

# Active For Life:



## The English Federation of Disability Sport Strategy



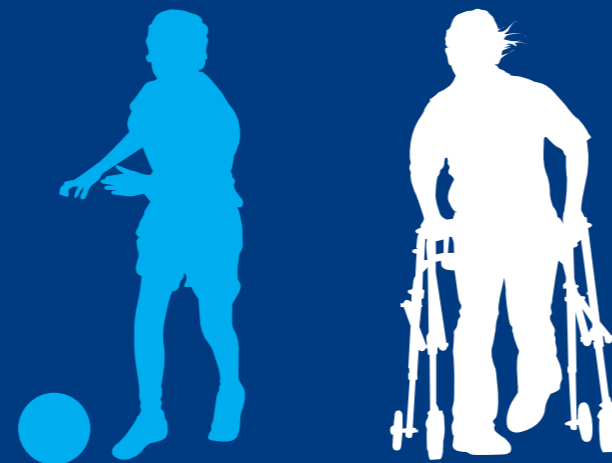
**English Federation  
of Disability Sport**

**“Being active is important in all our lives whether a disabled person or not. Sport can play a huge role in the life of someone disabled- building your confidence, allowing you to meet like-minded people but most of all it gives you a goal. It allows you to do something that you love. Everybody should be able to get involved in the sport of their choice and EFDS is working hard to make this possible”**

Martine Wright, sitting volleyball

**“Take chances. Take the opportunities while they’re there. You grab them, you never know what will happen. Just enjoy it.”**

Tom Minchington, athlete



### **Message from the English Federation of Disability Sport Honorary President**

Disabled people deserve the same rights to be active as everybody else, no matter whether they want to make use of their local gym or become an elite athlete. This is why organisations like the English Federation of Disability Sport have such an important role to play. Our work towards equality in sport means disabled people will be able to access more positive opportunities in sport and physical activity.

Undoubtedly, in 2012 this country delivered an amazing showcase of sport. The Paralympic Games on home soil meant more recognition was given to disabled people at the highest level in sport. As we all strive to build on the momentum which the Games created,

we need to ensure disabled people are not only interested in being more active, but that the opportunities are so widespread that everyone can choose something which is right for them.

The English Federation of Disability Sport will continue to work with partners and friends, new and established, to ensure this can happen. The organisation’s strategy is a major step on an important journey to change perceptions, increase participation and empower disabled people in sport. We are confident this ongoing journey will enable more disabled people to be active for life.

I hope you will join me in supporting English Federation of Disability Sport’s work over the coming years.

**Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson DBE**

# Active for life: the EFDS strategy

## Introduction

The English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) is the strategic lead in sport and physical activity for disabled people in England. In addition to being a funded National Partner of Sport England, EFDS, as a Federation, provides a platform for collaborative working across England and the main impairment groups.

Our full Members include National Disability Sport Organisations (NDSOs) and Regional Federations. As a Federation, EFDS seeks to be more than the sum of its parts. To do this, we bring together the energy and expertise which exists within our Member organisations and partners in England. This unique position in England enables us to be the authoritative voice for disabled people in sport and physical activity.

In this long term Strategy, EFDS has set out a clear vision and ambitious outcomes which, we hope will be shared by the wider “sector” following further consultation. The document will provide a clear route map to guide the focus and impact of EFDS over the next five years. Again, it is important to understand that we mean the whole “EFDS family” as we set out the collective impact we seek to achieve.

**We apply a broad and inclusive definition of the word “sport” as follows:**

**“... all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction. These include: play; recreation; organised, casual or competitive sport and indigenous sports and games.”**

(UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace (2003))

Language and terminology can often be a barrier rather than an aid to understanding. Therefore throughout the document it will maintain clear and simple language by defining our terms as follows:

- In line with the agreed definition above, when we use the words “sport and physical activity”, this definition

includes a wide range of other terms including exercise, fitness, recreation and a wide range of structured, unstructured, competitive and just plain fun sporting opportunities.

