

Active for College, Work and Life – a strategy for physical activity and sport for disabled college students

Introduction

Further education (FE) sector

Further education colleges provide the highest standards of technical and academic education and training for over two million young people, adults and employers¹. It is a vital environment for students of all backgrounds and abilities to learn a wide range of skills and gain work experience. As a result, there are significantly more 16 to 18-year olds in FE and sixth form colleges (37%) than in schools (28%) and in employment (7%)².

AoC Sport

AoC Sport is a membership organisation leading the way for college sport. The organisation promotes, supports and delivers physical activity and sport* for 230 college members across three key areas: policy and projects, development and competitions.

This strategy and its purpose

This AoC Sport-led strategy is the first of its kind in the FE sector and aims to create a step change in physical activity and sport for disabled students. It is targeted at college staff and organisations from the physical activity and disability industries and builds on the findings published in AoC Sport’s review *The current landscape of physical activity and sport for disabled students*. It reveals how AoC Sport will support colleges and partner organisations to develop this area for 2020 and beyond to achieve the vision of every disabled college student active for college, work and life.

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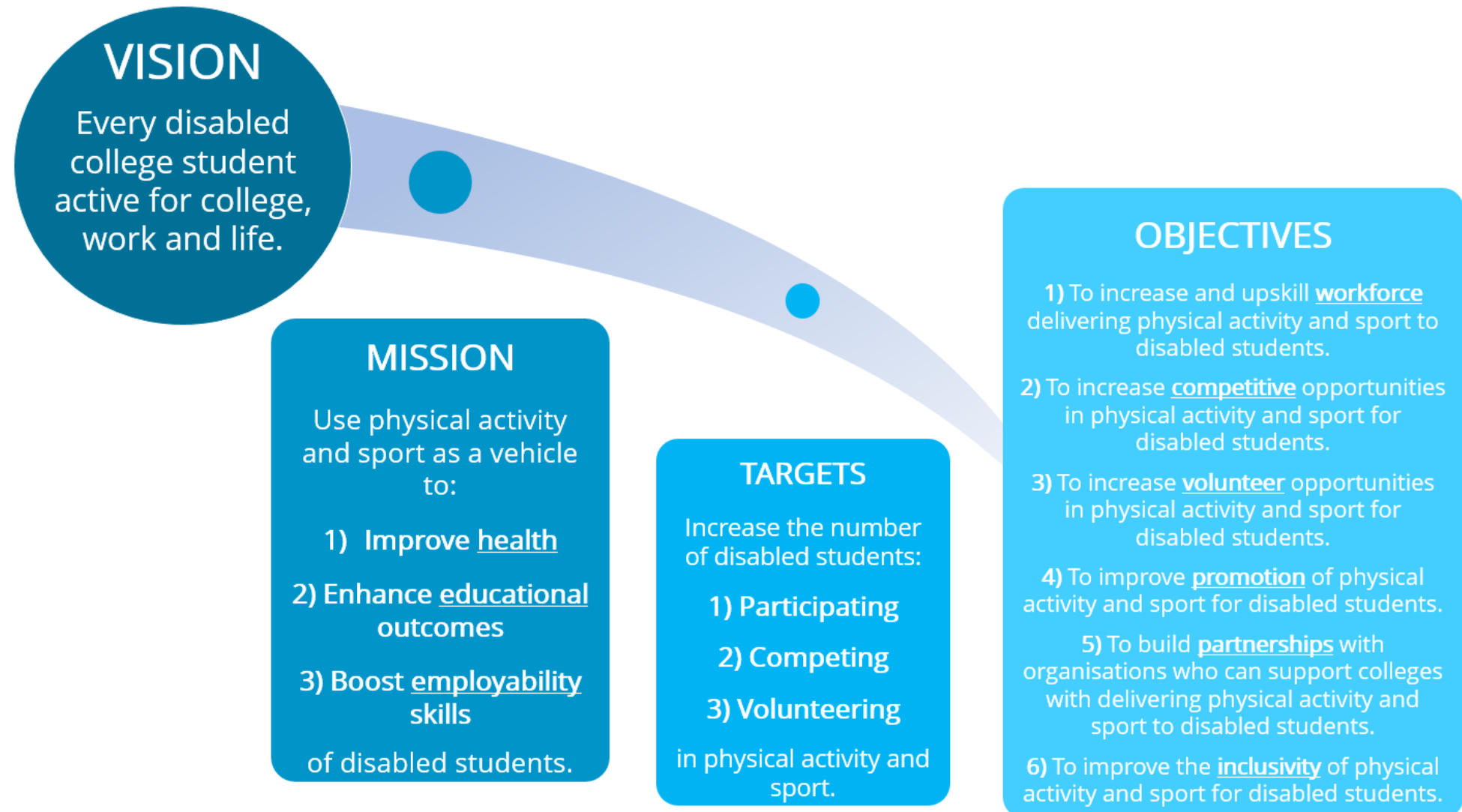
DERWEN COLLEGE

