

CULTURE COMMITTEE CC 01-03 p2

Date: 16 January 2003

Time: 1.30pm - 4.00pm

Venue: National Assembly for Wales

'MOVING FORWARD'

On behalf of the Federation of Sports Associations for the Disabled (Wales) it gives me great pleasure to write this foreword which represents the culmination of a detailed review of our governing body and its ambitions for the next two years.

This strategic document, appropriately entitled '*Moving Forward*', sets out to establish the short term 'vision' of our Governing Body as well as providing clear targets for our two national development and excellence programmes, 'Disability Sport Cymru' and the 'National Performance' scheme. The broad principles set out in this strategy will provide a framework for our annual performance plans over the next two years, which will review progress and enable a flexible approach to the further development of our services and national programmes.

Disability Sport has never been more buoyant in Wales. In 2001 / 02, performers, supported through the FSAD (Wales) national performance scheme, won 180 medals at British, European or World sanctioned competitions. More recently athletes competing in the Commonwealth Games at Manchester as part of the FSAD (Wales) 'Elite Athletes with a Disability' team performed to an extremely high standard, contributing two medals toward the 'Team Wales' overall tally of 31 medals. The CWG also provided a platform from which athletes could demonstrate their sporting excellence in the first ever championship event to be fully integrated. With this level of success Wales can look forward to the next Paralympics in Athens in 2004 with a degree of optimism.

It should, however, be recognised that this level of success can only be maintained through careful planning and creative partnerships. This strategy will seek to develop and build on past endeavours, by creating a structured pathway through which talented performers can progress from grass roots activity through to national and international competition.

FSAD (Wales) welcomes the recent decision by the Sports Council for Wales to extend lottery funding for the Disability Sport Cymru scheme until the end of March 2005. We are equally delighted by the continued enthusiasm of our local authority partners who are critical to the successful delivery of the Disability Sport Cymru scheme. The scheme will undoubtedly provide the bedrock of our future national performance programmes by developing new and improved clubs, training coaches, recruiting volunteers and creating local competitions. Without doubt, the opportunities for participation in disability sport have never been greater.

Our partners at national and UK levels are also vitally important to the delivery of this strategy. The National Disability Sports Organisations and Sports Specific Groups continue to make an impressive contribution to disability sport at National and GB levels, whilst UK partners such as the British Paralympic Association and British Deaf Sports Council continue to provide a focus for much of our work as we head toward Athens (Paralympics) and Melbourne (Deaflympics) in 2004.

It is then with much excitement and anticipation that FSAD (Wales) looks forward to the next two years of activity. This strategy seeks to move disability sport forward in Wales. With energy, commitment and a common sense of purpose I am sure we can achieve this goal.

Howard Gadd

Chairman

FSAD (WALES)

BACKGROUND

BACKGROUND

This document represents the vision of FSAD (Wales) for the next two years. The strategy, entitled '***Moving Forward***' provides FSAD (Wales) with a framework within which the future planning, provision and development of our national governing body services and programmes can be managed effectively and efficiently,

ensuring that they meet the needs of our members and participants, whether existing or potential.

INTRODUCTION TO FSAD (WALES)

The Federation of Sports Associations for the Disabled (Wales) is a pan disability governing body of sport, which aims to promote and develop opportunities for people to participate in sport.

The Federation comprises of five National Disability Sports Organisations (NDSOs) and a number of sports specific groups. Local Authorities in Wales are also represented on its Executive as are the Sports Council for Wales.

FSAD (Wales), which is recognised by the Sports Council for Wales as the national governing body for disability sport in Wales, is committed to the development of sport and focuses the majority of its efforts through two national sports programmes :-

a) A **National Performance** programme that supports talented and elite

disabled performers via a wide range of talent identification and development

schemes.

b. **Disability Sport Cymru**, which is a joint initiative between FSAD (Wales),

the Sports Council for Wales and the Local Authorities, is aimed at developing

quality community based sporting and recreational opportunities for people

with disabilities throughout Wales.

FSAD (Wales) ensures that its programmes are fully inclusive, offering individuals the opportunity to achieve a full and active role within their sporting communities, whilst at the same time providing a structured 'pathway' through which talented performers can achieve at higher levels of competition.

