

activity alliance

disability
inclusion
sport

Achieving Inclusion Together

Strategy 2018 - 2021



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A new name

Activity Alliance is the new name for the English Federation of Disability Sport. We are the same team working towards the same goals, but with a new image.

September 2018 marks 20 years since we became a national charity and we are proud of our success so far.

We work with so many amazing people and are at the centre of influential world-renowned programmes for disabled people. We believe the time is right for us to embrace change, engage new audiences and ensure our brand promise matches our ambition.

Activity Alliance brings our members, partners and disabled people together to make active lives possible.

Collectively, we continue to challenge perceptions and change the reality of **disability, inclusion and sport.**



1. Introduction

We are pleased to be able to introduce our **2018 - 2021 strategy** and feel incredibly proud of the progress we made and impact we had as the English Federation of Disability Sport. Now as we enter a new era under our new operating name, **Activity Alliance**, we hope you enjoy reading about our vision and goals for the future. It is an ideal time for us to evolve, and collaborate to transform disabled people's participation in sport and active recreation.

In 2018, we celebrate our 20th anniversary.

This will be a great landmark.

In the last financial year, we have grown our annual turnover to reach in excess of £3 million. We have secured significant investment from Sport England as a recognised expert partner. We have achieved the support of Spirit of 2012 for our UK-wide Get Out Get Active programme creating inclusive opportunities for disabled people.

Although our core purpose is to support other organisations, we have also provided a platform through both athletics and swimming events for disabled people to compete and progress along a competitive player pathway. We remain committed to ensuring high quality and accessible provision for disabled people to compete both regionally and nationally.

Our ambition through this strategy period is to create a step change in the number of disabled people participating in sport and active recreation. Participation figures have remained stubbornly resistant to growth for many years. We are excited about the opportunity to work with a broader mix of stakeholders to assist us in reaching more

disabled people as well as those with long-term health conditions.

Entering a new era in our existence and our new name will help us to build on the credibility developed in recent years and will future-proof the organisation for the years ahead.

We will broaden our membership base, creating the opportunity to develop even stronger collaborative approaches to programme delivery and grow our reach. We will implement an impact-focused approach to our work, ensuring we measure the impact we have on other organisations and ultimately on disabled people's lives.

Here at Activity Alliance, we are excited about advancing our business development potential through the 2018 - 2021 period. We will encourage our membership and stakeholders to innovate collaboratively with us, maximising the potential of achieving funding and greater impact. We will develop our ability to provide paid-for-services to partners, assisting to create a successful, innovative and sustainable organisation beyond this period.

We look forward to reaching out and working with you over the forthcoming years.

2. Our purpose



Making active lives possible by enabling organisations to support individual disabled people to be active and stay active for life.

3. Our vision

Disabled people are active for life.

This vision is:

Our view of the future position that we wish to see achieved.

Our definition of that position is:

Equality in participation whereby disabled people are just as likely to be active as non-disabled people.

Our clear target for progress by March 2021 is to see disabled people's participation rates **on a sustainable upward trajectory.**

Disabled people remain the least active group in the society and organisations continue to need the help of Activity Alliance and our Member and partner organisations to enable them to respond effectively to this challenge.



4. Outcomes

Our outcomes impact at three levels (see summary diagram at the end of this strategy):

1 Individual

Enhanced health and well-being for all disabled people (physical, mental, social, emotional and economic well-being) - responding to individual people's desire to:

- Build and retain friendships and connections.
 - Improve health.
 - Progress in life.
 - Build mental strength and well-being.
 - Have fun and feel free.
 - Strengthen family and support systems.
- Our **Motivate Me** research identified these individual outcomes or values.

2 Society

A more equal society in which disabled people can achieve more through increased opportunities and choice - contributing to the Government's five outcomes:

- Physical well-being (sometimes referred to as "Physical Health").
- Mental well-being.
- Individual development.
- Social and community development.
- Economic development.

