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Welcome

Hello and welcome to the 64th newsletter.

Changes to the Equality Standard Website and newsletter

The first article in this edition explains some changes being introduced by the Sports Council Equity Group (SCEG) to the content and process of the Standard. These changes will also have an effect on the Standard Website and the newsletter and Emma Tobutt, SCEG Interim Chair, would like to add the following: "Our contract with VAGA to provide the newsletter and manage the website will come to an end at the end of August. SCEG would like to thank colleagues at VAGA for their work and commitment. Particular thanks should go to Roger, whom always ensures that each addition of the newsletter is an interesting read and a useful resource. SCEG would like to assure readers that plans are afoot to review current support offered to Governing Bodies. We are presently considering new approaches for communicating news, good practice and support. The website will continue to be accessible until March 2011, after this date we hope to introduce a new website. Further information will be communicated via Home Country SCEG members."

Current SCEG members

Any comments/questions regarding the proposed changes outlined in the first article should be sent to the appropriate SCEG member as listed below:

- Sport England, Cathy Hughes, cathy.hughes@sportengland.org
 - Sport Northern Ireland, Marc Scott, marcscott@sportni.net
 - SportsScotland, Morag McConville, Morag.McConville@sportscotland.org.uk
 - Sport Wales, Emma Tobutt, Emma.Tobutt@sportwales.org.uk
 - UK Sport, Charlie Edward, Charlotte.Edward@uksport.gov.uk
- Please note Charlie does not return to the office following maternity leave until the beginning of August.

Equality Standard tops 150

The number of organisations that have achieved Foundation level of the Standard has now passed 150. Emma Tobutt commented: "This is a significant achievement. The Standard has come a long way since its launch in 2004. We are extremely pleased that organisations are demonstrating their commitment to Equality, and that the Equality standard has played its part in this. We look forward to organisations progressing and developing to achieve a positive output."

Please forward this newsletter to anyone you think may be interested, or get them to contact Roger Clifton at roger@vagaassociates.com if they would like a copy sent directly to them.

The main features in this edition are:

- Update on the review of the Standard
- News from Northern Ireland
- Research showing what female performance athletes want from coaching
- Equality Act questions and answers
- A variety of general information of interest and new resources of use
- Achievements
- Calendar of forthcoming events.

It's time to update the Standard

At their 5 February 2010 meeting, SCEG agreed to conduct a review of the Equality Standard: A Framework for Sport ('the Standard') and they have provided the information below to explain the current position.

Rationale for the review

- The new Equality Act contains a number of additional requirements, including placing a new single Equality Duty on public bodies. The new single Equality Duty will extend the current race, disability and gender equality duties to cover the protected characteristics of age, religion or belief, and sexual orientation.
- Due to the impact of the economic recession, opportunities to maximise impact and get best value should be considered (e.g. shared training and practice).
- New surveys and better collection of data by sports councils (e.g. Active People, the market segmentation work being undertaken by sportscotland, Sport Wales' participation survey) will impact on Sports Councils investment priorities. The Standard needs to be flexible enough to incorporate this.
- Application of the Standard: evidence is that the Standard is insufficiently flexible and applies a 'one size fits all' approach. This makes it difficult for small governing bodies to mainstream equality into their business, and leads to resistance.
- The need for the Standard's assessment process to fit in with Sport's Council risk management and audit processes, such as self assurance.

Changes

The content of the standard will not significantly change, duplication throughout the levels will be removed, it will be more accessible, fit for purpose and will focus on outcome and integration of 'Equality' as 'good governance'.



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At the preliminary level, organisations will be expected to demonstrate progress against their equality action plan.

There will be changes to the standard process. Variation in Implementation of the 'Standard' will exist across the Home Countries. ESA's will be replaced with Home Country specific support structures; this might be internal support from Sports Councils, consultancy support, peer support etc.

Foundation level will be integrated into the UK Sport and Sport England self assurance process and will be applicable to the Home Countries that utilise this tool. There will be greater emphasis on Governing Bodies to self assess against the criteria at all levels. Assessment will be conducted by one independent assessor; this will include site visits at all levels other than foundation.

Verification Coordinator

Ideally it would make sense to place this role together with the website management work as a distinct post. SCEG members are currently in discussions with funded partners. Interested parties should come forward to SCEG.

