



***Special Olympics***  
*Ireland*  
*Ulster*

**Presentation to**

**Sports Matters Implementation Group**

**Thursday 15 September 2011**

# **Special Olympics Programme**

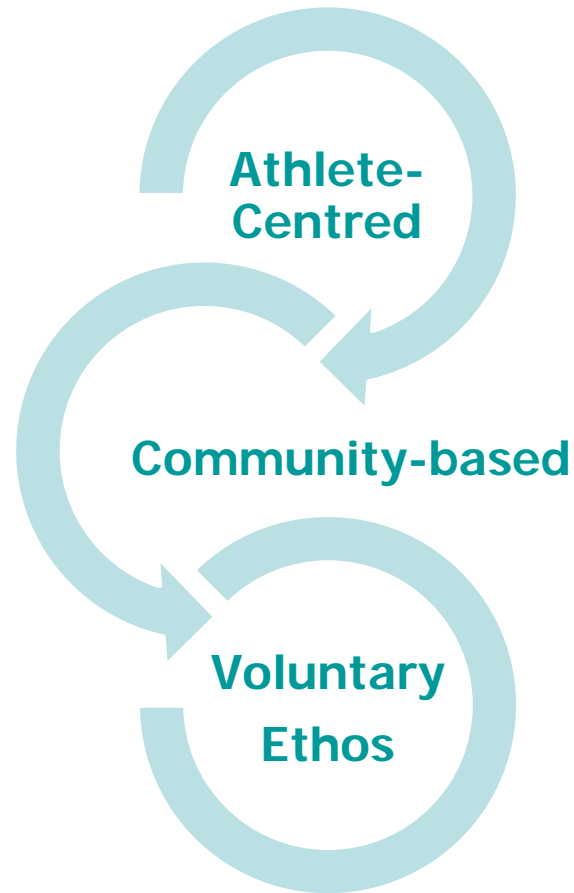
**Special Olympics is a year-round sports training and competition programme for children and adults with a learning disability**

