

***THE***

***POSITIVE***

***IMPACT***

***OF***

***DISABILITY***

***TENNIS***

A REPORT INTO THE IMPACT OF DISABILITY TENNIS ON PLAYERS,  
THEIR PARENTS/GUARDIANS, COACHES AND TENNIS VENUE STAFF IN BRITAIN

April 2017

# KEY FINDINGS

## CONTENTS

Objectives & Methodology .....3

Information from Players .....4

Information from Coaches .....8

Information from Tennis Venue Staff ..... 11



**84%**  
**OF PLAYERS**

say that playing tennis has had a positive impact on their social support network



**9 IN 10**  
**PLAYERS**

(91%) say that playing tennis has positively impacted their sense of self-confidence



**MORE THAN**  
**A THIRD**  
**OF PLAYERS**

(36%) would fail to meet the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines of doing 150 minutes or more high or medium intensity activity each week - excluding walking - if they were not playing tennis



**MORE THAN**  
**2 THIRDS**  
**OF PLAYERS**

(68%) say that they are feeling happier since they started playing tennis



**98%**  
**OF COACHES**

report a positive impact of coaching disability tennis on their professional development, saying it has improved their ability to coach generally

# OBJECTIVES & METHODOLOGY

## OBJECTIVES

ComRes was commissioned by the Tennis Foundation to undertake research in order to:

- Understand the benefits of playing tennis for disabled people both for their health and socially
- Explore the drivers and barriers to participation in tennis
- Provide recommendations on how to build the Tennis Foundation's programme supporting disabled people to play tennis



## METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the Tennis Foundation Disability Development Strategy 2013-2017 is to inspire and engage disabled people to become involved in tennis – regardless of background or ability – and to provide opportunities at both a recreational and competitive level.

To assess the success of this strategy, we looked at the impact of the Tennis Foundation's programme in relation to the desired outcomes of the new Sport England strategy, "Towards an Active Nation".

The research involved conducting face-to-face and online interviews with a range of respondents who would be directly impacted by any decisions by the Tennis Foundation:

- 127 tennis players (or parents of younger tennis players)
- 97 tennis coaches (of these, 65 confirmed that they coached disabled people to play tennis)
- 45 venue staff, 43 of whom work at venues which offer sports or physical activities for disabled people

# **INFORMATION FROM PLAYERS**

## **THE IMPACT ON PHYSICAL HEALTH**



MORE THAN  
**36%**  
OF PLAYERS

would fail to meet the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines of doing 150 minutes or more high or medium intensity activity each week - excluding walking - if they were not playing tennis



**A THIRD  
OF PLAYERS**

(32%) say that they were not playing any other sport at least once a month prior to playing tennis, indicating that starting to play tennis moved these players from inactivity to activity



**46%**  
OF PLAYERS

play at least 150 minutes or more tennis per week



**A THIRD  
OF PLAYERS**

(33%) report feeling less tired since they started playing tennis



**1 IN 5  
PLAYERS**

(20%) would be classified as "inactive" if playing tennis and walking were not included in the amount of exercise they did

## THE IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH, SOCIAL & INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Players cite the positive effect playing tennis has had on their mental and social wellbeing.

Supporting facilities to deliver more sessions and making sure disabled players feel welcome at these sessions have been vital in building this self-confidence and self-efficacy.



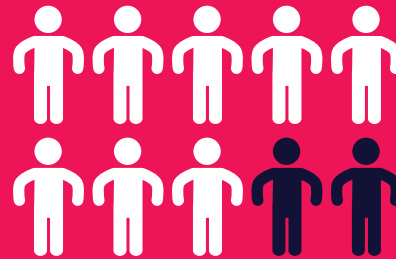
**91%**

say playing tennis has improved their self-confidence



**89%**

attribute their feeling of increased happiness to playing tennis



**84%**

say that playing tennis has had a positive impact on their social support network

In addition, since starting to play tennis:



**46%**

of players reported feeling less frustrated



**47%**

reported feeling less stressed

"I'm a lot calmer. It's very good for your mental health as well. You can just go out there and blast as many tennis balls as you need. At the end of the session you feel like you've done something as well. You have this massive sense of accomplishment at the end of each session."

