



Releasing the
Power
of our **Profession**

CIMSPA STRATEGY
2024 – 2030



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Foreword

The sport and physical activity workforce has never had such a vital role in society as it does today. The value of the contribution that we make to the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the population, to social cohesion, to the engagement of everyone in our communities, and to the economic prosperity of our country, continues to grow.

As our profession continues to contribute so much and the demands on it increase, it's important that, as the chartered institute for the sector, CIMSPA sets out a clear strategy for how our workforce, which now amounts to almost 600,000* roles, can be supported and professionally recognised.

Our profession is consistently striving for greater recognition.

- **Recognition** of their status as qualified, experienced professionals who have an immense impact on health and wellbeing through high-quality practice and continuous professional development.
- **Recognition** of how the value of their work extends beyond narrow perceptions and positively impacts lives and communities.
- **Recognition** of how their experience and commitment to ethical, safe practice and engagement makes them distinct.

Professional recognition, both as an individual and as a collective, is not an entitlement. It is earned through a continuous commitment

“Releasing the Power of our Profession sets out our commitment to six system interventions which will deliver the individual and collective recognition that our sector workforce needs and deserves.”

to innovation, collaboration, and the highest standards of professionalism.

CIMSPA's deep relationships with professionals working right across the sector, with employers large and small, with education providers and with sector partners, have enabled us to bring together a collective view on how professional recognition can be achieved.

Releasing the Power of our Profession sets out our commitment to six system interventions which will deliver the individual and collective recognition that our sector workforce needs and deserves. And it illustrates the phenomenal additional impact that the profession will have through that recognition.

Within these pages, we set out a plan to achieve a vision where professional recognition is not a static milestone. It ensures that as a profession we can maximise our agility to embrace emerging trends and be positioned exactly where society needs us to be to scale up the incredibly valuable contribution that we make to the health and wellbeing of the nation.



Foreword

“Professional recognition is incredibly powerful. In the hands of our talented and committed professionals, working right across our sector and beyond, it truly will transform lives.”

Our strategy sets out a recognised, achievable career path for everyone that is in or wants to be part of our sector with entry routes, progression and status recognition that meet the needs of both the individual and the employer.

It ensures that training, qualifications and skills development opportunities are high-quality and meet the changing needs of the sector. It provides a foundation built on local needs, helping the right skillsets to be available in the right places, at the right time. It helps more people to engage in sport and physical activity and have safe, enjoyable experiences.

What we set out to achieve in this strategy cannot be pursued in isolation. That is why the foundation of *Releasing the Power of our Profession*, is our continued work to enhance the professional standards and education ecosystem that the sector has tasked CIMSPA to create.

This strategy is the culmination of the collaboration between CIMSPA, professionals

working in the sector, employers, education providers, sector partners, governing bodies of sport, and allied professions such as health and social care. Together we are developing a sector-wide approach to recognising and elevating the status of our profession.

We are very grateful to everyone that has helped us to develop this strategy and will be integral to its success. At its foundation is a vision that the sector has asked us to deliver, and we believe that you will see your contribution within these pages.

Through fostering collaboration as a cultural norm across our sector, we can collectively empower our workforce to achieve an even greater impact.

Releasing the Power of our Profession is more than a roadmap. It is a declaration of our intent to ensure that the great contributions that those working in the sport and physical activity sector make to society and the economy are recognised and celebrated.

Professional recognition is incredibly powerful. In the hands of our talented and committed professionals, working right across our sector and beyond, it truly will transform lives.



Tara Dillon

Tara Dillon
CIMSPA CEO



Marc Woods

Marc Woods
CIMSPA Chair



*CIMSPA Workforce Insights Report 2023 and UK Coaching 2023

Strategy overview

Vision, purpose and mandate

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) is the professional development body for the UK sport and physical activity sector with a clear mandate to lead our sector and profession.

CIMSPA was created in 2012 with the award of its royal charter. Our approach has always been collaborative – “leading by listening” and our growing influence has been recognised by the UK government, devolved administrations, the home country sports councils and key sector bodies.

Our mandate to lead and regulate the sport and physical activity sector is grounded in strong regulatory, governance and education foundations.

Leading on removing workforce inequalities

Our ambition is that the demographic of the people who work in sport and physical activity fully-represents the society it serves. Our EDI ambitions will be a “golden thread” within and throughout this strategy.

Defining our sector

We are a sector whose workforce includes 586,000 professionals, working in six identified industries.

- 56% of our people work within small and medium sized enterprises with fewer than 250 employees. Our goal is to speak to, influence and support all our workforce, not just the 44% who work within large employers and are easier to connect with.
- 70% of sector organisations are in a “startup” phase and need support with business resilience and growth.

The potential value of our sector

There is a clear evidence base for the power of sport and physical activity to realise health, wellness, economic and social value benefits for the United Kingdom. Our workforce are the catalysts that CIMSPA will empower to achieve this. Improving the recruitment, training, career support and retention of this workforce is a key part of this strategy’s ambition.

Devolution and being place-focused

CIMSPA is a UK-wide professional body. However, sport and physical activity service provision and skills education delivery and funding are devolved functions. Devolution will be understood and respected both at home nations level and internally within England.

This strategy will ensure that the sport and physical activity sector drives health, economic and social benefits specific to a PLACE.

Stakeholders – understanding and alignment

We have a clear picture of the stakeholders we must work effectively with. Each of these has a key role in releasing the potential the sector has for activity, health, wellbeing and socio-economic value. Our stakeholder groups are:

- People – the sport and physical activity sector workforce.
- Education partners – training providers, higher and further education and awarding organisations.
- Employers – from individual entrepreneurs through to the largest sport, exercise and leisure providers.
- Systems partners – cross-sector organisations involved in policy making and strategic delivery.

CIMSPA is the engine that will align our stakeholders’ work to create, maintain and grow our sector’s power through our strategy’s six system interventions as without this, our sector will not fully professionalise and deliver on its potential.

Strategy overview

Professional status and recognition

Our insight and conversations with the sport and physical activity workforce reveal a singular truth – **they want to be recognised for the great work they do** – by their peers, by their employers, by the public and by professionals in other sectors.

Making professional recognition a reality for everyone in our world, through professional status, is a core ambition of this strategy.

