



## **SPORT NORTHERN IRELAND**

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### **DISABILITY ACTION PLAN 2009-2012**

**Date Agreed: 1 June 2010  
Council Paper No: SNI/10/124**

**This document is available in other accessible formats on request and on-line at [www.sportni.net](http://www.sportni.net)**

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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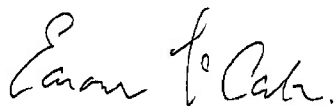
Website: [www.sportni.net](http://www.sportni.net)

## 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 new duties on public authorities, when carrying out their functions to have regard to the need:

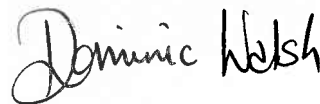
- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- to encourage participation by disabled people in public life.

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.



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**Chief Executive**



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**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 SNI, in carrying out its functions, to have due regard to the need:-

- to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people; and
- to encourage participation by disabled people 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 peaceful, 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. 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.

- 3.5 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 necessary resources (in terms of people, time and money) and aim to meet the target PA10 of 'Sport Matters - The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport 2009 - 2019'<sup>1</sup> in order to implement effectively this plan and where appropriate, 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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).

## **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 Chairman, Vice-Chairman 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;
2. Performance Sport; and

### 3. Corporate Services.

#### (iv) Staff

There are 103 members of staff employed within SNI and they fall under the following categories:

Staff Category	Number Employed
Chief Executive	1
Directors	3
Managers	19
Other Staff	83
<b>Total</b>	<b>103</b>

- 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, Facilities Team, Elite Olympic and Paralympic Facilities Programme, Tollymore Mountain Centre and the Safer Stadia Team.

The Performance Sport Unit is responsible for the Governing Bodies Team, Talent Systems Team and the Sports Institute Northern Ireland.

The Corporate 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 disabled people 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 prepare a Report on the implementation of its Plan which will be submitted to the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.
- 8.2 A copy of the Annual Report will be available on the web site – [www.sportni.net](http://www.sportni.net) . The SNI website is to be re-launched before



the end of the 2010 financial year, with a more user friendly interface as it will comply with the World Wide Web Consortium AAA accessibility guidelines.

## **9. Five Year Review**

- 9.1 SNI will carry out a five 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 Disability Sports Northern Ireland (DSNI) and its member organisations.
- 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; 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 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 'Active' (the newsletter of Disability Sports NI), to allow individuals and organisations the opportunity to respond to this Disability Action Plan. In addition, this Plan has been placed on SNI's website.
- 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](http://www.sportni.net). SNI will decide upon the best way to communicate information to young disabled people, 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 disabled people 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 disabled people 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' needs.
- 11.3 Training has been a priority for all Board Members and employees. Training has been provided to all SNI employees in a half day session to introduce them to the DDA in a practical and relevant way to the business and service needs of the organisation. Further training is tailored to suit the needs of the business and is provided by DSNI.
- 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 are now in receipt of an award from SNI to support policy implementation for a further three year period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.
- 11.6 SNI have ensured that one of its Technical Services Officers has received training in Accessibility Auditing working in partnership with DSNI/Montgomery Leisure to audit council leisure facilities through the pilot Community Sport Programme.
- 11.7 SNI work closely with Building Control to ensure that all building regulations are complied with. Assistance is provided to all applicants 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. SNI is addressing this through a number of Capital Programmes; the Elite Olympic and Paralympic Facilities programme and an associated technical guidance document has been developed, Design Guidelines for Access to Sports Facilities for People with Disabilities, in partnership with DSNI which contains technical and operational best practice for Elite Facilities and all Community Facilities. DSNI has consulted with non-sporting disability groups, plus specific impairment groups, for example the Royal National Institute of the Blind, during its production.
- 11.8 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 disabled person at selection and whilst in employment.

## **12. Action Measures and Impacts**

- 12.1 The table below outlines the measures which SNI intend 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 new ten year strategy for sport and physical recreation – “Sport Matters”. This timetable therefore outlines key actions which SNI will take until 31 March, 2012.
- 12.3 SNI liaise and promote 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 to incorporate the public life principles:
- Promote participation and involvement of disabled people;
  - Create opportunities for disabled people; and
  - Influence others to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people and encourage their participation in public life.

Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Outcome	Timeline
<b>PERFORMANCE SPORT</b>			
<p>To create a new support framework for the 6 Paralympic sports (Note: the sports selected were agreed as swimming, athletics and basketball in year one, with sailing and boccia added in year two and to work with football to support the IFA with their programmes) included for the 2006-2009 provision of services to support the implementation and delivery of the Disability Mainstreaming Policy for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009</p>	<p>6 Action Plans agreed and implemented.</p> <p>Minimum of 4 participation initiatives and appropriate competitive opportunities delivered.</p> <p>Minimum of 1 Disability Awareness Training session delivered for governing Bodies.</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>31 March annually</p> <p>31 December annually</p>
<p>To support an additional 4 sports (Badminton, Table Tennis, Archery and Cycling) with the development of provision for disabled</p>	<p>4 performer pathways developed</p> <p>4 action plans agreed and implemented</p>	<p>Increased levels of participation of those with disabilities in sport and physical recreation.</p>	<p>31 March 2012</p> <p>31 March 2012</p>

<p>people within the governing body.</p>			
<p>To conduct a review of current performer pathways within governing bodies (minimum 33) and the number of disabled people involved at each stage.</p>	<p>The production of an Audit report detailing the number of disabled people at each stage of governing body performer pathways.</p>	<p>Increased awareness of disability issues.</p> <p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with disabilities.</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 work with governing bodies to ensure that talented athletes are provided with appropriate support to maximise their potential.</p>	<p>The number of successful applicants supported to the Athlete Support Programme (Minimum of 6 however actual number will depend on number of eligible athletes meeting appropriate performance standards set by each governing body.)</p> <p>Development of performance plans for talented athletes and</p>	<p>Improved access to Sport Northern Ireland facilities and services, e.g. equipment and coaches.</p>	<p>31 March annually</p> <p>31 March annually</p>

	<p>squads with disabilities (minimum 6).</p> <p>Support the management of athletes with a disability on current Athlete support Programme investment awards.</p> <p>Information session for potential athletes and governing bodies.</p> <p>To provide a clear link between national disability Irish &amp; British organisations and NI/Ulster Governing Bodies to assist with the communication of opportunities for participation and competition.</p>		<p>31 March annually</p> <p>31 December annually</p> <p>31 March 2012</p>
<p>To provide advice, support and assistance to Governing Bodies of sport in mainstreaming opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport at all levels.</p>	<p>10 governing bodies achieving a minimum of Foundation level of the UK Equality Standard for Sport.</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>Improved training and</p>	<p>31 March 2012</p>

		knowledge on the disability equality legislation and disability awareness.	
In partnership with the governing bodies and SNI to facilitate a programme of talent identification and athlete development in the original 6 focus sports, plus Powerlifting and Adaptive Rowing.	Programme established and implemented	<p>Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with disabilities.</p> <p>More opportunities for participation in sport for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in sport.</p>	31 March 2012



Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Outcome	Timeline
<b>COACH EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b>			
<p>The provision of volunteering and mentoring programmes to increase the number of people actively using leadership skills in developing sport and physical recreation for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Delivery of Inclusive Community Coaches Programme for minimum of 15 coaches.</p> <p>To promote the coach education pathway for people with disabilities and coaches working with athletes with disabilities.</p>	<p>Improved training and knowledge on the disability equality legislation and disability awareness available for coaches working with people with disabilities.</p>	<p>31 March annually</p>
<p>To work with Sport Northern Ireland and Coaching Ireland to support the implementation of the strategic theme of 'Improving Access and Inclusion' within the Coaching Strategy for Ireland 2008-12.</p>	<p>Appropriate representation at sub group quarterly (minimum of 4) meetings.</p>	<p>Improved access to sports facilities and inclusion in sport for people with disabilities.</p>	<p>31 March 2012</p>
<p>To represent Northern Ireland on the 'UK Disability Sport Coaching, Learning &amp;</p>	<p>Appropriate representation at sub group quarterly (minimum of 4) meetings.</p>	<p>To increase the number, and qualification level, of coaches for disability sports.</p>	<p>31 March 2012</p>

Leadership Group', as part of the ongoing development of the UK Coaching Framework.			
To identify and support community based mainstream sports clubs to develop opportunities for disabled people.	1 mainstream & inclusive club in a minimum of 6 sports.	More opportunities for participation in sport for people with disabilities.  Increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in sport.	31 March 2012
To represent the interests of NI people with disabilities at a UK/Ireland level.	Contribute to policy implementation through attendance at: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• British Paralympic Association</li> <li>• UK Disability Sports Organisations Forum</li> <li>• Paralympic Council of Ireland</li> </ul> (12 meetings annually)	Increased awareness of disability issues.  Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with disabilities.	31 March 2012

Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Outcome	Timeline
<b>COMMUNITY SPORT</b>			
To increase participation rates in sport and physical recreation among people with a disability through the Active Communities and Awards For Sport investment awards.	The total number of disabled people participating in sport and physical activity	More opportunities for participation in sport for people with disabilities.  Increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in sport.	Award For Sport 31 March 2010  Active Communities 31 March 2010 annually
To provide support to all Sports Development Officers in receipt of Sport in Our Community Investment awards	17 officers to include appropriate targets for the development of opportunities for people with disabilities in their work programme.  3 Disability Awareness Training update session for SIOC officers.  Maintenance and support of quarterly meetings of the Disability Sports Development Officers Network (4 annually).	Increased awareness of disability issues.  Improved training and knowledge on the disability equality legislation and disability awareness.  More opportunities for participation in sport for people with disabilities.  Increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in sport.	31 March 2010  31 December annually  31 March annually
To work in partnership with the appropriate	Minimum of 6 sports/ physical recreation activities.	More opportunities for participation in sport for people	31 March 2010