Wheelchair tennis player,  
Grantham

## BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

The greatest challenges facing disabled people when it comes to playing tennis are:



**38%**  
OF PLAYERS

said finding players of a similar ability



**27%**  
OF PLAYERS

said the cost of lessons



**25%**  
OF PLAYERS

said traveling to the venue

The following would encourage players to play tennis more often:



**37%**

OF RESPONDENTS

said the availability of more frequent sessions



**31%**

OF RESPONDENTS

said sessions being available 'closer to home'



**23%**

OF RESPONDENTS

said if it were cheaper



**23%**

OF RESPONDENTS

said if there were more competitions to take part in

**23%**

OF RESPONDENTS

said if facilities were more accommodating of their disability



Barriers to greater participation in competition:

**43%**

say that there aren't enough competitions taking place nearby



**27%**

cite the associated cost as the barrier



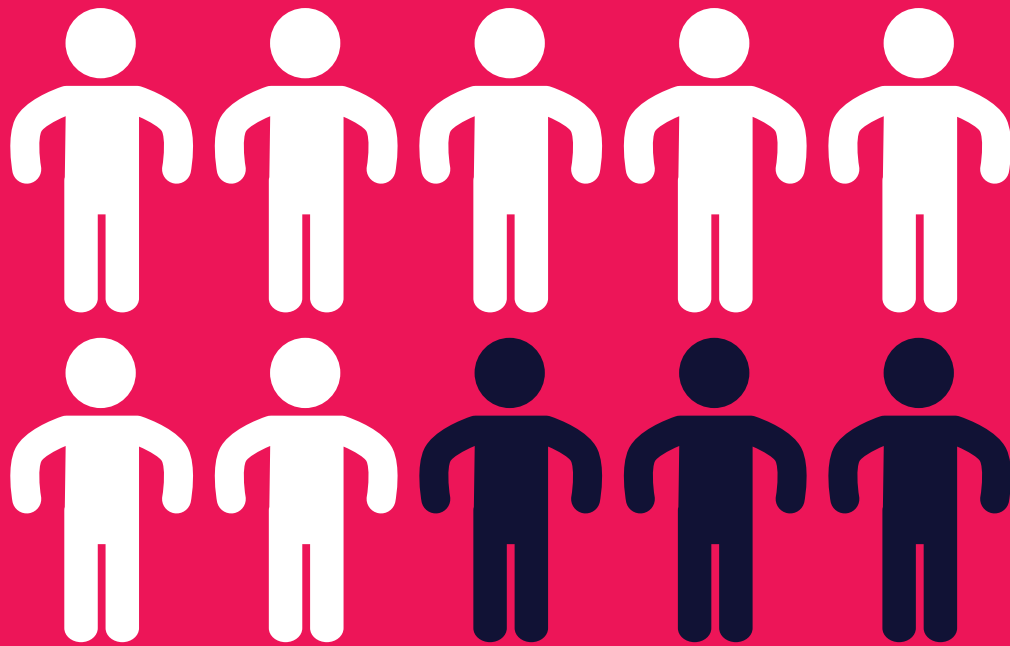
**26%**

cite a lack of time as the reason



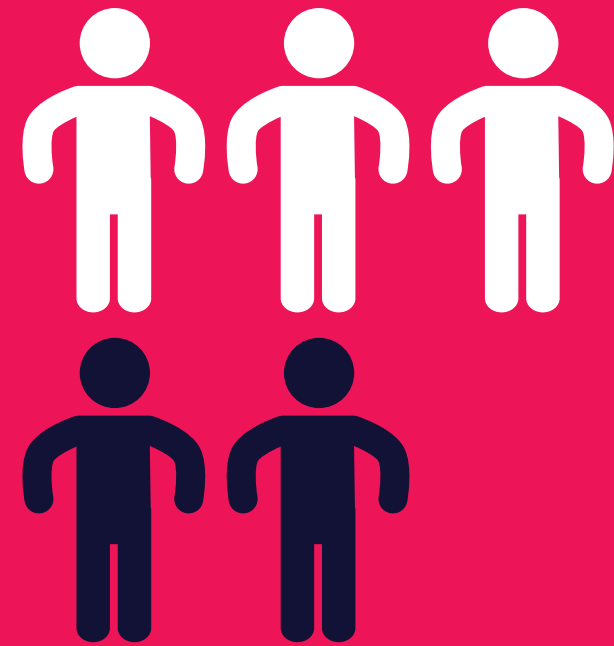
## **PLAYERS' PERCEPTIONS OF TENNIS**

Players are generally positive about the accessibility and openness of tennis for all people, but are less positive about the accessibility for disabled people.



