



# EVERYDAY SWIM NEWS *Good Practice Centres*

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## Welcome to the August edition of Everyday Swim News

It's the moment we have all been waiting for... the final report of the national pilot project, which will identify the true impact of Everyday Swim!

Analysis of both the Active People Survey and data collected across all pilot areas throughout the project has formed some key themes for the blueprint for increasing participation in swimming to be shared across the industry. As a key milestone in the Everyday Swim project, this edition of Everyday Swim news is dedicated to bringing you the key findings from the report.

To find out more please find the full report and executive summary available at [www.everydayswim.org](http://www.everydayswim.org).

If you have any questions or queries please email us at [everydayswim@swimming.org](mailto:everydayswim@swimming.org).

Enjoy your reading!

*Nicola Polley, Swimming Activity Manager, the ASA*



## M&E - Bolt-in not bolt-on

In addition to the Active People Surveys to identify the impact of Everyday Swim, researchers from SIRC (Sport Industry Research Centre) at Sheffield Hallam University were commissioned to monitor and evaluate Everyday Swim at the onset of the project in 2006.

Demonstrating a commitment to bolt the monitoring and evaluation of Everyday Swim

into the whole project rather than adding this process to the end of the project (bolt-on).

SIRC researchers have been closely analysing the impact of the Everyday Swim interventions across all of the pilot areas at the following levels;

- Community
- Facility
- Programme
- Sub group
- Individual



## What Active People says - 10,901 additional swimmers for ES areas

The headline figures of Active People2 (AP2) were published in December 2008. Between AP1 and AP2 national figures showed that participation rates for those swimming at least once in the last four weeks had fallen from 13.8% to 13.4%. This is a statistically significant reduction in participation between the two surveys, and as reported by Sport England - meant a 63,600 reduction in swimmers.

In its simplest form, it can be reported that only one of the Everyday Swim pilot areas showed a significant increase in participation rates between the two surveys (a 3.84% increase in Islington), on closer analysis other interesting results have been identified;

- Only 9 local authorities reported a significant increase in participation rates between the AP surveys, one of which was an Everyday Swim pilot area.
- Seven of the Everyday Swim pilot areas reported 'no significant change', however collectively their average change was +0.44%, this compares favourably to the national average where it can be found that of the 327 local authorities reporting

'no significant change' their average change was -0.22%. Suggesting that ES areas performed counter to the national trend, adding value at a local level.

- Four of the Everyday Swim authorities (Islington, Lewisham, Kirklees, and Bolsover) are ranked in the top quartile for their performance (top 88 out of 354), which is twice what would be expected under normal conditions.
- When figures were analysed to identify the change in the numbers of adult swimmers in Everyday Swim authorities it was identified that across the pilot areas there was an overall increase of 10,901 adult swimmers. When considered in the context of the reduction of 63,600 adult swimmers nationally, this is yet further evidence of the positive impact of Everyday Swim.

It is important to note that Everyday Swim was not pitched solely at adult swimmers, some interventions were aimed at increasing the uptake of swimming by children and young people, who would not be included in the Active People Surveys.

## Everyday Swim DVD

The Everyday Swim DVD produced in 2008 highlights some key messages from the Everyday Swim project, giving you ideas for things to consider when aiming to reach new markets and increase participation in swimming in your pools.

The DVD is available to view on the Everyday Swim website, or email us at [everydayswim@swimming.org](mailto:everydayswim@swimming.org) to order your free copy!





## The blueprint - Three emerging themes

Three emerging components identified from Everyday Swim as key to driving forward the delivery of swimming and increasing participation are;

- Culture Change
- Structured Sessions
- Creative Marketing

Each theme of good practice is explained in detail in the report, but here is an overview with some key supporting evidence as identified by Everyday Swim.

### Culture change

Swimming participation rates have remained static for the last 20-25 years. The way in which pool providers work can bring about a culture change in the delivery of swimming, this needs to be embraced to develop the market for swimming.

