

DISABILITY SPORT NI LTD

Company Limited by Guarantee

Trustees' Annual Report (Incorporating the Directors Report)

Year ended 31 March 2024

The Trustees, who are also the directors for the purposes of company law, present their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2024.

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered charity name	Disability Sport NI Ltd
Charity registration number	NIC102838
Company registration number	NI032590
Principal office and registered Office	Unit G, Curlew Pavilion, Portside Business Park 189 Airport Road West Belfast, BT3 9ED
The Trustees	Mr Patrick Marshall – Chair Ms Barbara Jill Poots – Vice-Chair Mr Stephen Friel (resigned 21/11/23) Mr Michael Hilland (resigned 21/11/23) Mr Anthony Paul Barclay (resigned 21/11/23) Mr David Cowan Mr James Rose Mr Barry Shannon Mr Greg Yarnall Ms Nicola Woods
Company secretary	Mr Kevin O'Neill
Senior Staff	Mr Kevin O'Neill – Chief Executive Miss Rhian McCarroll – Performance Sport Manager Mr Aubrey Bingham – Community Sport Manager Ms Sonia Langasco – Projects and Services Manager Ms Linda Moody – Finance & Business Manager (Resigned May 2023)
Accountants	Connon Associates Limited Chartered accountants Ecos Centre Broughshane Road Ballymena, BT43 7QA
Auditor	Finegan Gibson Ltd Chartered accountant & statutory auditor Causeway Tower 9 James Street South Belfast, BT2 8DN
Bankers	Danske Bank Small Business PO Box 183 Donegall Square West Belfast, BT1 6JS

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ABOUT US

Disability Sport NI Ltd is Northern Ireland's main disability sports charity working to improve the health and wellbeing of disabled people through sport and active recreation. We work with people with physical, sensory and learning disabilities of all ages and with schools, disability groups, sporting organisations and clubs to ensure that everyone can benefit from the health, social and educational benefits of sport and recreation.

We believe that every person with a disability has the right to participate in all aspects of life and are committed to building a more inclusive society where disabled people have the same opportunity as non-disabled people to lead a full, active and healthy lifestyle through sport and active recreation

Launched in 1998 by a number of small disability sports groups to address the under representation of disabled people in sport, we have gradually grown to represent the vast majority of disability sports groups and clubs in Northern Ireland.

We currently have 130 members made up of disability and mainstream sports organisations and clubs, disability groups, schools and adult centres and organise a range of participation programmes, events, training courses and education projects - all designed to improve the health and wellbeing of disabled people.

We also work closely with Governing Bodies of Sport and British and Irish performance sports organisations to ensure that talented disabled sports people have the same opportunity as their non-disabled peers to train, compete and excel in their chosen sport on the world stage.

Our vision for the future is - an inclusive society where disabled people fully participate in all aspects of life, including sport and active recreation.

Our mission is - to develop sports and active recreation opportunities which give disabled people an equal opportunity to live a full, active and healthy lifestyle.

Our Strategic Outcomes are -

- A more equal and inclusive society, where more disabled people participate, compete and excel in sport and active recreation at a level of their choice;
- The improved health and wellbeing of disabled people;
- Equality of access for disabled people to participate in sport and active recreation throughout Northern Ireland.

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STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

Disability Sport NI Ltd is a charitable company limited by guarantee and does not have share capital. In the event of the company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which sets out the objects and powers of the company and is governed under its Articles of Association. It was incorporated on 24th June 1997 and registered as a charity with The Charity Commission for Northern Ireland on 22nd May 2015.

Organisation structure

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the strategic development and governance of the charity. The Trustees, who are also directors for the purposes of company law, meet 6 times per year to review the overall strategy, policies and goals of Disability Sport NI and monitor progress against the priorities identified in the organisation's strategic plan.

Trustees give of their time freely and receive no remuneration but may be reimbursed for incidental expenses incurred.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who is appointed by the Trustees, is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the charity – supported by a management team consisting of the Performance Sport Manager, Community Sport Manager and Projects and Services Manager.

The charity has adopted the National Joint Council (NJC) pay scales for its use. Increments will normally be awarded annually, from 1st April, to all employees who have served at least six months in their current grade and have not reached the maximum placing on their scale. Inflationary increases are awarded in line with the NJC's annual pay agreement.

