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Our ref: AQW 22492/22-27

Date: 24 March 2025

Deborah Erskine MLA
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw, Stormont
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BT4 3XX

Dear Deborah

**AQW 22492/22-27 – WORK BEING UNDERTAKEN TO PROMOTE AND
ENCOURAGE DISABILITY SPORT IN NORTHERN IRELAND.**

You recently submitted an Assembly Written Question AQW 22492/22-27, asking that I detail the work being undertaken to promote and encourage disability sport in Northern Ireland.

I have arranged for this information to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Yours sincerely

**Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities**

Work being undertaken to encourage and promote disability sport in Northern Ireland as per AQW 22492/22-27.

Sport NI Response

I have sought the requested information from the Chief Executive, who has advised me of the following information:

“Sport NI is a member of the Sports Councils Equality Group (SCEG) and provides, in partnership with the other UK Sports Councils, free access for the sector to a specific ‘equality’ resource in the Moving to Inclusion hub - <https://movingtoinclusion.co.uk/>. This provides resources and support for sports organisations, helping them become more diverse, inclusive and socially responsible. It includes a self-assessment toolkit and resources to support continual improvement.

Sport NI co-ordinates and participates in the Active Living: No Limits group which is an initiative aimed at improving the health and well-being of disabled individuals in Northern Ireland through participation in sport and active recreation.

Sport NI through investment in Disability Sport NI continues to develop a skilled and inclusive workforce in the sport, leisure, education and outdoor recreation sectors by providing a range of courses including Disability Inclusion, Autism and Sports Coaching, Inclusive Skills & Games, and 5 Star Disability Sports Challenge.

Sport NI also works to develop a network of quality multi-sport hubs across Northern Ireland which are fully accredited, accessible to everyone and offer and actively promote inclusive dedicated sport and active recreation opportunities through the Inclusive Sports Facility Accreditation.

Disability Sport NI

Sport NI provides direct funding to Disability Sport NI. Table 1 shows that over the last 5 years Sport NI have provided Lottery funding to Disability Sport NI for the sports of

Boccia and Wheelchair Basketball; and Table 2 shows Core Exchequer funding to DSNI over the last 5 years.

Table 1: DSNI Lottery Funding 2020-25

Sport	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	
Boccia	£41,027	£41,000	£88,259	£128,000	£151,600	£449,886
Wheelchair Basketball	£109,927	£93,877	£95,337	£154,988	£182,700	£636,829

Table 2: DSNI Core Exchequer Funding 2020-25

Financial Years					2024-25 Business Case	
2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	Total	2024/25	
£376,127	£391,337	£457,500	£483,000	£1,707,964	£483,000	£2,190,964

Sport NI Sports Institute has a facilities agreement with Ulster University for use of facilities at the Jordanstown Campus. A portion of the UUJ-SNISI Facilities Agreement was allocated to eligible sports as a benefit 'in-kind' to access UUJ facilities. No monetary grant funding awarded.

DSNI Boccia benefit in kind value totalled £3,803, with £2218.42 in 2021/22 and £1584.58 in 2022/23; and DSNI Wheelchair Basketball benefit in kind value totalled £2,304, with £1,344 in 2021/22 and £960 in 2022-23.

Additional funding has been invested directly to develop disabled athletes as detailed in Table 3.

Table 3: Disability Athlete awards breakdown from 2022 – 2025

Sport	Investment Amount		
	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
<i>Boccia – Athlete 1</i>	£2000		
<i>Boccia – Athlete 2</i>			£2,500
<i>Cycling</i>		£5,000	£5,000
<i>DSNI WCBB – Athlete 1</i>	£4,000	£5,000	£5,000
<i>DSNI WCBB – Athlete 2</i>			£2,500
<i>DSNI WCBB – Athlete 3</i>	£4,000	£5,000	
<i>Horse Sport</i>		£2,500	£5,000
<i>Triathlon – Athlete 1</i>		£2,500	£5,000
<i>Triathlon – Athlete 2</i>	£2,000		£5,000
<i>Triathlon – Athlete 3</i>	£2,000	£2,500	
<i>Triathlon – Athlete 4</i>	£2,000		
<i>Paralympics Ireland – Athlete 1</i>	£4,000		
<i>Paralympics Ireland – Athlete 2</i>		£4,500	
Total	£20,000	£27,000	£30,000
Total No. of Disabled Athletes	7	7	7
Total No. of Sports	6	6	5

Sport NI has also invested £804,652 into disability sport across a range of sports governing bodies through our Sport Systems Investment in Governing Bodies programme under key themes of retention and growth, (£469,452) into 17 sports, and medals and more (£335,200) into 8 sports. Table 4 below provides a detailed breakdown of the investment into the sports.