- As a chartered professional body, CIMSPA is formally permitted to grant professional status to the sport and physical activity workforce and to regulate how this professional status is maintained in line with our charter and statutes.
- For individuals, being awarded a professional status gives them professional recognition of their value, experience and excellence.
- Collectively this will increase professional recognition for the sport and physical activity sector as a whole in the eyes of the government, the public, and allied sectors.

Flexible, accessible and inclusive

Our strategy recognises that everyone has their own career pathway to identify, build and follow. We will build our professional status pathways around this principle.

Introducing our system interventions

Our strategy will deliver professional recognition through six system interventions.

Local skills plans success through local delivery. Brokering supply and demand – the right training, delivered in the right place, at the right time, to the right people.



Strategy overview – a “systems perspective”

SYSTEM ISSUES

- The current **system** for the recruitment, training, support and retention of the sport and physical workforce is not working efficiently.
- It is not delivering the education products and skills our employers and workforce need – supply and demand are not in balance.
- These **system misalignments** are preventing us from realising the full potential of the sport and physical activity workforce.

OUR ROLE

- The sport and physical activity sector has collectively given us a mandate to intervene and **improve this system**. As the chartered professional body for the sector, and recognised as a regulator, we are the body best placed to do this.

IMPROVING THE SYSTEM

- CIMSPA has a proven track record over the past decade: creating professional standards; implementing quality assurance; maintaining an employer-led focus. This has built the foundations for **systemic improvement** in the recruitment, training, support and retention of our people.
- CIMSPA will provide leadership to its stakeholders and education partners in **harnessing** the **opportunities** presented to the sector through the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022.
- This will reduce **system inefficiencies** and help release our workforce’s potential to realise health, wellness, economic and social value benefits for the United Kingdom.
- Our strategy will deliver this **system improvement** through six specific **system interventions**.

Releasing the
Power of **our Profession**

Vision, purpose and mandate

CIMSPA is the chartered professional development body for the UK sport and physical activity sector with a clear mandate to lead our sector and profession.



About CIMSPA

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) is the professional development body for the UK's sport and physical activity sector, committed to supporting, developing and enabling professionals and organisations to succeed and, as a result, inspire our nation to become more active.

Vision

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

Our purpose

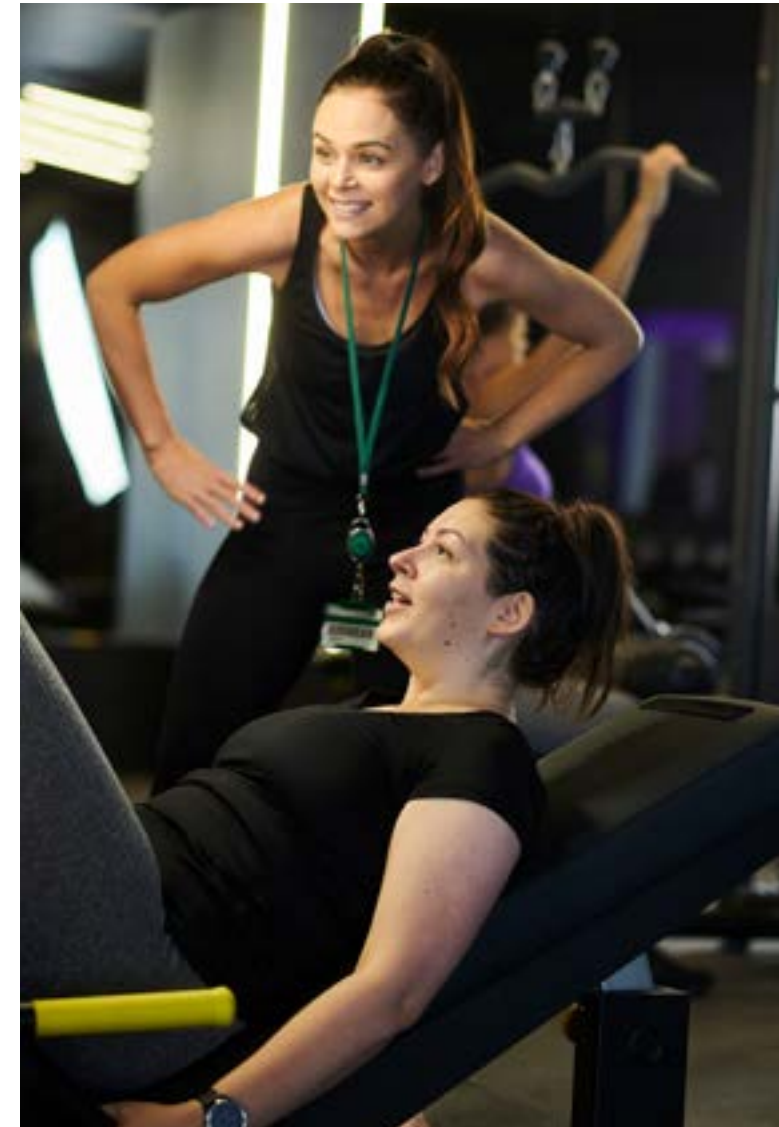
Our purpose is to lead the sport and physical activity sector and continue to shape a respected, regulated and recognised profession that prioritises diversity, inclusion, skills and behaviours. By doing this we will increase employment and volunteering opportunities for people from the broadest range of backgrounds and experiences.

We do this by:

- Empowering individuals to realise their potential in the sport and physical activity sector by supporting them on their personal career pathway through professional recognition.
- Championing the value and positive impact of a diverse and inclusive sport and physical activity workforce.
- Creating a robust, efficient, effective and localised approach to skills and education that systemises how we support and enable the workforce and organisations to succeed.
- Leading our sector on workforce policy and regulation to protect both the public and our workforce.
- Enhancing public trust and confidence in the value of our workforce and profession.

Values

Our team values and culture are respect, quality and teamwork.



Our mandate and our promise

CIMSPA was created in 2012 with the award of its royal charter. Since then, we have worked collaboratively with organisations across the sector and established a leadership position as the guardian of the sport and physical activity workforce and champion of its professionalism.

Our approach has always been collaborative – “leading by listening” is how we describe this, and our growing influence has been recognised by the UK government, devolved administrations, the home country sports councils and key sector bodies.

DCMS strategy mandate

In August 2023 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published “Get Active: A Strategy for the Future of Sport and Physical Activity”. This strategy explicitly backs CIMSPA’s leadership and rollout of place-based skills and training: “We will support CIMSPA in the development of Local Skills Improvement Plans with full national coverage.”