- We will use the Social Model of Disability. This will be applied to the way we work and the language we use. The Social Model was developed by disabled people and to show the structures within society as the problem. We too believe disability is caused by the barriers in society and the way it is organised. This discriminates against people with impairments and excludes them from positive involvement or participation. By applying the Social Model to our work, we identify disabled people as active citizens in sport and exercise. The application of this in sport means we still recognise the use of impairment groupings in competition structures and pathways.

- The Equality Act 2010 determines a person as disabled by the effect that impairment has on that person’s

ability to carry out normal day to day activities. It is a characteristic feature or attribute within an individual which is long term and may, or may not, be the result of disease, genetics or injury.

- It is important to remember that not all impairments are obviously identifiable or may be hidden.

Whilst we believe the terminology that we are using is the most relevant at this point in time, we will constantly consult disabled people to ensure that the language we use connects to their interests and aspirations.

Our strong focus is on the real benefits for disabled people from direct participation in sport and physical activity. However, we also actively encourage and enable disabled people to take part in all aspects of sport, whether as volunteers or paid employees. This includes taking up key roles as volunteers, leaders, coaches and teachers in the sector.

The summary diagram (page 7 and 8) provides a simple diagram of the key messages in the strategy.

## Values and ways of working

EFDS has agreed five clear values which will guide the way we work. In all that we do, EFDS will:

- Place **disabled people** at the heart of our work.
- Focus on how we **influence** the behaviour and actions of others.
- Be a good **partner**, achieving greater impact through collaboration.
- **Inspire and innovate** finding new and creative solutions.
- Remain **focused on outcomes** – real world impact.



## An effective organisation

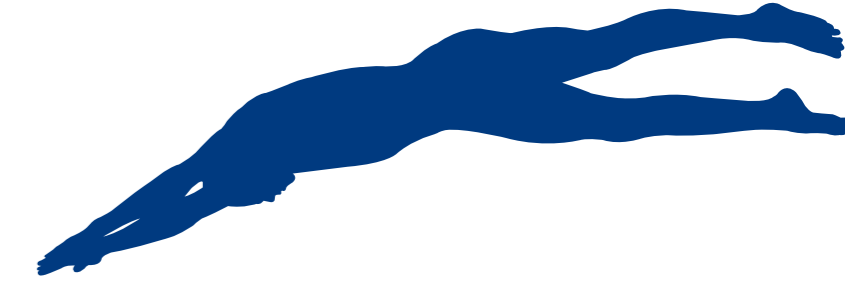
EFDS will ensure that all aspects of our operation meet the highest standards. The Board, Membership and all staff will ensure that our impact is underpinned by:

- Strong shared values (as above).
- Good leadership and governance.
- Continual learning and development for the paid and volunteer workforce.
- Sufficient and sustainable income streams.
- Excellent financial and administrative support.



## Vision

# Disabled people are active for life



## Outcomes

The above Vision is translated into two broad **Strategic Outcomes**. The main bodies involved in developing and delivering 'sport' services for disabled people will work together to achieve these broad outcomes:

**Enhanced health and wellbeing for all disabled people** (i.e. physical, mind, social and emotional health)

**A more equal society in which disabled people can achieve more through increased opportunities and choice**

The above broad Strategic Outcomes are broken down into the following shared sport and physical activity specific outcomes to provide a focus for our work in increasing the participation and retention of disabled people in sport:

### 1. Provider commitment

More people and organisations are supporting disabled people to participate in 'sport'

### 2. Pathways and progress

Disabled people can access the 'sport' of their choice throughout their lives and progress to the level they choose

### 3. Personal development

The confidence and self-esteem of disabled people is enhanced through 'sport'

### 4. Public perception

Attitudes regarding disabled people and the 'sport' they take part in are positive

### 5. Participation for life

The experience of 'sport' is positive, beneficial and enjoyable

The following two drivers will enable the achievement of the above **Vision** and **Outcomes**

**An effective process for engaging disabled people in sport with all stakeholders that continuously strengthens opportunity and participation.**

### A clear focus on impact based on:

1. Engagement of disabled people
2. Research, insight and marketing
3. Sport and physical activity development expertise
4. Engagement and collaboration from national to local
5. Strong advocacy – changing attitudes and behaviour
6. Directly providing services and participation opportunities



## Vision and outcomes

EFDS has a simple Vision of a future where:

**“Disabled people are active for life”.**

We do not assume that all disabled people will be active although that would be fantastic! Our aspiration is to see equality in sport whereby disabled people are just as likely to be active as non-disabled people. At the moment in England, four out of five disabled people are not taking part in any sport or physical activity each week. Non-disabled people’s participation rates are more than twice the level of disabled people.

