

Research Essentials: The Coaching Workforce

1 Volunteers make up three quarters of the coaching workforce.

There are over 1.1 million coaches in the UK, of which 76% are volunteers (over 800,000). Volunteers conduct an average of two sessions per week, each lasting for approximately 90 minutes.

2 Although younger coaches account for almost half the coaching workforce they are the group most likely to stop coaching.

Just under half of all coaches (45%) are aged 34 or younger. Evidence from the *UK Coach Tracking Study* (2010) suggests these coaches (especially those with lower levels of qualifications) are most likely to stop coaching. Personal circumstances, such as changes in work, education and/or family, were the most commonly cited reasons to stop.

3 Coaches help to improve fitness and enhance fun.

The two most important benefits of coaching are improved fitness (72%) and enhanced fun (68%). Using a coach to improve performance and develop skills is more important to men than women.

4 The more you participate, the more you look to a coach.

As participation increases, so does the use of coaching. On average, 27% of the population have received coaching in the last 12 months. However, of those people who had participated in sport more recently, 84% had received coaching.

5 The number of qualified coaches continues to grow.

Fifty-three per cent of coaches hold a governing body of sport qualification. This is an increase of 15% since 2004 (38% to 53%). Of these, 63% are qualified up to Level 2; however, there are considerable gender differences (eg 61% of male coaches hold a coaching qualification compared to 36% of female coaches).

6 Coaching mirrors inequalities in sport.

Women, people from black and minority ethnic communities and people with a disability are under-represented in coaching. This is consistent with a wider issue of under-representation of these groups in sport.

Further Reading

North, J. (2009) *The Coaching Workforce 2009–2016*

How to use workforce data to plan for your future coaching needs.

Timson-Katchis, M. and North, J. (2010) *UK Coach Tracking Study: Year Two Headline Report*

Primary research on coaches and their development.

Townend, R. and North, J. (in press) *Sports Coaching in the UK III*

Detailed statistics and analysis on the coaching workforce.