



POSITION STATEMENT

Our expected workforce standards

Authored by:

Steve Osborne, FCIMSPA (Chartered), Interim Chair of the UK Sport and Physical Activity Sector Workforce Professional Development Board, and fellow board members.

December 2025

PUBLISHED BY

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity
Incorporated by Royal Charter Charity Registration No. 1144545 www.cimspa.co.uk

© The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to clearly outline the position from the UK Sport and Physical Activity Sector Workforce Professional Development Board (WPDB) regarding the standards we strive toward the sport and activity workforce holding to be employed/ deployed in the sport and physical activity sector.

The need for a position statement

Sport and physical activity should be inclusive, accessible, and beneficial to everyone. All those working in the sector should be appropriately trained to include, inspire, understand and support the people they work with. The sector should also be a welcoming place for everyone to participate, work and volunteer. Quality training and a diverse workforce creates environments where everyone, can feel like they belong.

We face significant challenges with declining activity levels, which is exacerbated for people with some protected characteristics and children.

- Only 49.1% of children¹ meet the chief medical officers' guidelines of being active for 60 minutes per day.
- Significant inequalities remain in activity levels with Black and Asian and those from less affluent families still less likely to be physically active than across all ethnicities and affluence groups.
- Women and girls are also less likely to be active than boys and men.
- Disabled people are nearly twice as likely to be inactive than non-disabled people. Likewise, disabled children are less active than their peers, and experience significant barriers to participation.

Delivering quality inclusive activity requires knowledge of how to adapt sessions, communicate effectively and deliver a person-centred approach. Appropriate and proportionate training ensures that professionals can deliver safe, appropriate, and effective physical activity sessions tailored to individual needs and skill levels.

A lack of trained and confident professionals, and a lack of role models, discourages people from participating, working, and volunteering in physical activity throughout their life course. This, contributes to social isolation and health inequalities, placing extra pressure on the health and social care sector.

It is a professional and ethical responsibility for providers of sport, physical activity and education to be accessible and inclusive. Quality training and inclusive recruitment is crucial to ensure deliverers meet legal requirements, such as those under the Equality Act 2010.

What we would like to see...

The workforce professional development board commit to supporting the sport and physical activity sector stakeholders, employers, education providers and workforce, to receive proportionate training in working inclusively and embedding inclusive training, recruitment and working practices.

Since 2018, CIMSPA have included an inclusive approach as part of all occupational professional standards. The curriculum of training has been adapted so all front-line practitioners understand how to adapt sessions to meet the needs of the people in their sessions. This should contribute to reducing the barriers or inequalities for people participating in sport and physical activity.

We would like to see that everyone who delivers sport and physical activity:

- has the knowledge and confidence to include people from all backgrounds, ages, ethnicities and those with protected characteristics in their sessions
- has the knowledge and confidence to create welcoming and inclusive environments
- completes training that is endorsed to cover all or part of the working inclusively suite of professional standards relevant to them
- aspires to hold a level of accreditation that reflects this such as, where appropriate holding advanced practitioner professional status awarded by CIMSPA or a sports governing body
- demonstrates they have completed training aligned to the relevant professional standards for working inclusively.

We would like to see that everyone who trains, employs or deploys people to the sport and physical activity workforce endeavours to:

- have inclusive, proactive practices to support and create a welcoming work environment
- align their training to cover all, or part, or the working inclusively suite² of standards, embedding this in their training offer.

How we will support this movement...

- The workforce professional development board will work with organisations such as, CIMSPA, Activity Alliance, Mind, the Active Pregnancy Foundation, The Well HQ and others to create guidance for employers and national governing bodies to clearly outline the appropriate training for different roles and contexts to ensure inclusion and equality.
- We will increase the references to working inclusively within all occupation professional standards as they are reviewed.
- We will support and encourage employers and deployers to ensure their workforce is taking the appropriate training and achieving professional recognition from CIMSPA or a sports governing body verifying their credentials.
- We will support and signpost employers and education providers to good practice guidance on inclusive training and recruitment strategies.
- We will support and encourage education providers to ensure their learning and development is endorsed to cover all or part of the working inclusively suite of professional standards.

Board members

Members of the workforce professional development board

Interim chair: Steve Osborne, Cardiff Metropolitan University

Vice-chair: Richard Millard

Members

Andy Heald, Sportivity

Chris Emsley, University of South Wales

David Mclean, Edinburgh Leisure

Dr Emma Ross, The Well HQ

Emily Reynolds, The Youth Sport Trust

Graeme Sinnott, Active Partnerships Network

Harriet Jones, ukactive

Ian Gray, Hartlepool Borough Council

Jack Garner, The English Football Association

James Buckley, NHS

Laurie Marsden, UK Sport

Mark Gannon and Heather Douglas, UK Coaching

Matt Rhodes, The Association of Colleges

Matt Wenn, Sport Wales

Michelle Hayden, Netball England

Niall Judge, Sport England

Nikki Stewart, sportscotland

Pete Forder, Lifetime Training

Rob Johnson, Future Fit Training

Steve Nelson. SERCO

Steve Russell, Aberdeenshire Council

Susan Brown, Edinburgh Napier University

Further information

For questions regarding this position statement or to learn more about the work of the Workforce Professional Development Board:

- visit the [UK Sport and Physical Activity Sector Workforce Professional Development Board](#)
- [contact us](#) via CIMSPA.

References

- 1 [Active Lives Children and Young People Survey Report](#), Sport England, 2025
 - 2 The CIMSPA working inclusively suite includes specialism professional standards designed to help individuals develop knowledge and skills for working effectively with specialist populations, for example:
 - working with disabled people
 - working with women and girls
 - working with culturally and ethnically diverse communities
 - working with antenatal and postnatal clients
 - working with inactive people
 - working with people with mental health conditions.

For more information, see the [CIMSPA professional standards library](#).
-



Shaping a recognised, valued and inclusive sport and physical activity sector that everyone can be a part of.

www.cimspa.co.uk