

# **Report for Work Placement at Sports Northumberland**

## Objective 1

**Map out the policy context relating to SEND support for children & young people in Northumberland and look at how this impacts on participation in sport & physical activity.**

The SEND ‘Guide to Services 2018’ sets out the support and provisions available, or in the process of becoming available, for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Northumberland specifically. There are also national policies, such as the government’s ‘Sporting Future Strategy’; Sport England’s policy ‘Towards an Active Nation’; as well as organisations such as the English Federation of Disability Sport. All of these combined have multiple policies targeting the inactivity of disabled children and young people, and how to combat this issue.

A key area in the SEND ‘Guide to Services 2018’ was the education factor. Within this document it states that the current SEND Code of Practice of 0 to 25 years “identifies a graduated approach which recognises that children and young people learn in different ways, and can have different kinds and levels of SEN. A child or young person’s SEN should be addressed as soon as possible through early intervention and SEN provision”. To gain the best possible results for the child or young person, education, health, social care and other services should work in conjunction. However, the facilities available to children and young people in Northumberland differ in their delivery of education and sport/physical activity specifically. There are 9 schools in Northumberland with specialist provision for children with SEN, but these schools may or may not prioritise more towards the general academic education of the child rather than a certified level of physical activity.

There are also areas for improvement and policies associated to post-education. The English Federation of Disability Sport produced a report called 'Active Beyond Education', which explored young disabled people's (16 to 30 year olds) experiences of sport and physical activity during the transition from education to adulthood. The report found that 54 per cent of young disabled people were less active compared to when they were at school, and that the opportunity to engage in sport is impacted upon access, support, and availability of adaptive equipment. However, there are no implementations or changes trying to resolve this issue currently in Northumberland, leaving this area of limited participation in sport and physical activity static.

Another general area in the SEND 'Guide to Services 2018' is the domestic side of a child and young person with SEN. Under the 'Childcare and Breaks from Caring' section of the report, it discusses targeted intervention and support to children, young people and their families following requests from social care teams. This runs under the 'Family Support Team' who provides 'Task Centred Care' and 'Play and Activity Schemes'. The 'Task Centred Care' focusses on 5 to 18 year olds, and it works with children/young people outside the family home by accompanying them to access everyday activities. This could include taking the child/young person to sports and leisure clubs, and enabling them to participate in activities. The 'Play and Activity Schemes' provide an opportunity for children and young people to participate in a range of term-time activities and holiday play schemes. Both of these policies are focussed on children and young people having the opportunity to, and physically participating in, sport or physical activity.

**Figure 1: Map of Sports Centres in Northumberland**



Source: Northumberland County Council (2017). 'Children and Young People with Special Educational & Disabilities (SEND) in Northumberland: Guide to Services'.

*Northumberland SEND Information, Advice and Support Service.*

[http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/SEND/SEND\\_2018\\_interactive.pdf](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/SEND/SEND_2018_interactive.pdf) [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017].



**Figure 2: Map of Special Needs Schools in Northumberland**



Source: Northumberland County Council (2017). 'Children and Young People with Special Educational & Disabilities (SEND) in Northumberland: Guide to Services'.

*Northumberland SEND Information, Advice and Support Service.*

[http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/SEND/SEND\\_2018\\_interactive.pdf](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/SEND/SEND_2018_interactive.pdf) [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017].



**Figure 3: Map of Centres and Organisations for People with Disabilities in Northumberland**



Source: Northumberland County Council (2017). 'Children and Young People with Special Educational & Disabilities (SEND) in Northumberland: Guide to Services'.

*Northumberland SEND Information, Advice and Support Service.*

[http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/SEND/SEND\\_2018\\_interactive.pdf](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/SEND/SEND_2018_interactive.pdf) [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017].

The most important area in the SEND guide is the component on leisure. There are 29 centres/organisations/programs in Northumberland that offer activities for those with disabilities, including youth clubs and play schemes. 20 of those operate in specific locations, whilst 9 others operate across the county of Northumberland. Although this may sound like a sufficient amount of services in the area, there are none specifically for the age range of 5 to 25, which this objective is for. This also implies that there may not be the required support for 5 to 25 year olds that there should be. In relation to the age range issue, there are not many of the 29 centres/organisations that wholly focus on sport and physical activity for those aged 5 to 25.