Recruitment and appointment of trustees

Trustees are recruited on a rotational basis through an open selection and recruitment process, with positions advertised publicly on the websites of a range of relevant sports and charity websites.

A panel consisting of two existing Trustees, normally the Chair and Vice Chair, oversee the selection and recruitment of new Trustees. The CEO also sits on the panel but in a strictly advisory capacity.

Following short-listing and interview, the selection panel makes a recommendation for appointment based on the skills and experience of applicants. Recommended candidates are considered and, if appropriate, appointed by the membership at the Annual General Meeting. Trustees are appointed for an initial period of four years and may, subject to satisfactory performance, be reappointed for a second period of four years at the discretion of the Chairperson.

This ongoing process ensures that the Board has Trustees with a broad and varied range of skills and experience.

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Trustee induction and training

Following election at the Annual General Meeting, newly appointed Trustees undergo induction training to brief them on:

- their role, responsibilities and legal obligations under company and charity law,
- the organisation's values, mission and strategic objectives,
- organisational structure, key activities, policies and procedures,
- the strategic/operational planning and decision-making processes,
- key funders, financial position and reserves policy,
- Trustee expenses.

During the induction meeting, new Trustees are provided with the following documents:

- Strategic Plan
- Most Recent Annual Impact Report
- Policies and Procedures Handbook
- Trustees Role Description

A training needs analysis is carried out regularly to identify the training needs of Trustees and training organised as required.

Live Active Enterprises NI C.I.C

The charity established a community interest company in March 2016. The company is a subsidiary of Disability Sport NI Ltd, with the charity being the sole member of the company.

The purpose of the social enterprise is to run projects with a broader focus on providing active recreation opportunities which improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in the community, including disabled people and other under-represented groups, as well as developing and managing commercial services which generate income for the charity. Disability Sport NI Ltd is the sole member of Live Active Enterprises NI C.I.C.

During the reporting period the Board of the social enterprise company consisted of three Non-Executive Directors, two of whom were employees of Disability Sport NI Ltd. The Chair of Disability Sport NI Ltd is also the Chair of Live Active Enterprises NI C.I.C.

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OBJECTIVES

Disability Sport NI Ltd is established for the relief of disabled people in Northern Ireland without regard to their age, sex, race, religion, political opinion, colour or ethnicity, particularly by the provision of recreational or sporting facilities and training for the relief of such persons.

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities undertaken have helped to achieve the Charity's purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

This year was the fourth and last of Disability Sport NI's Strategic Plan covering the 2020-2024 period. Over the period of the plan the charity has had five strategic priorities as listed below:

Strategic Priority 1: Improving Health and Wellbeing

To improve the health and wellbeing of disabled people and people with long term health conditions through increased participation in sport and active recreation opportunities in every area of Northern Ireland.

Strategic Priority 2: Developing Sporting Talent

To lead the development of performance pathways and support programmes which enable talented athletes with disabilities to achieve higher levels of performance in their sport including continued international medal success.

Strategic Priority 3: Inclusive Sports Facilities and Outdoor Places

To develop access services which encourage and support the development of sports facilities and outdoor places which are inclusive of disabled people.

Strategic Priority 4: Communications, Training and Engagement

To inspire, facilitate and encourage disabled people to participate in sport and active recreation by engaging with disabled people and the broader community, by delivering inclusive training and by promoting the social model of disability.

Strategic Priority 5: Governance and Income Generation

To manage an effective, well governed organisation with the capacity to lead the development of disability sport and active recreation in Northern Ireland.

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ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

For each of the charity's five strategic priorities a summary of the main achievements during the year have been provided below:

Strategic Priority 1: Improving Health and Wellbeing

To improve the health and wellbeing of disabled people and people with long term health conditions through increased participation in sport and active recreation opportunities in every area of Northern Ireland.

Achievements

The charity organised and delivered an extensive range of community sport and active recreation programmes across Northern Ireland in partnership with a range of disability organisations and a number of District Councils. By the end of the year the charity had organised an array of sports and recreation activities which delivered 15,552 participant opportunities to 3,839 unique participants at a grassroots community level. A summary of these programmes is provided below:

1.1 Community Participation Projects – NI Wide: This involved the delivery of a varied range of participation programmes throughout Northern Ireland, many of which were linked to the District Council Disability Sports Equipment Hubs, previously established by the charity in each of Northern Ireland's 11 District Council areas.

