



Monaghan and Cavan Sports Partnership

Disability Sports Strategy

2011-2013



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Boccia League
Foreword

This 3 year strategic plan has its origin and is a result of a Department of Community Rural and Gaeltach affairs grant scheme accessed through Pobal from funding made available through the dormant account fund. Its aim was to provide a national network of sports inclusion development officers to work in conjunction with local sports partnerships.

The plan builds on the awareness and developments already achieved. It is with great pleasure that I recommend this strategy as an important process of creating an understanding that sport is for all and that community facilities should, in so far as possible be inclusive.

It is important to recognize the work of those involved in this inter-county committee. Nadine Mc Cormilla, coordinator Cavan Sports Partnership, Michelle Murphy, coordinator Monaghan Sports Partnership, the respective County Councils, Disability Service providers, members of the disabled community and the Health Service Executive. The dedicated work of the steering committee for the Sports Inclusion Development Officer. Finally, I welcome Stephen Flynn to the post of Sports Inclusion Officer Cavan/ Monaghan and acknowledge the skilful, ground building work of Jennifer Hill and Lisa Kelly our first Sports Inclusion Officers.



Malachy Marron
Chairperson Inter County Committee

As the Sports Inclusion and Disability Officer for Monaghan and Cavan I am delighted to present this our first Strategic Plan specifically for Inclusion and Disability Sport in the region. This Strategic Plan takes both counties closer to their goals of counties that are more inclusive and where sport can be enjoyed by all. This Strategic plan 2011-2013 is a clear indication of both counties commitment to the inclusion of people with a disability in physical activity and sport.

The plan aims to build on the work that was completed over the past two year's of the project where great strides have been made in promoting physical activity and sport for people with disabilities.

I would like to commend the work carried out by my predecessors, Jennifer Hill and Lisa Kelly in rolling out and delivering the programmes that have ignited people's interest in the SIDO programme. To the Inter County committee who guide the work of the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer. To all the lead and partnership agencies who support the SIDO Programme and its work. I would like also to acknowledge the support received nationally from the CARA centre and the Irish Sports Council.



Stephen Flynn
Sports Inclusion Disability Officer

On behalf of Monaghan Sports Partnership I am delighted to launch the Disability Sports Strategy 2011-2013. The strategy represents an important step forward in

advancement and development of disability sport in the region. The strategy takes on important recommendations from the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer programme Review 2008-2010 and also views and opinions of key stakeholders in the disabled community.

We have developed a positive relationship with our neighboring Sports Partnership in Cavan and have worked hard together to use the resources we have to best effect. I would especially like to thank; Monaghan County Council for its support, the Sports Partnership board members for supporting the introduction of this programme , the Inter-county committee members who harmoniously oversee the programme, our colleagues in Cavan Sports Partnership and of course to the Sports Inclusion Development Officers, past and present for their infectious appetite for their work.

Michelle Murphy
Sports Coordinator, Monaghan Sports Partnership



As coordinator of the Cavan Sports partnership I am delighted to present the first strategic plan for Disability Sport in the Cavan and Monaghan Region.

The strategic plan is the result on extensive consultation with all the relative stakeholders involved in the disability sector. This plan has been formed using ideas and suggestions from all key stakeholders and also recommendations from the recent review document that reviewed progress of the SIDO Programme over the past two years 2008-2010.

The Cavan and Monaghan Sports Partnerships have enjoyed a healthy working relationship over the past number of years and continue to run successful projects in both counties. The SIDO Programme has been delivered under unique circumstances and has been a major success for both Sports Partnerships. The programme has affected the lives of many living in the Cavan and Monaghan Area and its affects have been positive and long lasting.

I would like to thank all our stakeholders and partners for their support of the programme in the past and look forward to strengthening the working relationships in the future.