Sport England strategy mandate

In 2021, Sport England launched “Uniting the Movement”, a 10-year strategy outlining the importance of the workforce in driving change to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. Sport England supports CIMSPA to ensure a professional workforce is in place to:

- Create career opportunities for people to progress within the sector.
- Provide the sector with quality assured training and apprenticeships, underpinned by employer-led professional standards.

The power of our royal charter

The foundation of our mandate as a chartered institute is our royal charter, granted in 2012. The statutes within the royal charter were extended by Privy Council in 2019 to more closely reflect our leadership of the sport and physical activity sector.

The statutes detail the scope of professional regulation for those who work within our world.

This includes anyone active in delivery, administration, development or management in the field of sport and physical activity. Those working in research and academia within our sector are also covered within these statutes.

For these professionals, CIMSPA is responsible for ensuring that those who we regulate:

- Meet professional standards.
- Maintain their competence through CPD.
- Adhere to a membership code of conduct.

The power of these statutes is that, as the single chartered professional body in the sector, CIMSPA is uniquely placed to deliver professional recognition and status for our workforce. This is the central ambition of our strategy.

Our mandate and our promise

Regulatory, governance and education foundations

Every recognised profession requires regulatory authority and boundaries, strong governance and a credible education system for individual professionals to engage with throughout their careers. CIMSPA has built these foundations.

A recognised professional regulator

CIMSPA's position as the regulator for the sport and physical activity sector is acknowledged by government and other lead bodies. Our royal charter identifies us as the single and only body responsible for regulating our profession.

We are listed as our sector's regulator on the Department for Business and Trade's regulated professions register, which details the regulatory authority in each sector. Over 200 regulated professions are included on the register – from air traffic controllers, through engineers to solicitors.

Our education regulation credentials

- CIMSPA is acknowledged as a Professional Statutory Regulatory Body for Higher Education.
- We are recognised by the Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation (Ofqual), the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (IfATE) and other education regulators as the lead body for sector-specific education policy.

- We are recognised within the Directory of Professional and Employer Led Bodies by the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (ifATE).

Sector governance

- CIMSPA created and manages the UK Sport and Physical Activity Professional Development Board, as well as devolved boards in Scotland and Wales.
- We also manage industry-specific professional development committees tasked with standards development.

This governance framework sets the boundaries of a distinct sport and physical activity sector and continues to create and maintain the professional standards that define our sector as a profession.



Our mandate and our promise

Regulatory, governance and education foundations

The sport and physical activity education ecosystem

Another foundational success that reinforces our mandate has been the creation of employer-led professional standards which have been used by our awarding organisation and education provider partners to create quality-assured education products for our workforce.

This has been a collaborative process – hundreds of employers and education providers have been positively engaged and now partner with us with a common goal of maintaining the health of the education ecosystem.

We are recognised as the guardian and regulator of this quality assured education ecosystem by the sector, by the allied professions we work with and by government.

Our education ecosystem

- We have completed the development and publication of 35 professional standards outlining the knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to working in sport and physical activity, with over 1000 organisations and individuals consulted in their development.
- Over 275 education partners (awarding organisations, training providers and further and higher education institutions) align their qualifications, degrees and CPD to these professional standards.
- Over 1000 education products (degree programmes, qualifications, CPD opportunities and apprenticeships) are endorsed against the employer-led professional standards.
- Over 50 training provider partners have completed and been graded through the second generation of CIMSPA's quality assurance framework.



Leading on removing workforce inequalities

Our ambition

That the demographic of the people who work in sport and physical activity fully-represents the society it serves. Our equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) ambitions will be a “golden thread” within and throughout this strategy.

How we will achieve this

Increasing the awareness of CIMSPA as an exemplar employer and establish ourselves as the “go to” organisation for sector workforce equality, diversity and inclusion excellence.

CIMSPA People & Culture department

- Share how equality, diversity and inclusion is prioritised within our own organisation’s actions as we recruit, support and nurture our staff team.
- Continually develop our organisational EDI focus and ambitions as an exemplar for the sector.

CIMSPA Insight department and CIMSPA workforce skills observatory

- Lead on the collection of operational workforce EDI intelligence through the CIMSPA Insight department and CIMSPA Data Lens project.
- Share this insight with CIMSPA members, partners and stakeholders to enable their own equality, diversity and inclusion innovations and improvements.
- Commission over-the-horizon equality, diversity and inclusion research through the new UK sport and physical activity skills observatory.

CIMSPA members, partners and stakeholders

- Work to eradicate barriers into the sector from an employment perspective.
 - Improve understanding of the prime importance of EDI within the sport and physical activity sector’s work to deliver health, wellbeing and socio-economic benefits to our nation.
 - Establish a pathway for continual EDI development by CIMSPA partners and members. We will do this by ensuring that EDI is addressed within every CIMSPA sport and physical activity sector local skills plan.
 - Establish effective pathways for a diverse workforce into CIMSPA membership through our careers support activity.



EDI datapoints – where we are now

Headline: sport and physical activity core occupations tend to be less diverse than the UK-wide workforce.

AGE

30% On average, workers in the S&PA occupations are young with 30% of jobs held by those between 16–24 years of age, three times the level of the average of all occupations.

GENDER

56% Compared to the average, S&PA occupations are more likely to be male, although there are signs that this is changing. (down from 62% in 2020).

ETHNICITY

87% On average, S&PA occupations are less diverse than the UK-wide workforce with more than 87% of S&PA occupations being of White British ethnicity compared to 79% elsewhere.

DISABILITY

13% Fewer workers within the S&PA workforce report having a disability (13%), compared to the average of all occupations (16%). This is likely linked to the age profile of the S&PA workforce and to the physical demands of S&PA roles.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC

28% Compared to the wider workforce, the S&PA workforce has a higher proportion of workers in lower socio-economic groups, driven by higher shares of students and semiroutine occupations (28% vs 23% workforce-wide).



Source: CIMSPA 2023 Workforce Insights Report

Releasing the
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Defining the sector workforce and employers

Understanding the dimensions, boundaries and scope of the sport and physical activity sector and of the people who work within it. This insight guides our strategy.



Welcome to our world

We are a sector whose workforce includes 586,000 people.

