

Sussex Disability Sports Network - online forum 30.03.2021

1. [Activity Alliance's second Annual Disability and Activity Survey 20/21](#) and [COVID-19 and disabled people snapshot – March 2021](#) (Focusing on the evidence that shows disabled people's lives have been the hardest hit by COVID-19)

- Before covid - change was happening and perceptions were changing
- End of third lockdown - nosedive in Oct and then steady increase up to March 2021
- New barriers to participating -
- Specific 'new' groups affected - urban living, young people, no outdoor space.
- Intersectionality - Women, younger adults and ethnically diverse groups more affected
- Impairments - There is a separate report around specific impairments
- 5 key recommendations

Thoughts or questions?

- Nervous - need to consider what things need to be put in place to support people and increase confidence to resume activity routines.
- Information - needs to be accessible and not overwhelming. More easy reads as well as providing verbal - video, phone calls.
- Exemption has allowed some crucial activity to continue but there has been concerns by some partners around reputational risk of being seen delivering.

2. [Reopening Activity: An inclusive response](#)

3. [Sport England Strategy - #UnitingtheMovement](#) -



Five Big Issues;

- **Recover and reinvent:** Recovering from the biggest crisis in a generation and reinventing as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable network of organisations providing sport and physical activity opportunities that meet the needs of different people.
- **Connecting communities:** Focusing on sport and physical activity's ability to make better places to live and bring people together.
- **Positive experiences for children and young people:** Unrelenting focus on positive experiences for all children and young people as the foundations for a long and healthy life.
- **Connecting with health and wellbeing:** Strengthening the connections between sport, physical activity, health and wellbeing, so more people can feel the benefits of, and advocate for, an active life.
- **Active environments:** Creating and protecting the places and spaces that make it easier for people to be active.

Thinking more specifically about 'Active environments' What does this mean to you as an individual or your organisation/the people you work with/support.

Network members discussed return to play and reopening of facilities in respect of their delivery moving forwards.

There were some general pleasing responses with some facilities being helpful and ensuring their facilities remained fully accessible under the usage restrictions being put in place, and with some even offering to pick up the provision for disabled people if organisations were lacking capacity or funding, however there was a concern that this enthusiasm may decrease when Leisure Operators really start to assess the financial implications of the Covid and need to recoup income. It was noted that many leisure operator development teams were still on furlough, so if partners are struggling to have conversations regarding demand, concerns etc, then it would be advisable to contact the local authority instead.

On the flip side there were some concerns over free community access being taken away, specifically regarding Tennis courts. One member sits on the LTA Equality ideas group and has tried to make the case around accessibility not only to free/low-cost facilities but also the currently inaccessible booking system in place. Contact has been made with the local authority, club and LTA regional team to engage in discussions for access for the community to be renewed. It was suggested that other local authorities (such as Crawley) are considering having an open community court so these examples could be referred to to support these discussions.

Partners are seeing a rise in prices across the board, which is understandable and expected but there is a concern that this could significantly affect being able to provide a sustainable offer. Therefore, it was suggested that the network work together to collectively broker relationships with facility providers.

Although we are seeing a financial strain on partners in the sector, there is also an acknowledgment that due to lack of delivery and events etc, some local authority departments for instance may have underspends so it is worth speaking to them now.

The general reflections of the strategy were very positive, but members indicated that at present the focus is all about RECOVER, and hopefully as delivery starts to return partners we start to reflect on the other key issues and how they can add value and make an impact. There was however some concern that some NGB's don't seem to be following suit, especially with regards to inclusion and that provision for people with a disability is still an afterthought rather than being embedded throughout their strategy. Therefore they hope that Sport England's stance and approach will help to drive this change from the top and encourage more partners, and especially NGB's to reflect and change their own culture and practice to ensure activity is accessible for all.

