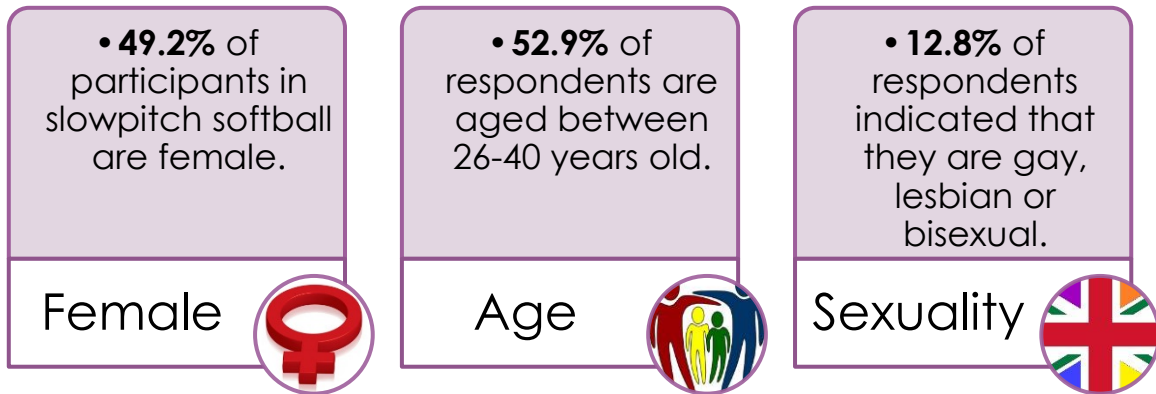


BaseballSoftballUK Ltd

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

2016

Headlines



Purpose of Study

This study was conducted in line with [BSUK's Equality and Diversity Policy \(2012\)](#), which provides the framework for monitoring the demographics of those involved in baseball and softball in the UK. The definitions of Equality and Diversity that underlie this document are provided below:



The definitions set out above emphasise the importance of equality within our sports. This purpose of this study is to monitor the demographic makeup of our sporting communities and enable BSUK to target portions of the population that require further support, and continue to ensure that the sports are accessible to all persons who wish to play.

Statement of the Chief Executives

BaseballSoftballUK, the development agency for baseball and softball in the UK, has an important role to play with regard to the make-up of the sports we deliver: firstly, in monitoring the demographics of those involved; secondly, in creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for all; and thirdly, in proactively influencing involvement from minority groups.

This isn't an easy task for a small organisation with limited resources. Powerful external forces, such as positive and negative social trends, can have a significant impact on this area of work. Our job is to work with and sometimes against these forces to increase the involvement of minority groups; one example is our mixed slowpitch softball work with the LGBT community in London and Manchester. Our efforts to bring new people into the sports have seen a considerable growth in mixed slowpitch softball and with it the number of new women and girls playing. We have also run projects introducing disability groups to our sports, especially near our flagship facility at Farnham Park in Buckinghamshire.

Equality of opportunity and diversity is one of the fundamental values we hold. It is part of our vision, and we have put policies, procedures and good practice in place to ensure we work in a positive and proactive manner. These policies and procedures have been produced to try to tackle potential or current discrimination or other unfair treatment, whether intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect.

Our Equality Policy sets out a number of proactive steps that will be taken to ensure that principles of equality of access and opportunity are adhered to by BSUK staff and officials in our work and on behalf of our members. These policies include the nine protected characteristics (above) covered by the Equality Act.

This study has been conducted with the input of 759 respondents and would not have been possible without their contributions. The responses paint a very favourable picture of the everyday experience of playing baseball/softball in this country, one that is welcoming, social and engaging for a very wide spectrum of the population. This experience is found in every game played, enhanced by each interaction with new or potential players and enshrined by a positive and inclusive culture. Thank you to each and every person who contributes to this on a daily basis.

The survey that has produced the results in this report helps us to monitor these factors and ensure that our sports continue to remove barriers to participation for both current and potential participants. Below, we present the findings of our Equality and Diversity Annual Monitoring Report for 2016.

-- John Boyd and Jenny Fromer, Joint CEOs

Protected Characteristics

Age
Disability
Gender reassignment
Marriage/Civil partnership
Pregnancy/Maternity
Race/Ethnicity
Religion/Belief
Sex
Sexual orientation

Method

Data was collected using electronic questionnaires (n=759), which were available both on the BSUK and Federation websites and directly emailed to registered users of the BaseballSoftballUK website, members of elite/national teams and registered participants for whom contact information was available.

Partial responses were accepted, and questions not responded to were marked "No Response." 113 surveys (17.3%) were partially completed to at least the second page, with the largest drop-offs seen after the demographic questions were completed and before the long-form questions regarding improvements to opportunities and impacts of the sports on the respondent. There were 105 additional partial responses with no or only the first page answered, or where the respondent indicated that they had previously filled in the questionnaire. These entries were removed before analysis, giving 654 useable responses. The table below shows the number of respondents to complete each page of the survey.

Pages of Survey Completed		
2	14	2.14%
3	45	6.88%
4	5	0.76%
5	11	1.68%
6	35	5.35%
7	3	0.46%
8	541	82.72%

Fully Completed Surveys		
Yes	541	82.72%
No	113	17.28%

The electronic survey was open between 30 June and 18 August 2016. The incentive of a competition for vouchers for playing equipment probably contributed to the fact that our online responses increased from 489 to 654. This amounted to a response increase of 34% on 2014, when over the same period the playing membership increased by 17.5%.

Given an estimated membership of 23,500, the 654 responses give a response rate of 2.8%. This equates to a confidence interval (at 50%) of 3.78, with a confidence level of 95%. Therefore, for all results given, it can be said that there is a 95% chance that a result of 50% is within +/- 3.78% of the true result. This margin of error decreases as a given result moves away from 50%. So although the overall percentage of respondents from the playing population remained steady, the overall number of responses increased. This allowed the confidence interval to decrease and produce more accurate data than in 2014.

To address the limitations of the 2014 study, several design improvements to the survey were made. A wider array of questions was asked, giving more data which enables further comparisons with other studies in this area, including questions regarding socio-economic status, religion, marital status, belief, motivations and barriers to participation. Age bands were also adjusted to provide data for those younger than 14 and those 14-17 years old. The role question was further defined with an additional level introduced (League/Multi-Team Club Administrator) and, if they were a paid worker, a request to state which organisation the respondent belonged to. Umpires were instructed not to tick this response if their income was from umpiring only.

