

London 2012 - The Final Countdown Begins:

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A majority of people believe a sporting legacy will be left and sports participation will rise

With one year left to the London Olympics two themes are emerging – legacy and cost. Do people feel that the £9.3 million cost of the games, up from some £3 billion in the bid proposal is value for money?

Regular research undertaken by JGFR of consumer attitudes is mixed. This is especially the case in terms of regional support for London 2012.

A third of people believe the Olympics will boost the economy

Before the bid was won in July 2005, around a third of adults believed that winning the Olympics would be beneficial for the UK economy, slightly higher than currently. People have become more optimistic about the economic effects of the Olympics in the past two years, but were very negative during the credit crunch and recession. The majority of adults remain unconvinced of the economic benefits and will be worried about the costs.

Very high ticket demand points to strong public support

Despite the concerns over the costs and benefits, the London Olympics have captured the mood of the public. “Being there” is very much part of a growing trend of consumer engagement with major events. Nearly 3 out of 10 adults believe the London Olympics will be the greatest sporting event of their lifetime; some 17% of adults (some 9 million) have consistently indicated they intended to apply for London 2012 tickets. The massive over-subscription and disappointment to millions of people who failed to get tickets is no surprise. In London and the South East around a third of adults had intended to purchase tickets.

Corporate sponsors will become key players in the success of the Games

With millions of tickets in the hands of major corporate sponsors growing attention is likely to be paid to promotional campaigns by sponsors offering Olympic tickets. While only a minority of people (11%) indicate they are more likely to switch to purchases from brands of Olympics sponsors, this proportion is expected to rise.

Legacy of major importance to making the London Olympics a long-term success

Efforts to gain more public support will be intensified in the coming year as focus intensifies on the issue of legacy. Overall the public have been far more willing to believe that the London Olympics will leave a lasting sporting legacy – just over half (54%) believe this to be the case - down from 58% in September 2010 and 56% in December 2009.

Given the focus on the legacy in East London, worryingly only 49% of Londoners believe there will be a lasting sporting legacy, down from 64% in September 2010.

Two-thirds of adults believe sports participation will increase post the Olympics

One of the key measures of legacy will be in sports participation. Two-thirds of the public believe that sports participation will increase as a result of the Olympics – down on 71% in September 2010 but up on 58% a year ago. Among young people aged 16-22 three-quarters believe that sports participation will grow as a result of the Olympics – more than in any other age group.

The NHS should use the Olympics to promote the benefits of sport and fitness to improve the nation's health

As part of the legacy a more general benefit to the economy would be an improvement in the nation's physical health. Some two-thirds of the population believe that the NHS should use the London Olympics to actively promote the benefits of sport and fitness with over three-quarters of high earners in support.

Country divided on whether the Olympics will make us feel happier and bring the nation closer together With just less than a year to go to the Opening ceremony, and amidst a surfeit of gloomy news stories fuelling a pessimistic mood of the nation, the Olympic countdown has the potential to help people to become more optimistic with a large range of events and celebrations planned in the coming year.

Just under a half of the country believe that the London Olympics will bring the country closer together and make everyone feel happier. Such a positive sporting impact is felt most in the South East (57%) and least in Northern Ireland (38%).

Just over 1 in 10 intend to volunteer to help in Olympics events/activities nationwide

In making the Games a big success an army of volunteers across the UK will be needed in helping in events and activities both at, and in the build up and surrounding the Olympics. Overall 12% of adults have indicated that they intend to help as a volunteer with the most unpaid helpers set to be found among Londoners (22%).

Commented John Gilbert, Chief Executive of research consultancy JGFR:

“The starter’s gun has been fired with the Olympic Games excitement still on a slow burn. We expect the excitement to grow in the coming months, especially if more tickets become available. The key measures on the Olympics dashboard will be upward improvements across the key gauges of legacy, sports participation, the economic impact and of a happier and more unified country”

To discuss our Olympics Research Barometer please contact 0208 944 7510 / 07740 027968 or email j.gilbert@jgfr.co.uk

The Olympics Dashboard

Consumers were asked to decide which of various statements relating to the Olympics applied to them. These statements have been asked periodically since June 2005.

About JGFR

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