

Analysing Audit Data

THE EQUALITY STANDARD FOR SPORT

This factsheet is intended to assist governing bodies and sports organisations undertaking audits as part of their general equality work. An audit exercise, with an analysis, is required for the Foundation level of the generic Equality Standard for Sport.

‘Demographic data’

For the purposes of this factsheet, ‘demographic data’ means the percentage breakdown of the population – local or national – by ethnic group, age, sex, and disability.

What analysis means

When you have collected information through an audit, analysis helps you understand what the numbers mean, and how to make decisions based on what the audit shows. Analysing the results of an audit is not just a matter of presenting a table of numbers or percentages; it means interpreting the significance of the figures, and their relevance for your organisation’s activities.

For the Equality Standard for Sport audit, you need to make sure you have information about age, gender, disability and ethnicity, as one purpose of the audit is to reveal any disparities of representation and involvement in sports between different communities. Depending on what kind of audit you are doing, you may also want to collect information on other variables, such as respondents’ roles or positions within their organisations, the county or region in which they participate in your sport, the grade or level they hold, and so on. The important thing is to make sure that you analyse the variables that matter. Information about sexual orientation and religious belief is now also often collected and you should think seriously about adding this to the list of equality profile data that you gather and analyse.

Understanding variables

It is important to analyse and report on all variables and how they relate to each other. For example, in a racial equality audit, you need to look at the distribution of respondents from different ethnic groups. It is not enough simply to count members of ethnic minorities in a single group. An analysis should compare the numbers and percentages of different ethnic minority communities. These figures can then be contrasted with local or national demographic data, so you can see which communities are, and which ones are not, involved in your sport or organisation.

You should also analyse the information you have collected by such variables as sex, disability, age, country, job role, level of participation, and so on, in order to get a more complete picture of who is and isn’t involved. Your findings may confirm something you already suspected about the profile of people involved in your sport, or they may show that your beliefs are not supported by the evidence. The audit is an objective way of finding out the facts.

Relating the analysis to planning

Besides examining and investigating variations in participation, a good analysis will attempt to provide some explanation of why those variations exist, and what you intend to do to rectify them, so that your sport or organisation will better reflect the diversity of the population. Every analysis should be accompanied by recommendations for action aimed at increasing the involvement of under-represented groups, whether for just one variable such as people with disabilities, or for combined variables such as Asian women. Your analysis must also state who it is being presented to, and what powers they have to approve any recommendations.

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Three steps to analysing data

1. Establish which variables are important, and count the totals under each variable.
2. Cross refer between different variables and against the demographic data.
3. Write a report of your findings.

Limitations

No audit is perfect. A good analysis will always begin by explaining the methods used and their limitations. You should also indicate what steps you have taken, or intend to take, to improve the reliability of your audits.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How detailed does the analysis need to be?

A. It depends on the number of variables you are analysing, but an analysis is not meant to be a lengthy report. A good analysis presents the key findings, interpretations, and recommendations concisely.

Q. What happens if a disproportionate number of the respondents are from a variable subgroup, male for example?

A. This in itself is something that you need to highlight and explain in your analysis. It could be that your audit was flawed, or there is significant under-representation from women and girls. Both these possibilities would indicate a need for action.

Q. Doesn't an audit and analysis just tell us what we already know?

A. Sometimes an analysis confirms your anecdotal knowledge, and you should note this, but you do now have objective and factual evidence to support your belief. Often though an analysis will reveal under-representation and inequality which you weren't previously aware of.

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