A version of the survey is presented in Appendix III, and the responses have been collated and analysed for inclusion within this report.

Findings

Format

482 of the 654 responses were from participants who were involved in slowpitch softball, 54 from fastpitch softball and 120 from baseball. These numbers do not add up to 654 as participants were asked to tick all formats that applied.

46 responses were from players who took part in both slowpitch and fastpitch, 34 from players who participated in both slowpitch and baseball and 6 from respondents who participated in all three formats.

Format	Respondents
Slowpitch Softball (SP)	482
Fastpitch Softball (FP)	54
Baseball (BB)	120
SP/FP	46
FP/BB	8
SP/BB	34
SP/FP/BB	6

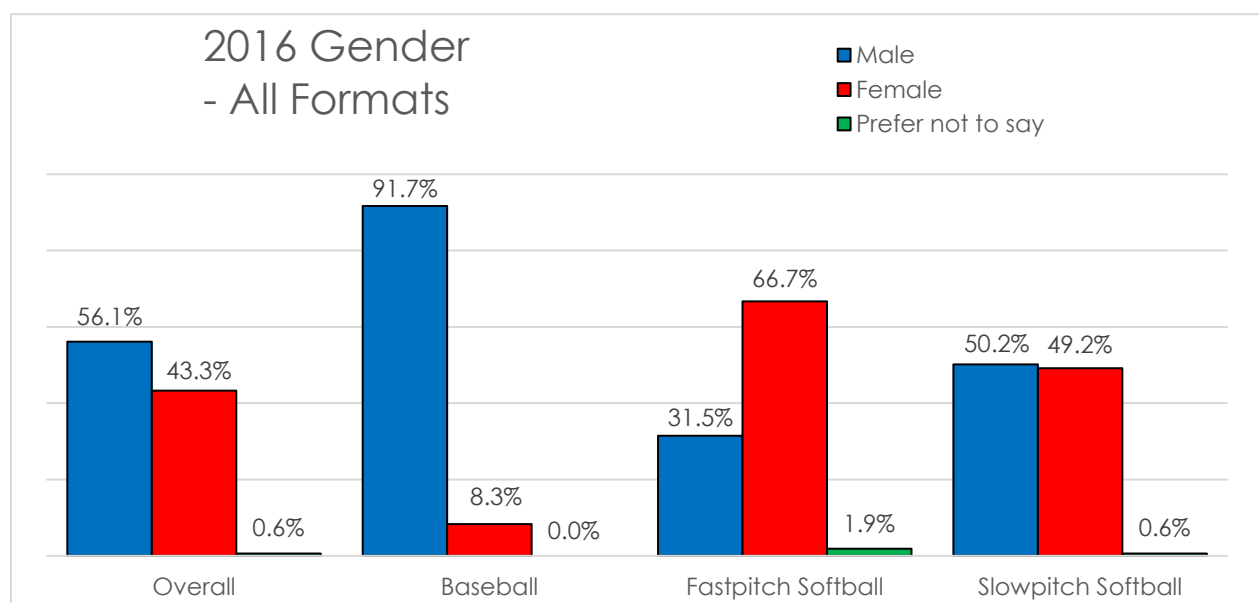


Gender

"I HAVE FOUND A SPORT I CAN STICK TO. I NEVER PLAYED SPORT WHEN I WAS YOUNGER. BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL HAVE GIVEN ME MORE CONFIDENCE AND SKILLS THAN I ACHIEVED AT SCHOOL."

Across the whole study it was found that 367 of the respondents identified as male, a figure representing 56.1% and a decrease of 5.1% since 2014. This is most likely due to expansion of the fastpitch format.

When the formats are separately analysed it was found that in slowpitch softball the female proportion measured 49.2%, an increase of 0.5% since the previous study in 2014. Fastpitch softball showed a movement towards becoming predominantly female (male = 31.5%, female = 66.7%). Baseball remained heavily weighted toward males, who accounted for 110 of 120 responses (91.7%).

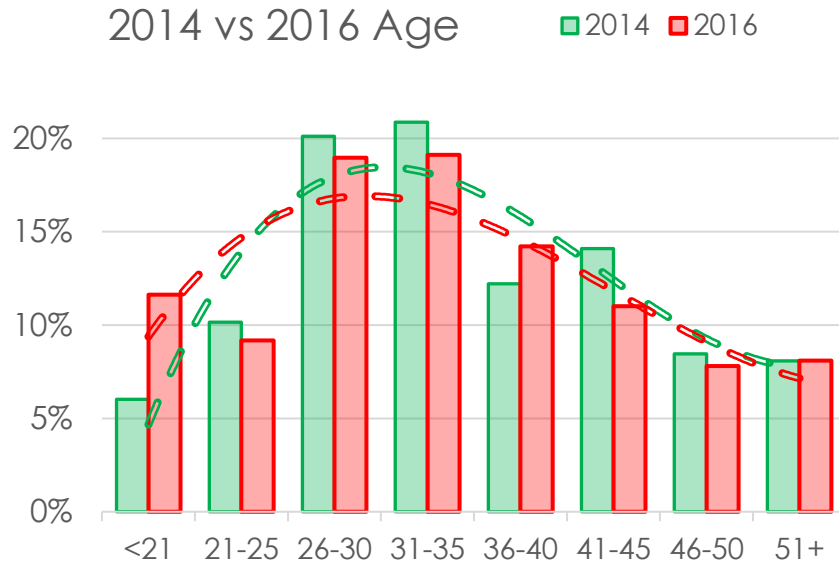


Age

The largest categories found included the 26-30 and 31-35 age ranges: 19.0% and 19.1% respectively. Other large categories included the 21-25, 36-40 and 41-45 ranges, which is expected assuming a normal distribution.

The largest gain was in the Under-21 category, where there was an additional 5.9% compared to 2014. The increase in this age group equates to a growth of 237.5% since 2014. The average age of respondents reduced by 1.1 years, from 35.3 to 34.2.