organisations to influence and develop participation and competitive programmes, and specifically for deaf/hearing impaired and blind/visually impaired people.	Collate & disseminate an annual calendar of events suitable for participation across a broad range of abilities.	with disabilities.  Increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in sport.	1 April annually
To develop and promote awareness of a schools competition programme with links to both mainstream schools and clubs, including a teacher-training element.	Teacher training opportunities identified.	Remove barriers to participation for people with disabilities.	31 May 2009
	Build a working relationship with the Regional Training Unit	Increased awareness of disability issues.	30 April 2009
	Teacher training programme established and delivered.	Promotion of positive attitudes towards those with disabilities.	31 August annually
To build capacity through relevant and appropriate training opportunities, through the provision of the appropriate level of training for statutory,	NI wide schools competition delivered.		28 February annually
	Appropriate training opportunities identified.	Remove barriers to participation for people with disabilities.	30 June 2009
	Programme of training established.	More opportunities for participation in sport for people with disabilities.	31 October 2009
Training delivered (minimum 4			31 March

governing bodies and community/voluntary organisations supported by SNI.	annually).	Increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in sport.	annually
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Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Outcome	Timeline
<b>OUTDOOR RECREATION</b>			
To work in partnership with CAAN to develop and identify a 3 year action plan to support the implementation of the relevant recommendations from the Barriers to Participation research.	Action plan identified.  Action plan implemented in partnership with CAAN.	Remove barriers to participation for people with disabilities.	30 June 2009  31 March 2012
To work in partnership with key staff from Tollymore Mountain Centre/SNI to ensure that the new facility is fully inclusive of people with disabilities.	Attending relevant design/project and management meetings. (minimum 6)	Remove barriers to participation for people with disabilities.  More opportunities for participation in sport for people with disabilities.  Improved access to sports facilities and inclusion in sport for people with disabilities.	30 June 2010
To work in partnership with key SNI staff to ensure that the new facilities are fully inclusive of people with disabilities.	To provide Design Quality Indicator workshops for 9 applicants (up to 6 workshops per applicant)  To provide advice to 9 applicant	Improved access to sports facilities and inclusion in sport for people with disabilities.  Increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in	31 March 2012  31 March 2012

	<p>organisations on their Sports Development Plan on the element of increasing participation among people with disabilities.</p> <p>To input into assessment of 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stage assessments and design advice during development.</p> <p>To collaborate with SNI on a potential accessibility best practice kite marking scheme.</p>	<p>sport.</p>	<p>31 March 2012</p> <p>31 March 2012</p>
<p>To work in partnership with key SNI staff to ensure that the new facilities are fully inclusive of people with disabilities.</p>	<p>To provide marketing support to all IFI projects (approximately 7 projects).</p> <p>To provide informal advice to applicants (approximately 10 per year) on their Sports Development Plan on the element of increasing participation among people with disabilities.</p> <p>To collaborate with SNI on potential accessibility best practise kite marking scheme for</p>	<p>Improved access to sports facilities and inclusion in sport for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in sport.</p>	<p>31 March 2012</p> <p>31 March annually</p>

	'Inclusive Fitness Initiative' projects and provide occasional ad hoc advice to SNI technical staff.		31 March 2012
To ensure SNI, Tollymore and SINI staff is in receipt of the appropriate level of Disability Awareness Training.	5 appropriate sessions identified and delivered	Increased awareness of disability issues.  Improved training and knowledge on the disability equality legislation and disability awareness.	31 March annually
To Implement an appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework to measure and demonstrate the impact of the work.	Disseminate examples of best practice in disability mainstreaming in Northern Ireland, Ireland, UK and International (minimum 4).  Work in partnership with SNI and other agencies to identify, and contribute to key pieces of research.	Increased numbers of people with disabilities participating in sport.	31 March annually  31 March annually
To work in partnership with the SNI Architect to identify, and contribute to guidance dealing with emerging	Best practice updates published and disseminated (3 minimum)	Improved access to sports facilities and inclusion in sport for people with disabilities.	31 March 2012



<p>accessibility best practice relevant to all SNI programmes.</p>			
<p>To work in partnership with SNI to promote opportunities for the inclusion of disabled people across Performance/Participation (Physical Literacy &amp; Life long participation) spectrum.</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 December 2010</p>

Action Measure	Key Performance Indicator	Outcome	Timeline
<b>MARKETING AND PROMOTION</b>			
To promote and portray positively in the media, the work of the DSNI/SNI disability project and its sponsors.	In partnership with the SNI to organise or contribute to 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.	Maintenance of website, telephone and e-mail service within acceptable communication guidelines.	Improved efficiency and effectiveness in the administration of sport.	31 March annually