

Press Release

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WheelPower announces Sport England partnership to tackle inequality through sport

WheelPower, the national charity for wheelchair sport, is amongst a group of over 120 organisations working in partnership with Sport England to level up access to sport and physical activity across the country. The Stoke Mandeville based charity will receive expertise, support and an investment of government and National Lottery funding from Sport England to co-deliver the ambitions of its 10-year Uniting the Movement strategy.



Sport England's research shows that some groups are typically less active, such as women, people with long-term health conditions, disabled people, people from ethnically diverse communities and lower socio-economic groups. Right now, the opportunities to get involved in sport and activity and reap the rewards of being active depend too much on your background, your gender, your bank balance and your postcode, and this needs to change.

Reflecting on this announcement Emily Weller, Head of Sport at WheelPower, said: "The investment and partnership with Sport England will support our charity to increase the opportunities for wheelchair users to access and participate in sport and physical activity. The extra funding will mean that WheelPower can develop new and existing resources as well as supporting our growing staff team and volunteers with training opportunities to improve their skills and experience. The new Partnership Development Manager role will develop our existing relationships as well as expanding our overall partner portfolio. By connecting more organisations to wheelchair users this will increase the range of activities on offer and the geographic coverage of opportunities for disabled people across the country."

Over £550million is being invested in total, with the partners including WheelPower receiving funding for up to five years. This new funding model from Sport England provides longer-term financial security as organisations recover and reinvent from the Covid-19 pandemic. All partner organisations were selected by Sport England due to their ability to influence change and improvement at the heart of the system they are a part of, no matter how big or small. This is the first step on a journey to revolutionise Sport England's approach to long-term partnerships as it seeks to partner and collaborate with innovative organisations to deliver Uniting the Movement and build a nation where everyone can get active.

Transforming lives through sport

WheelPower, Stoke Mandeville Stadium, Guttman Road, Stoke Mandeville, Buckinghamshire, HP21 9PP
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Tim Hollingsworth, CEO of Sport England, said: “Sport England’s goal is to get everyone active, no matter who they are, where they live, or what their background is. But we know that certain groups like physically disabled people are more likely to be inactive. We can only innovate and tackle inequalities effectively by thinking about long-term change; Uniting the Movement is a long-term vision, and our funding approach needs to reflect that. Changes to our funding model will help us achieve our goal, by making it easier for our partners to do what they need to do to level up and deliver.”

Martin McElhatton, Chief Executive Officer, WheelPower, continues: “We will tackle inequalities in the sport and physical activity sector by expanding our own programmes and working in a more collaborative way to level up access and increase engagement. We are delighted to partner with Sport England through the Uniting the Movement strategy and together we will support disabled people to access sport and physical activity, and ensure that everyone has a range of opportunities available to be more active.”

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

About WheelPower

WheelPower has been providing opportunities for people with physical impairments to take part in sport for over 70 years. Based in Stoke Mandeville, the Birthplace of the Paralympic movement, WheelPower is at the heart of wheelchair sport.

From first-timers to Paralympic medallists, we support and promote participation at all levels. We understand how playing sport and being active can enrich lives, offering tremendous physical and psychological benefits, whatever your age or ability. www.wheelpower.org.uk

About Sport England

Sport England is a public body and invests up to £300 million National Lottery and government money each year in projects and programmes that help people get active and play sport.

It wants everyone in England, regardless of age, background, or level of ability, to feel able to engage in sport and physical activity. That’s why a lot of its work is specifically focused on helping people who do no, or very little, physical activity and groups who are typically less active - like women, disabled people and people on lower incomes. www.sportengland.org

About Uniting the Movement

“Uniting the Movement is our 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. As we adapt and rebuild from the huge disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic, we need to collectively reimagine how we keep movement, sport and activity central to the lives of everyone. We believe sport and physical activity has a big role to play in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society for all.”

www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement

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