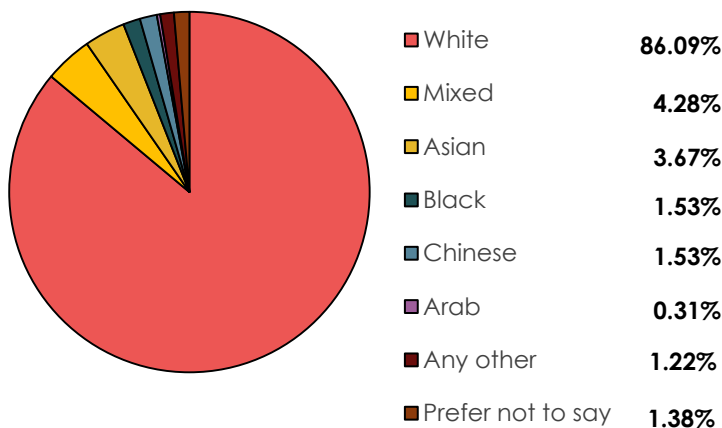
2014 vs 2016 Age



Ethnic Origin

Results were broadly similar to those found in the general public, but a large shift was found from the 2011 Census data in that 17.7% of the respondents indicated "Other White Background". This indicates that a large section of the community is made up of people from foreign backgrounds. However, when all white backgrounds are grouped together, the resulting 86.1% is very close to the reported 85.4% found in the Census data.

2016 Combined Ethnicity



There was at least one response from all categories in the survey except Any Other Black Background, and the largest shortfalls were found in the Asian-Indian, Asian-Pakistani and the grouped Black Background categories. However, other categories exceeded the Census data, including Mixed White and Asian, Other Mixed Backgrounds, Chinese and Any Other Background.

Disability

19 replies (2.9%) indicated a form of disability. This is significantly lower than found in the general population (18%).

According to current Sport England Active People data, 17.8% of people with long-term limiting illness, disability or infirmity play sport of some sort. This would equate to 3.2% of all sporting participants, putting baseball and softball close to the level expected in Disability Sport. The types of disabilities are shown to the right, the most common of which was Dyslexia (n=7).



"I LOVE THE FACT THAT I CAN PLAY COMPETITIVE SPORT AGAIN AS I HAVE FOUND SOFTBALL TO BE VERY OPEN TO DIVERSITY. AS A GAY MAN THERE ARE SO MANY SPORTS THAT STILL CAN BE QUITE HOMOPHOBIC. SOFTBALL HAS RENEWED MY LOVE OF TEAM SPORT."

Sexual Orientation

To this question, 54 people reported that they were Gay or Lesbian (8.3%). This is significantly higher than found in the general population (1.1%). A similar result was found in those reporting as Bisexual (4.6% in the study, compared to 0.4% of the population). Both of these results show significant increases from 2014, when 7.8% and 3.0% were the respective reported percentages.

54 surveys were returned without this question answered, a percentage of 8.3%. This is higher than the national average of 4.5% who collectively did not answer or answered "Don't Know" or "Other".

Elite

Sixty-nine responses from national team and Academy members were received, a reduction of twenty-one compared to 2014. This may be due to the earlier sampling time when some national teams were in competition. 84.1% (n=58) of participants came from a white background.

Ages were widespread, with highs of 18.9% (n=13) in the 14-17 age range and 16.0% (n=11) in the 31-35 range.

50.7% (n=35) identified as male, with 47.9% (n=33) identifying as female. These were much more equitable than the general population. Elite players were much more likely to be coaches than the general playing population; however, they were less likely to be umpires or have an organisational role.

Roles

Roles reported do not add up to 100% as participants were asked to tick all that apply. Roles were also analysed by gender and shown in the table below.

Role	Respondents	Male	Female	Prefer Not to Say
Player	564	315	246	3
Coach	122	97	25	0
Official	120	91	28	1
Club Administrator	154	103	51	0
League / Multi-Team Club Administrator	41	16	16	0
National/League Administrator	23	7	6	0
Paid workers	13	9	4	0

Those with multiple roles were also analysed, showing that of the 154 reported team captain/organisers, 144 of these were also players. 35 of the 41 League/Multi-Team Club Administrators were also Team Organisers, while of the 122 coaches and 120 umpires, only 57 filled both roles. Further comparisons are made in the matrix below.

Multiple Roles	Player	Coach	Umpire	Team Captain / Organiser	League / Multi-Team Club Administrator	National / League Administrator
Coach	113					
Umpire	117	57				
Team Captain / Organiser	144	73	62			
League / Multi-Team Club Administrator	54	29	34	35		
National / League Administrator	8	7	7	6	10	
Paid workers	9	7	5	5	9	1

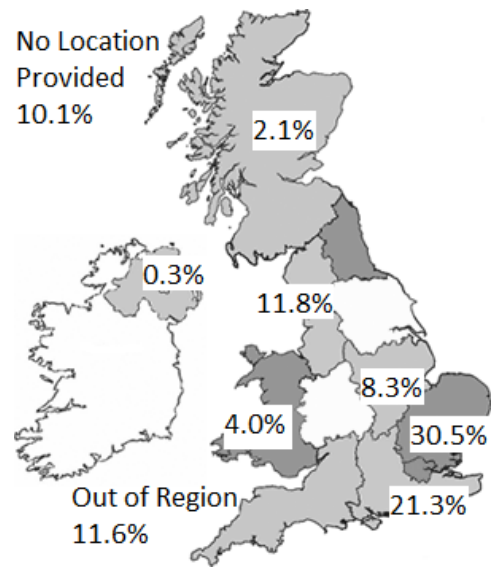
Of the paid workers who responded, eight were BSUK Staff and two were BSUK Activators. Other paid roles described included High School Coach and Club Manager.

"I'VE MET A LOT OF GREAT PEOPLE BY PLAYING AND JOINING THE COMMITTEE OF THE SHEFFIELD HORNETS UNIVERSITY TEAM, AND IT'S MADE ME LOVE THE GAME EVEN MORE THAN I ALREADY DID."

