

# **THE EQUALITY STANDARD FOR SPORT**

This factsheet has been produced to assist governing bodies and sports organisations undertaking audits as part of their general equity work. An audit exercise is required for the Foundation level of the generic Equality Standard for Sport.

### **What do we mean by audit?**

Doing an audit means getting hard evidence about representation to support equity work. All governing bodies and sports organizations 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 carrying out 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 chosen, in some random way, 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 every question.

## Data Collection

### Margins of error

Margins of error are a measure of how reliable the findings of a survey are. Opinion polls prior to a general election will always be published with a certain percentage margin of error. If a party has 40% support with a margin of error of 2 %, then the support is actually anything between 38% and 42%. Organisations are not expected to calculate margins of error for the Standard, 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 (i.e. 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 meaningful audits.

### Recommendations for governing bodies and sports organisations:

#### Adequate samples

Ideally, organisations should be able to undertake a full audit. However, it is recognised this may be impractical where resources and systems are not in place, or where the population to be audited is large. In such circumstances, it is recommended a random sample using between 10% and 20% 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 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).

#### Tips to encourage respondents to reply

- Ensure the anonymity of respondents where appropriate
- Make respondents aware that the data provided is in strict confidence and that submission of information is on a voluntary basis
- Explain why you are asking for the information
- Make sure the survey form or questionnaire is easy to understand and complete
- Ensure you distribute the survey in an appropriate format and manner familiar to your population. If possible, connect the survey to existing processes or products, a newsletter perhaps
- Make it easy to respond. Where possible, accept Email responses or use pre-paid post
- Tell respondents that you will respect their rights under the Data Protection Act, that you will not publish data from individual responses and that personal response information to a third party.

***For further information about this fact sheet, or the Equality Standard for Sport, please contact Vaga Associates.***