



UK Deaf Sport strategic plan

2012 - 2017

Produced by
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 UK Deaf Sport (UKDS) is a national registered charity and a federation of many deaf sports organisations united by a commitment to support the cause of deaf people through sport.
- 1.2 We want this strategy to be read and understood by people throughout deaf and mainstream sport. It has been published by UKDS and we hope you will share our vision, enthusiasm and determination to make sport stronger for deaf people¹ throughout the UK.
- 1.3 This plan sets out ambitious goals and outlines the contribution we will make to achieving them. We cannot achieve them alone and so it reflects how we will work with national governing bodies of sport (NGBs), sport specific deaf associations, the home nations sports councils, the English Federation of Disability Sport, Scottish Disability Sport, Disability Sport Wales, Disability Sport Northern Ireland and the deaf community to achieve our aims.
- 1.4 We believe that sport can have a profound influence on the lives of deaf people. We know that rates of mental health illness, obesity and poor physical ill health are higher among the deaf community than the general population. We also know that sports participation is lowest among people who are deaf or hard of hearing – only 11.3% take part in sport once a week compared to 37.7% of non disabled adults. They are also more likely than any other group in society to believe they are going to do less activity in the next twelve months. Sport can have a positive impact on the well being of deaf people but many are currently missing out on its benefits.
- 1.5 There are certain key challenges facing us. The need for communication support has been seen by many sports organisers as a prohibitive cost and as a barrier to many deaf people who do not take part. We must find ways of overcoming this.
- 1.6 Sport brings challenge, inspiration, excitement and enjoyment to people of all ages and backgrounds, whether it is as player, coach, official or spectator. Britain has entered an exciting 'decade of sport' including the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, the 2013 Deaf Olympics, the 2014 Commonwealth Games, the 2015 Rugby World Cup and the 2019 Cricket World Cup. We have the chance to use the world's biggest sporting event to excite and enthuse a generation of children. We must secure a legacy from these events and build connections between them and deaf people to truly inspire a generation.

¹ UKDS uses the term 'deaf' to mean all types of deafness, including deaf-blind and deafened people.

2. How we have learnt

- 2.1 We have used the Culture and Sport Improvement Toolkit (CSIT) to help us to assess our strengths and weaknesses. We have also compared ourselves with other sports organisations that we consider to be the very best.
- 2.2 We have worked with our partners to discuss their plans for the future and how we can help them.
- 2.3 We have learnt from research data provided by Sport England's Active People survey and from other local partners.
- 2.4 We have asked people across deaf and mainstream sport in the UK about their thoughts and ideas. Over the last three months we have;
 - Directly asked over 100 individuals
 - Run a number sessions with the UKDS Board
 - Held a series of focus groups
 - Asked existing groups and committees for their suggestions
 - Asked children and young people for their views.

3. Our big ambition for deaf sport

Where we are heading (our vision)

Our vision is “more deaf people participating and reaching their full potential in sport”.

How we are going to get there (our mission)

Our mission is to “create a world leading system for deaf people to participate and succeed in sport”.