Location

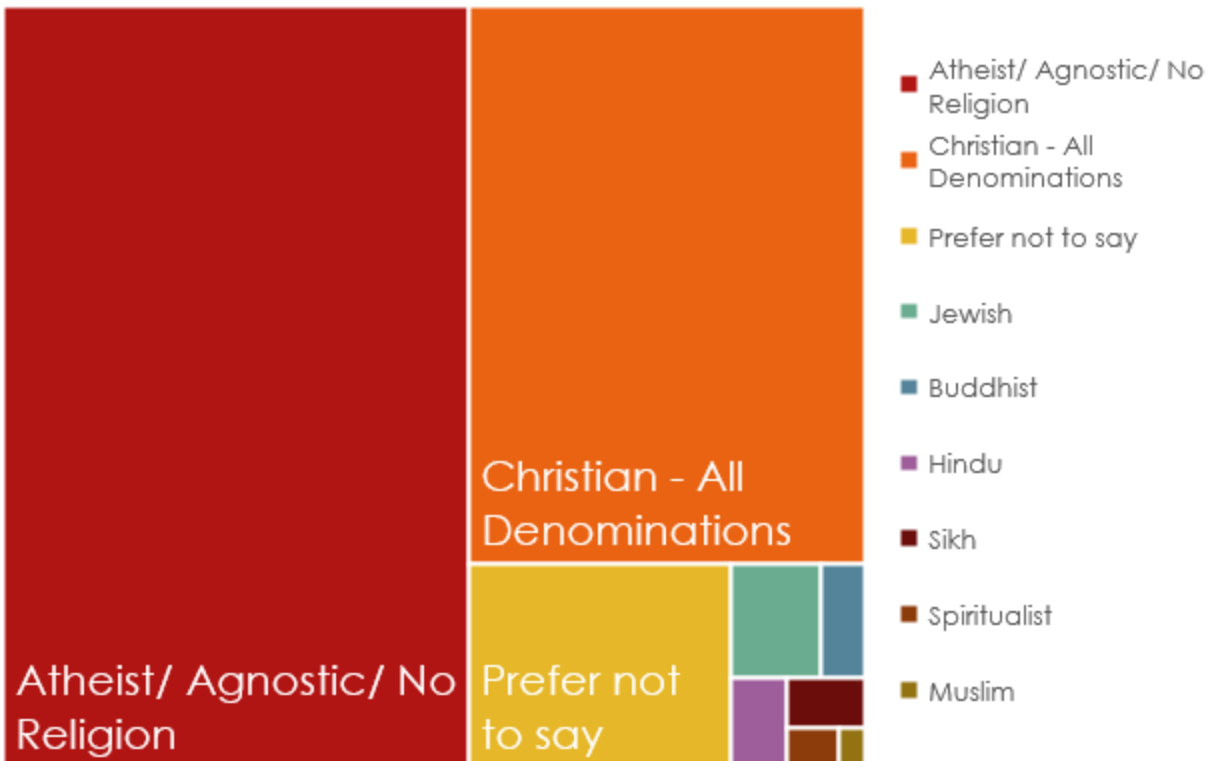
The majority of responses came from the London and South East regions, equating to a combined percentage of 51.8%. Other regions covered by Sport England funding (the North West and the Midlands) combined to form 22.1% of responses. The remaining responses came from Wales (4.0%), Scotland (2.1%), Northern Ireland (0.3%) and No Location Provided (10.1%). Responses with non-UK postcodes were placed in the No Location Provided category.

Compared to the Master Teams List (as of 31st March 2016) and disregarding No Location Provided, London was vastly under-represented in the final sample, with a deficit of 8.5%. The Midlands and the North West were also slightly under-represented (-1.5% and -2.2% respectively), while the South East and Out of Region had very high response rates compared to the number of players in each region (+6.9% and +5.3%).



Religion

The two largest religious groups within the sports were Atheist/Agnostic/No Religion (54.1%) and Christian (all denominations) (33.6%). Aside from those who preferred not to disclose their religion (8.1%), all other religions were negligible, with no category receiving more than 10 responses.



Socio-Economic Status

Socio-Economic Status (SES) was measured by participants self-assigning themselves into one of six categories, a modified version of the scale developed by the National Readership Survey:

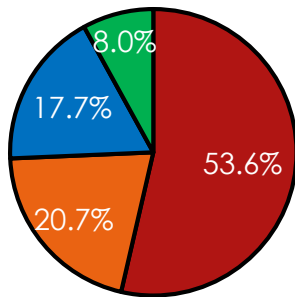
- A -- Higher Manager/Professional: £50,000+ p.a.
- B -- Intermediate Manager/Professional/Supervisory: £30k-£50k.
- C1 -- Junior Manager/Clerical Worker: less than £30,000 p.a.
- C2 -- Skilled Manual Work: £20,000+ p.a.
- D -- Semi and Unskilled Manual Work: less than £20,000 p.a.
- E -- Pensioner, Casual Work, Unemployed, Student, Homemaker.

The results show that the majority of participants are found in band B (31.7%), with 19.9% in band A and approximately 15% in both bands C1 and E. A real deficit is shown in categories C2 and D, with their combined percentage at 9.8%. Combining these bands shows a trend towards higher SES, with 51.6% in bands AB and 66.1% describing themselves in bands ABC1. The relatively high proportion of band E participants can be related to the high proportion of students (assumed to be those under 18). Further analysis excluding Under-18s (to exclude school-age children) and Under-21s (to exclude both school age children and university students) is shown below.

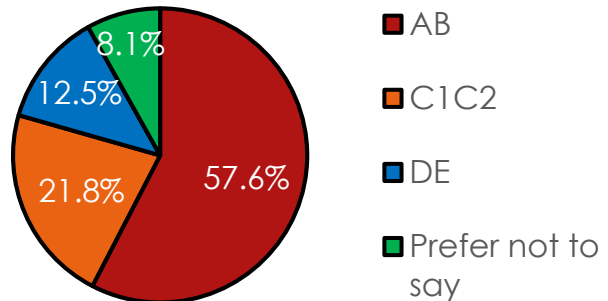


“IT HAS BEEN LIFE-CHANGING. THE SPORTS ARE ALMOST UNIQUE IN THEIR BREADTH OF INCLUSION. THE SOCIAL SIDE (PARTICULARLY OF SLOWPITCH SOFTBALL) IS SUCH AN IMPORTANT ASPECT IN MY LIFE.”

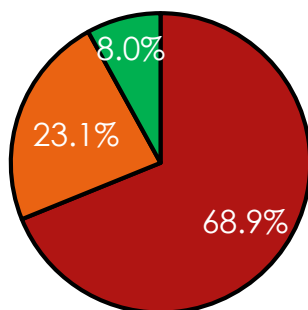
Combined SES (excluding U18s)



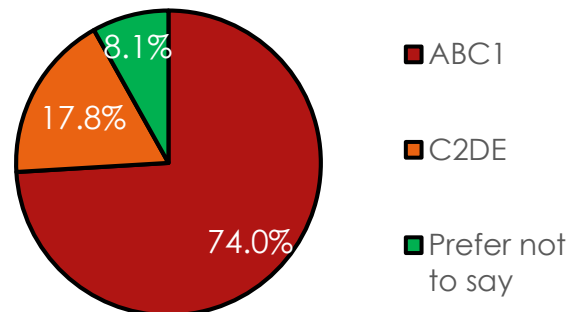
Combined SES (excluding U21s)



Combined SES (excluding U18s)



Combined SES (excluding U21s)



Children/Marital Status

The tables on this page show respondents' marital status and whether they have children. This information was included to bring the study in line with other similar studies, and to investigate whether having children became a barrier to participation. Of those that responded that they did have children, 41.2 % responded that childcare did limit their ability to participate, with 58.1% responding that it did not (the remainder declined to answer).