Activities delivered during the year included inclusive walking, adapted cycling, archery, boccia, badminton, fitness to music, multi-skills sessions, 'Wheelie Active' sessions, sailing activities and a number of inclusive summer schemes for children.

1.2 Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon (ABC) Borough Council Partnership: Through a long standing partnership with ABC Borough Council, the charity currently delivers the following two community participation programmes in the area:

1.2.1 The Inclusive Sport and Leisure Project: This participation programme, funded by Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council, is delivered by our Inclusive Sport and Leisure Officer, Colleen Connolly. The programme contributed to the development and delivery of activities including Nordic walking, indoor adapted cycling, 'wheelie active' sessions, inclusive gym programmes, specialist sports programmes for people with learning disabilities, people with autism and people with physical disabilities held across a number of recreation venues in the Borough.

1.2.2 GOGA in Action Project: GOGA in Action is a legacy project from the first phase of the Get Out Get Active (GOGA), delivered from 2016-2020. The project is now led by Active Recreation Officer, Martin Quick (new in post June 2023). The programme has developed and delivered activities such as 'Buggy Fit' and Tai Chi sessions, as well as three local fitness programmes in the Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon areas and a pilot 'Aqua Aerobics Programme' in Banbridge, which has proven to be very popular.

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1.3 Impairment Specific Programmes

The charity continued to be mindful during the year of the need to deliver impairment specific opportunities with the following activities successfully organised:

- An inclusive cycling & water sports programme for young people with Autism Spectrum conditions in the Craigavon area.
- A 'Multi-skills' activity programme for Cregagh Primary School Hearing Impairment Unit.
- An activity programme for people with sight loss organised in partnership with a number of RNIB groups: namely a community Boccia programme in Coleraine, a walking programme in Belfast and two Angling events in Derry and Bangor.
- An activity day for children with sight loss in Omagh organised in partnership with Angel Eyes.
- A Tandem Pilot Training day organised in partnership with Vision Sports Ireland.

1.4 Community Events Programme – Northern Ireland Wide

By year end, the charity had successfully organised and delivered the following 12 community events involving 1,260 disabled participants:

- **Amputee Sports Day** in partnership with the Amputee Rehabilitation Centre, took place at Olympia Leisure Centre, Belfast.
- **Swim Ulster Disability Open Swimming Championships** in partnership with Swim Ulster at South Lake Leisure Centre, Craigavon. The event also involved a visit and photo opportunity with Commonwealth medallist Barry McClements.
- **Versus Arthritis Competition Day**, organised at Ballybrakes Bowling Centre, Ballymoney in partnership with Versus Arthritis.
- **Junior Paralympic Fun Day**, organised at Antrim Forum Sports Centre. Participants had the opportunity to try out a range of sports including: Powerchair Football, Gymnastics, Para Badminton, Wheelchair Tennis, Boccia, Wheelchair Basketball, Inclusive Cycling, Table Tennis & Archery.
- **2 Regional Special Schools New Age Kurling Championships** events in Craigavon & Belfast.
- **3 Regional Special Schools Boccia Championships** in Antrim, Craigavon & Derry.
- **1 Special Schools Sports Hall Athletics Championships** in Craigavon.
- **2 Department for Communities (DfC) 'Celebration of Sport'** events supported in Ballymoney & Craigavon.

1.5: '5 Star Challenge' Education Project

In addition, the charity delivered the '5 Star Challenge' education project to 11 mainstream primary schools. The fun based challenge, where the children are given an opportunity to try 5 Paralympic sports is designed to raise awareness of disability sport and to challenge negative attitudes and misconceptions about disabled people.

1.6: All Out Trekking (AOT)

The charity continued to develop and deliver this innovative outdoor based project which gives disabled people, and their non-disabled friends and family, the opportunity to access countryside paths and mountain bike trails using a range of inclusive all-terrain electric vehicles and bikes at Gosford Forest Park in County Armagh.

