



DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2012 - 15

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This Disability Action Plan can be obtained from Sport Northern Ireland in alternative formats, including large print, easy read format, Braille, audio cassette and computer disc. It can also be downloaded from Sport Northern Ireland's website.

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Foreword

This Disability Action Plan is an important document in that it is a statement of Sport Northern Ireland's (SNI) commitment to and proposals for fulfilling the statutory obligations in compliance with Section 49A of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order 2006). This Act places duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have regard to the need:

- to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities; and
- to encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life.

The Plan is also important because it outlines how disability issues are being effectively mainstreamed within SNI and its funded partners, thus ensuring that they are central to the whole range of policy decision-making within Sport Northern Ireland.



Acting Chief Executive



Chair

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1. Introduction

1.1 Section 49A of the DDA, 1995 (as amended by the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order, 2006) requires Sport Northern Ireland (SNI), in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need:-

- to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities; and
- to encourage participation by people with disabilities in public life.

1.2 SNI is committed to the fulfilment of its disability duties in all parts of its organisation and has set out how it intends to do this in this Disability Action Plan (hereafter 'the Plan').

1.3 SNI will undertake a planned programme of communication and training on the disability duties for all staff and Board Members.

2. Purpose of the Disability Action Plan

2.1 This Plan sets out how SNI proposes to fulfil the disability duties in relation to its functions.

3. SNI – Its Role and Functions

3.1 SNI is an executive non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. It was established on 31st December 1973 under the provisions of the Recreation and Youth Service (Northern Ireland) Order 1973, with its main objective being the furtherance of sport and physical recreation.

3.2 SNI vision is: “a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport which contributes to a healthy, fair and prosperous society”.

3.3 In practice this means SNI creates and develops programmes and partnerships that will contribute to increased participation in sport and physical recreation, improved sporting performances and improved efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of sport.

- 3.4 SNI also considers the need to overcome barriers in relation to access within physical activity and sport for different population groups, including people with a disability. Specifically, SNI recognises the needs of hardest to reach groups including the deaf community/hard of hearing, blind and partially sighted and wheelchair users. SNI's commitment to addressing their needs is outlined in Section 12.
- 3.5 The need to improve personal well-being and reduce the number of obese and overweight people is also a pressing issue, as is the need to utilise education resources more effectively to instil a lifelong habit of sport for our young people.
- 3.6 SNI would also advocate the need to develop the volunteer and professional workforce in sport without whom sport will not develop and to create safe sporting environments for all participants.

6. Commitment to the effective implementation of the Disability Action Plan

- 4.1 SNI is committed to the effective implementation of all aspects of the Plan in all parts of its organisation. Overall responsibility for determining policy on how this will be achieved lies with the Board Members. Day-to-day responsibility for carrying out the policy determined by the Board Members lies with the Chief Executive who is responsible for the implementation of administrative arrangements to ensure that the disability duties are complied with by SNI in carrying out its full range of functions.
- 4.2 SNI is dedicated to implementing effectively the disability duties and this Disability Action Plan. We will allocate all available necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) to contribute towards the achievement of the target PA10 of 'Sport Matters - The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport 2009 - 2019'¹ in order to effectively implement this plan and where appropriate,

¹ PA10. By 2019 to deliver at least a 6 percentage points increase in participation rates in sport and physical recreation among people with a disability (from the 2013 baseline).

build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into corporate and annual operating plans.

- 4.3 As part of its Corporate Planning process, SNI will build objectives and targets relating to the disability duties into Corporate and Business plans. These will be reflected at all levels of strategic planning within SNI including individual staff objectives and annual plans. Progress on meeting objectives, including those relating to the disability duties, will be monitored and reported upon at senior level within the organisation on a quarterly basis.
- 4.4 A formal report of progress on meeting the objectives relating to the disability duties will be included in SNI Annual Report to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

5. How the Disability Action Plan will be Published

- 5.1 Following submission to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, this Plan will be available by contacting:

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- 5.2 SNI will, through our ongoing work with people with physical, sensory, mental ill-health, hidden disabilities and learning disabilities, find appropriate ways of communicating the Plan.
- 5.3 In addition, all employees will be signposted to the Plan and any amendments/updates, which will be available on the intranet under Publications.

