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# Understanding participation and non-participation in sport amongst Black and minority ethnic groups in Wales

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# 1. Introduction

## Background and Context

Like the other home nation sports councils, Sport Wales has a responsibility to increase participation, improve sporting performance and raise standards in sport and physical recreation. For some time the sports councils in the UK have been concerned that people from Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups may not be getting as much from sport as they might (e.g. the Sports Equity Index (Sport England, 2001)). The concern with increasing participation is multidimensional: it might serve to recruit new talent; allows sectors of society to enjoy what are thought to be the benefits of sport; and in so doing help to unite the nation<sup>1</sup>.

However, as recognised by the Equality Impact Assessment that was conducted by Sport Wales, there has been a shortage of research around sport participation by Black and minority ethnic communities. Thus, the current research is closely aligned with the aim of increasing participation and understanding non-participation. The research also addresses the identified need for further investigation into identified differences in participation between different equalities groups.

This project, commissioned by Sport Wales, has been undertaken by the Institute for Sport, Physical Activity and Leisure (ISPAL) in conjunction with Ecorys. It is a response to the strategy, action plans and operational plans of Sport Wales that embrace diversity and inclusiveness. These policy and operational documents consider ethnicity alongside other protected characteristics and a concern to address poverty and deprivation by operating in conjunction with other agencies. The research reported here will help to establish what resonance people in Black and minority ethnic groups have with the goal of ensuring 'a thriving sporting community, where all individuals feel safe, welcome and free from discrimination' (Sport Wales, Equality And Diversity Operational Action Plan).

## BME Communities in Wales

The proportion of people from Black and minority ethnic communities in Wales (4.5% according to the 2011 Census) is lower than for the UK as a whole, though there are markedly higher concentrations in some parts of Wales, notably Cardiff and Newport. There are some longstanding Black and minority ethnic communities, but others are more recent migrants. Table 1 shows the geographic variation Wales of the percentage of residents from BME communities. Census data reveal that people from Black and minority ethnic communities are growing in both absolute and proportional terms, as are those who were not born in Wales.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Sport Wales (nd) A Vision for Sport in Wales. Cardiff: Sport Wales.  
[http://sportwales.org.uk/media/506916/sport\\_wales\\_english\\_vision\\_doc\\_reprint\\_all\\_v3.pdf](http://sportwales.org.uk/media/506916/sport_wales_english_vision_doc_reprint_all_v3.pdf)

**Table 1: Percentage of Residents from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities**  
(Census 2011)

Area	Percentage BME population
<b>Wales</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Isle of Anglesey	1.9
Gwynedd	3.7
Conwy	2.4
Denbighshire	2.7
Flintshire	1.6
Wrexham	3.2
Powys	1.7
Ceredigion	3.4
Pembrokeshire	2.3
Carmarthenshire	2.1
Swansea	6.0
Neath Port Talbot	2.0
Bridgend	2.3
The Vale of Glamorgan	3.6
Cardiff	15.5
Rhondda Cynon Taf	2.7
Merthyr Tydfil	2.5
Caerphilly	1.7
Blaenau Gwent	1.6
Torfaen	2.2
Monmouthshire	2.0
Newport	10.1

Table 1 shows that Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, Gwynedd and the Vale of Glamorgan are the local authorities with the highest proportions of people from BME groups, though this does not include White minorities (see below).

For a study of this kind it is important to recognise the variations between ethnicities. The different settlement histories of BME communities in Wales are only a small part of that distinction; they are differentiated by their resources, culture and sporting capital. Table 2 shows the absolute numbers from the different BME communities across Wales, emphasising the major concentration in Cardiff. However, many of the recent migrants have been other White groups (Table 3). The highest proportions of Irish tend to be in the west and in Cardiff, and the highest proportion of Gypsies/Travellers is in Pembrokeshire. Apart from Cardiff, the highest proportion of the 'Other White' communities is in Wrexham.

**Table 2: Population in 10 Ethnic Groupings (2011 Census)**

	Ethnic Group	White	Gypsy / Traveller / Irish Traveller	Mixed / Multiple Ethnic Groups	Asian / Asian British: Indian	Asian / Asian British: Pakistani	Asian / Asian British: Bangladeshi	Asian / Asian British: Chinese	Asian / Asian British: Other Asian	Black / African / Caribbean / Black British	Other Ethnic Group
	Total										
<b>Wales</b>	3,063,456	2,925,468	2,785	31,521	17,256	12,229	10,687	13,638	16,318	18,276	15,278
Isle of Anglesey	69,751	68,455	65	480	135	33	53	153	117	81	179
Gwynedd	121,874	117,420	153	964	461	220	176	905	408	289	878
Conwy	115,228	112,484	65	894	317	101	134	376	324	199	334
Denbighshire	93,734	91,220	34	751	240	157	111	346	576	161	138
Flintshire	152,506	150,066	95	851	296	87	223	323	272	142	151
Wrexham	134,844	130,543	104	1,010	857	181	206	426	651	625	241
Powys	132,976	130,699	128	760	145	9	67	171	750	132	115
Ceredigion	75,922	73,369	74	736	367	81	91	322	238	266	378
Pembrokeshire	122,439	119,667	454	733	341	69	103	205	474	179	214
Carmarthenshire	183,777	179,988	335	1,033	563	159	117	298	700	279	305
Swansea	239,023	224,612	85	2,160	1,477	591	1,944	2,052	1,739	1,983	2,380
Neath Port Talbot	139,812	136,962	125	910	280	125	311	280	373	299	147
Bridgend	139,178	136,027	63	998	337	122	114	356	620	315	226
The Vale of Glamorgan	126,336	121,817	21	1,695	566	216	121	454	610	489	347
Cardiff	346,090	292,593	521	10,031	7,886	6,354	4,838	4,168	4,639	8,201	6,859
Rhondda Cynon Taf	234,410	228,188	53	1,506	656	267	106	1,065	936	1,308	325
Merthyr Tydfil	58,802	57,329	62	462	168	50	45	120	313	143	110
Caerphilly	178,806	175,814	31	1,174	327	123	32	495	369	242	199
Blaenau Gwent	69,814	68,678	72	394	202	39	26	122	96	95	90
Torfaen	91,075	89,076	155	603	172	64	80	208	453	169	95
Monmouthshire	91,323	89,520	6	624	245	54	40	193	368	144	129
Newport	145,736	130,941	84	2,752	1,218	3,127	1,749	600	1,292	2,535	1,438



**Table 3: Percentage of White Residents in Wales**  
(Census 2011)

Area	White	White English, Welsh, Scottish, NI, British	White Irish	Gypsy, Traveller, Roma	White other
<i>Percentage of populaiton</i>					
<b>Wales</b>	<b>95.5</b>	<b>93.2</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>1.8</b>
Isle of Anglesey	98.2	96.6	0.7	0.1	0.9
Gwynedd	96.3	94.4	0.5	0.1	1.5
Conwy	97.6	95.4	0.7	0.1	1.5
Denbighshire	97.3	95.6	0.6	0.0	1.2
Flintshire	98.4	95.9	0.5	0.1	2.1
Wrexham	96.8	93.1	0.4	0.1	3.4
Powys	98.3	96.1	0.4	0.1	1.8
Ceredigion	96.6	93.2	0.6	0.1	2.9
Pembrokeshire	97.7	95.7	0.7	0.4	1.4
Carmarthenshire	97.9	95.6	0.4	0.2	2.0
Swansea	94.0	91.5	0.5	0.0	2.0
Neath Port Talbot	98.0	96.9	0.3	0.1	0.7
Bridgend	97.7	96.1	0.3	0.0	1.4
Vale of Glamorgan	96.4	94.4	0.5	0.0	1.6
Cardiff	84.5	80.4	0.7	0.2	3.5
Rhondda Cynon Taf	97.3	96.3	0.2	0.0	0.8
Merthyr Tydfil	97.5	94.6	0.2	0.1	2.7
Caerphilly	98.3	97.3	0.2	0.0	0.8
Blaenau Gwent	98.4	97.4	0.1	0.1	0.9
Torfaen	97.8	96.9	0.3	0.2	0.6
Monmouthshire	98.0	96.1	0.4	0.0	1.5
Newport	89.9	87.0	0.5	0.1	2.3

## BME Communities and Sport

The Sport Equity Index (Sport England, 2001) drew attention to lower levels of participation in sport among ethnic minorities compared with the equivalent white population in the same age groups. When the Active People Survey was introduced in England, white respondents indicated significantly higher levels of participation than non-white respondents on all three measures of participation, though the difference was less marked for the less frequent measure of having participated in sport at least once in the past four weeks (Long et al., 2009). However, Long et al. went on to observe considerable variation between ethnic groups; the group of mixed ethnicities having markedly higher levels of participation than others. Further

variation was observed according to gender and according to the sport considered. It was Pakistani/Bangladeshi women who revealed consistently low levels of participation across almost every measure.

Some of the more recent Active People Surveys have shown higher levels of participation among Black and minority ethnic communities, depending upon the measure used<sup>2</sup>. However, as age is one of the key determinants of participation and as the age profile of Black and minority ethnic communities is younger than that of the White British population such headline figures are not what they would seem. Applying the same age related measure as the Sports Equity Index would more than account for that differential.

Researchers examining reasons for non-participation in sport by people from BME communities commonly identify a set of contributory factors. As Hylton et al. (2015: 6) point out several of these apply to others in the population as well:

- low incomes limiting what can be spent on sport;
- limited time because of long hours working in low paid jobs (and religious observance for some);
- limited facilities in the areas where they live;
- limited mobility because low levels of car ownership make it difficult to reach opportunities further away.

More specifically related to BME communities, some, more recent, migrants may also experience language barriers. It has also been suggested that there are physical limitations and cultural barriers inhibiting participation in sport by some BME communities. For example, in some parts of the South Asian communities there are constraints on the involvement of women in sport and physical activity in public environments, but once again there is much variation. Understanding of these cultural factors by a predominantly white sporting world too easily fall into stereotyping and need to be considered more carefully to allow a better representation of the social processes involved.

Crucially, the research literature also identifies the barriers represented by racism. Hylton et al. (2015: 6) explain that:

This need not be in the form of aggression and abuse, but may be reflected in unthinking prejudice or the way that established systems operate to disadvantage those from minority ethnic groups (institutionalised racism).

### *BME communities and sport in Wales*

Unfortunately the sample size of the Active Adults Survey, conducted in Wales in 2012 was not large enough to allow any detailed analysis of participation by different ethnic groups. It did suggest, however, that while participation by those from 'mixed/multiple ethnic groups' was higher than the white population (which of course includes several minority ethnic communities), the participation of those who described themselves as Asian / Asian British was lower than the white population. However, that masks a further complexity in that

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<sup>2</sup> Once a Week Participation in Sport:

[https://www.sportengland.org/media/162187/01\\_1x30\\_overall\\_factsheet\\_aps7q2-final.pdf](https://www.sportengland.org/media/162187/01_1x30_overall_factsheet_aps7q2-final.pdf)

participation by Asian males was higher than their White counterparts, whereas participation by Asian females was far lower than White women.

Although the raw data on ethnicity are not published as part of the School Sport Survey<sup>3</sup>, Sport Wales has released some analysis of the data<sup>4</sup>. Disappointingly this suggests that young people (school years 3-11) in categories Black, Asian and Arab/Other are less likely than their White or mixed ethnicity counterparts to take part in sport at least three times a week outside school (Table 4). Asian girls and Arab/Other girls were more likely than their peers to report that they just did not enjoy sport at all. Asian/Asian British girls were also more likely to believe that they were just not good at sport. Lack of time, particularly because of studying was commonly given as a reason for not being more involved in sport, more commonly among girls than boys and more commonly among Asian students than other ethnic groups.

However, the School Sport Survey also revealed considerable variation by sport. Indeed, there are several sports with higher percentages (compared with the average for Wales) of pupils from BME communities taking part in extracurricular and club settings: most notably basketball, cricket, badminton and athletics. Given Sport Wales' concern with female participation it is worth noting that different ethnic groups indicated particular interest in swimming, dance, tennis, netball, basketball, dodgeball, badminton and football.

**Table 4: Participation in Sport Three or More Times a Week Outside School by Ethnic Group**  
(Sport Wales, School Sport Survey)

Ethnic Group	Boys %	Girls %	All %
White	44	37	41
Mixed	46	36	41
Black/Black British	42	30	37
Asian/Asian British	37	20	29
Arab/Other	31	26	29
<b>Overall</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>40</b>

## The Challenge

The research needs identified by Sport Wales were:

- To identify and explore commonalities and differences between Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups in Wales with respect to sporting behaviours, perceptions, attitudes and experiences.
- To explore and understand the family context of sporting behaviours and differences in structural constraints across BME groups in Wales.
- To move beyond stereotypes by contributing to a non-essentialising understanding of BME populations in relation to sport in Wales.

<sup>3</sup> School Sport Survey, 2013, Statistics

<http://sportwales.org.uk/research-policy/surveys-and-statistics/statistics.aspx>

<sup>4</sup> [http://sport.wales/media/1509797/calls\\_for\\_action\\_-\\_bme\\_factsheet.pdf](http://sport.wales/media/1509797/calls_for_action_-_bme_factsheet.pdf)

- To use that learning to formulate recommendations that will guide policy and practice in order to increase and sustain the sports participation of people in BME communities in Wales.

Overall it can be seen that the current research builds on a series of commitments and policies implemented by Sport Wales to increase equality in Welsh sport. The BME Task Force recognises that in part the research may well document what some believe they know already, but recognises that others may not and that this is a necessary stage for Sport Wales to go through. We expect to do more, by offering a critical analysis of the intersections of people's lives and making sure the findings address the needs of Sport Wales.

## The Approach to the Research

The approach to the research was designed to help Sport Wales 'understand the reasons for non-participation', help enhance 'access for protected groups', allow them to be positive in 'challenging partners on their contribution to providing opportunities for all' and assist Sport Wales in driving 'a culture of inclusiveness both internally and in the wider sporting world' (Sport Wales Strategic Equality Plan, 2012-2016).

Rather than gathering statistics about participation, Sport Wales suggested that the goal should be to offer insight into daily family life among the various BME communities in Wales and their participation in sport, in order to inform policy. Following discussion with Sport Wales sport was taken to encompass physical recreation, exercise and fitness, and to involve all dimensions of sport: playing, coaching, officiating, administration and spectating. In the equalities arena there are several variants of terminology used; the default here is 'Black and minority ethnic communities' as it is the term favoured by Sport Wales, though other forms are occasionally used for convenience. As already apparent, we sometimes use 'Asian' to refer to 'Asian/Asian British' and similarly for subsets of 'Asian' and the equivalents for 'Black' and other ethnicities.

Following the example of the project on poverty and ethnic minorities in Wales that was conducted for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Holtom et al., 2013) we focused our enquiries ethnically and geographically, using five different ethnic classifications in five field areas. In terms of ethnicity the groups selected were:

- Indian – the largest minority ethnic group in Wales
- Polish – the largest of the European migrant groups in Wales, enjoying some of the privileges of whiteness, but still 'othered' (Long et al., 2014)
- Chinese – the third largest minority ethnic group (excluding Irish) in Wales and commonly overlooked in sport research
- African-Caribbean – a combination of census categories designed to encompass what are known to be large variations in sporting terms between mixed race groups and newer migrants from Africa (Long et al., 2009)
- Other minority ethnic groups – an open category that allowed the incorporation of voices that are not usually accounted for.

The geographical areas included the three major urban centres of South Wales (Cardiff, Swansea and Newport), which all have relatively high concentrations of minority ethnic groups. To complement them in the north, Wrexham and part of Denbighshire on the North Wales

Coast (Rhyl and Prestatyn) were added. Wrexham has a growing number of residents from BME communities, particularly more recent European migrants who have supplemented Black residents. The communities of the North Wales coast are more dispersed and have lower proportions of minority ethnic groups living there, thus being quite distinct from the other areas.

In the early stages of the project a lot of effort was put into establishing a network of contacts in key organisations operating in the five study areas. This network now embraces the fields of sport development, equality groups and community organisations. These contacts were needed to help identify what was happening in the area and suggest people who might either participate in the research themselves or suggest others who would.

The investigations took the form of: an examination of published material; one-to-one interviews with adults (age 16+) from BME communities; focus groups with a younger cohort; and a case study of policy and provision.

*a) Literature*

Electronic searches were used to identify existing material that might have a bearing on this research. This included the policy literature produced by Sport Wales and its partners and previous research that suggested key propositions for examination in Wales. Together they support an appreciation of the environment in which any recommendations arising from the project will be considered.

*b) 1:1 Interviews*

We combined our 5 ethnic classifications with the distribution of BME communities (2011 Census) to construct an initial grid that concentrated on different ethnic communities in each field location. However, the field researchers were flexible in recruiting respondents to meet our overall target numbers. The resultant distribution is shown in Table 5. The sample comprised 21 men and 22 women, aged from 18-68 who had been living in Wales for periods ranging from 5 months to over 40 years (the majority not born in Wales).

**Table 5: Adult Sample Composition**

	Area	Newport	Cardiff	Swansea	NWC	Wrexham
Ethnicity						
Indian			4	1		
Polish			4		1	2
Chinese		4	1	4	2	
African/Caribbean		4	1	2		4
Others		1	Bangladeshi	1	Syrian	1
				Sri Lankan	Sri Lankan	2
				Sri Lankan	Gypsy / traveller	Portuguese
					Filipino	

In each field area we used a system of repeated referrals, starting with our initial network of contacts, to identify people from the various ethnic groups who were prepared to discuss their

engagement with, and attitudes towards sport, physical recreation and exercise. Interviews were conducted in a venue chosen by the research participants so that they could feel more comfortable about the exercise. The semi-structured approach used is outlined in the Appendix. So that the data gathering should not be entirely dependent on participants' ability to articulate their ideas a mental mapping procedure was incorporated to allow people to draw a representation of their sport participation. While some struggled to grasp the significance of this and did not really engage, others enjoyed the exercise and it helped them to frame their thinking. In the event only a small minority needed a translator to help with communication. We also offered respondents the chance to record a message direct to Sport Wales. For some this represented a welcome opportunity; among those who were less comfortable some chose instead to record an audio message to avoid their face appearing in the public domain.

### *c) Focus groups*

Younger people were involved in the research through small focus groups conducted in each field area. Initial contact was made with schools known to have a number of students from BME communities in order to request an opportunity to run small focus groups with students in year 10 (age 14/15). This avenue worked well in Cardiff and Newport, for example, but elsewhere alternative means of identifying research participants sometimes had to be used. Part of the focus group activity involved flash cards (photographic representations of sport) to stimulate discussion. Again the outline of the session is provided in the Appendix to this report.

This approach involved 54 students and young people who variously described themselves as: South African, Libyan, Somali, Swahili, Arab, Persian, Tibetan, British Asian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Bengali, Sri Lankan, Tamil, Chinese, Singaporean, Filipino, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Polish, Scottish Turk, Russian, Portuguese.

### *d) Policy & provision case study*

Newport was chosen as a case study to review the nature of policy and provision to provide a supply side context for the consideration of demand discussed with members of the BME communities in the other components of the empirical work. In addition to a documentary review, a range of respondents (11) was identified from the local authority, NGBs, clubs, equality organisations and development workers, who were selected for their local knowledge of policy and provision. A semi-structured interview schedule was used in telephone interviews lasting 30-50 minutes. This varied to match each key informant. A basic version of this is also provided in the Appendix.

## **Report Format**

This report considers next the context provided by policy and provision in relation to Black and minority ethnic communities and sport. Four further chapters then address key themes identified by Sport Wales as being important: engagement with sport; sport, identity and relationships; the role of the family; barriers and aids to participation. The conclusions of the report are followed by a set of recommendations. The appendices contain details of the interview formats for the individual interviews with adults, the focus groups with school students and the telephone interviews with providers.

## 2. Policy and Provision

Alongside the more ethnographic style of research among members of Black and minority ethnic communities in different parts of Wales we tried to establish a contextual appreciation of the position of policy and provision. This was done through a consideration of policy documents produced by public agencies in Wales and a case study that focussed on Newport.

As identified in the previous chapter, eleven people contributed to the policy and provision case study by being interviewed. Some were in equalities positions with an interest in sport; some were working from a sport base to address equalities issues. We recognise that had we taken these respondents as a barometer of awareness and commitment we would have arrived at a rosier picture than is justified. However, that was not our purpose; our goal was to use their knowledge to develop a clearer understanding of the current position and the issues germane to the development of sport policy. Perhaps not surprisingly they had faith in the power of sport to break down (ethnic) barriers and redress misconceptions of the 'other'. However, they also recognised how that potential might be frustrated.