This brings up the question of what is Northumberland, and even the country, prioritising for child and young people with SEND. Is it health, education, social care or physical activity? The foundations for substantial resources and opportunities for young people participating in physical activity in Northumberland are available, there just needs to be more focussed attention on the issue to completely combat it. Figures 1, 2 and 3 also show that there are a good amount of centres, whether they be sports centres, schools or organisations, which are available to those with disabilities. However, they all point out that there may be an accessibility issue, as if you live somewhere like Wooler or Kielder Water the distance people need to travel is a lot to access the services available for those with disabilities.

The Northumberland SEND ‘Local Offer’ sets out the provision available to children and young people with SEND in Northumberland, and their families. Northumberland’s priorities for this include; preparing for adulthood, health, early years, education and schools, social care, transport, and adult education. Again, there could be more emphasis on sport/physical activity, which would positively impact upon participation.

The National Policy context on disabilities in sport varies to Northumberland's specific policies through SEND. All the reports from the government, Sport England and the English Federation of Disability Sport are quite broad in the sense that they focus on statistics and results instead of policies and areas to improve.

The government's 'Sporting Future' strategy gives an entire section on children and young people. There is a particular focus on obesity, with a new strategy being implemented soon on how to encourage more young children to be active in the early years (aged 0 to 5). In addition, there is awareness that any action taken to address inactivity must also ensure that hard to reach groups are not excluded, such as disabled children. As a result, there is attention on getting disabled people active, with new approaches to local delivery, such as SEND in Northumberland. The government is committed to reducing physical inactivity.

Sport England's 'Towards an Active Nation' is focussed on tackling inactivity by providing more money and resources, especially more in children and young people from the age of 5. Sport England also wants to help the sector to be more welcoming and inclusive for those groups currently under-represented in sport. 13 per cent of projected investment is on tackling inactivity, and 17 per cent of the total projected investment is on children and young people. Sport England also had another relevant project called 'Get Healthy, Get Active'. This showed that sport can reach inactive people and get them active.

EFDS advises Sport England on disabilities, and their ‘Talk to Me’ principles outline ten clear steps that providers can follow to make their activities more appealing to disabled people. If applied proactively, disabled people will participate more in sport or physical activity. The ten principles are grouped into 3 categories, representing 3 steps providers need to take to improve their offer.

- CATEGORY 1: Drive awareness
  1. Use the channels I already trust.
    - Connections with the disability sector.
    - Not all disabled people associate or connect with disability organisations.
  2. Stay local to me.
    - Travelling can be more of a challenge for disabled people.
    - Lack of availability and too expensive.
- CATEGORY 2: Engage the audience
  3. Don’t lead with my impairment or health condition.
    - Fail to inspire.
  4. Talk to as many of my values as possible.
  5. Continue to fulfil my values in new ways.
- CATEGORY 3: Offer support and reassurance
  6. Reassure me I’m going to fit in.
  7. Make me feel I can do it.
    - One of the barriers to participation is that disabled people fear that they are not good enough to take part.
  8. Make it easy for me to tell you my needs.
  9. Ensure my first experience is good.
  10. Encourage me via existing advocates.

These principles offer guidance in ways in which providers can adapt, develop and improve their offer to make them more suitable and appealing. These work in theory very well as they



establish clearly guidelines for not only those with disabilities, but those who provide them with the sport itself. Through the training of coaches, categories 2 and 3 naturally can be fulfilled as they are instilled in the training process itself not just for people with disabilities, but also those without. However, as shown by Figures 1, 2 and 3 the most issues lie with category 1, as there are areas, especially in the west, in Northumberland that seriously struggle as there are next to no organisations or groups (from the SEND initiative) that operate for those with disabilities in that area, thus step 2 is made much more difficult. Therefore whilst the steps may all work hypothetically and in more urban counties such as Greater London, they may not necessarily work in practice. This shows how national policies struggle to succeed as each county is different, so what may work in Greater London, may not work in Northumberland, especially when issues of accessibility are involved.