4. Partner updates - What have you been doing/planning

Matt Laird, Crawley Borough Council/Wellbeing Team – Hoping to start opening provision at K2 Leisure Centre, start Wheels for Wellbeing etc. Staffing considerations. Looking forward to supporting a promoting partner activity in the area.

Paul Gillett, East Sussex Vision Summary (formerly ESAB) - Rebranding details will be shared - focusing on the support they can provide. All about recovery and reinventing at present - building back better but considering what is achievable. Age profile of members highlights a need around access and technology usability. Sound tennis sessions are restarting, yay!

Aroop Tanner, Sussex Cricket - Community department coming back from furlough from 19 April, inundated with schools delivery so capacity will be slightly stretched. ECB disability sections of clubs - (5 areas) moving Hubs to clubs. Polegate, Burgess hill, Middleton, Buxted park, st peters cricket club (B&H) Example of reinventing and connecting communities.

Bob Leeves, Out There - Have secured investment from Sport England to fund their Out There programme for another year. Good links with Crawley and Chichester leisure operators who are keen to ensure continued provision.

Richard Deniese, Worthing Mencap - funding to run double sessions to support social distancing. Online Zumba sessions. General exercise group (Mencap Round The World Challenge). 60 people a week online. Restart face to face gradually in the park and venue at Gym and Swim session - conversations ongoing with Splashpoint to restart.

Loretta Lock, Defiant Sport - Home ed PE sessions back. Sound Tennis sessions starting back in the venue. Wrap around care CYP sessions. Easter holiday programme, including Mencap Round The World Challenge. Accessible beach project - social and providing accessible activity. Festival



for Inclusive Sport 28/29 August on seafront (no cost), partners welcome to get involved - <https://defiantsports.org.uk/eastbourne-festival-of-accessible-sport/>

Ricky Perrin, Sussex Bears - BWB returning in next few weeks. In process of finalising an agreement with local university - which will include BUCS teams through to community disability sports provision and training for students. Wheelchairs have been placed in the universities ready to go, to support the training programmes etc. Social prescribing - medical centre v medical centre wheelchair basketball matches (including with the University schools/departments). If partners want to influence Social Prescribers go through the GPs and just keep knocking on doors!! Lancing multi use outside area/courts - best in areas!

Al Carter, Chailey Heritage - Support extremely vulnerable CYP so Covid had a significant impact on operational delivery. Slowly starting to reopen wider activity. Hydrotherapy and rebound therapy. Booking system to open up facilities for community use potentially available from September.

Paul Brackley, Albion In The Community - running for 3 weeks now. First come first service 60 players. Easter camps. All other sessions resume from 12 April. Engagement with schools is tricky. All staff back from 1 April. Continuing to deliver online as well and still getting good attendance, so will be carrying on with this offer.

Jackie Wood, Freedom Leisure - looking forward to resuming Active Communities delivery, such as badminton sessions with Shanni.

Shanni Collins, Brighton & Hove City Council - Take part in Sept (tiny bit of money for clubs). Health Walking hopefully restarting 15th April with Grace Eyre (RTWC), restarting badminton when leisure centre reopens. People can attend other sessions available via the Health Lifestyles team as they all aim to be inclusive.

Gemma Finlay-Gray, Active Sussex – Part of the National Academy for Social Prescribing Learning Together Programme - so will share any relevant updates or info but worth checking out the [Thriving Communities pages and Ideas hub](#). Active Sussex launched the new TGC Sussex Network at the Active Sussex Network and following feedback and points raised the first forum is on 10 [May - Menopause and Physical Activity](#). It would be great for SDSN members to join to reflect and consider the insight and recommendations when working with women. Tackling Inequalities Fund is still a priority and currently working/identifying partners to distribute phase 3 funds. The trust has achieved the [Ann Craft Trust Safeguarding Adults in Sport Award](#).

5. Next SDSN forum focus ideas

Health, wellbeing and social prescribing
Wider sector links - Arts and culture