What we believe

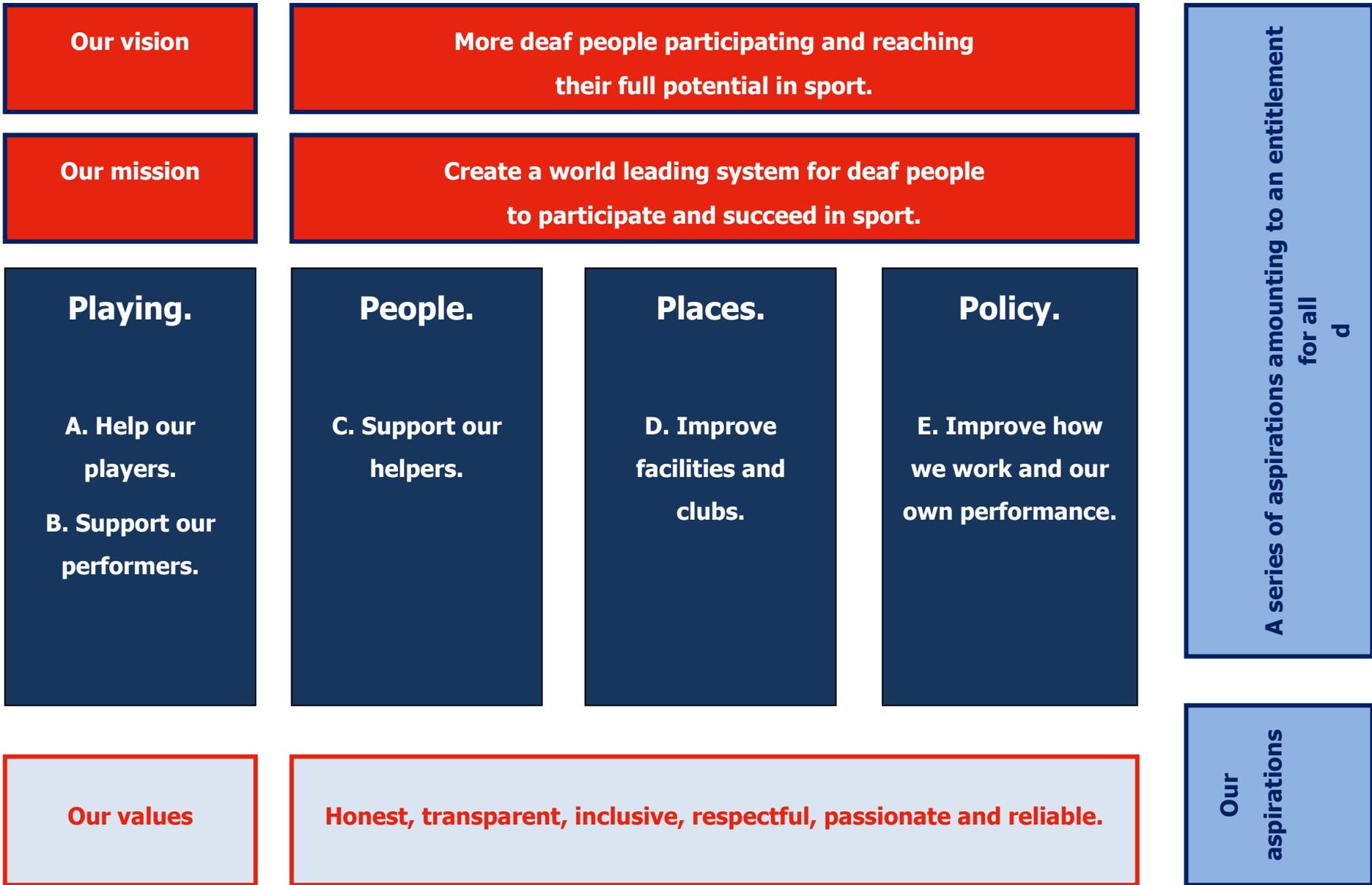
- 3.1 We believe deaf people should have the chance to enjoy a life in sport.
- 3.2 We believe deaf people are more likely to make sport part of their lives the earlier they get a taste for it. There are more than 45,000 deaf children in the UK, plus many more who experience temporary hearing loss. Physical education should motivate and prepare children to enjoy sport and because of its significance we must continue to improve the way it is taught in our schools.
- 3.3 Young people should have the chance to enjoy sport and to gain the ‘foundation’ skills that will enable them to enjoy and succeed in the sports of their choice. We need to devote more attention and effort to the formative years in a child’s sporting development. Success can often be traced back to early years.
- 3.4 If we are going to give deaf children the very best sporting chance, we must start by defining what **all** children and young people will have the chance to experience. This will focus our own efforts, and we hope those of our partners, on the most important things.
- 3.5 Children and young people will be helped to develop essential core movement skills, **aware** of the opportunities available to them, **positive** about sport and its benefits, **motivated** to try different sports and to stay involved, **informed** to make choices, and **confident** enough in their own ability to fulfil their potential.
- 3.6 This will lead to a **lifetime** of sport in a community sports system that provides clear choices, high quality clubs, door step clubs, facilities, coaching and competition.