### **Conclusion:**

In conclusion, the SEND initiative has been a positive addition in the support for children & young people in Northumberland. Not only does it show a progression and greater focus on young people, aged 5-25, who have disabilities in Northumberland, but it also shows a greater understanding for those people in society. National policies as well show this change as there has been an increase in spending for those who are inactive as well as children. There have also been principles, such as 'Talk to Me', that outline a code of conduct and direction to help both sides improve the situation. The 'graduated approach' (highlighted in SEND) is a great example of this progression, as it recognises that everyone, with or without a disability, learns and develops at different speeds, and this is something that should be continued. However, education, health, and social care seem to take a much greater priority over sport and physical activity instead of working together in conjunction. This is something that is an

issue not just within school, but also after school is finished as young people aged 16-30 are 54% less active then they were at school, and this may be down to accessibility issues within Northumberland. The SEND initiative shows that there are many, fantastic organisations working in Northumberland (and upper Tyne and Wear) that help to improve physical activity for those with disabilities, but they are not equally distributed among the county. There are 9 that operate throughout the whole county, but resources are still limited for those especially living in the West of Northumberland. Overall the situation is improving as there is a much greater focus and understanding on inactivity in children, both in Northumberland and nationally. Though there needs to be more of a focus on policy making sure health, social care, education and physical activity work together, instead of prioritising one over another.

## Objective 2

### **Map out existing provision/opportunities for children & young people with disabilities to participate in sport & physical activity in Northumberland. To be complete by end of March 2018.**

Objective 1 showed that there is an initiative in Northumberland to improve the number of those participating in sport and physical activity generally, as well as for those with disabilities. However, this objective will focus specifically on the provisions for children and young people with disabilities to help them participate in sport and physical activity. Table 1 provides a list of 16 organisations that target this group of society, and whilst the specific activities and audience may differ amongst them, it shows there is a good range of opportunities available to those who need them.

**Table 1. Organisations providing provisions and opportunities for children and young people with disabilities.**

<b>NAME OF PROVIDER</b>	<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>ACTIVITY DELIVERED</b>	<b>TARGETED AUDIENCE</b>	<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>
Ability 2 Play	Blyth Sports Centre, Bolam Park, Blyth, NE24 5BT	Wide range of activities (football, martial arts, trampoline, cricket, bounce & splash, dance, youth club)	Wide range of young people with learning difficulties or physical disabilities Mainly target 8-24 year olds, but activities also include 5 year olds (each activity has a smaller age range)	20 hours per week of term time activities 250 hours per during the holidays
The Alan Shearer Activity Centre	West Denton Close, West Denton, NE15 7LU	Hydrotherapy suite Sensory rooms Cave Giant ball pool Music room Seasonal activities	Disabled people of all ages	A specialist recreational, sensory and social resource, catering to a wide spectrum of need
Blyth Valley Disabled Forum	20 Stanley Street, Blyth, NE24 2BU	Athletics Swimming Youth clubs (8-12, 13-19, and over 19 year olds) Football club for ages 16 and over	People with disabilities living in the Blyth Valley No specific age range	There is a play scheme during the school holidays

Brightside Youth/Adult Services	1 Esther Court, Wansbeck Business Park, Ashington, NE63 8AP	Specialist fitness session	Ages 13-35	
Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project	Middle Farm Buildings, Station Road, Cramlington, NE23 1DN	Walking Football Basketball Kayaking and Canoeing Mountain biking	Children aged 8-19 years, and young people with disabilities up to the age of 25	
Forget Me Not Project	The Alnwick Garden, Greenwell Road, Alnwick, Northumberland, NE66 1YU	'Lonetree' – den building, campfire cooking etc. Costs £10 per child Youth club (ages 14-24 only)	Open to all children with additional needs	Users have to book beforehand to take part
Go Swim	Swimming pools across Northumberland	One-to-one swimming lessons	Disabled people of all ages, abilities and level of experience	
Happy Faces	Ferndene in Prudhoe (NE42 5PB)	Youth club Football	Children of all ages who have additional needs	Parent-led organisation Youth club is on a Monday, football is on a Tuesday
Hippotherapy Northumberland	Town Foot Farm, Shilbottle, Alnwick, NE66 2HG	Physical and therapeutic sport activity on a horse	No specific age range	
Pathways4All	Tim Lamb Centre, Rising Sun Country Park, Whitley Road, Benton, NE12 9SS	Soft play Sensory room Play and crafts Outdoor playground	No specific age range	
Percy Hedley Foundation	Hedleys Sport Academy, West Lane, Killingworth, Newcastle, NE12 7BH	Powerchair football Wheelchair basketball Martial arts Boccia Boxing Archery	Disabled people with: Cerebral palsy; Communication impairments; Sensory impairments; Complex learning, social care and therapeutic needs	Boasts some of the most successful sports clubs that compete at national level
SMILE Through Sport	16C Moorland Way, Nelson Industrial Estate, Cramlington, NE23 1WE	Athletics Boccia Cricket Multi-sport	Aimed at people over 14 years of age with a physical disability or mental health condition anywhere in the North-East region	Also delivers a variety of leadership, coaching, officiating and disability awareness courses suitable for children and adults