Nadine McCormilla
Sports Coordinator, Cavan Sports Partnership



Executive Summary

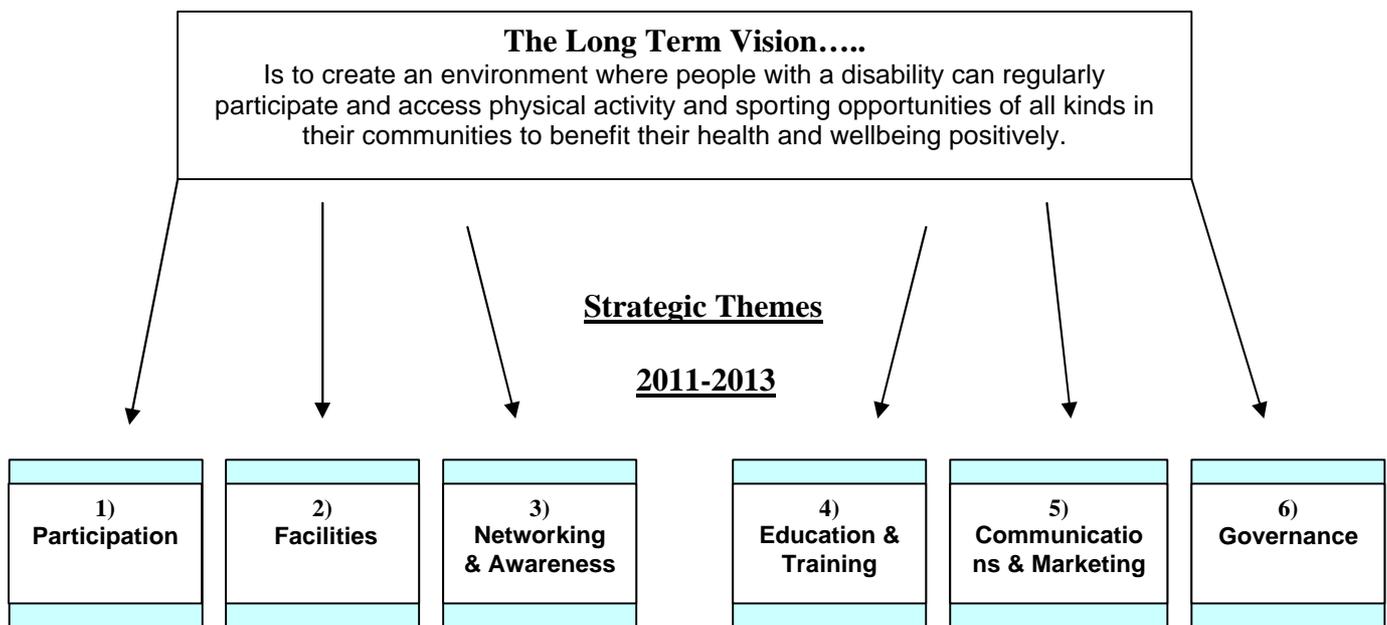
It is widely accepted that physical activity has a strong positive influence on a person's wellbeing and overall health. Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require energy expenditure (*WHO 2010*). Regular physical activity has significant health benefits and can reduce risk of developing certain chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis and diabetes. Physical activity and sport have been found to be a major factor in reducing the risk of people developing mental ill health issues and can reduce the symptoms and depression and anxiety (*Get Ireland Active 2009*).

In the Monaghan and Cavan there are 10,356 people living with a disability, this accounts for about 9% of the total population (*Census 2006*). These disabilities vary from physical and sensory to learning and emotional/ psychological.

People with a disability are found to participate less in sport than a person who does not have a disability. There may be many reasons why there is a low level of participation in sport and physical activity such as access, willingness, type of disability, support structures and attitudes. The role of the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer is to ensure that these barriers can be overcome and proper structures and support networks are set up so that participation in sport can become a part of everyday life in the community.

The strategic plan for the future comes in the wake of the review of the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer Programme over the last two years. The report provided a chance to recap on the work done over the two year period since its inception and an opportunity to gain some feedback from service users, coaches and participants in the programme. The report was written in consultation with all the relevant stakeholders involved and each had a chance to input their knowledge in the research gathering and the compilation of the report. The report highlighted recommendations that have been incorporated into the new plan for 2010-2013.

