



Young People's Sport Panel



# Making the team work

A toolkit for building a young people's sport panel

Putting sport first

**sport**scotland  
the national agency for sport

# Introduction

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At **sportscotland**, we're extremely proud of our Young People's Sport Panel.

Since its launch in 2012, it's offered a voice to young people from across Scotland, giving them an opportunity to influence decision-making and drive change.

Now, thanks to their invaluable input, those same young people have helped us develop this toolkit to help you create a panel of your own. Produced as part of our celebration of Year of Young People 2018 in Scotland, it offers practical advice, templates and tips to support you in your work with young people.

We hope you find the information useful and it helps you engage young people in every area to influence decisions and drive change.

If you'd like to know more, go to **sportscotland.org.uk/sportpanel** or check out **#sportpanel** across social media. You can also use the additional resources on our website to hear further insights from panel members.



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## Our work with young people

Whether influencing or leading, we know that young people make a valuable and meaningful contribution to building a world class sporting system for everyone in Scotland.

That's why we work closely with our partners to ensure young people enjoy a range of leadership roles, and are encouraged and supported to reach their potential.

With their involvement and development, we can provide a legacy of confident, knowledgeable and experienced young people, who throughout their life in sport, will help build and strengthen our sporting system.

To support our commitment, we created the Young People's Sport Panel in 2012, giving young people a platform to have their views heard – and a chance for us to learn from their insights.

Today, we must all ensure that young people are at the heart of the decisions that affect them. Putting them first is crucial to ensuring the continued success and growth of the Scottish sporting system.

## The panel says...

The national Young People's Sport Panel has been hugely influential. But don't just take our word for it — here's what a few of our current members have to say.



"Being part of the panel has hugely improved my confidence and teamwork skills, as well as my ability to speak to large groups of people."

**Kirsty**



"The panel has provided me with opportunity, friendship and mentoring. I've gained experience and it feels like a family."

**Rhys**



"Working as part of a team of like-minded individuals has enhanced my leadership skills, helped me express ideas more clearly, and taught me to think logically about any issues that arise and become better at solving them."

**Hannah**



"I've been given the opportunity to make a contribution to sport and share my enthusiasm. I've had some great experiences to help me prepare for the future, such as interviewing on national radio and meeting the First Minister and Olympians. I've also made new friends and contacts, developed new skills, and done things that are out of the ordinary."

**Alex**



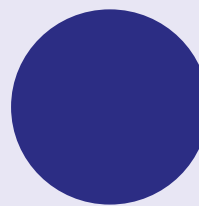
## A growing voice

We've been encouraged and inspired by the many panels and platforms created for young people in sport over the past few years.

The national panel has directly influenced the formation of several similar groups in local authorities and governing bodies of sport. And we're also heartened to know that many community sport hubs are engaging young people as leaders, deliverers and decision-makers.

We hope this toolkit will provide you with everything you need to inspire your own panel of young people – and help shape the Scottish sporting landscape of tomorrow.

### What other panel leaders say...



"We were inspired by the positive work of the national panel and the impact that young people can have on decision-making. We wanted to create a panel to give young people in South Lanarkshire a platform for their voices and opinions to be heard about sport and physical activity. We wanted to hear the experiences of young people growing up in the villages and towns of South Lanarkshire and how we can make a positive impact."

**Leah Wilson**

Active Schools Coordinator,  
South Lanarkshire



Follow the South Lanarkshire panel on **#SLSportPanel**

### The panel says...



"Young people are the only ones with a true insight into what they want out of sport and how to make it more engaging. That's why it's so important to give them a voice and the chance to shape the future of sport, as they will be the ones to benefit from any actions."

**Hannah**



"The panel is a great way to get young peoples' passion and enthusiasm about sport into the wider world. It helps influence how their sport can be improved and developed so more young people can benefit from the fun and rewarding experience of taking part."