### Official Policy in Wales

The Equality Standard<sup>5</sup> for Sport endorsed by Sport Wales and the ClubMark initiative oblige sports bodies to consider issues of ethnicity. Although the Welsh Sports Association Strategy for 2015-19 contains no mention of ethnicity, other policy documents they produce do now demonstrate a commitment to address the needs of minority ethnic groups and their web site has a dedicated equality page. Elsewhere, *Climbing Higher*<sup>6</sup>, the Welsh Assembly's strategy for sport and physical activity, considers equality only in broad terms with little specific to ethnicity. Much the same is true of the more recent update, *Climbing Higher – Next Steps*<sup>7</sup> that sees BME communities in terms of increasing the participation of 'all sections of society'. In the same vein, Sport Wales' Community Strategy exhorts teams to widen their participation base and commits itself to:

Develop and implement work to deliver equality of opportunity for the 9 protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy & maternity; ethnicity; religion & belief; gender; sexual orientation; marriage & civil partnership.

More recently the Sport Wales Strategic Equality Plan (2012-16) similarly focuses on increasing participation, aiming to:

Increase participation in sport by understanding the reasons for non-participation and enabling access for protected groups, challenging partners on their contribution to

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<sup>5</sup> Equality Standard for Sport <http://www.equalityinsport.org/>

<sup>6</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2005) *Climbing Higher – Strategy for Sport & Physical Activity*.  
<http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/150311-climbing-higher-en.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Welsh Assembly Government (2006) *Climbing Higher – Next Steps*.  
<http://gov.wales/docs/drah/publications/20100201nextstepse.pdf>

providing opportunities for all and ensuring that Sport Wales drives a culture of inclusiveness both internally and in the wider sporting world.

It should be recognised that the interest here in increasing participation among Black and minority ethnic communities is set alongside other equality objectives to increase the participation of females, disabled people and children from deprived communities. Of course, these are overlapping characteristics and so, for example, increasing participation by minority ethnic communities is likely to increase participation in deprived communities.

In turn, those equality objectives are set within the context of the Sport Wales Vision to 'unite a proud sporting nation where every child is hooked on sport for life and Wales is a nation of champions'. This is to be delivered through sporting innovation, the development of skills for a life in sport, sporting communities, sporting excellence and growing a skilled and passionate workforce.

At the same time that Sport Wales' interest in BME communities is part of a broader commitment to equality in securing a vision for a brighter sporting future, it is also set within the context of a wider equality movement promoted by organisations with their own agendas (employment, education, housing, hate crime, etc.), but who have much to offer as partners. However, just as the sport world sometimes finds it difficult to prioritise equality, so sport may not rank highly on the agenda of these organisations. For example, the Race Council Cymru report on *Race Equality and Racism in Wales an Exploratory Study* (2012) had no consideration of sport or recreation. Similarly Swansea Bay Regional Equality Council and South East Wales Regional Equality Council, for example, make no reference to sport on their web pages.

One positive development has been the establishment of various forums set-up to consider the position of BME communities in sport. There is now a task force for BME Sport in Wales, as well as various area-based groups and some national governing bodies of sport (NGBs) have set-up something similar too.

## Newport

Newport Gwent Dragons, Newport Town AFC and the recent successes of the women and girls teams at Newport Cricket Club all attest to local interest in sport. According to the 2011 Census data on the city council website, Newport has a population of 145,700, and as many again in the surrounding urban area. It has the second highest proportion of residents from Black and minority ethnic communities of any local authority in Wales (10.1% at the 2011 Census). Some of those BME communities have had a longstanding presence in Newport, while others are comprised largely of recent migrants. However, after identifying the scale of the ethnic population<sup>8</sup>, and observing that 'we are proud in Newport that we have always experienced good inter-community relations and it is vital that all of the people and agencies in the city continue to maintain this commendable social cohesion' (p5), the community strategy<sup>9</sup> does no more than identify community cohesion as a priority (p15) and requires projects and partnerships to consider the principles of equality (p16). Moreover, the draft cultural strategy

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<sup>8</sup> There seems to be some confusion of minority ethnic communities with being non-white.

<sup>9</sup> Newport's Community Strategy 2010 – 2020: Feeling good about Newport



for Newport (2013) contained no reference to ethnicity<sup>10</sup>, and the Continuing Learning and Leisure Service Improvement Plan (2014-15)<sup>11</sup> contains only an oblique reference: 'Services are available to all to comply with equalities legislation' [no page number].

Officers responsible for delivering services to engage residents from BME communities may be grateful for the flexibility this permits, allowing them to respond to opportunities that arise. On the other hand it makes it harder for them to call upon Council resources or indeed those of other potential funders as they cannot point to a clear directive.

Below the surface of those public statements lies a complex network of providers, funders and other partners<sup>12</sup>. Because of their role and structure, Sport Wales and the national governing bodies of sport make little direct provision themselves. They work through other bodies with a local presence, offering grant aid and other assistance, though in a climate of large scale cuts to public funding. Newport City Council is not only a direct provider of sport facilities and development workers, but it too funds others to help deliver the Council's goals. Those others may be local clubs or community groups or organisations like StreetGames or Show Racism the Red Card. At the same time there are other funders to whom people may look for support. In Newport the most significant of these is Communities First, the Welsh Government's anti-poverty initiative. This area-based initiative focuses on the 20% of communities across Wales that are most disadvantaged (Communities First Clusters). As such it is not specifically directing funding to BME communities except insofar as they are disproportionately likely to be living in disadvantaged areas.

It should not be surprising that many sports organisations, while identifying the need to help develop sporting involvement in BME communities, do not place great emphasis upon it. Engaging minority ethnic communities is only one of several challenges they are expected to address and is rarely the one most important to the funding partners who judge their success largely on the number of affiliated members and the success of teams/individuals. Those who are keen to assist BME communities are not helped by the primacy of increasing participation, understandable though that is. As one NGB officer noted, they were already at capacity meeting the demands placed on them:

*... so historically it has been difficult to justify the additional resource that is required to make a difference in BME communities and with other minority groups... It is far easier (and takes less resource) to develop [sport] in the middle class areas of Wales where parents are wanting their children to experience a wide range of activities and are willing to get involved to support clubs to do so.*

Another person, working in the community, bemoaned the monitoring and evaluation culture of Community Chest that fails to consider benefits beyond the numbers participating. Nonetheless, the first respondent observed why their board now recognised that 'growing the game' is not the same as making it accessible to everyone; the reason being that:

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<sup>10</sup> A Cultural Strategy for Newport, 2013-2020 (draft for consultation)

<sup>11</sup> Continuing Learning and Leisure Service Improvement Plan 2014-15

<sup>12</sup> At the time of the research responsibility for cultural, sport and leisure services was being transferred by Newport City Council to a not-for-profit distributing organisation (trust), Newport Live.

*If we had just wanted to purely chase numbers we would develop [sport] in all the nice areas of Wales where the parents want their boys and girls to have a whole range of different experiences be it the arts, sport or culture. When you actually state an objective of making [sport] accessible to everyone in Wales that means something very different, you have to do the real hard work in terms of difficult communities sometimes working with disability groups, areas of poverty, areas of ethnicity and that's more difficult work to sustain.*

He explained the challenge this represented in terms of what was being forgone as a consequence:

*We could grow far more easily by supporting the big existing clubs in the nice areas to get bigger and stronger, that's how you grow your numbers, but if you're talking about making the game accessible to everyone in Wales that's something very different.*

## Different Communities, Different Needs?

One respondent felt that Sport Wales and the NGBs find it hard to penetrate the 'walls' around some communities, but then suggested:

*The equality bodies would certainly like to be more involved in sport. We have the community links to spread the word and can provide advice and guidance. Those links are useful to Sport Wales who are mainly white middle class. [Equalities officer]*

Some of those contributing to this case study felt that in broad terms the kinds of measures required to facilitate participation by the various BME communities were similar and could be addressed by the same kind of approach. Indeed, the respondents from various BME communities whose voices are featured in the next four chapters do often represent broadly the same views. However, that does not necessarily gainsay the need for specially directed initiatives if success is to be secured at community level, and respondents repeatedly stressed the importance of appreciating the differences between different BME communities. There was an equally strong feeling that it is important to differentiate between minority ethnic groups and their different orientations to sport if they are to be engaged in it. It might be equally important to recognise that not all sports are the same in terms of what they require of participants or can deliver in benefits. In line with conventional good sport development practice, respondents emphasised the importance of getting into communities to identify what they want rather than expecting all ethnicities to want the same provision.

In the close-knit communities of some ethnic groups, what other people think is very important to the family, so their approval is required for participation.

Trying hard to make sporting opportunities available in the area; one person had been prompted by his own experience that he now saw evidenced among many other migrants. He sees people who do not know about Welsh (sporting) culture and systems and had not appreciated himself that everyone would be expected to own their own equipment. He had experienced what he now recognised as further general constraints in the shape of lack of money, transport and equipment. Being passionate about his sport he had persisted, but many

others would not. His concern was that those involved in sport all too often see people's participation in sport (or lack of it) purely in sporting terms and fail to appreciate "*the iceberg below the waterline*" that is the rest of their lives.

Initial engagement is one thing, sustaining that through securing a link to a club is another. Clubs may not be able to accommodate people who have recently arrived in Wales with little understanding of the sport. Individual clubs may have the necessary desire and skills, but lack the resources to respond to different needs of BME communities (many of whom want to play without being part of a club). For example, white coaches used to physical contact as part of communicating the skills of the game may find it complicates relationships with Muslim women. As in other research (e.g. Hylton et al., 2015) there was a call for training coaches from the same community.

## Different Communities Together?

There is some special provision in Newport, like the separate swimming sessions for Sudanese women. However, the usual response from those interviewed was that multi-faith, multi-ethnic participation is good for promoting cohesion and integration, but these may be hard to create. One respondent talked about how, even when the project workers carefully mixed teams at the outset, by the end of the session the youngsters had managed to construct teams around their separate ethnic groups.

Some saw none, while others referred to ethnic tensions in Newport; sometimes between White Welsh and minority ethnic communities, sometimes between those minorities. As enthusiasts, for our respondents sport is an obvious way of promoting integration. Mixed teams were seen as a good way of breaking down barriers and misconceptions, spreading a message of zero tolerance of racial discrimination.

*We make welcome anyone who wants to come and join our club. We won't tolerate any form of bullying, including racism. Yes, our teams have experienced some racist abuse playing elsewhere, what we call the Valleys, but that just motivates our players – makes us want to protect our own. [Club officer]*

Perhaps not all clubs extend that welcome and new migrants in particular may feel more comfortable participating with others who share the same cultural heritage. For example, some Romanians have formed their own football team and during the summer use the same council pitch as the team above, but have turned down an invitation to join them.

One respondent was confident that "*if you want to make your club open to all you'll do that*". But of course it does take effort to appreciate the different needs of different communities, make appropriate provision in terms of diet and other cultural considerations, and also recognise how inappropriate 'banter' can be a big deterrent.

Even if there is little or no racism in some sporting environments, there may be a system of practices that make it hard for people from BME backgrounds to progress:

- The cost of participation, particular if someone wants to progress to a higher level, either as a player or as a coach;

- Little communication to overcome a lack of knowledge in BME communities;
- Limited cultural understanding of BME communities;
- Restrictions on teams using municipal pitches;
- A natural inclination of a sporting system to go with what it knows: using established recruitment procedures; investing in safe areas with established bodies.

## Location, Location, Location

Although there was some appreciation of the potential contribution of Wales' natural resources, as had been demonstrated by the Mentro Allan project<sup>13</sup>, for communities in which many have no access to a car and have little income, the immediate environment is more important on a day-to-day basis. That prompted one respondent to note the value of park provision at the same time as recognising the financial challenge of maintaining those facilities, particularly in an era of cutbacks:

*You can't put a value on those facilities for improving society and improving cohesion, those facilities are definitely underrated. Investing in parks and leisure facilities is massively important for tackling obesity and shouldn't be underestimated in terms of preventative health savings.*

Facilities on the other side of town are likely to be out of reach for youngsters or anyone with a low income and no obvious transport, irrespective of ethnicity. For those sports or level of competition that necessitate travel to another town/city this becomes an even bigger issue. Even if there are facilities, those in the more deprived areas often occupied by BME communities are typically less well-maintained and of poorer quality than are available elsewhere, particularly when 'austerity' is the watchword. For one club this was emphasised by the change that came with the loan of a cage rugby facility with floodlights. Not only did this new provision allow more hours of activity, but "*the lights acted like magnets and drew the kids like flies*".

Although our case study is an urban area of significant size, it was recognised that accessibility becomes an even bigger issue in rural areas of Wales where people are physically further apart and less likely to be close to facilities.

## **“The biggest thing we've learnt is that we assume we're accessible, but we're not”**

Geographical accessibility is not everything. As repeated by respondents, it is of course equally crucial to have facilities available at a reasonable price. But there is more to it than that too as implied by the quote from an NGB officer that is the heading for this section. There is still a belief that Muslims do not relish the physicality of rugby, but also a recognition of the deterrence produced by the perception of the national game as being fundamentally white: players, coaches and board members, though that is hardly peculiar to rugby.

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<sup>13</sup> For details see: <http://sport.wales/research--policy/research-themes/mentro-allan.aspx>

One respondent suggested that some successful sports clubs and nearby communities “*might as well be on different planets*”. Different people have different images of sport and those involved in sport. Using the example of tennis, it was noted how cultural and perceptual barriers might prevent participation: “*The perception of tennis in the past has been white middle class, expensive, difficult to play, white clothing, and clique tennis clubs*”. Recognising that represented a barrier to BME (and other) groups and keen to make the sport more open, an attempt had been made to change the promotion of tennis: “*In the past, images of Tim Henman at Wimbledon, wearing white clothing, were used. Now down-to-earth images of families and ethnic minority groups playing tennis are used*”. Beyond the wearing of a headscarf, this might more commonly involve allowing arms and legs to remain covered and it was noted that there are very different attitudes towards the acceptability of burkinis at different pools. Respondents saw the secret of success lying in “*think a bit more*” about “*making people welcome*”, and this may necessitate not being too prescriptive about the terms of participation.

Pill (Pillgwenlly) Harriers rugby club, located in one of the Communities First clusters in Newport gets no money for engaging BME communities, but has managed to recruit some players. It was reported that for them accommodating people from BME communities is no problem because “*they just adapt and mix in... they don't drink alcohol and just choose the food they want*”. Evidence from respondents suggested that despite the openness of some clubs like this, such factors may still be a barrier to many other would-be players. The relaxed approach of the club did have advantages for Muslim players who might feel unable to play during Ramadan; the club just waits for them to come back. This may seem a bit off-hand, but at other clubs players might well be dumped if they failed to turn-up for a month.

Just as the image of sport has an allure for some and represents a barrier to others, partner organisations can prompt very different reactions. While some reported an antagonistic reaction to the police, one respondent noted the calming effect their presence had on young males involved in a local project.

## Different Forms of the Game

*Also, we shouldn't be precious about the form of the game. If those communities want a different form, let them shape it and own it, it can always lead to a more structured form later. [NGB officer]*

As elsewhere, in an effort to engage interest, various formats have been used to introduce people to the skills of rugby: street rugby (including Street Stars), cage rugby, atomic touch. These seem popular, but there was concern at the low conversion rate to club membership. As we have identified elsewhere in our work on cricket (Hylton et al., 2015), if people find satisfaction in these alternative, informal versions of a sport there is strong case for making full provision for them without expecting participation in the conventionally codified form. Others have a more fundamental problem with ‘sport’, and other activities were suggested: fashion, beauty and Bollywood or other cultural forms of dancing.

Pill has some players from BME communities, but still fails to attract others. A large proportion of any community are just not interested in sport, but beyond that two explanations can be

inferred from other respondents: lacking family and friends likely to make the introduction, youngsters need a referral from school which may only be made if they already have high skill levels; while those who have been to school locally will have had the chance to acquire rugby skills and an understanding of the game, club coaches find it difficult to work with more recent arrivals who may be enthusiastic, but are without that basic sporting capital.

## Support

Respondents also identified some elements of the support that might be necessary for initiatives to be successful.

- Most sports clubs have no staff so it is important to recognise that *“people at the club can only do what they can do”*. As a consequence form-filling, particularly in disadvantaged areas with a shortage of skills, is a barrier to achieving funding so officers willing to provide assistance are invaluable.
- Sports clubs and development workers can be directed to local sources of advice about BME communities if necessary. At Pill they have been able to use the local community centre, where they run language classes, and a local Muslim councillor. More broadly sports organisations should look to other partners who are able to address some of the underlying reasons for non-participation.
- Sport Wales was asked to get greater exposure for minority sports and provide education and simple explanatory material in other languages. Not only is there a need to overcome a lack of knowledge on the part of BME communities about facilities and systems, but also a lack of knowledge on the part of clubs about BME communities and how to aid their participation in sport.
- Sport Wales, NGBs, clubs and other providers need to win over the families to appreciate the worth of sport so that they will allow and then support members of the family in their sporting participation. To that end it would be good to emphasise the health benefits and the opportunities for qualifications and jobs.
- It was also felt that attitudes to sport might change among BME communities if BME success stories were disseminated.
- One respondent was quite insistent that the *“challenges are on the supply side, not the demand side”* and that what is needed is *“more coaches, more volunteers and more administrators”*. That was not to suggest that it is purely a question of quantity; form and style are crucial. However, it was suggested to us that it is not necessary to look too far for the right approach as it is simply embodied in the principles of good sports development and community development. Central to that is locating the right ‘movers and shakers’ in BME communities to communicate the positive messages of sport and its availability locally. They may or may not be the same as the people with a talent to enthuse, who will be delivering sporting opportunities in the streets, parks and clubs, what one person referred to as ‘pied pipers’.
- Those sports organisations that are willing to work with people from BME communities need to recognise the whole person and understand that there is a suite of human needs that has to be satisfied in order to allow participation in sport.
- Activities need to be free or minimal cost, people need to feel ownership of the sporting activity and they need training to develop the expertise necessary to provide sports opportunities themselves.

- As already pointed out, progression as coaches or onto sport boards is difficult without appropriate experience, so mechanisms are needed to allow people from BME communities to acquire that experience, perhaps alongside a mentor.
- For those involved, providing sporting opportunities to people from BME communities is typically only a small part of their responsibilities and there was a call for a dedicated person to at least co-ordinate such efforts locally.
- It was suggested that Sport Wales could help by endorsing the challenge from the various BME sport forums to NGBs to put someone from BME communities on their board and appoint a development officer to work with BME communities.

### 3. Engagement with Sport

This section illustrates the diversity of engagement with sport within Black and minority ethnic communities across the sampled areas in terms of participation (what, how much, where, who with, motivation) and non-participation. Although most of those interviewed did participate in sport and physical recreation some did not. The range ran from those who did not currently participate in any activities to those who were semi-professional and/or involved in sport as part of their job/studies (e.g. through coaching).

Most participants had been introduced to sport through family members and/or school as children. Throughout this study these institutions were shown to be both enabling and constraining participation (see below). There was also some evidence that friendships and consuming sport via the television can offer effective introductions.

For the young people, school and college were very important in terms of introducing them to activities, teaching them about healthy lifestyles, providing opportunities to play and compete and to integrate socially (with sport being part of this). For the adults, some level of background playing sport in their home country was important if they were to be involved now in Wales. Many said that they used to do a lot more sport in their home country, but that life, opportunities and weather limited them here.

Across the sample, sport was seen to be important for health (physical and mental) and as a tool for integration (within BME communities and between different minority ethnic communities and the White Welsh community). Our sample included individuals for whom sport was an integral part of their everyday lives and identities, with one participant describing sport as “*my life*”. For many, sport was an enjoyable, if not essential, aspect of their everyday lives; a way to stay healthy, socialise and relax. For those not currently involved, sport was something they felt they ‘should’ be doing, usually for health and weight management reasons, but was not a priority for them at this stage in their lives due to other commitments (work, childcare, financial, etc.).

#### Migration

Most of the young people in Swansea had been born abroad but had been living in the UK for most of their childhood. The situation in Cardiff, Newport and Rhyl/Prestatyn was quite different; most were British-born and had been introduced to sport here. Wrexham was slightly different again with none of the participants having been born in the UK. Length of time living in Wales ranged from 5 months to 43 years. We do not suggest that in this they are ‘representative’ of BME communities in those areas; we just mean to point out the difference it is likely to make to how they approach the research, and sport generally.

In Wrexham and Rhyl/Prestatyn there is a growing migrant community who come to the area for work – reported as being predominantly factory work, healthcare or engineering. This is relatively recent. Minority ethnic communities are more established in Swansea, Cardiff and Newport. In each of these areas there are longstanding community networks (e.g. centres) which cater for the needs of different minority ethnic groups. These are becoming more commonplace in Wrexham, but do not currently exist in Rhyl/Prestatyn.



