

# SPORT ENGLAND EQUALITY POLICY

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/EQUALITY STATEMENT

### A changing landscape

In February 2006 Sport England published its equality policy 'No Limits'. Since then there has been substantial progression in legislation relating to the equality and diversity agenda. This new legislation requires organisations such as Sport England to define how it carries out its statutory duty towards specific equality groups.

Organisationally, the publication in June 2008 of the new Sport England Strategy 2008 – 2011 produced a significant shift in focus and direction for the organisation. The overall focus of the new strategy is to build the foundations of sporting success through the creation of a world leading community sports system. In developing the world leading system it is Sport England's focus to ensure that:

- a substantial and growing number of people from across the community play sport;
- talented people from all backgrounds are identified early, nurtured and have the opportunity to progress to the elite level; and
- everyone who plays sport has the quality experience and is able to fulfil their potential.

Therefore this is an appropriate time to update Sport England's outward-facing Equality Policy and reaffirm its commitment to equality.

### Commitment to Equality

Sport is unique in the way it brings people together from all walks of life and from every aspect of society. At Sport England we recognise the power sport brings in engaging and motivating people; promoting social inclusion and change people lives. Ensuring that everyone has access to the potential benefits of sport is why equality and widening access to sports participation have been continual essential elements of Sport England's strategic vision.

Sport England is widening access and opportunity through a number of channels. Sport England's funding - through National Governing Bodies of sport and other partners – aims to enhance opportunities to participate in sport and develop talent Sport England also supports and funds three national partners – the Women's Sport & Fitness Foundation, the English Federation for Disability sport and Sporting Equals – in providing expertise to the sector as a whole. Sport England is also committed to champion and develop the Equality Standard to meet the sector's needs. In March 2006, Sport England was the first Sports Council and second sports organisation to achieve the Foundation and Preliminary levels of the Standard. Finally, Sport England is also committed to monitoring sports participation from an equality perspective and acting on the basis of this evidence.

This externally-focused document, stemming from the new Sport England Strategy 2008 – 2011, outlines the organisation's commitment to equality in terms of delivering its public purpose and strategic outcomes.

## SPORT ENGLAND EQUALITY POLICY

### Background

#### *Purpose of this document*

This is an external-facing document focused on external-facing issues. As such it does not reflect on internal-facing issues or policies (e.g. HR policy) relating to our statutory equality

requirements. Rather, it aims to explain Sport England's understanding for the need of equality in sport and how it proposes to deliver and measure this.

### *Changing landscape*

In February 2006 Sport England published its equality policy 'No Limits'. Since then there has been substantial progression in legislation relating to the equality and diversity agenda. This new legislation requires organisations such as Sport England to define how it carries out its statutory duty towards specific equality groups. Organisationally, the publication in June 2008 of the new Sport England Strategy 2008 – 2011 produced a significant shift in focus and direction for the organisation.

### **A new strategy and way of working**

#### *Strategy 2008-11*

The overall focus of the new strategy is to build the foundations of sporting success through the creation of a world leading community sports system. In developing the world leading system it is Sport England's focus to ensure that:

- a substantial and growing number of people from across the community play sport;
- talented people from all backgrounds are identified early, nurtured and have the opportunity to progress to the elite level; and
- everyone who plays sport has the quality experience and is able to fulfil their potential.

This strategy also stated that Sport England is committed to:

- Developing a culture that enables and values the full involvement of all, embedding and promoting the principles of equality, through the delivery of inclusive, high quality sport;
- Creating an environment in which all have equal opportunities to engage in high quality sport, whether as participants; competitors; volunteers; officials or administrators;
- Responding to diverse needs, capabilities and preferences of all, by ensuring appropriate levels of challenge;
- Overcoming potential barriers for those individuals and groups currently under represented as participants; and
- Making sure that all people can realise their talent and fulfil their potential.

Sport England's new approach is to operate at a strategic level, working with and through national governing bodies, and drawing in other partners including key equality bodies, the network of county sport partnerships and local authorities who will deliver specific outcomes. Part of this new approach has been to create a new Equality Centre of Excellence, sitting at the heart of the organisation within the NGB and Sports Directorate.