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- a) A **National Performance** programme that supports talented and elite disabled performers via a wide range of talent identification and development schemes.
- c. **Disability Sport Cymru**, which is a joint initiative between FSAD (Wales), the Sports Council for Wales and the Local Authorities, is aimed at developing quality community based sporting and recreational opportunities for people with disabilities throughout Wales.

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PLANNING FOR SUCCESS

FSAD (Wales) produces an annual performance plan which:

- a. reaffirms strategic aims and objectives;
- b. provides a summary of the previous years performance against agreed targets;
- c. sets out clear plans for both the Disability Sport Cymru programme and the National Performance programme for the year ahead;

d. identifies costs associated with delivering the national programmes and its core activities.

FSAD (Wales) will continue to deliver an annual performance plan within the framework of this strategy. The plan will be produced in partnership with the NDSOs, Sports Specific Groups and Local Authority Disability Sport Cymru Development

Officers.

STRATEGIC AIMS OF FSAD (WALES)

This strategy identifies three main aims, which FSAD (Wales) will be working toward:

GOVERNING BODY SERVICES: AIM

To be recognised as an effective and efficient National Governing Body of Sport, which is able to positively lead the strategic development of disability sport in Wales, within a constantly changing environment, through innovative and dynamic partnership with its affiliated members and other appropriate organisations, including the statutory, voluntary and commercial sectors

LOCAL SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

‘DISABILITY SPORT CYMRU’: AIM

To increase the number of people taking part in sport by developing

quality community based sporting and recreational opportunities throughout Wales

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE PROGRAMME: AIM

To develop a performer focused approach, which results in both domestic and international success for Wales, and becomes recognised as the most effective talent identification and support programme within the UK Home Countries

WORKING TOWARD THE AIMS OF FSAD (WALES):

PAST PERFORMANCE

In 2001 / 2002 FSAD (Wales) the following results were achieved:-

‘National Performance’- Performance Indicator 2001 / 2002

- a. 180 medals at British, European and International events.

‘Disability Sport Cymru’- Performance Indicators 2001 / 2002

- a. 37 club development projects
- b. 1,608 participants involved in scheme
- c. 47 specials schools introduced to the ‘Sportsability’ programme
- d. 22 Disability Sport Cymru Development Officers appointed

(1 per Local Authority in Wales)

Disability Sport Cymru results collected by the SCW Research and Evaluation Section in the autumn of 2001

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FSAD (WALES) TARGETS FOR 2002 – 2004

National Performance Programme

The FSAD (Wales) National Performance programme has identified the following sports as requiring additional Officer input given their developmental / medal potential and their strategic importance to UK and Paralympic activity:

Swimming / Athletics / Table Tennis / Powerlifting / Equestrian

In addition to the above, FSAD (Wales) will continue to support through its annual performance plan other sports and NDSO programmes which require assistance and contribute toward national, British and International events.

Performance Indicator	Target 2004	Actual 2004
Number of Regional Performance Centres	4 x swimming 4 x athletics 3 x table tennis 2 x powerlifting 2 x equestrian	

Number of 'regional' squad coaches	8 x swimming 8 x athletics 6 x table tennis 4 x powerlifting 2 x equestrian	
Number of National Performance Centres	1 x swimming - Welsh National Pool, Swansea 1 x athletics - National Indoor Athletics Centre, Cardiff 1 x table tennis - Welsh Institute of Sport 1 x powerlifting- Welsh Institute of Sport 1 x equestrian - T.B.C	
Number of 'national' squad coaches	2 x swimming 2 x athletics 2 x table tennis 1 x powerlifting 1 x equestrian	
Number of Medals Achieved by Welsh Performers at National / GB / International events	200 by 2002 / 03 200 by 2003 / 04	

Number of Welsh Performers selected for the British Paralympic Team for Athens '04	20	
Number of Welsh Athletes linked to World Class Performance Plan (including Elite Cymru)	31	

N.B. Regional Performance Centres / National Performance Centres can be defined as strategically located centres where selected performers can train under the supervision of appropriately qualified coaches within a high performance environment.