The insight and research we have already completed gives a clear understanding of the dimensions, boundaries and scope of the sport and physical activity sector and of the people who work in our world. This insight has guided the development of this strategy.

We identify our sector as comprising of six industries:

- Community sport
- Exercise and fitness
- Leisure operations
- Health and wellbeing
- Performance sport
- Adventure sport

One sector. 6 industries. 29 sub-industries.



Community sport

In-school provision • Grass roots sports clubs
Sports development • Sport for development
Disability/ inclusion • Out-of-school provision



Performance sport

Professional sport • Semi-professional sport
Youth and talent development
Sports management/ sports administration
Strength and conditioning
Sports science/ performance analysis
Sports media and sponsorship



Adventure sport

Indoor • Outdoor



Exercise and fitness

Medium/large gyms
Personal training/coaching
Boutique gyms/specialist facilities
Fitness events • Group-based exercise
Active travel



Leisure operations

Dry • Wet • Ice and snow



Health and wellbeing

Sports injury and holistic therapies
Wellbeing-focused physical activity
Sports psychology/mental wellbeing
Sports nutrition/weight management
Health navigation and social prescribing

Who our people are

172,200

of our workforce are employed in recognised workplaces, working in job roles at the core of our sector – roles that CIMSPA professionally recognises such as personal trainer, coach or leisure centre manager.

73,200

work within sport and physical activity as freelancers. These freelancers and sole traders are a major focus of this strategy – they are on the ground, delivering place-based local sport and activity opportunities, aligned to the needs of their communities.

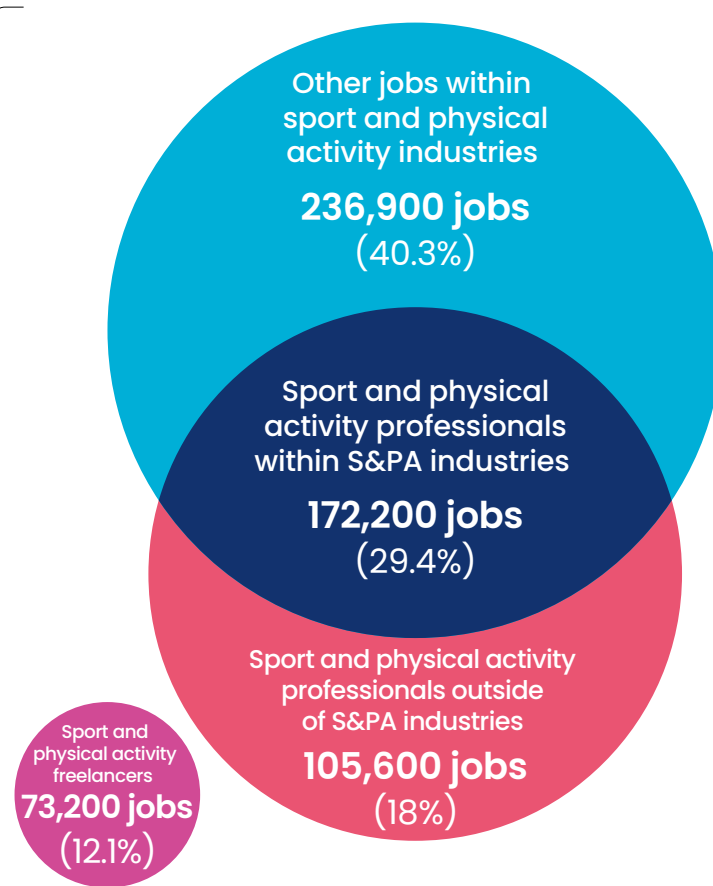
105,600*

are in roles that are sport and activity related, but take place outside our six core industries, such as in hospitality and education industries.

236,900

people work within our world but in non-sport and activity roles such as reception, marketing and finance.

Total sport and physical activity workforce
586,000



Source: Lightcast (2023.1) and ONS APS

**This figure is defined by government statistical definitions as to industries and occupations. The sport and physical activity workforce are distributed across several of these codes. This related workforce has many of the same professional recognition needs as our "core" workforce.*

Where our workforce is deployed

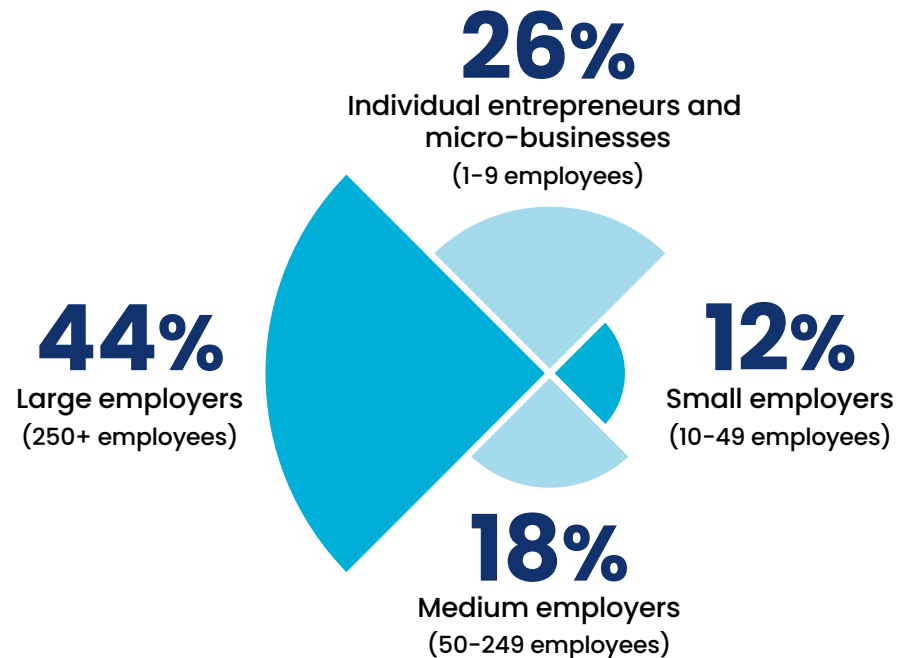
Our understanding of what kinds of businesses our workforce is employed within is important.

56% of our people work within small and medium sized enterprises with fewer than 250 employees.

Over a quarter of the businesses in sport and physical activity are individual entrepreneurs or micro-businesses with fewer than 9 staff.

