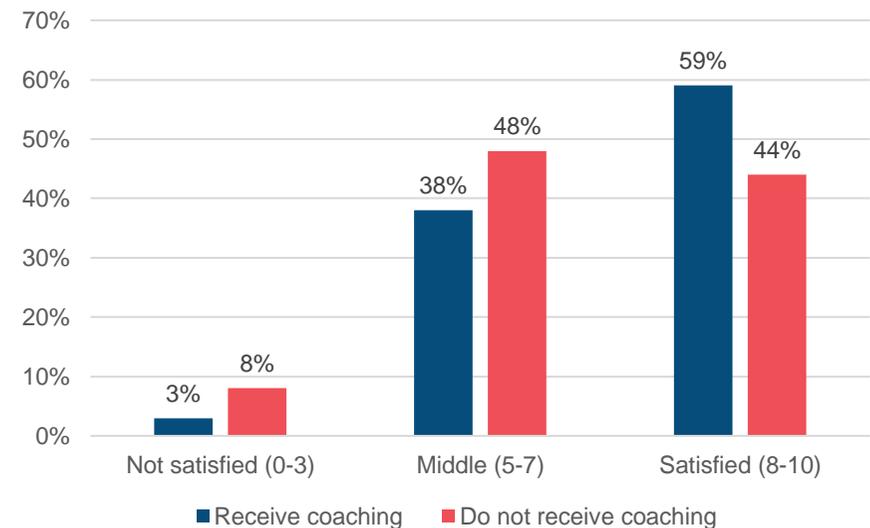
Children aged 7-17 who receive coaching outside of school indicate very high levels of happiness.



82% of children who receive coaching rated themselves as a 4 or 5 (where 1 is 'not at all happy' and 5 is 'completely happy'). This is significantly higher than the proportion of children who do not receive coaching (62%).

Older children were also asked how satisfied they are with their life nowadays, and indicated high levels of satisfaction.

On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 was 'not at all satisfied' and 10 was 'completely satisfied', older children who receive coaching are significantly more likely to rate themselves at 8-10 (59% than those who do not receive coaching (44%).



Older children were asked to what extent they feel the things they do in their life are worthwhile. On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is 'not at all worthwhile' and 10 is 'completely worthwhile', children in receipt of coaching (65%) are significantly more likely than children not in receipt of coaching (50%) to rate themselves at 8-10.

Summary

This report presents a summary of the key findings from Coaching in the UK, 2019 - the largest and most robust survey of coaching and coached-participation in the UK to date.

Around one in six (17%) of UK adults and 45% of UK children received coaching in sport or physical activity in the 12 months prior to the survey. This equates to an estimated **9 million adults and 3.8 million children receiving coaching in the UK.**

There has been a slight decrease in the proportion of adults in receipt of coaching since the last survey was conducted in 2017 (less than 1 percentage point), and a decrease in the proportion of children aged 7 to 11 in receipt of coaching (by 9 percentage points). UK Coaching will examine this data in further detail to try and understand this change.

Adults in receipt of coaching are more likely to be female, whereas children in receipt of coaching are more likely to be male. Coached participants are relatively diverse in relation to ethnicity and disability, but less diverse in relation to gender and social group. Since 2017, there has been a slight increase in the proportion of participants who are female, and a decrease in the proportion from a BAME background. Some of the changes observed in 2019 might be a result of small changes in the survey methodology, and UK Coaching will examine this data in further detail and will continue to monitor trends over time.

There are some variations in the data, particularly in relation to sport/activity, level of participation and environment. Some of these variations are highlighted in the main report and UK Coaching will be undertaking further sub-group analysis in the near future.

The survey has shown that people receive coaching in a wide range of sports/activities and in a variety of different environments, but overall, most people receive coaching at a recreational level and within health club settings. The most common coached activity is exercise, movement and fitness.

Comparing participant-level data to coach-level data, there are interesting differences in relation to sports/activities and environment. This is likely to be a result of the gender differences between coached participants and the coach workforce.

Adult participants considered the most important qualities when choosing a coach as level of experience, and personal and people skills. As in 2017, participants were much more likely to agree that it is important that a coach understands them, than a coach who is similar in terms of gender, age or background. The importance of understanding specific needs increased significantly in 2019. This highlights the importance of prioritising the attributes of the coach in relation to their understanding of participant needs, rather than their demographic profile.

Participant experience of coaching is overwhelmingly positive for both adults and children. Most adults who received coaching said that they enjoyed it, that their coach motivated them to do better and to come back, and helped them to achieve their individual goals. Across all questions about experience, the responses were more positive in 2019 compared to 2017.

Four out of five adult participants rated their last coached session as good, a significant increase from 2017. Only 1% of participants rated their experience as poor. In addition, the vast majority of adult participants had confidence and trust in their coach.

The survey explored the competence and confidence of participants to take part in sport and physical activity, and the physical and mental health benefits of receiving coaching. Adults in receipt of coaching are more likely to feel competent and confident than those not in receipt of coaching, and levels of competence and confidence increase with number of coaching sessions.

Adults who receive coaching are more likely to report excellent or good physical and mental health, and are more likely to rate themselves positively on a range of well-being measures, compared to those who do not receive coaching and the UK population. Likewise, children who receive coaching report higher levels of happiness and satisfaction than those who do not receive coaching.

Although it is not possible to say that coaching leads to improved physical health, mental health and well-being, as there are likely to be several factors at play, these results do indicate that people who are coached are more likely to be healthier, happier and satisfied with their lives.

The full statistical report is available on the UK Coaching website.