FSAD (Wales) TARGETS FOR 2002 – 2004 cont'd

Disability Sport Cymru

The following targets have been established for the Disability Sport Cymru programme:

Performance Indicators	Target 2004	Actual 2004
Number of new club development schemes	88	
Number of new coaches	176	
Number of new volunteers	352	
Number of new local competitions	44	
Number of participants in programme	4,000	
Number of active club members	1,000	

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FSAD (Wales) Financial Targets

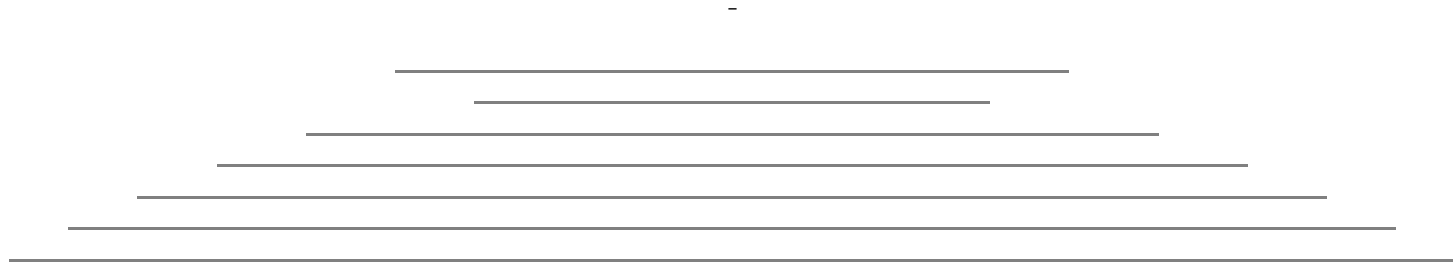
FSAD (Wales) recognises the need to attract additional funding, on an annual basis, in order to further develop core governing body services for its members as well as improving and broadening the impact of the National Performance programme.

FSAD (Wales) will seek to achieve additional funding through the development of new partnerships with the commercial sector and other funding agencies.

The following targets have been established for 2002 - 2004:

Performance Indicators	Target 2004	Actual 2004
To raise an additional 50% funding towards the National Performance plan per year.	£60,000 (£30,000 per year based on existing budgets)	
To raise an additional 50% funding towards core governing body administrative services	£10,000 (£5,000 per year based on existing budgets)	

FSAD (WALES) PERFORMANCE PATHWAY



The diagram below details the FSAD (Wales) pathway through which talented performers can progress to higher levels of sporting excellence.

FSAD (Wales) Performance Pathway for 'focus' sports

FSAD (WALES) GOVERNING BODY SERVICES

ACTION PLAN FOR FSAD (WALES) 2002 - 2004

KEY THEMES	OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY	TARGET DATE
GOVERNANCE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review / modernise FSAD (Wales) constitution 2. Review existing policies and procedures 3. Review membership policies 4. Review financial procedures 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High 2. Medium 3. High 4. Medium 	<p>December 02</p> <p>March 03</p> <p>January 03</p> <p>March 03</p>

<p>PERFORMANCE PLANNING</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuously improve performance planning systems 2. Assist NDSO's, Sports Specific Groups and Disability Sport Cymru Development Officers with performance Planning 3. Ensure that logistical disadvantage is not experienced in any part of Wales 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High 2. High 3. High 	<p>March 03</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
<p>COMMUNICATION</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continuously improve methods of (accessible) communications e.g. information technology, talking pages etc 2. Explore potential and sustainability of a FSAD (Wales) newsletter 3. Ensure that Disability Sport receives a high level of profile both locally and nationally <p>Commit to the development of a UK forum for Disability Sport</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High 2. Medium 3. High 4. Medium 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 03</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 03</p>

CONSULTATION	<p>1. Ensure that there are effective systems</p> <p>in place to allow consultation with key partners / participants e.g. National Conferences, Regional seminars etc</p>	1. High	Ongoing
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LOCAL DEVELOPMENT - 'DISABILITY SPORT CYMRU'

ACTION PLAN FOR FSAD (WALES) 2002 - 2004

KEY THEMES	OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY	TIMESCALE
INCLUSION	1.To develop a system by which the social impact of Disability Sport Cymru (DSC) can be monitored	1. Medium	1. March 2003
SUPPORT	1.To continuously develop and improve support systems for Disability Sport Cymru Development Officers (DSCDOs)	1. High	1. Ongoing
CONSISTENCY	1.To ensure that DSC can be delivered in a consistent manner throughout Wales, whilst taking into account regional and local variations	1. High	1. Ongoing