3 Organisational

A system where organisations have fully embedded approaches to inclusion into their mainstream work so that they can effectively support individual disabled people to be active and stay active for life:

- Improvement, leadership and organisational development.
- More effective engagement.
- Applying learning from research and insight.
- Application of inclusive marketing and communications approaches.
- Change through advocacy and influence.
- Inclusive programme management.



5. Culture, values and behaviours

We continue to strengthen and embed a dynamic organisational culture built solidly on the shared values of our staff, volunteers, members and partners. We are motivated by seeing the real change that we help to make possible.

Our shared values shape our behaviour. At Activity Alliance we:



are passionate about unlocking the life-changing value of sport and active recreation.



embrace family values, placing loyalty and empathy at the heart of what we do.



build relationships on trust, honesty and openness.



are guided by disabled people and a determination to achieve equality.

6. Theory of change



In the first year of this strategy period, we will be exploring and creating our organisational theory of change. This will enable us to test our journey as well as understand how we map our activities against stakeholders' needs. It will paint a picture of our desired outcomes alongside our impact.

Although we already base our work on an outcomes-based framework, the creation of our theory of change will enable us to be more effective. We will be able to describe how we support more disabled people

to be active and how we are evidencing our impact and achievements towards this.

Conversations have already begun with both the team and the board relating to its development. However, it will be critical that we draw on our expert membership, funding partners and wider stakeholders to ensure that it reflects the views and intelligence of all who we work with.

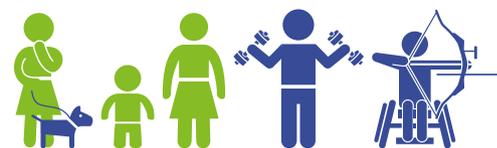
We will publish our clear and accessible theory of change on our website in March 2019.

A theory of change shows how you expect outcomes to occur over the short, medium and longer term as a result of your work. It is particularly helpful if you are planning or evaluating a complex initiative, but can also be used for more straightforward projects.

(Excerpt from www.knowhownonprofit.org)



7. Definitions and language



7.1 Sport

We apply a broad and inclusive definition of the word **“sport”** as defined in 2003, by the **UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Sport for Development and Peace** for the purposes of development, as follows: **“All forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction. These include: play; recreation; organised, casual or competitive sport and indigenous sports and games.”**

Even with this **“inclusive”** definition, the use of **“sport”** language and terminology can often be a barrier rather than an aid to understanding the nature of the offer. Therefore, throughout this document we also use the term **“active recreation”** and maintain clear and simple language, defining our terms as follows:

In line with the agreed definition above, when we use the words **“sport and active recreation”**, this definition includes a wide range of other terms including exercise, fitness, recreation and a wide range of structured, unstructured, competitive and just plain fun active opportunities.

7.2 Disabled people

One in five people in the UK consider themselves as a disabled person. This means as a large proportion of our society, we need to consider so much more than individuals’ impairments or health conditions.

We need to consider the wide diversity of disabled people including gender, cultural, ethnic and religious as well as socio-economic backgrounds.

‘Disability’ is used as a catch-all phrase - this is broadly accepted but some groups and individuals do not necessarily identify with the term and would not consider themselves to be disabled. How many older people do you know who say: **“I’m not disabled. I am just old?”** The term disability covers a wide range of different conditions and impairments - far too many to name individually. There is a broad legal definition in the UK, which is as follows:

“A physical or mental impairment that has a ‘substantial’ and ‘long-term’ negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities” (Equality Act 2010).

- **‘Substantial’** is more than minor or trivial e.g. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed.
- **‘Long-term’** means 12 months or more e.g. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection.

It is not necessary to know or understand different types of impairments or long-term health conditions, though if you work regularly with a particular group you may wish to inform yourself. It is much more important to know and understand the sorts of things that get in the way and prevent disabled people from participating in everyday life. The things that get in the way are called **“barriers”** and they include everything from inaccessible buildings and websites to people’s attitudes and assumptions.

7.3 The social and medical models of disability

There are two schools of thought or ‘**models**’ on disability, the social and medical models:

- **The social model** of disability says that it is the barriers in society such as inaccessible buildings or people’s attitudes that create disability and by removing those barriers you overcome the disability.
- **The medical model** says that a person’s health condition or impairment causes the disability and that this requires medical intervention and treatment to cure the “**problem**”.