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This year's programme consisted of twice weekly guided sessions for small groups of disabled people and their friends and families throughout the summer months from July to September 2023. A total of 243 participants took part in the programme which continues to attract a diverse range of disabled people from throughout Northern Ireland in addition to several participants from the Republic of Ireland and even a small family group who came all the way from Canada!

The project continues to receive excellent feedback, with many disabled participants remarking on how fantastic it was to be able to access a forest environment for the first time in such an independent way, alongside their friends & families.

Also during the year the charity developed a new 'Memorandum of Understanding' with Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council to enable the delivery of a potential mountain bike hire scheme at Gosford Forest Park as a means of supporting the future sustainability of the project.

Strategic Priority 2: Developing Sporting Talent

To lead the development of performance pathways and support programmes which enable talented athletes with disabilities to achieve higher levels of performance in their sport including continued international medal success.

Achievements

2.1 Inclusive Sport Award: The 'Inclusive Sport Award' (ISA) is the charity's accreditation scheme designed to recognise governing bodies of sport who make a commitment to creating an inclusive sports environment for disabled people.

Following the disruption caused to governing body of sport programmes by the COVID-19 pandemic over the previous few years and the introduction of Sport NI's new 'Sport Systems Investment in Governing Bodies' (SSIGB) funding programme the charity decided to review and refresh the Inclusive Sport award during the year.

This involved:

- Consultation with governing bodies of sport currently engaged through the ISA scheme which also included the organisation of a 'feedback forum'.
- Consultation with the other UK Home Nation Disability Sport Organisations.
- Discussions with Active Disability Ireland around working closer together in relation to All Ireland Governing Bodies of Sport.

By year end a new refreshed ISA scheme with different achievement levels had been drafted and plans put in place to launch the updated scheme during the next financial year.

As the ISA scheme was being reviewed performance staff continued to meet with representatives of the 11 Governing Bodies of Sport who currently have ISA Accreditation to provide them with advice, training and support on the development of more inclusive performance pathways.

In addition one further Governing of Sport, Ulster Badminton, worked with performance staff during the year to achieve ISA Accreditation. The award was subsequently presented to Ulster Badminton at the Ulster Masters Championship in Lisburn on the 27th January, 2024.

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This brings the total number of Governing Bodies to have achieved ISA accreditation to 12:

- Irish Football Association
- Athletics NI
- Ulster Rugby
- Swim Ulster
- Ulster Tennis
- RYA NI
- NI Judo Federation
- British Gymnastics
- Ulster GAA
- Canoe NI
- Archery NI
- Ulster Badminton

2.2 Progressive Club Support Programme: This programme involved the allocation of small development grants of £500, funded by Progressive Building Society, to the following 18 clubs:

- Antrim All-Stars Boccia Club
- Banbridge Barbarians Mixed Ability Rugby Team
- Bangor Bulls WBC
- Belfast Lough Sailability
- Belfast Trailblazers PFC
- Causeway Crushers PFC (Portrush)
- Causeway Giants WBC (Coleraine)
- Craigavon Lakers WBC
- Lisburn 2gether Pan-disability Badminton Club
- Lisburn Outlook Tandem Cycling Club
- Northern Ireland Disability Darts Association
- Northern Ireland Polio Fellowship Boccia Club (Belfast)
- NI Knights WBC (Belfast)
- North West Wolves WBC (Derry)
- Portadown Panthers Tag Rugby
- South West Storm WBC (Fermanagh-Omagh)
- Spokes in Motion Wheelchair Tennis Club
- Ulster Barbarians Wheelchair Rugby Club (Lisburn and Antrim)

2.3 Inclusive Club Award: The Inclusive Club Award is an annual awards scheme run by the charity to recognise clubs, and key individuals within clubs, who are being inclusive of disabled people. The charity received a number of strong, good quality applications for the scheme this year, with a selection panel consisting of the Chair Paddy Marshall, Honorary President Angela Hendra and Performance Pathways Manager Rhian McCarroll meeting to shortlist and select the winners.

The six awards, including two new 'official' awards were presented at the charity's AGM at the Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim on 6th December, 2023.