Delivers physical activity and sport sessions to ensure students are living a healthy lifestyle and learn about teamwork, fair play, respect and adhering to rules. “Sessions have had a positive impact as students are more motivated to attend lessons and display less behaviours of concerns” Maryanne Evans MBE, Foundation & Creative Studies Programme Manager (MBE for Services to Special Education).

*In the context of this document, physical activity and sport relates to any activity which involves bodily movement that raises heart rate and requires energy expenditure. This could be anything from walking to playing squash.

Executive summary: theory of change

To highlight the desired step change in physical activity and sport for disabled students in colleges we have created a theory of change. This provides an overview of our vision, mission, targets and how these will be achieved via our objectives.

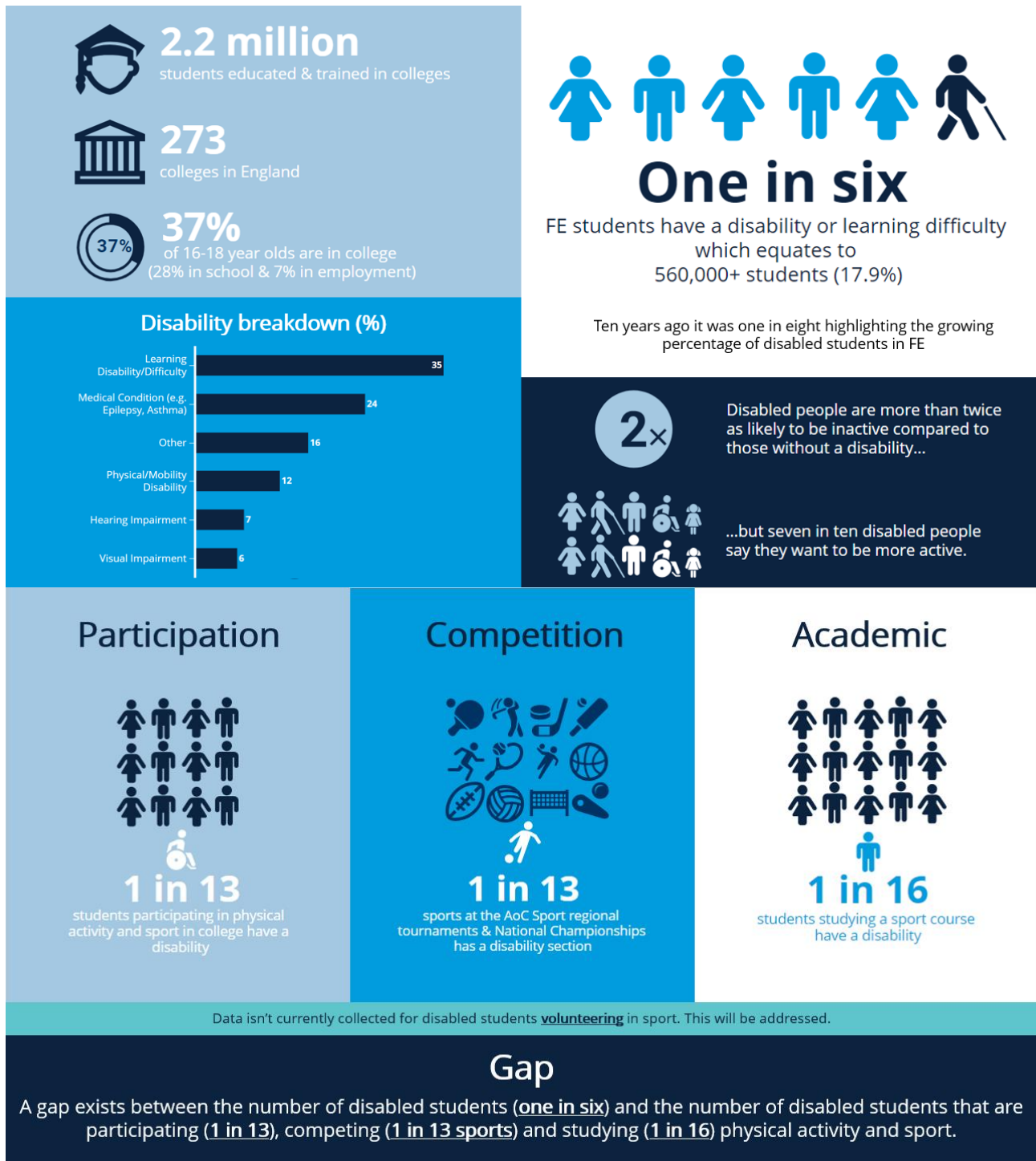


WALSALL COLLEGE

Walsall College established a disability football academy in 2016, providing disabled students with greater opportunities for training and competition. Since the academy was launched, staff have seen an increase in disabled students' attendance and attainment and some of the students have gone on to play for the college first team.

Current landscape: where we are now

AoC Sport's *The current landscape of physical activity and sport for disabled students* is a comprehensive review into the opportunities, barriers and attitudes to activity and sport for students with disabilities. An overview of the findings can be found below.



Barriers to physical activity and sport for disabled students...

Logistical



Limited workforce



Limited time



Limited funding



Travel

Physical



Lack of facilities



Lack of equipment

Psychological



College: sport isn't a priority



Staff: not qualified to deliver disability sport

These are the same barriers as identified by Activity Alliance highlighting the importance of colleges in building resilience in physical activity and sport for disabled people at a younger age.