This Strategy is based on the social model of disability because it empowers disabled people and encourages non-disabled people and organisations to be more inclusive.

By removing ‘**barriers**’ we remove the disability. Other organisations have developed a clear understanding about the social model of disability, including Scope.

By applying the social model in our work, we identify disabled people as active citizens in sport and active recreation.

The application of this in sport means we still recognise the use of impairment groupings in competition structures and pathways.

It is important to remember that not all impairments are clearly identifiable or could be hidden. Whilst we believe the terminology that we are using is the most relevant now, we will constantly consult disabled people to ensure that the language we use connects to their interests and aspirations. In particular, we are seeking to ensure that people with mental health problems are included fully in our work.

Our strong focus is on the real benefits for disabled people from direct participation in sport and active recreation. However, we also actively encourage and enable disabled people to take part in all aspects of sport, whether as volunteers or paid employees. This includes taking up key roles as volunteers, leaders, coaches and teachers in the sector.



Key areas of strategic shift for 2018 - 2021



8. Key areas of strategic shift for 2018 - 2021

In this Strategy, Activity Alliance builds solidly on our approach over the previous strategic period. However, there are a number of key areas where an increased emphasis and drive will ensure that we are effective at responding to key opportunities to expand our influence and further increase our impact.

These are:



- Children, young people and older people working to build strong foundations in early life continuing into later life.



- Acting as **“thought leaders”** using influence and collaboration:
 - Applying a broad definition of sport and active recreation.
 - Using a wide and inclusive definition of disability (including long-term conditions).



- Ensuring strengthened connectivity between disabled people (and those working with or for them) and active recreation.



- Even greater emphasis on engaging the least active people (including a strengthened focus on customers or consumers).



- Increased flexibility in relation to the settings within which activity takes place (e.g. workplace, countryside, community settings).

9. How we will achieve change

This section sets out our aims for each of our key areas of work. In each case, we have ensured that these are underpinned by measurable objectives and actions which recognise the areas of strategic shift (set out in section 8). It will be essential to have line of sight from all our work to the outcomes (see diagram further on in the strategy).

Activity Alliance will support organisations to constantly improve how they respond to the needs and aspirations of disabled people through:

9.1 Using research and insight

At the heart of our work, informing all we plan and do. Enabling us to bring even stronger “**demand side**” perspectives to inform how organisations can better include disabled people in active recreation and sport.



2018 - 2021 aims:

- Conduct more **primary research** projects which can inform how organisations can increase disabled people’s activity.
- Ensure continued and improved **inclusion of disabled people** in our research processes.
- Improve **dissemination of research** findings (internally and externally) - ensuring the target audiences receive results in a relevant and usable format.
- Work with partners to test current Activity Alliance research guidance through **programme evaluation**.
- **Increase collaboration** with partners within and outside of the sport and active recreation sector.

9.2 Supporting engagement

Connecting disabled people (and the world or infrastructure surrounding them) with the world of active recreation and sport. Ensuring that outreach underpins all our work.



2018 - 2021 aims:

- **Ensure** that key strategic partners are more effective in reaching and engaging less active disabled people (through the provision of support and resources).
- **Secure** a sustainable and co-ordinated approach to getting more disabled people active in sport and active recreation across England (by facilitating regional support and local networks).
- **Drive** improvement in organisations involved in sport and active recreation provision and delivery for disabled people (by applying the key elements of excellence in our Leading Equitable and Accessible Delivery - LEAD programme).
- Ensure that sporting partners **identify and nurture** talented disabled people within player pathways (including proactive talent recruitment as well as effective development systems).

9.3 Applying inclusive marketing and communications expertise



The mechanisms, content and processes of proper marketing to engage and influence disabled people - introducing and advocating the use of better language and approaches which ensure inclusive communications.