To alleviate this barrier, there were several calls to add safe, affordable childcare/crèche facilities at tournaments, as well as making improvements to amenities at grounds, making games more local and increasing the number of weeknight events instead of long weekend days.

Children	Total
Yes	20.95%
No	74.62%
Prefer not to say	2.29%
No response	2.14%

Marital Status	Baseball/Softball Population	Census 2011	Difference
Divorced	4.74%	7.17%	-2.43%
Married or civil partnership	32.72%	63.12%	-30.40%
Separated	1.99%	1.57%	0.42%
Single and never married	53.21%	28.14%	25.07%
Prefer not to say	5.20%	0.00%	5.20%
No response	2.14%	0.00%	2.14%

Motivations to Play/Barriers to Participation

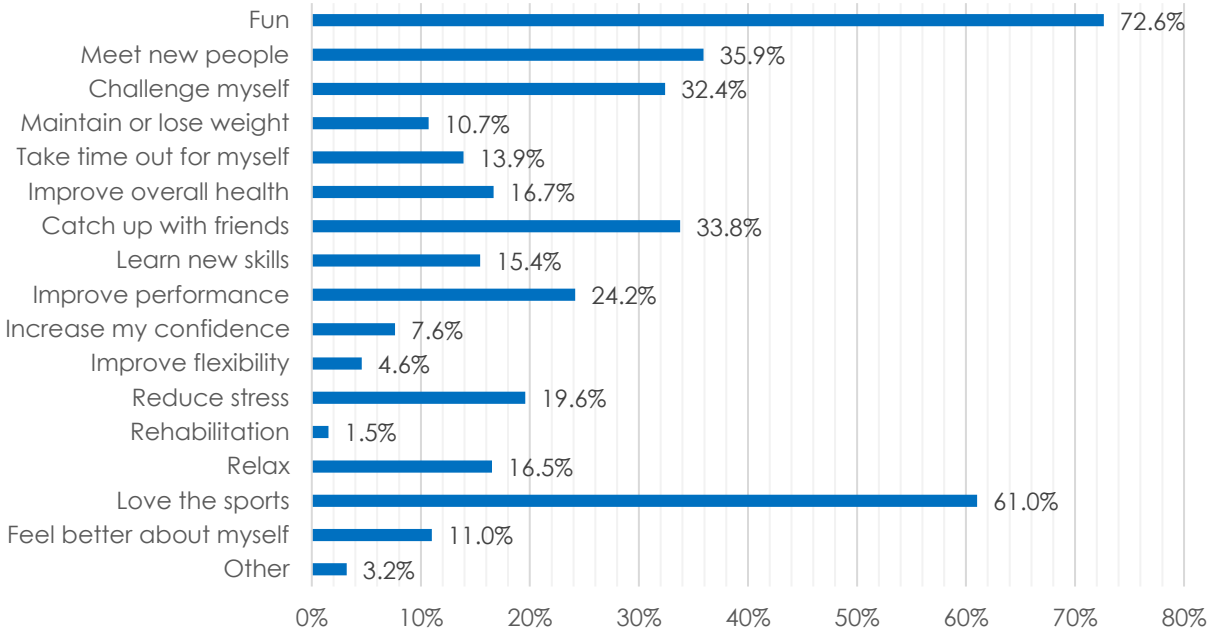
Motivations for playing baseball/softball are largely enjoyment-driven. After playing for fun (73%), the next biggest motivations were to meet new people (36%) and catching up with friends (34%). The social aspects of the three formats are clearly strong motivators. Activities that promote the social health of teams, clubs and leagues can help accentuate positive motivations.

Sport-specific motivators included love of the sports (61%), challenge myself (32%), improve performance (24%) and learn new skills (15%). This indicates that the sports themselves have meaning to those who participate, as opposed to other activities or sports which could offer better health or social opportunities.

A number of health motivations were cited (reduction of stress 20%, improving overall health 17%, feeling better about myself 11%, maintaining/losing weight 11%, improving flexibility 5%). These are largely secondary drivers as individuals could choose more than one driver.

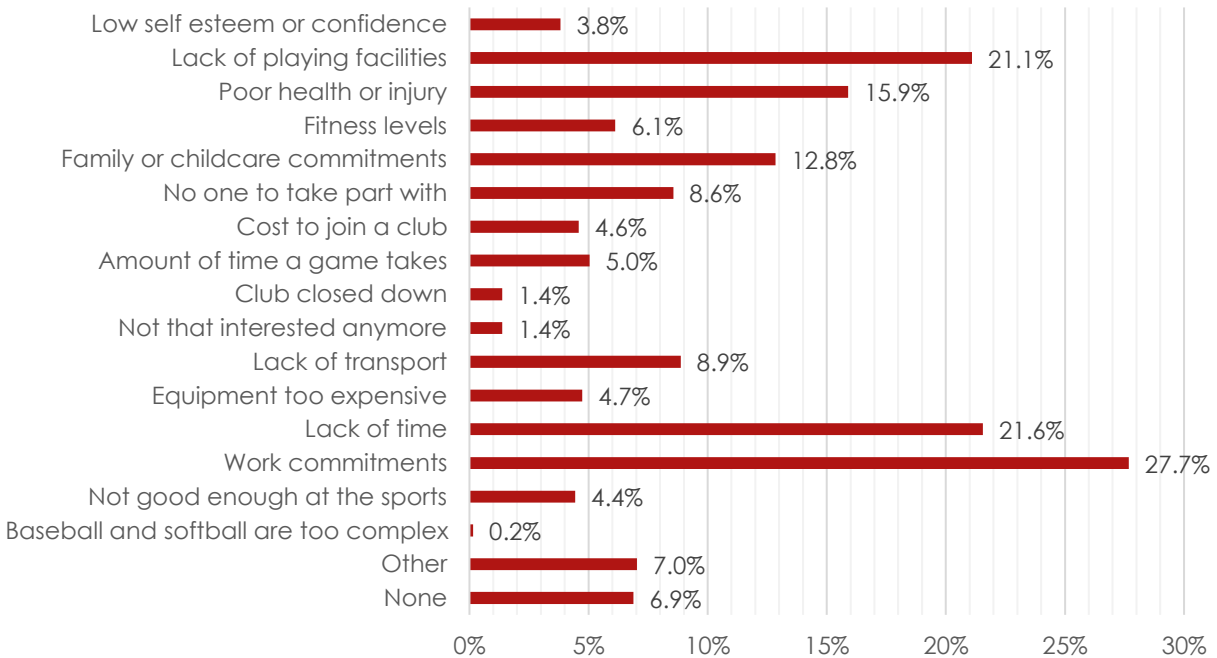
"I'VE ALWAYS LOVED BASEBALL; FINDING THE OPPORTUNITY TO CONTINUE PLAYING IT AND LEARNING TO UMPIRE HAVE GIVEN ME ANOTHER OUTLET FOR SPORT AND STAYING HEALTHY AND FIT. I THINK MY PLAY HAS IMPROVED, I'VE MADE MANY NEW FRIENDS. I'M RETIRED NOW AND BECOMING A MORE CONFIDENT UMPIRE AS I GET MORE EXPERIENCE."