**7/10**  
**PLAYERS**

(69%) agree that tennis is generally a welcoming sport to all people



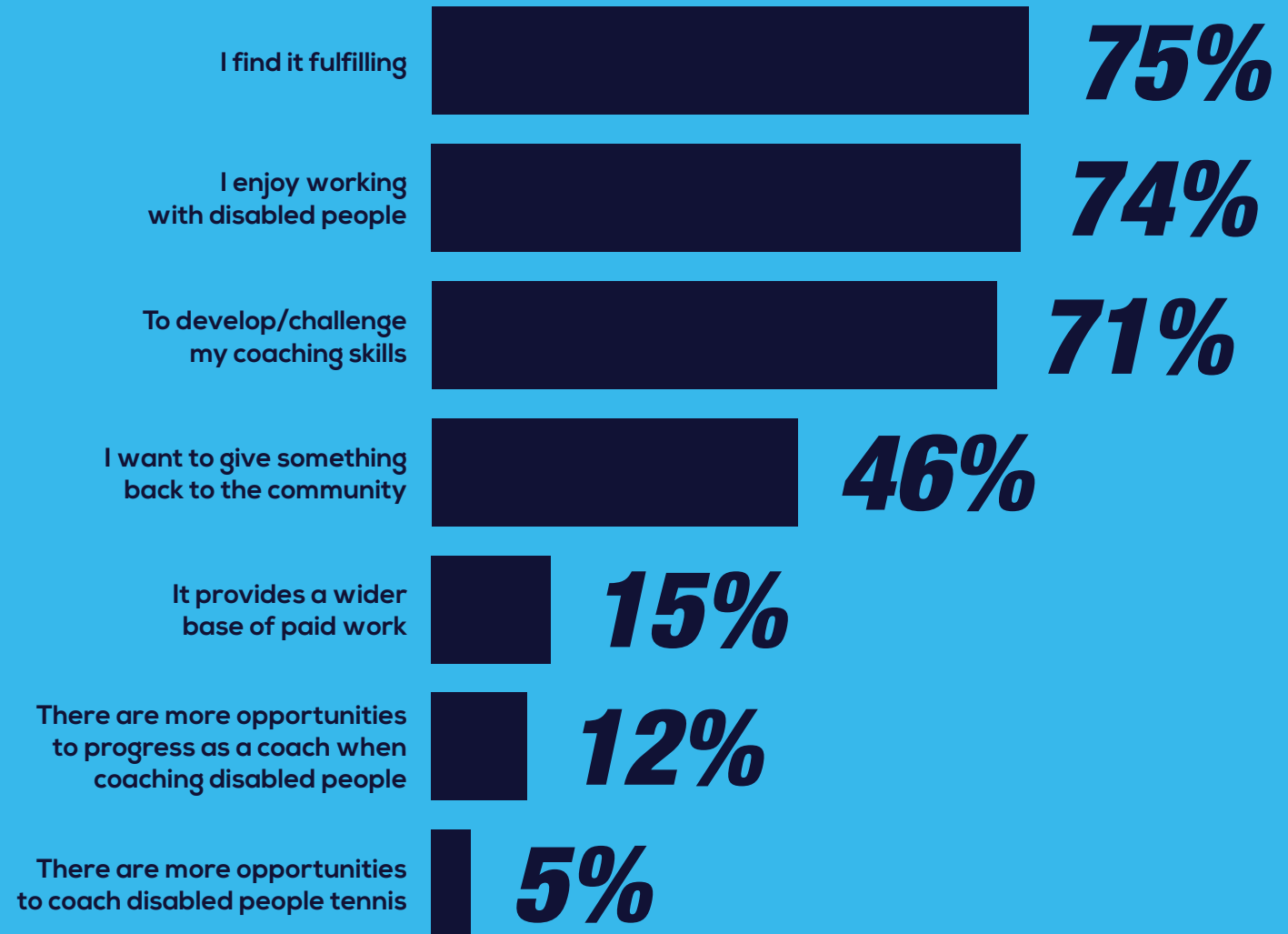
**LESS THAN**  
**3/5**

(58%) agree that tennis is generally good at making itself accessible to disabled people