2018 - 2021 aims:

- To drive national and local organisations to be more effective in **inclusive marketing** communications that resonate with disabled people.
- To **position and promote** disabled people's authentic voice on sport and active recreation and **drive** more user-centric marketing.
- To **champion** national or local campaigns that make a difference and include more disabled people.
- To collaborate with a wider range of partners to **deliver** better practices in marketing communications.

9.4 Managing inclusive programmes



Ensuring our own programme management exemplifies best practice in inclusive delivery. Activity Alliance sees real value in leading or supporting programmes which evidence the best inclusion practice which is why we will seek to strengthen our capacity whilst maintaining the principle of enabling other organisations to be more effective and working collaboratively in all programmes.

2018 - 2021 aims:

- To **lead, deliver and account** for the Get Out Get Active (GOGA) programme and its legacy, achieving all key performance indicators and ensuring that evaluation and learning informs best practice in inclusive active recreation.
- Pro-actively **seek and support opportunities** for business development including an increase in the organisations programme profile in line with key values and principles.
- To **lead and account** for our Inclusive Activity Programme and Inclusive PE Training Programme, evidencing the impact of the initiatives and securing their sustainability.
- To **champion** delivery of high quality and **sustainable inclusive events** at local and national level, through the development of resources.
- To work in partnership to **directly deliver** commissioned events for competition and identified progression routes.

9.5 Improvement, development and leadership



Providing expertise and resources to enable improvement, leadership and organisational development across the system (including capability, workforce development, knowledge transfer and capacity building). We will work to ensure that we help organisations and individuals to strengthen their skills in relation to inclusion. In our improvement work, it will be important to ensure that:

- We work in **collaboration** with key improvement partners.
- **Disabled people remain at the heart** of our approach and our work.
- We are clear about our technical expertise and **added value**.
- We consistently and effectively apply the **Talk to Me Principles**.

2018 - 2021 aims:

- To support the **development** of visionary, forward-thinking and self-determined **leaders** who are passionate about making a difference for disabled people in our community (LEAD Strand 1).
- To develop a **competency framework**, which supports the sector to upskill the workforce so that they can better include disabled people as valued customers.
- To provide direct support to key partners with **guidance and resources** to improve their effectiveness in delivering sport and physical activity programmes by and for disabled people at all levels.
- To **develop and nurture volunteers** and provide workforce development opportunities directly and indirectly in partnership with volunteering agencies.

9.6 Advocating and influencing policies, strategy and investment



Ensuring that we are able to effectively influence stakeholders to increase disabled people's inclusion. We will champion collaboration and cooperation in advocacy work. Activity Alliance will use its own engagement and partnership working as an exemplar to influence others.

2018 - 2021 aims:

- To strengthen our position as the **leading expert voice** advocating disabled people's participation in active recreation.
- To establish new **collaborations and alliances** which strengthen our ability to influence policy, investment and practice in order to maximise disabled people's activity.
- To develop a legitimate **mass member** base of support, experience and expertise to underpin our ability to advocate with and on behalf of disabled people.

9.7 Excellent corporate support

Strengthening the efficiency and effectiveness of our corporate activity to deliver all of the above through:

- Strategy, performance and people management.
- Finance.
- Governance and assurance.
- Fundraising.
- Membership engagement and support.

2018 - 2021 aims:

- To **transform** the charity's **business development**, introducing innovative and best practice commercial and charity approaches to financial sustainability.
- To embed full **ownership** of budgetary, performance and risk management across the organisation to secure full accountability and even stronger governance assurance.
- To develop a **strong membership** base underpinned by mutual respect, strong and regular communication and a clear support package.
- To work with members, associate members and local partners to agree **measures that capture collective impact** of work in relation to Government and Sport England Strategy.



Measuring success, proving impact



10. Measuring success, proving impact

We have a strong track record of setting, measuring and reporting on clear performance indicators. We have become increasingly effective in being able to answer a question that challenges all expert partners: **“so what difference do all our interventions really make?”**

We are a **‘learning organisation’** that uses our robust measurement and evaluation processes to support continued improvement in the service that it delivers.