EFDS is the strategic lead for sport and physical activity in England. It is important to identify how our work and those of our partner organisations can help achieve this vision and lead to wider changes in society and for disabled people specifically.

We see **two broad (wider than sport) outcomes** which will result from increased participation in sport and physical activity by disabled people:

- Enhanced health and wellbeing for all disabled people

This outcome focuses on the improved wellbeing and quality of life for disabled people. It aspires to social, emotional and psychological wellbeing as well as physical health.

- A more equal society in which disabled people can achieve through increased opportunities and choice

To achieve our vision where disabled people are active for life, they need to be recognised within society much more positively. This is a position where the physical, logistical and psychological barriers to participation are removed. If disabled people are to exercise genuine choice, then the opportunities open to them need to be as comprehensive as those available to non-disabled people.



We have identified five sport and physical activity specific outcomes which will both guide our work and define how we will make a difference. These are:

### 1. Provider commitment

**More people and organisations are supporting disabled people to participate in sport and physical activity**

The supply of quality sport and physical activity opportunities will need to expand rapidly if it is to respond to the growing demand from disabled people. It must be recognised that the network of organisations and individuals involved in providing opportunities for disabled people is vast and not only includes National Governing Bodies of sport but also Disabled People's Organisations, sports organisations, the media, volunteers and of course, disabled people themselves.

Whilst all stakeholders are important, National Governing Bodies of sport will play a critical role in providing opportunities for people to participate in sport. Therefore EFDS will work closely with them and other providers of sport and physical activity to help strengthen their offers and ensure the relevance to a broader range of disabled people.

### 2. Pathways and progress

**Disabled people can access the sport of their choice throughout their lives and progress to the level they choose**

The focus here is on ensuring the opportunities are available for disabled people to initially engage with sport at the relevant level as well as providing opportunities and pathways to enable individuals to progress to the level they are willing and capable of achieving.

For some people the choice may involve participating in relatively informal local sport, physical activity or exercise. However, where the potential and

the desire exists, there must be the opportunity to progress to international competition (including but not exclusively through the Paralympics).

### 3. Personal development

**The confidence and self-esteem of disabled people is enhanced through sport and physical activity**

This focuses on the state of mind of individual disabled people. It is based on the knowledge that low confidence and self-esteem can often prevent people seeking opportunities to become active. However, evidence shows that participation in sport helps to drive a positive cycle of increased confidence and self esteem which in turn heightens the hunger for more active participation.

### 4. Public perception

**Attitudes regarding disabled people and the sports they take part in are positive**

This focuses on attitudes within society

both towards disabled people in general but also to the sport and physical activity in which they take part. EFDS is passionate about seeing a change in attitudes across society towards disabled people and their participation in sport. In an ideal world, sport and physical activity will be seen as being just as much a "normal" part of life for a disabled person as it is for a non-disabled person. Sport would be seen as "just sport" whether it is a high profile "mainstream" sport like Premiership football or an inclusive game of sitting volleyball at a local school or community centre. Won't it be great when the coverage of sport involving disabled people is just as widespread in the media as any other sport!

### 5. Participation for life

**The experience of sport and physical activity is positive, beneficial and enjoyable**

Throughout life and regardless of impairment, participating in sport or any physical activity will always be a choice rather than a requirement. Like all things, the more positive, beneficial and enjoyable the experience (especially the first time), the greater the likelihood of an individual coming back for more and recommending the experience to others.