Motivations



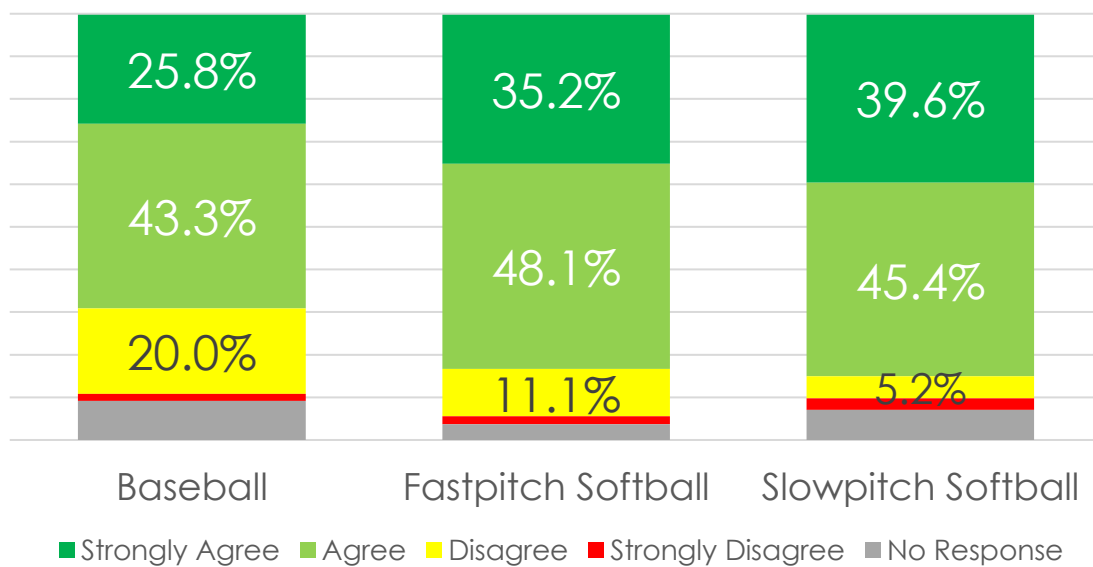
Regarding barriers to participation, work commitments are the largest issue for players (28%). A lack of time (22%) and lack of playing facilities (21%) were also major problems, with 13% citing family/childcare commitments. 9% said that having nobody to play with (or not enough people to play) and lack of transport were issues.

Barriers



On the positive side, 7% said that there were no barriers to their participation and that they competed as much as they wanted to. Cost to play was only cited by 6% and just 5% felt that the cost of equipment was a barrier, which indicates that the sports are seen as good value for money. This is supported by the value for money analysis below.

Format by Value for Money



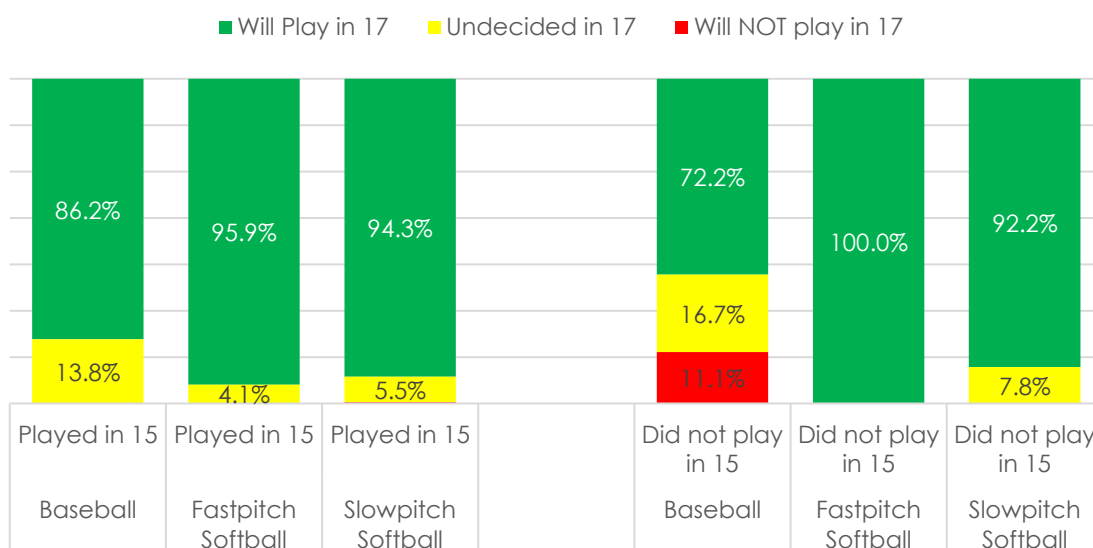
“I LOVE IT! GAME DAY IS ALWAYS THE HIGHLIGHT OF MY WEEK. IT'S OUTDOORS, KEEPS ME ACTIVE, AND I'VE ALSO MET MANY GREAT LONG-TIME FRIENDS THROUGH BASEBALL.”