Positive impact of physical activity on...

Education



Improves grades and attainment

Improves attendance

Improves behaviour

Employment



Improves skills and experience

Improves employment opportunities

Improves career progression

Health



Increases happiness

Increases self-esteem

Reduces risk of death

Sports competition contributes to a healthy lifestyle

The findings highlight a gap between the provision of physical activity and sport for disabled and non-disabled students. As a result, AoC Sport will provide greater support to colleges to ensure disabled students have the same opportunities to be active as their non-disabled peers.

NATSPEC GAMES

Provides competition for disability specialised colleges with over 250 disabled students attended three events in its first year in 2017. The Games provide an opportunity for students to test their sporting ability in a fun and competitive environment.

Future landscape: where we want to be in 2020 and beyond

FE, as with many other sectors, is experiencing significant changes and funding cuts which requires doing more with less. In addition, physical education is only compulsory up until the age of 16 which results in many college students becoming inactive. However, we believe this strategy and the desired step change is an opportunity to increase awareness of the important work going on within colleges and to show the wider benefits of being active. As a result, we have set an ambitious vision for physical activity and sport for disabled college students for 2020 and beyond.

Vision

Every disabled college student active for college, work and life.

Mission (outcomes)

Our outcomes are closely linked to the Government's five sport outcomes.

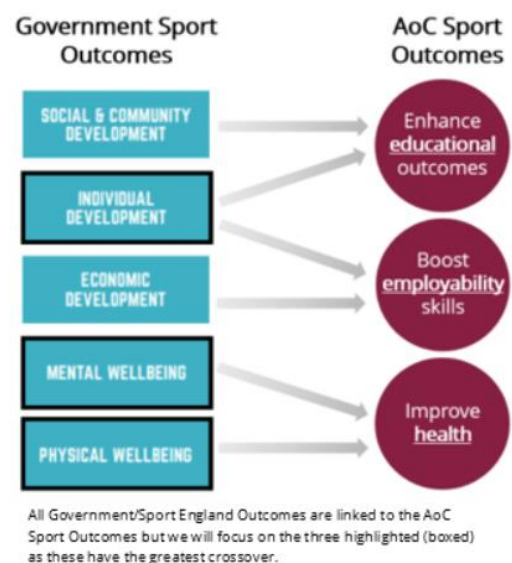
We will use physical activity and sport as a vehicle to:

- 1) Enhance **educational** outcomes...
- 2) Boost **employability** skills...
- 3) Improve **health**...of disabled students.