**Alex**

## Early stages:

# Define your vision and objectives

Before setting up a panel, ask yourself a few questions:

- **What** do I want to achieve?
- **How** can I get maximum value for everyone, but especially the young people?
- **How** will the panel's work complement the mission of my organisation or club?
- **Which** partners can I work with to create opportunities for the young people?

Creating a panel means investing significant time and effort, so the right support is crucial. Think about your key stakeholders, local partners and other influencers – who could help you achieve your vision?

Once you have a clear vision in mind, translate this into objectives for your panel. As an example, the national panel has two aims:

- To raise the profile of sport
- To influence and shape the future of sport in Scotland

These aims are at the heart of everything the panel does, so they're visible at every meeting, reflected on when project work is considered, and included in all promotional channels.



### Tip 1

#### Make it clear

Promoting your objectives from the start will help candidates and stakeholders understand them clearly. Print them on posters to keep them front of mind.

### Tip 2

#### Keep it consistent

To help you achieve your vision, ensure all projects and outputs are linked to your objectives. Tell members how these links will contribute to the wider vision.

### The panel says...



"Before applying for the panel, I knew what its aims and objectives were, so I could tailor my application accordingly. Having defined objectives has allowed us to stay focused on our work and means we're all clear on what we're working towards."

**Kirsty**



"The panel's values and aims were made very clear right from the start, so it was easy to see what sort of mind-set was required. With the whole group focused and aware of these values, our work has a consistent feel, even if we aren't always working directly together."

**Hannah**



## Early stages:

# Set up your structure

Once you have a clear vision and objectives, it's time to turn your focus to the structure of the panel itself. Again, you'll need to ask yourself a few questions:

- **How** many young people would I like to recruit?
- **What** age range and experiences am I looking for?
- **How** long will their memberships last?
- **What** commitment is realistic to ask for?

Now align these decisions to your vision and start thinking realistically about the resources and support you'll need.

As an example, here's how the national panel is structured:

- **Age range:** 14-23 years
- **Numbers:** 15-16 members
- **Timeframe:** Two years
- **Target:** Young people who are passionate about sport and want to make a difference, selected from all backgrounds across Scotland
- **Commitment:** up to three hours a week of work.
- **Roles:** Action planning, decision-making within projects and meetings.

And here are the commitments that its members are expected to meet:

- **Residential team building weekend** – held to mark first meeting and planning session
- **Panel catch-ups** – monthly, in Glasgow or Edinburgh
- **Project work and opportunities** – ongoing across the two years.
- Develop a co-design approach with young people at the heart of your work.

### Tip 1

#### Mix it up

Consider a variety of experience and ages to help younger members learn from older ones.

### Tip 2

#### Plan sensibly

Choose a realistic timeframe for your vision and objectives. Knowing when you'll start to see tangible results is crucial for positive engagement.

### Tip 3

#### Stay flexible

When choosing your number of possible members, think how work and opportunities will be divided. If you're undecided on size, don't worry – a rough idea is fine. But bear in mind young people can drop out, so be adaptable too.

## The panel says...



"Our monthly catch-ups are very useful. With people spread across the country, it's often difficult to get everyone in the same room, so never underestimate the importance of getting people around a table and having face-to-face discussions."

**Hannah**

## Getting started:

# Applications & interviews

Your application process will depend on the level of interest you're expecting. If you think it'll be high, you could consider selection. This could be done through a simple application form that you use to make a decision. Alternatively, interviews could be held.

If there's an application form or task, it should focus on some of the key qualities and skills you're looking for. They should also relate to your vision and objectives.

Interviews should be fun and enjoyable for the candidates volunteering to work with you. Depending on the number of applications you might need support, so ask partners and stakeholders to get involved. It also helps them get closer to your project. Work out when the panel will meet and let your candidates know what will be expected of them, both beforehand via promotional activity and again at the interview itself.

Previous panel members can provide invaluable help too. Ask them to help promote this new opportunity and meet potential applicants at special information evenings. They could even help conduct interviews and set work for the new panel.

