Inclusion case studies
Examples of inclusive practice that supports children, players and athletes to become involved in sport

Putting sport first

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Introduction and acknowledgements

The case studies set out in this document have been collated by sportscotland – the national agency for sport – and have been written by Scottish Disability Sport and a number of local and national partners across the country.

We would like to acknowledge the input of the following organisations for their energy, time and commitment in highlighting these best practice examples around inclusion in sport:

- Scottish Disability Sport
- Active Schools Network
- City of Edinburgh Council
- Lothian Disability Sport
- Sport 4 All Club
- Disability Sport Fife
- Basketball Scotland
- JudoScotland
- Scottish Football Association
- Scottish Disability Equality Forum
- PAMIS
- Fife Sports and Leisure Trust
- Royal Caledonian Curling Club
- Inverclyde Council
Active Schools is a sportscotland led programme designed to encourage children and young people to stay active. The Active Schools Network is a team of managers and coordinators working within the school and the wider community to develop an infrastructure by recruiting, supporting and sustaining a network of volunteers, coaches, leaders and teachers who in turn deliver sport before, during and after school and at weekends in the wider community. From the outset, inclusion has been a key principle of the Active Schools Network. Different successful models have evolved across Scotland that have inspired children and young people with a disability to become involved in sport.

Inclusion within Active Schools

Edinburgh

The model

The City of Edinburgh Council created an Active Schools coordinator Inclusion post with the remit of supporting fellow coordinators, school staff and pupils attending mainstream schools across Edinburgh. The post holder provides advice, guidance and training for teachers and learning support staff to facilitate the inclusion of children with a disability in extra-curricular activity. Partnership work between Lothian Disability Sport, Active Schools coordinators and sports development officers from the other local authorities in the area has been particularly effective.

The delivery of the regional schools’ calendar of sporting events linked to the Scottish Disability Sport calendar is an example of this effective working partnership. The remit also includes the provision of one to one support for pupils with a disability to facilitate inclusion. In addition there is a commitment to encourage pupil involvement in the disability sport participant pathway.

The result

Appropriate support was provided for one secondary school age wheelchair user who had struggled to engage in sport. Initially, wheelchair skills training was provided to improve mobility and develop the young person’s confidence. At the same time support and advice were provided to introduce them to the disability sports pathway.

A coach from a local basketball club was then engaged to identify the most suitable sport specific environment. The young athlete quickly established himself as a first team player in the local club and has subsequently gone on to represent Great Britain at under 21 level. This successful outcome was only made possible because partners worked together to meet mutually agreed objectives. The close proximity of a successful basketball club and the availability of an inclusive coach was also critical to the success of this project.

Inverclyde

The model

Two Active Schools coordinators in Inverclyde local authority were charged with the responsibility of implementing the Disability Sport/Inclusion Project in the area. Initially, a multi-sports club run by a volunteer coach was established to address an identified lack of opportunity for pupils with disabilities or additional support needs to engage in sport.

Every effort was made to publicise the existence of the Sport 4 All Club to all pupils with a disability or additional support needs. The club and the project are now well established. Partnership working across Scottish Disability Sport (SDS), social work services, local disability charities, Active Schools staff and pupil support teams within schools has resulted in the club becoming accessible to all. This was underpinned by effective consultation with SDS to ensure a shared philosophy and objectives along with consistent priorities.

The result

The Sport 4 All Club began with one session, attended by five pupils and led by Active Schools coordinators. There are now three separate club sessions with over 20 individual participants and six volunteer coaches present. The club has established links with a local mainstream athletics club, offering an inclusive option for those young athletes with the commitment and desire to develop their sport specific skills. The club offers a summer programme and links to all priority sports within the local authority. Six participants are now involved in regional or national SDS squads.

Fife

The model

Fife Active Schools model has embedded inclusion within its practice. All Active Schools coordinators have responsibility to encourage pupils with additional support needs into sport and physical activity, including disability sport. Disability Sport Fife (DSF) provides appropriate learning opportunities for Active Schools coordinators and DSF staff to meet with the Active Schools manager on a quarterly basis. An Active Schools Champions Group, with agreed terms of reference, has been established to bring coordinators and DSF together regularly to share best practice, celebrate success and address issues of common interest or concern.