## Strategic aims (2012-2017)

To realise the Vision and Outcomes set out above by 2017, EFDS will be recognised for having achieved the following aims:

1. Provide strategic leadership and direct support to get more disabled people participating in sport and physical activity.
2. Be recognised and respected as the authoritative voice for disabled people in sport and physical activity in England.
3. Be the central resource for research evidence relating to disabled people and sport.
4. Ensure that strong and effective engagement processes and partnerships are in place with National Governing Bodies (NGBs), County Sport Partnerships (CSPs), National Disability Sport Organisations (NDSOs) and other partners that lead to improvement in the infrastructure of sport and the products and services available for disabled people.
5. Work collaboratively with disabled people and develop an effective platform for their engagement with sport and physical activity.
6. Ensure the provision of pathways to participation for disabled people in sport and physical activity through a dedicated events programme.
7. Influence and support the health and fitness industry to provide high quality inclusive services and provision.
8. Promote and develop specific programmes and activities to support the growth in participation of young disabled people within sport and physical activity.
9. Generate significant additional income and funding opportunities to support the participation of disabled people in sport and physical activity.





## A working system for engaging disabled people in sport

EFDS will develop and champion an effective and functioning sports system that engages with disabled people and is inclusive. It will provide a platform that leads to increased and sustained participation by disabled people in sport and physical activity. The key components that contribute to having a successful sports system in place are:

- The recognition and understanding of the roles that key stakeholders/players can and do play, which contribute to engagement and the effective delivery of sport for disabled people.
- Clearly defined activities and functions that can directly increase levels of participation in sport and physical activity by disabled people.
- An effective engagement mechanism with the non-sport sector that leads to more disabled people participating in sport and physical activity.

Whilst EFDS is not directly accountable for the work of these identified stakeholders, EFDS provide direct support and guidance to help them identify and fulfil their respective roles.

EFDS will continue to work closely with national and local providers to improve the supply of opportunities, which increase the number of disabled people participating in sport. In addition, we will help build demand from disabled people who wish to participate in sport. We will do this through the development of effective pathways for disabled people to participate in sport. Our work will ensure existing local sport systems and infrastructures provide an inclusive environment with targeted outcomes to help increase the number of disabled people participating in sport. In particular, we will seek to support the NGB and CSP infrastructure in the development of sport for disabled people ensuring those organisations provide an equitable and inclusive approach.

EFDS will support NGBs and CSPs to better engage with disabled people and organisations that are representative of and for disabled people. We will support this through tested marketing methods to increase awareness of sport for disabled people, provide further opportunities and attract more disabled people to participate in sport.

EFDS will provide the sports sector with expert knowledge of participation patterns and consumer demand from disabled people. This reaches deeper into existing markets and highlights new ones for growth. We will build on existing commissioned research which enables delivery partners to drive up participation in a way that is relevant to the sport infrastructure. Our research will connect the sports sector to disabled people and will measure the impact of inclusive sports provision as well as building the case for further investment into sport for disabled people.



## A focus on disabled people as customers

### Insight and understanding

EFDS are aware that in order to be fully successful they must place disabled people at the heart of all of our work. Through engagement with disabled people and Disabled People's Organisations we will ensure that we have the strongest possible understanding of the very wide range of interests and aspirations. The gathered insight will be used to support and strengthen our internal functions.

With this support, we can provide focused, relevant and actionable recommendations to organisations and individuals who seek to increase the participation of disabled people in sport and physical activity.

Current research, from a range of external sources, provides EFDS with the foundations of understanding disabled people in sport:

- Participation rates of disabled people in sport taken from Sport England Active People Survey and DCMS Taking Part Survey.
- The drivers and barriers to participation, as well as the perceptions and beliefs of society toward disabled people taken from Sport England Active People Survey, Sport Satisfaction Survey and Life Opportunity Survey, DCMS Taking Part Survey and EFDS Understanding the Barriers to Participation research.
- An understanding of young disabled people's exposure to and experience of sport, as well as the limitations and frustrations toward access as they grow older, taken from Sport England's Young Disabled People and Sport and Active People Survey.

- A skeleton map of the sector set-up, from grass roots to elite participation, derived from combining research from various academic sources. Individually such research focuses on niche areas of interest but when viewed collectively, provides a usable baseline to identify key areas of on-going concern.

