

# The current landscape of physical activity and sport for disabled students

June 2018

A review into the opportunities, barriers and attitudes to physical activity and sport for disabled students in further education (FE) colleges



in partnership with



# Purpose

To gain an insight into the current landscape of physical activity and sport for disabled students in colleges.

The findings of the review will support recommendations on how to improve opportunities for disabled students within AoC Sport's *Active for College, Work and Life – a strategy for physical activity and sport for disabled college students*.



## Method

The review consisted of: studying relevant secondary data and research; engaging with 107 colleges via visits, meetings, events, calls and emails; interviewing and feedback from 60 disabled students; and consulting with 12 partner organisations.



# 2.2 million

students educated & trained in colleges<sup>1</sup>



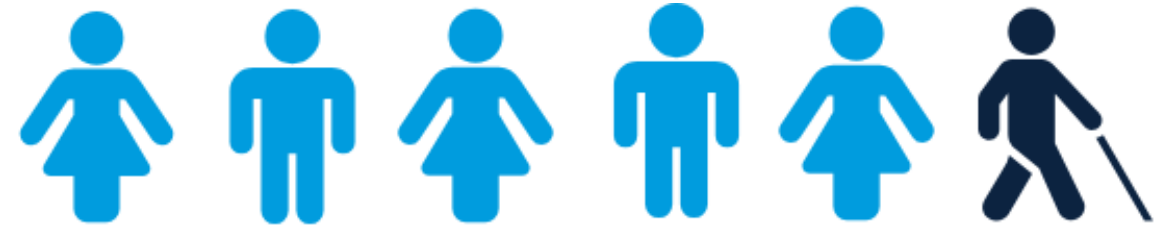
# 273

colleges in England<sup>1</sup>



# 37%

of 16-18 year olds are in college  
(28% in school & 7% in employment)<sup>1</sup>

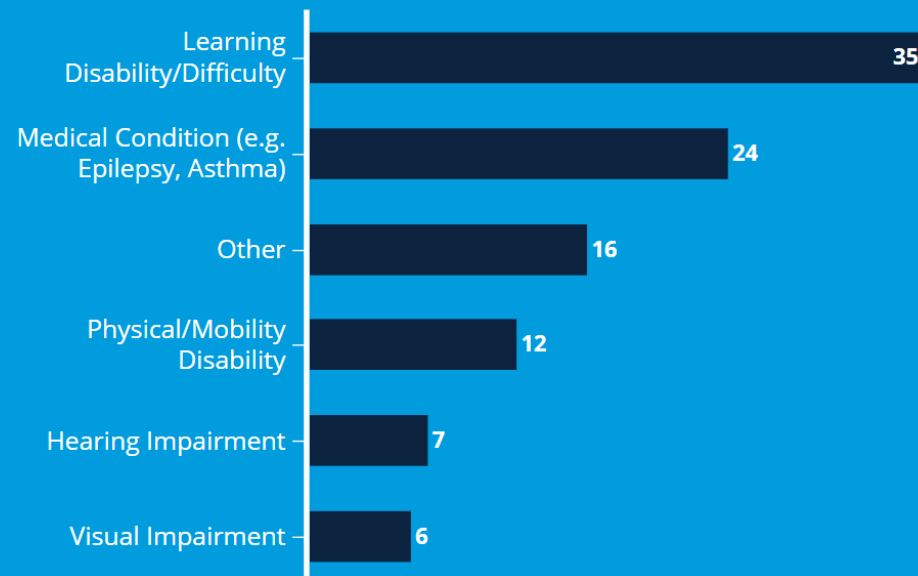


## One in six

FE students have a disability or learning difficulty  
which equates to  
560,000+ students (17.9%)<sup>2</sup>

Ten years ago it was one in eight highlighting the growing  
percentage of disabled students in FE<sup>3</sup>

### Disability breakdown (%)<sup>4</sup>



Disabled people are more than twice  
as likely to be inactive compared to  
those without a disability...<sup>5</sup>



...but seven in ten disabled people  
say they want to be more active.<sup>6</sup>

# Barriers to delivering physical activity and sport to disabled students...

## Logistical



Limited workforce



Limited time



Limited funding



Travel

## Physical



Lack of facilities



Lack of equipment

## Psychological



College: sport isn't a priority



Staff: not qualified to deliver disability sport

These are the same barriers as identified by Activity Alliance<sup>9</sup> highlighting the importance of colleges in building resilience in physical activity and sport for disabled people at a younger age.



# Participation



**1 in 13**

students participating in physical activity and sport in college have a disability<sup>7</sup>

# Competition



**1 in 13**

sports at the AoC Sport regional tournaments & National Championships has a disability section

# Academic



**1 in 16**

students studying a sport course have a disability<sup>8</sup>

Data isn't currently collected for disabled students volunteering in sport. This will be addressed.

# Gap

A gap exists between the number of disabled students (one in six) and the number of disabled students that are participating (1 in 13), competing (1 in 13 sports) and studying (1 in 16) physical activity and sport.

# Positive impact of physical activity on...

## Education



Improves grades and attainment<sup>10</sup>

Improves attendance<sup>11</sup>

Improves behaviour

## Employment



Improves skills and experience

Improves employment opportunities<sup>12</sup>

Improves career progression<sup>13</sup>

## Health



Increases happiness<sup>14</sup>

Increases self-esteem<sup>14</sup>

Reduces risk of death<sup>15</sup>

Sports competition contributes to a healthy lifestyle<sup>16</sup>

# Disabled students' motivations for being active



It's fun, to get fit and to improve health...<sup>17</sup>



"I love to keep fit and it helps me lose weight"



"It's fun and I stay healthy"

## Support available to colleges

Resources, training, funding and advice is available to colleges currently but there isn't a central place for staff to access this information easily. This will be addressed.

# Examples of successes



Physical activity sessions integrated into disabled students' weekly timetable



Disability sessions delivered by sport students which helps them to gain volunteer hours



Links built with local sport clubs who provide workforce to deliver disability sessions



Physical activity used to support numeracy and literacy learning.

# Conclusion

This review highlights the gap between the number of disabled students in the FE sector and the number of disabled college students who are participating, competing and studying physical activity and sport.

It also demonstrates the positive association between activity and disabled college students' education, employment and health. For these reasons AoC Sport will provide greater support to colleges to help disabled students be active for college, work and life.



## References

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[www.aocsport.co.uk/disability](http://www.aocsport.co.uk/disability)

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