



POSITION STATEMENT

CIMSPA partnerships with sports governing bodies

Authored by: Colin Huffen, Associate Director of Standards and Regulation, CIMSPA

Approved by: UK Workforce Professional Development Board

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

© The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity

Purpose

This statement sets out CIMSPA's position on the sporting bodies it may partner with at this current time and the partnership types available.

The need for a position statement

The sport and physical activity sector is complex with many different organisations supporting participation across the UK. CIMSPA must therefore apply a clear, consistent approach to partnership eligibility.

CIMSPA is required to operate in line with key governance requirements:

- Our [Royal Charter and Statutes](#), as granted by the Privy Council.
- By the UK government as the named regulator for the sector in the [regulated professions register](#).
- Our [role as a charity](#), regulated by the Charity Commission.
- The [Code for Sports Governance](#) as a Sport England system partner.
- The relevant governance principles laid out in our partnerships with:
 - [Sport Northern Ireland](#)
 - [sportscotland](#)
 - Sport Wales

These governance responsibilities determine the types of organisations CIMSPA may partner with.

Sports governing body – definition

Throughout this document we will use the term sports governing body, this is the term CIMSPA uses to describe an organisation who is responsible for governing their sport. They can often also be called, for example:

- National governing bodies (NGBs)
- National governing bodies of sport
- Scottish governing body (SGBs)
- Scottish governing bodies of sport
- Welsh governing body of sport
- Northern Ireland governing body of sport

Sports governing body recognition is officially awarded by the four Home Country Sports Councils with UK Sport operating as a joint partner.

Details of the recognition processes are available here:

- [Sport England](#)
- [sportscotland](#)
- [Sport Wales](#)
- [Sport Northern Ireland](#)

To achieve formal national governing body (NGB) recognition an organisation must meet strict evaluation criteria shared by all the above UK sports councils.

CIMSPA partnership types and eligibility

The partnership types and who CIMSPA can partner with

CIMSPA's organisation partnership types:

- Employer Partner
- Training Provider Partner
- Higher Education Partner
- Further Education Partner
- Awarding Organisation Partner
- Sports Governing Body Partner

Each partnership category has defined entry criteria based on legal status and/or formal recognition.

Note: Sporting bodies are not eligible for CIMSPA further education or higher education partnerships.

Partnerships – sports governing bodies with sports council recognition

Sports governing bodies with sports council recognition may apply for the following partnership types:

- Sports Governing Body Partner
- Employer Partner
- Awarding Organisation Partner

Partnerships – organisations not recognised by sports councils

To partner with CIMSPA, an organisation not directly recognised by a sports council must have specific support from a sports council recognised body in line one of the three scenarios detailed below.

1. Where an organisation operates within the remit of a sports council recognised body with their official support. For example, it may deliver workforce training specific to a sport, such as coach education, CIMSPA will grant the relevant partnership type applying for with the additional submission of a letter of support from a named representative of that recognised body on headed paper.
2. Where an organisation is not recognised by the sports councils and works outside the remit of a sports council recognised body, it must secure support from the recognised body as part of its CIMSPA partnership application. This must be provided in a letter of support from a named representative on headed paper.
3. Where there is no sports council recognised body for that sport or activity, organisations can apply to be a training provider partner. Within that application there are due diligence checks conducted by CIMSPA on the organisation.

Non-recognition reasons

Where a sports council-recognised body declines to support a non-recognised organisation, it must provide a legitimate reason not to provide support for that organisation. Legitimate reasons could include, but are not limited to the following:

- The organisation is not working in line with the principles of good regulation, transparency, consistency, proportionality, targeting, accountability.
- The organisation is looking to compete rather than collaborate with the recognised sports governing body.
- The organisation is not protecting the public from harm.
- The organisation is not working to maintain confidence in the profession.
- The organisation may not be operating in line with the governing body's standards.

Further information

For questions about this position statement, or to learn more about the work of the Workforce Professional Development Board:

- [Sport and Physical Activity Sector Workforce Professional Development Board](#)
- [CIMSPA partnerships for organisations](#)
- [Contact us via CIMSPA](#)



Shaping a recognised, valued and inclusive sport and physical activity sector that everyone can be a part of.

www.cimspa.co.uk