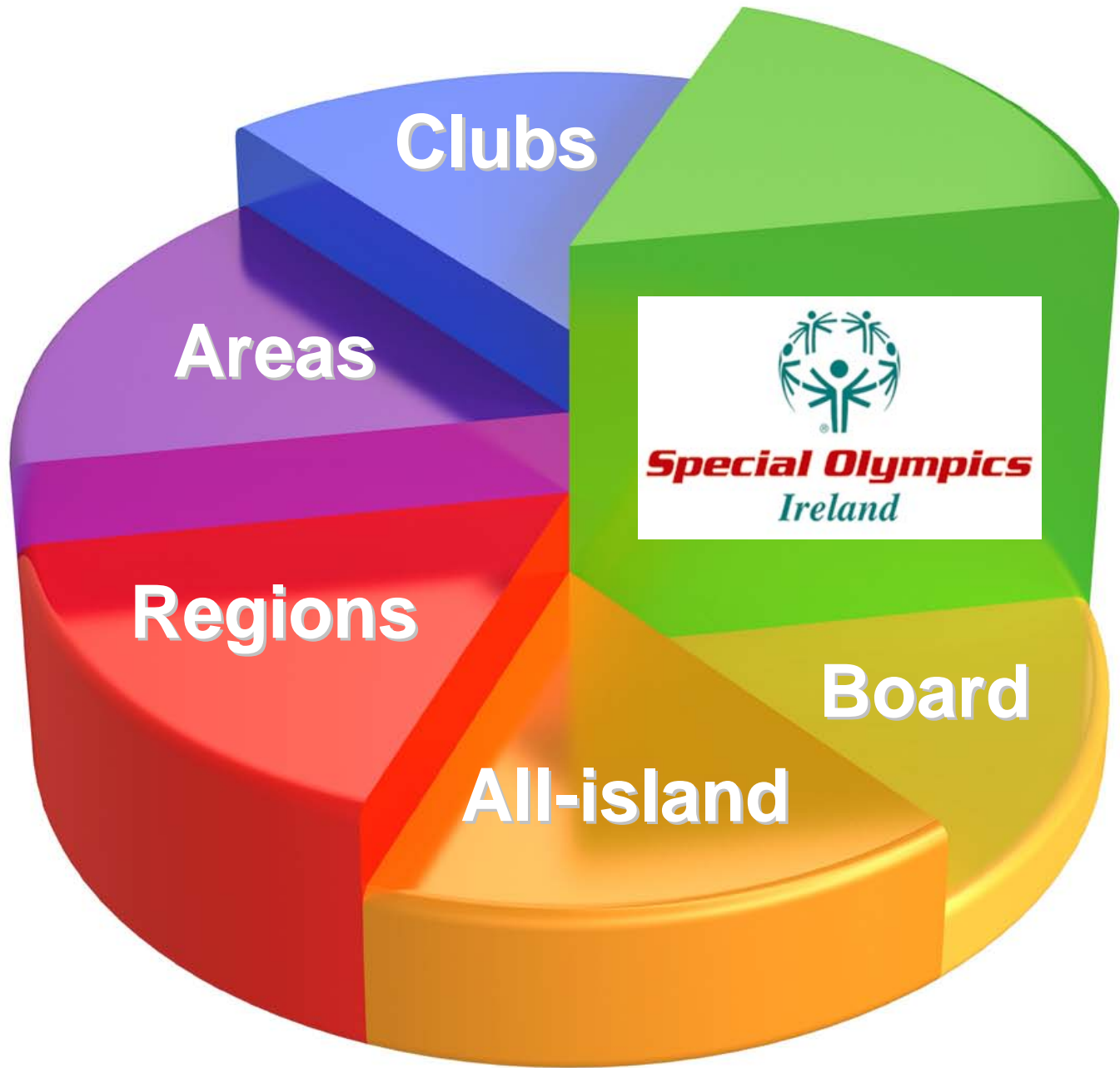
# ***Vision***

***To expand the opportunities and resources offered by Special Olympics Ireland so that every child and adult with a learning disability has the chance, in their own community, to achieve in ways that bring life changing experiences of increased skills, confidence and joy***

# Our Aim

To grow and develop a dynamic professional organisation:





Clubs

Areas

Regions

Board

All-island

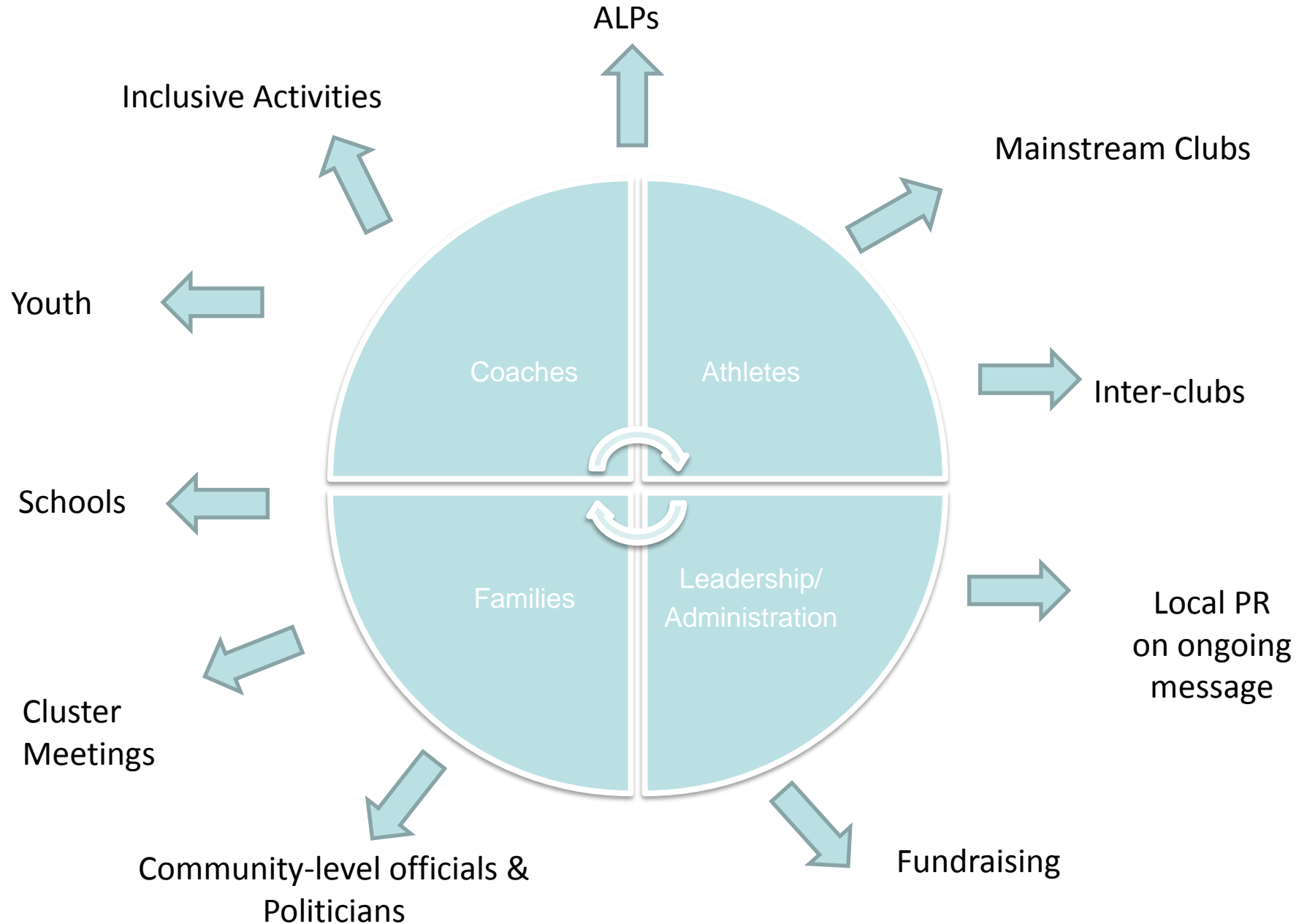


**Special Olympics**  
Ireland

# Strategic Goals 2012 -2015

- **Developing and enhancing sports excellence as the core activity at the heart of Special Olympics Ireland**
  - Improving coaching standards, Knowledge/understanding of the rules
- **Supporting Clubs so that they can enhance and drive the impact Special Olympics makes at a local level**
  - “The Club is the Hub”
- **Driving education to achieve public understanding of Special Olympics as a year-round activity that requires ongoing funding**
  - Strong perception still exists that Special Olympics is an event rather than a year-round programme
  - Increasing awareness of the programme will lead to a better understanding of what we do and why we need ongoing funding to run our programme.

# The Club as the Hub



# Who Are The Athletes?

- Open to every registered person with an Intellectual Disability
- Training only from 6 years of age
- Competition from 8 years of age
- No upper age limit but sport and event should be appropriate to age



# Sports Programme

- Club Support & Development
- Sports Development
- Coach Education
- Competition Management and Development
- Healthy Athlete Programme
- Code of Ethics and Good Practice

# Divisioning

- Athletes of all ability levels are encouraged to participate
- The aim is to place athletes/teams in divisions according to gender, age and ability
- Each athlete or team within that division has a reasonable chance to excel during competition
- *Ability* is the over-riding factor when creating divisions

# Sports Offered

## Official Summer Sports

- Athletics
- Basketball
- Tenpin Bowling
- Gymnastics (*artistic & rhythmic*)
- Aquatics
- Equestrian
- Football (*5 & 11 a side*)
- Table Tennis
- Golf
- Badminton
- Bocce
- Kayaking