In slowpitch softball, a combined 85.0% of people agreed or strongly agreed that the sports were value for money, with a similar number of 83.3% for fastpitch softball. This number is reduced in baseball, with only 69.1% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing that the sports are value for money. This is probably due to the costs of being committed to playing in an organised club, which is more the case in baseball. Baseball also plays more home and away fixtures compared to the events structure in both softball formats. Offering more one or two-day events may help address this perception of value, even if it increases costs moderately.

Regularity of Play/Retained Participants

The highest likely return rate was in fastpitch softball. This is a new priority area and the development of fastpitch softball is just a few years old. In those who played in 2015, just 4% are undecided about whether they will play in 2017 and all of those who were new to the sport in 2016 said they would play again in 2017. These numbers are very similar to those found in slowpitch softball, where just 6% of those who played in 2015 are undecided about returning to the sport in 2017, and only 8% of those who were new in 2016 may not play in 2017. Baseball, however, had the lowest affinity rate of the three formats, with 14% of those who played in 2015 undecided about whether they would play in 2017. 17% of those who were new to the sport in 2016 are undecided about playing again and 11% stated that they will not. However, this number maybe due to the very low number of respondents who started playing baseball this year – 2 of the 9 respondents will not return next year.

Retained and New Participants



Overall, more than 9 out of 10 respondents play at or above the BaseballSoftballUK metric of six dates per year to be counted as part of a team, with 44% playing on more than 21 dates during the year. From a different point of view, most respondents play during the season on one or two days a week (33.5% and 33.7% respectively). This would signify playing on a weeknight team, on one weekend day for baseball or a combination of these, or at one weekend tournament each week for softball. The majority of baseball players responded that they played on two days a week, which would indicate one day for a game and one day for a training session.

“BASEBALL HAS TAUGHT ME PATIENCE, A 'NEVER GIVE UP' ATTITUDE AND RESPECT.”

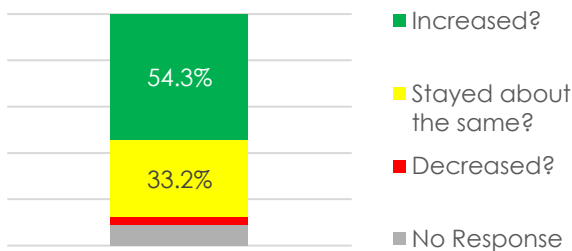
14.1% of respondents play on three days a week, which would, in terms of softball, equate to one weeknight game and a weekend tournament. 7.7% of respondents reported playing on four or more days a week, which would indicate being a member of multiple leagues and/or formats, or playing multiple weekly games in conjunction with training sessions.

Physical Activity Levels and General Health

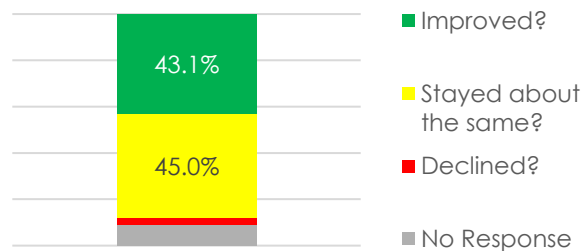
In general, baseball and softball have positive impacts on both the health and activity levels of their participants. 87.5% said that their activity levels increased or remained the same, with 88.1% of respondents reporting that their general health had either improved or stayed the same. 9% of surveys were returned without either of these questions answered, leaving both decreased physical activity levels and a decline in general health at less than 4% each.

“SOFTBALL GOT ME INTO SPORTS AND HAS MOTIVATED ME TO GET INTO THE GYM AS WELL AND BE MORE ACTIVE IN GENERAL.”

Weekly Physical Levels

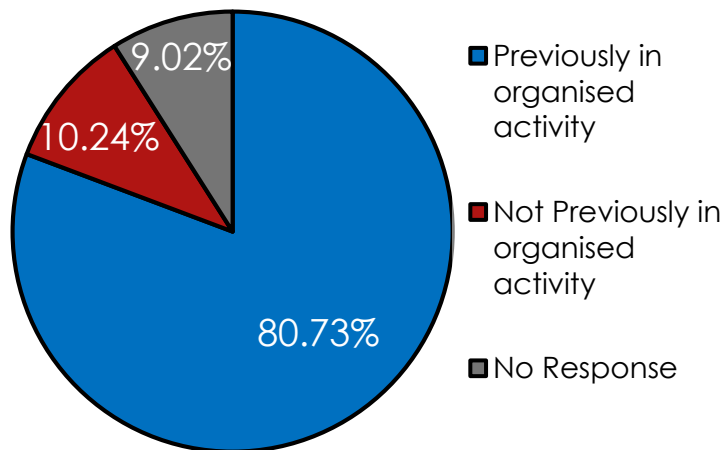


General Health



A wide array of activities and sports played prior to taking up baseball/softball were mentioned. The most popular of these included football (37.1%, n=196), tennis (19.5%, n=103) and basketball (15.7%, n=83).

Activity levels before Baseball/Softball



“I’VE NEVER BEEN A FAN OF TEAM SPORTS BUT I LOVE SOFTBALL. I LOVE THAT IT’S MIXED AND IT’S OPEN TO ALL ABILITIES. IT’S VERY INCLUSIVE AND I FIND IT A GREAT STRESS-BUSTER. THERE’S NOTHING BETTER THAN ENJOYING SUMMER EVENINGS PLAYING SOFTBALL IN THE SUN.”


Approximately 4 out of 5 respondents had previously been part of organised sporting activity, with 9% giving no response. Therefore, for more than 10% of participants, baseball and/or softball was their first organised sporting activity.

Selected Comparisons between Baseball and Softball

As discussed previously, the slowpitch softball community is very equitable in terms of gender, with 50.2% and 49.2% of participants identifying as male and female respectively. This is definitely not the case in baseball, which shows a very large gender split of 91.7% versus 8.3% in favour of male participants.

Baseball also has a younger age profile, with 18% more participants in the 18-25 age range than softball and 5% more that are younger than 18. Slowpitch softball shows very similar percentages for the rest of the age scale, with 18% more players in the 26-40 category, and 5% more 41+ participants. This would indicate that baseball is more popular among younger age groups and older players either convert to slowpitch or their initial exposure to the sports is slowpitch.

Slowpitch also has a much higher average SES, with nearly three quarters of its participants among the ABC1 range compared to baseball's 42.5%. The largest group for baseball of the two-category bands is actually DE, which gives baseball two-fifths of its membership. However, this may be due to the high percentage of students and school-age participants, which would artificially lower baseball's average SES.