Our goal is to speak to, influence and support all our workforce, not just the 44% who work within large employers and are easy to connect with.

Instead, the focus of this strategy is for CIMSPA to reach into local areas to connect with every sport and activity provider, communicate the value of professional recognition and support them in their amazing work.



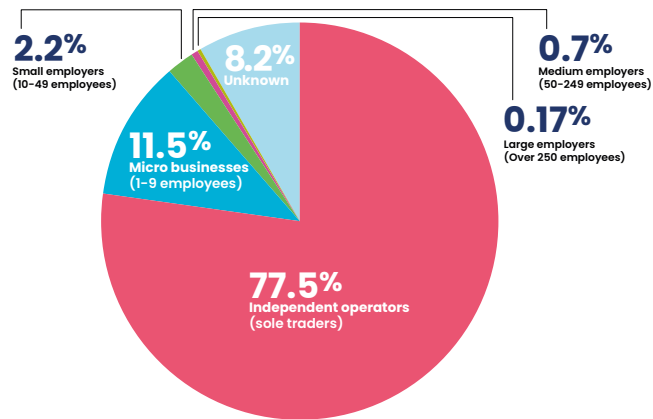
Source: The DataCity 2024 (web scraping & Companies House), LightCast 2023 (ONS & jobs data)



How sector enterprises size up

Another dimension of our sector this strategy will account for is organisational size. Our insight reveals a sport and physical activity sector with more businesses than estimated before – **nearly 95,000**.

- Independent operators (sole traders): 77.5%
- Micro businesses (1-9 employees): 11.5%
- Small employers (10-49 employees): 2.2%
- Medium employers (50-249 employees): 0.7%
- Large employers (over 250 employees): 0.17%
- Unknown: 8.2%



Over 91% of sector enterprises have fewer than 49 employees.

Previous sector policy initiatives have not clearly identified, or fully supported this large number of small businesses – **that is the challenge this strategy is designed to meet.**

Source: Datacity/Lightcast. Data includes: Sector core industries – Exercise and Fitness; Leisure Operations; Community Sport; Health and Wellbeing; Performance Sport; Adventure Sport. Data excludes: Sector bodies and training, development and education organisations

Business maturity – an alternative lens

The business insight research we have completed reveals a consistent picture of a sector with a majority of “startup” enterprises. Our strategy will prioritise support for these organisations to build their resilience and support our people whatever size organisation they work within.

By helping our startups thrive, they can play an effective, local-focused role in releasing our sector’s potential.

STARTUP

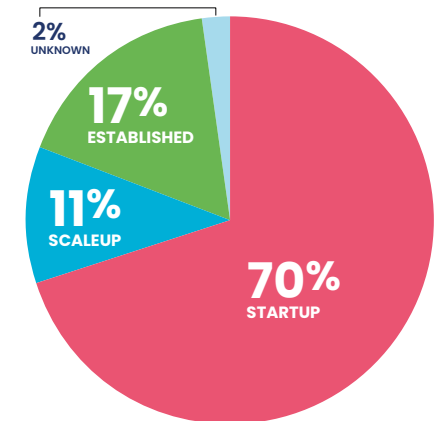
New enterprises yet to fully-develop their business model, potentially lacking adequate capital and needing to grow their resilience.

SCALEUP

Companies with a good business model that have shown +20% growth for 3 years.

ESTABLISHED

Reputable within the sector with a developed customer base.



Improving the resilience and business maturity of this large number of “startup” enterprises will be a key focus of our business support hub strategy delivery project (see document section below).

Source: Aggregated data from CIMSPA skills diagnostic collection across 17 skills hub areas.

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The potential value of our sector

There is a clear evidence base for the power of sport and physical activity to realise health, wellness, economic and social value benefits for the United Kingdom.



Our people – the catalyst for positive impact

There is a clear evidence base for the power of sport and physical activity to realise health, wellness, economic and social value benefits for our nation.

Our people – the sport and physical activity workforce – are the catalysts that CIMSPA will empower to achieve this.

This realisable potential is the narrative this strategy will use to encourage government to take notice of and understand our sector's power.

The picture provided by research and case studies is clear. However, if our organisations, of whatever size, don't have the right people, then our sector's potential will remain unrealised.

Recruiting, training, supporting and retaining this workforce is a central theme of this strategy.

Respecting devolution and being place-focused

CIMSPA is a UK-wide professional body. However, sport and physical activity service provision and skills education delivery and funding are devolved functions across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and partially in England.

This strategy will ensure that the sport and physical activity sector drives health, economic and social benefits specific to a PLACE.

Its ambitions, budgets and priorities will be place-based.

Devolution will be understood and respected both at home nations level and internally within England.

We have already deployed liaison staff and skills hub managers in Scotland and Wales as a practical demonstration of our intent.



From the national picture down to local success

CASE STUDY



More active means better outcomes for society

Research modelling by the University of East Anglia reveals the results of taking 1 million people from across the socio-economic spectrum, then getting and keeping them more active over a decade. In this scenario, people live longer, work longer and are economically active for longer, generating significant savings for the NHS.

This model uses the Quality-Adjusted Life Year (QALY) metric, where one QALY is equal to 1 year of life in perfect health.

1.7k QALY gained

After one year of activity

70.2k QALY gained

After 10 years of activity

Source: *Fit for the Future: The Health Value of Wellbeing and Leisure Services.* University of East Anglia (HEC) and Economics by Design, for the District Councils' Network, 2022

CASE STUDY



Inclusive physical activity enhancing wellbeing

HM Treasury uses wellbeing as one measure within its green book methodology. The wellbeing-adjusted life year (WELBY) is a metric that shows the impacts of policies and interventions on life expectancy and individual wellbeing.

As an example of this, since 2020, Sport for Confidence and Essex County Council have delivered their Prevention and Enablement Model (PEM) within adult social care – embedding inclusive physical activity sessions and creating practice-based learning for its care workforce.

Those taking part in this activity programme demonstrated a difference in life satisfaction estimated to equate to:

£22,230 per person of value, per year.

The programme was evaluated by the University of Essex and has since been awarded the national public health champion award at the 2023 NHS England Chief Allied Health Professions Officer Awards.

Our strategy will ensure that we measure the impact of our work in the same way that HM Treasury does, to ensure we can effectively make the case for the value of sport and physical activity.

