



Voice of voluntary sport in
Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Sports Forum

Strategic Plan 2020-2024

This Strategic Plan sets out a renewed vision of how the Northern Ireland Sports Forum can support, guide and empower the development of sport and physical activity in Northern Ireland.

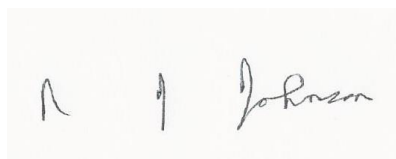
Over the past four years we have grown our capacity and influence as the umbrella body representing the best interests of our members and to ensure that we represent their views. Within this strategy we will strengthen our relationships with our members, provide more key services that will support the growth of their organisations but also have a direct benefit to the clubs that they represent. We have engaged with our members and we believe we understand their needs. We will work hard to promote the benefits of participating in sport and recreation activities and ensure that key decision makers understand Why Sport Matters.

Over the past two years we have grown our advocacy work and we recognise the importance of ensuring that the views of our sector are fully recognised and that how sport can play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of our communities.

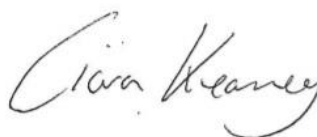
Our members vary from very large to very small. Throughout this plan we aim to provide support that will make a direct impact regardless of how many members you have and what your overall aspirations are. Promoting good governance has always been part of what we do, but we can do it better. Throughout the span of this strategy we will engage with our members to strength their operations and make an impact to grassroots sport through your clubs.

Whether you aim to win medals on the Olympic stage or just want to provide participation opportunities in local activities we are here to support you. Provision of services and support is vital and by using a collaborative approach we believe we can help make the lives of our future generations healthier. Within this strategy we will build on the positive working relationships between our members. It is vital that we continue to work together and support each other for the development of sport and physical activity.

Yours in Sport

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'R' and 'J'.

Richard Johnson
Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ciaran Kearney". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'C' and 'K'.

Ciaran Kearney
Executive Manager

Who we are:

The Northern Ireland Sports Forum was originally established in 1955 as the Northern Ireland Council of Physical Recreation and in 1997 was renamed the Northern Ireland Sports Forum. We exist to promote amateur sport and physical recreation, which results in improved physical and mental health.

The Sports Forum is a voluntary association whose membership consists of 71 Governing Bodies of Sport, 25 Associate Members and 14 Individual Members with an interest in sport and physical recreation.

We are the recognised umbrella organisation for the voluntary sector of sport in Northern Ireland and act as the “Independent Voice of Voluntary Sport in Northern Ireland”.

Our membership encompasses organisations from the major spectator sports such as rugby, football and golf, through to judo and swimming, right across the sector to yoga and outdoor recreation. Our full members are Governing Bodies who represent

Northern Ireland Bodies- Canoe Association NI, Netball NI, NI Judo Federation etc.

Ulster Branches of All-Ireland Organisations- Ulster Squash, Ulster GAA, Ulster Badminton, Ulster Rugby etc.

All- Ireland Bodies- Horse Sport Ireland, Gymnastics Ireland, Irish Indoor Bowling Association etc.

Regional Sections of British Bodies- British Gymnastics NI, British Horse Society

In fact, there are few recognised sporting activities which do not have affiliations to the Sports Forum, with member organisations drawn from right across the sector. Through our members we can reach stakeholders at all levels from sports clubs to volunteers benefiting approximately 480,000 individuals.

OUR PURPOSE

'To guide, support and empower our members in their role to govern and promote sport and physical activity in Northern Ireland'

OUR VALUES

LEADERSHIP

We aim to lead in the strategic direction of the sport and physical activity sector in Northern Ireland.

INTEGRITY

As an organisation, we are committed to acting with integrity, leading by example through engaging with stakeholders and members with honesty and respect.

INDEPENDENCE

We will continue to safeguard our independence, representing member organisations and their interests without influence or bias.

INSPIRING

We will support our members to be progressive organisations and support them to build their capacity, realising their full potential.

INCLUSIVE

We strive to embed inclusivity in our operations, promoting best practice.

PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION

We are committed to developing mutually beneficial partnerships, working together through engagement and advocacy to progress the needs of the sector.

Strategic Context

As a membership organisation, the Northern Ireland Sports Forum is committed to the development of sport and physical activity. It is vitally important that we operate within a wider strategic context. At present the Programme for Government is in draft format and the Department for Communities and Sport NI are in the process of developing new strategies for the next number of years.

The overall purpose of this proposed investment is to enable Northern Ireland Sports Forum to actively contribute to the delivery of the draft Programme for Government and also strategic plans for the Department for Communities and Sport Northern Ireland.

Programme for Government

Without Executive sign off, the Programme for Government is still in draft form. Within the PfG it is acknowledged that in order to successfully deliver on the initial outcomes of the new Programme for Government, meaningful collaborations and partnerships will be required.

This draft did however outline that the Northern Ireland Sports Forum has a role to play within the PfG including being a key partner in the delivery of the Female Sports Forum Active, Fit and Sporty Strategy and also the disability sport Active Living: No Limit's 2021 action plan.

NISF continues to engage with key partners responsible for the delivery of PfG Indicators and are keen to play an active role within the delivery of the PFG in the coming years ahead.

Sport NI Corporate Plan 2015-2020/ 2020-2025

In their own response to the Programme for Government consultation, Sport Northern Ireland have also listed NI Sports Forum as one of the delivery partners for *Implementation of the Sport NI's Sporting Clubs and Sport Winners Investment Programme*. Sporting Clubs and Sporting Winners are key components of the Sport NI Corporate Plan 2015-2020.

Going forward, the Northern Ireland Sports Forum believes it is well placed to support the Sport NI Corporate Plan for 2020-2025 and welcome the opportunity to engage in the process in the coming months. We believe that this strategy and the activities planned over the next four years will make a positive contribution to the sport and physical activity system in Northern Ireland.

Sport Matters 2009-2019/ Strategy 2020

NI Sports Forum has been valued and active contributor to the Sport Matters Implementation and Monitoring Groups throughout this period and have highlighted the importance for early engagement and consultation of the new sport and physical activity strategy post Sport Matters. NI Sports Forum will continue to play a vital role within the development of Strategy 2020 and have already assisted the Department for Communities with their engagement with members.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE



Our Strategic Priorities:

Following consultation with our member organisations and other stakeholders, the following five key themes were identified.



Collaboration & Partnerships

Northern Ireland Sports Forum aims to facilitate collaboration develop relationships with our member organisations and the wider sport and activity sector. NISF will lead increased networking and engagement opportunities between members and relevant stakeholders across the sector.

Member Services

NISF will develop relevant services to empower and strengthen our member organisations relevant to their own needs and aspirations

Representation

NISF will act as a strong representative for members and the sector on various groups and committees including central and local government and impact on development of research and evaluation to ensure the best interests of the sport and physical activity sector are upheld.

Business Development

NISF will build capacity of the Forum through seeking new opportunities and to provide support to develop our members

Leadership

NISF will invest in staff and board skill development for the growth of the organisation to enhance services and operations.

Monitoring and Accountability

As part of this Strategic Plan, NISF has developed detailed Operational Plans outlining activities for the next four years on our journey. Monitoring of progress against the Strategy and Operational Plans will be undertaken on behalf of the board by the Governance Subcommittee.

We are very thankful to our members for their open engagement throughout this process.