This plan outlines the aims and objectives, the actions, process's and the key partners and stakeholders needed to progress. The strategic plan will give the SIDO direction and goals to work towards an overall vision for the region. The Sports Inclusion Inter County Committee will assist and guide the role of the SIDO and will oversee the implementation of the plan.



Aims 2010-2013

1. To sustain and increase overall participation in sport among people with a disability.
2. To highlight the need for accessibility or services and amenities in the region that may facilitate physical activity and sporting opportunities.
3. To raise awareness of the benefits of sport and physical activity for people with a disability.
4. To provide training opportunities to people who work in the area of disability.
5. To maximise opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport and physical activity programmes and to give widespread recognition of the work that is being carried out.
6. To support the development of sport for people with a disability in Monaghan and Cavan.

Anticipated Outcomes

1. Increased Participation throughout the region.
2. Increased opportunities for people to access a service and participate in physical activity and sport.
3. Better awareness of the importance of the role of physical activity in the lives of people with a disability.
4. Greater knowledge and understanding about sports specific coaching and training with leaders of disability groups.
5. More recognition of programmes and work been carried out and improved lines of communications.
6. Evaluation of programmes, improved quality of delivery and cost effectiveness.

Background

The Irish Sports Council (ISC) was established in 1999 after the Irish Sports Council Act was passed. The Irish Sports Council was designed to be the statutory body for the promotion and development of sport at all levels in Ireland. The Council deals with both competitive and recreational sports.

In 2006, The Irish Sports Council with the Local Sports Partnerships highlighted the need for the establishment and creation of a full time position for a dedicated Sports Inclusion Disability officer. In 2008 the Monaghan and Cavan Sports Partnership's together with their partner agencies and stakeholders combined their efforts to apply for funding through Pobal (through the Department of Health and Children) for funding from the Dormant Accounts fund. The funding was used for the provision of a Sports Inclusion Disability Officer (SIDO) to work in conjunction with the Local Sport Partnerships (LSP'S). The main aim of the programme from the outset was to help address the inequalities in opportunities for people with a disability to participate in sport and physical activity. An inter county committee was established to support and guide the work of the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer. The committee was comprised of representatives of the disabled community, service providers and service users, members from each county council, the Coordinators from each Local Sport Partnership and a member of the HSE. The CARA Centre based in IT Tralee is a national resource used to support the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer. CARA is an internationally renowned centre for leadership in the development of sport, physical activity and physical education for people with a disability.



