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### Message from the Chair

#### Sam Orde, Chair

Welcome to Activity Alliance's 2019-20 Impact Report. It has been another impactful 12 months for the charity, and I hope you enjoy reading about some of our successes in this report.

This year, we have worked with a wide range of organisations, across many sectors, to increase disabled people's opportunities to be active. Key to this has been collaboration with our members, funders, and partner networks. In this report, you will find examples of how we have been tackling the inequalities that exist for disabled people in sport and activity. By the end of 2019, we began to see signs of progress with an increase in disabled people's activity levels. But there is much more to do to close the unjust participation gap between disabled and non-disabled people.

We began 2020 with the development of a clear organisational strategy; to achieve fairness for disabled people. The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic presented a huge challenge and I am

extremely proud of Activity Alliance's response. Staff proceeded to adapt and work incredibly hard to stay connected and support disabled people to be and stay active during lockdown. We seized the opportunity to ensure inclusion and accessibility were at the forefront of the sport and leisure sector's plans to reopen their doors.

As we move forward through this difficult and unpredictable time, we will learn from and use new insight to advocate for the needs of disabled people. Our new strategy will drive sustainable social change and deliver better experiences for disabled people in sport and activity.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the charity this year.
I am looking forward to what the next 12 months has in store for Activity Alliance.

Looking ahead to 2020-21

**Barry Horne, Chief Executive** 

Everyone at Activity Alliance is determined to make a difference to the lives of disabled people.

We know that sport and activity bring tremendous benefits and improved wellbeing. In recent years we have seen some improvement but that positive change must be accelerated. The impact of Covid-19 on the lives of disabled people and the ability of activity providers to meet all our needs is having a profound effect on our work.

Physical inactivity levels among disabled people in England are still roughly twice that of non-disabled people. So, from 2020-21 we will tighten our focus to achieve a new single long-term vision: **Fairness for disabled people in sport and activity**.

We will close the gap between disabled people's level of inactivity and that of non-disabled people. We will make that change within a generation by:

- **1.** Embedding inclusive practice into organisations
- **2.** Changing attitudes towards disabled people in sport and activity

Everything we do will be rigorously tested to ensure that it is making a positive contribution to achieving one or both of those objectives.

The charity has grown significantly in recent years, more than tripling our expenditure. That growth must continue, and our focused review of impact will shape and direct every penny of income to be certain that our vision can be realised.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Activity Alliance staff and Board members, our member organisations and wider partners for your dedication and support this year.

# Tackling inequalities through a global pandemic



As we came to the end of our financial year 2019-20, life, for all of us changed. As the coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak swept across the world and we went into lockdown, the sport and leisure sector had no choice but to close its doors.

Before this crisis, disabled people faced real challenges in accessing opportunities to be active. We were making good progress on closing the 'fairness gap' between disabled and non-disabled people's activity levels. In April, Sport England's Active Lives Adult Survey reported rising activity levels for people with an impairment or long-term health condition. 4.5m (47.3%) people active, compared to 4.2m (44.8%) twelve months ago, an increase of 258,100 (2.5%). It is yet unknown how the Covid-19 pandemic will impact disabled people, but we do know that inequalities have widened.

We, like many others, adjusted to new ways of working and refocused our efforts to support disabled people through this unprecedented time. Our team was quick to respond to an influx of requests for support from across the sport and leisure sector. There was a growing need to provide accessible and inclusive activities for disabled people at home.

In March, we compiled and promoted information on ways that disabled people could keep active while at home. We followed this in April with the release of our **STEP inclusion** resources for individuals and organisations.

The STEP tool shows people how to adapt sports and activities using everyday items so that everyone, disabled and non-disabled, can take part together.



Our active at home information and STEP resources were valued contributions to Sport England's Join the Movement **#StayInWorkOut** campaign. The uptake showed in the high volume of downloads and digital engagement.