Strive to make the opportunity as open and inclusive as possible, consider the different ways young people might wish to communicate and the various communication requirements they may have (e.g. use subtitles in a promotional video, create a version in British Sign Language, allow applications in video form as well as written, make adjustments at the interviews as necessary).

### Example application process for national panel

- **Online application:**  
three questions
- **First stage interview:**  
informal chat
- **Second stage interview:**  
written and group task

### Possible application/interview questions

- **Why** do you want to be on the panel?
- **What** are your strengths and weaknesses?
- **What** would you like to achieve individually and as a panel?
- **Who** are your role models and why?
- **How** do you think sport in Scotland can improve?
- **What** difference would you like to make for young people in sport in Scotland?







## The panel says...



"Each application stage was slightly different, allowing us to highlight different skills and qualities. I particularly enjoyed the first stage, as the informal chat allowed me to express my opinions, show my passion for sport and really get across what motivated me to apply."

**Hannah**



"Each stage allowed us to showcase separate skills and information about our experiences. Overall it was really positive and even though the second stage was more nerve-wracking, meeting some of the people involved at the first stage made me more relaxed."

**Kirsty**



"The interviews weren't as scary as I'd imagined, with former panel members leading some sessions to put us at ease. The group tasks were great and even the formal interviews with staff were relaxed and enjoyable - they just wanted to know more about us as people."

**Sam**

## Tip 1

### Broaden the scope

Consider different ways for young people to submit their application instead of the usual written format, e.g. with a video or poster.

## Tip 2

### Keep it light

Think of the interview as an informal chat to get to know the candidate better.

## Tip 3

### See them in action

Including a practical task as part of a two-stage process can help you see how your candidate works with others.

## Tip 4

### Make commitment clear

Ensure candidates are aware of the effort and time required to be a member, as well as flagging up any meeting dates.

# Getting started: Spreading the word

So your panel's foundations are now in place, you know who you want to attract and you've decided on your method of selection. What next?

Raising awareness is key, so you should draw up a promotional plan to ensure your message reaches your target audience successfully.

Brainstorm all possible promotional avenues and keep track of relevant timelines and deadlines. Then contact partners who can help share the message, e.g. schools, clubs and relevant organisations.

Social media is a useful tool to engage people in your campaign, as is local media such as newspapers and radio, who may also provide a platform to spread the word.



## Tip 1

### Know your platform

Create a range of consistent communication for different formats, e.g. a poster for a school noticeboard, an email for stakeholders, or a digital banner for a website.

## Tip 2

### Seize the day

Identify opportunities to promote your message at a relevant occasion, e.g. a school event, careers fair or club open day.

## Tip 3

### Choose a champ

Engage promotional 'champions' to suggest or select candidates, e.g. teachers or coaches.

## Tip 4

### Stay #tagged

If social media is key, a Twitter hashtag helps audiences understand your aims and helps you monitor activity, e.g. the national panel's work can be tracked using **#sportpanel** and the recruitment campaign with **#SpeakUpForSport**

## The panel says...



"The video and photos were very helpful and further fuelled my interest in joining the panel. I preferred that to reading a lot of information."

**Brodie**



"Using social media is a good way to reach young people and also gain support to share the message via networks like Active Schools and local community sport hubs and clubs."

**Daniel**

## Initial set-up:

# The first meeting

So you've selected your panel members and it's time for your first meeting. Make sure you do this quickly to capitalise on enthusiasm and maintain momentum.

Setting ground rules during this first meeting will help your candidate understand your vision for the panel. So share your objectives, ask them to make any tweaks, and finalise them together.

Other things to decide in the first encounter include:

- frequency of meetings
- roles and responsibilities, e.g. chair, minute taker, treasurer
- possible teambuilding/planning residential trip or away day.
- develop a code of conduct document

Depending on member numbers and your vision and objectives, it might be useful to split your panel into project teams. That way, they can influence their work better and you can set relevant and realistic goals.

### Tip 1

#### Stick to the Code

Give everyone a copy of the Code of Conduct and use it regularly to reinforce your shared values.