There was a feeling that sport is less of a priority in British/Welsh culture than it is in their different home countries. This was particularly the case for Black Africans and some new migrants, for example those from Poland. Disappointingly for Sport Wales, many said that since migrating they spend less time participating than they used to. This was attributed to various factors such as cost, confidence and language. There were also accounts of respondents having participated in an activity 'back home' and then not being able to do that at all in Wales. Examples include a British Slav (Russian) boy who had previously participated in a martial art called Rukopashnii Boi, native to Russia. Several Polish participants in particular identified activities they had participated in when in Poland (handball, volleyball, skiing) which were not readily accessible to them where they now live in Wales. Some Chinese respondents said that they would prefer to participate in activities that are common in their home country – e.g. Tai Chi, badminton, table tennis.

## Participation in What?

Across our sample participants took part in a wide range of activities including, but not limited to, football, basketball, hockey, rugby, martial arts, boxing, walking, swimming, Zumba and dance. 'Being active' was understood to be important for health, psychological and social reasons, and was defined by participants in different ways. For young people 'sport' was predominantly associated with competition, while adult participants also enjoyed many non-competitive activities such as hiking, yoga and leisure cycling.

Without the benefit of a large scale survey we cannot say whether there is any clear link between individual BME communities and particular sports. There were, however, some examples of respondents attributing their sporting preference to their ethnic group. For example, both male and female Filipino adults in Rhyl/Prestatyn said that basketball (for men) and martial arts were preferred choices; mainly because both activities are popular in the Philippines, and therefore, they and other family members had been exposed to these prior to migration. Martial arts were also considered to possess important moral qualities, instilling discipline and respect, qualities they believe are central to Filipino culture. They also noted the heightened interest in boxing when Manny Pacquiao is competing.

The Tamil female respondent currently participates at a relatively high level in netball, and had previously competed at school and district levels in athletics. She said that she had never come across other Tamil females through sport and therefore was unable to say whether this ethnic group gravitate to certain sports. She did however say that Tamil boys tend to be attracted to cricket and, to a lesser degree, football.

Chinese participants in Newport enjoyed Tai Chi, through the Newport Chinese community centre. When the centre initially put on Tai Chi lessons they chose a Welsh teacher, who the Chinese participants felt did not communicate effectively (partially a language barrier) and taught to a basic level. They now have a Chinese instructor who they feel challenges them more, which is not just suggestive of a preference within this Chinese community for Tai Chi as a form of physical activity (especially for older people), but also a reminder of other conditions necessary for successful participation.

## Level of Importance

The level of importance attributed to sport varied considerably. Men were generally more involved than women in organised competitive sports. For many, sport was an important feature of their everyday lives. For the women (teenagers and adults), sport was generally less significant. It is something they recognise as important in health terms, but is not a priority in comparison to other demands on their time. They would take part if provision was easy for them to access and could fit in around other commitments.

Some held aspirations of becoming elite athletes, others enjoyed competing, whilst many more were lured by the camaraderie of team sports. On a more individual basis, some identified how they liked to learn new skills and to challenge themselves, and others reflected on how being active was a mechanism for losing weight and staying healthy. Those who favoured martial arts valued the activity's emphasis on personal discipline and skill acquisition.

Others had established businesses around sport, showing that individuals can be both consumers and providers of sport. A Polish couple had set up a business around sports provision for children, spotting a gap in the market in terms of providing accessible coaching sessions for other members of the Polish community. They run classes in swimming and football. They would like to do more but suggest that there are not adequate facilities to enable them to do this. They see sport as essential to a healthy lifestyle for themselves and their families – *“we bought bikes, not because we didn't have a car, we basically wanted to be an active family”* – and want to encourage more people within and beyond the Polish community to get involved.

## With Whom?

As has been identified elsewhere within the sport and policy literature (e.g. Hylton et al., 2015), many minority ethnic communities participate in sport informally rather than engaging with formally organised 'mainstream' sport. Informal participation is usually *ad hoc*, and often involves participating with people who share the same ethnicity or religion. Evidence suggests that the purposes of these networks are multiple, but can be understood broadly in terms of facilitating community togetherness and carving out spaces that are absent from racism. There are leagues and teams throughout the UK which were originally established to provide specific ethnic groups with spaces to play. These are most evident in football and cricket and have generally been taken up by Black African (Caribbean) and South Asian (mainly male) participants.

This pattern of participation was supported to some degree in this study. Adult participants in Wrexham took part (or would want to take part) predominantly with people from their own community, although they hoped that sport would be a way to integrate with the local population as well. Those from Swansea suggested more 'mixed' participation, but this Indian male in Cardiff articulated a strong sense of ethnic segregation:

In terms of the group of people that you play football with, are they from the same ethnic minority group, or are they different groups?

*Yes, same, really. We play [against] diverse, being Cardiff and everything. The mates we go to school and we're friends with, and ... more diverse... I don't really play with many white people. It's quite segregated down here, it's quite weird.*

Some male respondents commented how it was common for them to organise *ad hoc* fixtures and events for members of the same community. The Filipino males often get together to play basketball, the Black and South Asian men tend to participate in football and cricket, while Gypsy/Traveller men will box and play football. Cardiff was known to have an established community of South Asian cricketers, many of whom play for the Welsh Asians Cricket Club. Similarly the Gypsy/Traveller community has established a football league that is national in scale (discussed further below) with an organised programme of fixtures. During informal discussions with local people in Rhyl/Prestatyn it became apparent that there is a community of South Asian men (mainly restaurant workers) who are playing football informally. It was reported by people outside the sample that these men have established a network of other restaurant workers throughout North Wales and North West England who compete against one another.

Adult women would also like to take part with friends, predominantly from their community. They (and the teenage girls) stated a preference for single-sex facilities and activities. This was not always for religious reasons but because they felt self-conscious with men looking at them when they were trying to work-out, which supports findings from previous sports participation research (Hargreaves, 1994; 2007). A teenage Afro-Portuguese girl spoke about her preference for “quite dark” facilities, so people could not really see her as she exercised. She explained, “Just a whole place just for women, I'd love that, I'd go all the time!” For Muslim women this becomes a more pressing issue, as most are unwilling to take part in activities in a mixed-sex environment; for them the lack of single-sex facilities is a major barrier to participation in sport. While our respondents were fairly active, there was still a feeling that very many Muslim women do not participate because culturally that is not seen as the ‘norm’. This is despite their higher than average level of health problems, e.g. heart disease and diabetes, attributed to diet and lack of exercise. A Bangladeshi Muslim respondent spoke of how she is currently involved in a community project which aims to encourage more Muslim women into physical activity and said that more needs to be done to educate the community about the benefits of being physically active and to educate GPs about how to get that message across effectively. One measure needed to encourage greater participation was seen to be having more qualified female coaches and fitness instructors.

The teenagers (male and female) participate with their peers, some from their community, some from other ethnic minority communities, some from the White Welsh community. The younger participants experience far fewer barriers in terms of integration, largely because they attend ethnically diverse Welsh schools. In this environment they are routinely socialising with a range of different ethnic groups in sport and non-sport contexts.

It should be noted that many of the participants who participate in ethnicity-specific spaces are also participating in mixed environments. For example, one African participant was introduced to mountain climbing by a White Welsh friend and also took part in other activities with African friends. The Welsh Asians Cricket Club is interesting as it openly promotes itself as a club for ethnic minorities (mainly Pakistani) and yet competes in an otherwise ethnically mixed

league. This is a relatively consistent pattern and has been observed in other research in the UK (Fletcher and Walle, 2015).

On the question of 'choice' respondents in Rhyl/Prestatyn suggested most participate in mixed ethnicity teams and leagues. Rhyl/Prestatyn may be different from other locations in our sample, however, in that participation in mixed environments is rarely a choice given the relative lack of diversity. This was highlighted most effectively by the Tamil female respondent who commented on how said she would like more opportunities to experience playing with and against other Tamil females, but the lack of a Tamil social network in Rhyl/Prestatyn led her to feel quite isolated and cut off from the wider Tamil community.

In general who participants were involved with was decided as a result of convenience (who is available) and preference (friendship groups). Rarely would the family influence who it was acceptable to participate with. Moreover, and as we discuss in the section below on the family, there was limited evidence that sport was something pursued as a family. There were exceptions: for example, a Polish couple said it was important to participate as a family as they wanted to encourage their children to be active. For the majority of other respondents participation took place more in friendship than family groups.

## Participating Where?

Participation took place in both formal environments (e.g. clubs, schools, local authority pitches and sport/leisure centres) and informal environments (e.g. beach, footpaths, parks). Participation in formal environments was generally structured and affiliated to someone/where. However, it did not always revolve around competition. There was general consensus that there were adequate sporting facilities in all the sampled areas, in terms of swimming pools, gyms, pitches etc. – but access was limited by cost and transport:

*As a coach, the facility for participants over there, from my perspective, is good. The facilities are one of the top of the range, we've got the velodrome over there, we've got some tennis courts, some badminton. [Black male]*

Participation in informal environments was common and seen as a more cost-effective way to enjoy sport. The natural environment, such as the beach or walking trails, was a valued resource, especially in the summer:

*At the moment I don't go to gym, because I'm very busy. And what I do in my spare time, I usually go to the seaside, because around the seaside, Swansea Bay, they have got a long road with cycling. I do cycling. [Chinese female]*

Many said that they would like to participate more on an ad hoc basis by playing in parks and on other public land, but it was felt that many of these spaces are poorly maintained, or located in areas where they did not feel welcome. The UK's inclement weather and fear of being alone in certain parts of town/city also restricted the activity of some.

## How Often?

Factors that tended to determine the frequency of participation were a subset of those that determined whether or not people participate in the first place: time, money and other commitments. Work and childcare needs often restricted adults of working age, while participation was easier for students and retired adults.

For those for whom sport is an important aspect of their lives and identities, participation is frequent. Even in the face of competing demands on time and money, such participants will manage to find time for involvement in sport and physical activity. In the Newport focus group one participant explained that he had to “*find the time*” and to “*keep motivated*” to train for boxing 6 days a week.

Although we have drawn attention to the appeal of informal activity, organised activity can increase how often people participate. For retirees, the commitment to regular classes is a way to increase and then maintain the frequency of participation. The Chinese community centre in Newport runs weekly Tai Chi sessions which are popular with older community members and keep them engaged in physical recreation on a regular basis. Frequency of participation in schools varied considerably, from a low of one class per fortnight to 11 hours a week. This was attributed to a variety of factors, but the predominant variables were school culture and teacher inclination. As school is such an important environment for young people to get involved in sport this level of variance may have consequences for frequency/level of participation for individuals beyond school years.

## Motivation for Participation

A variety of motivations for participation in sport were identified, including: competition, fitness, bodily appearance and socialising, amongst others. The two most frequently mentioned reasons were health/fitness and socialising. The health benefits of involvement in some form of physical recreation were recognised at different stages in the life cycle. This was understood in terms of physical health (fighting infections, managing weight, avoiding injury) and also in terms of the mental/psychological benefits of being physically active:

*It just makes me feel good inside. It's a pick-me-up kind of ... it gives you a kick, it's like a fix in a sense, if I can call it that, where if I don't do it I really feel ... I feel heavy within my own body. I don't want to do certain things, I can feel a bit depressed, feel really depressed, but when I do sport, I feel alive, quite lively and stuff like that. [Black female]*

Socialising was identified up as a key motivator irrespective of ethnicity, gender or age.

*Sport in general is huge for the social aspect, you meet some new people rather than hanging around in your own area meeting and staying with the people that you're used to being around and not really going anywhere. It gives you a sense of direction, sense of pride, sense of worth as well. You know, you're a part of that team, you're a big aspect of it. [Black male]*

*For me, it's the social aspect. I've met quite a lot of people through sport. [Black female]*

Thus sport was seen by many as a way to meet people beyond their ethnic community and so represented a tool for integration. Many recognised the potential of sport to bridge differences associated with ethnicity, culture and even language. In one focus group a teenager commented *"Sport brings people together, I think."* The opportunity to meet different people may be particularly important for recent migrants who may otherwise feel isolated in a new location. It was interesting then that the groups most likely to experience isolation (new migrants and asylum seekers) were least likely to see sport as accessible (see below).

## Other Forms of Participation

When asked about sports participation many assumed this was confined to active participation and had to be prompted to think of other ways they might be involved, such as being coaches or volunteers. One Polish woman claimed not to be involved in any sport, but with further discussion she conceded:

*OK, so you can say I do a lot. Basically he's [husband] coaching but I say I do a lot. I go every time when he does the football sessions or the swimming sessions. I always take a register. I don't know, I speak to parents. Any ideas what to do with kids, what will we do next, or any steps, we always talk about together, so sometimes it's his ideas what we can do and sometimes it's my ideas. I take my boys to the swimming lessons. That's my role, as he does the swimming lessons, and so I'm the person who has to take my kids. As I said, we are both qualified (sport) teachers, so we want our boys to be in action in sport, to do something with sport. They go for the football session and swimming sessions, and any events we do we're both organising, so...*

There are clearly gendered aspects to her involvement in sport and her reluctance to recognise her administrative and communication role within sports coaching as legitimate involvement in sport in comparison to her ready identification of her husband's role as a coach. Such support work is vital to the success of sports clubs but often goes unacknowledged. This kind of support work is more likely to be performed by women than men and may contribute to women feeling less valued within some sporting contexts.

Other participants are active as coaches and officials. This was seen as enjoyable and rewarding for the individual concerned, and as important for encouraging more young people into sport. A Black male coach in Newport explained how he saw his role:

*When I'm coaching, it's all about being a good role model for the kids, making sure they have a good time, making sure they come back again, making sure I'm a good role model, I'm organised and effective, I'm engaging for them, I'm interactive in all those aspects, making sure they have a good session.*

Role models have been identified in the wider literature as important for encouraging minority groups to become involved in sport. There is also a popularly held view that ethnically matching the coach to the participants is preferred by minority ethnic communities, a view supported by many participants in this study.

The Gypsy participant saw the benefit of coaching qualifications for 'putting back' into the local community, especially in helping other young Travellers develop their skills. He believed that if Sport Wales wants to gain access to the Traveller community the most effective means of doing so would be via recruiting Travellers to coaching and community development roles.

*It'd help, it would help, a lot. As I say, it'd make a big difference ... If it was a travelling person, then again, as I say, they'd take it even more fair because they'd have more respect for a traveller person, which is understandable. If you asked a Muslim, they'd obviously have more time for another Muslim. Say, if you asked, erm, a Jew, they'd have more time for a Jew. If you asked a Christian, there's more time for a Christian. Well, it's the same with travellers, a travelling person would obviously listen to another travelling person more. But as I say, they wouldn't be disrespectful, they'd still listen, but as I say, it would be a lot better if it was someone who's a traveller.*

This approach has wider implications in terms of invigorating interest among young ethnic minorities and promoting sports opportunities and pathways for them. Participants felt that there is a lack of ethnic minority coaches in Wales and, concomitantly, not enough support and opportunities to help those from ethnic minorities, who desperately want to get involved, become qualified coaches to work with and inspire other ethnic minorities.

## Non-participation

Some of the reasons offered for non-participation were quite generic, and certainly not specific to respondents' race or ethnicity. It was not unusual for focus group respondents not to be participating in any sport beyond school where participation is part of the curriculum. The females were much less likely to be active in sport. Time was a big issue, related to competing priorities in the home, paid work and childcare. This is discussed further below, but is summed up by the following quote from a Polish female who used to be very active in sport, but now struggles to fit it into her life:

*I always wanted to be very active, but it's more like my husband is saying, more laziness now. I just feel I am more lazy, I would say now with my children. I know that's not an excuse, but it is sometimes the time, and when we do the swimming lessons and I have to take them... So I am tired. I do a full-time job, and then we do the football and the swimming sessions... And I am not active, but it's always in my head that I wanted to do something. I did some exercises yesterday and the day before. It's only 7 minutes but I did something. So I want to be active; I just can't explain why. But I really like to do exercises, I really like to be, you know, hyper, but...*



She, and many of the other women interviewed, expressed a desire to be more involved in sport but experienced difficulties in making this happen. Many of these issues are not specific to BME communities and apply to women from all cultures and backgrounds. However, some of these difficulties may be exacerbated in some BME communities due to the prevalence of gendered power relations that see childcare and housework as 'women's work', limiting possibilities to get involved in sport. Irrespective of such commitments, in some BME communities sport is simply not seen as important for girls and women, and the consequent male dominance of sports environments and organisations was seen as off-putting and excluding by some women. This Black female pointed to the shortage of women involved in community groups and the impacts it has for female sports participation/involvement:

*Then of course the male domination of all these forums or bodies can be quite intimidating sometimes. Yeah, it can be intimidating, in the sense that you are coming into a situation where there is already an established group. They know the politics, they know what's already going on, and you're new there, you have to learn to speak the language, you have to learn to know who's who and what's what, and all that, and that can be quite daunting for a lot of people... That can make women not participate in sport as well, so I don't think I would want to advocate for a women's only group as such, but if that is a way of encouraging women to participate and it can be sort of like a temporary, or stop-gap measure, for bringing people in until they know the ropes, then integrating them into the bigger picture, then why not go that way? [Black African female]*

## The role of Schools

We were not surprised to find that the school environment seemed key for introducing participants to sport and for that interest to be nurtured during their formative years. As already highlighted, the quality and nature of sport provision within schools varied considerably.

### *School as positive*

In some of the focus groups participants identified how sport was not only a feature of formal scheduled PE teaching, but was also offered competitively as extra-curricular activities. This offer of extra-curricular activities was vital for those who did not participate in a club environment beyond school. There was limited evidence to suggest that this offer was more appealing to certain ethnic groups than others, though there was a suggestion that children who do not necessarily have the support of their home environment may benefit most from this offer (see Chapter 5 for a discussion of family support).

Students at one school were appreciative of the good job their school was doing in terms of making diverse forms of sport available. Their teachers were recognised as being passionate about sport and the students saw how this passion is reflected in how sport is offered within the school. However, only three miles away at another school, students spoke of how PE is only offered once a fortnight, and for around one hour.



Elsewhere the importance of having a variety of sport opportunities available was emphasised, as was having a choice over what those activities are. Activities mentioned in the focus group varied from mainstream sports like football, rugby, basketball and hockey to dodgeball, darts, fencing and Zumba. This school was quite advanced in embedding sport into the school's culture. For example, there are 'Sports Ambassadors' within the student body, two of whom participated in the focus group. The overall aim of these Ambassadors is to promote a culture of sport within the school. One of their roles is to ask other students what they want/need and then communicate this to the PE Department. During the focus group, the British Bangladeshi female said she would like to play more dodgeball. One of the Ambassadors was able to tell her that the school already has male and female dodgeball teams; clearly there is a difference between availability and awareness even in a small close-knit community like a school. When another British Asian female said she would like to try fencing the Ambassador agreed to report this to the Head of PE.

This culture of active involvement and support for sport was valued by all members of the focus group. It was also something that staff at the school valued. In turn the Head of PE reported that his motto is to "*give all students the opportunity to be involved in sport on their terms*". He cited the example of how he knew of a homosexual male student who was uncomfortable getting changed with, and competing with, other male students and this was discouraging him from participating. The response from the school was to allow this boy to change separately and to participate with the female students. Other examples, more specific to ethnicity, may make participation in a 'normal' PE environment difficult, including issues of modesty (male and female) for Muslims. Although we appreciate that this kind of accommodation is not always possible for all individual characteristics (or even preferable, in terms of education about inclusion and diversity), our argument here is about schools promoting a positive environment for learning and participation, one that accounts for individual needs and differences.

One school in Cardiff illustrated how sport can be used to integrate an ethnically diverse school population. This school prioritises sport and encourages all children to get involved together. Students were very positive about sport, and about the ethnic diversity of their school and sporting experiences. This suggests that when the school is committed to providing strong sports provision young people from different backgrounds can be encouraged to take part in regular physical activity with others from diverse backgrounds and communities.

### *School as negative*

Some schools provide less positive experiences. In a school that did not prioritise sport there were poor facilities and pupils had to walk outside the grounds to access fields and playing areas. PE only happened once a fortnight, and a recent reduction in the lunch hour (to 30 minutes) further limited sporting opportunities and pupils felt sport was not valued or promoted within their school. In another school that did not prioritise sports provision this was felt particularly by female pupils who avoided taking part and were uncomfortable about PE and being active at school. Given the high dropout rate by teenage girls, this lack of support and provision is a cause for concern in terms of trying to maintain engagement. Across the study areas respondents evidenced lower levels of participation and intensity among girls and women compared with boys and men, and schools could have a key role to play in redressing that imbalance.