In June, ahead of the gradual reopening of the sport and leisure sector, we published new guidance titled 'Reopening Activity:

An inclusive response'. Created in consultation with sport, leisure and disability equality partners, the resource helps providers to ensure that disabled people are included as they reopen their doors. Over a two-month period, the guidance was downloaded from our website more than 850 times, showing organisations' aspiration to be better prepared.

Inclusive activity can make a big difference to disabled people's quality of life. It is good for everyone's physical and mental health and benefits our economy. Activity Alliance will not stand by and allow disabled people to become the forgotten audience as the nation's activity levels increase. We will continue to apply new learning about how we can work and what changes are needed to ensure that disabled people gain maximum benefits as opportunities to be active open up again.

#### Thank you

Thank you to all our members and partners for the innovative and accessible responses they have delivered so far during this crisis. Together we will achieve fairness for all in sport and activity.



# Embedding inclusive practice into organisations



Activity Alliance empowers sport and activity organisations to deliver better experiences for disabled people. Our expertise and resources provide them with the guidance and training they need to embed inclusive practice at all levels.

Leading organisational improvement

This year, we have supported six national and regional partners to complete **Lead** - our inclusion improvement programme.

Headed up by our engagement team, the programme takes organisations on an improvement journey focused on disability equality. Our advisors provide each organisation with a bespoke improvement plan. It outlines how they can improve the services they provide for disabled people and offers a suite of solutions.

Lead can be an intensive process for organisations. To combat this, we created our new Lead flashcards as an informal introduction to the programme. They prompt organisations to think about how they currently engage with disabled people and generate new ideas. The flashcards support organisations to lay the foundations for a successful inclusion improvement journey.



#### **Youth Sport Trust boosts commitment to inclusion**

Children's charity, the Youth Sport Trust began their inclusion improvement journey with Activity Alliance in 2019. Julie Robbins, Head of Inclusion and Diversity, describes the impact Lead has had at the Trust:

Youth Sport Trust found the recent Lead self-assessment programme with Activity Alliance extremely valuable. Engaging staff from across the organisation to review our practices has helped us to embed inclusion into our day-to-day work at every level. It also highlighted where we need to focus our efforts in the future to improve equality for disabled people both internally and more widely across the sector.



## **Empowering workforces** to be more inclusive

This year, we redeveloped our online customer service training course - 'Delivering an excellent service for disabled customers'.

The comprehensive course educates sport and leisure professionals on how they can embed inclusive practice into their roles. This includes all front of house staff like receptionists and centre managers. Increasing their disability awareness and confidence means more customers will have a welcoming and inclusive experience.

The course is now a key element of Swim England's national inclusive swimming project. Funded by London Marathon Charitable Trust, the project aims to improve disabled people's access to and experience of swimming at 20 pools across the UK.

Find out more about available training opportunities at activityalliance.org.uk/how-we-help/training



## Upskilling organisations on inclusive communications

Our position as inclusive marketing and communications experts in the sport and leisure sector continues to grow. With partners at all levels accessing our services and bank of resources to reach more people accessibly and inclusively.

This year, we were proud to make significant contributions to embed inclusive practice into several high-profile campaigns and programmes. This includes Sport England's We Are Undefeatable campaign, GM Moving's That Counts! campaign, and the Include Me West Midlands programme.

The messaging and visual identity for That Counts! was a fantastic example of an inclusive campaign.

We delivered bespoke training to communications professionals at several national bodies.
This included Women in Sport, London Sport,
Swim England and one of the UK's leading leisure operators Everyone Active.

Nine in ten stakeholders who received inclusive communications support from Activity Alliance rated it 'very' or 'quite' useful. This includes attending an inclusive communications workshop and using our comprehensive guide and bitesize factsheets to inclusion proof their work.

Read more about inclusive communications at activityalliance.org.uk/communications



Activity Alliance gave tremendous support throughout the planning and execution of Greater Manchester's That Counts! marketing campaign.

They contributed to the creative process to ensure we were fully inclusive and mindful of the audiences we were focused on. Their direct input and clear guidance on accessibility issues challenged us in a supportive way; and empowered us to produce inclusive campaign outputs.