Newsletter and Website

Our contract with VAGA comes to an end this August. Although the website will remain as it is until March 2011. SCEG are considering options for providing fit for purpose support for NGBs. It is likely that a new website will be established, and that newsletters will become quarterly e communications.

Timescales

The new 'Standard' will be posted onto the existing website in September; changes to the UK Sport and Sport England self assurance process will be operational this month. SCEG anticipates that the new 'Standard' will be operational by January 2011.

Delivering sport in Northern Ireland

Our thanks to Angharad Bunt, Development Officer - Community at Sport Northern Ireland, for providing the information below.

New strategy

A New Ten Year Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation in Northern Ireland has been launched.

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Entitled “Sport Matters: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Sport and Physical Recreation, 2009-2019”, the Strategy outlines a new vision for sport and physical recreation in Northern Ireland. Developed by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, in partnership with Sport Northern Ireland, the strategy establishes key targets and priorities for sport’s future development as identified by the sports sector, the community at large and a range of other interests across central and local government, the voluntary sector and business. To download a full copy visit [Strategy](#).

Supporting Active Communities

Sport Northern Ireland has launched the Active Communities Programme – a £13.5m programme which is creating a vital 106 full-time equivalent coaching posts over the next five years. The Programme seeks to employ, deploy and train a network of full-time and part-time sports coaches and leaders to deliver a range of activities in community and club settings across Northern Ireland. It is a lottery investment programme, which has at its core, the aim of increasing participation in sport and physical recreation, especially among women and girls, people with disabilities and older people.

Sport Northern Ireland Chief Executive Eamonn McCartan commented: “We are extremely pleased to launch this programme which provides a vital investment into sports participation at a community level. It will deliver a wide range of benefits from the creation of 106 new coaching posts, and increased access to sport and physical activity which will subsequently result in healthier communities.”

The Active Communities Programme recognises the strategic importance of, and contributes to, the participation and coaching targets outlined in “Sport Matters”. The coaches will play a key role in creating increased opportunities for participation in sport and physical recreation, and approximately 100,000 participants will benefit from the programme. Plans received from the district councils and their partners suggest that over 40 sports will benefit from the investment over the 5 year period.

Further information is available at [Active Communities Programme](#).

Volunteering opportunities in disability sports programmes

Disability Sports NI (DSNI) is searching for volunteers to assist with the Sport Northern Ireland funded ‘Active Communities’ disability sports programmes in a range of locations across Northern Ireland and has formed a number of partnerships with District Council consortium with the aim of providing sports/recreation opportunities for people with disabilities.



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Volunteers will be assisting Active Communities disability coaches to deliver a variety of activities e.g. Multi-Skills, Boccia, New Age Kurling and Wheelchair sports to children and adults across a range of disabilities. This is a fantastic opportunity for anyone interested in working in the field of disability to gain knowledge and get hands on experience whilst receiving training in Disability Awareness, Inclusive Games and Inclusive Skills. All volunteers will be offered a range of training opportunities, branded merchandise and will be insured and Access Northern Ireland (ANI) checked through DSNI.

If this is something you would be interested in pursuing, contact Disability Sports NI on 028 9038 7062, or email@dsni.co.uk

How do female athletes want to be coached?

Our thanks to Christine Lillistone, Insight and Innovation Manager at the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation, for providing the article below.

"...ultimately I'm a basketball player and I think that's what I want to be seen as. I don't want to be seen as something, but I think gender always comes into account. There's no way of getting around it, no matter how much you try..."

For the first time female performance athletes have spoken about how they experience coaching and what they want from an 'ideal' coach. In spring 2010, the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (WSFF) and Sportscoach UK embarked on a joint research project to gain a better understanding of how female performance athletes experience coaching and what they want from coaching. Leeds Metropolitan University provided academic support.

There is evidence that suggests that even in the case of sports which are traditionally for women, or in which women have high participation rates, coaching is still delivered in a way that assumes gender neutrality, with female and male participants being coached as if their needs are the same. At present very little research exists that really describes female athlete's experience, and asks whether their needs really are the same. WSFF and Sportscoach UK wanted to develop a pilot project that would go some way to bridge this evidence gap. The project used a narrative methodology – allowing athletes a voice to reflect on their real-life experiences and an opportunity to consider whether their needs were being met.

