

Disability Steering Group Update – March 2016

In January 2015, a wide range of bowling organisations, disability sport organisations, equipment manufacturers, coaches and volunteers gathered in Melton Mowbray to draft the National Disability Strategy, latterly to be known as the National Disability Strategic Action Plan (NDSAP). This was the first attempt by the sport of bowls to create a plan to increase the number of disabled bowlers within the sport and the associated opportunities required. The NDSAP was formally launched in August 2015 as part of Disability Bowls August.

In order for the Plan to be successful and achieve its stated aims, a steering group was established in June 2015 to oversee this process. The Disability Steering Group (DSG) is chaired by Paul Brown (Disability Bowls England) and includes the following core members:

- Jess Cook – English Federation for Disability Sport
- Steve Rodwell – English Indoor Bowling Association
- Paul Humphreys – Bowls Development Alliance
- Mo Monkton – Disability Bowls England
- Alistair Hollis – Bowls England
- Jamie Chestney – AeroBowls

In addition to the above, the DSG has also invited to its meetings individuals with particular specialisms in areas such as coaching as well as those who are responsible for specific key pieces of work, such as safeguarding and Disability Bowls August.

To date, the DSG has met on three occasions and the following key actions have been achieved:

- National Disability Strategic Action Plan agreed and launched.
- Disability Bowls August 2015 raised awareness of disabled participation in the sport.
- Adaptive Equipment Loan Scheme is being explored amongst pro-active clubs.
- Disability Bowls England is working on a clear participation and competition pathway, supported by relevant classification information for Bowls England, EIBA, EFDS and the BDA to promote.
- All partners have promoted the National Disability Survey and the Love Fisher Brown Award.
- The Working with Disabled Bowlers module has been communicated to clubs and coaches.
- Bowls England and EIBA have created disability sections of their websites.
- Bowls England, EIBA and BDA staff attended an Inclusive Communication Workshop hosted by EFDS.

Future planned work includes:

- The development of a Disability Club 'Kitemark'.
- All DSG representatives to promote competitive opportunities organised by Disability Bowls England.
- Disability Bowls England, Bowls England and EIBA to lead on research into the effect of wheelchairs on bowling green surfaces in conjunction with relevant manufacturers with a view to removing the cost barrier associated with the purchase of a bowling wheelchair.
- A specific Disability Day to be the focal point of Disability Bowls August 2016 at the Bowls England National Championships in Leamington Spa and nationwide.
- All partners to promote the free Disability Bowls England individual membership scheme.

At the last of the three meetings, held on the 9th March 2016 at Bromsgrove IBC it was agreed by the DSG that all future meetings would be summarised in a meeting report that would be available on the websites of Disability Bowls England, Bowls England, EIBA and the BDA.

For more information on the DSG, please contact Paul Brown via paul.brown@disabilitybowlsengland.org.uk