3.7 More than 40% of over 50 year-olds have some form of hearing loss. We have a critical role in increasing participation amongst older people. The UK will be a place where deaf people of all ages make sport part of their lives. It is never too late to get involved and opportunities will exist for people to return to sport or try new activities later in life.

Our aspirations

3.8 We want the UK to be the very best place to be involved in sport. We also want to change perceptions about deaf people. We achieve more when we work together and so, with our partners, we will work towards the following aspirations;

- All deaf children aged 5-16 will do two hours PE per week in schools
- All deaf children will learn to swim and gain fundamental movement skills
- All deaf children will have the chance to compete in school sport, whatever their ability
- Advice and guidance will be readily available for parents of deaf children
- There will be a choice of sports clubs and leisure facilities in every local area where deaf people are welcomed and catered for
- Deaf people will have the chance to receive high quality coaching and instruction
- Deaf people will have the chance to compete at national, European and world level events
- Deaf people will have the chance to play sport in mainstream settings and/or with their peers in the deaf community
- Deaf people will have the chance to stay active and healthy in later life and there will be 'return to sport' programmes and veterans sport for deaf adults in every district
- Deaf people will have the chance to take part in a wide range of education and training programmes
- Deaf people will have chances to volunteer and to work professionally within the sports sector
- There will be clear, accurate, easy to find, up to date and information and advice on all aspects of sport that deaf people can understand
- Deaf people will have the chance to help shape how sport is run in their local area
- The sporting achievements of deaf people will be recognised and celebrated.



4. This is what we are going to do

Playing

A Our players

- 4.1 Our focus will be on improving the sports system for deaf people throughout the UK but systems alone do not make the difference. Sporting success of all kinds begins and ends with people.
- 4.2 Of course, most people are involved in sport as a player or competitor. Many people's experience of PE at school determines whether they take up sport in the first place. There is still more to do to improve the quality of PE for more young people. To keep them involved, sport must be fun and positive.
- 4.3 Deaf people want to play sport for many different reasons. We must create ways for deaf people to try and enjoy sports of their choice at the level they feel comfortable with. We will help people of all ages to enjoy the sports of their choice and improve what is on offer to them.

Ref	Objective
A1	Improve the quality of PE and school sport for deaf children
A2	Increase the range of sports opportunities in local communities for deaf people
A3	Support deaf sports organisations to grow their sport
A4	Help national governing bodies to make participation programmes more inclusive

B Our performers

- 4.4 Talented people need help to reach their potential. UK Deaf Sport provides support to young athletes and our funding has helped many over the years to achieve their goals. The Deaflympics has been the pinnacle of deaf sport and has offered our athletes to

represent their country and compete with the best in the world. It is important our athletes have the chance to excel.

Ref	Objective
B1	Develop a robust system that will identify more deaf people with the talent to perform at national and international level
B2	Support our athletes to excel in their chosen sport and to reach their full potential
B3	Support our teams to take part in international competition
B4	Support the hosting of events at national and international level

People

C Our helpers

4.5 Whether it is as coach, official, or club treasurer, sport relies on its loyal army of volunteers and its much smaller number of professionals. Each of these groups needs specific help.

4.6 Sport makes up about 22% of all volunteering in the UK. We need this skilled and motivated 'workforce' to help others to enjoy sport. Many people's experience of sport is shaped by their sports coach and we recognise the importance of having highly qualified and skilled coaches available to guide and support them. We need more and we need more of them to be active. We also need many more to understand the needs of deaf people. We need more deaf people to become sports leaders and coaches.