However, due to limitations associated with the research, the outputs and relevance for the disability sport sector is limited. This means there are significant knowledge gaps which still need to be filled in order to provide the most effective service.

EFDS is committed to identifying the key areas of focus for future research and working together with other stakeholders. This ensures research is conducted in a timely and effective manner, answering key questions to provide concise, relevant and actionable outputs.



## Effective marketing and communications

Insight and market research is important for one key reason. It is pointless delivering something which does not respond to a need or demand. Once we have this evidence, we can deliver ourselves and advise others on more customer-focused programmes which respond to a need.

Marketing effectively then means we can satisfy and anticipate the customer needs. In an ideal world, we could personalise everything we do to ensure every individual's needs are satisfied. However, for any organisation, this is too time-consuming and definitely too costly. If EFDS is to establish real value in the services we deliver, we need to determine market segmentations which work effectively. We know segmenting disabled people into wide impairment groups or demographic features does not work. One wheelchair user is not the same as the next one, just like not every woman is the same. Disabled people,

like non-disabled people, have various lifestyles, motivations and experiences. Moving forward, the triggers, actions, lifestyles and motivations of individual disabled people are four areas which upon EFDS will concentrate.

Until we develop an ideal behaviour change model for our audiences, we know a useful starting point is using an adapted marketing approach for our own work. The commonly known marketing Loyalty Ladder which we call Engagement Ladder can be used for customers or stakeholders. It takes, in marketing terms, the prospects on a journey to hopefully a champion or advocate. We have deliberately left out the audience for the ladder as it works for many whether consumer (disabled people) or stakeholder (e.g. National Governing Body of sport).

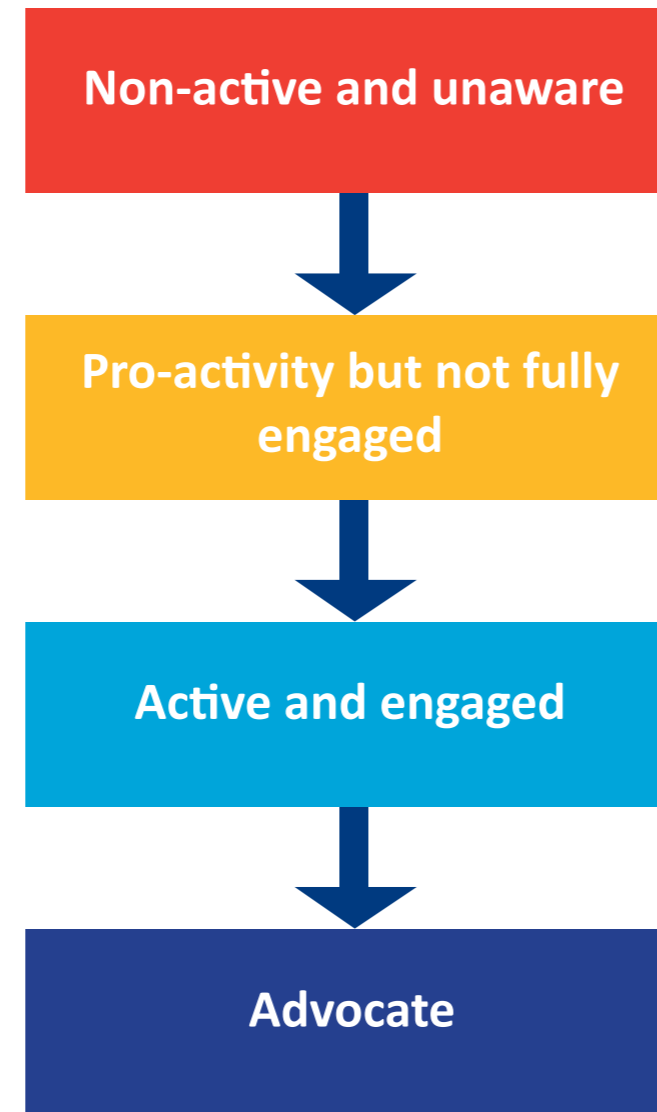


Table 1- engagement ladder





## Delivery priorities (2012-2014)

The strategic plan and aims set out previously will be underpinned by clear delivery plans, which identify the way in which respective EFDS service areas will contribute to achieving the vision and outcomes.

