

Special Olympics Great Britain: Empowering people with intellectual disability |

Special Olympics GB (SOGB) is a charity established in 1978 as part of the global Special Olympics Movement, which uses sport as a tool to help improve the lives of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. We are the largest provider of a year-round, all ability disability sports programme in Great Britain.

Participating in sports helps people with intellectual disability become more confident, active citizens and learn important physical and emotional life skills. For our athletes, excellence is personal achievement, a reflection of reaching one's maximum potential – it is a goal to which everyone can aspire. However, SOGB is about more than just sport – we run education, early intervention activity training and health screening programmes to create more inclusive communities and improve general health and wellbeing of our athletes.

We've been established for nearly 40 years and through 140 local Special Olympics programmes across Great Britain we currently support & deliver;

- ✓ We support over **10,000 athletes** with intellectual (learning) disabilities on a continued basis.
- ✓ We offer a year-round programme in **28 sports** (summer and winter)
- ✓ Our local programmes deliver approximately **27,000 regular sports coaching sessions** of at least 1 hour each
- ✓ There is an average of **100 all ability, inclusive sports competitions** annually.
- ✓ Our competition pathways make us unique within the disability sports sector as we provide for athletes of all abilities opportunities to compete and progress at **local, regional, national and international levels.**
- ✓ Our extensive local programmes are led by over **4,000 dedicated volunteers** in a variety of sports coaching, administrative, event, logistic, fundraising and supporting roles.
- ✓ **Unified Sports®** programme where athletes with and without intellectual disabilities play together on the same team
- ✓ **Healthy Athletes Programme®** a series of health screenings and advice for athletes and their families
- ✓ Enhanced opportunities for our athletes within the **Athlete Leadership Programme®**: providing training in skills development and advocacy
- ✓ **Motor Activities Training Programme®** to offer sport to those with severe and profound multiple disabilities
- ✓ **Families Support Programme** giving advice & support to our family members
- ✓ **Young Athletes Programme®** for children aged 2-7

In recent years our key achievements have been:

- ✓ Increasing our footprint across the UK from 7000 athletes, 2,800 volunteers and 120 clubs in 2010 to 10,000 athletes, 4000 volunteers and 140 programme in 2016.



- ✓ Through a donation of £100,000 provided by the charity's Premier Partner National Grid, a National Development Fund was set up to support our clubs in providing grants to support their capacity and development. To date over 55 grants have been made impacting over 2000 athletes.
- ✓ Establishing a National Volunteer Office dedicated to the overall management and administration of the charity's volunteer programme including recruitment and training
- ✓ Receiving recognition from the British Government through a one off grant of £2 million to support the organisation's ambition to reach a new younger generation of athletes, coaches and volunteers.
- ✓ Created a partnership with Mencap –the English Learning Disability Alliance – working closely together to share skills, resources and together promote a strong and united voice for people with intellectual disabilities in sport.
- ✓ Introduced a coach education grant scheme to support volunteers wishing to undertake national governing body coaching courses.
- ✓ Appointed as Charity of CMS Cameron McKenna in 2012-2013 with the partnership raising over £200,000 to support the charity and its plans to establish its year-round programme across London by 2015.
- ✓ As official charity, recruiting 1650 runners to take part in the 2012 British 10k and raising £160,000
- ✓ Proudly supporting 60 torchbearers (athletes and coaches), 14 athlete games makers and 2 Paralympians to be part of the London 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games.
- ✓ Planning and organising the 2013 National Summer Games in-house for the first time in our 35 year history, allowing 1700 athletes to compete in 12 sports over 4 days and include 1,045 health screening checks
- ✓ Creating a legacy from the 2013 Games to re-establish coverage across the South West region from 2 clubs in 2012 to 8 clubs in 2016.
- ✓ Expanding Motor Activity Training Programme enabling meaningful engagement in sport for individuals with profound and multiple disabilities from 40 athletes in 2008 to 200 athletes in regular activities in 2016
- ✓ Launching a new and innovative Schools advocacy campaign – Play Unified - to promote inclusion in schools using sport as the platform. The programme will reach 18,000 young people with and without intellectual disability in its first 2 years (15-17)
- ✓ Announcing Sheffield as the host of the 2017 National Summer Games.

SOGB is helping foster a more inclusive society by highlighting ability over disability, allowing people with intellectual disability to realise their potential whilst also breaking down inaccurate and negative perceptions about intellectual disability amongst the wider community.

In the UK a person is deemed to have an intellectual disability if they have an IQ of below 75, with significant limitations in adaptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual, social, and practical adaptive skills. Intellectual disability is one of the most common forms of disability in the UK, with Down's Syndrome being one of the most well-known.

Our training, competition and selection criteria are fully inclusive, designed to allow anyone with an intellectual disability to participate regularly, from those with low motor abilities to highly skilled athletes, with the opportunity to take part in their chosen sport and represent their club, region or country in competition.

The need for Special Olympics GB

- There are 1.5 million children and adults with an intellectual disability in Great Britain
- It's the most common disability in the UK and is predicted to grow by 14% by 2021
- 200 babies are born with an intellectual disability each week¹
- It's caused by the way the brain develops, there are many different types and it's lifelong
- Children with an intellectual disability are socially excluded and 8 out of 10 are bullied²
- 1 in 2 families with an intellectually disabled child live in poverty
- 1 in 3 people with an intellectual disability are obese³

The critical issue we are solving is exclusion from life and sporting opportunities for all people with an intellectual disability. Over 80% of adults with Intellectual disabilities do not achieve recommended levels of physical activity and 1 in 3 are obese. They also face significant social exclusion, with 8 out of 10 children being bullied and 1 in 2 families living in poverty.

SOGB's programmes in partnership with private companies and other learning disability organisations aspire to give people with intellectual disability a better quality of life and ease financial pressures on families, and in turn reduce the burden on the state associated due to long-term chronic illness and unemployment.

We are currently seeking further investment over the next three years to help us significantly change the lives of people with intellectual disability in the UK.

With new investment SOGB would be able to broaden the reach and impact of our valuable programmes that:

- ✓ Empower people with intellectual disability to become more independent and integrated into society;
- ✓ Ensure people with intellectual disability develop skills vital to lead a happy and healthy life;
- ✓ Educate wider communities about intellectual disability, to breakdown prejudices and overcome social exclusion;
- ✓ Identify and target long term chronic illnesses and health conditions that result in premature deaths.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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¹ *People with Learning Disabilities in England*, Eric Emerson & Chris Hatton, Centre for Disability Research Report (2008)

² *Disability in the United Kingdom 2012*, Papworth Trust, Sept 2012

³ *Health Inequalities & People with Learning Disabilities in the UK*, Eric Emerson, Susannah Baines, Lindsay Allerton and Vicki Welch (2012)