Pupils are introduced to the highly successful DSF sports options programme called Vortex via a transition process that is now being rolled out to wider partners. Information available from the Fife pupil database (Scottish Government E1 System) helps identify where mainstream pupils with a disability are schooled and DSF development officers and Active Schools staff can work together to encourage participation. Active Schools has much to offer Fife’s young people who have disabilities and DSF has been fortunate to utilise their expertise on many occasions to good effect.

The result

The annual junior multi-sports festival for 8-14 year olds with a physical or visual impairment is now in its fifth year and its success has been driven by partnership working. Disabled participants bring along a school buddy and together they experience a full day of quality coaching/teaching and learning in eight indoor sports. The festival offers Active Schools and sports development staff experience of working with disabled pupils inclusively in eight sports.

Each child who attends the festival is followed up by Active Schools and DSF staff to encourage future involvement in DSF or after school activities. Some success stories which have evolved from this festival are outlined below:

• Track and field coaching was delivered by Active Schools for a squad of high school pupils with additional support needs in the lead up to the DSF athletics championships.

• Active Schools coordinators support the DSF weekly Vortex sessions as volunteers. One Active Schools coordinator has successfully engaged with two senior pupils with a disability, enabling them to access lunch time training in the company of their peers.

• Across Fife, Active Schools coordinators have introduced imagery and language into their promotional material that raises awareness and encourages inclusive activity.

DSF considers Active Schools coordinators to be the key partners in developing sports for children and young people. The Active Schools models described above are all very different but some common principles exist which make them work:

• There is commitment to include, and focus on, the individual needs of each pupil.

• There is a shared vision among partners to ensure an inclusive approach to the provision and development of sporting opportunities for pupils with disabilities.

• The focus within each area is on the ability of the pupil as opposed to individual impairments.
Inclusive facilities for world class athletes

The barriers to participation in sport for children, athletes and players with a disability are many and varied. However, attitudes are undoubtedly changing for the better due to the example set by sports and leisure providers with encouragement from national agencies. Inclusive facilities and inclusive programming are now the norm and not the exception.

Partnerships between local authorities, local communities and organisations representative of disabled people can help influence the design and potential of a facility or venue to meet the needs of disabled sportsmen and women engaged in sport at all levels of the participant pathway.

The model

The Fife sports institute promotes inclusion through its award winning accessible design and offers mainstream and discreet sports options for children, athletes and players with a physical, sensory or learning disability. It has a wide range of indoor and outdoor sports facilities, including an aquatics centre. The diverse range of activities and programmes offered enable the participation of individuals of all ages and abilities. Along with disability sport sessions, staff and coaches are experienced in delivering mainstream sessions that actively promote inclusion through sport.

Since 1970, Fife Council and more recently the Fife Sports and Leisure Trust (FSLT) have offered concessionary rates that help address the challenge of finance so often identified as a barrier to participation.

The programmes on offer have developed strong links with local sports clubs, creating pathways for progression for children, athletes and players with a disability into both mainstream and disability sport.

As Fife Council and the local leisure trust re-develop and modernise the institute, disabled people and their representative organisations have been involved at every stage of the design process. This includes consultations with Disability Sport Fife, Scottish Disability Sport, Scottish Disability Equality Forum and PAMIS (for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities). Architects held open planning meetings with service users and their representative organisations and along with investment from the Scottish government and sportscotland, the new facilities will continue to serve the local community of disabled users and develop future Paralympians when opened in 2013.

The result

The existence of the institute in Fife since 1970 has greatly increased participation in the area and promoted inclusion through sport for the local community of disabled residents. The institute is also renowned across the country as a centre for excellence in disability sport. Weekly programmes offered at the institute can be the first step on the sport pathway for disabled people of all ages.

The institute hosts the annual junior multi sports festival which offers disabled pupils the opportunity to experience a range of sport. As part of the 2014 Commonwealth Games legacy, the institute has been central to developing competitive sporting structures throughout Fife and Scotland and actively hosts a variety of local, national and international sports events for disabled children, athletes and players. At the same time, it has achieved considerable success at both increasing local participation, developing world class performers and promoting inclusive coaching.