Final results will not be published until the autumn, but the following summarises the workshop presentation given at the Sportscoach UK Coaching Summit in June 2010.

Methodology and sample

The pilot study involved telephone and face to face interviews with 27 female performance athletes aged 18-28 and 7 male and female coaches within athletics and basketball. A team and an individual sport were chosen to reflect the potential differences that arise from being coached as an individual sportsperson or as a team member. The interviewees were on the performance or high performance pathway and were based in Wales, the North East, North West, the Midlands and East of England.

Key findings

Every athlete is unique

While there are commonalities across all the athletes/basketball players interviewed, as might be expected there were sometimes very different views on what they wanted from their coach and how they wanted to be treated. As such the main goal for any coach is to get to know his/her athlete and to understand what makes them tick, what motivates them and what will bring the best out of them. Within the team sport, it can be a considerable challenge when trying to balance the needs of the individual and the needs of the team.

Importance of the coach – athlete relationship

The relationship that the athlete and coach have is very important to the female athlete. They want their coach to understand them (their motivations and their goals) and also appreciate they have a life outside sport (education and work), and to coach them accordingly.

The coaching process is a joint endeavour: the athlete, the coach, the NGB.

Female athletes want to be involved in the process. They have a voice and want to feel that the coach will listen to their ideas and suggestions. In addition, they want a say in final decisions.

Importance of CPD in athlete evaluation of coaches

Having a coach who is well trained and knowledgeable is also important to the athletes. The athletes have considerable respect for a coach who is continuing training and knows their stuff.

Coaches to understand the significance of gender

The athletes see themselves as athletes first and women second.

As such they want to be pushed as hard as male athletes with the same expectations. That said, the interviewees acknowledge that women are different to men – for example they can be more emotional and want to know ‘why’ more when told to do something. As such, the coach may need to tailor the way they communicate with the athlete/team to balance this.

Importance of coaches’ communication

Presently athletes experience a variety of coaching styles from coaches – ranging from shouting and autocratic to jokey and easygoing. Despite the coaching style, all athletes still want their coach to talk to them, to provide them with continual feedback – both constructive and positive. Again, every athlete is different and the coach needs to understand what form of communication will work best to motivate the athlete.

Balancing the needs of the team

A coach has a huge task to manage the needs of each athlete within a team. There can be tensions if players feel that their team mates are getting preferential treatment. A good coach will make sure that each player is treated fairly – if not necessarily the same.

Training to be varied, fun, structured, challenging and tailored

These athletes are at a level in their sport where they expect to train hard -and want to work hard - but they would still like it to be enjoyable and varied. They want to feel that everyone in the training group is also working hard and taking it seriously. They want the sessions to be well organised and tailored to their current training needs.

Next steps

WSFF is now working with Sportscoach UK to write a report of the findings. They are also planning to use what has been learnt to create an online resource for coaches, which will be available in autumn 2010. For further information about the research contact Chris Lillistone at WSFF on 020 7273 1739, or email chris@wsff.org.uk.

Your Equality Act questions answered

Following the article in the last edition, further questions have been received and these are shown below with answers. As before though, remember these are general answers and legal advice should be sought for specific issues.

Q. With the new Equality Act, are competitions that are split into different disability classifications still allowed?

A. Yes, although the Act does not specifically address this point, different disability classifications will still be permitted, as they are likely (depending upon the circumstances) to constitute "reasonable adjustments" under the Act. This is supported, for example, by the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS), who state: "The EFDS reserves the right to limit competitions to disabled people of specific age, gender or disability classification where it is necessary to ensure equitable, safe and equal competition" and they hope Governing Bodies will adopt this to encourage their inclusion and ownership of disabled people's participation. Similarly, events held for non-disabled people and split by, for example, age categories, will still be allowed provided they can be objectively justified.

Division in respect of other characteristics, such as weight for example, is also allowed, as this is not a protected characteristic under the Act. However, where participation is limited to people who are at least a certain weight, and no provision is made for participation by people under that weight, this would be discriminatory under the Act if the lack of weight was as a result of a disability. Such a policy would therefore have to be objectively justified to avoid it being unlawful.

Q. Our organisation has a rule that says Board members must retire at 70, which means I will have to stand down at the next elections, is this legal?