Table 4: Investment in Disability sport per NGB breakdown

Retention & Growth Investment		Medals & More	
Sport	Investment Amount	Sport	Investment Amount
<i>Badminton</i>	<i>£4,000</i>	<i>Table Tennis</i>	<i>£6,000</i>
<i>Badminton</i>	<i>£3,000</i>	<i>Athletics</i>	<i>£2,000</i>
<i>Badminton</i>	<i>£3,000</i>	<i>Badminton</i>	<i>£34,650</i>
<i>Boxing</i>	<i>£67,200</i>	<i>Badminton</i>	<i>£2,500</i>
<i>Boxing</i>	<i>£7,000</i>	<i>Badminton</i>	<i>£2,450</i>
<i>Boxing</i>	<i>£11,000</i>	<i>Lawn Bowls</i>	<i>£52,000</i>
<i>Canoeing</i>	<i>£400</i>	<i>Boccia</i>	<i>£49,300</i>
<i>Fencing</i>	<i>£13,800</i>	<i>Boccia</i>	<i>£58,000</i>
<i>GAA</i>	<i>£40,000</i>	<i>Boccia</i>	<i>£3,000</i>
<i>GAA</i>	<i>£40,000</i>	<i>Swimming</i>	<i>£5,000</i>
<i>GAA</i>	<i>£40,000</i>	<i>Wheelchair Basketball</i>	<i>£49,300</i>
<i>Game Angling</i>	<i>£1,500</i>	<i>Wheelchair Basketball</i>	<i>£56,000</i>
<i>Golf</i>	<i>£21,607</i>	<i>Wheelchair Basketball</i>	<i>£15,000</i>
<i>Golf</i>	<i>£38,300</i>		
<i>Gymnastics</i>	<i>£10,000</i>		
<i>Lawn Bowls</i>	<i>£25,000</i>		
<i>Mountaineering</i>	<i>£7,400</i>		
<i>Mountaineering</i>	<i>£1,000</i>		
<i>Rambling</i>	<i>£3,316</i>		
<i>Rugby</i>	<i>£11,680</i>		
<i>Rugby</i>	<i>£8,148</i>		
<i>Sailing</i>	<i>£10,400</i>		
<i>Table Tennis</i>	<i>£500</i>		
<i>Table Tennis</i>	<i>£500</i>		
<i>Volleyball</i>	<i>£2,000</i>		

Retention & Growth Investment		Medals & More	
Sport	Investment Amount	Sport	Investment Amount
Wheelchair Basketball	£29,750		
Wheelchair Basketball	£24,750		
Wheelchair Basketball	£3,000		
Wheelchair Basketball	£1,400		
Wheelchair Basketball	£1,000		
Wheelchair Basketball	£2,5000		
Boccia	£24,800		
Boccia	£4,000		
Boccia	£2,000		
Boccia	£3,000		
Boccia	£2,500		
Total	£469,451	Total	£335,200

Sport NI also provides direct funding to disability sport clubs and community groups through a range of programmes, such as the Sport Hardship Fund and more recently our Creating Opportunities as outlined in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Funding to Disability Sport Organisations

Fiscal Year	Organization Name	Type	Project Title	Grant Amount
2020/21	Fitmoms & Kids	Revenue	Sports Hardship Fund	£1,000

Fiscal Year	Organization Name	Type	Project Title	Grant Amount
2020/21	Inspire NI	Revenue	Sports Hardship Fund	£2,000
2020/21	Newry City AFC Special Olympic Club	Revenue	Sports Hardship Fund	£2,000
2020/21	Causeway giants WCB	Revenue	Sports Hardship Fund	£2,000
2020/21	Oxford Bulls FC	Revenue	Sports Hardship Fund	£2,000
2020/21	ParasportNI Athletics Club	Revenue	Sports Hardship Fund	£2,000
2020/21	Newry City AFC Disability Club	Revenue	Sports Hardship Fund	£2,000
2020/21	Fitmoms & Kids	Revenue	Sports Hardship Fund	£2,000
2020/21	3C's Snooker Club	Revenue	Sports Hardship Fund	£3,000
2020/21	Greysteel Community Enterprise	Capital	Health and Safety in year budget	£17,990
2020/21	Armagh City, Banbridge & Craigavon BC	Capital	All Out Trekking (Gosford Forest Park)	£26,250
2024/25	Special Olympics Ireland	Revenue	Investment in Special Olympics Ireland 2024-25	£382,500
2020/21	Special Olympics Ireland	Revenue	Investment in Special Olympics Ireland	£689,936
2023/24	Special Olympics Ireland	Revenue	Investment in Special Olympics Ireland	£719,540

Fiscal Year	Organization Name	Type	Project Title	Grant Amount
2021/22	Special Olympics Ireland	Revenue	Investment in Special Olympics Ireland	£719,761
2022/23	Special Olympics Ireland	Revenue	Investment in Special Olympics Ireland	£724,600
2024/25	Trillick Boxing Club	Revenue	Creating Opportunities	£5,000
2024/25	Strabane Athletic	Revenue	Creating Opportunities	£5,000
2024/25	Neurodiversity UK	Revenue	Creating Opportunities	£5,000
2024/25	Cairn Lodge Boxing Club	Revenue	Creating Opportunities	£5,000
2024/25	Rathfriland Boxing Club	Revenue	Creating Opportunities	£5,000

Sport NI provided Covid Safe Sports Packs to the disability sport organisations listed in table 7 below. No funding was awarded; however, the packs did have a cost paid by exchequer revenue funding via DfC and administered by Sport NI.