### **Consultation through the strategy**

#### *An open and inclusive consultation process*

In developing its new strategy and approach to equality Sport England engaged in a thorough and embracing consultation process. Over 100 stakeholders from across the sport sector and a Ministerial external challenge group contributed to two rounds of consultation to develop the new strategy, addressing the fundamental challenges facing community sport. The input from this diverse group critically informed the strategy as well as the approach and organisational structure required promoting and delivering equality.

## Sport England's equality commitment

Sport is unique in the way it brings people together from all walks of life and from every aspect of society. At Sport England we recognise the power sport brings in engaging and motivating people; promoting social inclusion and change people lives. Ensuring that everyone has access to the potential benefits of sport is why equality and widening access to sports participation have been continual essential elements of Sport England's strategic vision.

Sport England is widening access and opportunity through a number of channels. Sport England's funding – through National Governing Bodies of sport and other partners – aims to enhance opportunities to participate in sport and develop talent Sport England also supports and funds three national partners – the Women's Sport & Fitness Foundation, the English Federation for Disability sport and Sporting Equals – in providing expertise to the sector as a whole. Sport England is also committed to champion and develop the Equality Standard to meet the sector's needs. In March 2006, Sport England was the first Sports Council and second sports organisation to achieve the Foundation and Preliminary levels of the Standard. Finally, Sport England is also committed to monitoring sports participation from an equality perspective and acting on the basis of this evidence.

Our commitment to equality therefore runs through the heart of Sport England's work and delivery. However, there are also specific activities which will ensure that the 2008-11 Strategy delivers across all sectors of society:

- Sport England is working with the equality organisations in sport (English Federation of Disability Sports, Sporting Equals and Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation) to create Centres of Excellence for the sector.
- Sport England is specifically challenging NGBs to consider how they can encourage the participation of currently underrepresented groups in their sports. This is a particular important feature of discussions with the major commercial sports, which we believe can take a stronger lead in this area.
- NGBs developing the girls and women's game, disability sports and reaching out to diverse communities, is not an optional extra but a vital part of what they will be required to do. If any sport does not wish to accept this challenge, funding will be switched to those that do.
- Sport England will consider offering specific additional funding to smaller, less well funded sports, which have the opportunity to appeal to currently under-represented communities. An example of this commitment is the funding provided to all Paralympic Sports, in line with NGB 09 / 13 investment.
- Sport England will seek out opportunities to work with community groups capable of delivering 'break through' with different parts of the population. We will also take steps to ensure that any such projects have an appropriate connection with the work of the relevant governing body.
- In agreeing which sports will work with us to tackle drop off from sports participation, Sport England is seeking to ensure a balanced portfolio. We are including at least one sport which is particularly attractive to women, one which has – or has the potential to have – a high representation from BME groups, and one sports with a significant proportion of disabled participants.

- The new innovation fund is one of the key ways in which Sport England is seeking to fund projects which take innovative approaches to encourage under-represented groups to participate more in sport. We aim to identify projects which can become sustainable in the medium term.

### **Measurement and understanding**

Sport England is not only committed to achieving greater equality in participation in sport but also recognises the need to assess and inform progress as it is made.

The two primary sources of measurement and understanding operated by Sport England are the Active People Survey and the Satisfaction with Quality of the Sporting Experience Survey. Both are used to measure Sport England's outcome targets. The Active People Survey – measuring participation in sport across the population – will be run continuously for the duration of the strategy and provide insight into take-up rates across the population and amongst different demographic groups. The Satisfaction with Quality of the Sporting Experience Survey is run annually and will provide insight into key drivers of satisfaction and levels of satisfaction across 45 funded sports. The Survey will also provide insight across the sporting sector and demographic groups.

As the new Equality Bill comes into existence, Sport England will consider how best to measure and assess alternative and wider aspects of equality.

### **Linkages to internal equality policies**

This Equality policy supports internal HR policies and the organisation's commitment as a public body to statutory legislation. Statutory legislation ensuring the delivery of sports equality can be found at the following links:

[www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageld=5145524](http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageld=5145524)

[www.equalities.gov.uk/](http://www.equalities.gov.uk/)