6. Internal Arrangements

6.1 (i) Board

The Board consists of a Chair, Vice-Chair and up to 13 members who combine sectoral interest with a broad range of skills and experience to further the strategic objectives for the development of sport in Northern Ireland.

(ii) Committees

The Board's work is supported by a number of Committees. Each Committee is chaired by individuals with relevant expertise and experience. The full Board ratifies all appointments to Committees. Each Committee reports and makes recommendations as appropriate to the Board.

(iii) Chief Executive

The Chief Executive is the Accounting Officer of SNI. Three units operate within SNI each headed by a Unit Director:

1. Participation and Facilities;
2. Performance Sport; and
3. Sport Management Services.

(iv) Staff

As at 1 April 2012, there are 115 members of staff employed within SNI and they fall under the following categories:

Staff Category	Number Employed
Chief Executive	1
Directors	3
Managers	18
Other Staff	93
Total	115

6.2 The Chief Executive is responsible for the strategic direction and advice to the Board, for the day-to-day management of services and the longer term planning and allocation of resources.

- 6.3 The Participation Unit is responsible for Capital Team, Community Sport Team, Tollymore National Outdoor Centre and the Overseeing Function for implementing the Safety at Sports Grounds legislation team.
- 6.4 The Performance Sport Unit is responsible for the Performance Investment Team, Talent Systems Team and the Sports Institute Northern Ireland.
- 6.5 The Sport Management Services Unit is responsible for Finance, Grants, Internal Audit, Human Resources, Policy Planning and Research, Marketing, Information Systems, Investment Assurance and Central Services.

7. Effective Engagement

- 7.1 The Board is committed to engaging effectively with people with disabilities in the drafting, implementation, monitoring and review of this Plan. Further information on how this will be done is outlined in Section 9 on Consultation.

8. Reporting Process

- 8.1 SNI will monitor progress through it's contract with Disability Sports Northern Ireland (DSNI) and explore the potential for undertaking a stakeholder survey to determine progress against the Action Measures included in Section 12.
- 8.2 A copy of the Annual Report will be available on the Equality page of the SNI website – www.sportni.net

9. Three Year Review

- 9.1 SNI will carry out a three Year Review of its action plan and equality scheme in consultation with the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 SNI is committed to carrying out consultation in a meaningful manner in the development of its disability duties. In doing so, SNI is keen to bring about change for people with disabilities.

- 10.2 Specifically, SNI is keen to seek the views of those with disabilities in relation to the development of the Plan. To do this SNI works closely with stakeholders within the disability sector, and specifically those organisations within disability sport.
- 10.3 SNI carried out a review of opportunities for people with disabilities in 2003 which resulted in the establishment of an advisory group who then developed an issues paper which informed SNI's policy direction; SNI's Disability Mainstreaming Policy was formally adopted in February 2006.
- 10.4 SNI monitors and reviews policy based on feedback to help to shape priorities and present solutions on how to remove barriers and ensure any service improvements are made in an effective and meaningful way.
- 10.5 Furthermore, in partnership with DSNI, SNI receives feedback from education and training workshops held by DSNI and their respective member organisations. This has enabled SNI to consider recommendations, put forward through this consultation process, when developing SNI's Action Plan's action measures (detailed in section 11).
- 10.6 SNI has placed press advertisements in the Belfast Telegraph, SNI website and emailed SNI consultees, to allow individuals and organisations the opportunity to respond to this Disability Action Plan. SNI will also place an advertisement in 'Active' (the newsletter of Disability Sports NI) once the final Disability Action Plan has been agreed.
- 10.7 As part of the consultation process, barriers to consultation will be removed by ensuring accessibility of documents in appropriate formats. Information will be made available on request in accessible formats, in a timely fashion and can be downloaded from our website – www.sportni.net. SNI will decide upon the best way to communicate information to young people with disabilities, as well as considering additional dimensions, such as ethnicity, age, gender, sexual orientation and religious belief. SNI considers the Plan to be a useful working document for staff, the Board and any member of the public.