Ref	Objective
C1	Recruit more people to volunteer in deaf sport and increase the contribution they make
C2	Develop more coaches and better coaching among the deaf community
C3	Encourage more sports coaches to be aware of the needs of deaf participants and to be able to cater for them
C4	Improve the knowledge and skills of professional staff in meeting the needs of the deaf community

Places

D Improve facilities and clubs

- 4.7 We need to improve the places where sport is played and for the most part this is in amateur sport clubs and local authority leisure facilities.
- 4.8 Over 10 million adults play sport in amateur clubs in England alone, many of which are at the heart of their neighbourhoods. We need sports clubs across the UK to be better informed and better equipped to meet the needs of deaf people.
- 4.9 We must also influence the managers and operators of sports and leisure facilities to adapt their provision to meet the needs of deaf people. Too many people think of accessibility in purely physical terms (such as ramps and accessible toilets) but far too few are providing necessary communication support.

Ref	Objective
D1	Support more voluntary sports clubs to meet the needs of deaf people
D2	Encourage more sport and leisure facilities to be truly inclusive

Policy

E. Improve how we work and our own performance

- 4.10 In order to fulfil the vision and reach the objectives in this strategy we must improve the way deaf sport is run and the way we do business. Everyone involved in developing sport must work better together. We must become a more effective organisation.
- 4.11 Our key partners are NGBs and much of our work will continue to be with them. In England, their Whole Sport Plans (funded by Sport England) set out what they intend to achieve. We will provide a range of services for NGBs to help them reach and include more deaf people.

- 4.12 Nothing in this strategy will be achieved in isolation. We also value the role and work of County Sport Partnerships in England and local authorities across the UK. We will do our best to help maximise the contribution they make to deaf sport.
- 4.13 The incredible year of sport we enjoyed in 2012 can act as a catalyst for attracting greater commercial interest in sport at all levels. We must increase investment into sport but also invest *our* time and money in the people and areas that need it most, where it will have the greatest impact. We must stimulate innovation, creativity and enterprise across deaf sport.
- 4.14 Information and local 'market intelligence' will be an essential part of future strategies, decisions and action. All partners involved in sport need to collect and gather the right evidence to highlight the outcomes that are being achieved. In particular we need a planned and shared approach to using research. In turn we must use this to influence key decision makers to change how deaf sport is sometimes misunderstood and undervalued. People in deaf sport feel that it does not get the credit or funding it deserves.
- 4.15 We must increase our influence. Deaf sport needs leadership and needs us to represent its interests clearly and strongly.
- 4.16 We will focus on building our partnerships, improving our marketing and communication, improving our systems, developing our research and measurement, and increasing the resources at our disposal. This will help us to highlight the true value of deaf sport.

Ref	Objective
E1	Improve our governance, management and administration
E2	Build more effective partnerships across the sporting community with deaf sports associations, NGBs, home nations sports councils, local authorities and County Sport Partnerships
E3	Maximise funding and resources for the deaf sports network
E4	Improve marketing and communication and increase public awareness of deaf sport opportunities
E5	Gather better insight to improve the effectiveness of deaf sport
E6	Champion the importance of sport within the deaf community and with decision makers in sport and politics at national and international level

5. The next steps

- 5.1 This strategy will only help to make a lasting difference if it is implemented. Actions speak louder than words.
- 5.2 We are reorganising UK Deaf Sport so that we can deliver this strategy. We will commit to making sure we reach our goals but this will depend on how we can increase our resources. We recognise we will have to become more efficient and more entrepreneurial and raise more money to help our work.
- 5.3 More detailed actions plans will be drawn together with our partners across sport. Each of the objectives set out in this plan will have specific actions drawn up. This will guide our work. Like all strategies, it will be vital to monitor our progress and review our plans.
- 5.4 This strategy should influence the plans of our partners and we hope that you will use it to plan your work in future. We hope to see sport specific plans across the country that contribute to our ambitions for deaf sport. The development of deaf sport has been fragmented and we hope this strategy and its delivery plans will lead to clarity of purpose, better co-ordination and greater accountability for outcomes. We will work together with you to make sure we achieve our vision together.