SpLinter Group	MAIN: Room G08, Blyth Community Enterprise Centre, Ridley Street, Blyth, NE24 3AG (OTHER: Gallery Youth Project, Rear of 39, Bondgate Within, Alnwick, NE66 1SX)	Group sessions in Blyth (e.g. projects and activities)  RAP - create better access to opportunities for young people living in rural areas	Young people with learning difficulties aged 16 and over	
Torch Centre	Corbridge Road, Hexham, NE46 1QS	Pool and table tennis adapted for wheelchair users	Physical and learning disabilities, and mental health problems	
Trinity Special Needs Youth Club	The Oval Community Centre, Roslin Park, Bedlington Station, NE22 5NU	Social interaction opportunities with appropriate age and ability activities	8-18 years	
WECAN	Adapt NE Offices, Burn Lane, Hexham, NE46 3HN	SATURDAY CLUBS (Wentworth Leisure Centre, Hexham) – trampolining, bowling, football, swimming and dance  EASTER SCHEME (one day a week)  SUMMER SCHEME (3 days a week)	6-19 years Disabilities (learning and physical), additional and complex needs	

Source: Northumberland County Council (2017). 'Children and Young People with Special Educational & Disabilities (SEND) in Northumberland: Guide to Services'. *Northumberland SEND Information, Advice and Support Service*. [http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/SEND/SEND\\_2018\\_interactive.pdf](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/SEND/SEND_2018_interactive.pdf) [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017].

As mentioned, the organisations cover a wide variety of activities. Not only do they cover the more conventional sports like football and swimming, but they also branch out into more obscure sports such as trampolining and martial arts. The activities provided also move out of the traditional competitive scene into a more casual and social one. An example of this is the 'Forget Me Not Project' which gets young people outside doing activities like den building and campfire cooking.

This opportunity is an interesting alternative to more conventional physical activity, as not only does it provide a less competitive atmosphere, but its youth club offers a much needed social aspect which can help keep participants stay part of the programme. It is this variety of activities that can help in encouraging young people with disabilities into sport as it allows for those involved to find an activity that is right for them.

These organisations are also good at recognising that a disability is not just a physical impairment. The variety of support and care offered by these 16 organisations not only supports those with physical disabilities, but targets individuals with learning difficulties and mental health issues. In addition to this some of the organisations, such as Trinity Special Needs Youth Centre, have a greater focus on improving social skills. This shows a greater sense of understanding of what a disability is amongst these organisations, and highlights that there is support for the individual and their family, but also that it gives the young person choice. A number of the organisations, such as Blyth Valley Disabled Forum, Ability 2 Play and WECAN also have opportunities for young people with disabilities during holidays, a time (outlined by SEND) where fewer 5-25 year old individuals take part in sport and physical activity. This shows support for young people, as well as the carers, outside of the school environment, emphasising how health, social care, education and physical activity can and should work together.

The main issue with the organisations is that whilst some of them, like 'Go Swim', operate across Northumberland, there are still many areas of the county where children and young people may not get the required support. As Figure 4 shows there is a concentration of organisations in the south-east of Northumberland, and so there are large areas where there is

**Figure 4. Map of organisations providing provisions and opportunities for children and young people with disabilities.**



Source: Northumberland County Council (2017). 'Children and Young People with Special Educational & Disabilities (SEND) in Northumberland: Guide to Services'. *Northumberland SEND Information, Advice and Support Service*.

[http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/SEND/SEND\\_2018\\_interactive.pdf](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Child-Families/SEND/SEND_2018_interactive.pdf) [Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017].

limited support. This is especially important when recognising that ‘disabilities’ includes mental health problems, and so the lack of resources to some areas is something that needs to be addressed. This is not just an issue for rural areas though, as Berwick-upon-Tweed (amongst other more urban places in Northumberland), suffer from a lack of organisations. Therefore the opportunities for disabled young people to get involved in sport and physical activity are significantly more limited outside more urban places like Blyth, and this problem of equal distribution is something that is supported by the maps in the first objective.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, the existing organisations provide a good level of opportunities and provisions for sport and physical activity to children and young people in Northumberland. There is a range of choices for those who want get involved, competitive and casual, and the organisations themselves show a greater understanding of what a disability is, by accommodating to more individuals who need support. Yet the issue of accessibility means that the opportunities and provisions supplied are not always effectively consumed, and so this means that for young people with a disability in rural Northumberland the opportunities to get involved in physical activity are limited.