Source: *Prevention and Enablement Model Evaluation Report.* University of Essex State of Life and University of Suffolk, 2022



CASE STUDY

Prehab4Cancer – helping people with a cancer diagnosis to both prepare for and cope better with their treatment

Prehab4Cancer is the first integrated care service-delivered prehabilitation and recovery programme for cancer patients in the UK, via a partnership in Manchester between the Greater Manchester Cancer Alliance and GM Active leisure centres. The programme facilitates cancer patients to engage in exercise, nutrition, and wellbeing assessments and interventions prior to, during and after treatment.

Patient benefits

- 1.5-day reduction in hospital stay.
- 0.4-day reduction in critical care stay.

Patients are optimised BEFORE surgery, so healthcare demands are reduced and patients gain long-lasting health benefits.

Provider benefits

- 550 ward bed days released.
- 146 critical care bed days released.

Bed days released from 1000 prehab patients enabled 179 additional patients to access timely surgical pathways.

System benefits

Bed days 'released' per prehab patient cover the costs involved in setting up and delivering Prehab4Cancer for a year – sustainable on a recurrent basis.

£400
(per person)

Programme delivery costs.

£1244
(per person)

Estimated financial benefit – bed days and critical care bed days released; emergency attendances and readmissions prevented.

Prehab4Cancer is a clear and striking example of the impact sport and physical activity can have on improving health and enabling governmental goals.

Reality check – rollout barriers

The biggest barrier to sustaining and widening out programmes like this is people. GM Active need more people with the right qualifications and the right training and the right experience to be able to work with more patients in this way.

Our strategy focuses on workforce development through a local lens. In the North West CIMSPA will work with GM Active and others to drive investment into training that enables programmes like Prehab4Cancer to amplify their impact.

Releasing the
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Understanding our stakeholders

To realise our strategy's ambitions, we must work effectively with multiple stakeholders both within and outside sport and physical activity.



Introducing our stakeholders

To realise this strategy's ambitions, we must work effectively with different stakeholders both within and outside sport and physical activity.

Each of our stakeholder groups has a key role in releasing the potential the sport and physical activity sector has for activity, health, wellbeing and socio-economic value.

Our core stakeholder groups are:

- **People** – the sport and physical activity sector workforce.
- **Education partners** – training providers, higher and further education and awarding organisations.
- **Employers** – from individual entrepreneurs through to the largest sport, exercise and leisure providers.

These stakeholder groups already have a close and symbiotic relationship. Our task at CIMSPA is to ensure they work in a systemic and efficient way to allow us to release the potential of our workforce.

The final stakeholder type is our systems partners. These are the cross-sector organisations involved in policy making and strategic delivery, including Sport England and **sportscotland**, UK Coaching, Women in Sport and UK Anti-Doping.



Who the stakeholders are

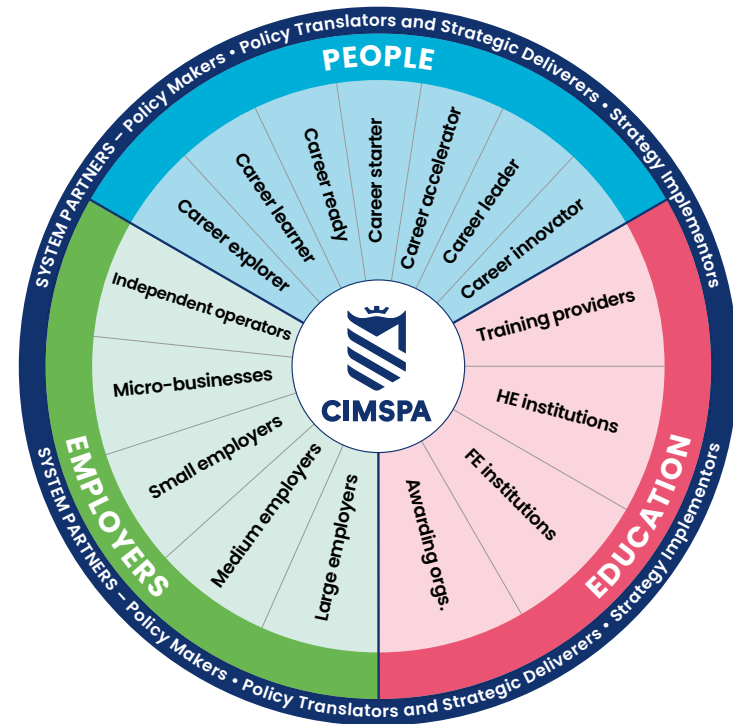
A whole system approach

As we deliver this strategy our constant goal will be to encourage our stakeholders to align their work, as without this, our sector will not fully professionalise and deliver on its potential.

We want our workforce to be awarded professional status and gain professional recognition. To deliver this, we will need end-to-end and flexible career pathways.

We'll need the expertise of our entire education ecosystem to deliver the modern education products (e.g. CPD, qualifications and micro-credentials) that these career pathways will require.

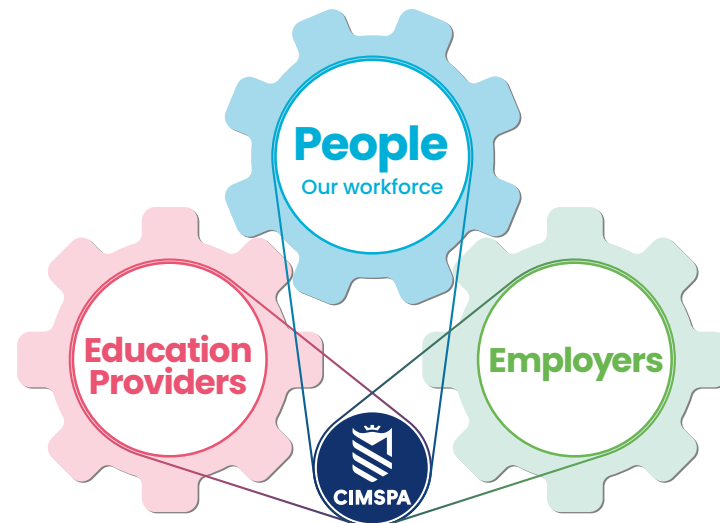
CIMSPA is the guardian of this whole systems approach. We have a clear picture of who our stakeholders are; we know that we will need to deliver value with a local-first mindset; and we will always shine the lens of inclusivity onto our work.