### *After school and links with clubs*

Many of the focus group respondents were not currently affiliated to any club/society outside school. The significance of this is that there has long been a concern that there is a considerable fall in participation amongst boys and (particularly) girls in the time immediately after leaving school. This is mainly attributed to changing priorities amongst this group and to the onus shifting to the individual to seek opportunities to participate. That being said, the school environment does potentially provide fertile ground for player/participant recruitment. In one of the schools with a 5x60 officer<sup>14</sup> working on site, facilitating sport in the school and also, establishing links with the wider community. Such dedicated provision is not available in all schools, but respondents and staff in this school believed that the community role of the 5x60 officer had a beneficial impact on students' sports participation.

Participants in the same focus group also discussed the potential positive impacts of representatives from professional sport visiting schools. They cited an example of the Russian national rugby union side visiting the school and playing a match against the students. Some of the focus group respondents explained that this experience had strongly influenced them and one now wanted to be a professional rugby player. This view was also supported by some of the young Muslim females. When asked about the potential influence of role models, they commented that having other sporty Muslim females visit their school could have a positive influence on their uptake of sport/physical recreation:

Would it help that there were role models that reflected your background coming into school, and things like that?

*Yeah, it would. A lot.*

So, for example, if a British Asian female footballer came into school, would that give you more of a want to go and do it rather than if your teacher.

*Probably.*

Why?

*Because I'd know that someone else from my religion has gone for it, no matter what, so I'll probably follow.*

Would you endorse that? Would you support that view?

*If they can do it, I can do it.*

Those who were participating in sport beyond school were generally attached to a club and participated in a structured environment. The vast majority of sports being played outside school were also being played inside school (e.g. football and rugby) but others were not (e.g. martial arts and boxing). There was little evidence to suggest that ethnicity affected propensity to join a club outside school, or which sport that would be.

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<sup>14</sup> With a remit to secure 60 minutes of physical activity 5 times a week.

## 4. Sport, Identity and Relationships

Sport Wales' vision is to 'unite a proud sporting nation where every child is hooked on sport for life and Wales is a nation of champions' and the findings from this study suggest that sport can be a powerful mechanism for community integration and social inclusion. Members of various BME communities identified sport, and specifically rugby, as linked to concepts of Wales and 'being Welsh'. However, national (home country) and ethnic allegiances remain strong for many and sport can be an environment of exclusion that reinforces difference as much as one of togetherness and acceptance. This Chapter illustrates various ways in which identities (individual, ethnic, Welsh) interact, sometimes in complementary and sometimes in contradictory ways.

### Individual/Personal Identity

For some participants sport is an important aspect of who they 'are' and they are committed to participating in and watching sport regularly. Many of those most actively involved in sport said they could not imagine not participating in some kind of physical recreation on a regular basis. This Black male summed up how sport could make an individual feel different in a positive way:

*The feeling when I play... So if I went to play basketball now, for example, once I finish I'm buzzing, basically, the whole endorphin thing, I can't stop talking, I'll just talk your ear off. I'm pretty calm and laid back throughout the day but once I finish playing I'm just full of energy, I'm buzzing, I can't shut up ... get good feelings from it.*

For him, and many of the other participants, being active in sport contributes to a positive sense of self. This was more common amongst male participants, and younger people. Sport can provide participants with social capital in contexts beyond sport and so active participation can be important to self-esteem and status within different groups. This was expressed by an ex-professional athlete who confessed "I still tell new girls that I've met 'I used to be a pro, you know. Google me'."

For many of the female participants (adults and teenagers) sport is inextricably linked to feelings about body image. The strongest motivator for many females to get involved appears to be weight control and body sculpting, but this may also inhibit involvement when the individual feels uncomfortable or ashamed about her body. This was why single sex facilities were identified as an important way to tackle some of these negative perceptions as women suggested that they feel less self-conscious in front of other women than in front of men. Activities that are seen as fun and sociable, such as Zumba, are also seen as a way to get some women to overcome self-consciousness in relation to their bodies.

Many of these links to individual identity are not specific to any ethnic group, and vary more by age and gender, but may be more prevalent amongst minority ethnic minority groups than White majority groups as a result of confidence, culture and feelings of social inclusion or isolation.

## National/Home Country Identity

Feelings about national and/or ethnic identities were mixed. This may be reflective of the different migration patterns and histories of the various BME communities and individuals involved. More recent migrants predictably identified more openly with the nations of their birth/ancestry. Communities in the South appeared on the whole to be more readily connected with Wales. This may be related to the strength of different ethnic communities in these areas, and how relationships have been established over longer periods of settlement. While all but two of the participants in Rhyl/Prestatyn were largely indifferent about their national identities, for those interviewed in Wrexham connections to national and/or ethnic identity were strong across age and gender boundaries.

Many participants expressed ambivalence in relation to their ethnic and/or national identity within Welsh society, and through sport specifically. This Afro-Portuguese teenager participant explained:

*I feel like, right, it's a hard situation because Portugal will always be my home, I think ... I think when I'm like, sixty, I'll move back there, but it's not the place to live, as in comfortably, whereas I can live here comfortably ... whereas if I moved to Portugal, it would be hard ... but then it's got the nicer things, cos like it's more active ... like they have gyms outside, like they really push people – the younger generation – to keep fit, do things, and to have all these activities as well. And then they've got loads of stuff – they do quite a few things on the beach as well. They have sports days.*

She, and some other participants, felt a connection and a sense of pride in relation to her 'home country', even if she had been resident in Wales for the majority of her life. Some participants acknowledged that life opportunities were better in the UK (Wales), but believed that quality of life and sports provision may be better 'back home'. To some extent this may reflect a lack of knowledge of facilities and sports events in Wales, as other participants identified the availability of such activities in their local area.

There were instances when participants expressed feelings of exclusion and 'Otherness' in relation to their ethnic identity, even when this was not linked to discrimination or racism. This Black male explained his feeling of being visually different in relation to the largely White Welsh population:

*But I have been in situations where I've been like 'I'm the only person of colour here.' Like we had a big event, a big launch for our event. There were 150 people there and it was only me, I was the only black adult there. There were two mixed-race people there who were volunteers, but other than that, out of the whole 150 people, I looked around during the talk and it just clicked, and I was like 'Oh my God, I am the only person here...'*

Visual difference can make some ethnic minority groups feel distinctive and potentially unwelcome, which may lead to anxiety or unwillingness to participate in mixed-ethnicity sports, as this Indian male explained in relation to young Sikhs and questions of inclusion on teams and training squads:

*I think where they are – they're Sikh, so they have a turban, so it's definitely harder for them. We encourage sport because of the health side, and we wouldn't discourage it if they wanted to pursue any kind of sport, because I actively get them involved. But I think for them it's very, very hard to break into any sport, having the identity they do. I don't say... I wouldn't want to go down the route of using the race card, but I still think it has a huge, huge impact on why kids, especially from the ethnic background, are not being chosen.*

Some groups expressed a preference for participating in sport with others from their ethnic community, rather than within mixed groups. This may be due to confidence and language barriers:

*The Chinese community are quite active in Cardiff. They have got an elderly group which is funded by charities, and they have got a venue, a church hall, and they try to do exercise there. I don't know, it's the way it is, that ethnic minorities like to stay together, they don't want to be mixing with Caucasians. They just feel more comfortable being with other people. Maybe it's the language barrier. [Chinese female]*

*Yes, plenty of Polish people, they want to be engaged in something like that, but they are quite reluctant to engage in Welsh activities, they don't feel confident to join. If we organise group of people who know each other for very long time, they don't mind if we mix with Welsh. Most people they know, they are OK yes, they are first, 'I'm going', but they would never go themselves or join to another group. [Polish male]*

Many participants take part in sport activities with others from their own ethnic community because of family ties or a sense of belonging and familiarity:

*Indian and Pakistanis, mainly. And this league was started by these Pakistani guys. Because they are from different cities and different villages in Pakistan, so they have their own team. So it's like the local league and I play for one of those clubs. Badminton is all mixed. Badminton is only me, there's only three - two Indians and one Pakistani. [Indian male]*

Why do you think that your main friends are Filipinos?

*I dunno. I used to know them because our parents are Filipinos and they kind of live the same way that we do here. [Rhyl/Prestatyn FG1]*

However, sometimes this separation is simply for practical logistical reasons:

*I know there are so many cyclist group in Swansea, but it's not suitable for the Chinese people, because our day off days are usually Monday or Tuesday. That's why we can't join other group in our city. [Chinese female]*

At the same time there were many cases where sport was seen as a catalyst for interacting with people beyond an individual's own ethnic group, including the local Welsh community:

*They were just random people when I was going to these groups. I haven't met Polish people there. I just didn't have chance. Maybe once I met somebody Polish, but they were mostly people from different ethnic backgrounds. They were just local people from my area. [Polish female]*

*it's a nice way of socialising, isn't it? Because while you are doing these things you meet people with the same interests, who are doing the same things, and you talk about it.*

Because you were saying you go to the beach with your friends?

*They are Welsh friends. They go with us, and we play, we go for walks, we take long walks along the coastal path. [Kenyan female]*

When the idea of being 'Muslim' was explored, one of the focus groups in Rhyl/Prestatyn (which contained three Muslim respondents) discussed whether their faith affected their ability to participate in mixed-ethnicity environments and issues of modesty in relation to sports participation. Contrary to what many might expect, none of the respondents believed these factors influenced their participation. The participants did not articulate this point in any depth so it is hard to say why their views were in contrast to much of the existing evidence.

What was your experience like when you did play?

*It was good, I enjoyed it a lot, met new people*

Was it easy for you as a... Well, as a Muslim girl, to play?

*Yeah. Yeah, it was easy.*

So no issues in terms of dress and things like that?

*No.*

Disclosure was not an issue for Black respondents, but the British Turk and the Gypsy respondents believed it was important to be open about their ethnic backgrounds with team mates given that neither community (Muslims or Travellers) are perceived positively in wider society. The Gypsy is a semi-professional footballer, and had also been a promising boxer throughout his teenage years. Much of the conversation revolved around football. While he discussed the culture of football within the Gypsy/Traveller community, he said that more often than not football is secondary to boxing. The reasons for this can be summarised as: boxing is traditionally the sport of choice (attributed to Irish roots); fighting is a feature of the Traveller community (i.e. while living on Traveller sites families would prove their worth through fights); and an acknowledgement that, in the current context, Travellers need to know how to defend themselves.

## A Welsh Identity

When asked if sport made them feel more Welsh, many participants laughed and gave a definite 'no'. Sometimes participants slipped between saying 'Welsh', 'British' and 'English' suggesting they do not all see a clear differentiation. For some participants, Wales is not seen as a welcoming environment and sports participation does not improve that. Despite living in Wales for many years, or being born and raised in Wales, some participants feel that they will never be welcomed or accepted as 'Welsh' as the following extract illustrates:

*I'm Welsh and proud, I suppose. But I'm not seen as Welsh, in general. I'm seen as a black man, I'm not seen as Welsh ... I'm Welsh, I've lived in Wales my whole life ... I'm not seen as Welsh, because a Welsh person is a white person from the Valleys that talks with a strong Welsh accent, I suppose, and knows a bit of Welsh. I know Canolfan Hamdden, Leisure Centre. Or bore da, hello. I don't even know if that means 'hello'. So yeah ... No, definitely not. Definitely not. [Black male]*

Visible difference in terms of skin colour played a part in this perception, but a number of new white migrants in this study also identified feelings of 'Otherness'. Undertones of racism / discrimination are apparent in such accounts, as discussed further below.

Nonetheless, some participants did feel more Welsh through their sporting engagement. This was related to two key factors: representing Wales in sport and playing/watching rugby. Many in the focus groups suggested that if they played for Wales, and thus received a Welsh shirt, they would then feel Welsh, and those who had experienced this privilege acknowledged that it did indeed make them feel part of the Welsh nation, described by a Black male as "*proud times in my sporting life*". For others the possibility of representing Wales was an aspiration that if realised would contribute to their sense of Welshness:

*You know if you win a Welsh boxing championship? You get a vest, a Welsh thing. I haven't got one of those yet, but if I get that I guess I could probably... if I win that. It's like a Welsh thing. [Newport FG1]*

If asked to make a connection between Wales and sport the response was almost always - 'rugby'. Playing rugby, watching rugby and talking about rugby were seen as 'Welsh' things to do. Other sports were not associated specifically with the Welsh nation in the same way:

Does sport make you feel more Welsh?

*Right, I think so, yes. Especially rugby. So I'm really fascinated about watching the rugby and how Welsh people are crazy about that. So it really is fun, and also when I'm in the town and I watch all these people excitement or just waiting for the match, so it's really nice. So I can really... I'm with them and I want that Welsh team will win. And especially it's about the rugby, because we are here in centre of Cardiff, it's actually all about the rugby. And yes, obviously I support the team and obviously I want that they will win. And yeah, it's really nice, I feel like because we are not good with rugby so I feel like Welsh, yeah. [Polish female]*

*When I think of 'Welsh' what comes into my head is rugby. I wouldn't say sport, I would say rugby. Rugby is more connected with Wales, I suppose. You can't put cricket and Wales together. It's all about rugby. [Indian male]*

Sport can be a way for migrants to get to know Wales physically as a landscape, and this can be a way to increase feelings of connections with the country:

*More Welsh? Well definitely I know more about Wales, because I've been to places where my colleagues at work have never been. I can draw a map where*

*I've been. I can draw a map of Wales with the hills and the roads, and they don't. In that way, yes, I think I know more about Wales, especially on the paths where I've been. [Polish male]*

Generally, national allegiance to Wales through sport was not strong. Instead, most would support their home nation in a competition, or a close neighbour (South Africa, for example, for a Zimbabwean if Zimbabwe were not competing) and would only support Wales in rugby if no African nation was playing. Rather than national identity or personal links many talked about allegiance to nations such as Spain on the basis of the talent of specific stars.



## 5. The Role of the Family

As Sport Wales recognises, families, family life and family structures influence uptake, maintenance and cessation of sports involvement. A substantial amount of youth sport is organised and delivered almost entirely by adult/parent volunteers and thus may be heavily influenced by the value attached to sport in particular families alongside other commitments and constraints (employment and income, for example). It continues to be the case that some families do not, or are unable to support youth involvement in sport. This section acknowledges that the family itself may be both a facilitator and constraint in terms of sports participation, and that apparently similar families operate very differently in different circumstances.

In some ways the family seemed to be important in reinforcing participants' likelihood of participating in physical activity, but in other cases, the family was viewed as a constraint; restricting access and discouraging participation. There was also a feeling that gaining access to families was a potentially productive method for recruiting new young people whilst also maintaining participation amongst those already involved.

### Positive Role Models

A relatively consistent pattern emerged whereby individuals whose parents were engaged in sport were also likely to participate. There were exceptions to this however, whereby children of active adults were inactive. However, if their introduction to sport had not been through school then for most it had been through the family. It is easy to see how choice of sport might be passed down through the generations as young children watch their parents play sport and are encouraged to do the same. Many parents are involved in introducing their children to sport and may act as their child(ren)'s 'coach'. It is unsurprising then that many parents will introduce their children to the sports/activities in which they are comfortable / skilled / experienced. The popular stereotype is that introducing children to sport is one of the roles of fathers (or male guardians) and that mothers or female guardians are less influential in the uptake of sport and physical recreation. As the following section demonstrates these views were not necessarily reflective of our findings.

The vast majority of respondents, irrespective of ethnicity, said parental support was vital. Those who had it celebrated it, while those who did not reflected on how much they had sought it. However, where participants' parents had been sporty it was certainly not the case that they felt they were following in their parents' footsteps. There was very little evidence to suggest that participation was directly related to parental involvement in a specific sport. In many cases parents were not currently engaged in sport as participants: indeed, in some instances parents had never been known to participate themselves, but had supported their offspring nevertheless. This latter point was reflected most frequently by the mothers involved in this study, some of whom had sacrificed their own sport/physical activities in favour of childcare.

*The big one that made me stop playing was when my daughter was first born I was playing semi-pro basketball and I was working full-time at the same time and I didn't see my daughter for three weeks, because I would leave before she woke*

*up and then I would get home when she was asleep. That was for three weeks. You know, we sat down and one day I saw my daughter and said 'Oh my God, she's grown two inches, I've missed this in three weeks' So that was an eye-opener, so I stopped playing a bit. [Polish female]*

Some of the school students believed that their parents had previously participated, but they had little experience of watching their parents play. Although there was not always a direct correlation between the sport played by the parents and that taken up by the children there seemed more generally to be a commitment to the value placed on sport / being physically fit.

It is also worth pointing out that there was little suggestion that introduction to sport is inevitably through the father/male guardian. The view from the Rhyl/Prestatyn focus groups was that mothers/female guardians should be targeted by Sport Wales as it tends to be women who 'organise' and 'regulate' (i.e. take the leading role in balancing between commitments, including education) their children's leisure activities. Once again, this view was not ethnicity specific.

*I think if you went up on the balcony now, there would be massive support for that statement, actually. I hadn't thought of that. If I can visualise upstairs now, there are certainly more mothers up there. [Filipino female]*

Similarly, this Chinese female illustrated the view that it is mothers who regulate their children's sport and physical recreation:

*As long as she's coping and her grades are not suffering, I don't hear any negative reports from all her teachers, I won't stop her from doing what she wants to do. Because I think it's going to be a challenge for her as well, to balance her time with the things she enjoys and her academics.*

These discussions were generally limited to participation as players as there was little indication that any of the participants' parents were involved in sport or physical recreation in any other ways (e.g. as coaches).

## Family Support

There was some evidence of generational differences in terms of attitudes to sport. The vast majority of the young focus group respondents, for example, said that their parents had supported their involvement in sport, but many of the adult participants acknowledged that sport was not necessarily valued by first and some older second generation migrants. This was seemed to be particularly the case among South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan) and Chinese respondents. The testimonies below illustrate how attitudes towards sports have altered through the generations:

*But then again it would have been a lot harder then [to pursue sport], because my parents were just education-focused ... Again, I'm not being negative towards them, because I've had an excellent upbringing ... As I say, in our culture, we're more focused on education than anything else, but again it's down to education, and I wouldn't be the same towards my kids as my parents*

*were to me – not to say they were bad – but I think being more educated, in terms of not just sport but everything, general health, educational, whatever you wanted to pursue, I think they were maybe slightly more narrow-minded than other people who may be living here already. But as I say, as times changed and as we move forward, we're completely different. I'm completely different to my nephews and my cousins of a younger age, than my parents were to me. I never kind of dis-encourage [sic] them to do any sports. [Indian Sikh, male]*

*It can be cultural as well. The Chinese families are very academic-focused, and not so much on the physical. Whereas you compare it to a British family – if the dad was made on sports and rugby, cricket, that sort of thing, football, they would encourage their sons and take them to Saturday morning football, that sort of thing. But I don't think you've got that in the Chinese community. Maybe now, as the generation changes, we might see that in the next generation. [Chinese female]*

In a similar vein, Indian participants in Cardiff, who were born and bred in Wales, said that their parents were indifferent or not particularly supportive of their participation in sports when they were young. They viewed education as being more important, and were often too busy providing for the family to have time to encourage or support them to participate in sport. An Indian participant talked about how he has to keep reminding his mother how important physical activity and exercise is for her health and wellbeing (an interesting role reversal with the younger generation trying to educate the older), and observed how attitudes and knowledge of the importance of sport have improved between the 1st, 2nd and 3rd generations.

Would you say your mum's view of sport has changed then?