Hayley Lever,
Chief Executive Officer, GreaterSport and Exec Lead, GM Moving

# Get Out Get Active celebrates phase one success

This year, our Get Out Get Active (GOGA) programme reached a significant milestone. Following three years in delivery, Activity Alliance and funding partner, Spirit of 2012, took time to celebrate the programme's impact so far. From 2016-2019, GOGA has been a huge success in bringing disabled and non-disabled people together in activities across the UK.

This success is credit to all our national and local delivery partners who have embraced the 'GOGA approach'. Together, we have engaged some of the UK's least active people in fun, inclusive activities. The impact of which has resulted in stronger, healthier and happier communities.

## Just some of GOGA's impact so far:



- Engaged more than 30,000 disabled and non-disabled people in inclusive activities.
   With four in ten (42%) GOGA participants saying they had not done any physical activity prior to joining the programme.
- Seven in ten (69%) participants felt that their GOGA experience positively contributed to an increase in their physical activity levels.
- Instilled confidence in over half of all participants to take up other activity opportunities for 9-12 months after taking part in GOGA.
- Additional health and wellbeing benefits recorded among all GOGA participants included:
  - Improved life satisfaction.
  - Reduced anxiety levels.
  - Greater social connection in their community.



#### **New funding brings Get Out Get Active to more UK locations**

In February, Activity Alliance was delighted to announce that the GOGA programme will continue for a further three years. Thousands more inactive people across the UK will benefit from this new £5 million investment. It will enable Activity Alliance and partners to build on the success of GOGA phase one and engage more people in inclusive activities until 2023.

Commencing in April 2020, phase two of GOGA will be delivered in 21 locations. This has been made possible thanks to our founding funder,

Spirit of 2012. They awarded a further £3 million to GOGA across the UK. Alongside, a £1 million grant investment from London Marathon Charitable Trust. A further £1million contribution from Sport England National Lottery fund will boost the programme's reach in England.

Activity Alliance looks forward to working with all national and local delivery partners to support more disabled and non-disabled people to get out and get active together!

Visit getoutgetactive.co.uk for more information.



## Improving opportunities in schools and communities

Activity Alliance headed back to school to deliver **Sainsbury's Active Kids for All Inclusive PE Training**. The programme provides free training workshops and resources to support teachers, trainee teachers and school staff to deliver high quality PE for all young people. From April 2019 to March 2020, we trained more than 2,500 teachers and school staff, in partnership with our home nation counterparts, Youth Sport Trust and British Paralympic Association.

We also secured a funding extension from Sainsbury's to continue programme delivery until March 2021. Our 2017-2020 programme evaluation shows that Inclusive PE Training is having a positive impact on both teachers and students:



Confidence of teachers and school staff in providing inclusive PE experiences increased from 50% to 92% after taking part in the programme.



After attending a workshop, 90% of teachers felt they had the skills and knowledge to include all young people effectively.



Before attending a workshop, only 53% of teachers felt their students had access to high quality inclusive PE. This increased to 92% following the training.



Top benefits of inclusive PE lessons identified by students were taking part in new activities more often, improving their skills, and greater enjoyment.

Activity Alliance also enjoyed another successful year of delivering our community-based **Inclusive Activity Programme** in partnership with UK Coaching. Supported by Sport England's National Lottery fund, it provides specialised training on how to engage disabled people more effectively in physical activity. It is ideal for organisations and individuals alike, including sports coaches, community leaders and healthcare professionals. From April 2019 to March 2020, we delivered inclusive activity training to 950 individuals.

## Premiership Rugby tackles inclusion head on

In October, we teamed up with Premiership Rugby to address a lack of confidence among coaching staff to deliver inclusive rugby opportunities to disabled people. To date, we have delivered five workshops to 49 individuals across several premiership rugby clubs. Moving forward, we will be working with Premiership Rugby to enable all 2,000 rugby clubs across the country to take part in the Inclusive Activity Programme.