- 10.8 The Board believes it is important that those with disabilities are involved in the implementation, monitoring and review of the Plan. Section 11 of this document sets out the initiatives that SNI wishes to implement. The actions detailed have been identified from current practices and comments received to date.
- 10.9 Following on from the consultation period, SNI may wish to further discuss the information detailed within the Plan by meeting with:
- Individuals; and
 - Representative groups.

Organised surveys and other innovative ways of involving people with disabilities and their carers will also be explored.

11. Action Measures Already Taken

- 11.1 SNI has already taken a number of measures to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and encourage their participation in public life as a result of the duties under Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. In particular the Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the SNI Disability Mainstreaming Policy highlighted a number of positive actions already in place.
- 11.2 SNI has taken additional steps to ensure equality of access is available, both in terms of physical access to buildings and facilities, and access to appropriate information, in a format that is suitable to meet individuals' circumstances, abilities and needs.
- 11.3 Training has been a priority for all Board Members and employees. SNI staff have also completed disability awareness training, a commitment which will continue in the future.
- 11.4 All SNI policies are screened to ensure they comply with Section 75 of The Northern Ireland Act, 1998. This practice will continue and where adverse impact or potential adverse impact is identified, appropriate corrective action will continue to be taken.
- 11.5 SNI has developed a Disability Mainstreaming Policy and associated action plan, which promotes mainstreaming as the end goal through a 'twin track' approach. To implement the policy,

SNI has engaged the services of DSNI through a competitive tendering process. This contract for services covered the period 1 April 2006 - 31 March 2008 and was extended to 31 March 2009. DSNI were also engaged through a strategic investment award for the 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2012 period and for a further three year period from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2015.

- 11.6 SNI has increased the provision of sporting opportunities for people with disabilities through its investment in DSNI, Special Olympics Ulster and across other investment programmes e.g. Active Communities, Awards for Sport . These investments have led to a significant improvement in disability sports provision in Northern Ireland. That improvement in provision is most notable at a performance level. The London 2012 Paralympic Games were the most successful in history. Eight athletes from Northern Ireland qualified for the games: six in the Paralympics Ireland squad and two in the Paralympics GB squad. Those athletes secured a total of seven medals, including five gold medals, which made Northern Ireland the most successful region of the UK or Ireland as regards gold medals secured per million of population.
- 11.7 The most recent research carried out, the 2010 Northern Ireland sport and physical activity survey (SAPAS), found that disabled people are half as likely to participate in sport as others. Only 19% of disabled adults participate, compared with 37% of non-disabled adults. SNI aims to ensure a lasting legacy from the 2012 Paralympic Games and that the opportunities for disabled people in sport and physical recreation become more widely available.
- 11.8 SNI work closely with Building Control to ensure that all building regulations are complied with. Assistance is provided to all applicants for SNI support and enquiries are dealt with to ensure all specific needs receive the appropriate attention. However, SNI is aware that building regulations alone are not high enough to provide adequate access to sports facilities for people with disabilities, particularly in the case of wheelchair users and large numbers of sports chair users, or to provide the facilities required for some other 'disability specific' sports. Currently SNI is addressing this through the Sport Matters Community Capital programme and an associated technical guidance document has been developed, 'Access to Sports Facilities for People with

Disabilities: Design and Management Guidelines', in partnership with DSNI. DSNI has consulted with non-sporting disability groups, plus specific impairment groups, for example the Royal National Institute of the Blind, during its production.

- 11.9 In 2012, SNI developed and launched the Inclusive Sports Facilities (ISF) design criteria in partnership with Disability Sports NI. This information was widely disseminated and freely available. SNI is working with relevant capital projects to support them achieving the DSNI 'Inclusive Sports Facilities' accreditation. SNI is to embed the achievement of ISF Accreditation in all future capital programmes.
- 11.10 It is SNI's policy to provide employment equality to all existing and potential employees, irrespective of disability. All employees and applicants for employment (actual or potential), are treated fairly and selection for employment and promotion will be on the basis of aptitude and ability. SNI is fully supportive of the duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to a person with a disability during recruitment and selection and whilst in employment.