### Objective 3

#### **Research examples of best practice to support children & young people with disabilities to regularly participate in Sport & Physical activity in Northumberland.**

##### **Case Study 1: Blyth Valley Disabled Forum**

The Blyth Valley Disabled Forum provides basketball, swimming, football and youth clubs amongst other activities for people with disabilities living in Blyth Valley. In addition to these activities, there is also a play scheme available during the school holidays.

The swimming session, known as ‘Aqua Fun Sessions’, takes place every Monday evening with transport to the venue included. This session is specified to adults with learning disabilities.

On Tuesday evenings, there are after school clubs for children aged between 8 and 13.

There is another activity group on a Wednesday evening for adults with learning disabilities. Here they can play golf, tennis and bowling among other activities. The same session is provided on Thursday evenings for young adults with special needs aged 16 and over.

Saturday mornings provide the specific sport sessions. This is catered for children under the age of 19 with football, basketball, horse riding, bowling, snowboarding, canoeing, and swimming all on offer.

##### **Why is this project delivering these sessions?**

Blyth Valley Disabled Forum (BVDF) was established in 1984 with the aim of providing activities to disadvantaged and disabled people, and allowing them access to the wider community. In 1993, the Forum expanded by providing services at home and in the community to adults with learning and physical disabilities.

### **What benefits does this project bring?**

This organisation offers disabled children and young adults an opportunity to participate in sport and physical activity with their peers. In Blyth, there is only 'Ability2Play' that provides something similar for disabled children, so the Blyth Valley Disabled Forum delivers an important service. Getting disabled children aged between 5 and 25 to be more physically active is not only significant, but it is also difficult for those specific services to be provided. Blyth Valley Disabled Forum has succeeded in this goal for over 30 years, with the activities on offer expanding year on year.

### **How is this project being funded? Is there any other support needed?**

Blyth Valley Disabled Forum depends on volunteers for these activities to be delivered. The 'Aqua Fun Sessions' takes place in the Blyth Sports Centre. Every other activity service is held in their own centre (Home Care Centre, 20 Stanley Street, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 2BU).

There is no funding for these services, but Blyth Valley Disabled Forum provides homecare for the elderly as well as the disabled, so the profits from that could go towards the maintenance of their centre, and paying for the use of Blyth Sports Centre swimming pool.

### **Case Study 2: Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project**

Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project (CVYP) is for children aged 8 to 19 years, and for young people with disabilities up to the age of 25. The outdoor activities that this charity provides include; hill walking and orienteering; football; basketball; kayaking and canoeing; and mountain biking.

There is also construction currently in place for a new outdoor centre/retreat in Chirdon Head, Kielder. The aim of this is to create an innovative outdoor experience, with the planned activities being; walking and expeditions; mountain biking; and kayaking and canoeing. Chirdon Head is 6 kilometres south of Kielder Water, which provides a vast array of water sports.

**Why is this project delivering these sessions?**

Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project deliver these sessions in the hope that they can enhance the social and personal development of young people by offering specific opportunities.

**What benefits does this project bring?**

There are no other services like the ones that Cramlington Voluntary Youth Project provide in the Cramlington area. This makes the organisation and its activities vital for disabled children and young people here. Without this, disabled children and young people in Cramlington would find it increasingly difficult, and near impossible, to participate in sport and physical activity. CVYP brings vast amounts of benefits to these people.

**How is this project being funded? Is there any other support needed?**

Cramlington Youth Project depends on donations from the public, with the majority of their staff being volunteers.

All of the current activities provided are held in their grounds, which is located at: Middle Farm Buildings, Station Lane, Cramlington, Northumberland, NE23 1DN. Future activities will be held here and in the new Chirdon Head centre in Kielder.

The funds for the construction of the Chirdon Head centre have been provided by predominantly by Northumberland Social Service. Northumbria Water is a part of the volunteer programme here.

**Case Study 3: Forget Me Not Project**

The Forget Me Not Project is an organisation that operates in the Alnwick Gardens to help get young people outside and trying a different, more unconventional form of physical activity. Whilst users

need to book beforehand in order to take part, the schemes are open to all children with additional needs, and indeed to young people who care for other family members.