TRAINING	1.To deliver two residential training opportunities per year for DSCDOs based on audited needs	1. High	1. Sept / March
LEADERSHIP	1.To provide effective national leadership, disseminating best practise, producing appropriate resource and training materials and co-ordinating national campaigns e.g. volunteering	1. High	1. Ongoing
PARTNERSHIP	1.Developing partnerships to ensure the effective delivery of DSC at a local level	1. Medium	1. Ongoing
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	1.Agree methodology by which DSC will be effectively monitored and evaluated	1. High	1. November 2002
MARKETING	1.To ensure that DSC is marketed and promoted in an effective and consistent manner	1. High	1. Ongoing

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE PROGRAMME

FSAD (WALES) ACTION PLAN 2002 - 2004

KEY THEMES	OBJECTIVES	PRIORITY	TIMESCAES

SUPPORT	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To support NDSOs and Sports Specific Groups with the development of their national programmes 2. To support individuals applying for / or accepted onto Elite Cymru / World Class Performance Plans 3. To place additional officer input into five 'focus' sports, given their developmental / medal potential 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High 2. Medium 3. High 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Autumn 2002/03/04 2. Ongoing 3. Ongoing
TALENT IDENTIFICATION	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To develop and train a network of 'Regional Talent Identification and Support' staff 1. To gain support for the introduction of professional staff in athletics and swimming who will identify, support and coach developing and elite performers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Medium 2. High 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. March 2003 2. January 2003
PERFORMANCE CENTRES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To introduce Regional / National Performance Centres for 5 'focus' sports for developing / elite performers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Network complete by December 2004
PERFORMANCE COACHING	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To recruit / train and retain coaches who are able to work at the Regional / National Performance Centres 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Network complete by December 2004
SPONSORSHIP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To attract sponsorship to support specific national performance programmes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Medium 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing
SPORTS SCIENCE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To work with organisations who can provide technical and sports science support which will benefit Welsh athletes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Medium 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ongoing

FAIR PLAY	1. To sign up the SCW 'Chwarae Teg' scheme and promote amongst all areas of work	1. Medium	1. February 03
MONITORING AND EVALUATION	1. To develop systems to monitor, evaluate and record outcomes of the National Performance programme	1. High	1. December 2002

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FSAD (Wales) would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following Organisations who have assisted in the development of this strategic paper.

Welsh Assembly Government

FSAD (Wales) Executive Committee Members

National Disability Sports Organisations

Sports Specific Groups (Wales)

Sports Council for Wales

United Kingdom Sports Council

Local Authorities (Wales)

Disability Sport Cymru Development Officers

British Paralympic Association

Disability Wales

September 2002



THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FOR WALES
CULTURE COMMITTEE: REVIEW OF PARTICIPATION IN SPORT
A RESPONSE FROM THE
FEDERATION OF SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS FOR THE DISABLED
(WALES)

BACKGROUND

This document provides a response from FSAD (Wales) to the National Assembly for Wales Culture Committee's review of participation in sport. This

response should be read in conjunction with the enclosed FSAD (Wales) strategic document 'Moving Forward' and the Disability Sport Cymru booklet 'Make it Happen'.

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'MOVING FORWARD' – FSAD (WALES) TWO YEAR STRATEGIC DOCUMENT

This document (enclosed) represents the vision of FSAD (Wales) for the next two years. The strategy, entitled '**Moving Forward**' provides FSAD (Wales) with a framework within which the future planning, provision and development of our national governing body services and programmes can be managed effectively and efficiently, ensuring that they meets the needs of our members and participants, whether existing or potential.

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

In terms of disability sport, 'barriers to participation' can be identified at two differing levels i.e. community level (grass roots activity) and national

performance level

(sporting excellence).

COMMUNITY LEVEL

LOCAL SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

‘DISABILITY SPORT CYMRU’: AIM

‘To increase the number of people taking part in sport by developing

quality community based sporting and recreational opportunities throughout Wales’

(FSAD (Wales) Strategy, September 2002)

In the autumn of 1998, the Sports Council for Wales, in partnership with FSAD (Wales) and the local authorities launched Disability Sport Cymru.

Disability Sport Cymru is a national sports development programme, delivered locally, which aims to increase the number of disabled people participating in sport by developing quality community based sporting and recreational opportunities throughout Wales.

There is now a complete network of 22 Disability Sport Cymru Development Officers (one based in each of the local authorities) across Wales. The Sports Council for Wales fund Disability Sport Cymru Development Officers (DSCDOs) from Lottery Funding, on a part-time 21 hours per week basis. Since the schemes inception eight Local Authorities have found additional funding to make their DSCDO full-time.