The winners of the 2022-23 awards were as follows:

- **Mainstream Club of the Year – Banbridge Barbarians Mixed Ability Rugby Club**
 - **Disability Club of the Year – North West Wolves Wheelchair Basketball Club**
 - **Club Person of the Year Wheelchair Basketball – Ciara McChrystal**
 - **Official of the Year Wheelchair Basketball – Wendy Cullen**
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- **Club Person of the Year Boccia – Susan Weir**
- **Official of the Year Boccia – Suzanne Wallace**

2.4 Wheelchair Basketball Programme: The organisation of a club development and performance programme for the sport of wheelchair basketball, funded by Sport NI's Sport Systems Investment in Governing Bodies (SSIGB) programme.

2.4.1 Wheelchair Basketball Club Development Programme

Northern Ireland Wheelchair Basketball League 2023-24: Disability Sport NI continued to organise the Northern Ireland league, sponsored by the Perennials RFC, with all 7 local wheelchair basketball clubs participating. Throughout the season each club hosted a 'Game Day' with the final 'Game Day' being hosted by Disability Sport NI at Ulster University's Jordanstown campus. The Bangor Bulls won the league trophy after a very competitive final with Causeway Giants. A special mention too goes to North West Wolves who won the Vase Trophy following stiff competition from runners up South West Storm. Disability Sport NI would like to thank the Perennials RFC for their continued support of the league.

Coach Education and Training: Throughout the year the charity organised and delivered a range of courses for club coaches, umpires and referees, designed to build a skilled and qualified volunteer workforce around the sport of wheelchair basketball in Northern Ireland.

Highlights included seven coaches attending a British Wheelchair Basketball (BWB) Level 2 Coaching course in September and a two-day coaching clinic facilitated by former GB head coach Haj Bhanja on the 13th and 14th of January 2024.

Junior Club Development: With the appointment of a Junior Development Officer during the year clubs were supported to develop their junior section. This included the organisation of two Junior Blitz events in Cookstown Leisure Centre during the year with 27 juniors (aged 9 – 14) attending across both days.

2.4.2 Wheelchair Basketball Performance Pathway Programme

The wheelchair basketball performance pathway programme, which is delivered in liaison with British Wheelchair Basketball (BWB), is concerned with developing and improving performance pathways in Northern Ireland which support talented local players to be selected for national teams.

NI Academy Programme: Regular academy training sessions were organised weekly throughout the year in preparation for competition in the following national leagues organised by British Wheelchair Basketball (BWB)

- **BWB National League Division 1 (North):** The NI Academy team competed well in a very competitive tier of the national league, finishing a very respectable joint 4th place in the league.
- **BWB Women's League Division 2 (North):** In only its second year competing in the league, the NI Academy women's team, under newly appointed coach Valene Ryan, competed extremely well in their series of fixtures, finishing 2nd in the league, which was a significant improvement from last year, where they finished mid table.
- **2026 Commonwealth Games:** Despite the uncertainty surrounding the hosting of the 2026 Commonwealth Games, Disability Sport NI continued to cautiously prepare for the 3x3 Wheelchair Basketball event, with a number of training camps taking place at Ulster University Jordanstown for both the men's and women's 3x3 programme.

Talented Athlete Support: Wheelchair basketball staff continued to support the development of local

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talented wheelchair basketball athletes during the year with a focus on the following four athletes:

- **James MacSorley:** James was selected to represent the GB Men's senior squad during the year winning a gold medal in the European Championships and a silver medal at the World Championships. James also competed throughout the year for professional squad Bilbao in the Spanish League, while at the same time attending a number of GB camps in the build up to Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. James was also presented with Queen's University's 'Graduate Of The Year' award and Belfast City Council's 'Disabled Athlete Of The Year' Award during the year, which were both great personal achievements.
- **Conn Nagle:** A Sport NI 'Athlete Award' of £5,000 was secured for Conn, who competed throughout the year for professional squad Amiccacci in the Italian League, while at the same time attending a number of GB camps in the build-up to the European Championship. Conn was also selected for the GB "A" squad which competed in a friendly competition against Germany.
- **Katie Morrow:** A Sport NI 'Athlete Award' of £5,000 was secured for Katie who regularly trained and competed with the GB Women's Senior team and U25 team during the year in the build-up to the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. Most notably she was pivotal in helping the GB squad secure a silver medal at the World Championships in Thailand.
- **Nathan McCabe:** Nathan trained and competed with a number of GB squads during the year, most notably playing for the GB U22 squad against Germany and the U30 GBR squad who secured a Gold Medal at the Kitakyushu Champions Cup in Japan.