The power of stakeholder alignment

Success will be achieved if all of our stakeholder groups work together to create, maintain and grow our sector's power. CIMSPA is the engine that will align our stakeholders' work through our strategy's six system interventions:

- Local skills delivery / local skills plans
- National Training Academy
- Careers support
- Business support hub
- Workforce governance
- UK sport and physical activity skills observatory



Value propositions

Different value propositions

Each of those segments needs something different from CIMSPA and this strategy exists to deliver that unique value to each stakeholder type.

People

“People” are at the top of the stakeholder wheel for a reason – we are a people organisation and our sector’s people will be the catalyst for our success.

This is not a single entity though – our people need support in different ways, and this strategy will define and deliver a distinct value proposition for each group. Our strategy segments people in the context of where they are in their career journey.

From career explorers who need to understand the exciting and accessible careers the sport and physical activity sector provides, through career learners and career starters all the way through to career innovators who have reached the pinnacle of their careers, with this most likely reflected in chartered status.

Example value propositions

CAREER STARTER

Someone who is working in our sector and now needs an inspiring career pathway. CIMSPA will help you take the next steps in your career.

Because of my relationship with CIMSPA:

- I have my first professional status and am qualified and competent/safe to work.
- I understand our sector has many exciting career choices and is accessible and inclusive.
- I have support in moving forwards on my personal career pathway.
- I can network and connect with others like me.

CAREER INNOVATOR

Someone who is enabling positive change to more than just their organisation – ensuring the sport and physical activity sector has a positive impact. CIMSPA will ensure your excellence is recognised.

Because of my relationship with CIMSPA:

- I have the highest professional status in our sector – the pinnacle.
- I am part of a strategic network of innovators both within and beyond the sector and can champion the positive impact our work has for society.
- I can use my strategic position to enhance our sector’s professionalism and its external perception.
- My contributions to advancing the sport and physical activity sector are shaping a legacy.

For a complete picture of our stakeholder value plans and mapping, visit www.cimspa.co.uk/strategy

Releasing the
POWER of our **Profession**

Professional status and recognition

Our strategy will create professional status awards for our sector's workforce, ensuring they are professionally recognised by the public and allied sectors.

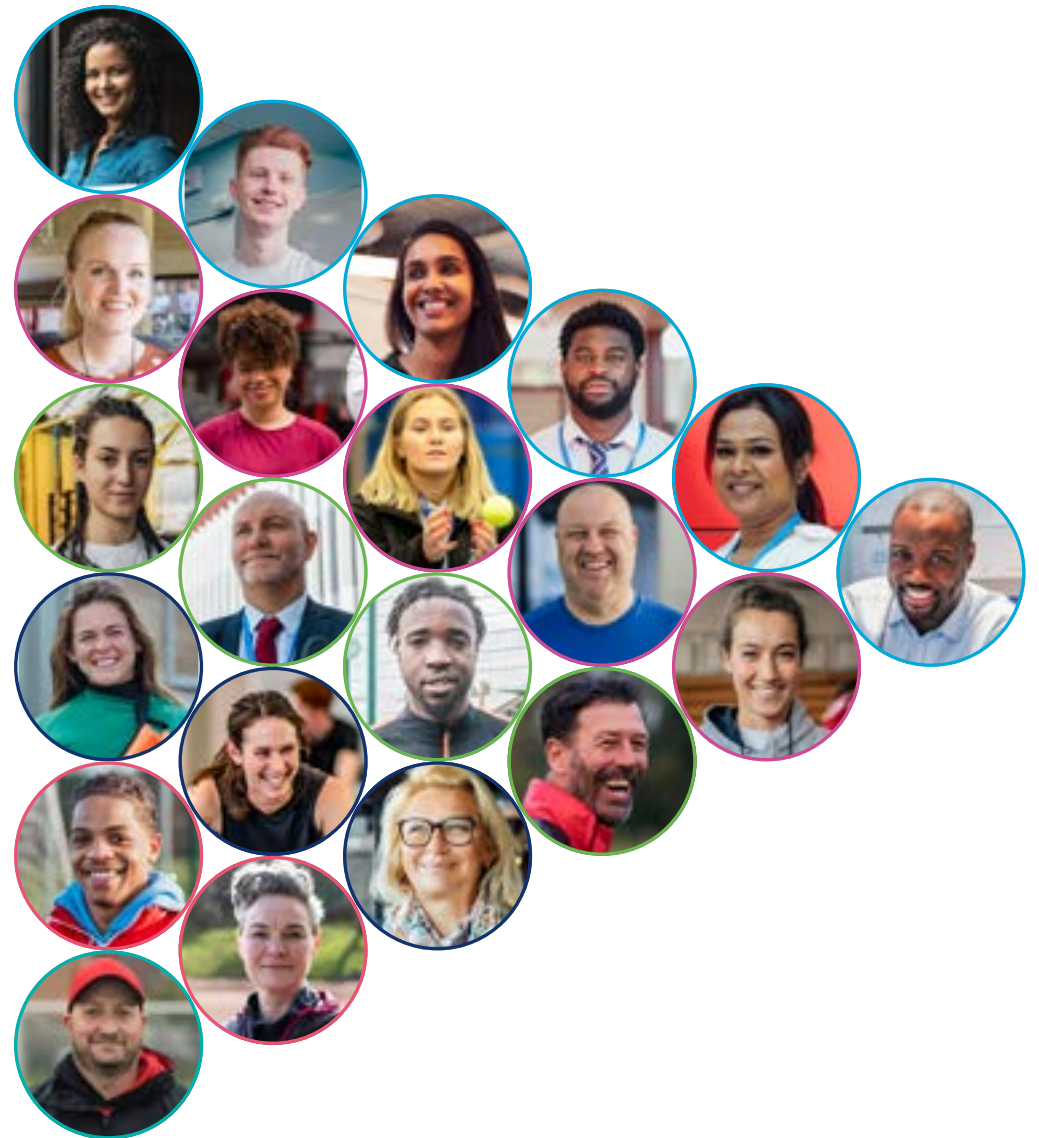


Professional status and recognition

Our people – the sport and physical activity workforce – are the catalyst that will release the potential of our sector.

Our insight and conversations with them reveal a singular truth – **they want to be recognised for the great work they do** – by their peers, by their employers, by the public and by professionals in other sectors.