Targets (outputs)

Increase the number of disabled students:

- 1) Participating...
- 2) Competing...
- 3) Volunteering...in physical activity and sport.



GRANTHAM COLLEGE

Higher Education (HE) sport students deliver sessions and events to their disabled peers. This benefits everyone as it reduces sport team delivery, provides HE students with relevant experience and volunteer hours and enables disabled and non-disabled students to mix.

Objectives: how we will get there

The following objectives will help us to achieve our vision and targets:

- 1) To increase and upskill **workforce** delivering physical activity and sport to disabled students
- 2) To increase **competitive** opportunities in physical activity and sport for disabled students
- 3) To increase **volunteer** opportunities in physical activity and sport for disabled students
- 4) To improve **promotion** of physical activity and sport for disabled students
- 5) To build **partnerships** with organisations who can support colleges with delivering physical activity and sport to disabled students
- 6) To improve the **inclusivity** of physical activity and sport for disabled students.

At the forefront of these objectives is the requirement to listen to disabled students and colleges to ensure their needs are put first. We will do this via meetings, events, conferences, surveys, focus groups and regular communication with students and colleges.

KINGSTON COLLEGE

A partnership with the Tennis Foundation has resulted in funding, links to a local tennis coach and the creation of a weekly tennis session for Foundation Learners. “The tennis session in the afternoon motivates students to attend their functional skills classes in the morning” Keith Mellow, Kingston College SEND lecturer.

Support for colleges and partners

To achieve our vision, targets and objectives we require the support of colleges and partner organisations. In return we will do the following:

- Increase the number of events and competitions for disabled students
- Work with NGBs to provide competitive opportunities for disabled students and link in with their talent pathways
- Increase volunteer, training and leadership opportunities for colleges and their disabled students
- Deliver workshops to help college staff and sport students adapt sessions for disabled students
- Promote the positive impact of colleges and their provision of physical activity and sport for disabled students
- Share best practice, research and case studies with colleges and partners
- Secure support from external organisations to help colleges with their physical activity and sport provision for disabled students (e.g. funding, resources and training)
- Improve the accessibility and inclusivity of AoC Sport mainstream competitions, events and volunteer opportunities for those with disabilities.

Measuring the impact of our work

Education, employment and health outcomes will be at the heart of all our work within physical activity and sport for disabled students. To measure the impact of this we will utilise a range of tools including but not limited to:

- AoC Sport's College Sport Survey and monitoring and evaluation data
- Case studies, personal stories and pre- and post- intervention surveys
- Impact measurement tools such as the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale.

Conclusion

We do not believe in ‘sport for sport’s sake’. Physical activity and sport have wider reaching benefits and, as highlighted within this strategy, can have a positive impact on student’s education, employment and health. As a result, we aspire to create a step change in physical activity and sport for disabled students in colleges by building on the work already being delivered in the sector. Colleges are an influential environment to reduce inactivity in over 16-

year olds and there is an invaluable opportunity to support more disabled students to be active. We look forward to working with colleges, staff, students and partners to achieve the vision of every disabled college student active for college, work and life.

If you would like to work with us on any aspects of this strategy please get in [contact](#) or visit www.aocsport.co.uk/disability.

NEWHAM SIXTH FORM COLLEGE

The college's Ability Counts Ambassador Programme provides sports qualifications for disabled students. "We see a tremendous improvement in confidence and communication throughout the disabled student's journey as part of the Ambassador programme. The opportunity to take on Ambassador responsibilities externally and to run events and officiate at school competitions instils a sense of pride in their achievements. Better yet, this allows a number of disabled students to find a voice that may well have remained hidden within a classroom environment." Beth Harris, New Vlc Sports Academy Manager

References

¹ Association of Colleges (AoC), College Key Facts 2017/18

² Association of Colleges (AoC), College Key Facts 2017/18