*Most definitely changed, yeah. She wouldn't have known. Again, because of the education and where she's from – she's from Malaysia – back then they weren't big on sport and how important your health is, but now she's looked into it, and I actively educate her on how important it is. She'll go for a walk every day with her friend, they go off to the... And she enjoys it. And she physically sees a difference in herself and her mindframe, so education is key. [Indian Male]*

There was a feeling among some of the respondents that there is a reluctance in South Asian communities, especially women, to participate in sport / physical recreation, irrespective of the benefits associated with them. This Chinese respondent works in healthcare and said:

*Asian women that I see in my work, a lot of them have got Type II diabetes. You say 'go out and do some exercise. Even if it's a walk, we don't mean for you to go to the gym and run on the treadmill. Even if it's a fifteen, twenty-minute brisk walk around the park.'*

The idea that within minority ethnic communities sport and physical recreation are predominantly male spaces and that female members of the family tend not to be supported (as much) was most felt intensely by female respondents. These patterns are mainly attributed to culture; specifically, traditional gender-specific expectations:

*My mum wanted me to stop playing (netball) in February, because she said 'You need to focus now.' I said 'No, I can do both.' So with my mum it's just a case of priorities. I can't do two things at once, so she knows that very well. But I've had to work it out, work within my means and be flexible. [Tamil female]*

*Basically they think sport is for boys, they don't want me to do it ... Boys are more... their parents... they're pushed towards it... it's natural for boys to play football, any type of sport, to be part of a team. Most of the boys I know, they all take up out of school football, whereas girls will probably go do something... It's not such a big thing, their parent's won't push them... dads probably passing it onto their sons, and things like that. [Cardiff FG2]*

*I think it's changed from when we grew up ... My sisters and stuff. For my background growing up it wasn't an option for me to do sport, and for my sisters it most definitely wasn't an option. It was, you know, because my parents are very education-oriented. [Indian Sikh, male]*

Undoubtedly, in some families the view that sport is of marginal importance continues to linger. That said, within many families, sport was highly valued. This Black male respondent from Newport commented how sport featured strongly within his family, but that men and women are engaged in different things:

*Yeah, I would say the male side of the family are very sporty. The female side of the family, I wouldn't say they're so sporty ... the girls teach, coach ... but their focus is more with dance. They run a dance studio ... So yeah, they're pretty sporty. [Black male]*

Again, while there did seem to be some patterns attributable to ethnicity, we must stress the importance of avoiding essentialism as there was also some evidence of inter-family differences. For example, some respondents did identify that the value placed on sport and physical recreation in their family was not necessarily representative of other families sharing that ethnicity, or even, other members of their extended family. For example, a Tamil female said that her participation in sport (netball and athletics) was not necessarily understood (or supported) by other members of her extended family. This respondent demonstrated an interesting example of how ethnicity and gender can intersect within sporting contexts. When asked about whether her ethnicity and gender had affected her participation she explained how her parents had always supported both her and her brother, but she recognised that their participation in sport and physical recreation was not necessarily typical amongst other Tamil females. Sport and physical recreation, she said, are largely considered to be male activities within Tamil culture and females do not traditionally participate, as players at least. She also noted how she and her extended family differ in how they live with their ethnicity. While she viewed her orientation to sport as 'natural', she acknowledged how other members of her family felt she was pushing boundaries. Her aunties in particular did not understand why she would want to participate. She also noted how other family members would frequently comment on how little she was wearing when pictured playing sport. She attributed these differences to local geographies, explaining how living apart from other Tamil families provided her with an alternative perspective on normalcy.

She explained how, as hers is one of a small minority of Tamil families in the area, she does not feel attached to the wider UK Tamil diaspora. This has its benefits and drawbacks, but is certainly a benefit within the context of sport as she does not feel obligated to adhere to the same dominant cultural expectations regarding her gender as constrain other females in her family who live elsewhere. She believed that, if her family was surrounded by other Tamil families, her situation might be significantly different. Her narrative demonstrated how the family and wider community can also inhibit participation in sport and physical recreation:

*...the issue of revealing your body, that kind of links in with Tamils. Tamils don't really expect the girls to reveal their bodies. I mean, for example, a picture was posted on Facebook of me and my team, and one of my aunties saw it and she was... she pointed out, she was like 'Oh, she is in her netball kit, she's wearing a skirt.' My mum said 'Yes.' My auntie was like 'Oh, OK', because it was not something they would usually see.*

Is that a non-issue for you? You seem to be very much 'I'm aware of it, but I don't really live by it.'

*My cousins would say that to me. They live in Coventry where there are a lot of Tamil people, and they're surrounded by a lot of Tamil girls. They would always say to me 'You're very different from the Tamil girls that live here.'*

On this basis this participant believed that there will be Tamil females with an interest in sport who are not encouraged to pursue these within the family context. She believed that more could be done to encourage more Tamil females into sport and highlighted as an example a large annual cultural and sporting event, popular amongst Tamil communities across the UK. In addition to being a series of sporting contests, the event is also a cultural festival, which aims to bring the UK Tamil diaspora together in celebration of shared heritage. The event generally takes place in the Birmingham or London areas and attracts Tamil communities from across the UK. She noted how currently there are no female competitions within the event. Women are not excluded from the event, rather their participation is limited to catering and other traditional 'facilitating' roles. Moreover, she also said that, given where the event takes place, it is often inaccessible to Tamil communities living in Wales.

This gendered nature of sport and recreation was not limited to South Asian communities as explained in unequivocal terms: "Gypsy/Traveller girls won't be allowed to play sports. It, erm... no, definitely not" [Gypsy male]. His understanding was that many female Travellers are actively prevented from participating in sport by parents or male partners, but equally that sport is not valued among female Travellers. He did acknowledge that there are some female Travellers who play, or at least have an interest in sport, but that these are few and far between:

*They're just not interested in sports. Maybe out of 1000 travelling girls, maybe one, one of them would be interested in sports. They're more interested in – Travelling girls, when they're thirteen, fourteen years of age, they'll clean up, and they'll do their nails or get their hair done or that – they're just not interested.*  
[Gypsy male]

In addition to gender, parental priorities towards their child(ren)'s education is an important factor in whether or not sport is supported. Education featured prominently in a number of the interviews and the focus groups. Most participants commented on the importance of getting a quality education. This imperative was strongly linked to histories of migration, and specifically a belief in how many of the participants' parents had brought them to the UK in pursuit of a better, more affluent life to which education was the passport.

This Indian male said that parental expectations about his education "*got in the way*" of his sport:

*Yeah, they got in the way, obviously, but that's simply because I don't think they knew enough about it and the opportunities they had in it. I mean, my parents wanted me to be a doctor or engineer, more or less. That's what I mean. Most Asian parents expect them to be a doctor or engineer, something along those lines. So I wasn't really exposed to the right mentality in general.*

While it would be inappropriate to generalise about whether education is prioritised more by certain ethnic groups than others, the importance of education did feature strongly in the testimonies of most South Asian, Filipino and East Asian participants. Many commented that reconciling their desire to play sport with their parents' expectations for high grades was challenging. In many cases participants said that parental support for sport was contingent on achieving well at school and in the focus groups participants said that their sporting involvement had to be curtailed to accommodate exam preparation. It is appropriate to once again stress that these views are not specific to BME communities and will be replicated in many White Welsh families. However, the additional pressure for educational achievement is perhaps more greatly felt by ethnic minority children because in some cases their parents have not received a formal education themselves. A Thai female in one of the focus groups for instance said that she felt pressured by her mother to gain 'A' grades in all her exams:

*My mum wants me to get As in everything, which I probably can't.*

So you're feeling the strains?

*I can get As in the other subjects, but in maths I'm in foundation, so I can't in that one.*

Do you think on that basis that if you said 'I want to go and play sport for two hours tonight, rather than do some coursework?' you would be supported?

*Yes, she'd probably say go.*

She'd let you go?

*Yeah. But then when I get home she'll probably make me revise until nightfall.*

Similarly, some others said they had to provide their parents with evidence of hard work and good grades before they would pay for training sessions. Comments from a group of young male and female Filipinos were illuminating:

Do you think that that emphasis on education ... is it cultural, is it typical of Filipino culture?

*All: Yeah.*

How much of an emphasis is it?

*Male: I understand it, because when I used to go to the school in the Philippines I have to pay. In here it's free. In Philippines you have to pay.*

*Yeah, it's quite expensive ... so our parents moved us here.*

Do you feel the pressure of that?

*Sometimes they use it as blackmail.*

Explain that to me.

*Like ... back home they'd use that card again ... 'Oh you know, back home you'd have to do ten quizzes a day and over here they ... once a term, and you don't respect, or you don't appreciate the fact you're here getting a free education...'*

These views were not typical of the sample however. Many of the African and Polish respondents for example said that sport continues to have high importance, the health and social benefits of being physically active were stressed by the women in particular.

*Probably the most important for me is, like, health. Yeah, because I want to live longer, I want to be healthy. I don't want to have any illness. This is one of the things that I can do, like for free, so I don't need to go to the gym. I can cycle, I can run, and I can walk sometimes, and it helps me to be healthy. [Polish female]*

*I'm not really a very sporty person, but I try and do training at home at least three to five days a week, especially in the morning, so I try to wake up earlier, about half past six in the morning, and then do training with my DVDs or trainings on YouTube. [Polish female]*

In addition, the Gypsy respondent maintained that the vast majority of Gypsies/Travellers are removed from formal education from the age of eleven, and are 'home-schooled' thereafter. This version of home-schooling, he believed, is not particularly rigorous with many parents, giving priority to teaching their children about business, rather than following a standard curriculum:

*Now, when you're home-tutored, you only get ... you only get a couple of days a week, and plus that's mostly night-time, so through the daytime, you do pretty much what you wanna do. Which in my case, was I'd work every day, Monday to Friday, I'd work with my dad. Which also made me the person I am today. [Gypsy male]*

The type of sport participants believed parents would or would not support was also discussed. The male British Turk for instance said that his parents did not particularly like him participating in rugby. He did not know the reasons for this, but believed that a combination of the sport's physicality and the existence of racism at grassroots levels of the game probably accounted for much of their anxiety. The Chinese participants believed that Chinese people prefer non-contact activities, such as swimming. Some of the female Chinese respondents said that non-competitive activities would also be preferred, again highlighting swimming as an example. The Gypsy respondent also discussed how the community's emphasis on boxing was quite exclusionary towards females. He believed that there is a tendency within Traveller communities for men to 'protect' female members of the family and as boxing is the main sport within this community, many women are excluded from it due to concerns over their safety.

There was very little suggestion of parents preferring their sons/daughters to participate in ethnicity-specific environments. Rather, the integrative potential of sport was emphasised:

*Different cultures all playing together in sport. All working together, lots of people have different backgrounds, but because they're all in a team they all have to work together ... sport brings people [together].* [Cardiff FG 1]

*I helped to organise a tournament a couple of months ago, and we got people out of the synagogue come down... Jewish in Cardiff. It was kind of weird, but it's a change, and it's positive, but we need more of it.* [Indian male]

*Yeah, it's a nice way of socialising, isn't it? Because while you are doing these things you meet people with the same interests, who are doing the same things, and you talk about it.* [African Kenyan male]

*New friends. Like swimming. Actually it's not making friends, but conversation with other people, because in the swimming pool sometimes I will conversation to other people, maybe Welsh people, other nation people, anyone, yeah.* [Chinese male]

In addition to parental support and considerations about education, there was also some evidence regarding the complexities surrounding spousal support. As already highlighted there is a popular perception that female members of the family enable male members to pursue sport and physical recreation by taking on a dual burden: paid *and* domestic work.

*... there is no-one to look after our children. We don't want to drop our kids to someone... and as we do quite a lot when we do football sessions, as they don't swim on the Tuesday and Thursday, like my [son], he swims only on Thursdays, so if I go for a swimming session on a Tuesday I always try to find someone to look after him. So like today I didn't want to ask again someone to look after... you know, so there is... we haven't got parents here, no grandparents, so there is no-one to look after... We've got friends, but they have their own children.* [Polish female]

There was also evidence, however, of men experiencing pressure not to participate:

*They don't like it. They're always moaning. I'm lucky today, because she's staying with her mum, so I've got the time to play... I'm free bird today. She's not happy. She goes 'Oh you play six days a week, so you just choose three days.' But I try. When she goes to bed I just sneak out of the house and I just go to sport. We do have arguments about it sometimes, but she's OK, she's used to it now.* [Indian male]

Other men had stopped participating due to pressure from a female spouse. Another Indian male said:

*Well, my parents supported me, to be honest, when I was in school. They were like go and play. I just played it for fun, never took it seriously. But now, when you get married or get a girlfriend, there's no way... either you spend time with them or you lose them [laughs].*



Despite these comments there was virtually no discussion among respondents of the possibility of partners sharing sport and physical recreation.

## Lack of Knowledge of Sport and the 'System'

Many of the participants believed that their parents had not offered them complete support because they perceived sport to be a trivial pastime, devoid of economic and occupational worth. Most believed that their parents were unable to see sport as anything other than a professional activity. In other words, sport was attributed very little value as a purely *leisure* activity. This can be explained as a general lack of understanding of the organisational structure of sport and physical recreation at grassroots level. A Cardiff-based Indian male summed this up:

*My parents didn't have enough belief. They knew how rare it was to get through - obviously you've got to be exceptionally good to get through, but I just don't think they understood the importance of it [in other ways].*

## Bonding

The idea that sport and physical recreation can help bind families together was more explicit amongst some ethnic groups than others, and was stronger among women than men. Participants in this study were more likely to participate in sport/physical activity with their friends, rather than family members. Reasons for this were very rarely articulated by participants. However, there were Polish, Syrian, Kenyan and Chinese women with young children who emphasised the importance of doing physical exercise as a family. The most often cited activities to do as a family were cycling and walking, mainly because they were free and could be done with little to no preparation.

*To be honest, all we do, I try to, a few times a year, take all my family just to go... not the mountain, but just to see, like, from a five to ten miles walk in the mountain, yeah. We have paths across the Brecon Forest in Wales, we've been to Tenby and Sundays the paths, yeah. But basically it's just walking now.*

What do they think of you and your rock climbing, or the trekking?

*They really enjoy our trips. Of course, they complain because they taking too big distance, too difficult route. [laughs]. On the end of day, they complain about the corns. [laughs] But I think they enjoy that. [Polish male]*

*He's (son) grown up, my daughter's grown up. They've got their own lives now. They don't want to spend time with their mum and dad. [laughs]. We go out for walks together. If it's a weekend, it's a nice day, we go out for walks in the park together.*

So you do activities together...?

*... we'd do cycling as well. We've all got bikes and we've got a bike rack and we've done cycling together. [Chinese female]*

Beyond cycling and walking, there was evidence from the Chinese and African respondents that badminton and table tennis were good activities for the whole family:

*I remember trying to make sure that we had family time. We went to Center Parcs and we played badminton together. We did sport together in Center Parcs. You know, it was family time. And we did it for a little while when we got back home, in the winter months, just to get out and be active and play badminton in the leisure centre. We booked a court every week... that must have been about ten years ago now. [Chinese male]*

*My other relatives, cousins and that, my uncles. When we're all together sometimes, they'll be like 'Oh, come on, let's all have a game of badminton. Let me teach you how to play this, how to play that.' And they teach me and we play together. [Cardiff FG 2]*

*... we've just started table tennis, and we played... When I was young I used to play in school, so I can be a team-mate for him. I can play against him, so that will be nice. If I can save the £3 every week, we can go. [African Kenyan male]*

It is difficult to ignore the latter's reference to the cost of activities. We will return to this point in Chapter 6.

Furthermore, a schoolgirl (who identified herself as Persian) spoke of her parents being very committed to volleyball. They had participated in leagues/national teams in their youth. They had encouraged her and her sister (16) to engage in volleyball; the family currently travelled to play in teams twice a week. Other schoolgirls spoke of their parents being keen on sport. For example, a Latvian girl's father was a professional ballet dancer in his home country, whilst some of the South Asian young people mentioned how their parents followed cricket. None of these participants specifically suggested that any of these activities helped the family 'bond' per se, but it seemed to be important for their family identity, or to consolidate their positive relationships as a family unit. In addition, some female participants mentioned how they and their husbands watch sport on the television with their children, which provides opportunities to think about involvement in other ways.

## 6. Barriers and Aids to Participation

Sport Wales is concerned with what it is that prevents people participating in sport, and conversely what might aid their involvement.

### Barriers

Participants in this study identified a range of factors acting as barriers to entering and progressing in sport. Many of these are familiar to those working in sport policy and provision; it is the context, circumstances and combinations that vary and make their resolution challenging.

#### *Gender*

There are clearly gender differences in terms of participation and attitude to sport, though it is not easy to differentiate personal choice from social roles and expectations; and gendered differences were also identified in terms of facilitating participation. Respondents explained the different levels of support for sport offered to males and females in the family, typically in terms of gendered family relations that prioritise the leisure activities of men over women. There was also evidence of women and girls being actively deterred from participating in sport due to the broad notion of 'cultural expectations'. This was observed throughout, but was more prevalent among South Asian and Black African families.

*Boys are more likely to get into it.*

*Why?*

*You know, the old stereotype of women staying home and doing the traditional housework. So the mums that have grown into that have never really experienced sport. My mum was lucky enough to have experienced that. But I think also because girls are more pushed towards the educational route, just like I was, but most don't consider doing sports, they don't get enforced by their parents. They might do it in school, but they would never pursue it outside school. [Tamil female]*

Issues of gender segregation were also highlighted. Much of the current literature on this in the context of BME communities points to how South Asian (predominantly Muslim) women find it unappealing to participate in mixed environments. Although also observed here, this pattern was not specific to South Asian women. Indeed, the prospect of participating in mixed environments was daunting for many of the women involved in this project, particularly those conscious of their bodies:

*Well I know there's a women's group I used to go... these women always wanted to go to the women swimming, maybe for cultural reasons, because they don't want to be seen. [Black Kenyan female]*

*Some people probably feel embarrassed to run outside because there are people watching, so they do it in the morning, at around 5, 6. [Newport FG]*

*The only thing about swimming is because some of them are Muslims they don't... Most people prefer Zumba to swimming. The Pakistanis and the others that are Muslim. They don't really expose their bodies, they don't really... maybe because of their religion, that's why. [Black Nigerian female]*

Some of the men acknowledged the challenges faced by women:

*I don't think that maybe Muslim girls are fortunate enough, or have the mentality to actually get into football or stuff like that, simply because of cultural differences. And that's something I think needs to change, because you can still be a Muslim and be able play football professionally. I don't think many Muslim girls realise that. I don't think they have the opportunity to, as well. [Indian male]*

In addition to being body conscious, many of the women are self-conscious about their ability to perform particular activities and therefore prefer to participate in environments that are specific to their skill level.

Beyond grassroots participation there was a feeling that sports organisations are male dominated. The lack of female (White and BME) representation within these organisations was considered to be both symbolic and typical of an institution that has privileged the position of men. A Black woman, who is an active member of a local race equality forum commented that the lack of female participation in 'formalised' capacities gives the impression that women are not valued in certain sporting spaces. She suggested that this can be disempowering:

*That's something that's always been there since time immemorial, and it still goes on at the moment. I really don't know why there should be that gender difference in an age where so much equality is being talked about, and we feel that we have made so many advances as far as equality is concerned. But I feel inequality is still there, especially gender inequality. And as far as sport is concerned it's still alive and kicking. I can give you an example of the BME sports forum that I'm involved in. I'm mostly the only black woman there – just the one woman – here in Newport. And I think to myself 'Where is everybody else?' You know. And if at all there are any women who come they are mostly people who are planning for funding for their groups. They are not really involved in the forum itself, to see how we can actually help or how we can actually encourage other women from the BME background to get involved in sports. I always ask myself 'What is it?' Then of course the male domination of all these forums or bodies can be quite intimidating sometimes. Yeah, it can be intimidating, in the sense that you are coming into a situation where there is already an established group... It's like when I come into... like I was explaining to you earlier about the swimming... I'm going into a new place and everybody just stares at you and you think 'What have I done?' It's the same kind of feeling that happens when you go into a male-only meeting. Everybody looks at you and then you just think 'I hope I'm not going to make a fool of myself here.' Or 'If I ask a question I hope it's not going to be something stupid.' You know, you become conscious of a lot of things because of the environment, of your perception of it. To you it's quite intimidating. It might turn out to be, you know, they might be very welcoming, they might really be willing to teach you or show you*

*what really it's all about. We're all different. It's creating that environment that's inviting for people to come to, I think that's important to women. [Black woman]*

## *Time*

Time was a major limiting factor for all participants, irrespective of their ethnicity. There were links to gender, in terms of having time around paid work (where relevant), child care and homecare, and it was female respondents who were more likely to identify these factors than men. This was explained on the basis that many work full time, and the majority of their own leisure time is spent facilitating their children's (and to some degree, their male partner's) sport and leisure activities. The women who valued sport and physical recreation usually had a history of participation (mainly walking and/or going to the gym) and said that they would like to do more, but that they were constrained by, amongst other things, time. In pursuing their desired participation they may find it more difficult to make time than their male equivalents:

*After the interview ... he's [her husband] going running after the interview, and I'm more thinking like 'Oh, we have to get our boys, get the tea' and something. For [husband], there is no limit for time, do you know what I mean?' [Polish female]*

Asked if sport is a priority for him, the male said "yes" and the female replied "I'm a good wife, letting him do it". While this pattern was fairly consistent throughout the sample areas there was also sometimes evidence of more equitable distribution of sport and domestic responsibilities. Some participants (mainly male, but some female) said that time pressures were equally relevant to males. That said, it was certainly more common for female respondents to identify family responsibilities as a barrier than it was for males.

The type of work that migrants tend to have was also identified as a barrier. Shift work and long unsociable hours make it difficult for people to commit regular time for sport, and this sometimes leads to ending informal activities as well.

*I do shift work, yes. Also it becomes very difficult for you to be able to be committed, even to play, to say OK, I will join a club where I can play tennis or play cricket. It becomes very difficult because you don't have that consistency ... But, like I said, because of the work patterns of people it's so difficult to be able to meet and be able to do things. [Zimbabwean male]*

Moreover, the physically demanding nature of a lot of this work acts as a deterrent to pursuing sport and physical recreation as leisure:

*I think the other thing is people are so committed to work, so you find sometimes that, because of the jobs they do, at the end of the day you might not find extra time to do other things, it becomes a struggle. Whereas you might want to do it ... I remember at some point I joined the gym, but because of my work pattern, because I was going to uni, and at the same time I was also working, so it becomes very difficult for me to slot in the time. [Zimbabwean male]*

For school students time is also a limiting factor. The females in particular felt they had to spend lots of time studying and then any remaining time is for socialising, which is higher on

their agenda than sport. The young males give greater priority to sport but still struggle to fit in as much sport as they would like. The way the subject was discussed it seemed clear that this gender difference is attributed to family relations with boys generally being supported more in sport by their parents.