The Inclusive Activity Programme workshop was expertly delivered and really thought provoking. The course taught us how to modify coaching sessions and focus on the participants abilities rather than their impairments. We had the opportunity to put our knowledge into practice and apply theory models to live coaching situations that we encounter when delivering Project Rugby and introducing new people to the game. I'd highly recommend this course to all rugby coaches!

Charlie White,
Project Rugby Officer,
Saracens Sport Foundation



#### **Delivering inclusive events**

From first time experiences to talent development opportunities, Activity Alliance's events programme has something for everyone.

From April to July 2019, our **Regional and National Junior Athletics Championships** took place with support from British Athletics and Lions Clubs International. 1,300 young disabled people took part in this year's programme. 200 athletes went forward to represent their region at the National Championships in Derby. Activity Alliance crowned the North West team as 2019 National Champions after two days of spirited competition!

In July, we managed the delivery of an **inclusive family sports day** for the Home Office. Over 1,500 staff and family members enjoyed taking part in a range of inclusive sports including boccia, blind football, sitting volleyball and adapted tennis games.



In December, more than 230 swimmers competed in the **National Para-Swimming Championships** at Manchester Aquatics Centre.
The event welcomed a mix of established and new para-swimming stars, including Eleanor Simmonds, Reece Dunn, Ellie Challis and Maisie Summers-Newton. The Championships is organised by Activity Alliance in partnership with British Para-Swimming.

In March, the next generation of para-swimmers made a splash at the **National Junior Para-Swimming Championships** in Sunderland. More than 100 swimmers aged 10-18 years old took part. For many, this event is their first experience of a national competition and an opportunity to improve their personal best times. We deliver this event each year in partnership with Swim England.



We came so close last year and to win this year, is just everything to us. These Championships have a massive impact on our athletes.

As well as having the opportunity to compete, the event has huge social benefits because everyone makes new friends from other clubs and cheers each other on. The support the athletes receive and give each other gives them the confidence and encouragement to flourish at this athletics event and beyond.

Samantha, North West athletics team volunteer

## Refreshed toolkit provides clear and simple guidance

Activity Alliance is renowned for delivering high quality inclusive events. Our expert events team also provide specialist guidance on embedding inclusive practice for organisations and activity leaders.

In September, we added to our resource bank with the release of our profile toolkit. Supported by Sainsbury's Inclusive PE Training, the refreshed toolkit guides sports coaches, teachers and physiotherapists on different methods of identifying and grouping disabled people for events and activities. The toolkit not only enables fair competition at a beginner level, it also supports disabled people to take their first steps onto a competitive pathway in sport.

# Changing attitudes towards disabled people in sport and activity

Activity Alliance is passionate about unlocking the value of sport and activity for disabled people. Robust insight and people's lived experience guide all our work. We are committed to changing out-dated attitudes and removing the barriers that society imposes on disabled people.

# Calling time on negative perceptions

In July 2019, Activity Alliance took a powerful step in its advocacy and influencing work with the launch of the **Who says? campaign**. We created it in response to our research into non-disabled people's attitudes on inclusive activity. Who says? called time on negative perceptions and offered ways to rethink and change out-dated views. The campaign ran for six weeks over summer and was supported by Sport England.

Featuring humour and straight talk, the six films provided upbeat insight from disabled and non-disabled people.





Who says? created a movement that influenced at three levels. For individuals, society and us as an Alliance. Our members and sport sector partners rallied behind us. Many Active Partnerships and National Governing Bodies backed the campaign with their own creative ideas. We received great public and influencer support across social media, including comedian and The Last Leg presenter Adam Hills and Paralympian Jonnie Peacock. As well as West Midlands Mayor Andy Street and Liverpool City Region Mayor, Steve Rotheram, who both spoke publicly about the campaign.

The campaign was also a key success in demonstrating how to reach and engage people inclusively. We ensured all content was accessible and used multiple alternative formats,

including audio described video, British Sign Language translation and easy read. Later in the year, the campaign was shortlisted for two industry awards - Northern Digital Awards and Charity Film Awards. We took bronze in the latter. A proud moment for everyone involved.

