



POSITION STATEMENT

Inclusion of disabled people in the sport and physical activity sector – workforce considerations

Joint statement:

Activity Alliance, Disability Sport Northern Ireland, Disability Sport Wales, Scottish Disability Sport and CIMSPA



July 2026

PUBLISHED BY

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity
Incorporated by Royal Charter Charity Registration No. 1144545 www.cimspa.co.uk

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Purpose

To clearly outline the position of Activity Alliance, Disability Sport Northern Ireland, Disability Sport Wales, Scottish Disability Sport and CIMSPA regarding:

- outlining the appropriate standards to ensure the training of the sport and activity workforce is inclusive of disabled people
- ensuring the sport and physical activity sector is a welcoming place to work and volunteer for disabled people.

The need for a position statement

Sport and physical activity should be inclusive, accessible, and beneficial to everyone. All those working in the sector must be appropriately trained to include and retain disabled people as participants or within the workforce. The sector must also be a welcoming place for disabled people to participate, work and volunteer. Quality training and a diverse workforce creates environments where disabled and non-disabled people alike can feel like they belong.

Disabled people are twice as likely to be inactive than non-disabled people. Likewise, disabled children are less active than their peers and experience significant barriers to participation. We also know that disabled people are underrepresented within the workforce by 20%.

Disabled people face significant barriers to participating, working and volunteering in our sector. Appropriate training equips professionals with the confidence, knowledge and skills to challenge these barriers, create inclusive environments and actively support the rights of disabled people.

An inclusive and accessible approach ensures that sport and physical activity is not exclusively for non-disabled people. Education providers, employers and deployers must improve access to training for disabled people and embed inclusive and accessible recruitment processes.

- Delivering quality inclusive activity requires knowledge of how to adapt sessions, communicate effectively and deliver a person-centred approach.
- Appropriate training ensures that professionals can deliver safe, appropriate, and effective physical activity sessions tailored to individual needs and skill levels.

A lack of trained and confident professionals, and a lack of disabled role models, discourages disabled people from participating, working and volunteering in physical activity throughout their life course and, therefore, contributing to social isolation and health inequalities.

It is a professional and ethical responsibility for providers to be accessible and inclusive. Quality training and inclusive recruitment is crucial to ensure deliverers meet legal requirements, such as those under the Equality Act 2010.

What we expect to see

Activity Alliance, Disability Sport Northern Ireland, Disability Sport Wales, Scottish Disability Sport and CIMSPA are committed to supporting sport and physical activity sector stakeholders, employers, education providers and the workforce to receive appropriate training in working inclusively and embedding inclusive training, recruitment and working practices.

Since 2018, CIMSPA have included an inclusive approach as part of all occupational professional standards. The curriculum of training has been adapted so all front-line practitioners understand how to adapt sessions. Therefore, there should be no barriers to disabled people participating in sport and physical activity.

We expect to see that everyone who delivers sport and physical activity:

- has the knowledge and confidence to include disabled people in their sessions
- has the knowledge and confidence to create welcoming and inclusive environments for disabled people
- completes training that is endorsed to cover all or part of the [Working Inclusively – Working with Disabled People](#) professional standard
- aspires to hold a minimum of Advanced Practitioner professional status, demonstrating they have completed training aligned to the professional standard for Working Inclusively – Working with Disabled People.

We expect to see that everyone who trains, employs or deploys people in the sport and physical activity workforce:

- has inclusive, proactive practices to support disabled people
- aligns their training to cover all or part of the Working Inclusively – Working with Disabled People professional standard and embeds this in their training offers.

How we will make this happen

- Activity Alliance, Disability Sport Northern Ireland, Disability Sport Wales, Scottish Disability Sport, and CIMSPA will work together to create guidance for employers and national governing bodies to clearly outline the appropriate training for different roles and contexts to ensure the inclusion of disabled people.
- We will increase the references to working inclusively within all occupation professional standards as they are reviewed.
- We will support and encourage employers and deployers to ensure their workforce is taking the appropriate training and achieving professional recognition from CIMSPA verifying their credentials.
- We will support and signpost employers and education providers to good practice guidance on inclusive training and recruitment strategies.
- We will support and encourage education providers to ensure their learning and development is endorsed to cover all or part of the Working Inclusively – Working with Disabled People professional standard.

Further information

To learn more about the work of Activity Alliance, Disability Sport Northern Ireland, Scottish Disability Sport, Disability Sport Wales and CIMSPA please visit:

- [Activity Alliance](#)
- [Disability Sport Northern Ireland](#)
- [Disability Sport Wales](#)
- [Scottish Disability Sport](#)
- [CIMSPA](#)

Supporting references.

- Activity Alliance – [Annual Disability and Activity Survey](#), June 2026
- Sport Wales – [Sport and Active Lifestyles: State of the Nation report](#), 2024-2025.
- Sport Wales – [School Sport Survey](#) (ongoing)



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