Fife has produced twenty Paralympians and all have used the institute as their training base before competing in Paralympic Games and major championships all over the world. Disability Sport Fife has been based in the institute since its formation in 1977 and has prepared individuals and teams for national and international participation using institute facilities and support staff. DSF recently introduced a Fife Hall of Fame which currently has 13 members who are all Paralympic medal holders.

The model worked because:

• The wide variety of programmes offer participants with a disability the chance to experience a range of activities at a level that’s best for them.
• The institute benefits greatly from the support of local and national partners across the public and voluntary sectors.
• New facilities are currently being developed with inclusiveness at the heart of the project. The new inclusive facility has been designed and built with extensive input from the local community, including athletes and players with a disability.
• The expertise and experience of coaches and staff enable them to fully support children, young people and adults with a disability and ongoing staff development ensures the institute will meet their needs in the longer term.

“From the day the institute opened in 1970, disabled people of all ages and abilities have been a valued and welcomed community user group. The institute promoted Paralympic performance pathways. Inclusive coaching and teaching have created opportunities for Fife’s disabled sports people with talent to meet their sporting aspirations and realise their full potential. What makes the institute in Fife different and unique is that sports equity and inclusion are practiced with pride, commitment and supported with resources.”

Richard Brickley MBE
President of Disability Sport Scotland
**Inclusive coaching**

Inclusive coaching encompasses coach education, coach development and coach delivery. It recognises the difference between the technical (‘what’ to coach) and generic (‘how’ to coach) elements of coaching. Examples of good practice are where children, athletes and players with different impairments are appropriately and effectively included within mainstream sport. Scottish Disability Sport (SDS) works with sports to develop inclusive coaching practices. Two examples of this kind of work are outlined in this case study.

**The model**

In 2011 SDS set up partnerships to develop an inclusive coaching workforce. The aim of the partnership was to help coach/leader education and development to be more inclusive.

**JudoScotland**

A working party was established to develop UK Disability Inclusion Training – Judo (UKDIT-Judo). One of the key expected course outcomes was that coaches would feel more confident and competent in their ability to work with judo players with different impairments. The process revealed that there were already a number of experienced judo coaches working with players with a disability. There was a real desire to build on the success of the training course and include disability judo into the national events and training programme.

**Basketball Scotland**

Basketball Scotland national tutors completed a UKDIT basketball course. This course enabled tutors to incorporate inclusion into coach education qualifications for Basketball.

**The model worked because:**

- There was enthusiasm from partners to ensure the success of the courses.
- There was a commitment from key officials to include disabled people in their planning processes.
- The SGBs recognised that practices could be improved and there was a desire to encourage inclusion.
- Theory sections were put into practice, bringing the ethos of inclusion to life.

"SDS is delighted to be working in the community on an activity that is available to all, including participants with a disability."

Gavin Macleod  
Scottish Disability Sport CEO

**An inclusive approach to sports development**

Scottish Governing Bodies of Sport (SGBs) are well positioned to promote sport for children, athletes and players with a disability. SGBs are able to develop policies, promote best practice on including players from different impairment groups and develop practical opportunities that increase participation.

Scottish Disability Sport (SDS) has the expertise and experience to support SGBs to develop performance sport options, create appropriate coach education opportunities and increase levels of participation amongst communities with a physical, sensory or learning disability.

**The model**

In 2005, the Scottish Football Association (SFA) established the post of National Development Officer for Disability Football. The aim was to deliver a four year action plan which focused on creating programmes, developing structures, increasing participation and raising standards of disability football. As the action plan was rolled out across the country, disability football became embedded in Scotland’s football culture.

Opportunities for participation at grassroots level have rapidly increased due to a variety of programmes including fun festivals, school football programmes and disability soccer centres. The SFA worked closely with SDS to establish disability inclusion training for coaches of all levels across the sport. The training focused on developing adaptive coaching practices and implementing good practice.

Teams of players with a disability now compete at SDS national championships. Partnerships have been established with a number of professional football clubs to share resources, explore skill development and coaching expertise within disability football.

**The result**

There has been an almost threefold increase in the number of players participating in disability football. For some it is a great way to keep fit and socialise with friends, while others have progressed to represent Scotland and Great Britain in international competitions.

