

UK Deaf Sport

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Our purpose

UK Deaf Sport (UKDS) is a National Disability Sports Organisation and the registered strategic lead for deaf sport across the UK. Our mission is to lead on developing more opportunities for deaf people to participate in sport throughout their lives and to support more deaf athletes to perform on the world stage.

We use the term 'deaf' to refer to all levels of hearing loss in children, young people and adults, including partial or total loss of hearing. This includes those who may describe themselves as having a 'hearing impairment', 'hearing loss' or as 'deaf', and includes children and young people who may have glue ear.

Who we represent

As the strategic lead for deaf sport, we represent 11 million people who are deaf in the UK. We believe that deaf people should have the opportunity to take part and enjoy sport throughout their lives. Sport and physical activity can have a profound effect on the lives of deaf people, improving a person's health, confidence and increasing their social interaction.

Most deaf people do not consider themselves to be disabled and believe that their main barriers to taking part in sport and physical activity are:

- Concerns about lack of fitness
- Concerns about communication problems
- Lack of confidence about taking part or making contact with groups

(UKDS Participation Survey, 2015)



Deaf and hard of hearing people

Action on Hearing Loss (RNID) reports that one in six people in the UK (11 million) have some form of hearing loss. This includes around 6.7 million people who could benefit from hearing aids. An estimated 900,000 people in the UK are profoundly deaf. There are 50,000 deaf children and young people in the UK. Around half of them are born with hearing loss, while the other half lose their hearing during childhood.

According to Sport England's Active People Survey 10 (2016), participation in sport and physical activity is lowest among deaf people. Only 9.7 per cent of people with a hearing impairment take part in sport once a week, compared with 39.9 per cent of non-disabled people.

Our support

UK Deaf Sport offers support and guidance to a range of national, regional and local organisations to develop coaching, talent identification and competition pathways within deaf sport. As part of this work, we support programmes that look to enhance deaf people's physical and mental wellbeing through sport and create new participation opportunities for deaf children, young people and adults.

We are committed to improving the ability of sports coaches to communicate with deaf people. We work with partners to provide deaf awareness and British Sign Language training. In partnership with UK Coaching we run 'Effective Communication – Coaching Deaf People in Sport' workshops around the country. We also work with National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) to increase the number of deaf coaches in sport by providing more coaching courses with communication support.

In addition to encouraging participation at a recreational level, we are also committed to developing talent and enabling deaf people to reach their sporting potential. We work with NGBs to ensure that those with sporting talent are not hindered or discriminated against because of their hearing impairment. We support Deaf Sports Organisations and NGBs to develop clear sporting pathways for deaf people to develop their skills and compete at a Regional, National, European, World and Deaflympic level. We also work in partnership with Deaf Sports Organisations to improve their governance and infrastructure, so they can provide better support to deaf athletes.

Participation pathway for impairment group

Deaf sports have a structure of competitive opportunities on a National, European, World and Deaflympic level. UKDS is the recognised body for the registration and authorisation of UK, GB and home nation entries into international competition. We work with a variety of partners to increase the awareness of elite deaf sport and bring more world class competitive events for deaf people to the UK. UKDS is also a member of the International Committee of Sport for the Deaf (ICSD) and the European Deaf Sport Federation (EDSF).