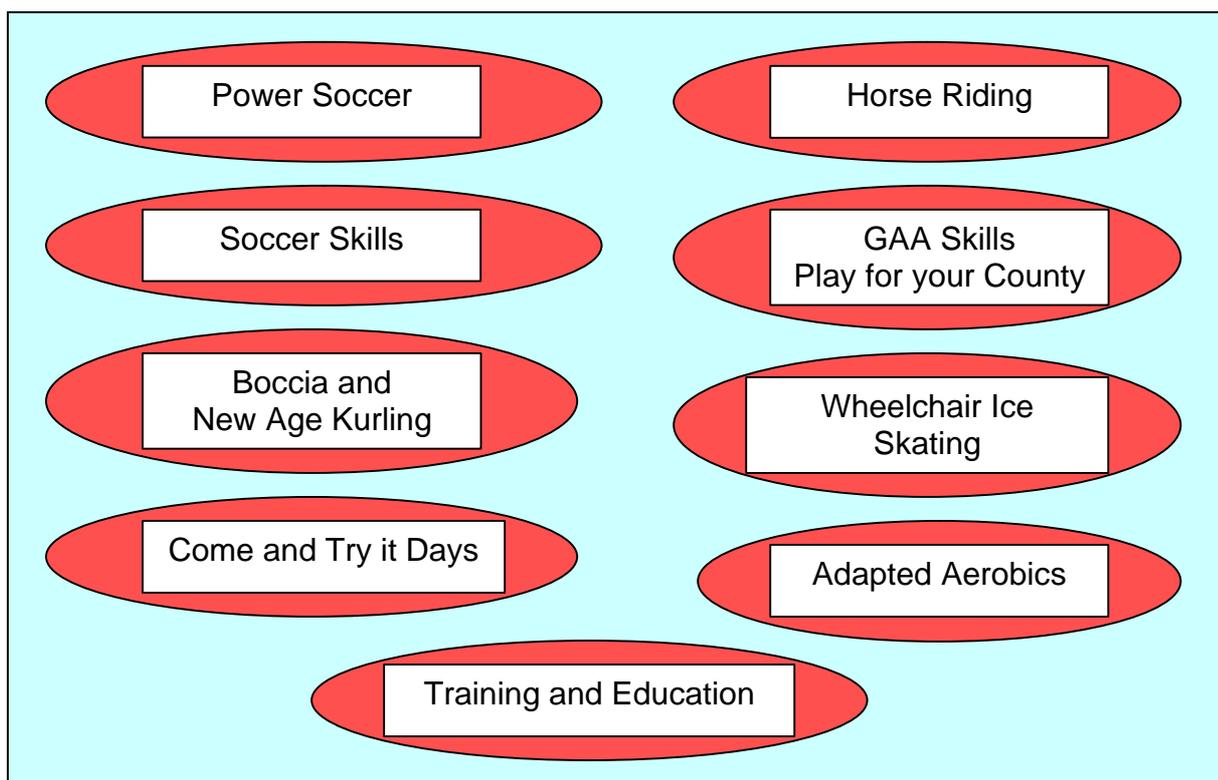
Soccer Skills

The Monaghan and Cavan Sports Partnerships share a unique working relationship which has proved successful throughout the project. The joint ownership of the SIDO programme has really benefited people in both counties and has created opportunities and experiences for people with a disability that otherwise would not have being possible. Monaghan and Cavan have outlined in their respective strategic plans the role for disability sport within the community and nationally.

They also highlight that equal access and social inclusion are some of the main guiding principles in the work of the Local Sports Partnerships.

In the period 2008-2010 a number of programmes have been delivered and the establishment of new working partnerships with disability groups, local sports clubs, National Governing Bodies (NGB's) and voluntary groups. Together with these partner group's there has been a strong positive response to all programmes with over 500 different individuals taking part in the events which is 5% of the total disability population of the Monaghan and Cavan. This is good as national averages say that only 2% of people with disabilities regularly take part in physical activity (NDA 2006).

Some programmes include the Come and Try It sports days, Soccer Skills, GAA Skills/ Come and Play for your County, Powerchair Football, Horse Riding, Boccia, New Age Kurling, Adapted Aerobics. There also has been many disability awareness courses delivered through the schools setting with the Transition year students in local post primary school's and also in the community with leisure centres and with clubs. There has been ASA Swimmers Helper's courses delivered which is a Swim Ireland accredited course. Many of the disability day services and special schools have received additional training which has enhanced their service quality and highlighted the importance of physical activity and sport.



This diagram 1.0 shows the different events that have taken place in both counties.

In the services there has been an incentive to try new sports and activities such as bowling, outdoor pursuits, road bowls, swimming, meet and train, yoga and cycling. All of these activities have been very popular with the all participants and should be encouraged and continued.

Disability in Monaghan and Cavan.

Disability is an umbrella term used to describe impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Disability is a complex phenomenon reflecting an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which he or she lives (WHO 2010).

Disability is defined as:

"A substantial restriction in the capacity of the person to carry out a profession business or occupation in the state or to participate in social or cultural life in the state by reason of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or intellectual impairment."

(National Disability Act 2005)

Or

"Is a difficulty in functioning at the body, persons, or social levels, in one or more life domains, as experienced by an individual with a health condition in interaction with contextual factors."

(WHO 2010)

Persons that have a disability include those with a long term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairment. These factors when interacted with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society.

According to the last Census 2006, the disabled population in the Monaghan and Cavan region stood at 10,356. This figure represents 8.7% of the total population of the Cavan and Monaghan area. The National figures tell us that the total population of people with disabilities in Ireland is 9.3%. This translates that there are around 393,800 people with a disability in the Republic of Ireland.