The key objectives for the programme are:

- to create new clubs and to give professional advice and support to improve existing clubs;
- to increase the number of disabled people who are members of sports clubs;
- to co-ordinate locally accessible training courses for coaches and volunteers and to support those already active within their communities;
- to establish local competition structures which can lead on to regional and national performance.

Research, gathered from the Disability Sport Cymru Development Officers, demonstrates that the Disability Sport Cymru scheme has made good progress over the last three years, creating new opportunities for participation at a local level. In 2001 / 02, some 37 new / improved club opportunities were created across Wales.

The research also confirms, in the view of the DSCDOs, those barriers that are currently acting as an obstacle to providing new and improved opportunities for disabled people to participate in sport.

Transport

Accessible transport, particularly out of normal working hours, was rated highly by all responding DSCDOs as a major problem.

The transport issue was not so much an urban/rural issue as one of specialist transport being needed in all areas. In addition, it was not just a case of being able to afford to provide the transport. Voluntary 'care support' may also have to attend the sporting activity attended by the participant (particularly children and young people), creating extra organisational problems.

Currently transport provision for people with disabilities is usually linked to schools and day care. Transport is, therefore, most likely to be available at times when facilities and suitable venues are least likely to be available. This 'timetabling' also clearly affects those times when voluntary sports clubs and other activity groups are likely to meet i.e. evenings and weekends.

There are no easy solutions to address this particular barrier. It does not necessarily follow that increased finance will mean sustainable progress across all of Wales. There is a need to revisit the use of existing (and planned) accessible transport and any solutions and partnerships that could develop and be transferable across local community groups and local authorities.

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Facilities

Whilst improving facility provision is not the primary remit of the Disability Sport Cymru scheme, it is a factor to be considered when addressing the issue of barriers to participation.

The difficulty of accessing appropriate facilities at suitable times, tying in with available transport and the availability of clubs, coaches / volunteers is apparent across Wales.

Some facilities may offer slots for people with disabilities but are often only able to offer slots that are not in such high demand – such as later evening slots or early Sunday mornings. DSCDOs found that less busy facilities tend to provide more favourable access opportunities. These access problems, however, are not necessarily unique and can affect many areas of sports development.

Physical access to facilities is also an area for concern although the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), which comes into effect in 2004, and current building regulations should see a marked improvement in this area.

Training

Appropriate staff / sports provider training is absolutely essential (and in many ways more important than issues of physical access) to ensure that participants are treated in a positive, equitable and dignified manner.

The need for training extends from professional leisure facility staff through to sports club personnel, coaches, volunteers and other members of a community who are involved in the development or delivery of disability sport.

Training needs to be affordable, accessible and pitched at differing levels applicable to its audience. It should also be considered as 'ongoing' and not a 'one off', with refresher courses available as well as more advanced courses being made available.

The DDA will ensure that all public and commercial sectors will have to make reasonable adjustments to their services to ensure equity for disabled users.

Funding

On occasion, local disabled sports groups cannot always generate sufficient funds to sustain activity in leisure /community facilities, particularly at peak / more favourable times when costs are normally higher. Often members of those sessions are already in receipt of disability benefit payments and find it difficult to pay for their leisure activity.

Whilst some groups involve family siblings or other members of the community to offset 'core' costs, there may need to be some consideration by facility providers, and particularly local authorities, as to how they can ensure that there are offering a fully inclusive programme at times suitable for all disabled users.

Many Local Authorities operate 'passport to leisure' type schemes that serve as examples of good practise. Consideration may be given by the local authorities as to how they might extend these schemes to enable groups of disabled participants, as opposed to just individuals, to use their facilities for specific activities during peak or more favourable times.

Use of Volunteers

The dependency on the use of volunteers in sport is well recorded. In terms of disability sport it is absolutely vital. Some disabled participants may be totally reliant on a volunteer providing appropriate support, without which they could not continue their involvement in community sport.

There remains, therefore, a need to ensure that there is a constant flow of volunteers who can be recruited, retained and, in some way rewarded (not necessarily financially) to recognise their value and worth.

FSAD (Wales) has recently been successful in winning a £50k grant from Europe with which this issue can be addressed. Resources will be developed which can support the community in attracting and retaining new and existing volunteers (including sports coaches) into disability sport in Wales.

