

Data collection

This factsheet has been produced by Sporting Equals to assist governing bodies and sports organisations undertaking audits as part of their general equity work. An audit exercise is required for the preliminary level of the Sporting Equals Standard.

What do we mean by audit?

Doing an audit means getting hard evidence about representation to support equity work.

All governing bodies and sports organisations need to know the demographic profile of people involved in their sport or organisation – as a member, an employee, a coach, etc. If that profile is known then targeted work can be planned where under-representation has been identified. Also, the impact of work being done or planned can be assessed by doing another audit at a predetermined date in the future and comparing the two audits.

The most accurate audit is one where everyone you want to audit (called 'the population') has been identified, included in the audit and responded to the audit (people who respond are called 'the respondents').

But partial audits can be acceptable. What matters is how that partiality has occurred and what margin of error is allowed. There are two ways partiality occurs:

- the audit is designed to sample the population
- the response rate of the audit is less than 100%

Sampling

Sampling is a tried-and-tested way of undertaking audits. There are two ways of sampling a population:

- random sampling
- representative sampling

A random sample is one in which the potential respondents are picked by lot out of the

population. This can mean, however, that the sample is 'skewed', for example, a random sample of the voting intentions of the country may not give a true reflection of those intentions if the respondents chosen at random all happen to live in the countryside.

A representative sample is one where the sample is designed to give a true reflection of the population. For example, a governing body may want to ensure it audits in urban and rural areas as part of its sampling. However, this raises the question: how do we ensure we have a representative sample if representation is the thing we are trying to identify?

Sample size is decided by a number of factors: the level of accuracy you want, the resource you have and what sort of survey you are doing.

Response rate

No researcher ever expects to get a 100% response rate. For the purposes of the audit required in the Standard, any analysis is based on a recognition of response rate, as this indicates the accuracy of the analysis.

It is vital you record the number of responses and compare that to the size of your chosen sample. The calculation is easy. If you sent out n questionnaires and received r responses, then the response rate is, in percentage terms, $r \times 100/n$. Remember, response rates for individual questions may differ from the overall response rate if respondents fail to answer them.

Margins of error

Margins of error are a measure of how reliable the findings of a survey are. This error reflects

Example

Organisation X has 1280 members, and decides to sample 25% of them: 320. 200 respond, but of these, 50 neglect to answer one question. So the overall response rate is $200 \times 100/320$ (= 62.5%). But the response rate for the question left unanswered by 50 respondents is $(200 - 50) \times 100/320$ (= 46.9%).



the way in which the population is sampled, and how much of that sample responds to the survey.

Sporting Equals does not expect organisations to calculate margins of error, though all audits need to be aware of the following.

- The bigger the sample size compared to the population, and the bigger the response rate, the more accurate the final analysis will be.
- Calculating a margin of error is only meaningful when one attempts random sampling. The error is then a measure of how random that sample is.
- If we are sampling for racial equality (ie. asking questions about ethnicity) we need to look at a sample size that enables us to capture information about ethnicity.

The recommendations below will help organisations to produce acceptable audits.

Recommendations for governing bodies and sports organisations

Adequate samples

Ideally, organisations should be able to undertake a full audit. However, Sporting Equals recognises this may be impractical where resources and systems are not in place, or where the population to be audited is large. In such circumstances, Sporting Equals recommends a random sample using between one-tenth and one-fifth of the population. It is inadvisable to attempt representative sampling for anything other than geographical and urban/ rural spread (if these are considered significant).

Adequate response rates

There is no hard and fast rule for response rates, as what rate you are satisfied with depends on how accurate you want the responses to be. But commercial and academic researchers agree that a 'good' survey – one that will give an acceptable measure of confidence to the analysis – will be

Tips to encourage respondents to reply

- Ensure the anonymity of respondents, where appropriate.
- Make respondents aware that the information provided is in strict confidence and that submission of information is on a voluntary basis.
- Explain why you are asking for the information. Say you are gathering it to allow you to set a benchmark against which you are devising equity policies and action plans. Explain you are hoping to achieve the levels of attainment in the Sporting Equals Standard and you are committed to achieving racial equality, and the information provided will help you achieve this.
- Make sure the survey form or questionnaire is easy to understand and simple to fill in.
- Ensure you distribute the survey in an appropriate manner familiar to your population. If possible, connect the survey to existing processes or products.
- Encourage responses by offering prizes to the first respondents or a random respondent 'drawn from the hat' – but do not physically link the prize draw entry with the survey form.
- Make it easy to respond. Where possible, use pre-paid reply envelopes, or a Freepost address.
- Tell respondents you will respect their rights under the Data Protection Act and you will not pass on the individual responses to any third body.

one with a response rate of 30+%. In practice, most response rates fall between 30% and 60%. Unless the sample size or population is very small (less than 50) or very big (more than 10,000), Sporting Equals does not expect response rates outside that range.

How to contact Sporting Equals

Sporting Equals is keen to establish links with sports organisations, community groups, researchers and others interested in promoting racial equality in sport.

Please contact us at our office in Leeds if you:

- would like to know more about the Charter and the Standard
- would like further advice on working with ethnic minority communities
- are working in this field and would like to share research
- would like to know about or share good practice

Write to:

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