*Boys are more... their parents... they're pushed towards it... it's natural for boys to play football, any type of sport, to be part of a team. Most of the boys I know, they all take up out of school football, whereas girls will probably go do something... It's not such a big thing, their parent's won't push them... dads probably passing it onto their sons, and things like that. [Cardiff FG]*

## Language

The level of English language proficiency varied considerably through the sample. Language was an individual barrier, but also intersected with a range of others too, for example in negatively influencing confidence to access sport resources. Indeed, there was evidence of some participants feeling isolated because they did not have the confidence to ask how they could access sport and physical recreation opportunities:

*It is a little bit different, because obviously there will be always more people from this country than from another because we... but also this is because, I dunno, I'm just thinking right now... I think they quite shy. So, for example, they try to go to play football with a lot of people when, you know, they... this is not their country, maybe this is easier for the students when people are from different countries. And also they have this access to different facilities. But yeah, it is a little bit barrier, I think. It's just maybe they don't have enough contacts with someone who can just show him what is available. And probably they are too shy. [Polish female]*

There is a gender dimension to this too. Those minority ethnic women not working outside the home are not exposed to, or need to use, English language in their everyday lives. As English is often not the language of choice at home, but is needed in school, many young people from BME families are bilingual. This can be enabling for many young people. However, it continues to be the case that older (particularly female) migrants are less exposed to English language and so rely on younger family members to communicate on their behalf. In the long term, this can be alienating for many older people. Those older people without good language skills feel discouraged from taking part in activities, or do not know about them. It tended to be the case that the older participants worked in environments where there were many others sharing their ethnic identity. In these environments they would generally speak in their first language. The Portuguese participants explained how, because many adults live and work in environments where there are other Portuguese people, their language skills are poor and so this limits their ability to understand information:

*I can say about 90% doesn't speak – er, doesn't understand the language. Trying to learn, but – but it's difficult because they er, live in a Portuguese environment right. There's three Portuguese coffee shops, erm, is good! But then people just tend to go there, so they never learn much, and first thing they do when they arrive is watch Portuguese television, is very important, so they have to hear Portuguese news,*

*Portuguese everything from on the telly, but not much here, so that's why they not learning. [Portuguese female]*

*Anyway, all I know is a lot – most Portuguese people they work, kind of, together – yeah – 'cos they all work in the same area. Yeah. They all in the same factory – like my dad. But my mum's in [name] now, but if she – she'd be there. Plus working in a factory, it's not like you have much communication, so it's not like you're gonna learn that much, is it? Yeah, yeah. You only need to learn the basics, like, 'pass that' or 'get that'. [Wrexham FG1]*

This group were identified by local community workers as being at risk of social exclusion, due to poor English language and weak social networks as they were now all retired and so did not have work as an avenue for integration. The group were keen to engage in activities like dance, swimming and group walks, but lacked the confidence to approach facilities and existing groups. They suggested that limited provision of targeted information in Portuguese as well as English would make them feel more welcome and confident in accessing existing provision. This group identified the Welsh language as a further barrier that increased their confusion and confidence in their (broken) English language skills.

Language is also highly influenced by the context of arrival. Asylum seekers are less likely to be proficient and so experience more communication problems. In the Chinese community language would appear to be an especially important barrier as there were several Chinese participants who required an interpreter for the interview, despite having lived in the UK for many years (even decades). Almost inevitably, there was a feeling that those who possess greater English language proficiency are more easily able to integrate into 'mainstream' Welsh culture, including sport:

*So when I came over, this country is a bit different from Africa, because you don't seem to have time on your hands, and also some of the facilities, maybe for you to be able to access them is a bit of a problem in some ways, especially when you are not from here. You find it difficult to be part of a group. [Zimbabwean male]*

Issues with language may also affect choice of sports provision. The parents from the Polish community seem to prefer a Polish coach. This Polish couple, who coach swimming and football, say that their sessions consist almost entirely of Polish families:

*The parents, yeah. And sometimes it's more parents than children. Some of them, not most of them, but quite a few of them, they can't speak [English] ... so I think it's best to just speak Polish.*

They pointed out that young children also prefer Polish, although this changes when they reach about 7, so most of their clients are young children:

*I spoke with one parent. They've got a daughter, she's 3 or 4 years old. They said if family like ours speaks Polish I know that she goes to school every day but anyway she don't understand the English people. She needs, like, if we speak with Polish on phone, she needs more... She is more comfortable if her teacher is from Poland because she understand anything. For example, when she came for*

*swimming pool, she came on swimming pool, she was worried about teacher, but when she knows me she make sure that I am Polish, I speak Polish, she start smiling, and because it was not difficult for her. The same with my boys. They don't want to go to start football for different teams. [Polish male]*

There was also some evidence that Chinese participants would prefer to be taught/coached in their native language, and are reluctant to attend sessions if the instructor is not Chinese:

*Probably because of the language, because the instructor doesn't speak good English.*

And before that, did you had an English-speaking instructor?

*Yes, he's no good because they don't understand. [Chinese male]*

It is not always possible to have a Chinese instructor so this Chinese participant reflected on how she watches yoga and Tai Chi videos on YouTube:

*Tai Chi, yoga ... when it comes to the Chinese community ... would be more suitable. I did attend some classes which were held at [place], which is an elderly retirement home for Chinese people. But you have to have certain numbers to keep the class running. But because with the people travelling back to Hong Kong or China for holidays, etc., they couldn't keep up the numbers and so they had to stop the classes.*

Do you exercise at home on your own, or with other people?

*I just do it at home.*

The YouTube clips then, they are in Chinese are they?

*Sometimes Cantonese, sometimes Mandarin. Sometimes instructions from Hong Kong, or Taiwan or China ... Just depends what comes up. [Chinese female]*

It is difficult to say whether language is the main reason why these respondents are able to relate more easily to native speaking coaches. There may be additional factors, broadly identified as cultural 'commonalities', which make these interactions more comfortable than if the coach was Welsh.

Because 'African' encompasses so many ethnicities, 'Africans' in Wales are as likely to share English as an African language, but language was still identified as an issue. As one South African pointed out, this causes divisions within the African community itself, as well as in relation to integration into the Welsh community:

*Now when we come to African people we are from the continent of Africa, but it's a very big continent and the language is not universal like English. So even with this group that I and my two cohorts, ... and the other gentleman, have started, I noticed that even though we ... One thing we have in common is that we are all black and we are all from the African continent, but when we're under the same roof, people start to sit around tables with the people they speak the same language with. So the point I'm making is, even though our commonalities are our African-ness and our blackness, it ends there, we are still separate people. [South African female]*



It is therefore important to acknowledge these inter-group differences and not expect all 'Africans' to be the same or have the same needs and interests. Indeed, one of the Zimbabwean participants commented on how Zimbabweans, generally, do not struggle with English – “*You can't get a job in Zimbabwe if you don't have English*” – but acknowledged that many African people do find the language difficult:

*But speaking on behalf of other people from other countries, you find they do struggle, because maybe some of them would have learned English in this country, so it becomes difficult for them. So for them to maybe approach a facility and say they want to join, it becomes very difficult. [Zimbabwean male]*

The length of time people had been in the UK also affected English language ability. Participants in Swansea were mainly asylum seekers and therefore felt language barriers particularly acutely. This Syrian respondent who had only been in the UK five months simply said: “*I can't understand good English [sic]*”. As already mentioned, however, there was also evidence of individuals from Chinese, South Asian and Portuguese communities having been resident in Wales / the UK for decades, but still having very poor English language skills.

### *Confidence*

Confidence was mentioned as a barrier for many, although it was manifest in different ways, including language, access to and progress in sport. This African participant felt that confidence was what held back most African people in the community. He linked this to language but also to cultural differences, which are also affected by how long someone has lived in Wales:

*Yeah ... what I would say, sometimes when the most things that affects most people is maybe confidence. I mean you have to be somebody who is just confident to be able to approach somebody. But I think now, now that I have stayed in this country for some time, I've got that confidence and courage and to be able to be part of a group. But speaking to other people, they find it very difficult to be able to mix and mingle with the locals. [Zimbabwean male]*

During the interview he repeatedly returned to the issue of confidence. He talked about having the confidence to approach clubs or organisations to get involved in an activity:

*But it's how to access that, how to become a member. Because you can't just walk in and say 'I want to play darts, I want to play pool, or I want to play ...' whatever game they are playing. It's the confidence bit that comes into play - to say 'OK, who do I approach to become a member?'*

Here, confidence is explicitly linked to knowledge: *of clubs, facilities and key people and places*. We are not suggesting that this is something peculiar to BME communities, but it is often the case that minority ethnic communities need some assistance if they are to enter an unfamiliar environment. They may also need assistance with raising awareness of what provision is available in their areas and, in turn, providing information on how this can be accessed. For any ethnic group access to sport is usually facilitated by intermediaries, influential people who are 'in the know'. Long established ethnic groups may have members of their community

embedded within these institutions, but this is certainly not the case for all minority ethnic groups. New and early migrant communities may need a more proactive approach from providers of sport and physical recreation.

For others, (lack of) confidence referred to their proficiency in the activity. Some participants spoke of wanting to take up activities for the first time, but worried whether there would be entry level provision that would make them feel safe and welcome. For many, taking the decision to try and access sport is a big step and so it is important they feel enabled to do so. This respondent linked her confidence to take part with her age, specifically how she wanted a class (Pilates) with an instructor who would make sure she did not injure herself, yet like many of us did not want to be categorised by age:

*Because before, when I was working, I didn't have any time for it, per se. I've got time for it now, but I don't know ... I know the Council has got some activities going on in the parks, like swimming for a certain age group, and exercises for a certain age group. But I don't want to be labelled as a person of a certain age. I just want to go to a place where I can feel comfortable. Because I want to feel comfortable, not because ... I just don't want to feel like that ... I would feel comfortable under the tutelage of someone... under the supervision of someone like that who knows what they are doing so that I don't put my health in danger by trying to keep fit. [South African female]*

In some cases, lack of confidence was linked to a perception that the 'system' was exclusionary. Respondents in Newport, Cardiff and Swansea believed that (professional) club scouts overlook communities known to be high in ethnic minorities. Furthermore, respondents in both Wrexham and Rhyl/Prestatyn believed that opportunities to be scouted were better for those living in the South. Some of the participants who (had) played a sport to a high level cited how coaches did not push them sufficiently, or scouts seemed uninterested in them. An undercurrent of racism was suggested:

*I never used to get motivated by most of my coaches. I see them motivating other players, but not like ... there are three or four of us who were not as ... They motivate the rest, but not us. They don't motivate us too much, they don't push us too much but they will motivate the rest. I can see it ... I complained at the time, but... I never got motivated too, too, too much. I never got pushed by the coaches a lot. And even other players that were like me would have felt exactly the same way. [Black male]*

*I think, compared to the white population in Cardiff, I see Cardiff City football club, they head down towards the valleys, towards the more richer areas, to find footballers. I don't see many of them coming down and contacting the youth here. There are a few, one or two, you know. [Indian male]*

*Basically, at the age of 9 I used to play for Grangetown Boys' Club. There were a lot of scouts and that used to be there. There had been scouts a lot of times, for a lot of different teams, but never from Cardiff City, they never wanted me. So I would go on different teams, Birmingham, Bristol City, Bristol Rovers, Bath City, all them teams they used to have scouts. There used to be black scouts who used to be there*

*... there's not enough scouts coming here to watch our area to play football. They're sending... For example, Cardiff City, they don't have enough black people or Asian people ever playing for Cardiff City. You rarely see them nowadays. They sent scouts to Caerphilly, Valleys, wherever, to get players. We don't have enough players. That's the only negative thing about football nowadays around here. That's what I think about it. [Black male]*

### *Transport*

For those without a car this is a key issue. It was pointed out that people living in 'rough' areas of town (often where migrant communities are concentrated) needed to be wary of walking or running alone at night. This also restricts choice of activities. People without access to their own transport, and for whom public transport is restricted by cost and routes, have to choose activities out of convenience rather than because they are the best match for what they want to participate in. If their preferred activities are not immediately accessible, they tend not to participate.

The majority of people said that they knew of activities in their local area, but their perception of how accessible these activities are varied. The teenagers who saw transport as a key issue only considered activities to be available to them if they were within walking distance or if they had someone to take them (they did not mention taking a bus).

The Polish couple mentioned above identified transport as a difficulty in providing swimming for the Polish community. Having struggled to negotiate appropriate time slots in the council pool locally they had to use a pool eight miles away which caused problems:

*Yeah, they come, they have to pay for the petrol, swimming lessons, and also their time. So some of them, they are so desperate for children going for the swimming lessons and they go by bus, but it's only two months they go by bus, so yeah, so transport, I say. It's the big issue. They've got no car, there's no chance. [Polish female]*

Concerned about the consequences for children's opportunities, they continued:

*We were thinking about if we could buy a van or something so we could take children for the swimming lessons or the pool sessions. It is always ... It is a big issue, transport, yeah. Especially with our football sessions - we've got so many of them asking, but ... We've got two cars so it's quite easy for us. But now we go with only one car, so we've basically lost three children coming for our football sessions, as we ... It is the transport, yeah! [Polish female]*

A further barrier was identified when discussions moved on to participants wanting to progress to a higher level in their activity. As discussed above respondents in Newport, Cardiff and Swansea believed that (professional) club scouts overlook communities known to be high in ethnic minorities, meaning that ethnic minorities must travel outside of their locality to be noticed. Furthermore, respondents in both Wrexham and Rhyl/Prestatyn believed that opportunities to be scouted were better for those living in the South. Moreover, in Rhyl/Prestatyn there was a perception that, depending on family circumstances, because

representative team trials and higher level activities took place outside their local area they were not always accessible.

For example, a young British Turk, who dreamed of becoming a professional rugby player, said that he wanted to take rugby to the “next level”, but he felt constrained by having limited knowledge of the next steps. He was unaware of where and when trials for representative teams took place. His view was that the additional travel needed to get noticed was a lot of “hassle”:

*I'd love to play rugby... in a professional ... My mum and dad want me to get a job, and all that, but my dream would be to play rugby in a professional manner.*

What would help you get there, do you think?

*Getting spotted by one of the... whatever you call them, I'm not sure.*

A scout?

*Yeah.*

Do you play in the right environments for them to see you? Do you play for a mainstream club, for instance?

*I play for Rhyl, but other than that, no. I play for the school...*

There isn't anything else is there? Rhyl is the mainstream... it's a...

*Well, there's Rhyl, and then you're going as far as Colwyn Bay, just for training – and it's a lot of hassle. [British Turk male]*

In addition, an Indonesian female, who possessed a black belt in Karate, said that she had stopped participating mainly because sessions directed at her level were not taking place locally. It is important to note here that it was not the distance she would have to travel to these sessions, availability of transport or cost of travel *per se* that acted as barriers, she was simply deterred by the amount of effort involved. She was quite honest about this, saying: “*I have time to do a lot of things, but just don't. I'm a bit lazy.*”

### *Cost of participation*

The barrier of cost is related to a number of the others. Although felt most acutely by asylum seekers, it was also referred to by Chinese, African and some South Asian (mainly Pakistani and Bangladeshi) participants. This African participant said that cost is the biggest barrier for her and other African women, especially those seeking refuge in the UK. When asked if there was anything Sport Wales could do to help more people like her become active she said:

*The only thing I'd like to say, it's just funding. Just pay for us and they see us (laughs) ... Simple as that, yeah. Simple as that. [Nigerian female]*

She went on to explain further:

*Actually, it's because we are black and minority it's money that's so, so very important. Money to register, money for the activities, money to find somebody - a childminder for your child ... Money for transportation down to the centre, then they need money for the kids ... the tennis, the shoes, the tops for Zumba. So it always leads to money, money, money.*

The position of asylum seekers is quite distinct from that of people from minority ethnic groups more generally. They face particular barriers related not just to cost, but mechanisms for payment. Having the Home Office card rather than cash benefits means they cannot pay to use leisure facilities and, as a consequence, are more likely to be isolated / less well integrated into the community. Even when people have an established right to remain it may take some time to acquire the knowledge, skills and social connections to support sports participation.

*With all my experience as an asylum seeker, I've tried my best to do any sport that I can do, basically, anything possible which is free, because I don't have any cash, I don't have any money given to me. I can't work. It's really hard with two children without money and to support myself and those children into sport, and to encourage them to do that ... A lot of these sports that I do I would love to do with the children, but I need money, so I can't access them as much as I would like because I don't have cash. So if there is anything that can be done, especially for people who are living in Section 4, in this situation like myself, then that would really help. [Kenyan female]*

The research highlighted the overlapping significance of social class and income in shaping the form of participation. Many of the adult respondents were on low incomes (asylum seekers in particular) and so favoured free activities such as walking or running. For those who would otherwise prefer to participate at the gym or another non-competitive environment, cost was identified as prohibitive. The women and girls in particular said that the cost of joining the gym was too much for their already limited budgets and therefore they could not justify this expense against competing priorities.

*And then when that wouldn't continue for long, you know, because of financial constraints, I just decided to jog. So I've been walking and jogging for a long time. And then when I started working I joined the gym for five or six months or whatever, and of course that tends to be quite expensive. Even swimming, going swimming – because I used to swim every morning, every day, so that proved to be too expensive as well, because of the kind of job I was doing, I wasn't getting much.. And I have a place of my own now, so I had to prioritise. [Black female]*

*I just feel that I should walk.. Not only that, it's not been easy to be a single mother in this country, so if you want to go to the gym you pay in loads and I don't have the money. I think that's to be the first reason. I think if I had the money maybe I would have registered at the gym, or swimming or something. I really want to, but because I have to pay per month I think I can't afford it. So that's the reason. [Nigerian female]*

Cost was not a factor for all participants though. Few of the focus group (younger) respondents said they were restricted by cost and indeed most spoke of their parents having cars and being able to give them lifts to matches/competitions and training sessions. For example, the young people in Rhyl/Prestatyn were still under the care of their parents, all of whom were in relatively skilled occupations (e.g. health care) and who were prepared to support their children's participation. Referring to his own community one respondent said that the Gypsies/Travellers are generally quite affluent and, moreover, willing to invest money in sport. He reflected on how football fixtures within the informal Gypsy/Traveller league tend to take

place at quality venues – professional club training grounds for example – the cost of which is covered by the players.

*I think the lads give two and a half thousand quid the other day to hire Doncaster stadium out for a game, which I played in. We went and played in Doncaster stadium. Chester played Doncaster, they hired Doncaster stadium out for two and a half grand. And that was all just paid between the players.*

So this is – this is not a local park, is it?

*No, no. It's all big – as I say, they train ... they have professional training grounds where they play. Like, London, I think they play in, erm. London play, erm ... on QPR's training ground, I think, so they try. It's big money, they spend big money trying to get events going, but ... for the teams, as I say, and they play once every two weeks, they play. [Gypsy male]*

### Childcare

Interlinked with cost, time and gender, a further limiting factor is childcare. While not limited to them, the women involved in this study were most likely to identify childcare as restrictive. The lack of accessibility of some activities when accompanied by a child was noted. Perhaps the most restrictive element related to childcare was the cost implications of either having to extend existing childcare provision (at the times when formalised classes might take place) or pay for childcare when they would not have done otherwise.

*... it's quite difficult because I have small children, so it's difficult to find time - in the evening we put them to bed and during the day I am busy, so it's difficult to find time to do it. [Polish female]*

*But the childminding is very important as well. Oh, it's really, really important. You know, in this country, not like Africa, you can put your child with your neighbour or your mum or auntie, anybody, but here you have to be very... So talk about childminding, which is very, very expensive here. [African female]*

*With me, it's like a problem with the childcare. When I would like to went to the gym, the crèche was open till 3 o'clock so it wasn't good, because I think loads of mothers want to do the gym, but they don't know what to do with their children. So I think this is a really big problem. [Polish female]*

The crux of the issue for the majority was that most sporting spaces do not provide provision for childcare. As this African female explained: “Yes, you're right. You just bring your children and the minder can sit down there and watch them. Yeah, that's an idea, a good one.”