The activities include (but are not limited to): campfire cooking, gardening and den building, and mostly operate between March and October when the weather is warmer. These activities not only teach them lots of different techniques, but also help those involved learn the importance of eating fresh, healthy food. The project also offers a youth club for ages 14-24, and so the support goes even beyond the activities.

### **Why is this project delivering these sessions?**

The opportunities provided by the Forget Me Not Project help support the individual needs of a child, whilst enabling families to spend time together outdoors where they can learn new skills. Previously Alnwick Gardens offered a similar program to everyone, but the Forget Me Not Project directly targets young people with a range of disabilities, and so the social aspect is useful in supporting young people with physical, mental and learning disabilities.

### **What benefits does this project bring?**

The benefits of this project are that whilst it helps the young people be active, it also has a strong social aspect to it. Not only does it help the individual, and give their families more support, but being around lots of children their age helps improve their communication and social skills, all whilst doing physical activity such as digging and gardening. This project also provides participants with a sense of accomplishment that mainstream sport can lack, as they see their efforts grow before their eyes from a seed/bulb into a plant/vegetable.



### **How is this project being funded? Is there any other support needed?**

The Forget Me Not Project is funded mostly by donations and fundraising, but does also have support from Alnwick Gardens, the William Leech Trust and Northumberland County Council. In August 2016 they were also voted as the winner of the Sainsbury's Charity of the Year, where they received £3108.82, so they have a strong amount of financial support at the moment.

### **Case Study 4: SMILE Through Sport**

SMILE Through Sport is a non-profit organisation founded in 2013 by Paralympian Stephen Miller MBE. This project operates throughout the whole of the North-East region, so goes beyond just Northumberland, although they are based in Cramlington. Their focus is people over 14 years of age with both physical disabilities and mental health conditions. They cover sports such as Athletics (of which there are weekly clubs that alternate between children aged 8-13 and young people over the age of 14) and Cricket, but have a strong focus on Boccia too where there are weekly sessions in Gateshead. All these sessions are relatively cheap ranging from £3-4 and accommodate a range of abilities from complete beginners onwards. There is also a strong family element in these events as family and friends are encouraged to come along too.

The organisation also provides programmes to educate people about disabilities, thus helping to develop a greater cultural awareness, and these courses are suitable for children, as well as adults.

### **Why is this project delivering these sessions?**

SMILE Through Sport state that their mission is to “provide and encourage high quality disability sports opportunities while inspiring individuals to participate”. Their mission is also to ultimately improve “the perception and culture surrounding disability sport”.

Fundamentally, as their name suggests, this project makes having fun paramount for those involved whilst still getting them to take part in sport and physical activity, and with the aim to help young people with disabilities to continue to take part.

### **What benefits does this project bring?**

This organisation brings two key benefits:

Like the others, the project is about encouraging young people (over the age of 14) into disability sport, but this has a more competitive aspect to it. Even so, there is still a lot of support offered to those who take part, and at the end of the day it is about having fun which in turn will help those take part remain involved in sport and physical activity.

The project also offers training and support to the volunteers and coaches in the North East.

Especially amongst volunteers, there is a lack knowledge and education to help support those with disabilities in sport and physical activity, so courses such as the Disability Awareness Course helps to challenge initial perceptions and improve the quality of the opportunities available.

### **How is this project being funded? Is there any other support needed?**

In 2014 the project applied for Sport England's Inclusive Sport Funding and were successful in obtaining a 3 year fund to grow sporting participation in the North East. They have also taken part in fundraising events, an example being the Sunshine Fund's Go Banana's campaign to help this project get more funding for new equipment.

However, Sport England's Inclusive Sport Funding 3 year period has run out, and whilst SMILE Through Sport are going to be pursuing another period of funding, it is not for certain, and thus further support may be needed.

## **Conclusion**

Overall these case studies help to show that in Northumberland there is a great range of organisations to help young people with disabilities get involved in sport and physical activity. Not only do they provide these opportunities to take part, but they all offer support to the individual and their family as well, which is invaluable to them and is often overlooked as a part of sport. These case studies also show that in Northumberland there are new schemes that provide a community for those who take part, no matter their disability, and that whilst there are opportunities to take their sport more seriously, there are also more relaxed approaches to physical activity. However, some of these organisations are heavily dependent on volunteers and sources of income that are not the most reliable, such as lottery funds, and so there needs to be support from the county to make sure as many of these organisations can continue to carry out their work.

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