The following outlines our key, early delivery priorities to March 2014.

### 1. Research and insight

- To understand the perceptions disabled people have of themselves and their abilities and what impact that has on their confidence and self-esteem (generally and specifically in sport).
- To identify the key benefits disabled people gain from sport.
- To understand the barriers to participation and how these can be/have been overcome.
- To gain a better understanding of the sporting opportunities and pathways available and any gaps that currently exist or areas of frustration that prevent participation/progression.

### 2. Marketing and communications

- To promote the wider benefits of sport and exercise through the relevant channels for both consumer and stakeholder.
- To satisfy the needs of those who support the end users by providing offers to use sport and exercise as a way to enhance life skills.
- To provide channels for the end consumer to share their needs, positive experiences and better practices in sport and exercise.



### 3. Sports development and engagement

- To provide strategic leadership and support that leads towards getting more disabled people participating in sport and physical activity, in particular, in partnership with the NGBs and CSPs.
- To work collaboratively with the wider network of disabled people and develop an effective platform for engagement with sport and physical activity (also for NDSOs/Inclusive Fitness Initiative).
- To ensure strong and effective partnerships are in place with NGBs, NDSOs, CSPs, Regional Forums/Federations and other partners that improve the infrastructure of sport and the quality of their products and services for disabled people.
- To develop an agreed collaborative approach with EFDS and NDSOs to connect the disability population into NGBs interventions and targets.

### 4. Events

- To provide a platform for community based sports opportunities for disabled people to participate in sport.
- To identify progression routes specifically for disabled athletes and where appropriate, provide opportunities through a range of events.
- To develop and nurture volunteers and provide workforce development opportunities directly and indirectly in partnership with other volunteering agencies.