2.5 Boccia Programme: The organisation of a club development and performance programme for the sport of Boccia, funded by Sport NI's Sport Systems Investment in Governing Bodies (SSIGB) programme. Boccia is a Paralympic sport developed for people with high levels of impairment.

2.5.1 Boccia Club Development Programme

Northern Ireland Competition Programme: Disability Sport NI continued to organise a number of local competitions and leagues sponsored by the Titanic Quarter Cycling Club as summarised below:

- A newly introduced 'NI Open Series' programme of events were hosted at venues across Northern Ireland on 23rd September, 14th October and 11th November 2023.
- The NI Boccia Championships took place on the 20th of January at Belfast Boys Model School with 15 athletes competing across 6 different classifications.
- The NI Pairs League commenced in February 2024 with 6 teams made up of 18 players. The first two league game days were organised at the University of Ulster Jordanstown campus on 17th of February, 2024 and at Antrim Forum on 2nd March 2024.

Club Development:

- Ongoing support provided to Antrim All Stars, Bangor Boccia Club, Craigavon Boccia Club, NI Polio Federation and Lough Moss Boccia Club.

Coach Education and Training:

- A Level 1 Coaching Award with 7 learners organised.
- A Level 2 Coaching Award hosted in NI for the first time with 4 NI candidates.
- 2 Academy coaches enrolled on the Coach Advanced Programme.

2.5.2 Boccia Performance Pathway Programme

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The Boccia performance pathway programme, which is delivered in liaison with Boccia UK, is concerned with developing and improving performance pathways in Northern Ireland which support talented local players to be selected for national teams.

NI Academy Programme: Regular academy training sessions and camps, including a joint camp with Boccia Ireland at the Share Centre, Fermanagh and a joint camp with the Scottish Boccia Squad at Inverclyde Sports Centre, were organised throughout the year in preparation for competition in the following key competitions:

- Scottish Open: 4 athletes competed winning 2 bronze medals.
- UK Championships: 4 athletes competed winning 1 Gold medal.
- 3 athletes were supported to compete at the Leinster Championship winning 1 Bronze medal.
- Irish Championships: 6 athletes competed winning 2 Gold, 2 Silver and 1 Bronze medal.
- 3 athletes were supported to compete at the Disability Sport Wales Team & Pairs competition in Swansea.

In addition the charity hosted a Boccia UK approved 'NI Challenger' competition for the second year running in Antrim Forum with 23 players from N. Ireland, Ireland, England, Wales and Scotland participating including 3 Internationally ranked players.

Talented Athlete Support: Boccia staff continued to provide support and advice to local talented athletes who were who were selected to compete with Boccia UK during the year at international competitions as summarised below:

Claire Taggart:

Zagreb World Challenger - Individual Gold and Team Silver.
Montreal World Cup - Individual Bronze and Team Bronze.
Povoia 2023 World Boccia Cup competition – group stage finish in pairs event.
European Championships – Individual Bronze and Team Silver.
Fortaleza World Cup – Individual Gold.

Robyn McBride:

Zagreb World Challenger
Montreal World Cup
Heraklion 2023 World Boccia Challenger – quarter final finish.
European Championships

Strategic Priority 3: Inclusive Sports Facilities and Outdoor Places

To develop access services which encourage and support the development of sports facilities and outdoor places which are inclusive of disabled people.

Achievements

Disability Access Design and Management Guidelines

The charity has developed a suite of disability access design and management guidelines in recent years to inform best practice in the sports and leisure sector.

During the year an additional guide entitled '**Accessible Sports Club Facilities Guide**' was produced. The guide will support clubs to make positive changes to their facilities, to improve accessibility and increase the number of disabled people who can get involved in their sport. The guide includes a

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comprehensive template to assist clubs to make an action plan for change, which can be implemented over time.

Inclusive Sport Facility Accreditation (ISF)

In partnership with All In Access Consultancy, the charity continued to encourage and support sports facilities throughout Northern Ireland to work towards achieving the organisation's 'Inclusive Sports Facility' (ISF) Accreditation Scheme which recognises sports facilities that meet optimum levels of good practice in terms of access for disabled people.