### Tip 2

#### Stay focused

Make sure you have a clear focus and plan for each meeting.

### Tip 3

#### Keep it fresh

Give everyone a chance to take on different roles and encourage them to manage the process themselves.

### Tip 4

#### Look to the future

Create a timeline for projects and make sure everyone is clear on actions and deadlines.

### Tip 5

#### Keep them talking

Encourage the group to stay in touch outside meetings via social media and group chats.

## The panel says...



"Our monthly catch-ups are really useful for keeping track of our commitments. It's also good to catch up with other panel members as often it's the only time we can get together. Whatsapp has also kept us in touch and help move things forward between meetings."

**Kirsty**



"Social media is the best way to have a wide spread of views and be noticed. As our passions lie in two distinct areas - women and girls in sport and disability sport - we also found that making two sub-groups was the most effective way to get things done."

**Emma**



## Initial set-up:

# Building an identity

It's crucial to give your new panel a distinctive and memorable identity right from the start.

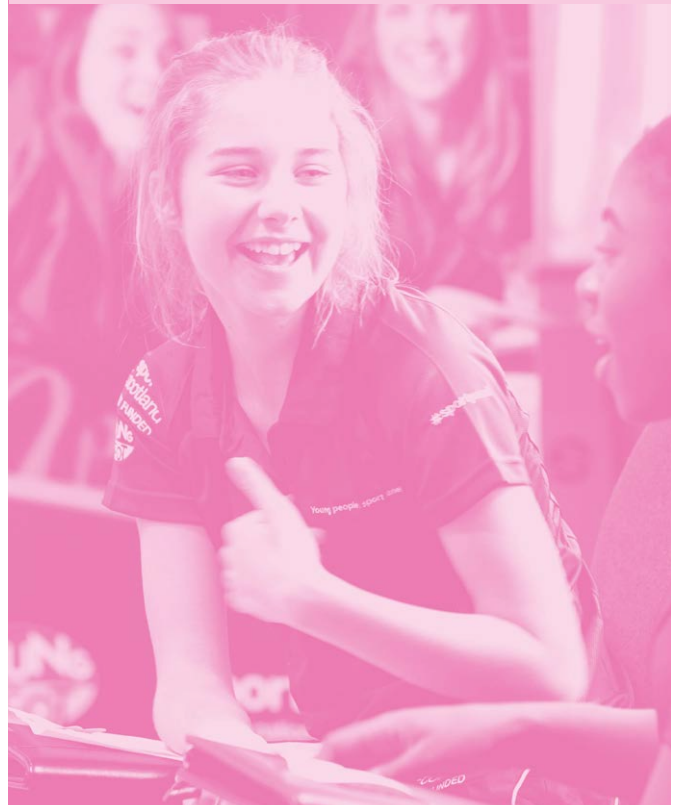
To do this, you could invest in branded kit to help build team dynamics and act as a promotional advert for the project as a whole.

If it's your first panel, you could ask members to help create a logo and colour scheme, or may have already done it during your 'raising awareness' phase, allowing members to focus on core projects. Social media is a great way to raise the profile of your panel and its work, so you may decide to start dedicated accounts on popular channels like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A regularly updated website can also provide focus and keep wider audiences updated.

You could even just create awareness in the local community by sending a press release to your local newspaper.

## Looking the part

Members of the national panel receive branded clothing, including a t-shirt and hoodie, at their first residential get-together. They also receive other branded items during their two-year membership, e.g. a water bottle, folder and pens.



## The panel says...



"Being part of the panel is an incredible opportunity. Working with other young people and influencing change for young people in sport in Scotland is so inspiring. It really does feel like we're making a positive difference for others, which is amazing."

**Eilidh**



"The first residential was a great way to meet everyone and feel good about the panel. It meant we could establish our ways of working and plan out the first year."

**Alex**

# Continued success: Great project ideas

If you want to succeed, you'll need to keep your members engaged and committed.