For some, the act of childcare had replaced sport and physical recreation. This is just part of changing priorities through the lifecourse, though there was an acknowledgment from some that they expected this to be only temporary. This Indian male for example, spoke of how he had temporarily given up playing sport competitively since the birth of a child:

*It is sometimes family reasons, you know. I've got a daughter now, she's 18 months old. That's why I haven't played for the last two years, but that's the only thing, family reasons.*

### *Changing priorities*

In addition to starting a family and the attendant challenges this brings for engagement in sport and physical recreation, other participants noted how their priorities and interests had changed over time. For those in the focus groups a change in their leisure tastes (e.g. towards music and being in a band) and courtships had meant the end of participating in sport. While at a personal level some of these reasons may be linked to their ethnicity it is highly likely that similar responses would be forthcoming from the White Welsh community.

### *Experiences of discrimination*

Some participants did feel 'different' or 'Other' as a result of their minority ethnic status. Difference and Otherness was most firmly articulated by migrants who could be identified by skin colour and who, in contrast to the new migrants from Europe, were marked as being visibly different. For some there were other markers too, as this Indian Sikh commented:

*They're Sikh, so they have a turban, so it's definitely harder for them. We encourage sport because of the health side, and we wouldn't dis-encourage it if they wanted to pursue any kind of sport, because I actively get them involved. But I think for them it's very, very hard to break into any sport, having the identity they do.*

A Black female in Newport related her uncomfortable experiences swimming, when people openly stared at her:

*What I've noticed most of the time is that when I go swimming in most places, everybody stops and stares at me ... I don't know what they're thinking. I'll be thinking to myself, 'OK, are they thinking I can't swim, or are they thinking 'What's that black woman doing here?' Or what?' Because I'm in my swimming costume, so why are they staring at me? It really does affect me, but that doesn't stop me anyway, it really doesn't. [Black female]*

It was far from being unusual for participants from non-white ethnic minority communities to be stared at, or openly avoided (crossing the street etc.) by White Welsh people. This othering through avoidance was within urban environments; rural areas, and specifically 'the Valleys', were identified as less welcoming spaces where discrimination was more common and more direct.

There was a perception, particularly in south Wales, that opportunities for sport, from grassroots to professional levels, were much more accessible for the white population than for ethnic minorities:

*I think it's the same for all ethnic groups. If you're white, you have got far, far more opportunity to do anything in terms of sport than any other ethnic background, and I think it's a fact, it's not even anything you have to hide. It's a*

*fact. That's just the way it is. People have more, maybe a better network of people around them, people higher up, inside connections. I've seen them all kind of sugar-coated, but the fact of the matter I think everybody knows it's there and no-one wants to admit it or take responsibility to do anything to change it. [Indian Sikh male]*

Racism is a persistent and well-documented problem in sport and there is a perception (and evidence) that organisers of sport (governing bodies, coaches, officials, etc.) do not take it seriously enough and do little to challenge racist behaviour on and off the field. This Black male had experienced such situations:

*Well, a lot of people have been racist to me on the pitch a lot of times, to be honest. I played [ ] and people were... it was clear they were being racist and all sorts. The referee can hear but he doesn't really care about it. I've seen a lot over the years.*

You'd think, with the person in that position, being the ref, he'd step in and do something about it.

*Yeah, if this was live and cameras, obviously the ref would have done something about it, but obviously he does nothing. It's just me, the ref and the person saying that to you. The ref said 'I never heard nothing.'*

On the other hand, several participants believed that sport is a way to break down some of these barriers. The idea that sport is a 'level playing field' where people are judged on athletic ability rather than personal characteristics such as race and ethnicity was expressed many times, particularly by those actively and regularly involved in sport. This Black male commented on how sport offered an environment in which he suffered far less discrimination than in the course of his day-to-day life:

*I think that's the only time I've not been discriminated against, because I think people look up to talented sports players, so I think I get more discrimination on a daily basis. When I'm on the court I think I'm looked up to when I'm playing sports.*

Even beyond the context of (relatively) high performance sport, where achievement and ability can be a way to overcome prejudice, sport can be a tool for integration and acceptance. The idea that sport and physical recreation can bring people together, was frequently articulated, especially among the younger adults:

*In fact, when we are doing mountain walking, we find there are a lot of people, the locals, who are there as well, they actually support you, like you are trying to climb. Because if it's your first time, you are not doing it the right way, maybe someone will give a hand, even if you have just met them there. So I would say people, when they are out there, will support each other. And when we're playing football in the community centre, we're all right, there are no problems at all. [African male]*

He maintained that if there are any problems, it comes from the younger population but "you can't really take that to heart, because they are kids who are still growing up". Similarly, this



Tamil female reflected on her experiences of being the only person from a BME community in her club:

*My club was very welcoming. Because I'm Asian, they try to include you even more than they would if you were white, because they're quite empathetic in the fact that they understand that you might feel a bit more included because you're the only brown...*

So in what ways? Can you give me some examples of what they would do? *Like they'd confront the elephant in the room. They'd be like 'Oh, where are you from, what's your background?' Things like that. 'Oh Sri Lanka's a lovely place.' Just the general chit-chat. They wouldn't ever hold anything against you – well my team doesn't, anyway, because they're very welcoming. And they're very open about the different cultures as well, they always ask about the different religions and what Sri Lanka's like, what temperature it is there... [laughs]*

Moreover, many of the participants tended to brush off racism as an inevitable and unremarkable feature of everyday life and sport. This participant reflected on how football crowds in Rhyl respond to the fact he is a Gypsy:

*[Name], you gyppo, [Name], you gyppo'. But ... that's the small-minded people you have. Like Rhyl have got great fans, Rhyl have got maybe two or three thousand – fifteen hundred fans who go there every week, and then you've got a handful of six or seven idiots. [Gypsy male]*

White ethnic minority participants were certainly not free from experiences of discrimination and racism; indeed, some members of non-white ethnic minority communities pointed to the white groups as the ones most likely to experience discrimination in contemporary Wales. Perhaps more important was the perception that racism against white minorities is not taken as seriously by the authorities and the Welsh population at large:

*[I]f you went and called a black boxer the 'n' word, on Twitter, you would have the police after you, you would be dismissed from Twitter. If you go on Tyson Fury's Twitter ... you have got that much abuse that – it amounts to the same ... everything Tyson Fury puts – 'Tyson Fury, you dirty gyppo, go back to your smelly caravan, you dumb gyppo'. Now, if that – if the shoe was on the other foot, and that was a black person, and there was people saying 'Oh, you dirty – you – you dirty, erm. You dirty 'n' word, monkey'. Now I'm not being funny, you'd be kicked off Twitter, the police'd be... you'd be arrested, it'd be in the newspapers. [Gypsy male]*

He went on to assert that his community are “hated” by the majority of the Welsh community, getting vilified and discriminated against regularly and openly: “We are hated. Yeah, we are hated, there's no ifs or buts about it!” The way in which the Gypsy community is singled out for negative responses and discrimination, was pointed out by several participants from other ethnic communities.

Media discourse about Eastern European migrants, and the rise of UKIP across the UK, contributes to a hostile environment for many European migrants:

*But people, they don't know, basically. They don't come in, so they don't know... they think 'Oh, it's a Polish company, that's what it is.' So they don't think ... We are not just for the Polish children. We've met – you've met a lady watching your swimming lesson. She came to him and she said 'Oh, your lessons are completely different, it's amazing, they're really good lessons.' That was an English lady. But that's what it is. The people who don't come see him ... they just think 'Oh Polish, so we don't go there.'* [Polish female]

One Polish female, who appeared to be very well integrated (she appeared confident, had an excellent level of English and a Welsh partner, and she attended yoga classes at her local leisure centre), spoke very emotionally about her experience of being treated differently by her yoga instructor. Her instructor often addressed the whole class (most of whom were Welsh), but her instructor would sometimes single her out in front of the class and ask her “Do you understand?” She admits that her instructor was always nice to her and probably did not know that what she said upset her, but she stopped going to her yoga classes because of this, and was clearly still very upset about it at the time of the interview:

*... on the yoga session. I was quite upset because the teacher was repeating to me, it was a year ago so my English wasn't quite as good, I think. She kept asking me 'Do you understand? Do you understand?' And it really upset me. And actually it made me cry. And I left the session. So it was... even now I feel like crying when I think about it.* [Polish female]

## Enablers and Reasons for Being Involved

### *Socialisation and integration*

It was generally acknowledged that sport and physical recreation *can* provide opportunities to meet people and socialise with friends, and that the social side of sport is important. In addition to merely possessing functional qualities, some participants recognised the potential for sport and physical recreation to encourage cultural ‘mixing’, thereby facilitating integration. In the context of rising discrimination and racism, this becomes increasingly important. This African male commented on how sport providers currently do little to encourage mixing at grassroots level:

*I feel for you to be able to enjoy the sports you should be mixing with other people, with the locals. That would make it more interesting. If you're just doing it socially, sometimes you don't get that encouragement to continue doing it.*

He felt that there was a need for education; that is, to educate the African community on what activities, clubs and facilities are available, and also to educate the local White Welsh community to be accepting of difference:

*I think probably it's a question of them, if they could educate us. It's a question of ... Now we've got this [community] group, maybe if they know we exist they could send us some literature, or something. Maybe signposting us to the relevant people that we can... Because, if there are people who are interested in sport, then obviously they need to know where to go, or how to join a club ... So probably it's*

*just that education that we need. If they could just say 'OK if you want to do this, if you want to join a team ...' Being supported, to say 'OK, when you see a person like this coming to join, can you please accept them?' They might not ... Nobody can say they cannot accept you, but it's something that you are thinking, to say 'Are they going to accept me, how am I going to feel?'*

Fun was a major factor for many sports participants and an important inducement for those not currently participating in anything (alongside informality). Many of the Black and African women emphasised how they enjoyed participating in activities like dance or Zumba, mainly because they were relatively informal and enjoyable. This Nigerian female is not currently taking part in any physical recreation but would like to if it was fun – she stressed this frequently:

*Oh, I love Zumba, I wish I could do that, I love that. And I'm sure one of these days I will go and join. I love Zumba, that's the only one ... And swimming. I hope, because of my weight I don't know. But I love Zumba, that would keep the ... Zumba and swimming, that's all.*

When asked why Zumba was appealing she also identified the importance of physical recreation being 'easy', not in terms of its physicality but in terms of accessibility. For busy families (mainly the women) being able to do an activity either at home, or close to home was very appealing: *"The dancing. And you can easily do it at home. I can get the CD and then dance at home"*.

She explained that Zumba was popular with African women because it led to weight loss, a major motivator for involvement:

*The women from Zimbabwe, oh, they love Zumba, honestly. There was one time that they all came, they were just telling each other about Zumba, and I know most of them actually have registered for the dancing classes, and then – apart from that they are into now, right now, I know that the group is now doing their own... is it jogging or running ... their own. And you could see most of them are very slim now, you know. [laughs] They're actually slim, it's really working on them.*

A woman who volunteers for a human trafficking and domestic violence charity pointed out that such activities could have wider benefits for women from 'abused' backgrounds:

*Everybody likes dancing. You know here, people are, because of the nature of the activity, the organisation, they support domestically abused people. It's so, so sad that they don't have money or grant for such thing. You know sometimes when people dance you dance away your sorrow, you dance away everything that you have been through, you know. Honestly, if we had a way, if we had funding... It would be a kind of therapy, you know, for the women ... Let them just enjoy themselves, let them dance, you know. [Nigerian female]*

An Afro-Portuguese participant, arguing that fun was a good way to get more women involved, talked about a community fun day when they had a game of football:

*But er, no, I'm not a very active person but, er, just because we had this football match last weekend. It was to celebrate Women's Day then er, single ladies against married women. It was fantastic, we all loved it, and we're now planning to do another one but we all found out how unfit we are because I'm still suffering from it! But it related to that same day so if there was an opportunity, I think we would get involved.*

Women in particular often subscribed to the view that sport and physical recreation need to be associated with pleasurable moments, as opposed to stress and anxiety brought about by the continuous pressure of competition to win.

### *Tailored recruitment*

Irrespective of location or ethnic group there was a feeling among participants that more should be done to actively recruit minority ethnic communities to participate in sport. In line with other recent studies (Hylton et al., 2015; Fletcher et al., 2014) there was a conviction that there are talented players who are currently unknown to the sporting establishment because coaches and scouts are not looking in the right places. For example, it was argued that there are a number of high quality Gypsy boxers and football players currently competing via informal networks throughout the UK, but who are not currently 'known'. It was also suggested that there must be people from BME communities not currently participating, but who would either like to, or will certainly not participate without some gentle encouragement.

There were repeated suggestions that Sport Wales should be more proactive, with recruitment campaigns actively seeking out minority ethnic communities in different locations. A Tamil female believed that if the same opportunities afforded to her were made available to other Tamil females, many would be interested in taking them up. The point about adverse cultural orientations notwithstanding, another respondent suggested that the sporting authorities might consider working on recruiting female Gypsies/Travellers given that there is currently little participation in sport and physical recreation among this group. There is no one size fits all approach to this however. As recent policy related research (Hylton et al., 2015; Fletcher et al., 2014) has shown, different communities are more likely to respond to certain approaches than others. For example, in this study respondents held mixed views on how and where young people from BME communities should be targeted. Some identified the family or school as primary sites given their role in the daily socialisation of young people. Others highlighted the potential of targeting places of worship and/or religious and cultural leaders as these were considered to be culturally significant places and people that hold genuine influence within the community.

The female participants in particular identified the gendered nature of sport, suggesting that the majority of current development provision is targeted at males. There were also suggestions that females are often uncomfortable accessing established spaces in the same way as their male counterparts and that single-sex participation (even at the most informal levels) is their preferred option. Moreover, in general terms there is not yet a culture of females participating in sport in roles other than players – that is, as spectators, volunteers or coaches.

The sporting establishment was often seen as being cut off from minority ethnic communities. The implication of what was said is that Sport Wales and its partners would benefit from having increased visibility (and a welcoming presence) within different BME communities. Respondents identified influential figures in their respective minority ethnic communities well placed to facilitate access to community sites. These figures include religious leaders, community leaders and teachers. Evidence from previous research (Hylton et al., 2015; Fletcher et al., 2014) is that BME communities are often internally well connected and messages will be speedily disseminated through the community if shared with influential people. This engagement must also be considered 'meaningful' by those the policy is designed to benefit. Although not unanimous, there remains a suspicion that BME communities are often overlooked and that current engagement by the authorities is superficial, a process of box ticking that lacks the necessary intent for truly meaningful impact and development for, and within, these communities. A number of (mainly male) respondents commented on opportunities (or lack of) given to ethnic minorities:

*A glass ceiling? What makes you think there's a glass ceiling?*

*Really it's just, you know, obviously you have the Cardiff City foundation, obviously rugby foundations, but it just never seems close to home. It's just never in the area. It's always out of your way. And, you know, we're not the most privileged of areas. OK, maybe some people are, but not everyone. [Indian male]*

*Just need to be more pro-active in the area. I mean, if you think how many kids come out of this area towards a profession within sport ... I can count on one person in this community that's come out of there. He still hasn't made it. [Indian male]*

*Basically, I've seen a lot of good players ... There's not enough scouts coming here to watch our area to play football. They're sending... For example, Cardiff City, they don't have enough black people or Asian people ever playing for Cardiff City. You rarely see them nowadays. They sent scouts to Caerphilly, Valleys, wherever, to get players. We don't have enough players. That's the only negative thing about football nowadays around here. That's what I think about it. [Black male]*

*Things I don't like is when somebody's a good player and then he doesn't get more opportunities compared to the other guys, because maybe they're friends or something. That's something which I don't like about ... When you're good you should be there on the top. When people are biased and they don't want you to go up, that's something I don't like. [Indian male]*

### *The natural environment*

In the context of the observations about cost, some of the participants explained that they will often exercise outdoors given that it is free and accessible. Participation was mainly through walking, jogging/running and cycling. Participants in Swansea in particular said that being out in the open allowed them to recognise the richness of their local environment: for example, mountains and beaches. The investment in cycle paths was recognised and these appeared to be well used. Participants shared the view that the summer months provide the best opportunities to participate in free activities outdoors. For some, participation in the outdoors recalls participation 'back home' (e.g. in the Caribbean or Indian subcontinent). This mode of

participation is familiar and this can be enabling in itself. For a large number of these participants however, the weather was a significant deterrent outside of the summer months.

### *Free / low cost activities*

The importance of free or low cost activities to communities where many have low incomes was highlighted above. Low income minority ethnic groups will look for ways to exercise free of charge – cycling, walking, playing games on the beach with their children. However, making an activity economically accessible alone will not automatically increase participation numbers. Other related factors need to be addressed at the same time. For example, there is a major free swimming initiative in Wales, aimed at under 17s and those aged 60+. In this study those aged under 17 relied heavily on transport provided by their parents, and those aged 60+ may face additional issues in terms of mobility and English language proficiency. These other considerations interact with cost to influence uptake and future engagement in sport and physical recreation.

### *Informal networks*

A wider sense of ethnic and cultural identity being supported through exercising collectively seemed to be important. So participants highlighted the value they placed on friends organising ad hoc team fixtures, group cycle rides or group walks, often giving friends lifts to the countryside and otherwise helping them to engage. Many of the focus group participants also commented how other members of the team were not only team members but friends as well.

Clearly there are a range of interlinking factors that both constrain and enable participation in sport and physical recreation among any ethnic group. Many of these factors are beyond the control of sports development professionals (e.g. family situation or social class) and therefore, it is unlikely that the root cause of such barriers will ever be tackled. What is needed then is an awareness and appreciation of such barriers, as well as of the needs of individuals and entire communities so that programmes and initiatives can be devised to temporarily overcome systemic inequities. A number of enabling factors have also been identified here. These range from education and empowerment to ethnicity-specific targeted initiatives.

## 7. Conclusions

### Differential Participation

One of the people in the policy and provision case study observed that there is no secret to getting people from BME communities involved in sport, it is just good sport development and community development. However, one of the key principles of community development is knowing the communities well and understanding their needs; not just their sporting needs because if their other needs (e.g. employment, income, housing) are not addressed their participation in sport is likely to be compromised.

Although we insist that it is important to differentiate one BME community from another, at a general level many of their concerns about (not) participating in sport are similar and, in many cases, are not ethnicity specific. Moreover, many of the barriers they identified to participation are those that appear in basic texts about sport participation for other populations (time, cost, access, transport). This is not to underplay their significance; on the contrary they were vitally important to people involved in this research. To deliver opportunities effectively requires an appreciation of the context within which those barriers have to be redressed as well as addressing the factors that are distinct.

#### a) Between BME communities

- Those respondents who were immigrants to Wales, may have experienced different sporting careers because of the **sporting culture** they were brought up in. This sporting capital is likely to affect choices once they arrive in Wales and immigrants are also less likely to know the range of activities available to them locally until they are well established.
- Those who are immigrants are also more likely to experience **isolation** which in turn restricts the **information** they have access to because of their limited interaction with services and local networks. There is also an important distinction to make between adults and children as children participating in the Welsh school system are far more aware of sporting options and have more opportunity to develop sporting careers (i.e. they can quickly develop sporting capital once they arrive in Wales).
- **Gender relations** vary between different BME communities and between those communities and White Welsh communities. This is not just about attitudes to the appropriateness of sport for the respective sexes, but about gender roles more widely that shape people's sporting outlook and their ability to prioritise sport. There was some suggestion that there are ethnic groups within which sport is 'not the done thing' for women; even if free of that there is still the expectation that they will be care-givers first, which presents further barriers. However, our respondents suggested that while it may be difficult to interest South Asian women in particular in sport, there was less difficulty interesting them in the broad definition of sport that Sport Wales has adopted (embracing activities like Zumba, dance and Tai Chi).
- Irrespective of ethnicity, **immigration status** makes a difference to people's ability to engage with sport. If people feel insecure as a result of not having the right to remain they are less likely to seek to participate in sport, and without the right to work lack the income necessary to take part in much sporting activity.

## b) Between BME communities and White Welsh

- Clearly it is wrong to presume that all BME communities necessarily experience **language** difficulties living in Wales. Unless they were brought up in a Welsh speaking area they are unlikely to speak Welsh, but many have English as their first language because they were born or schooled in Wales or because it is widely spoken in the country they originally came from, and others will have worked hard to acquire proficiency since arriving in Wales. Although most of our respondents were able to communicate effectively in English there were some (mainly older) who would have appreciated information about sport in other languages (and it is likely that this would be more commonly the case among those who did not get involved with the research).
- For those who experience **racism** and consequent **discrimination** the experience of participation is soured and sporting aspirations may be frustrated. Even without overt racism people may be made to feel unwelcome or decide that white, Welsh sport and sporting spaces are not for them. While overt racists can be challenged or removed, these more subtle relationships can be harder to address.

The approach to the research recognised how people's various characteristics interact in shaping their involvement with sport, meaning that more than ethnicity has to be addressed. A rather loose definition of ethnicity has already incorporated religion and nationality; in addition the significance of age and gender were apparent.