A. No, age restrictions such as this are not allowed within the law, unless they can be objectively justified. It is hard to see how any limitation on the age of Board directors could be justified. One example may be where the membership of an Association was limited to people of a certain age and, to be eligible to be a director, it would also be necessary to be a member. Places on Boards can be earmarked for certain categories to address underrepresentation, such as one member from the junior section, but requiring people to retire just because they have reached a certain age is not permitted. If there is still concern that individuals may remain on the Board for a long period of time, then have a rule that limits the amount of time a member can serve. An amusing footnote to this question is that, when the person who enquired was given this answer, they said: "That's a pity; I was hoping I could use that as an excuse to stand down!"

Q. Will Governing Bodies generally be regarded as Associations as defined by the Act?

A. This will depend on whether the Governing Body has rules for admission and a selection process for new members. Our view is that most Governing Bodies will not be Associations as defined by the Act as, more often than not, the only requirement for membership is to pay the membership fee (which is specifically excluded as a "rule for admission or a selection process"). In the last edition of this newsletter we advised that an Association is defined in the Act as a group with over 25 members which has rules for admission and a genuine selection process for prospective members. Although most Governing Bodies will probably have over 25 members, they are unlikely to have rules for admission and a genuine selection process for prospective members. Just as an example, as long as they pay the membership fee, anyone may be able to join an equestrian group, even if they have no interest in horses at all. However, if there was a rule that stated they could only join if they owned a horse, then that would be a rule for admission and would potentially make the organisation an Association.

Q. In the last edition of this newsletter, it was stated that single gender clubs are allowed within the law, does this also apply to other protected characteristics?

A. Yes, clubs are allowed to limit their membership to members who all share a protected characteristic. So, for example, clubs restricted to people with disabilities, or to Africans, are legal. The exception is colour, meaning that clubs limited just to black people for example are not permitted.

Q. Are clubs still allowed to have membership based on future members having to be recommended and seconded by existing members and, if they are, would such clubs be regarded as Associations?

A. Any club that has such a selection system would by definition be an Association under the Act (unless it had fewer than 25 members). In relation to the recommending and seconding of prospective members by existing members, there is a danger that such a practice could be indirectly discriminatory where a club has an existing membership drawn from a very narrow group of individuals who largely share the same characteristics, making it less likely for someone having different characteristics to come into contact with existing members and therefore be able to secure the support needed in order to gain membership. In such cases, the club would need to objectively justify this selection process in order to ensure it was not unlawful. Such selection practices will not always be potentially discriminatory – it will depend on the composition of the club and how the selection practices actually operate.

A selection of general information of interest.

This section contains information that may be of interest as well as useful new resources. In many cases we are simply passing on information we have been sent and the inclusion of this is purely to make readers aware and should not be interpreted as a recommendation either in favour or against what has been provided.

London 2012 celebrates diversity and inclusion

The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) has announced that it will be issuing a series of pin badges to celebrate its six strands of diversity and inclusion and engage all communities to support London 2012. LOCOG is committed to making sure London 2012 is everyone's Games where people from all backgrounds can take part and feel inspired and London's diversity was one of the reasons it was chosen to host the Games. The first pin badge to be launched will be in support of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community. Further pin badges will be launched over the next year and will celebrate belief, age, disability, gender and ethnicity. The badges will be available from the [London 2012 online shop](#).

Meanwhile, activities are now in-place for the London 2012 Open Weekend, 23-25 July, and these can be found at [Events](#).

Weeks of action 2010 dates announced

The dates for 2010 One Game One Community weeks of action have been confirmed as 14-26 October. Click on [OGOC](#) to find out more.

Rugby news

RFL's One Big Family declared a success

A pioneering new education programme called One Big Family has been declared a success after receiving positive feedback following its delivery at schools in Castleford and its surrounding area. Darren Payne, Castleford Tigers Equality and Diversity representative, said: "One Big Family is the first of its kind in Rugby League. At the centre of the campaign is an assembly which involves the use of Rugby League related images featuring Tigers and Rugby League personalities each representing separate strands of diversity including age, gender, race, disability, faith, socio-economic situation and in secondary schools, sexual orientation." To find out more about the programme, go to [One Big Family](#).

