

## **UK Sports Association for People with Learning Disability – Written evidence (NPS0122)**

How can local delivery, including funding structures, of sport and recreation be improved to ensure that people of all ages and abilities are able to lead an active lifestyle? For example, how successfully do local authorities and other bodies such as Active Partnerships, Leisure Trusts, local sports clubs and charities work together, and how might coordination be improved?

1. Partnership working has undoubtedly improved but further progress is required. The Equality Standard for Sport has taken inclusion a step forward, but ensuring that real and tangible outcomes and actions from organisations is achieved is necessary. It is not enough to create aspirational targets and actions if that action isn't turned into reality. Linking positive expectations and outcomes to investment should be the norm.
2. Diminishing resources within local authorities, charities and other organisations makes connecting far more of a challenge. With the added impact of the pandemic on the sector, the impact on the providers will be significant. This is even more worrying when considered through the lens of provision, accessibility and attitudes to people with intellectual impairment as they were already starting from a point much further back than other members of the population.
3. Funding structures need to better reflect the needs of this under represented groups with all organisations in receipt of funding having an explicit target to embed inclusive practice to engage people with intellectual impairment in a real and meaningful way.

How can adults of all ages and backgrounds, particularly those from under-represented groups, including women and girls, ethnic minorities, disabled people, older people, and those from less affluent backgrounds, be encouraged to lead more active lifestyles? If possible, share examples of success stories and good practice, and challenges faced.

4. A cultural change is required to better engage and understand people with intellectual impairment. Far too often in our sector the focus is on physical impairments rather than the hidden impairment.
5. We need to improve the pathways from health into sport and physical activity. More joined up governmental thinking, strategies and encouragement for NGBs and the charity sector to do the same. Some good examples of joined up practice can be seen from our colleagues at Scottish Disability Sport where they are one year into a three year Get Out Get Active (GOGA) programme in partnership. With NHS Tayside.

What are the opportunities and challenges facing elite sports in the UK and what can be done to make national sports governing bodies more accountable? For

example, accountability for representing and protecting their membership, promoting their sport and maximising participation.

6. The Equality Standard for Sport gives a good platform for clubs and organisations to look more at all areas of inclusivity in their sport. However the. Overly bureaucratic nature of the process could be counterproductive. There isn't a one size fits all and Governing Bodies and sport as a whole needs to look at their inclusive practices and whether there organisations truly serve the 'wider performance' landscape.
7. For too long NGBs have been focused on gold medals at the Paralympic Games being the only currency. This is driven by the unrelenting focus of UK Sport and its investment programme on elite sport being only that of Paralympic or Olympic opportunity. The gap between grass roots, elite development and elite needs to be addressed by UK Sport and four Nations Sports Councils. The UK Sports Association and the athletes we support fall into this ever expanding grey chasm and to the detriment of generations of athletes with intellectual impairment in sport.
8. Athletes with intellectual impairment have the opportunity to excel at a performance level on the international stage through the UK Sports Association and the Virtus Championship programme including the Virtus Global Games, however the lack of recognition, investment (financial and resource)and engagement limits UK athletes ability to do what they do best. A wider focus and definition through a truly inclusive agenda should be a priority for NGBs. Success is not just Paralympic success.

Should there be a national plan for sport and recreation? Why/why not?

9. There should be a plan, but only if it connects all that currently exists and is truly UK wide and not simply an England centric plan.

UK Sports Association  
[www.uksportsassociation.org](http://www.uksportsassociation.org)

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