12. Action Measures and Impacts

- 12.1 The table below outlines the measures which SNI intends to take in order to implement the disability duties to improve access to sport for people with disabilities through the DSNI award.
- 12.2 The action measures and timetable reflect some of the priorities identified within the ten year strategy for sport and physical recreation – "Sport Matters". This timetable therefore outlines key actions which SNI will take until 31 March, 2015.
- 12.3 SNI liaises with and promotes the work of many local organisations who seek to assist those with disabilities within the local area. SNI does this by assisting these organisations and individuals with advice, speakers and by attending meetings as and when appropriate.
- 12.4 Furthermore, when developing the action measures SNI ensured that it incorporated the following public life principles:

- Promote participation and involvement of people with disabilities;
- Create opportunities for people with disabilities; and
- Influence others to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities and encourage their participation in public life.

Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Outcome	Timeline
MARKETING AND PROMOTION			
To promote and portray positively in the media, the work of SNI disability project, and partner organisations	to organise or contribute to publications, conferences and seminars which promote examples of good practice associated with the SNI's Disability Mainstreaming Policy (minimum 4)	<p>Increased awareness of disability issues.</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with disabilities.</p> <p>Improved training on the disability equality legislation and disability awareness.</p>	31 March annually
The provision of an efficient information and advice service for people with disabilities	Maintenance of website, telephone and e-mail service within acceptable communication guidelines.	Improved efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of sport for people with disabilities	31 March annually

Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Outcome	Timeline
OUTDOOR RECREATION			
<p>To Implement an appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework to measure and demonstrate the impact of the work.</p>	<p>Disseminate examples of best practice in disability mainstreaming in Northern Ireland, Ireland, UK and International (minimum 4).</p> <p>Work in partnership with SNI and other agencies to identify, and contribute to key pieces of research.</p>	<p>Increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in sport.</p>	<p>31 March annually</p>
<p>To work in partnership with SNI to promote opportunities for the inclusion of people with disabilities across Performance /Participation (Physical Literacy & Lifelong participation) spectrum, and especially targeting those hardest to reach</p>	<p>To work in partnership with SNI to deliver training opportunities to the sporting workforce.</p>	<p>Remove barriers to participation for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>31 March 2015</p>

including Deaf/Hearing impaired, Blind/Partially sighted and Wheelchair users			
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Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Outcome	Timeline
COMMUNITY SPORT			
<p>To increase participation rates in sport and physical activity among people with a disability through SNI programmes and investment awards, and specifically those hardest to reach including Deaf/Hearing impaired, Blind/partially sighted and wheelchair users..</p>	<p>The total number of people with disabilities participating in sport and physical activity.</p>	<p>More opportunities for participation in sport for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in sport.</p>	<p>31 March Annually</p>
<p>To organise participation based competitions and participation initiatives through investment in DSNI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Events & Participation Initiatives: To organise participation based competitions and participation initiatives which will benefit 900 people with disabilities per annum. 	<p>Increased number of athletes with a disability at a competitive level.</p> <p>To increase the number of athletes with a disability competing at an international level.</p>	<p>31 March 2015</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District Council Partnerships: To develop partnership projects with District Councils which will result in the development and maintenance of 6 sports participation projects which will benefit at least 6,600 people with disabilities per annum. • Disability Sports Club/Group Development Programme: Number of DSNI supported clubs, schools and groups actively delivering participation programmes for people with disabilities increased from 84 to 90. 	To increase the number and capacity of coaches in disability sports.	
To increase the number of sports facilities	Sport Centres & Pavilions:	More facilities that are fully inclusive of people with	31 March 2015

