



## **Strategic Plan 2020 –2024**

**Be active. Be the best.**

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## About Us

Disability Sport NI is Northern Ireland's main disability sports charity working to improve the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities through sport and active recreation.

We work with people with physical, sensory and learning disabilities of all ages and with schools, disability groups, sporting organisations and clubs to ensure that everyone can benefit from the health, social and education benefits of sport and active recreation.

We believe that every person with a disability has the right to participate in all aspects of life and are committed to building a more inclusive society where people with disabilities have the same opportunity as non-disabled people to lead a full, active and healthy lifestyle through sport and active recreation.

Launched in 1998 by a number of small disability sports groups to address the under representation of people with disabilities in sport, we have gradually grown to represent the vast majority of disability sports groups and clubs in Northern Ireland.

We currently have 113 member groups made up of disability sports groups, schools and adult centres and organise a range of participation programmes, events, training courses and education projects all designed to improve the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities.

We also work closely with Sport Northern Ireland and Governing Bodies of Sport to ensure that talented disabled sports people have the same opportunity as their non-disabled peers to train, compete and excel in their chosen sport on the world stage.

Disability Sport NI is a limited company with charitable status and is recognised by Sport Northern Ireland as the key body responsible for the development of sport and active recreation opportunities for people with disabilities in Northern Ireland.

The organisation is a member of the British Paralympic Association, Boccia UK, Disability Action, the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action and the Northern Ireland Sports Forum. Disability Sport NI also maintains close links with Paralympics Ireland.

## The Need

There has been a welcome improvement in the provision of sports and active recreation opportunities for people with disabilities in Northern Ireland over the period of our last strategic plan from April 2016 to March 2020. Most significantly a joint up inter agency approach to improving the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities through participation in sport and active recreation was adopted for the first time in Northern Ireland, with the launch of the Active Living No Limits Action Plan in 2016. During the period there was also a significant increase in the number of participation projects and initiatives for people with disabilities in every area of Northern Ireland. Governing bodies of sport were more proactive in including people with disabilities in their programmes and talented athletes from Northern Ireland once again excelled in competition on the world stage including at the 2020 Paralympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Indeed these welcome improvements in provision are reflected in Northern Ireland wide statistics which indicate a 3%<sup>1</sup> increase in participation in sport by disabled people.

However despite this success the reality remains that opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport and active recreation in Northern Ireland are still not being provided on the scale required to give people with the disabilities the same opportunities as non-disabled people to live a full, active and healthy lifestyle.

Indeed statistics for Northern Ireland show that people with disabilities remain half as likely to participate in sport and active recreation as non-disabled people:

- One in five people in Northern Ireland have a disability or long term health condition – that’s 21% of the population. (Census 2011)
- Disabled people are **less than half** as likely to participate in sport as non- disabled people, with 22% participating in sport in the last month compared to 47% of non-disabled people. (Experience of Sport in Northern Ireland. Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2017/18)
- Disabled people are **half** as likely to be a member of a sports club or organisation, i.e. 14% of disabled people compared to 27% of non-disabled people. (Experience of Sport in Northern Ireland. Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2017/18)
- Disabled people are **half** as likely to attend a live sports event in Northern Ireland – that’s 17% of disabled people compared to 33% of non- disabled people. (Experience of Sport in Northern Ireland. Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2017/18)

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<sup>1</sup> Experience of sport in Northern Ireland. Findings from the Continuous Household Survey 2015/16-2017/18.

## **Our Vision, Mission & Strategic Outcomes**

### **Our Vision** for the future is:

An inclusive society where disabled people fully participate in all aspects of life, including sport and active recreation.

### **Our Mission** is:

To develop sports and active recreation opportunities which give disabled people an equal opportunity to live a full, active and healthy lifestyle.

### **Our Strategic Outcomes** are:

- A more equal and inclusive society, where more disabled people participate, compete and excel in sport and active recreation at a level of their choice.
- The improved health and wellbeing of disabled people.
- Equality of access for disabled people to participate in sport and active recreation throughout Northern Ireland.

## Our Values

### Inclusion

We believe that disabled people have the right to be fully included in every aspect of society, including sport and active recreation.

In sport and active recreation we believe that for most disabled people inclusion can be best achieved through **mainstreaming**, that is the inclusion of disabled people in mainstream sports sessions, clubs and participation programmes alongside their non-disabled friends and peers.

However, we also believe that true inclusion also requires the provision of **parallel and disability specific** activities and programmes where required.

### Equality

We are committed to promoting equality of opportunity and will carry out our work in a manner which promotes equality of opportunity between disabled people and non-disabled people, between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, race, age, marital status or sexual orientation, between men and women generally and between persons with dependants and persons without.

### The Social Model of Disability

We are committed to the social model of disability. That is, we believe that disability is caused by the barriers that exist in society and by the way society is organised, rather than by a person's impairment or difference. The social model of disability is concerned with removing barriers so that disabled people can participate in all aspects of society and live full and independent lives.