Having projects that relate to your overall vision is vital as it gives them something to aim for. And don't worry if it's something big – breaking it into smaller chunks makes it less daunting and more manageable.

Ask members what they'd like to do. Giving them some control means you can draw on their passions and achieve more in the long run. Regular communication is key, keep referring back to what you agreed in your Code of Conduct.

Contact any partners, stakeholders, colleagues and communities and see if the panel could:

- add value by doing consultation work
- offer support by aiding event delivery
- influence decision-making by attending committee or board meetings, working with headteachers or club leaders
- share their own stories at assemblies, events, public speaking opportunities.

## Tip 1

### Raise your profile

Give everyone a copy of the Code of Conduct and use it regularly to reinforce your shared values.

## Tip 2

### Stay focused

Track projects, opportunities and involvement to gain insights into group progress and individual contributions.

## Tip 3

### Start off small

Don't bite off more than you can chew – build from smaller-scale projects to larger ones as your panel develops.

## Tip 4

### Celebrate success

Share all positive feedback and media coverage with the group to build morale and a sense of achievement.

## Involvement in action

The national panel has worked on many projects and campaigns, including:

- women and girls in sport
- disability sport
- LGBTI sport
- School Sport Awards
- Young Hub Leaders.

Other opportunities include:

- being part of the Women and Girls Advisory Group at the Scottish Government
- consulting on, and speaking at, the launch of the new Standards for Child Wellbeing and Protection in Sport with Children 1st
- supporting the Coaching, Officiating and Volunteering Awards.

# Continued success: Sharing triumphs

Sharing the progress of your panel and its project groups and individuals is a great way to raise both profile and morale.

Do it in relevant places – e.g. schools, clubs, community sport hubs, colleges, universities and workplaces – and encourage your members to share messages and updates too.

Local media can be a great supporter, so invite local journalists to join stakeholders and parents to share in your achievements at information evenings, assemblies and other events.

And finally, don't forget to share what you're doing with **sportscotland** – just contact your local partnership manager who'll soon help to spread the word.



## Tip 1

### Get yourself seen

Promote what you do across all channels – videos are a great way to engage viewers.

## Tip 2

### Keep it real

Smaller, short-term achievement goals can help to maintain focus

## The panel says...



"It's important for your projects to feed into your overarching aims and objectives, so we've been involved in the Young Ambassador programme, Women and Girls in Sport Week, Active Girls Day and major sporting events. We've had chance to share our stories and experiences and show other professionals and young people the benefits of being on the panel."

**Kirsty**



"As we carry out one event, we're constantly planning for the next. This means there's always something in the pipeline to work towards. For example, as we prepared for Active Girls Day, we were also planning our toolkit"

**Emma**



## Next steps: Leaving a legacy

You should already be preparing for your next panel well before your current group reaches the end of its membership term.

The good news is, you can involve current members and capitalise on their energy and positivity to spread the word to new applicants.

Sharing your many achievements brings the panel to life and is another engaging recruitment tool, so remember to document all the great work you've done.

You can also ask current members to share knowledge and experience with future candidates, adding mentorship to their skillset.



### Tip 1

#### Have a handover

Ensure there's a crossover between panels, with all learnings and actions passed on.

### Tip 2

#### Keep a record

Take pictures of what you do as you go along and create a video of your work.

### Tip 3

#### Be a buddy

Try a three-month buddy scheme so previous members can help newcomers set up.

### The panel says...



"It's always sad to say goodbye, but I plan to leave smiling. I look at what we've achieved and the impact we've made and it's brilliant. It's important to shout about what we've accomplished and inspire the next group of young people to apply."

**Hannah**



"If you can, share the things you've learned with the new panel to make sure they can hit the ground running"

**Kirsty**

The **sport**scotland group is made up of **sport**scotland and the **sport**scotland Trust Company (National Training Centres). **sport**scotland incorporates the **sport**scotland institute of sport, the high performance arm of **sport**scotland.

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