Table 6: Covid Safe Sports Packs

Fiscal Year	Organization Name
2020/21	3C's Snooker Club
2020/21	Special Olympics Ulster Office
2020/21	Inspire NI
2020/21	Newry City AFC Special Olympic Club
2020/21	ParasportNI Athletics Club
2020/21	Bangor bulls wheelchair basketball club

<i>Fiscal Year</i>	<i>Organization Name</i>
<i>2020/21</i>	<i>Belfast Trailblazers Disability Powerchair Football Club</i>
<i>2020/21</i>	<i>Craigavon Lakers Wheelchair Basketball Club</i>
<i>2020/21</i>	<i>Down Special Olympics Club</i>
<i>2020/21</i>	<i>Linfield Disability Football Club</i>
<i>2020/21</i>	<i>Lisburn 2gether Special Olympics Club</i>
<i>2020/21</i>	<i>Ripples Special Olympics Sports Club</i>
<i>2020/21</i>	<i>Titanic Tigers</i>

Sport NI works in partnership with local district councils through the Community Planning Investment Programme to encourage, promote and support disability sports. Table 7 below provides a list of funding awarded in 2024/25 for disability projects across several District Council areas.

Table 7: Community planning investment programme

<i>District Council</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Total Cost</i>
<i>Armagh, Banbridge & Craigavon District Council</i>	<i>6-week basketball programme in 6 special schools/learning support centres followed by a local schools partnership and a teacher workshop, delivered in partnership with Basketball NI</i>	<i>£3,500</i>
<i>Causeway Coast & Glens District Council</i>	<i>Boccia (Limavady, Ballycastle, Coleraine and Ballymoney)</i>	<i>£3,390</i>
<i>Causeway Coast & Glens District Council</i>	<i>Pickleball</i>	<i>£3,800</i>
<i>Causeway Coast & Glens District Council</i>	<i>ASD Access to leisure Services Inclusion Project (Calm Packs)</i>	<i>£844</i>
<i>Causeway Coast & Glens District Council</i>	<i>ASD Access to Leisure Services Project (Communication Project)</i>	<i>£1,950</i>

<i>District Council</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Total Cost</i>
<i>Causeway Coast & Glens District Council</i>	<i>ASD Water Safety Programme (Autism Swim Coach Programme)</i>	<i>£3,550</i>
<i>Lisburn & Castlereagh City Council</i>	<i>Sport for development, inclusion and activity programme for people with disabilities</i>	<i>£9,000</i>
<i>Mid Ulster District Council</i>	<i>Aquatic Skill and Confidence Class, Dungannon - 10 weeks</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• New Programme</i> <i>• 5-10 Participants</i> <i>• Supporting families of children that need additional assistance to enter, exit and support during aquatic activity.</i> 	<i>£1,000</i>
<i>Mid Ulster District Council</i>	<i>Neurodivergent Class, Dungannon - 10 weeks</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• New Programme</i> <i>• 6-10 Participants</i> <i>• Multisport activities that allow children and young people to move around and play games at their own pace.</i> 	<i>£1,000</i>
<i>Mid Ulster District Council</i>	<i>Neurodivergent Class, Cookstown - 10 weeks</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>• New Programme</i> <i>• 6-10 Participants</i> <i>• Multisport activities that allow children and young people to move around and play games at their own pace.</i> 	<i>£1,000</i>
<i>Mid Ulster District Council</i>	<i>Neurodivergent Class, Magherafelt – 10 weeks</i>	<i>£1,000</i>

<i>District Council</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Total Cost</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New Programme</i> • <i>6-10 Participants</i> • <i>Multisport activities that allow children and young people to move around and play games at their own pace.</i> 	
<i>Mid Ulster District Council</i>	<i>Teen Intervention Class, Magherafelt - 10 weeks</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New Programme</i> • <i>10+ Participants</i> • <i>Multisport activities for children with a learning disability or physical disability. Promoting inclusion and offering additional and alternative social outlets to those children not requiring respite or befriending services.</i> 	<i>£1,000</i>
<i>Mid Ulster District Council</i>	<i>Inclusive swimming lessons - 11 weeks</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>New Programme</i> • <i>8 Participants</i> 	<i>£1,010</i>
<i>Mid Ulster District Council</i>	<i>Young Men's Health Day Programme – Sports Equipment, Clothing & facility hire</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Programme</i> • <i>10 Participants Activity programme for young males with a learning disability - offering physical activity, peer support, mentoring, befriending, respite services and volunteering opportunities</i> 	<i>£1,000</i>

<i>District Council</i>	<i>Project Description</i>	<i>Total Cost</i>
<i>Mid Ulster District Council</i>	<i>Inclusive and Youth Bush Craft – x2</i> <i>Specific EDI Bush Craft sessions</i> <i>Delivery at Davagh & Ballyronan</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>2 sessions for Inclusive</i> • <i>2 sessions for youth/families</i> 	<i>£1,210”</i>

For any future queries relating to operational matters, you may wish to contact Sport NI directly. Making direct contact with Sport NI will ensure that you receive the information in the shortest possible timeframe and make best use of public resources.