Persons with a Disability in the Monaghan and Cavan Region (2006)

Total population	120,000
Total Population with Disability	10,356
Percentage of Population	8.7



Come and Play for your county

Disability is broken down into four main sub groups: Physical Disability, Sensory Disability, Learning Disability and Emotional or Psychological Disability. Under these main headings there is a further breakdown of the different condition and impairments. The National Disability Survey conducted from data received in the Census 2006 outlined that there were 9 categories in which disability was divided. 48% of all reporting a disability were male and 52% were female. Of all the persons reporting a disability 24% reported having the highest severity which prevented them from doing every day activities.

Physical Activity and Disability

Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require energy expenditure (*WHO 20010*). Physical activity has been found to have a strong positive relationship with health and wellbeing. Regular physical activity has been found to reduce many of the risk factors associated with chronic diseases. Physical activity has numerous beneficial physiologic and psychological effects. The most widely appreciated are the effects on the cardiovascular and muscular-skeletal, metabolic, endocrine and immune systems (*US Department of Health and Human Services 1996*). Physical activity is found to reduce risk of developing mental illness and was found to relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety (*WHO 2006*).

Sport and planned exercise is a sub section of physical activity. Sport is an activity that involves physical exertion and skill in which an individual or teams compete with and against others for entertainment (*Oxford Dictionary 2010*). Sport is an organised, recreational, competitive, entertaining and skilful physical activity requiring commitment, strategy and fair play. The physical activity involves the movement of people, animals and or a variety of objects such as balls, machines or equipment.



Tanagh Outdoor Pursuits

Sport is important for people with disabilities not just for the obvious psychological benefits but because of the psychological and social element to the activities. Physical activity and creating opportunities where people with disabilities can practice and participate in physical activity be it, daily activities, planned exercise, organised sports competitive or recreational, or physical education is of up-most importance to the Sports Inclusion Disability Programme. Sport and physical activity can boost an individual's confidence and have a positive effect on their general behaviour and temperament.

The Irish Sports Council (ISC) recently published a report on the economic benefit of sport. The report highlighted the relevance and importance of physical activity and sport to the country and how efficient an investment in sport can be. It highlighted the positive long lasting effects it can have especially to the lives of the disabled in the workforce and of those who may wish to join the workforce. Physical activity and sport has been proven to increase concentration, improve productivity, relive stress and symptoms of stress and anxiety as well as decrease the risk factors for chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease (*ISC 2010*).

The Health Service Executive (HSE) Get Ireland Active publication which defined the physical activity level recommendations found that 60% of Irish adults do not participate in physical activity that will benefit their health. This figure can be significantly less within the disabled population sinking to as low as 2%. The World Health Organisation (*WHO 2006*) state that people with a disability partake in sport far less than their non disabled counterparts.



Power Soccer

The structure of sport in Ireland resembles the majority of European countries and some Asian countries also. The structures in most cases resemble a pyramid with the grass roots at the bottom or foundation of the pyramid supporting it. At the apex or top of this pyramid are the elite athletes and the national and international governing bodies that represent their code (*NDA 2006*). The clubs at the foundation of the pyramid offer the possibility of people to participate and enjoy sport locally, facilitating the idea for sport for all. Despite this being the case there are still very low numbers of the disabled community involved or members of mainstream clubs and who actually regularly participate in club events.



GAA Skills

Barriers to Participation

The barriers that may hinder a person with disability taking part in regular physical activity and sport are varied and far reaching. Some barriers are in direct control and slight changes can overcome these obstacles, while others are out of the direct control of the individual or group. These barriers may be broken down or overcome by developing working relationship with the gatekeepers or decision makers with the power to change the circumstances that deny people with a disability the chance to access physical activity and sporting opportunities.

From conducting our own research throughout the programme over the past two years we found that there are two main types of barriers to participation: there are external barriers and there are internal barriers.

External Barriers

The external barriers are diverse and can include anything from attitudes to access. They are usually outside the person's direct control and can be hard to overcome.