### Excellence

We are committed to excellence in everything we do and will strive to achieve the highest possible standards in our programmes, services and governance.

### Mental Health and Wellbeing

We are committed to developing a culture and approach that promotes the positive mental health and wellbeing of our staff, volunteers, participants and athletes.

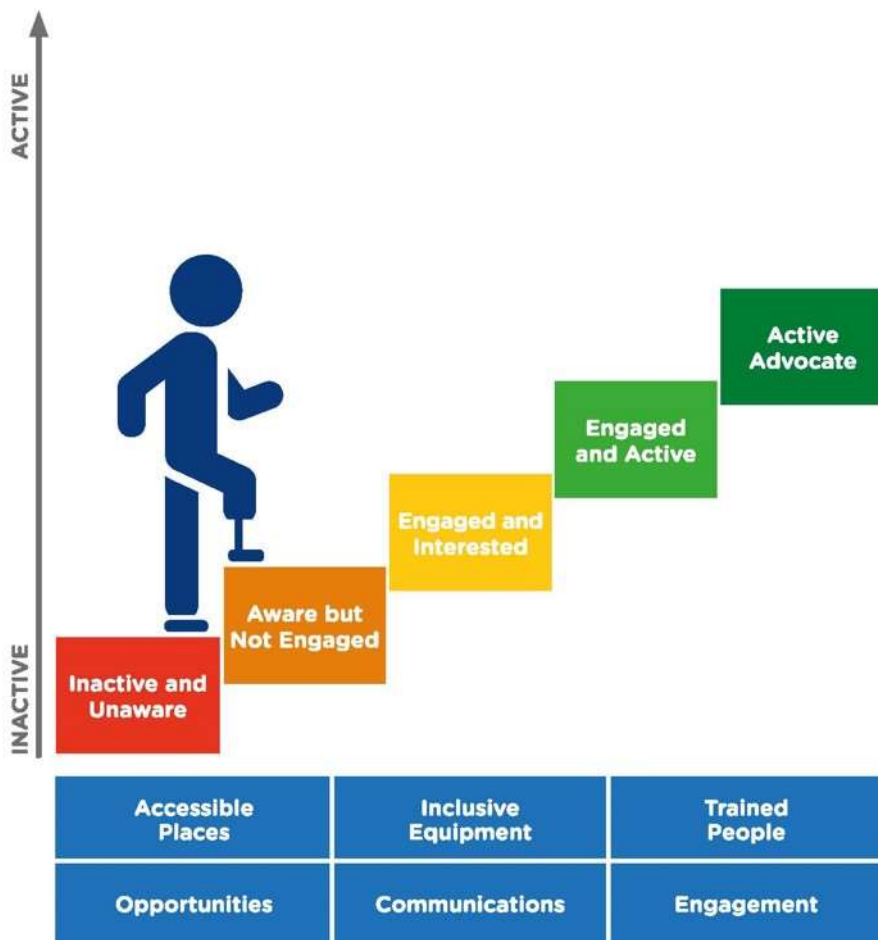
## The Benefits of Sport and Active Recreation

At the heart of who we are is the belief that participation in sport and active recreation at any level is a positive and transformational experience. Sport and active recreation not only has the power to enhance the quality of life of the individual, but it can also be a tool for positive social change.

We believe the benefits of sport are:

- **Lifelong Enjoyment and Fulfilment:** Whether it's the fun and enjoyment of taking part, the thrill or challenge of competing, or the opportunity to socialise and make friends, sport and active recreation offers participants lifelong enjoyment and fulfilment.
- **Improved Health and Wellbeing:** Regular participation greatly improves the general health and fitness of participants. It can also play a vital role in improving public health, by contributing to reductions in the effect of long-term health conditions.
- **Increased Academic Achievement:** There is growing evidence that active involvement in sport and active recreation can help improve children's academic performance.
- **Social Inclusion:** In a society where disabled people are marginalised, participation in sport can help build confidence and self esteem and create opportunities for disabled people to play an active role in their local community.
- **Changing Attitudes:** Sport provides an ideal vehicle to showcase the abilities and achievements of disabled people, thereby challenging and addressing commonly held negative attitudes and misconceptions about disabled people in society.

# Our Sport and Active Recreation Engagement Model





## **Our Five Strategic Priorities**

Over the period of this plan Disability Sport NI will have five strategic priorities:

### **1. Improving Health & Wellbeing**

To improve the health and wellbeing of disabled people and people with long term health conditions through increased participation in sport and active recreation opportunities in every area of Northern Ireland.

### **2. Developing Sporting Talent**

To lead the development of performance pathways and support programmes which enable talented athletes and coaches with disabilities to achieve higher levels of performance in their sport including continued Paralympic success.

### **3. Inclusive Sports Facilities & Outdoor Places**

To develop access services which encourage and support the development of sports facilities and outdoor places which are inclusive of disabled people.

### **4. Communications, Training & Engagement**

To inspire, facilitate and encourage disabled people to become more active by engaging with disabled people and the broader community, by delivering inclusive training and by promoting the social model of disability.