DSCDOs will also work in partnership with Dragon Sport Co-ordinators (a national sports development programme managed by the Sports Council for Wales in partnership with Local Authorities) to ensure that Sportsability, an adapted training courses for volunteers and teachers, feeds into their community based sports structures.

Marketing

Good marketing is essential if disabled people are to influence and participate fully in community based programmes.

Research should continue to be undertaken to ensure that the views of local disabled people are taken into account and that programmes reflect their need.

In addition, programmes must be robustly promoted to ensure that potential participants are aware of opportunities that are available to them within their community. Communication of activities should be available in various accessible formats and, therefore, consideration must be given as to how finances, and or, existing communication networks can become available to community sport.

Education

Whilst FSAD (Wales) remit does not extend to curricular P.E. and sport within schools, Local Education Authorities should be monitored and encouraged to ensure that pupils with a disability access sport on an equitable basis.

P.E. sessions should provide a positive experience, which should have an influence on disabled pupils continuing to participate in sport outside of school hours or once they have left full time education.

Conclusion

The Disability Sport Cymru scheme has identified key barriers that act as obstacles for those people with disabilities who wish to participate in sport on a regular basis. Over the next two years FSAD (Wales) will use the Disability Sport Cymru scheme to address these barriers and seek ways in which to overcome them.

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE LEVEL

NATIONAL PERFORMANCE PROGRAMME :AIM

'To develop a performer focused approach, which results in both domestic and international success for Wales, and becomes recognised as the most effective talent identification and support programme within the UK Home Countries'

(FSAD (Wales) Strategy, September 2002)

Wales has a proud tradition of producing World Class disabled athletes. If Wales is to continue to produce talented athletes then it must continuously improve its systems of talent identification and athlete support programmes.

The FSAD (Wales) strategy sets out a 'performance pathway' (see strategy document) through which potential talent can be developed. The strategy also sets out ambitious key performance indicators and targets for the National Performance scheme over the next two years.

There remain, however, key barriers that can prevent athletes from developing their full potential.

Coaching Matters

Good coaching is one of the key components to achieving sporting success for any athlete / team. The recruitment of good and potential coaches remains a key factor in any Governing Body strategy. In this respect, there is no difference in terms of disability sport in Wales.

There is currently a lack of quality coaches available to develop and improve talented / elite athletes. At present, some coaches, who have demonstrated their potential to coach at a higher level and who already work, or choose to work, with disabled athletes are 'fast-tracked' through their qualifications in order for them to receive higher levels of coach education to enable them, in turn, to raise standards of performance.

Whilst this situation is not ideal, in the sense that often it takes time to nurture and develop good coaching, it is often the reality faced by talented or developing athletes / teams.

FSAD (Wales) is currently addressing this issue through closer liaison with some governing bodies of sport, sharing session time where possible and developing coaching enhancements e.g. models of good practise, video footage of coaching techniques, recruitment campaigns. This information will also enable some Governing Bodies of Sport to consider disability in a more informed way and to consider how best to integrate athletes into their programmes in the future.

There also needs to be a dovetailing of good disability awareness training courses with sports specific technical coaching courses to assist coaches into a confident environment where they can work with talented or elite athletes / teams. Moreover,

there needs to be a focused approach, ensuring that sports are targeted where there is greatest need for coaching or where a significant difference can be made, in terms of eventual performance, over a specific period of time.

Coach education, wherever possible should be free of charge to volunteers and there should be some form of reward (not always necessarily financial) to ensure that the importance of coaching is recognised and valued.

Sports Science Support

New research should be undertaken into sports science support for talented or elite athletes with a disability to ensure that they are reaching their full potential.

FSAD (Wales) has recently entered into a sponsorship agreement with a Cardiff based podiatry company, 'Ace – Feet in Motion' which will provide a range of support services to Welsh athletes who have the potential to compete in the Paralympics in Athens in 2004 or at other international events. Services supplied will be monitored to assess their impact on the athlete's performance over the next 18 months.

FSAD (Wales) will also seek to work in partnership with the British Paralympic Association which is currently appointing a team of experts to consider how best to develop sports science support for athletes. If British Disability Sport is to continue to achieve on the world stage the continued development of sport science programmes will be crucial.

Talented Athlete Support Programmes

Some talented athletes receive disability benefit as their main, or sole, source of income. For these athletes and others who may be on a low income (and do not qualify for schemes such as the SCW's 'Elite Cymru') additional financial support may be required in order to assist them in achieving their full potential.