Transportation is a major issue, seeing that the majority of people with a disability do not own their own means of transportation they are dependant on services and transport systems. In the rural area of Cavan and Monaghan there is a limited amount of public transport systems available for use to the general public and then some may not be accessible to some people with a disability. The National Disability Authority identified that proper **support structures** are essential if people are to participate or continue to participate in physical activity.

Information and communication can be a barrier and there should be careful consideration done when choosing a media source or promotional tool with respect to the audience you wish to target. Also there should be better coverage and recognition of disability sport in the media at local, regional or national level.

The **access** to facilities and amenities are often not disability friendly especially if the buildings or structures have been inherited from a different generation. In many cases staff in the facilities can feel uncomfortable dealing with a disabled customer and this can lead to an unwelcoming feeling. Sports clubs are sometimes **unaware** of the interest in their sport by people with a disability and can be non inclusive. Sports clubs often feel that their games cannot be adapted and that the focus

is too much on the competitive side and the training of excellence. This **attitude** is usually brought about because a lack of knowledge and awareness around disability sport. Most clubs are very accommodating and willing to joint programmes and becoming more inclusive given the right information and support.

The lack of experienced leaders and lack of training can sometimes prevent people with a disability from taking part in sport as their leaders do not realise the benefit of physical activity or the type of physical activity that can benefit their clients the most.

The lack **of financial support** for clubs and organisations to run and maintain sports programmes. Adapted equipment, coaching, facility hire and transport can all be very expensive when delivering a programme.

The absence of a **Sports Inclusion Disability Officer** can greatly hinder the opportunities that people with a disability have to take part in physical activity and sport. The Monaghan and Cavan area has benefited because of the creation of the position and has created many opportunities for people to access physical activity and sporting opportunities

Internal Barriers

The internal barriers that may effect participation are relative to the individual. These include **self confidence, fear, financial constraints, awareness and education, perception of ability** and **poor** health. These factors can influence participation and can severely restrict people from taking part in physical activity and sport.

Self Confidence can act as a barrier as many people may feel embarrassed to be involved in sport in public especially if it is new to them. People may not have the confidence to approach clubs or facilities to ask can they participate. People could also be **fearful** of getting hurt or injured playing a sport or doing physical activity that may take them out of their comfort zone.

Financial constraints may stop them from participating as sometimes adapted equipment is very expensive and also it does cost money to use facilities and to get transport, this can be a huge burden on the individual especially if they are not working and are not earning an income.

Awareness and education may be a issue where people do not realise the importance of regular physical activity in their daily lives and the role sport can play in improving their quality of life. They may also not be able to access information about different events that are ongoing. They may feel that their **level of ability** is not at an adequate level to participate; this may also arise due to people participating in sports or physical activity that does not suit the abilities.

Variety in sporting programmes is necessary for people to find what sports suit them most and the ones they will get most benefit from.

Poor health or a **medical condition** may stop some people with a disability from participating and this has to be monitored carefully and this may rule many people out of certain activity programmes.

“What would life be like if we never had the courage to try anything?”

Vincent Van Gogh

Action Plan

Monaghan and Cavan Sports Partnership together with its partner agencies and under the guidance of the Inter County committee for Sports Inclusion and Disability have established a three year plan to guide the work of the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer. The plan aims to tackle many of the barriers that prevent people with a disability from participating in sport and regular physical activity. The plan also highlights the need not just for greater participation but to ensure that a quality experience is had by all who participate in the programmes. There is also emphasis on participants gaining knowledge and skills that will lead to long term health protective behaviours that will benefit themselves and others.

The vision for Disability Sport in Monaghan and Cavan:

“Is to create an environment where people with a disability can regularly participate and access physical activity and sporting opportunities of all kinds in their communities to benefit their health and wellbeing positively.”

Our Role:

This Strategic plan is a statement of intent and a commitment to achieve the vision set out above.

The Sports Partnerships key roles are to:

- To promote physical activity and sport in the disabled community to help improve their quality of life and their wellbeing.
- To increase the knowledge and awareness of disability and disability sport in the Region.
- To support the efforts of clubs, societies and organisations who wish to enhance the lives of people with a disability through sport.