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RFL to form Panel for young people

The Rugby Football League (RFL) has announced plans for the creation of a Young People's Advisory Panel as part of its ongoing commitment to give a voice to Rugby League enthusiasts nationwide. The panel will give those involved in the sport between the ages of 16 and 21 a chance to have their say on RFL policies which may affect them. The deadline for applications is Friday July 30. For more information, including how to apply, visit [Panel](#).

RFU supports deaf rugby players

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) has joined the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) Me2 campaign, which is a project aimed at revolutionising access to activities at all levels for deaf children. They have also developed, in partnership with the England Deaf Rugby Union, "The Deaf Friendly Rugby Guide". The guide caters for the rapidly expanding number of deaf or hard of hearing people playing rugby throughout England in mainstream clubs. It provides clear communication tips and balanced information that will help coaches address the needs of young deaf players. For more information about the RFU's work with the NDCS and to access "The Deaf Friendly Rugby Guide", view the [RFU press release](#).

Earl Barrett to lead Kick It Out mentoring project

Former England international and Premier League player, Earl Barrett, has joined Kick It Out to lead a mentoring project. His new role will see him channel his experience from a 15-year career into a project working with under-represented communities in cities across the country. "I'm excited about the challenge", said Earl, whose role is part of a joint initiative with the Equality and Human Rights Commission. "I will be identifying inspiring individuals from a range of different communities who can help to mentor and inspire others to achievement, both at a grass roots and professional level. Part of the objective is to practically address issues of exclusion and discrimination, particularly in relation to current gaps in representation, such as the lack of black coaches, managers, women and disabled in administration and Asian players." For more information about the mentoring scheme, including how underrepresented individuals can get involved, visit [KIO](#).

BT Paralympics World Cup

To find out what happened in May's BT Paralympic World Cup, including British swimmers setting World records in the pool and the GB Men's Wheelchair Basketball team claiming Gold, click on [BTPWC](#).

Faith news

Leeds InterFaith project

The Leeds InterFaith four-year Strategy has been launched. The purpose behind the project is 'to use cricket as a vehicle for social cohesion and faith integration, bringing together communities of different faiths and those from a disadvantaged background, in order to break down perceived barriers and encourage friendships'. For more information, go to [Leeds](#).

Muslim girls learning to be sports leaders

A group of Muslim girls at Madani High School have been given the opportunity to get involved in sport through a Women Get Set Go course, which is a leadership award offered by Sports Leaders UK. The course, which the Islamic Faith School in Leicester started in January, is delivered weekly to 15 enthusiastic girls, and it is already seeing some very positive results. More about this project can be viewed at [Sports leaders UK](#).

Homophobia in football documentary

BBC Sport presenter Mark Chapman recently presented a documentary focusing on homophobia in sport on BBC One. To read his experiences and to watch the documentary, visit [BBC](#).

Achievements

Many congratulations to the following organisations that have achieved a level of the Standard since the compilation of the last newsletter:

Foundation level

- British Horse Society
- Lancashire County Football Association
- Leicestershire County Football Association
- Staffordshire County Football Association
- Welsh Athletics
- Welsh Football Trust.

Preliminary level

- Gymnastics Northern Ireland
- Sport Wales
- Royal Yachting Association, single sport submission including: RYA Scotland, Welsh Yachting Association and RYA Northern Ireland.



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A full list of those that have achieved a level of the Standard can be found at [Achievements](#) and a total of the number of organisations that have achieved each level of the Standard can be found by clicking on [Total](#).

Additionally, a full list of accredited Equality/Equity Standard Advisers and Verifiers can be found on the Standard Website at [ESAs/ESVs](#).

Calendar of forthcoming events

Dates for your diary include:

- 23-25 July London 2012 Open Weekend throughout the UK
- 31 July-7 August VIII Gay Games in Cologne Germany
- 6 August StreetGames West Mids Sports Festival in Birmingham
- 14-26 August Youth Olympic Games in Singapore
- 2-5 Sept UK School Games in North-East region of England
- 14-26 Oct One Game One Community weeks of action throughout the UK.

How to Get the Most Out of this Newsletter

Hopefully you have enjoyed the variety of information in this newsletter. You can contribute! Do give us some information about your governing body, home country, sporting organisation or project. The deadline for contributions to the next newsletter is 6 August, with the final monthly edition being distributed in week commencing 16 August.

Please e-mail any contributions or comments to roger@vagaassociates.com.