

Free Swimming Programme: Basic throughput data by local authority

Statistical release

24 July 2009

Purpose of release

This statistical release presents the number of free swims recorded by all local authorities participating in the Free Swimming Programme. The release includes data for the first three months of the programme – April, May and June 2009.

The Free Swimming Programme

The Free Swimming Programme is a £140 million programme designed to increase participation in swimming in England and lead to subsequent health and economic benefits. The initiative is based around local authorities providing free swimming for children aged 16 or under and for adults aged 60 or over. Free Swimming, along with a variety of other initiatives, will contribute to the target set out in the London 2012 Olympic Legacy Action Plan to get two million more adults more active by the London 2012 Olympics. It is also expected to make a significant contribution to the Government's commitment to provide five hours of PE and sport for 5 to 16 year olds and three hours of sporting opportunities for 16 to 19 year olds.

The Free Swimming Programme is a cross government initiative with funding from five government departments (the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), the Department of Health (DH), the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Communities and Local Government), as well as investment and resource from the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) and Sport England (SE).

For more information about the Free Swimming Programme see:

http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/sport/5809.aspx

Basic Throughput Data

This statistical release presents the number of free swims recorded by all 253 local authorities participating in the Free Swimming Programme. The release includes data for the first three months of the programme – April, May and June 2009.

The data includes the following information:

- **Local Authority Name:** The name of the local authority participating in the Free Swimming Programme. The authorities included in this report reflect local government structures post-April 2009. An asterisk beside the name of the local authority denotes that they joined the 16 and under element of the

programme late. A double asterisk denotes that the local authority withdrew from the 16 and under element of the programme after 1 April 2009.

- **County:** The name of the county within which the local authority participating in the Free Swimming Programme is based.
- **Region:** The name of the region within which the local authority participating in the Free Swimming Programme is based.
- **Offer:** 'Both' signifies a local authority that is offering free swimming to both people aged 60 and over and children and young people aged 16 and under. 'Just 60+' signifies a local authority that is only offering free swimming to people aged 60 and over.
- **Free Swims 60+:** This shows the total number of free swims as part of this scheme by people aged 60 and over across all the participating swimming pools in a given local authority in a given time period (April / May / June / Q1 total). It **is not** a measure of the total number of individual participants taking part in free swimming.
- **Free Swims 16 and Under:** This shows the total number of free swims as part of this scheme by people aged 16 and under across all the participating swimming pools in a given local authority in a given time period (April / May / June / Q1 total). It **is not** a measure of the total number of individual participants taking part in free swimming.
- **Free Swims Total (60+ and 16 and under):** This shows the total number of free swims as part of this scheme by people aged 60 and over and people aged 16 and under across all the participating swimming pools in a given local authority in a given time period (April / May / June / Q1 total). It **is not** a measure of the total number of individual participants taking part in free swimming.

Beneath the main table of data, there is a list of a further six local authorities that are participating in the Free Swimming Programme, but do not have any public pools of their own. These authorities are working with neighbouring authorities to support the national free swimming offer.

Supplementary data

We have appointed PricewaterhouseCoopers to conduct a national evaluation of the Programme. They will be collecting their own data via online surveys to supplement the throughput data. They will also be collating data from a number of other sources, and will be conducting a number of case studies with local authorities.

Next release of data

The next release of throughput figures will take place in October 2009 and will include data for the second three months of the programme – July, August and September 2009.

Methodology

1. All local authorities that signed up to be part of the Free Swimming Programme were asked to provide contact details for a nominated data collection lead. This

person is responsible for collating and reporting throughput information from all the different centres/sites offering free swimming within their local authority area.

2. Sport England developed a system for collecting basic throughput information on a monthly basis from the data collection contacts using a web-based survey tool. They also developed a guidance document for local authorities setting out what information was required and how it should be reported. A copy of the guidance document is available from the DCMS website:

http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/sport/5874.aspx

3. Towards the end of each month the data collection lead was sent an e mail reminder to submit their data. The e mail reminders included within them a link to the online survey tool. By clicking on this link the data collection leads were able to access the online survey and submit their data.

4. The deadline for submission was two weeks after the end of the month. Sport England was responsible for monitoring the data returned by local authorities. A basic quality check was carried out on every return to ensure that all the numbers added up as they should. Basic checks were also carried out to ensure that there was an appropriate explanation when the number of centres/sites reported by a given local authority differed from one month to the next (this could be the case, for example, because one site was closed for refurbishment, or because certain pools are only open during summer months). Any obvious errors were identified and clarification sought from the local authorities concerned.

5. Any apparent errors in the data picked up by Sport England for which no satisfactory explanation has been provided have been excluded from this analysis. This means that they, along with any missing data, will appear as a '0' in this statistical release.