The Strategic plan outlines actions that can be taken in the following three years to improve the current structures in place. The six main themes identified are as follows:

Theme 1: Participation

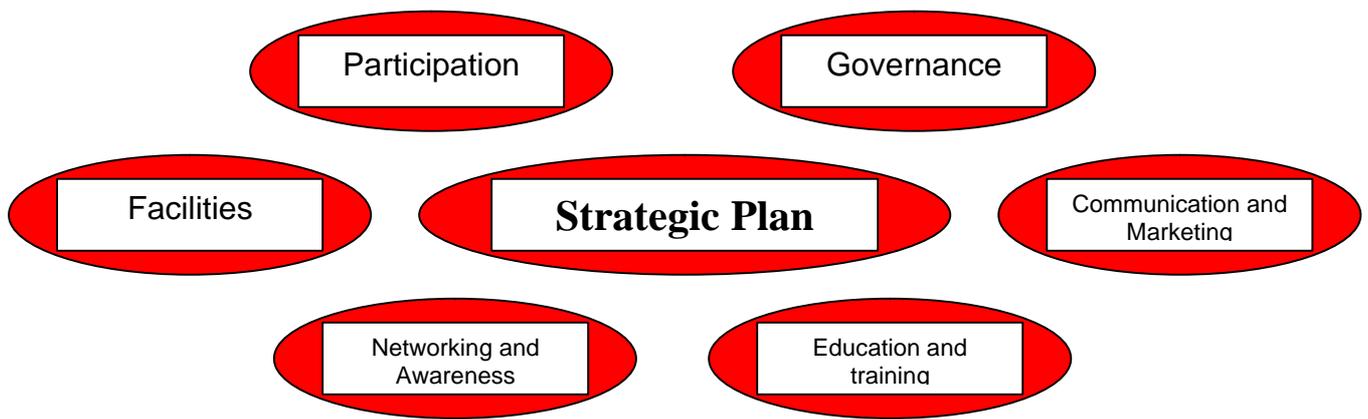
Theme 2: Facilities

Theme 3: Networking and Awareness

Theme 4: Education and Training

Theme 5: Communication and Marketing

Theme 6: Governance



Theme 1: Participation

Objective:

To increase and sustain overall participation levels in sport for people with a disability.

Actions:

- To run a programme of "Taster Days" i.e. Come & Try It Days.
- To introduce new sports to people with a disability.
- To develop and support a programme of activities to increase physical activity participation rates among people with a disability.
- To develop sporting clubs for people with a disability.
- To build on existing successful programmes and projects to integrate sustainability and increase numbers.

Partner Agencies:

Health Service Executive

CARA

Irish Sports Council

National Governing Bodies of Sport

Disability Service Providers

Local Sport Partnership

Monaghan County Council

Cavan County Council

Theme 2: Facilities

Objective:

To highlight the need for accessible sports and leisure facilities in the region.

Actions:

- Provide support and advice to existing or potential sports/ leisure facilities on accessibility issues for people with a disability.
- Establish a baseline data on the provision of accessibility in existing sports clubs/facilities.
- To ensure that disability is on the agenda in relation to future facility development.

Partner Agencies:

Access officers

National Governing Bodies of Sport

CARA

Irish Sports Council

Disability Service providers

Monaghan County Council

Cavan County Council

Theme 3: Networking and Awareness

Objectives:

To raise awareness of the benefits of sport and physical activity for people with a disability.

To increase awareness of the work on Monaghan and Cavan Sports Partnerships Sport Inclusion Development Programme.

To develop a disability sports forum.

Actions:

- To deliver activity workshops on the importance of physical activity.
- To highlight the need for inclusiveness in sport and physical activity for people with a disability.
- Establish and maintain links with all NGB's of sport, and disability organisations highlighting the work of the sports inclusion development officer.
- To highlight the work of the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer Programme in the Cavan and Monaghan Sports Partnership Newsletter.
- To highlight the work of the Sports Inclusion Disability Officer programme through the CARA centre.
- To develop relationships with disability groups, to put sport and physical activity on the agenda.
- Develop links with all disability groups/ organisations.
- To establish and maintain links with Local Sports Partnerships and NGB's.
- To engage with those who are not engaged with a disability service.
- To ensure inclusiveness between all local sporting clubs, RDO's and disability groups.