# INFORMATION FROM COACHES

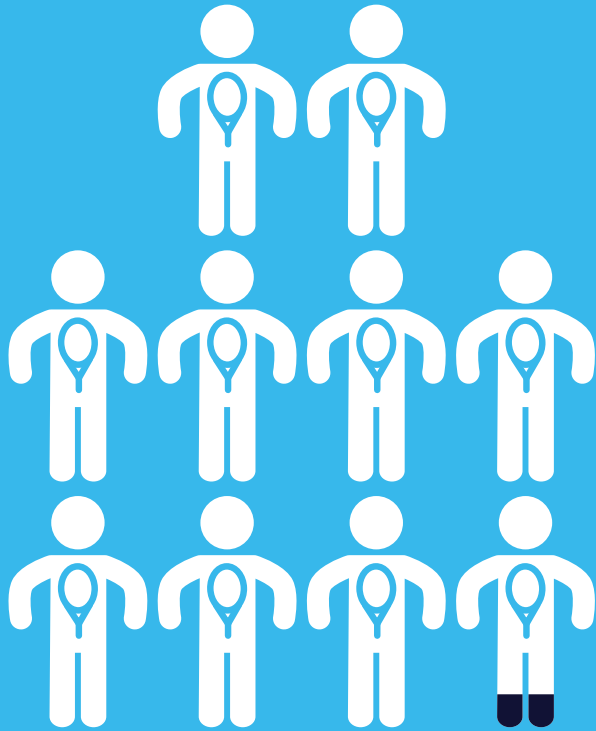
## WHY DO COACHES WORK WITH DISABLED PLAYERS?

Q. For which of the following reasons, if any, do you coach tennis to disabled people?  
 Base: coaches who currently coach disabled people (n=65)



N.B. Respondents were encouraged to select as many as were relevant.

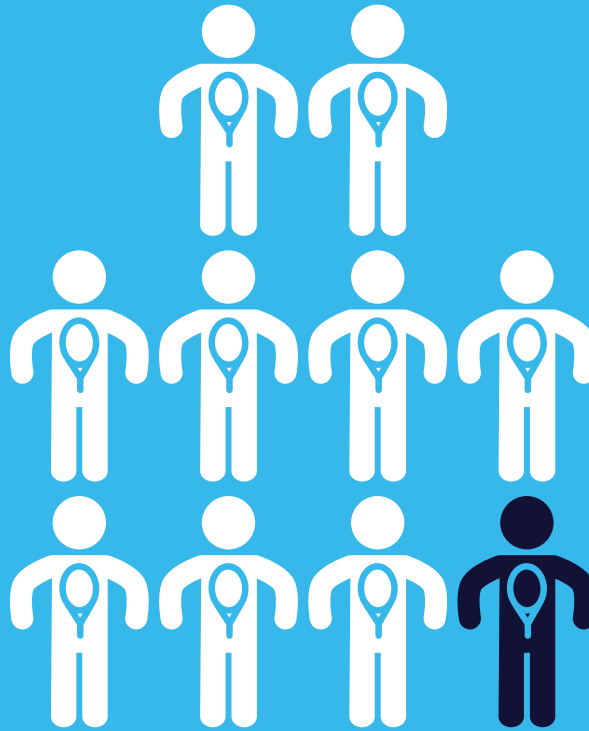




**98%**

**COACHES**

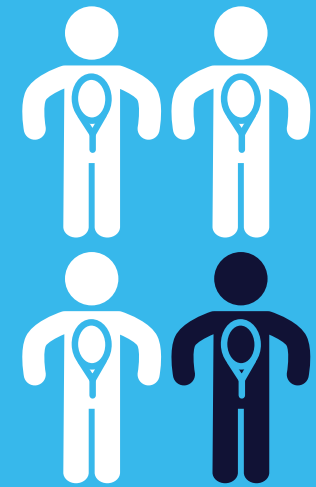
say that coaching disabled players has positively impacted their ability as a coach generally



