

A Half Of People In Wales See Olympic Torch Relay

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Between the start of the Olympic Torch Relay on May 19 and the Opening Ceremony on July 27, just over a third of adults (35%) and millions more children will have, or expect to experience, the once-in-a-lifetime thrill of watching the Olympic Torch as it journeys through the whole of the UK.

The 11th JGFR Olympics Barometer commissioned from GfK* that tracks the public's attitudes towards the Olympics, found over a quarter of adults in all regions have / or intend to line the streets of the 1,019 communities supporting the 8,000 Torchbearers.

In Wales, a half of adults watched the Torch pass through, nearly double the expected support in Northern Ireland (26%) and Scotland (28%) where the Torch had yet to visit.

In England, the highest actual / intended viewing for the Torch Relay is in the North West (42%) and the South East (37%) with the lowest in the West Midlands (31%) and London (32%). In the South West where the Torch started its journey, 35% of adults attended the Olympic Torch Relay.

In the eastern half of England where the Torch Relay is awaited, slightly lower than average numbers of adults expect to view – 34% in the North East and 33% in Yorkshire / Humberside and the East of England.

Such support lining the streets for a nationwide event (an estimated 20 million) compares with the 12 million people expected to watch this year's Tour de France.

A higher proportion of women (39%) than men (30%) have/expect to watch the Torch Relay – which may reflect the former's more flexible working patterns. By work status the highest proportion of actual/likely Torch viewers is among part time workers (47%). By age group the most support is found among 23-29 year olds (39%).

For many people free events such as the Olympic Torch Relay and the Diamond Jubilee celebrations provide a welcome escape from daily financial pressures brought on by the on-going economic problems. This is reflected in there being similar attendance levels among people living in saving, making do and struggling households**. Where there is a notable difference is in higher proportions of very financially active people*** supporting the Torch Relay. More financially active and younger people will appeal to the Olympic Torch sponsors whose "battle-buses" are a feature of the experience.

For nearly a half of the population (47%) the London Olympics are expected to bring the country together and make people feel happier – a consistent level of response in recent quarters. Regionally more people in Wales and the North East (53%), London (52%) and the South East (51%) expect the Olympics to produce greater national bonding. Only in Scotland (31%) do notably fewer people expect the Olympics to have a lower bonding effect.

Feeling part of London 2012 through viewing a Torch Relay will help to boost confidence in the Games, with millions affected by difficulties getting tickets as a result of the massive ticket demand and purchase process. More people are getting tickets (11%, June compared to 6% March) although the proportion of successful applicants is well down on the 17% of adults who intended to apply. Around 5% of adults will seek to access tickets from corporate sponsors.

Fewer people expect an Olympics boost to the economy

In the latest Barometer fewer people (28%) than in March (33%) expect the Olympics to give a boost to the economy. Regionally, more people in the North West (40%) and Wales (37%) expect an Olympics boost, with the lowest proportions in Northern Ireland (18%) and the West Midlands (22%). In London, where the bulk of Olympics activity and consequent disruption takes place, 24% of adults expect a boost. In June 2005 prior to the bid succeeding, nationally 35% of adults expected winning the bid to boost the economy.

Will the Olympics inspire?

• Just under a third of the public (32%) believe the Olympics will be the greatest sporting event of their lifetime – the highest proportion recorded in the eleven Olympics Barometers - and up from 28% in March.

• 27% of adults expect the cultural Olympiad / Olympics / Paralympics will inspire them to become more active

• A majority of the population (60%) believe that the Olympics/Paralympics will increase sports participation

• A half of the public believe there will be a lasting sporting legacy

• There is considerable support (60%) for the NHS being a prime vehicle to promote sport /exercise

Commented John Gilbert, Chief Executive of JGFR

“The last pre-Olympics Barometer shows the mood of the public towards the Olympics little changed since March with around a half of the public expecting it to bring the country together. The Olympics Torch Relay has attracted vast crowds

and together with the Diamond Jubilee combined to help people express their nationhood and escape from on-going economic problems. Events will determine the Games success. With a month to go the public are mildly optimistic of the prized sporting legacy that will put Britain at the forefront of the sports industry for the coming decade.â€•

*The 11th Olympics Barometer is based on telephone interviews undertaken by GfK NOP with 1,003 adults aged 16+ over the weekend of 15-17 June. The Olympics Barometer has been run periodically since June 2005. The survey findings will be reported in the â€˜Summer 2012 Olympics Barometerâ€™™.

**The Olympics Barometer is housed on the same GfK omnibus survey as UK consumer confidence that asks people about the current financial state of their household

*** The Olympics Barometer also ran alongside the Summer UK Financial Activity Barometer that measures consumers intended savings, investment and borrowing activity

Chart : Viewing / intending to view the Olympic Torch Relay and of the London Olympics bringing the country together and making people feel happier, attitudes June 2102, adults aged 16+, UK

About JGFR

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