There is much still to do to achieve fairness for disabled people in society. Phase one of Who says? has given us an advocacy platform to continue this important work.

Relive our Who says? campaign here:

activityalliance.org.uk/whosays

# New research reveals unacceptable inequalities

Activity Alliance is proud to be the leading source of insight on disabled people in sport and activity. This year, we released two ground-breaking reports examining disabled people's experiences and perceptions.

In January, we released our first annual research report titled 'Activity Alliance Annual Disability and Activity Survey 2019-20'. Supported by Sport England and involving more than 2,000 respondents, it presents an in-depth comparison of disabled and non-disabled adults' experiences of sport and activity.



The survey findings reinforced that disabled people remain substantially more likely than non-disabled people to be physically inactive. And, revealed some of the many unacceptable inequalities that disabled people experience.

This report is a big step forward in understanding the important issues that affect a large proportion of our population. It will be repeated every year to track changes in perceptions and experiences among disabled people.



Activity Alliance's first Annual Survey increases our insight and throws down a challenge to all in the physical activity sector: to use this new understanding to make sure that far more disabled people can get active in a way that is right for them. It's a challenge that personally I know we must take up.

Tim Hollingsworth,
Chief Executive, Sport England

#### Report sparks fears for future generation

In March, we followed up the Annual Survey with the release of our most comprehensive report on disabled children and young people's experiences. Titled 'My Active Future', the report investigates the differences in disabled and non-disabled children's attitudes towards, and participation in, sport and activity.

The findings uncovered a worrying situation. Failings across many sectors are steering disabled children into an inactive adulthood. Disabled children are less active than their

peers and experience more barriers. This activity gap can lead to disabled children becoming lonely and socially isolated.

In response to this report, we called for more commitment from every sector in society to ensure all children and young people have access to inclusive opportunities.

Read Activity Alliance's new insight on disabled people in sport and activity here:

activityalliance.org.uk/research

My Active Future report: Disabled children's activity levels decrease significantly

as they get older.

Proportion of disabled children who are 'active or fairly active'.

Age 5 - 7 Key Stage 1



Age 7 - 11 Key Stage 2



Age 11 - 14 Key Stage 3



Age 14 - 16 Key Stage 4

# Pioneering regional inclusion programme

In May 2019, we joined other key national figures in sport and activity for the launch of **Include Me West Midlands**. West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) spearheads this initiative, in partnership with Sport England and Activity Alliance.

WMCA consulted directly with local disabled people and disability organisations to develop the Include Me West Midlands approach. It aims to generate a collective momentum across the region and put disabled people at the heart of activity planning, opportunities and campaigns.

Central to the success of this programme so far is the Include Me West Midlands pledge - a commitment made by local organisations to improve how they engage disabled people in physical activity. Activity Alliance's ten principles are rooted within the pledge. They form the framework for organisations to embed inclusion in their work. Since its launch, 65 local organisations have signed up to the pledge.



#### **Our General Election 2019 manifesto asks**

In late 2019, ahead of the UK General Election, we unveiled our asks for an inclusive, active nation. We called on all political parties to commit to giving disabled people the same opportunities to live full and active lives as non-disabled people.

Over the last 20 years, Activity Alliance has helped to deliver significant change, but more needs to be done. We are resolute in our determination to see increased policy focus on disabled people's inclusion at the highest level. We will not rest until disabled people have equality, freedom and choice in sport and activity.

## Our five manifesto asks for an inclusive, active nation were:

- **1.** Boost cross-department government collaboration.
- **2.** Make sport and leisure bodies responsible.
- **3.** Address disabled people's fears of losing benefits.
- **4.** Ensure collaboration for greater health and wellbeing outcomes.
- **5.** Inspire future generations through inclusive PE and school sport.





### Organisational wellbeing

Organisational wellbeing is key to our success at Activity Alliance. It is good for our staff team, the people we work with and our charity's performance.