<p>achieving Inclusive Sports Facility (ISF) accreditation through investment in DSNI.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 12 new or existing sports centres and pavilions, in Northern Ireland to be fully inclusive of people with disabilities, and successfully achieving Inclusive Sports Facility (ISF) accreditation by March 2015. • ‘Access To Sports Facilities For People With Disabilities Design & Management Guidelines’ updated and republished, to include separate guidance document for pavilions. <p>Sports Stadia:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive Stadia Advisory Group (ISAG) established and Inclusive Stadia Design and Management Guidelines developed and published. • Advice Service provided to DCAL and project sponsors in 	<p>Disabilities, which will increase participation opportunities.</p>	
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	relation to the inclusive design and build of Ravenhill Park, Casement Park and Windsor Park stadia with all redeveloped stadia providing improved accessibility for people with disabilities by March 2015.		
To attract new athletes into Special Olympics Ulster through Inter-departmental funding managed by SNI.	To attract minimum of 100 new athletes annually and a minimum of 400 new athletes by March 2015.	Increased number of people with a learning disability participating in Sport and Physical Activity.	31 March Annually
To develop new clubs in areas that has no opportunities to participate in Special Olympics.	To attract minimum of 14 new clubs by March 2015, to increase the total number of clubs to 78.	More opportunities for people to volunteer in sport. Increased number of people with a learning disability participating in Sport and Physical Activity.	31 March 2015
To attract new volunteers into Special Olympics Ulster.	To attract minimum of 150 new volunteers per year as follows and a minimum of 600 new volunteers by 2015.	More opportunities for people to volunteer in sport, which will in turn strengthen the Special Olympics Ulster Programme and create more participation opportunities.	31 March Annually

To attract new coaches into Special Olympics Clubs.	To attract new coaches into Special Olympics Clubs, with a total 490 (56 new) coaches by March 2015.	Increased number of Coaches involved in the programme and this will create more participant opportunities.	31 March 2015
Develop the awareness of Special Olympics programme.	Develop the awareness of Special Olympics programme to 30% of the overall total of the population (16,000) in Northern Ireland with Intellectual disabilities.	Increased awareness of Special Olympics Ulster Programme which will in turn increase the number of participants.	31 March 2015

Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Outcome	Timeline
COACH EDUCATION AND TRAINING			
To deliver inclusive coach education, training and sports leadership courses and workshops through investment in DSNI.	Education Workforce Training: 36 Sainsbury's Active Kids for All Inclusive PE course delivered to 540 teachers, trainee teachers and classroom assistants.	Improved training and knowledge on the disability equality legislation and disability awareness available for coaches working with people with disabilities. Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with disabilities.	31 March 2015
	Sports & Leisure Workforce Training: To deliver inclusive coach education, training and sports leadership courses to 2,160 leisure services staff, coaches and sports leaders.	To increase the number, and qualification level, of coaches for disability sports. Increased awareness of disability issues.	31 March 2015

Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Outcome	Timeline
PERFORMANCE SPORT			
<p>To maintain the number of athletes receiving Sport NI Athlete Support Programme Funding through Disability Sport NI or mainstream governing bodies of sport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing pathways in eight 'focus' sports of Archery, Athletics, Badminton, Cycling, Football, Sailing, Swimming and Table Tennis sustained and further developed. • Participation based competitive pathways for people with disabilities in the sports of Rugby and Gaelic football established in partnership with Ulster rugby and GAA. • Boccia performance pathway including eight clubs, a Northern Ireland League and Ulster squad established. • Wheelchair Basketball performance structure improved 	<p>Increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in sport.</p> <p>Increased awareness of disability issues.</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with disabilities.</p> <p>Improve upon the performance levels of NI athletes.</p>	<p>31 March 2015</p>

	<p>and annual competition and performance programme involving 4 clubs organised.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northern Ireland's first wheelchair rugby club established. <p>Athlete Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 13 talented athletes to be in receipt of Sport NI athlete support funding annually. 		
<p>To work with governing bodies and other relevant organisations to ensure that identified athletes are provided with appropriate support to maximise their potential.</p>	<p>The number of athletes benefitting from SNI and SINI investment.</p> <p>The number of athletes contributing to SNI's medal and other performance targets.</p>	<p>Increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in sport.</p> <p>Increased awareness of disability issues.</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with disabilities.</p> <p>Improve upon the performance levels of NI athletes.</p>	<p>31 March Annually</p>

<p>To provide advice, support and assistance to Governing Bodies in mainstreaming opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport at all levels.</p>	<p>The number of governing bodies achieving a minimum of foundation level of the UK Equality Standard for sport.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of disability issues.</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with disabilities.</p> <p>Improved training on the disability equality legislation and disability awareness.</p>	<p>31 March Annually</p>
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