

General Election 2019: Our asks for an inclusive, active nation



**activity
alliance**

disability
inclusion
sport

activityalliance.org.uk

About Activity Alliance

As an Alliance, our collective voice is stronger. We work with members, partners and disabled people to make active lives possible. Together, we challenge perceptions and change the reality of **disability, inclusion and sport**.

September 2018 marked 20 years since we became a national charity (previously known as the English Federation of Disability Sport). We enable organisations to support disabled individuals to be and stay active.

It is indisputable that taking part in sport and active recreation is an essential component of individual wellbeing. Yet, disabled people are still twice as likely as non-disabled people to be physically inactive. We cannot and will not accept this. Despite evidence of marginal improvement, participation figures remain stubbornly resistant to significant growth.

Our partners include Sport England, the National Disability Sport Organisations (NDSOs) and National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport. We also work with regional, coaching and education networks, such as Active Partnerships, clubs and schools.

Our three-year Strategy, **Achieving Inclusion Together**, looks to a future where disabled people are just as likely as non-disabled people to be active. View our [strategy page](#) here.

We lead the way in evidence-led insight on disabled people's inclusion in sport and active recreation. This enables us to be at the centre of influential world-renowned programmes for disabled people.

Activity Alliance will not rest until disabled people are as active as non-disabled people.

“Now is the time to redouble our efforts rather than to rest on our laurels. Disabled people count for one in five of our population and remain the least active group in society – twice as likely to be inactive as non-disabled people. We cannot accept this inequality.

“The barriers that exist for disabled people are wider than just those they face in sport. It will take national and local organisations who serve disabled people, as well as sport and leisure providers to look inwards at their own contribution.

Barry Horne, Chief Executive

Our manifesto asks for an inclusive, active nation

Disabled people are twice as likely to be inactive. At Activity Alliance, we believe that everybody has the right to be active. We also believe that the 12 December General Election is a perfect opportunity for political parties to commit to giving disabled people the same opportunities to live full and active lives.

Activity Alliance is determined to ensure that there is an increased policy focus on disabled people's inclusion in sport and active recreation. Since we formed as a charity more than 20 years ago, we have helped to deliver significant change. But there is much still to do and never has there been a better time to make the step change that disabled people need to see.

We'd like to see the next government:

1. Boost cross-department government collaboration

- Everyone has a right to enjoy an active lifestyle. This can only happen if support is offered in all areas of disabled people's lives. Government must ensure that departments work closely together to support disabled people to live, work and play on equal terms. Specific areas, which affect disabled individuals' levels of activity, include employment, transport, housing and community, health and social care.
- The move of ODI to the Cabinet Office has the potential to help by coordinating and making government accountable for progress on increasing activity levels for disabled people. But there needs to be greater urgency to tackle this inequality. Government should appoint a Minister directly responsible for disabled people and physical activity.

2. Make sport and leisure bodies responsible

- Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport must insist that the strategies of all sport and leisure bodies are inclusive of disabled people in relation to programmes, performance pathway and workforce.
- Funding must meet the organisation's needs to include and support disabled people to take part at all levels.
- The 2020 Paralympic Games year should be a springboard for change for all disabled people. From gym to stadium, no person should feel left out.

Our research provides in-depth insight on disabled people's needs and preferences. [Read our and partners' research here.](#)

Our advisors work tirelessly to improve organisations' engagement with disabled people. [Read about our engagement work here.](#)

3. Address disabled people's fears of losing benefits

Our evidence tells us that disabled people fear losing such support, and therefore their independence, as a result of being seen to be active. [The Activity Trap: Disabled people's fear of being active](#), commissioned by the Dwarf Sports Association UK was released by Activity Alliance in October 2018.

Almost half (47 per cent) are fearful of losing their benefits if they are seen to be more active. More than half (55 per cent) said they were likely to be more active if benefits weren't at risk of being taken away.

The report has eight recommendations and discussion points, but in particular, we call on parties to:

- Ensure the benefits system and other forms of government and NHS financial assistance, such as personal budgets, encourage disabled people to be as active as they want to be in all aspects of their lives.
- Remove from reassessment people whose conditions are unlikely to improve, unless they request it.
- Protect applicants' mental health and wellbeing with more support in the assessment process.
- Ensure assessment processes reflect barriers disabled people face every day and review the '20 metre rule'.

4. Ensure collaboration for greater health and wellbeing outcomes

All of us must play our part in advocating and enabling better health outcomes for everyone. However, too many disabled people are missing out on the positive social, economic and health outcomes of being active, identified in the Government's Sporting Future strategy. Healthcare professionals clearly have a particularly important role. They can have significant influence in supporting more disabled people and people with long-term health conditions to be active for life. Evidence shows that one in four patients would be more active if advised by a healthcare professional.

- Ensure health professionals are equipped and confident to advise disabled people on sport and activity.
- Insist on accessibility and inclusion in health campaigns, which encourage the population to lead an active lifestyle.

We are committed to working with a broad range of healthcare professionals and their national bodies. [Find out about our work in health here.](#)

5. Inspire future generations through inclusive PE and school sport

All children at school need to be given the same meaningful opportunity to take part in sport. A young person's experiences at school has a significant impact on how active they are in adult life.

- Provide an environment in which everyone has the opportunity to be challenged appropriately and make good progress.

- Ensure teachers feel confident and competent to include disabled children in PE and school sport.
- Regularly monitor and assess quality of inclusive PE for disabled students of all ages.

The Sainsbury's Active Kids for All Inclusive PE programme provides invaluable training. [Read more about the programme here.](#)

We will send these asks to all party leaders and raise awareness across our communication channels. Please show your support and join us in calling for change.

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