In this strategic period, we will once again push the boundaries of measurement by introducing an approach to consistently understanding the experiences of end users.

This will enable us and our partners to learn at pace and evolve delivery to ensure a continual improvement in the experience of disabled participants.

The key elements of our measures of success will be:

- **Clear Key Performance Indicators** - which at the highest level are reported to the Activity Alliance Board and partners but which cascade clearly through the delivery plans and individual performance targets. Under each aim we have set out the specific priorities and KPIs from April 2017-19. This has been informed by the work on our Sport England funding submission. Our delivery plan is shaped to align with the aims set out in Section 9. We will seek through our reporting to provide the evidence of the impact our work has on wider nation’s participation including Sport England Active Lives Survey. Some KPIs will be input or process measures but we will also incorporate more measures from the following three categories. KPIs will include where relevant online analytics. With increased digital use in our research, engagement and especially our marketing work, we are able to present analytical insight on offers like resource downloads, social media and sign-ups.
- **Feedback** - as a business to business organisation we are determined to find out from the organisations we support how effectively they are able to implement the guidance we provide. Increasingly, we are able to show through feedback responses and the submission of clear case studies where organisations have used the guidance and support we provide most effectively. Regular feedback will strengthen our understanding of the core requirements of our stakeholders and produce some **“softer”** evidence of how they believe they are contributing to the five fundamental (societal level) outcomes.
- **Evaluation** - it is increasingly possible for us in partnership with delivery stakeholders (including NGBs, CSPs and a wide range of other programme partners) to evaluate the impact of our work. Although not funded by Sport England, our Get Out Get Active (GOGA) Programme is designed to test the effectiveness of the ten Talk to Me Principles developed through our research work.

We have been able to secure significant external investment into that programme and crucially of its impact. Increasingly, we work with partners to develop new interventions and will always embed effective evaluation. All our evaluation work will test the impact of programmes on key society level outcomes.



- **End user surveys** - we are ever more determined to understand the difference we make. We are working in partnership to develop a standardised model for assessing disabled people’s customer experience that benefits from improved interventions by the organisations we work to support. In order to achieve this, we will develop a robust, consistent and effective methodology for understanding the participant experience of disabled people taking part in sport and active recreation.

End user surveys will provide a key opportunity to test with disabled people directly how effectively a programme enables them to secure the individual outcomes or benefits set out in our model. As shown in the diagram at the end of this Strategy, individuals who are able to share their experience of improving their physical or mental health and well-being will contribute to the evidence of progress at a society level.

We would like to see this accessible but powerful feedback tool being used by all stakeholders we engage with. This will enable the experience that is delivered to be monitored and improvements to be made at strategic and operational level. In addition to providing consistent evidence of the extent to which disabled people experience the positive outcome intended.

Executive summary



11. Executive summary

Vision: Disabled people are active for life.

Purpose:

Making active lives possible by enabling organisations to support individual disabled people to be active and stay active for life.

Strategic Outcomes:

1. Enhanced health and well-being for all disabled people (i.e. physical, psychological, social and emotional health).
2. A more equal society in which disabled people can achieve more through increased opportunities and choice.
3. A system where organisations have fully embedded approaches to inclusion into their mainstream work so that they can effectively support individual disabled people to be active and stay active for life.

Strategic Shift 2018 - 2021:

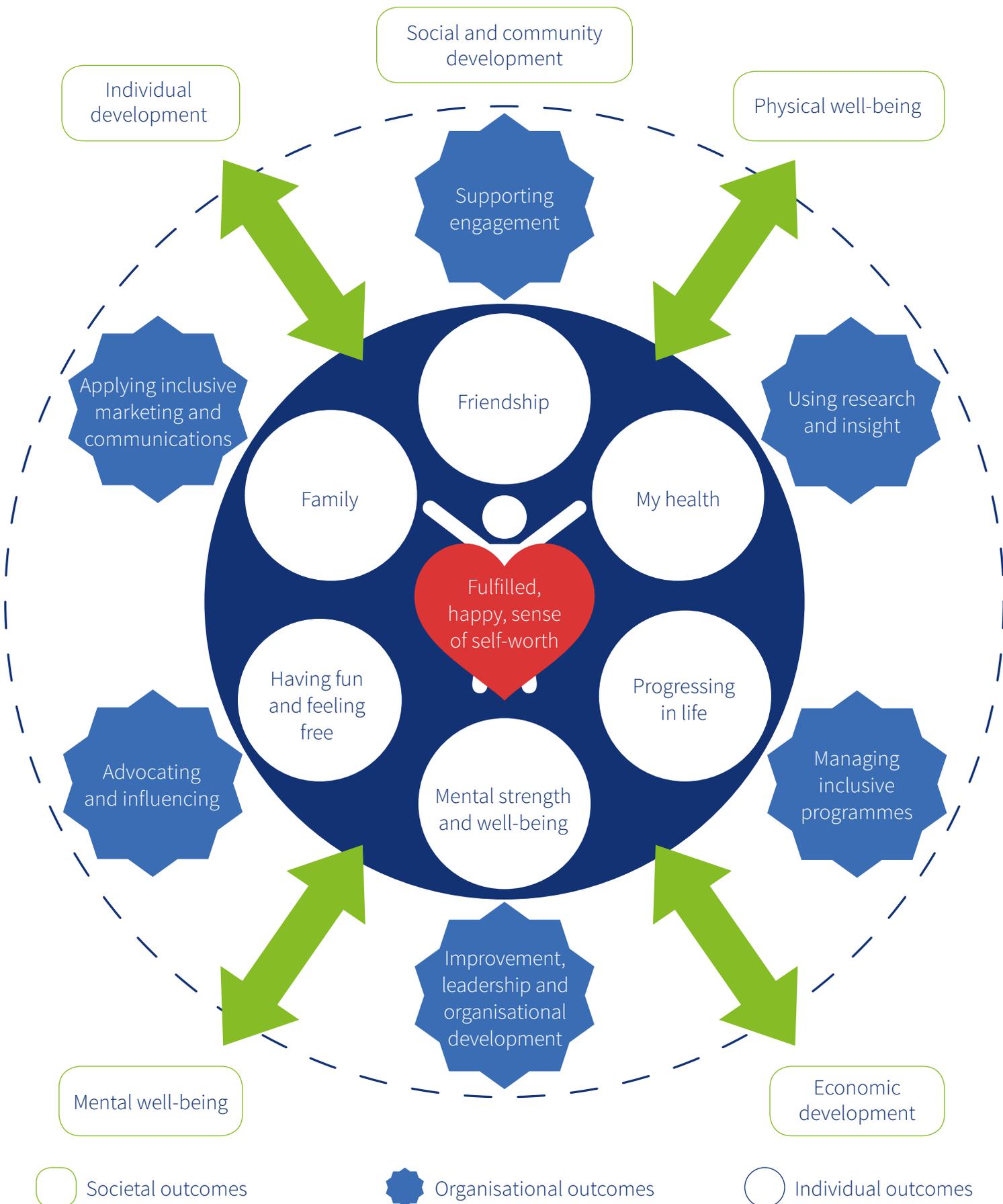
1. **Children and young people and older people** - strong foundations in early life continuing into later life.
2. Thought leaders - influence and collaboration with partners and the worlds of sport and **all involved in active recreation**.
3. Thought leaders - influence and collaboration across a **wide and inclusive definition of disability** including people with long-term health conditions.
4. Ensuring **strengthened connectivity** between the wider worlds of active recreation and the wider definitions of disability.
5. Even greater emphasis on engaging the **least active people** (including strengthened focus on customers or consumers).
6. Increased flexibility in relation to **the settings** within which activity takes place (e.g. work place, countryside, community settings).

Measuring Outcomes and Impact:

1. Key performance indicators (KPIs)
2. Feedback
3. Evaluation
4. End user surveys



This diagram shows how our organisational outcomes support individual and society-wide outcomes:







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 @AllForActivity

Activity Alliance is the operating name for the English Federation of Disability Sport. Charity Registration Number 1075180.

