

Racial Inclusion

Engagement and Delivery Plan: 2024-2026

This Plan is to influence the sector to actively promote 'Racial Inclusion' over the course of two years to March 2026. The Engagement and Delivery Plan will be further developed by and led by the Sports, Culture & Integrity Team, and will be actioned by programmes and staff across the organisation.

Background – Strategic Context

Sport NI's Corporate Plan 2021-26 'The Power of Sport' targets sustained participation in sport and activity generally, and specifically from under-represented groups, contributing to improving physical activity in communities.

While, prior to the pandemic, we were seeing improvements in terms of the percentage of people who were participating in sport and physical activity, (The NI Continuous Household Survey 2020-21 notes a 3% rise in overall sports participation numbers to 59%), barriers clearly still exist for many in our society. Challenges remain for people with a disability, women and girls, older people, carers, ethnically diverse communities and those from the LGBTQ+ community. Whilst we have seen an increase in the support for, and the profile of, women in sport and those with a disability, there is much still to do which we aim to address through this corporate plan. Consequently, the participation rates for these groups remain significantly below the general population rates for participation in sport and physical activity.

Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality In Sport (TRARIIS)

Sport Northern Ireland alongside UK Sport, Sport England, **sportscotland** and Sport Wales are working together to tackle racism and racial inequalities in sport in their home countries and across the UK.

In 2020, the murder of George Floyd was a catalyst for the five Sports Councils responsible for investing in and growing sport across the UK, to come together to explore racial inequalities in sport and to look at how reflective our sporting system is of UK society. This led to establishing the *Tackling Racism and Racial Inequality in Sport Review (TRARIIS)*. This was to help better understand if the Councils were doing enough to understand the context and tackle the issues involved.

The review involved an extensive analysis, carried out by the Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC) at Sheffield Hallam University, of all publicly available data on race and ethnicity in sport. It also involved an additional piece of work led by AKD Solutions, a Black-led Learning and Development consultancy, to carry out a lived experience research project in which over 300 people across the UK, ranging from grassroots participants to elite athletes and coaches, shared insights into their involvement in sport.

The findings make clear that racism and racial inequalities still exist within sport in the UK and that there are longstanding issues, which have resulted in ethnically diverse communities being consistently disadvantaged. The review also highlighted the detrimental impact that this has had on individuals, leading to mistrust and exclusion and makes clear areas where we must see change.

While recognising that this process will take time, the Councils are determined to learn from the review. The aim is to bring transformational change across sport, harnessing its huge power to drive equality and ensuring that all parts of the system are fair, welcoming, inclusive, and diverse, so that people have positive experiences at every level. The Councils have agreed some initial overarching

commitments that all five organisations will work on together ensuring that they are aligned to their individual strategies.

The Interim CEO addressed the TRARIIS online seminar in October 2023 and conference event in February 2024 along with other Sports Councils. At the online seminar in October 2023 the CEOs all spoke of their continued commitment to tackling racism. At the February 2024 event, delegates were able to attend in person, in Leicester, and a full-day agenda was planned with expert speakers, discussion panels and breakout sessions. Sport NI's interim CEO was part of a panel with his UK counterparts, as well as introducing 'Sport NI's' breakout session – where Cricket Ireland presented on a piece of work it had undertaken to address high-profile issues of racism within the sport of cricket.

Sport NI also launched the 'Moving to Inclusion' Framework, toolkit and resources developed in conjunction with the Sports Councils Equality Group (SCEG), to promote EDI with their stakeholders and assist them as they seek to make organisations more diverse and inclusive. The framework, toolkit and resources were launched to the NI sector on 9 February 2024 - <https://movingtoinclusion.co.uk/>. The on-line hub is an initiative by the UK Sports Councils to provide support for EDI to sport and physical activity organisations – with the aim of moving towards a more diverse, inclusive and socially responsible sector. Currently (as of 7 November 2024) 11 of 34 'Sports System Investment – Governing Bodies' (SSI-GB) organisations have engaged with the website and further promotion of the resources is planned to increase engagement.

Each Sports Council is working to develop their own specific plans to further deliver on the TRARIIS commitments, considering their own local contexts and remits whilst addressing the recommendations from the review. Sport NI's commitment to this is reflected in this Engagement and Delivery Plan for the 2024-25 year.

This will involve working closely externally with relevant groups or communities, as well as internally across teams and investment strands, to identify potential solutions. The attached plan is intended to support the wider sports sector to understand and recognise the issues and collectively bring about change.

Action Plan Pillar	Action Plan Objective	Action Plan Activity
Leadership	1. Promoting people from ethnic minorities in decision making positions in sport - to deliver equitable representation for sports to achieve through current investment.	A. Establish a baseline for people from ethnic minorities in decision making roles, including in Sport NI.
		B. Engage with sports to increase awareness of imbalance.
		C. Determine reasonable targets and timeframes.
		D. Ensure investment is focused on creating opportunities.
		E. Measure progress at different intervals.
	2. Promote workforce opportunities for people from ethnic minorities to progress in sport i.e. coaches, officials, volunteers - to broaden the base.	A. Establish a baseline for people from ethnic minorities in workforce development roles, including in Sport NI.
		B. Engage with sports to increase awareness of imbalance.
		C. Determine reasonable targets and timeframes.
		D. Ensure investment is focused on creating opportunities.
		E. Measure progress at different intervals.
Visibility & Advocacy	3. Research that tracks trends re levels of participation, and underlying factors re people from ethnic minorities' participation.	A. Map research ecosystem - Share insights and research on regular basis with Sport NI commentary.
		B. Engage with sector to understand their research/insight needs.
		C. Commission research that closes knowledge gaps.
		D. Monitor awareness of ethnic diverse community gap in sport.
	4. Communications & Advocacy interventions to increase visibility of people from ethnic minorities in sport and inspire those from ethnic minorities to find their sport.	A. Establish a network of partners for advocacy.
		B. Production and/or dissemination of high-quality articles, publications, case studies which promote good practice.
		C. Measurement of Comms 'reach' & impact.

Action Plan Pillar	Action Plan Objective	Action Plan Activity
Participation	5. Focused investment to increase engagement in sport and physical activity among ethnic minorities.	A. Build and share understanding of barriers and motivators.
		B. Engage with peers and partners to shape investment.
		C. Deliver focused investment for ethnic minorities in sport.
		D. Track impact, share best practice and innovations.
	6. Provide structured support to Governing Bodies of Sport, mainstream sports clubs, and community organisations to identify and remove barriers and provide high quality sport and physical activity opportunities for ethnic minorities.	A. Build and share understanding of barriers and motivators.
		B. Provide tool-kit to review provision and club culture and resources to enhance the experience of people from ethnically diverse communities in sport.
		C. Collate info on interventions by sports/clubs - showcase best practice.
		D. Track Governing Body membership data.
Sporting Foundation	7. Investment in infrastructure to support greater participation for those from ethnic minorities e.g. changing facilities.	A. Understand current infrastructure (Built, natural and equipment) across sport friction points for those from ethnic minorities.
		B. Develop design principles that are reflective of those from ethnic minorities' priorities.
		C. Build and share understanding of how to make infrastructure more reflective of needs of those from ethnic minorities.
		D. Require all Sport NI Capital investments to be cross referenced against progressive design principles and require fair and equitable access.