### **5. Governance & Income Generation**

To manage an effective well governed organisation with the capacity to lead the development of disability sport and active recreation in Northern Ireland.

## **Strategic Priority 1: Improving Health & Wellbeing**

To improve the health and wellbeing of disabled people and people with long term health conditions through increased participation in sport and active recreation opportunities in every area of Northern Ireland.

### **Our Objectives**

**1.1 Inclusive Active Recreation Projects:** To sustain and develop local active recreation projects through our Community Interest Company Live Active NI which improves the health and wellbeing of everyone in society with a particular focus on disabled people, people with long term health conditions and other underrepresented groups.

**1.2 Disability Sports Hubs:** To further develop and sustain a programme of disability sports activities at all eleven disability sports hubs, in partnership with each District Council.

**1.3 Inclusive Clubs:** To encourage and support mainstream sports clubs to be more inclusive and where necessary to support existing and new disability sports clubs.

**1.4 Inclusive Outdoor Recreation Opportunities:** To manage, sustain and further develop the 'All Out Trekking' project and to support the development of new outdoor recreation projects which are inclusive of disabled people.

## **Strategic Priority 2: Developing Sporting Talent**

To lead the development of performance pathways and support programmes which enable talented athletes with disabilities and coaches to achieve higher levels of performance in their sport including continued Paralympic success.

### **Our Objectives**

**2.1 Inclusive Governing Bodies:** To support Governing Bodies of Sport to develop performance pathways, coach education programmes and clubs to be more inclusive of disabled people.

**2.2 Wheelchair Basketball:** To continue to develop and implement a strategic plan for the sport of wheelchair basketball in Northern Ireland which further develops the network of local clubs.

**2.3 Boccia:** To continue to develop and implement a strategic plan for the sport of boccia in Northern Ireland which further develops the network of local clubs.

**2.4 Athlete Inclusion & Wellbeing:** To support the inclusion and wellbeing of disabled athletes in performance sport programmes.

**2.5 Major Events:** In partnership with National Governing Bodies of sport to host national and international disability sports events in Northern Ireland.

**2.6 Representation:** Through the maintenance and development of effective working relationships with UK and Irish performance sports organisations to ensure that talented athletes from Northern Ireland have the opportunity to access national performance programmes.

### **Strategic Priority 3: Inclusive Sports Facilities & Outdoor Places**

To develop access services which encourage and support the development of sports facilities and outdoor places which are inclusive of disabled people.

#### **Our Objectives**

**3.1 Inclusive Sports Facilities:** To encourage and support sports facility designers and operators to design, develop and manage sports facilities which are fully inclusive of disabled people.

**3.2 Inclusive Stadia:** To encourage and support the design, development and management of stadia which are fully inclusive of disabled spectators.

**3.3 Inclusive Equipment Projects:** In partnership with other organisations to facilitate and support the provision of inclusive equipment which improves access to sport and active recreation opportunities.

**3.4 Outdoor Places:** To encourage and support the design and development of outdoor places which are fully inclusive of disabled people.

**3.5 Inclusive Sports Centre:** In partnership with other sports organisations to develop a sports facility which will include a disability sports hub for the Belfast City Council area and 'High Performance Centres' for wheelchair basketball, boccia, and other sports.

**3.6 Disability Access Community Interest Company:** In collaboration with other organisations to explore and if feasible establish a specialist Community Interest Company to develop and manage a range of sustainable disability access services designed to support and facilitate the full inclusion of disabled people in society.

## **Strategic Priority 4: Communications, Training & Engagement**

To inspire, facilitate and encourage disabled people to become more active by engaging with the wider community, by delivering inclusive training and by promoting the social model of disability.

### **Our Objectives**

**4.1 Marketing & Social Media:** To develop and deliver an effective marketing and digital media plan which successfully engages with disabled people and the wider community.

**4.2 Inclusive Training:** To develop, market and deliver training courses which provide the knowledge and skills required to fully include disabled people in sport, active recreation and physical education.

**4.3 Education Initiatives:** To deliver disability sport inspired education projects which increase understanding of disability and challenge negative attitudes and misconceptions about disabled people within society.

**4.4 Community Engagement:** To increase awareness of the organisation's work and promote the social model of disability by engaging with disabled people and the wider community.

**4.5 Volunteers:** To train and manage a network of volunteers to support the work of Disability Sport NI and Live Active NI.

**4.6 Research & Insight:** To develop, conduct and collate research and insight that clearly demonstrates the impact of Disability Sport NI and Live Active NI's work.

## **Strategic Priority 5: Governance & Income Generation**

To manage an effective well governed organisation with the capacity to lead the development of disability sport and active recreation in Northern Ireland.

### **Our Objectives**

**5.1 Governance:** To achieve recognised levels of good governance and to effectively manage risks to the organisation.

**5.2 Income Generation:** To secure sufficient funds from the statutory and corporate sectors, charitable trusts and the public to resource the work of Disability Sport NI and Live Active NI.