Around 200 football coaches have attended the SFA’s Coaching Footballers with Disabilities certificate course, ensuring players with a disability can benefit from the expertise of the top coaches in the game.

"Often the biggest barrier for coaches getting involved with footballers with disabilities is the fear factor. The SFA’s course aims to build confidence and help coaches to see that they can coach people with disabilities. The course helps participants to appreciate the importance of planning and delivering sessions that are fun, enjoyable and inclusive."

Stuart Sharp  
SFA Development Manager for Disability
Inclusive support for an emerging sport

Scottish governing bodies of sport (SGBs) can support the development of adapted sports for athletes and players with a disability. Wheelchair curling was constituted as a sport at the end of the 1990s and has since grown at breath-taking speed with the development of international competitions. The sport was successfully included in the Winter Paralympic Games in Turin in 2006 and Vancouver 2010.

Thanks to a mix of targeted investment, effective partnership working with national agencies and mainstream and disability sports governing bodies, along with the passion of the athletes themselves, Scotland has been a major player in the development of wheelchair curling at international level. As new disability sports are developed and adapted, the story of how Scottish athletes became World Champions in an emerging major international disability sport provides an excellent model for other sports to follow.

The model

In 2001, with the sport still in its infancy, a partnership between Scottish Disability Sport (SDS), the Royal Caledonian Curling Club (RCCC) and sportscotland was established. A nationwide programme was launched to develop the sport and introduce it to wheelchair users.

The programme began to pay dividends quickly. A Scottish team comprising of wheelchair athletes from other sports, former mainstream curlers as well as complete novices brought home the bronze medal from the 2002 World Championships in Switzerland.

The sport began to grow in popularity. ‘Come and try’ events were held at ice rinks across Scotland, outreach work was targeted at mainstream curling coaches and clubs, and a series of coach training modules were developed for wheelchair curling. The sportscotland institute of sport appointed a wheelchair curling head coach and all partners contributed to developing a wheelchair curling performance plan.

Local wheelchair curling clubs began to form across Scotland. Nine of these clubs now exist with around 100 wheelchair athletes playing regularly. Along with the creation of competitive leagues and national championships, local clubs have been vital in supporting participation and the ongoing development of the sport.

The result

Scotland hosted the wheelchair curling World Championships at the Braehead arena in 2005. The Scottish team were the defending world champions and they managed to deliver a magnificent win on home soil.

In 2006, as wheelchair curling made its Paralympic debut, the Scottish athletes who made up the Great Britain team added silver medals to their World Championship success.

Aileen Neilson, a primary school teacher and wheelchair user from Glasgow was in the crowd cheering as Scotland retained their world title in Braehead in 2005. Inspired by what she saw Aileen decided she would much rather be competing than spectating.

After making rapid progress through the sport and representing Scotland and Britain at various international wheelchair curling competitions, she became the first ever female to skip an international wheelchair curling team. Aileen had the privilege of leading Team GB at the 2010 Vancouver Winter Paralympics.

Partner engagement has driven nationwide participant development, the creation of a network of local clubs and the hosting of international events. The wheelchair curling model could be repeated in Scotland by other sports which demonstrate a willingness and determination to accommodate athletes and players with a disability.

The model worked because:

- The mainstream governing body (RCCC) worked in partnership with SDS to develop competitive wheelchair curling structures.
- The development of courses for mainstream coaches enabled them to gain valuable expertise and knowledge to coach world class athletes.
- The creation of local clubs, often tied to existing mainstream curling clubs, helped the wheelchair game to develop and embed itself within the sport in Scotland.

“I had toyed with a number of sports but never really found one where I could compete on equal terms. Four years ago I was introduced to wheelchair curling and after a couple of adaptations I was hooked! Great camaraderie combined with good exercise and opportunity to play at any level. I wish I’d found it years ago.”

Wheelchair Curler

“The speed of development of wheelchair curling as a sport is testimony to the excellent partnership work between the RCCC, SDS and sportscotland and to the commitment and enthusiasm of the curling community to embrace and support opportunities for wheelchair users to access their sport.”

Gavin Macleod
Scottish Disability Sport CEO