Partner Agencies:

Cavan Sports Partnership

CARA

Health Service Executive

Disability Service Providers

Monaghan Sports Partnership

National Governing Bodies

Local Media

Theme 4: Education and Training

Objectives:

To provide training opportunities to people who work in the disability sector.

To provide training to sports clubs and leisure facilities on including people with a disability.

To support disability sports development in neighbouring sports partnerships that do not have a SIDO.

Actions:

- To provide sports specific coaching/ training to service providers for people with a disability.
- To empower service providers on the skills necessary to implement an activity programme in their daily service.
- To deliver adapted ISC programmes.
- To deliver disability awareness training to sports clubs and leisure centres on becoming more inclusive of people with a disability.
- To assist any sporting club/ leisure facility on a programme of activity for people with a disability.
- To provide support and opportunities for participation in SIDO programme for counties that currently do not have a SIDO in place.

Partner Agencies:

Cavan Sports Partnership

National Governing Bodies

Coaching Ireland

Irish Sports Council

Leitrim Sports Partnership

Monaghan Sports Partnership

CARA

Sport/ leisure facilities

Louth Sports Partnership

Disability Service Providers

Theme 5: Communications and Marketing

Objectives:

To maximise opportunities for people with a disability to participate in sport and physical activity programmes through effective communications and marketing.

Actions:

- To ensure the Cavan and Monaghan Sports Inclusion Programme has a means of communication which is accessible to all.
- To develop a disability section under the CSP and MSP website.
- Highlight the current programmes/initiatives for people with a disability through the CSP and MSP newsletter.
- Develop a directory of local groups/organisations that cater for people with a disability and also individuals with a disability.
- Use local and national and media to highlight the work of the SIDO Programme.

Partner Agencies:

Cavan Sports Partnership

Monaghan Sports Partnership

Disability Service Providers

CARA

Local Media

Monaghan County Council

Cavan County Council

Theme 6: Governance

Objectives:

To support the development of sport for people with a disability in Cavan and Monaghan.

To develop a steering group comprising or representatives from statutory, voluntary, community and sporting sectors in Cavan and Monaghan to guide the work of the SIDO programme.

To deliver quality services and programmes.

Monitor the work of the Sports Inclusion Development Programme.
Continue the Training and Development of the SIDO Programme

Actions:

- To implement an agreed strategy for the promotion of physical activity and sport among people with a disability.
- Annual monitoring and evaluation of strategic plan.
- To provide effective leadership and management of the disability section of CSP and MSP.
- To highlight and support the needs of people with a disability in both counties.
- To strive to achieve inclusiveness in sport for all in Cavan and Monaghan.
- To report quarterly to the steering group on the work of the SIDO programme.
- To secure additional funding to enhance the level and quality of services and programmes provided by the sports inclusion development programme.
- To source of additional funding for continuation of the SIDO Programme.
- To monitor and evaluate the work of the SIDO Programme through the National Evaluation and Monitoring tool SPEAK.
- To keep up to date with current research and best practice in relation to sport, disability and APA.

Partner Agencies:

Cavan Sports Partnership

Monaghan Sports Partnership

Irish Sports Council

National Governing Bodies

Disability Service Providers

Cavan County Council

Monaghan County Council

Health Service Executive

CARA

Terms abbreviations used in document.

SIDO – Sports Inclusion Disability Officer

CSP – Cavan Sports partnership

ISC – Irish Sports Council

IWA- Irish Wheelchair Association

NGB- National Governing Bodies

MCC- Monaghan County Council

APA- Adapted Physical Activity

WHO- World Health Organisation

LSP- Local Sports Partnership

MSP –Monaghan Sports Partnership

HSE – Health Service Executive

DSP- Disability Service Provider

RDO- Regional Development Officers

CCC- Cavan County Council

NDA- National Disability Authority

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