Travel passes, kit supplies, access to facilities for training purposes and human resource supports would provide additional benefits to the athlete, allowing them to focus on their sport without having to cope with other financial distractions.

FSAD (Wales) would propose that a scheme be established, and managed through its National Performance services, to support those athletes who have been identified as having real potential and who require additional support due to their personal circumstances. New and sustainable funding would need to be identified to support this proposal.

Events

FSAD (Wales) has identified the need for good quality events to be staged within Wales / UK to enable talented and elite athletes/teams to compete on a more regular basis. FSAD (Wales) would propose that the four Home Countries, in conjunction with the British Paralympic Association, review the type and number of events that are currently available to athletes in order to ascertain weaknesses or gaps in the programme.

Performance Camps

There is a need to ensure that sufficient facilities are available in Wales in order to host 'performance camps', either sports specific or multi-sport, for talented and elite athletes / teams.

The Welsh Institute of Sport (WIS) already serves as a venue for disability training sessions and competitions. WIS staff currently receive training in disability awareness issues and understand the needs of performance athletes.

There remains, however, a serious deficiency in the number of accessible bedrooms available to athletes. If disabled high performance athletes / teams are to benefit from the overall facilities at WIS, and receive equitable services, there must be a significant increase in accessible bedrooms. The Sports Council for Wales have recently submitted a proposal to the National Assembly for Wales for capital funding to re-develop WIS. This re-development would include the creation of new accessible bed space. FSAD (Wales) is supportive of this bid, as it would make a significant difference to the development of certain individuals / teams in Wales.

Media

Maintaining effective relationships with the media remains a high priority for FSAD (Wales). Over recent months, and certainly during the Commonwealth Games in 2002, the media provided a good level of coverage of disability sport, whether at community level or national / international competition.

This level of coverage must be maintained if disability sport is to receive the profile and recognition it deserves. In 2001 / 2002 Welsh athletes delivered 180 medals in GB, European and International competition – a little known fact!

It is also essential to maintain interest from the media if disability sport is to provide tangible profile benefits to actual and potential commercial sponsors of disability sport, whether for teams or individuals (the latter being particularly difficult to achieve).

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CONCLUSION

Disability Sport has never been more buoyant in Wales. In 2001 / 02, performers, supported through the FSAD (Wales) national performance scheme, won 180 medals at British, European or World sanctioned competitions. More recently athletes competing in the Commonwealth Games at Manchester as part of the FSAD (Wales) 'Elite Athletes with a Disability' team performed to an extremely high standard, contributing two medals toward the 'Team Wales' overall tally of 31 medals. The CWG also provided a platform from which athletes could demonstrate their sporting excellence in the first ever championship event to be fully integrated. With this level of success Wales can look forward to the next Paralympics in Athens in 2004 with a degree of optimism.

It should, however, be recognised that this level of success can only be maintained through careful planning and creative partnerships. FSAD (Wales) strategy will seek to develop and build on past endeavours, by creating a structured pathway through which talented performers can progress from grass roots activity through to national and international competition.

FSAD (Wales) welcomes the recent decision by the Sports Council for Wales to extend lottery funding for the Disability Sport Cymru scheme until the end of March 2005. We are equally delighted by the continued enthusiasm of our local authority partners who are critical to the successful delivery of the Disability Sport Cymru scheme. The scheme will undoubtedly provide the bedrock of our future national performance programmes by developing new and improved clubs, training coaches, recruiting volunteers and creating local competitions. Without doubt, the opportunities for participation in disability sport have never been greater.

Our partners at national and UK levels are also vitally important to the delivery of this strategy. The National Disability Sports Organisations and Sports Specific Groups continue to make an impressive contribution to disability sport at National and GB levels, whilst UK partners such as the British Paralympic Association and British Deaf Sports Council continue to provide a focus for much of our work as we head toward Athens (Paralympics) and Melbourne (Deaflympics) in 2004.

It is then with much excitement and anticipation that FSAD (Wales) looks forward to the next two years of activity. FSAD (Wales) considers that it is realistic to overcome the above barriers if support is forthcoming from key national organisations, agencies and partners and will be working toward this goal over the next two years.

This response seeks to move disability sport forward in Wales. With energy, commitment and a common sense of purpose I am sure we can achieve this goal.

Jon Morgan

Director

JM / 02.01.03