There are currently sixteen facilities in Northern Ireland that have achieved ISF Accreditation at a standard or excellence level and a further three sports facilities in three Council areas continue to work towards accreditation.

Strategic Priority 4: Communications, Training and Engagement

To inspire, facilitate and encourage disabled people to participate in sport and active recreation by engaging with disabled people and the broader community, by delivering inclusive training and by promoting the social model of disability.

Achievements

4.1 Marketing and Social Media: A comprehensive range of marketing and social media activities were implemented during the year in support of this strategic priority. Key areas of delivery are provided below:

- The continued development and formal launch of the new 'Active Living No Limits' disability sport opportunities website for Northern Ireland.
- The successful management of information and news on the charity's website and social media channels.
- PR activities around James MacSorley and GB Wheelchair Basketball at 2022 World Championships.
- PR activities for Claire Taggart following European Para Championships.
- Promotion of NI Wheelchair Basketball and Boccia Academy programmes.
- Promotion of Trailblazers Powerchair Football Club award of 'Every Body Moves' Club of the Month Award.
- The marketing, promotion and delivery of training courses and youth sport challenges.

4.2 Training and Education: Disability Sport NI delivered a range of training courses during the year, all designed to give volunteers, coaches, teachers and leisure services staff the knowledge and skills required to better include disabled people in sports and recreation opportunities. The charity also delivered a number of education based sports challenges designed to increase understanding of disability and challenge negative attitudes and misconceptions about disabled people. In total 42 courses were delivered to participants during the year.

4.3 Research and Insight:

How we measure success

When developing its current strategic plan for the 2020-2024 period the charity decided to adopt the performance management system recently adopted by public bodies in Northern Ireland. This system of 'outcome-based accountability' (OBA) focuses on impact rather than simply on activity levels.

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In line with this performance management system, we evaluate each area of our charity's work by using three OBA questions:

- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- Most importantly, is anyone better off?

During the current 2023-24 financial year the charity used this OBA performance management system to demonstrate its success by producing an annual impact report and a series of OBA based 'Insight Pieces' produced on an ongoing basis which focus on different areas of the charity's work. A range of 'Insight Pieces' and an annual impact report for the year are available on the Disability Sport NI website www.dsni.co.uk

Next year, following the end of our 4-year strategic planning cycle we will also measure how the implementation of our strategic plan has contributed to:

- Our three strategic outcomes:
 - A more equal and inclusive society, where more disabled people participate, compete and excel in sport and active recreation at a level of their choice.
 - The improved health and wellbeing of disabled people.
 - Equality of access for disabled people to participate in sport and active recreation.
- Active Living - The Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Northern Ireland (Published March 2022)

Strategic Priority 5: Governance and Income Generation

To manage an effective, well governed organisation with the capacity to lead the development of disability sport and active recreation in Northern Ireland.

Achievements

5.1 Governance: Disability Sport NI continued to review and update its policies and procedures as required during the year, maintaining its 'robust' level of assurance from its main funder, Sport Northern Ireland

5.2 Funding Uplift: A welcome uplift in funding was also secured from Sport NI for this the last year of the current 4 year 'core investment' funding package. This was to take account of the negative impact that the COVID-19 Pandemic has had on the charity's ability to generate unrestricted income from long established training services, access services and community fundraising initiatives over the previous two years. The additional investment in the current 2023-24 financial year was £78,777.

5.3 Representation: Disability Sport NI staff continued to positively influence relevant areas of policy development and partnership working by representing the interests of disabled people in Northern Ireland on the following key national organisations and committees during the year:

- Active Living: No Limits Forum
 - British Paralympics Association National Paralympic Committee (Paralympics GB)
 - Boccia UK Board of Directors
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- Home Nation Disability Sports Organisations' Chief Executive Officers Forum

5.4 Volunteers: Disability Sport NI could simply not deliver its full range of programmes and services without the commitment of a dedicated team of volunteers. During the year **84 volunteers** contributed a total of **1460 hours** to the work of the charity. This involved a contribution from three types of volunteers as explained below:

Trustees and Honorary Presidents: 12 volunteers with a range of individual skills required to effectively oversee the governance and strategic direction of the charity.

Regular Volunteers: 54 volunteers who regularly help the charity deliver its range of local community sport and active recreation programmes as well as its wheelchair basketball and boccia competition programmes.