## 5. Physical activity

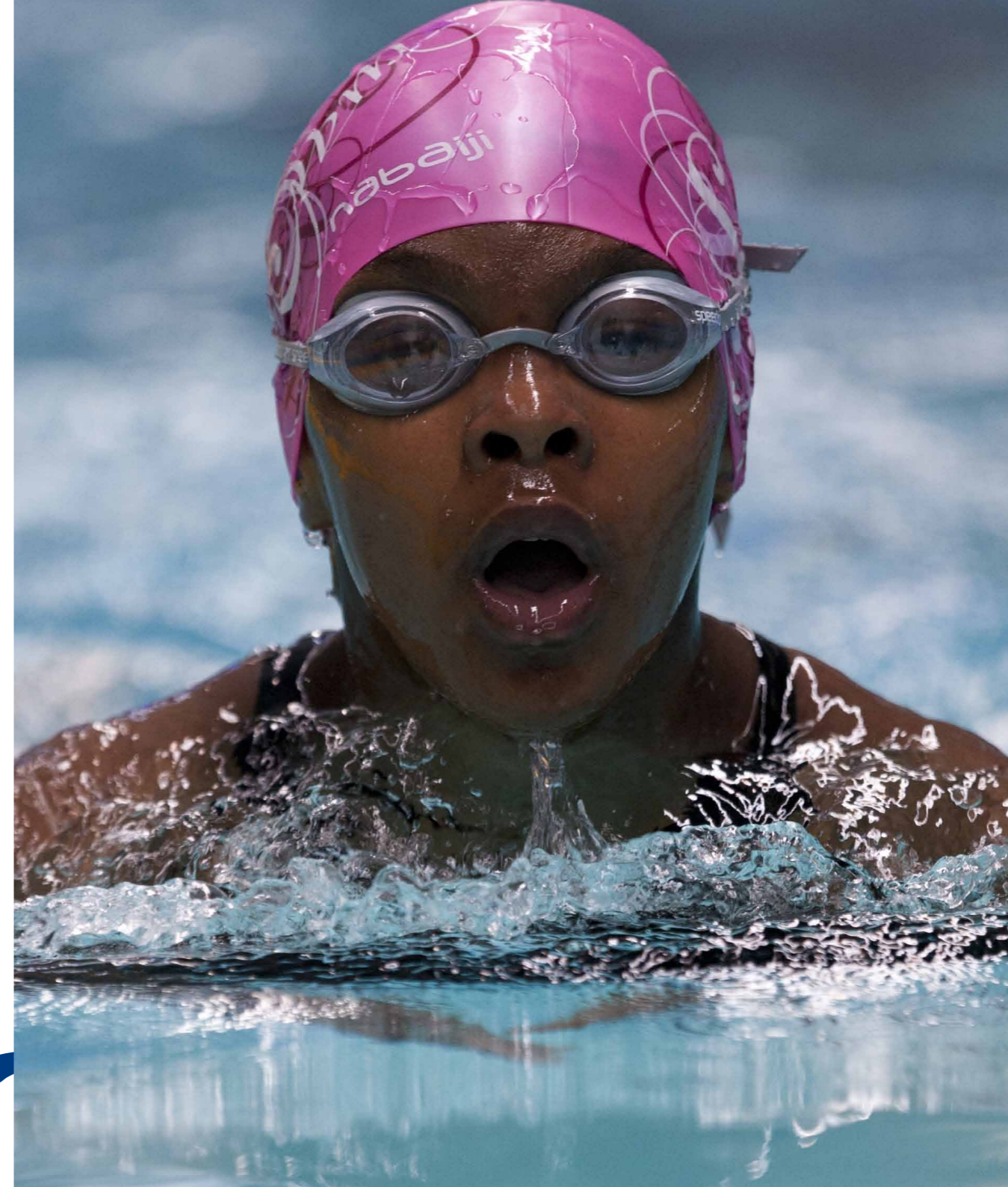
- To influence and support the health and fitness industry to provide high quality inclusive services and increase the number of disabled people participating in physical activity (demand).
- To grow the role of physical activity within the EFDS core offer and brand family and secure funding resources specifically around disability and inclusion within physical activity.
- To successfully develop and manage physical activity programmes (e.g. IFI Mark) in line with delivery plans and funding partner requirements.
- To identify and advocate evidence based benefits of physical activity for disabled people.

## 6. Children and young people

- To develop a long term strategy identifying new areas of development to support the growth of young disabled people participating within physical activity, PE and sport.
- To support key landscape partners on the engagement of young disabled people within PE and sport including the development and delivery of an inclusive PE programme throughout the UK impacting on curriculum development and initial teacher training.
- To provide insight and good practice to all Sport England funded partners on engagement of young disabled people within activity, PE and sport.

## 7. Income generation and fundraising

- To develop and implement a fundraising strategy for EFDS.
- To identify funding for participation pathways and core funding that support disabled people in sport.
- To develop new funding partnerships and nurture existing ones.
- To support fundraisers and maximise income opportunities.



## Glossary

County Sport Partnership (CSP)

English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS)

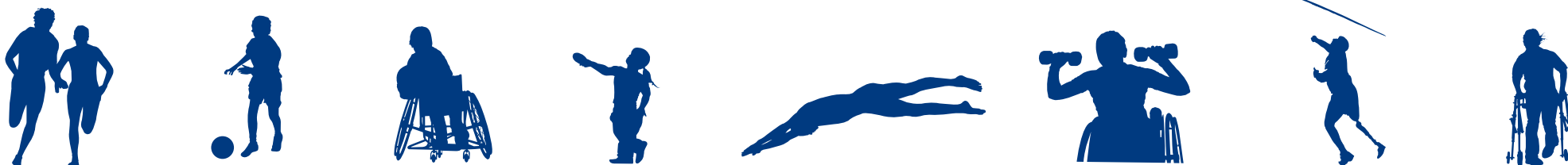
Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI)

National Disability Sport Organisations (NDSOs)

National Governing Body (of sport) (NGB)

Physical Education (PE)





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The English Federation of Disability Sport is a registered charity. CRN 1075180



**English Federation  
of Disability Sport**