**9 / 10**

**COACHES**

(89%) say it has increased their involvement with the disabled community

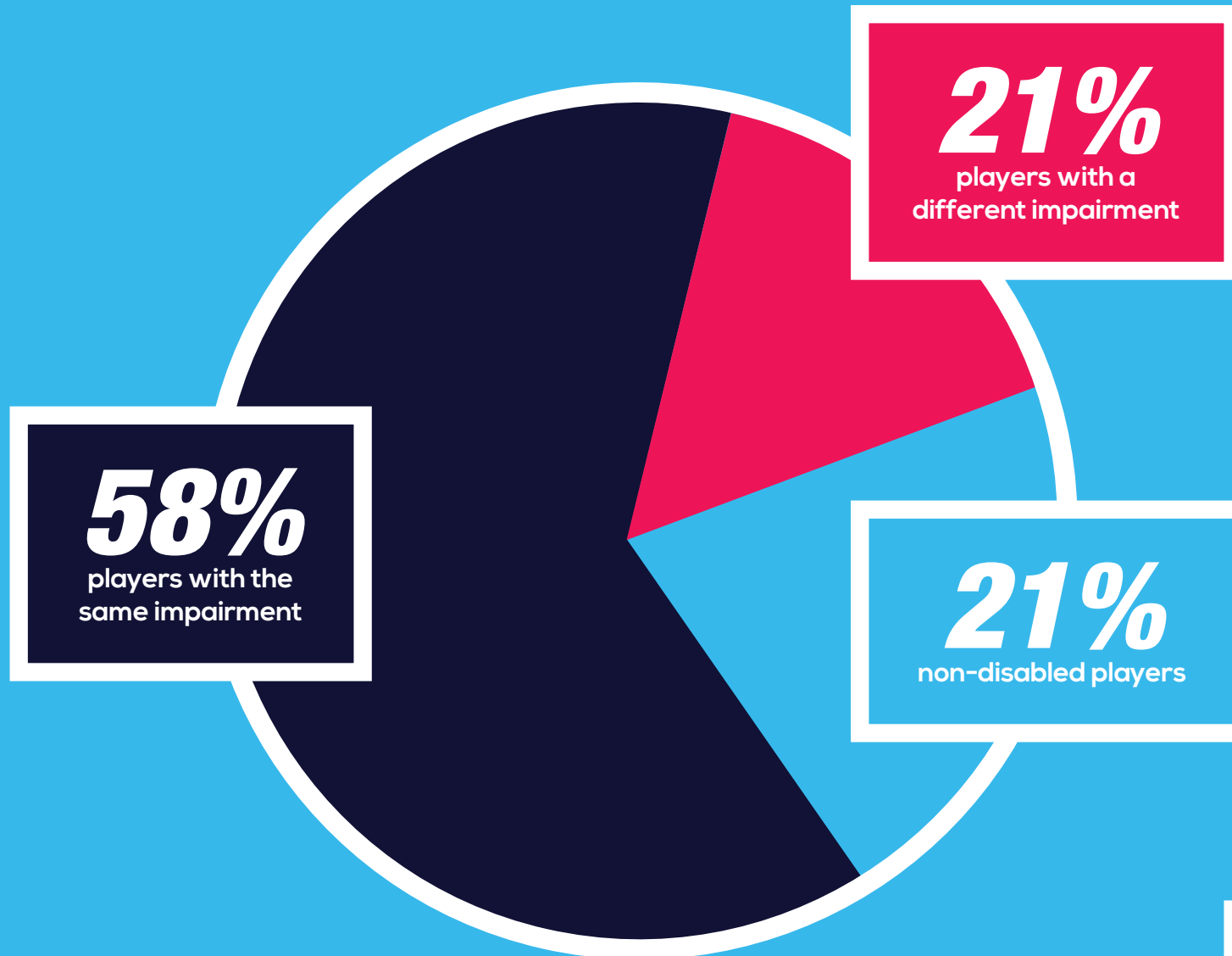


**3 / 4**

**COACHES**

(77%) say it has had a positive impact on their personal wellbeing

**COACHES TOLD US THAT DISABLED PEOPLE DEVELOP THEIR TENNIS BEST WHEN PLAYING WITH...**



Not only do the majority of coaches say that they think it is easier to provide effective coaching when coaching a group of players of the same impairment types (77%), they are also more likely to say that disabled people develop their tennis best when playing with players of the same impairment (58%).

# INFORMATION FROM TENNIS VENUE STAFF

The vast majority of staff (98%) are confident when engaging with customers with a physical impairment. However, venue staff are less confident in engaging with customers with a behavioural problem, when only 88% staff said they were confident.

Physical Impairment

**98%**

Learning Disability

**93%**

Visual Impairment

**93%**

Hearing Impairment

**91%**

Mental Health Problem

**91%**

Behavioural Condition

**88%**



[www.tennisfoundation.org.uk](http://www.tennisfoundation.org.uk)  
020 8487 7000  
[info@tennisfoundation.org.uk](mailto:info@tennisfoundation.org.uk)

© The Tennis Foundation 2017  
Charity Number 298175  
Registered Company Number 2138124