#### Everyday Swim supporting evidence;

- Workforce fit for purpose to broaden the base of swimming participation by enabling new markets to be developed.

Some of the Everyday Swim pilots spent considerable resources on this essential element. Wirral was one of the first areas in the country to train dry-side instructors with the new Aquajogging qualification to deliver pool based sessions. Whilst in Woking an audit identified a shortfall in female lifeguards which was impacting on the delivery of women only sessions at the pool.

- Performance management tools

Consultation with customers and non-customers will help pool operators to manage expectations and identify areas of service delivery that might require action. In Woking a review led to the introduction of additional cleaning hours, which has since increased customer satisfaction.

- Audit the pool programme

Research informs us that there is a strong positive relationship between participation rates (demand) and the availability of pool space (supply). Everyday Swim examples come from Easington where vital pool hours were unlocked at a school pool which was opened to provide community access.

### Structured sessions

Providing structured sessions rather than 'free splash' is essential in converting new participants into regular swimmers. Having structured sessions linked into pathways gives the new swimmer an idea of where their participation 'journey' might take them.

#### Everyday Swim supporting evidence;

- Adult learn to swim opportunities.

Providing a structured environment in which adults can learn to swim is one way to tap into the latent demand identified in Active People, as for many adults this is the barrier to participation. 1 in 5 adults are unable to swim in England.

In Islington, 704 adults have accessed quality free or subsidised adult lessons as a result of Everyday Swim. Through empowering people with the relevant water skills and confidence, swimming lessons provide a platform for positive behaviour change.

- The Aqua-Max summer programme for young people in Telford and Wrekin delivered a variety of water based activities including snorkeling, mini polo, and Aqua fun sessions. Having this structure kept participants engaged.

### Creative marketing

The Active People2 survey revealed that 13% of the adult population on England would like to start swimming or swim more often. To persuade potential new swimmers to use your pool it's essential to market beyond the four walls of the pool in a way that is audience and context specific. It is not a one size fits all approach.

#### Everyday Swim supporting evidence;

- Creative techniques such as the Suffolk open days are a key opportunity to engage with non-swimmers and showcase the range of aquatic opportunities, improved standards of cleanliness, improved facilities, and that 'times have changed'. 64% of those who visited the initial Suffolk open days stated they had used the swimming pool since the open day on a follow up survey.
- 56% of participants on the Islington free adult learn to swim lesson programme in 2008 found out about them via Islington's Motivation magazine, a glossy magazine full of interesting feature based articles on swimming which was delivered to residential households. Of these new swimmers, a follow up survey revealed that 19% had never used the leisure centre before and 30% had not used one in the last year.

More supporting detail on the three themes can be found in Chapter 5 within the final report.



## Critical success factors

The final report also highlights the key strategic conditions required to enable interventions such as Everyday Swim to succeed. These are vital where the overall outcome is to create the potential to increase participation levels in swimming.

- Being well informed
- Effective Consultation
- Dynamic leaders and support network
- Continuity and perseverance
- Long term vision
- Marketing and promotions
- M&E

Find out more in Chapter 6 of the report.

## Next steps

*Everyday Swim has confirmed that there is no 'magic bullet' for increasing participation in swimming, and that it is actually a question of doing 100 things 1% better rather than one thing 100% better.*

But swimming has the edge, it is the sport with the highest levels of latent demand amongst adults (AP2) and it IS possible to drive swimming forward with the insight of the Everyday Swim project.

The ASA are committed to taking forward the good practice from Everyday Swim to support the delivery of the governments Free Swimming initiative through our 49 ASA County Swimming Coordinators. This is a unique time for swimming and we look forward to embracing it as we are provided with an opportunity to be proactive and bring about improvements in the way swimming is delivered.

## Dates for your diary

**DON'T FORGET**, dates have been confirmed for the Everyday Swim Good Practice Centre seminars.

#### Confirmed dates are:

Manchester - October 1  
 Bristol - October 6  
 London - October 7  
 Newcastle - October 14  
 Birmingham - October 20

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