## Official Winter

### Sports

- Alpine Skiing

## Developing Sports

- Pitch & Putt
- Floorball

# Support Programmes

Family Support Programme

Athlete Leadership Programme

Support Programmes

Healthy Athlete

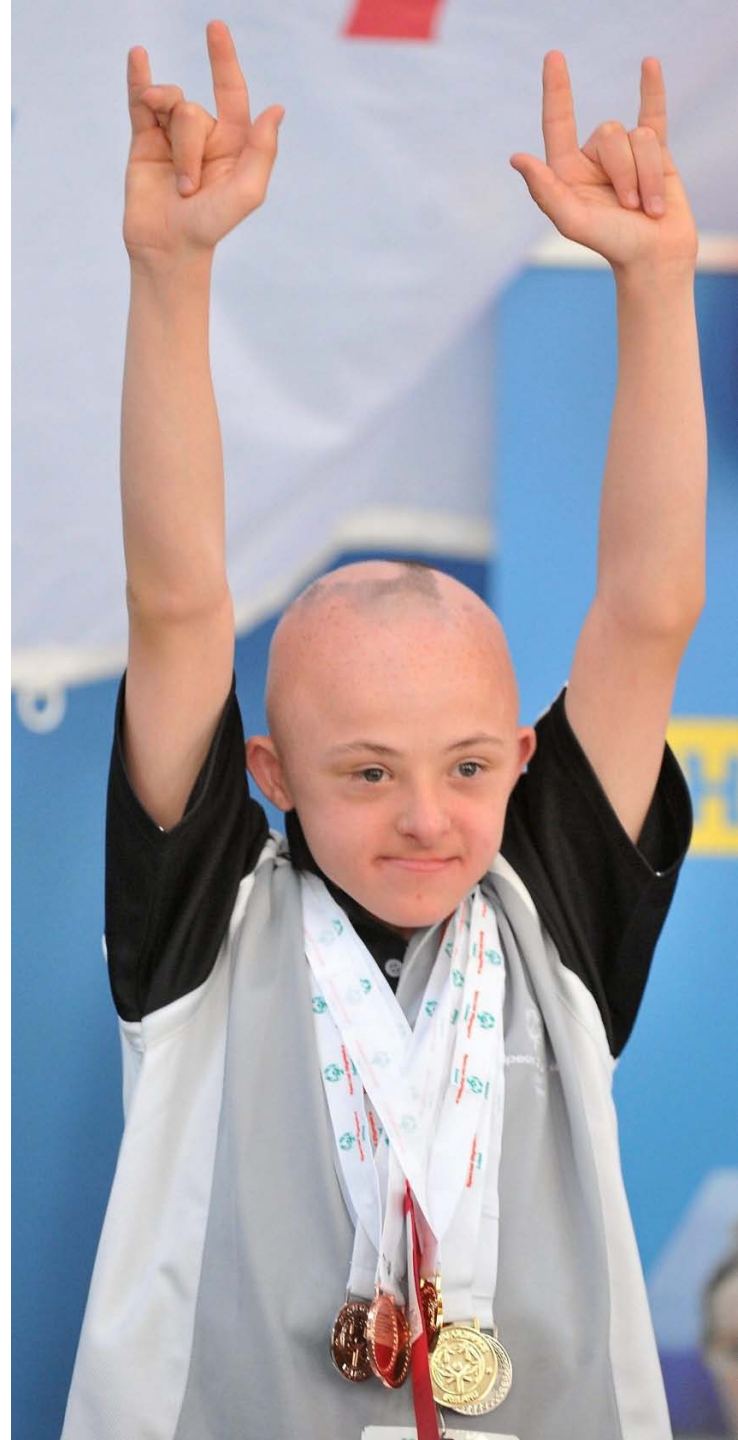
Education Programme

Volunteer Programme

# Facts & Figures

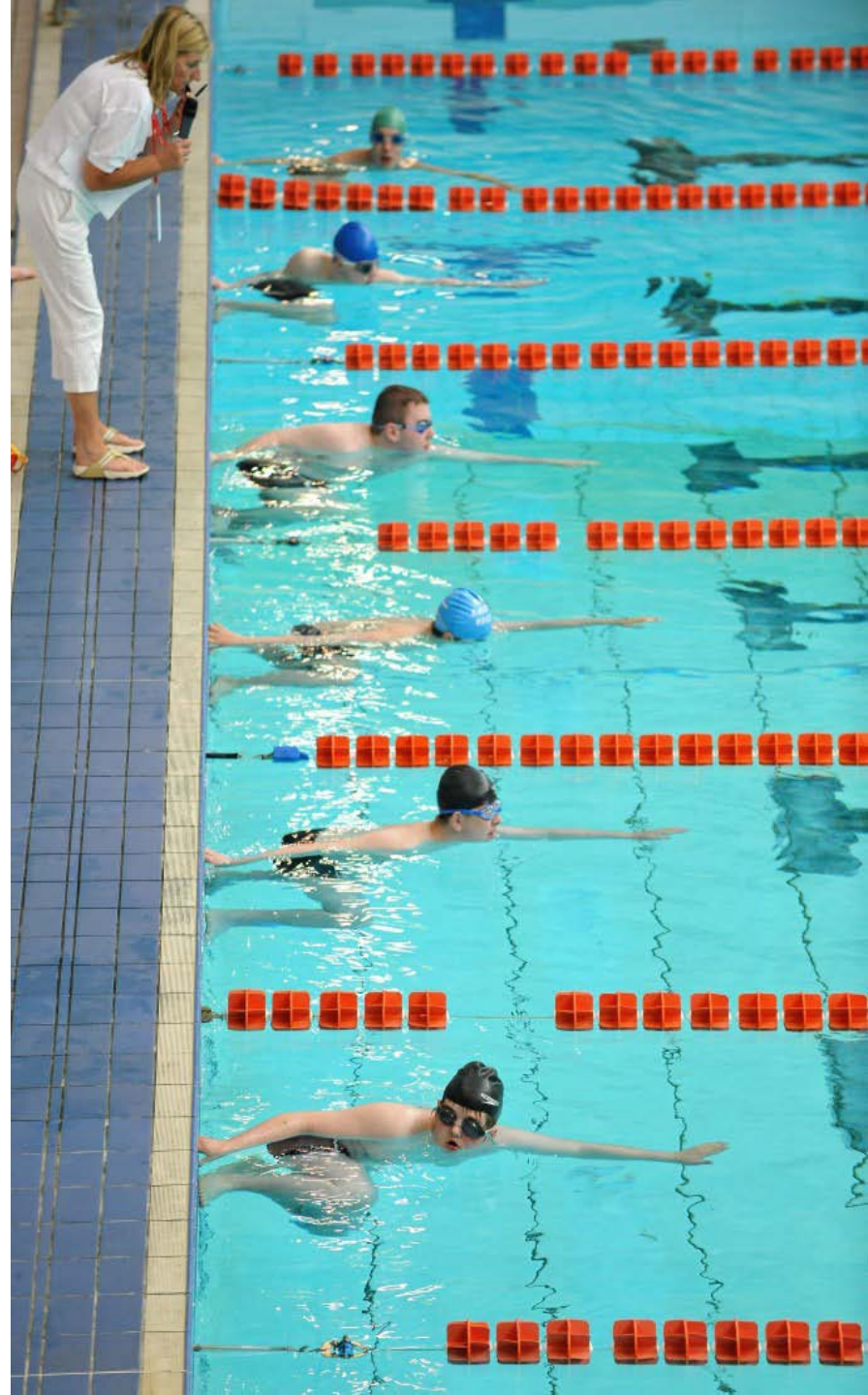
- 1,375 athletes in NI
- 4,300 volunteers
- 65 Clubs
- 14 sports
- Weekly sports training across every community in NI

*Picture: Sean Irvine from Belfast's All Stars Club is just one athlete whose life has been changed by Special Olympics*



# Activities 2010/2011

- 64 Clubs supported – 5 to be recruited this year
- Targeted promotion of Coach Education
- Raising awareness
- Promotion of Special Olympics in Schools
- Promotion of Employer Supported Volunteering
- Increase Athlete Numbers
- Build on Health Promotion







## What will current funding help us deliver?

- Sustain current programme
- 100 new athletes per year
- 150 new volunteers per year
- 5 new clubs per year
- Health advice and support services for every athlete
- Training and support for coaches
- Increased Awareness

*Picture: Ryan Craig excels at several sports, including gymnastics and golf.*



# Where we fit!

- Our programme contributes to a number of key Government Department Strategies.
- "...Promoting inclusiveness of all members of the community by encouraging participation amongst those with intellectual disabilities and by encouraging volunteering and active citizenship. ."
- By 2011 to have 125,000 children participating in sport and physical recreation."
- "...By 2019 to deliver at least a 6% point increase in participation in sport and physical recreation among people with a disability (from the 2013 baseline)."
- "...to improve the health and social well being of the people of Northern Ireland".

*Picture: The Special Olympics Flame of Hope.*



# Challenges Ahead

- 16,366 people with an intellectual disability
  - Increasing awareness of Special Olympics and opportunities offered
- Addressing sport participation amongst schools and disability providers
- Engagement with Partner Organisations
- Improve long term funding sustainability

*Picture: Meg Carr, age 9, from the Salto Gymnastics Club.*



# What we need your support with!

- Long-term funding sustainability
- Increasing awareness of year-round Special Olympics Programme