“A LIFE CHANGING
IMPACT. I HAVE A NEW
LOVE, A NEW FRIENDSHIP
GROUP, A FUN AND
EXCITING SPORT TO PLAY
AND THE CHANCE TO
TRAVEL ALL AROUND THE
COUNTRY PLAYING!”

Baseball has a higher percentage of coaches in its membership (40.8%) than slowpitch softball, where only 18.5% of respondents describe themselves as coaches. Due to the lower overall number of baseball players, this may mean that the number of participants with organisational roles is higher.

Softball players tend to only play on one or two days a week on a regular basis. This may be due to the pick-up-and-play nature of this format compared to the more challenging format of baseball. Here, a much higher proportion play on three, four or more days a week (34.2% of baseball compared with 22.9% of slowpitch softball). This is reflected in the number of dates played data, with 10% more baseballers playing on 21 or more dates in 2016.

In terms of motivation, slowpitch softball has a much stronger social pull than baseball, with the following motivators being indicated by a higher percentage than for baseball: fun, meet new people, catch up with friends, reduce stress and relax. Baseball, on the other hand, tends to more of the competitive motivators: challenge myself, improve performance, love the sport and learn new skills. Baseball also shows a higher dependence on facilities, as lack of facilities is mentioned on a high percentage of responses. The length of time a baseball game takes is also a much more relevant barrier than in slowpitch. Slowpitch has a higher percentage of barriers to do with lack of time (including work and family/childcare commitments) and fitness-based barriers (including health/injury).

Selected Comparisons in Slowpitch Softball between London and the Rest of the Country

Slowpitch softball in London shows a lower average age than that found in the rest of the country, as well as a higher percentage of single and never-married participants and a lower percentage of participants with children. This may be an opportunity to adjust marketing materials to focus London-based programmes on a younger, more metropolitan audience while focusing outside London on promoting a family sport. This is also shown with family/childcare commitments being a larger barrier in the rest of the country than in London, whereas London's most common barrier is work commitments.

London also shows a more diverse community, with only 80.0% of participants describing themselves as White, while in the rest of the country the percentage is 88.2%. Londoners are also less likely to describe themselves as coaches (11.9% vs 21.7%), but are more likely to be umpires (25.0% vs 19.9%).


Regarding SES, Londoners have a much higher percentage of participants in band A than the rest of the country (33.1% compared to 13.7%), whereas band E participants are found at triple the rate of London-based responses (London = 15.2% compared to 5.6%) in the rest of the country.

Non-London responses show that respondents are more likely to participate in the form of tournaments across all levels, whereas Londoners participate mainly in leagues (both affiliated to the BSF and unaffiliated leagues). This picture is further strengthened when analysing regularity of play data, which shows Londoners participating on only one or two days a week at 87.5% compared to the rest of the country at 70.8%.

A higher percentage of London responses indicated that they did not play in 2015 (80.6% vs 87.3%), which shows that the London region is growing at a faster rate than the rest of the country. However non-Londoners will compete on 21 or more dates at a rate of 46.9%, compared to Londoners at 37.5%.

Within London, the journey for 63.8% of participants to their home grounds is 30-60 minutes, whereas outside London journeys of less than 15 minutes (22.1%) and 15-30 minutes (30.8%) are the most common. This could contribute to London-based participants perceiving the sports as a lower value for money than their non-London counterparts.

50.6% of London-based players agree that softball is value for money and 36.3% strongly agree. But the percentage of non-Londoners who agree that softball is value for money equates to 42.9%, while 41.3% strongly agree that this is the case.



“SLOWPITCH SOFTBALL HAS ENABLED ME TO MAKE MANY FRIENDS, PROVIDED ME WITH SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND A MEANS TO CHALLENGE MYSELF. I AM NOW 55 AND STILL COMPETING WITH PEOPLE OF VARIOUS SHAPES, SIZES, AGES, ETHNICITIES. I AM NOT AWARE OF MANY OTHER SPORTS WHERE I WOULD BE ABLE TO BE CONTINUE TO PLAY WITH THE MAINSTREAM OF PLAYERS.”

Improvements to Opportunities

Survey participants were asked how opportunities to take part in baseball and softball could be improved. These responses were categorised and a selected number of responses are shown below. The unedited full list is available in Appendix I, and the categorised list in the data pack.

Category	Improvement	Number of Responses
Umpiring	More course availability	29
	More/better umpires	18
	Better incentives for umpires	7
Advertising	Better awareness in the general public/ Advertising/promotion	58
Coaching/Training	More training sessions	29
	More courses to train to be a coach	23
	More mid-level player clinics	14
Facilities	Better playing fields	50
	More facilities	47
	More local environments	21
	More even geographical spread of opportunities	17
Organisational	Better communications between clubs, organisations and players	16
	Better relationships with local councils	7
Competitions	More games/tournaments	22
	More fastpitch opportunities	10
	More recreational tournaments	9
Target Groups	Youth/schools/Little League	46
	Higher education	14
	Female recruitment	6
Participation	Increase participation levels	20
	Increase speed of game	5
	Encourage teams/players to play at more appropriate levels	5
Funding	Cheaper to play	14
	More Sport England/UK Sport funding	12

“I’VE MADE GREAT FRIENDS AND GOT GREAT MEMORIES. WHEN YOU’RE ON THE DIAMOND WITH THE SUN ON YOUR BACK AND YOU’RE HAVING A LAUGH WITH YOUR TEAMMATES AND YOUR OPPONENTS, THERE ARE FEW NICER FEELINGS.”

Limitations

This year's survey was electronic only; due to the length of the survey, it was thought that it would be more difficult to get players to fill it in during events. Our potential respondents were therefore only those whose contact details were held, those who could be reached on social media and those who saw the news article promoting the survey on the BaseballSoftballUK website.

The Socio-Economic Status scale chosen, while easier to analyse and quicker for respondents to categorise themselves into, was a different system from that used by Sport England and the Office for National Statistics. This meant that it was impossible to compare Socio-Economic Status with the general population and the sporting population.

This study was much larger in scope than in previous years, and it is recommended that this size of study be done only once every four years, with a more streamlined version completed on a yearly basis. This would help minimise the number of incomplete responses.

Ages taken from Census 2011 for Under-14 were 10-13, and for 51+ were 51-59.

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