#### **Code for Sports Governance review**

During the year, Activity Alliance's Board undertook an independent external evaluation in line with the Code for Sports Governance for Tier 3 organisations. The review was carried out by Sport and Recreation Alliance. It enabled us to identify areas of improvement that affect Board effectiveness.

The results of the review were positive.
Our Board functions effectively and openly.
Trustees are knowledgeable about the role and direction of Activity Alliance.
Communication between staff, stakeholders and members was identified as an area for improvement. Future development opportunities could include improving Board knowledge and skills on governance, finance and change management.

#### New membership approach coming soon

Collaboration is at the heart of Activity Alliance's work. Our members bring great expertise and together we make a powerful Alliance.

This year, we carried out a detailed review of our membership structure. We gained valuable insight and feedback from existing members at two consultation events.

These sessions helped us to re-evaluate how we work with members and advocate for disabled people's opportunities.

This review forms part of our ongoing work to develop a new membership approach that supports our ambitions for future growth. With a stronger, more united membership, Activity Alliance will lead a collective movement.

We will unveil our new membership approach in 2020-21.



#### Diversity and inclusion in the workplace

Activity Alliance is committed to championing equality and diversity in all aspects of employment and in the services we provide. These are the findings from our equal opportunities survey with employees and Board members:

Activity Alliance diversity profile	Percentage of total number	
People with an impairment, long-term health condition or illness	48%	
Female	71%	
Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender	10%	
From Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic background	16%	





### Financial wellbeing

Activity Alliance's total income for the financial year 2019-20 amounted to £3.71m. An increase of £411k on the previous year.

Sport England exchequer investment continues to be one of the charity's biggest funding contributions. It enables us to use our expertise to embed inclusive practice into organisations and change attitudes towards disabled people in sport and activity.

Spirit of 2012 provided £1.089m to fund the final year of the Get Out Get Active (GOGA) phase one programme. Awards totalling £886.8k for GOGA phase two, due to begin on 1 April 2020 were also received in March 2020. This income has been recognised in the financial year 2019-20



and will be carried forward as part of a restricted reserves balance. Monies received for GOGA phase two commencement include £547.5k from Spirit of 2012, £189.9k from Sport England National Lottery fund and £149.4k from London Marathon Charitable Trust. We were also awarded an additional £139k National Lottery funding this year to fulfil our role as inclusion specialists for Sport England's Secondary Teacher Training programme.

The funds raised by our individual fundraisers and corporate partners remain crucial to our work. Thank you to all our supporters and dedicated partners including Lions Clubs International who raised £4.9k.

Our event management and consultancy services provided a good level of income generation. Once again, sporting partners London Marathon Events, Swim England and British Para-Swimming, commissioned our services to deliver inclusive competition opportunities for disabled children and adults.

Income Year Ended 31 March 2020			
	Get Out Get Active programme	£1.98m	
	Sport England (Exchequer)	£1.21m	
	Sainsbury's Inclusive PE Training programme	£181.5k	
	Sport England (National Lottery) Secondary Teacher Training programme	£139.4k	
	Sport England (National Lottery) Inclusive Activity Programme	£64.5k	
	Activity Alliance events	£49.8k	
	Consultancy	£31k	
	Donations and legacies	£28.2k	
	Other	£26.3k	
	Investment income	£3.2k	
Tota	al	£3.71m	

Exp	<b>Expenditure Year Ended 31 March 2020</b>		
	Sport England programme delivery	£1.15m	
	Get Out Get Active programme	£1.05m	
	Sainsbury's Inclusive PE Training programme	£220.3k	
	Secondary Teacher Training programme	£145.6k	
	Activity Alliance events	£135k	
	Inclusive Activity Programme	£109.2k	
	Organisational development	£48.6k	
	Others	£35.1k	
Tota	al	£2.89m	

Visit Activity Alliance website for more information on our work and our members' achievements.

This document is also available in Word format. Please contact us if you need more support.

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@AllForActivity

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Photo credits: British Blind Sport, Dwarf Sports Association UK, GM Moving, GOGA Nottingham, Special Olympics GB.

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