In addition to the language difficulties apparently being more common among older members of BME communities, other generational differences were noted. Younger respondents were more at ease with sport. They are more likely to have had some time in the Welsh educational system and so become familiar with the local sporting culture.

As we would expect from their White Welsh counterparts, the women who participated in the research identified how competing responsibilities restricted the amount of time they had available for sport and were more likely to be interested in physical recreation rather than formal, competitive sport, given the greater flexibility in the use of time they provide. The implication of respondents' accounts is that some ethnicities still have a strong division of gender roles<sup>15</sup>. Irrespective of who has responsibility within the family, making provision for childcare at facilities might be welcomed, though this would have to address difficulties of cost and safeguarding. Some, though, are looking for opportunities to recreate together as a family.

## The Sporting Offer

Many respondents were looking for non-competitive recreation rather than formal sport, something that was particularly true of the Chinese participants and African females in the sample. Older respondents too were more likely to be attracted to activities with a focus on fun and general fitness, rather than competition and performance. While Chinese participants in particular indicated that they were quite happy to be competitive educationally, this did not extend to sport. African female respondents repeatedly highlighted the draw of Zumba and other dance activities.

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<sup>15</sup> We recognise that despite talk of modern males there are still strongly differentiated gender roles in the UK generally.



Those who were migrants also tended to seek out sports and other activities that were familiar from the 'homeland', for example, the popularity of Tai Chi among the Chinese community. There was also evidence of some of the men participating in what might be considered 'informal' sport offers through leagues and teams organised by and for the benefit of specific minority ethnic groups. Examples of this included Black, South Asian, Gypsy/Traveller and Filipino communities participating in ethnicity-specific football, cricket and basketball teams and leagues. They chose to participate in these informal offers through a sense of community and the cultural solidarity they experienced, which they believed could not be recreated in the current, more formal structures. This was especially relevant for migrants who felt detached from the wider diaspora. As has been demonstrated recently (Hylton et al., 2015), it should be recognised that not everyone currently participating informally does so because they do not have access to formal formats. Moreover, this study has demonstrated how formal and informal routes to play are not mutually exclusive with some people playing both formats. Regardless of its level of (in)formality mechanisms for facilitating these forms of participation are important elements in sport development for BME Communities.

Adult migrants talked about an interest in pursuing the sports they had engaged in before coming to Wales. At the level of initial engagement with the activity this need not be difficult to arrange, but becomes more difficult as competence increases and more specialist equipment and coaching are required. This is one arena where sporting bodies and community organisations need to be collaborating.

The importance of the local was clear. If an opportunity was not within easy reach then for most people it might as well not be there. This was emphasised for respondents dealing with unfamiliar circumstances, lacking local knowledge, having limited access to transport and finance and sometimes encountering animosity. For providers unable to offer everything everywhere this is an obvious problem.

There may be a disproportionate number of poor people among BME communities and respondents were price sensitive, but not all provision can be free. There was seen to be a compromise between price and quality of facility that might limit ability to improve performance. For some 'value for money' was all, while others were prepared to pay a bit more for better facilities and instruction.

## Special Provision

Acknowledging that there was some lack of confidence in participating in sport there was interest in provision specific to particular ethnic groups in the belief that this would help to build confidence, sporting competence and personal relationships, thereby making the next step of integration easier. The identification of key individuals within ethnic minority communities (community leaders, gatekeepers) was important for setting up much of the fieldwork in this project and such individuals offer an avenue for accessing BME groups directly and encouraging greater sports participation. This may be particularly relevant for targeting older people and new migrants, as well as possibly opening up much needed dialogue with parents who are reticent about introducing their sons and daughters to sport and physical recreation.

Although there was some faith in sport's ability to help integration there was little to suggest that this would promote a feeling of Welshness, a Welsh identity, beyond those capable of high performance representing Wales in competition. Unfortunately sport's ability to introduce people to others was least available to those perhaps most likely to be isolated (new migrants and asylum seekers). Sport can increase a person's connectedness, but if they do not have the connections in the first place it is harder to participate in sport.

Sport Wales and its partners need the institutional equivalent of this social capital, the contacts in other agencies and in the BME communities who can be their allies.

## The Family

The extent to which respondents described sport and physical recreation being valued by their ethnic communities varied markedly, and this has an impact on the likelihood of young people in the family being supported (or not) to get involved. In some communities (e.g. South Asian and Chinese) sport and physical recreation are considered to be a low priority in relation to other areas of life such as education, work, family, community. Others also placed high value on education, but equally, they recognised the many benefits of sport and physical recreation in terms of staying fit and meeting new people. The view of participants in this study is that younger generations are beginning to attach higher priority to sport and physical recreation than preceding generations, but that some experience barriers erected by parents and other family members to their pursuit of these activities. Although some girls received encouragement and support from their parents (often 'sporty' themselves), parental support for girls was generally less likely than it was for boys, and in some communities female participation in sport and/or physical recreation is actively discouraged (e.g. in some South Asian and Gypsy/Traveller communities).

The choice of immigrant children without previous experience of sport may be limited to the traditional team games they are introduced to at school. That choice could be expanded by providing information and opportunities to try a wider range of sports and physical activity. Given that many parents of the current generation of migrants may not have participated in sport or physical activity there is currently a lack of awareness of coaching and development pathways among migrant communities. There was a view that opportunities to pursue such pathways would be embraced by many, especially younger players, if information was more easily accessible. Moreover, for young people to have a better chance of success within these pathways, they would benefit from parental support. Sport Wales would reap the benefits of promoting the value of sport as a legitimate and worthwhile activity (as leisure and health pursuit as well as career) to parents and senior community leaders.

## Sporting Intermediaries

Any scheme that Sport Wales and its partners might fund can only be as good as the people who deliver it. One provider referred to the importance of identifying Pied Pipers with the personality and skills to engage people in sport. The choice of the right intermediaries becomes easier if people from within the BME communities have been inspired and

empowered to fulfil that role. It helps to resolve some of the difficulties of language, culture and confidence that have been identified. In cases where providers and coaches are from different ethnic backgrounds from the communities they are working with, knowledge and understanding of those communities makes a big difference to the likelihood of success.

Respondents indicated some interest in coaching, but this was limited. One of the challenges for Sport Wales and its partners is to devise means to develop this human resource, empowering people to facilitate. It is likely that some of these people are beyond the current sporting networks, working in community development or equality organisations and living in the BME communities themselves; local knowledge allows access and promotes sympathetic relationships.

## Awareness and Communication

Participation in sport requires knowledge not just of what facilities and opportunities may be available, but also how sport is organised in Wales and its culture operates. It is clearly unrealistic to expect every sports club to make its literature available in a dozen languages. However, Sport Wales could help by providing some generic material in different languages and by making links with BME community groups, clubs and facilities would provide themselves with a ready translation service for communicating information about the sporting opportunities they can offer.

At the same time providers and policymakers need an understanding of the communities they are encouraging to participate. We were given an indication of the gap that currently exists when asking local contacts about potential research participants. The various equality forums, networks and task forces that are being set-up perhaps show the way to how communication can be improved. More effective though would be to encourage the representation of BME communities on committees and boards around the sporting landscape.

## A Matter of Priorities

Sport Wales and various sports partners have made a commitment to principles of equality and advancing the sports participation of BME communities. However, neither Sport Wales nor the NGBs are major providers in their own right. Their primary agents are sports clubs who may lack the requisite resources to be proactive in promoting participation by BME communities: few have large financial resources; few have paid staff and so most of the work is done by volunteers who themselves have competing demands on their time. Without underplaying the work of enthusiasts, the first call on their efforts is to provide the opportunity to play for those who approach the club with a shared passion for the sport. Similarly, the first priority for those who run local authority leisure centres is to manage the centre. Those researching sports participation have long pointed out that these very understandable forces reinforce the status quo in which certain groups are under-represented. Changing that requires a different kind of effort. In an era when many in the third sector and public bodies like local authorities are having to operate with less money, unrealistic exhortations for 'more, more, more' are likely to be dismissed out of hand.

As one of the providers observed, 'The Equality Standard for sport has helped, but you have to have real commitment to make a difference rather than tick boxes'. Our research indicates that there are many individuals with that sort of commitment. However, unless that commitment becomes incorporated into the organisational frameworks, the cause of equality is vulnerable to the churn of staff turnover.

## 8. Recommendations

Perhaps reassuringly, many of the points coming from interviews with people from Black and minority ethnic communities match ones arising from the interviews with policymakers and providers. However, insofar as they reflect some perceived deficiency it suggests that action is still required if participation in sport and physical recreation by people from BME communities is to increase. We encourage Sport Wales (and its partners) to consider:

1. improved communication so that people in BME communities are more aware of the sporting offer (particularly less formal and minority sports) and the sporting networks are more aware and have a better understanding of BME communities. This might include:
  - equality awareness training alongside an appreciation of important aspects of different BME communities<sup>16</sup> and a recognition of the other human needs that must be met to allow sports participation
  - Sport Wales making available to clubs and facilities basic material in different languages about a range of sports so that they can incorporate it into their own literature
  - sports clubs and centres making links with BME community contacts who can both act as conduits and translate material
  - sports stars and coaches visiting schools and community venues
2. capitalising on existing BME community networks and leaders to access people who are least likely to be part of existing sporting networks (e.g. new migrants, older people) and provide targeted information about relevant activities
3. how best to locate and then support the ‘pied pipers’ capable of encouraging greater participation within the BME communities, e.g. by providing them with contacts, small amounts of funding and assistance with bureaucracy like grant applications.
4. supporting the other elements of ‘participation’ in sport and physical recreation beyond playing and spectating by providing training for volunteers who want to get involved in administration, coaching, umpiring/refereeing, ground preparation and maintenance. This might extend to providing guidance on how to replicate models for sustainable clubs.
5. establishing countywide BME forum(s) for sharing ideas and good practice, with the requirement for sport development officials to meet regularly, and the appointment of local BME co-ordinators.
6. encouraging sports bodies to recruit people from BME communities to their boards and committees
7. promoting the value of sport and physical recreation as legitimate and worthwhile activities (as leisure, health pursuit, as well as career) to parents and senior community leaders.

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<sup>16</sup> As an example the ECB provides on its website an introductory guide to the dominant faiths involved in cricket: <http://www.ecb.co.uk/ecb/one-game/south-asian-communities>

8. special initiatives to engage women and girls through:
  - Zumba and dance-related activities as informal fun
  - more women only sessions at swimming pools, gyms etc.
  - better information about the availability/timing/location of these sessions targeted at specific BME communities
9. how free or low-cost activities can be made accessible to members of BME communities
10. facilitating the provision of opportunities for informal participation in alternative (forms of) sports. This might be aided by providing more accessible pitches (non-turf), access to equipment and informal coaching opportunities on site
11. liaising more closely with schools and local authorities to create new spaces of play and improve existing facilities
12. showing in official material the participation of people from Black and minority ethnic communities in sport in Wales and celebrating their achievement.

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## **Appendix: Outlines of Interview Procedures**



## Interview schedule

### **BME groups in Wales and (non)participation in sport**

#### **Introductions and background**

- Leeds Beckett University and Ecorys are doing research on minority ethnic groups in Wales and sport, physical activity and exercise.
- For Sport Wales, but independent from them.
- We need a better understanding so that people can improve what is available to minority ethnic groups.
- We are interested in what makes sport easier/harder, better/worse for you and your family
- By 'sport' we mean not just competitive matches, but informal games and physical activity. And we are not just talking about doing it, but also about helping others take part, coaching, refereeing/umpiring/judging and going to watch it.
- Timing – we expect this to take about one hour. It may take less. We can see if you want to continue or finish at the end of the hour.

#### **Informed consent and confidentiality**

First we need to talk about your choice to take part. This is important.

It is your choice to take part and you can stop at any time.

We will use this information to tell Sport Wales about what we have learned.

You can do this anonymously by choosing a pseudonym (a different name) for yourself.

We would like to record what you are saying. The audio recorder can be switched off at any point if you want.

We will do the interview and at the end we will ask you to sign a form to show that you are letting us use what you have told us in our reports.

#### **Explain the interview / maps**

I've brought pens, paper, post-it notes etc. with me. During the interview I'll be asking you questions and we want you to draw in some way – we call it a map – what sport you do and where.

#### **Drawing maps, participant led exercise**

You can do this in whatever way you think best. There is no correct way to draw the map. Our experience is that everyone has their own way of doing their drawing, but it's probably easiest to start where your home is and putting the other places around that.

As we do not know about your life, you are the expert – the best person to show us what happens.

I can prompt you and offer advice, but I am keen that you use your own ideas...I will ask you some questions about what you are doing and the sorts of activities you are thinking about and recording, and who you are doing them with.

### **1. Participation**

**What** sport and physical activity do you do? Can you put that on the map? [*Don't forget – not just competitive sport: coaching, officiating, organising*]

**Where** – Try to establish if it's formal facilities, parks, streets, etc.  
What are they like?  
Why do you use these and not other places?

**Frequency** – How often would that be? [*Not a survey, so not looking for precision, but indication of level of commitment*]

**Who** first got you involved and who do you do these things with? [*not names but family, friends, team mates*]  
Are they {minority ethnic group}? Does that matter to you?

**Past** – Are there other things you used to do?  
Why no longer? Do you miss it?

**Nature of the experience** – satisfactions and concerns – positive and negative aspects of involvement  
What are the good things about doing / playing \_\_\_\_?  
Anything you don't like?  
Does playing/doing \_\_\_\_ make you feel any different?

**Enablers and barriers to participation** (Time, money, knowledge of opportunities, social networks/ partners, language, fear or discomfort, discrimination)  
Is there anything that makes taking part in sport difficult? Is there anything that could be done about that?  
And what things help you to take part?

**Awareness of sport and physical recreation opportunities** – What else goes on in your area? Ask them to map.

**Aspirations** – What else would you like to do ( or do more of)? What stops you?

## 2. Family

**Family/household structure**  
Who lives at home with you?

**Attitudes** – What do they think of you and your sport? Ask 'who?' / 'how?' as appropriate/necessary through this section.  
Do they help you do/play {activity} or get in the way?

Do your family **do** the same things in the same places? Add anything significant to the map. Are there any age/generational differences in sport? Or gender differences? Why don't they do what you do?

## 3. Ethnicity

Do you think that what you have told me is different for different ethnic groups?  
Does sport make you feel more Welsh?  
If not already established: Have you ever felt discriminated against playing/doing \_\_\_?

## 4. Talking Head

Would you like to say something to people planning sport in Wales to tell them how to make it better? We have a camera here if you'd like to talk to them directly? You can make some notes first if you like.

**5. Personal Details**

*Check have respondent profile – to be gathered whenever most natural during the interview:*

<b>Age</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	
<b>City/Town/Village</b>	
<b>Work/ Occupation/ hours</b>	
<b>Born in UK?</b>  <b>Otherwise, length of residence</b>	
<b>Family in the home</b>	
<b>Elected pseudonym</b>	

**Return to consent**

Ask them to choose a name we can refer to them by – discuss confidentiality.

Verify consent again and sign consent sheet.

\*Ask them to add the date and their name / pseudonym to corner of map

\*Ensure they have info sheet and contact details

**Thank you!**

## Focus group methodology

### Sport Wales – BME participation in Sport research

**Light-touch, interactive, activity-based focus groups, normally in a secondary school in each location**, designed to explore ethnic minorities (non) participation in sport and improve the accessibility of sports/ sports facilities to minority ethnic groups.

#### *Focus group implementation*

We will start each focus group with a warm-up discussion to establish a relaxed atmosphere and a sense of trust of the moderator and of the rest of the group. The focus group will include structured discussion where all the children should be encouraged to take part and will use flash cards.

#### **Flash card coverage**

Set 1: images from the 'This girl can' campaign to prompt discussions about sport/exercise/physical activity experiences and feelings about those experiences.

Set 2: 5-10 flashcards demonstrating a range of ethnic minorities undertaking different sports.

#### **Introductions and background**

- We are doing research for Sport Wales on minority ethnic groups in Wales and sport.
- We need a better understanding so that people can improve what is available to minority ethnic groups.
- We are interested in what makes sport easier/harder, better/worse for you and your family
- Timing – we expect this to take about one hour. (Or however long has been agreed with the school).

#### **Informed consent and confidentiality**

First we need to talk about your choice to take part. This is important.

- It is your choice to take part and you can stop at any time.
- We will use this information to tell Sport Wales about what we have learned.
- You can do this anonymously by choosing a pseudonym (a different name) for yourself.
- We would like to record what you are saying. The audio recorder can be switched off at any point if you want.
- We will do the interview and at the end we will ask you to sign a form to show that you are letting us use what you have told us in our reports.

The focus group is a group discussion and I want to hear about your experiences and views on sport. I want everyone to have a chance to talk and so we all need to listen to each other and respect other people's views.

## **Broad structure for the focus group**

### **1. What is sport?**

Begin with an easy discussion about what the pupils think sport is. Here you can use the flash cards (set 2, mainly) to help prompt discussions. Is aerobics sport? Is riding your bike to school sport? This discussion should help relax them and get them thinking about what physical activity means to them.

What do they consider 'participation' in relation to sport/physical activity/exercise? It is just taking part actively? How about coaching, stewarding or refereeing? How about spectating?

### **2. Sport in school**

Then move onto something easy and familiar that all the participants can get involved with and will have some common ground on – sport in school.

Do you do sport in school? What? How much? Who with? What do you like about it? What do you not like about it? Would you like to do more/less/different activities? Do you do any other forms of exercise or physical activity in school?

### **3. Sport outside school**

Do you do any of the activities you do in school outside school? If yes, why? If no, why not?

**What** other sporting activities do you do? Where? (formal facilities, parks, street etc.) How often?

**Who** do you do sport with? (*Who introduced you to different activities, takes you, goes with you, practices with you etc.*)

Are they {minority ethnic group}? Does that matter to you?

**Past** – Are there other things you used to do?

Why no longer? Do you miss it?

### **4. Sports experiences**

**Nature of the experience** – satisfactions and concerns – positive and negative aspects of involvement

What are the good things about doing / playing \_\_\_\_\_?

Anything you don't like?

Does playing/doing \_\_\_\_\_ make you feel any different?

How does taking part in sport/physical activity/exercise make you feel? Here we can use the set 1 of the flashcards from 'This girl can' to prompt discussions about sporting experiences. Do they feel sporty? Fit? Body conscious? Part of a team? Etc.

### **5. Family**

#### **Family/household structure**

Who lives at home with you?

**Attitudes** – What do they think of you and your sport? Ask 'who?' / 'how?' as appropriate/necessary through this section.

Do they help you do/play {activity} or get in the way?

Do your family **do** the same things in the same places? Are there any age/generational differences in sport? Or gender differences? Why don't they do what you do?

## **6. Aspirations**

Exercise using the 2<sup>nd</sup> set of flash cards. Pupils to be asked to select 1 or 2 flashcards that show a sport or activity that they don't do at the moment. How much do they know about that sport? Do they know if/where it is possible to take part in that sport in their area?

Would they be interested to take part in that sport? Why/why not?

What would they need to be able to take part in that sport? E.g. equipment, time, transport, people to play with

## **7. Sport and identity**

A question about identity – change name and ethnicity as appropriate – Sam told us about XXX which is different to what the rest of the group said. Do you think that's because Sam is Chinese or because Sam is Sam? (Adapt as appropriate for each group)

Does sport make you feel more Welsh?

When you watch international sport, what national team(s) do you support?

Why?

If not already established: Have you ever felt discriminated against playing/doing \_\_\_?

Do you have any sporting heroes? Why do you consider X a sporting hero?

***Wrap-up and thanks.***

## Policy and Provision Case Study: Outline Checklist

*Reminder that sport is taken to include physical recreation and exercise and that MEGs include white minorities.*

Please explain your role in relation to ethnicity and sport.

What for you are the key issues in terms of sport, ethnicity and the equality agenda?

Why do you think Sport Wales places so much emphasis on the family?

Can you suggest examples of good practice

- Policy initiative?
- Provision?

What makes it so? Why does it work?

Lessons learnt?

What is the role of alternative provision (e.g. Big Lottery) in supporting disadvantaged minority ethnic groups to access sport and exercise provision?

Is there anything around that addresses women, disability or other equality issues within the focus on ethnicity?

Are there any policies/provision in place to support asylum seekers to access sport and exercise provision?

Is there anything you would identify that is specific to Newport, or Wales more generally?  
If something works in Newport will it work in Wrexham or Rhyl?

Is the emphasis on entry level, grassroots or elite?

Are there any policies in place to encourage people to utilise the natural environment to exercise? Could Sport Wales be doing more to encourage use of the natural environment for exercise and sports participation?

What would be your recipe for success in promoting participation in sport by minority ethnic communities?

Who will deliver that?

Any data or documents we should be reviewing?

[For providers: How are you enabled to deliver equality strategies?].

*Thanks – future contact*