Casual Volunteers: 18 volunteers who helped the charity organise and deliver its community events programmes by supporting the organisation and delivery of one-off community sports competitions.

Disability Sport NI would like to thank its volunteers for the very important and valuable contribution they continue to make to the work of the charity.

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FINANCIAL REVIEW

The detailed financial results for the year ended 31st March 2024 are set out in the Financial Statements that accompany this report.

Sources of Funding

The principal source of funding is Sport NI, with funding provided to support the charity's core work and performance sport programmes.

Other sources of income include:

- Grants, sponsorship and donations from other organisations, corporate partners and individual donors,
- Training, education, and access & inclusion programmes,
- Participant fees and rental income,
- Administration and overhead support from Live Active NI.

Income

Total incoming resources in the period were £1,002,291 (2023: £847,145). This includes unrestricted income of £630,450 (2023: £581,766) and restricted income of £371,841 (2023: £265,379).

Expenditure

Total resources expended in the period were £967,007 (2023: £810,395). The cost of charitable activities amounted to £966,691 (2023: £810,032) and the cost of raising funds amounted to £316 (2023: £363).

Net Movement in Funds

Net incoming resources in the period were £35,284 (2023: £36,750 incoming). Before transfers between funds, this represents a net increase in unrestricted funds of £42,653 (2023: £87,633 increase) and a net decrease in restricted funds of £7,369 (2023: £50,883 decrease).

At the end of the reporting period, £0 (2023: £1,638) was transferred from unrestricted to restricted funds to offset the deficits created by several projects.

Total charity funds carried forward at 31st March 2024 amounted £432,946 (2023: £397,662).

The balance held in unrestricted funds at the year-end was £430,777 (2023: £388,124). This includes £200,667 that can only be realised by disposing of tangible fixed assets. The Board has designated £50,000 of the charity's unrestricted funds to support the development of the Northern Ireland Boccia League, Wheel Chair Basketball and the All-Out Trekking programme at Gosford Country Park.

The restricted fund balance at the year-end was £2,169 (2023: £9,538). This includes £160 relating to the depreciation value of capital equipment and will be released each year in line with the organisations depreciation policy.

Reserves Policy

It is the policy of Disability Sport NI to maintain free reserves which match the needs of the organisation, both at the current time and in the foreseeable future. This provides sufficient funds to cover running

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costs which include management, administration and support costs. Free reserves are those unrestricted reserves, not designated nor invested in fixed assets, which are available for general use.

At the end of the reporting period, the charity held free reserves of £180,110 (2023: £113,243).

Principal Financial Risks and Uncertainties

As part of its strategy to manage risk, Disability Sport NI maintains a Corporate Risk Register. With support from the senior management team, the register is maintained by the Chief Executive and is updated on an ongoing basis in line with the organisation's Risk Management Policy. The register is reviewed, as a standing agenda item, at all Board meetings. This ensures newly identified risks, and changes to existing risk, are promptly addressed to mitigate the detrimental impact that such matters may have on the financial resources available and increase the likelihood of the charity achieving its aims and objectives.

The main financial risks listed on the risk register at the end of the 2023-24 financial year were as follows:

- A reliance on Sport NI funding;
- Cash Flow: need to maintain adequate levels of cash reserves to account for unexpected reductions in funding.

These risks have been managed by:

- Securing an uplift in funding from Sport NI for the last year of the current 4 year 'core investment' funding package i.e. covering the 2023-24 financial year. This was to take account of the negative impact that the COVID-19 Pandemic has had on the charity's ability to generate unrestricted income from long established training services, access services and community fundraising initiatives over the previous two years;
- Careful financial management and an ongoing focus on achieving annual budgets with a net surplus in unrestricted funds which has resulted in a strong cash flow position.

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TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES STATEMENT

The Trustees, who are also directors for the purposes of company law, are responsible for preparing the Trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the charity Trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charity's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Auditor


Each of the persons who is a trustee at the date of approval of this report confirms that:

- so far as they are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware; and
- they have taken all steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charity's auditor is aware of that information.

Small company provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies entitled to the small companies exemption.

The Trustees' annual report was approved on 1st October 2024 and signed on behalf of the board of Trustees by:



Patrick Marshall (Chair)