Making professional recognition a reality for everyone in our world, through professional status, is a core ambition of this strategy.



The power of professional status and recognition

Professional status

A professional status is **earned** through learning and experience, then **awarded** and it must be **maintained**.

Professional status is a powerful acknowledgement of how those who invest in their career and ongoing development become more professional through application of learning and more valuable within their careers through that commitment.

- As a chartered professional body CIMSPA is formally permitted to grant **professional status** to the sport and physical activity workforce.
- The right to use post-nominal letters as part of an awarded **professional status** gives tangible value in that other sectors and professions understand an individual's value, experience and excellence.



Individual professional recognition

Being awarded a **professional status** gives an individual better **professional recognition**.

Professional recognition acknowledges an individual's expertise, education and experience. It also signals formal recognition of competence, knowledge and skills by a professional regulatory body.

It offers a shared and positive community of like-minded professionals and recognition, respect and reward for their commitment.

It demonstrates credibility to employers, colleagues and the public – achieving **professional recognition** is a significant career milestone and provides great opportunities for advancement.



Collective professional recognition

Over the lifecycle of this strategy, many thousands of our people will be awarded a **professional status** by CIMSPA and through this award will be **professionally recognised**.

Collectively this will increase **professional recognition** for the sport and physical activity sector as a whole in the eyes of the government, the public, other sectors and the system partners we work most closely with.

Our sector's reputational capital is built on the collective reputational capital of its people – their success is our greater good.

Who can be professionally recognised

Through the system interventions included in this strategy, CIMSPA will establish an accessible and flexible pathway to professional status for everyone working in the occupational roles that we professionally recognise.

We use three occupational groupings which together include all those CIMSPA can award a professional status to.

There are three categories:

- Practitioners
- Managers and leaders
- People developers

As part of our workforce skills observatory system intervention (see section below), we are exploring how best to develop professional recognition for academics and researchers who work in our world.

PRACTITIONERS

Occupations that apply knowledge, skills and behaviours to support people to achieve their fitness or sporting goals, often referred to as the 'front line' workforce.

EXAMPLE OCCUPATIONS:

Sports coach; swimming teacher; personal trainer; lifeguard; mat-based Pilates instructor; strength and conditioning coach; group exercise instructor.

MANAGERS AND LEADERS

All management and leadership occupations across the sector with clear linear progression from aspiring to entry to general to senior manager.

EXAMPLE OCCUPATIONS:

Exercise and fitness manager; sports development manager; leisure centre manager.

PEOPLE DEVELOPERS

Occupations that support, educate and assess peoples' competence to be practitioners and managers.

EXAMPLE OCCUPATIONS:

Tutor; assessor; coach developer.



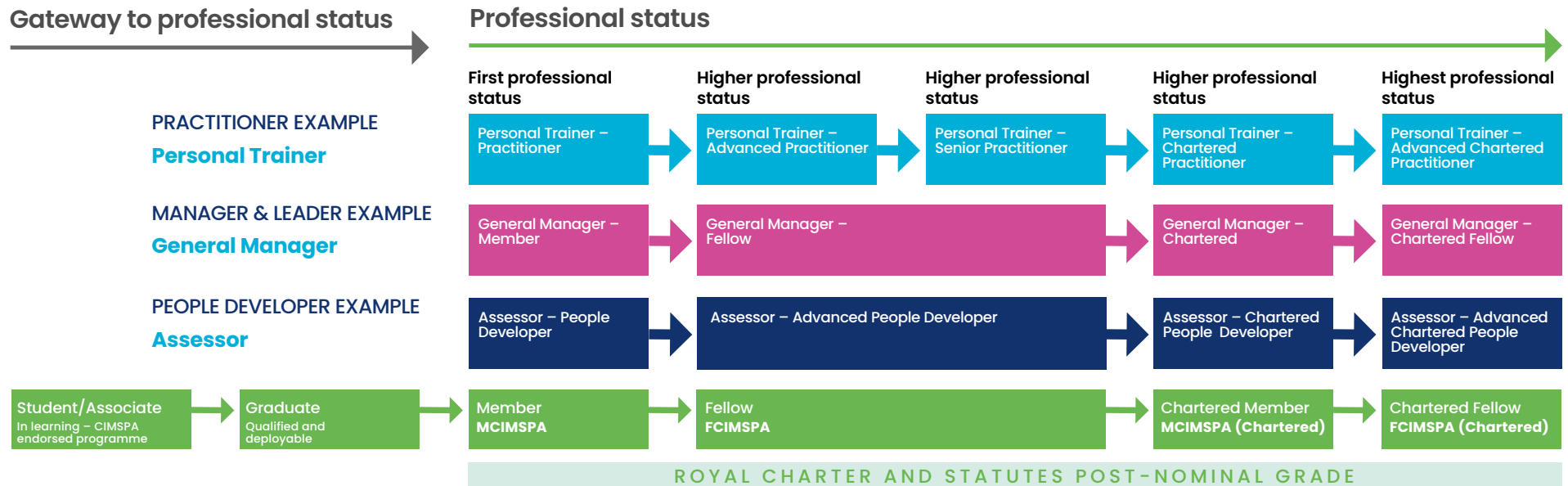
Pathways to professional status

For each of our occupational pathways, for example coach or general manager, there will be four or five core levels of professional status, aligned with our royal charter and statutes.

Flexible, accessible and inclusive

Our strategy recognises that everyone has their own career pathway to identify, build and follow. We will build our professional status pathways around this principle.

- A pathway for someone who enters as a student and wants to advance all the way to chartered status with a single-minded focus.
- A pathway for someone who has found their specialism and wants to both do a great job but also maintain their work-life balance.
- A pathway for a mid-life career switcher keen to repurpose their transferable skills into a fulfilling future in our world, enabled by our education ecosystem through micro-credentials and recognition of prior experience.



Professional status unpacked

An awarded professional status communicates job role, experience and education in line with professional standards, currency and wider recognition



Occupation

Personal Trainer

Entry Manager

Other examples include sports coach, gym instructor, health navigator etc.

Professional experience and education

A highly skilled personal trainer working in a specialised role.

- Core professional recognition as a PT
- Specialism in working with people with long term conditions

A manager at the start of their career – qualified and deployable.

- Core professional recognition as an entry manager (leisure operations)

CIMSPA post-nominals

Demonstrates the CURRENCY and WIDER RECOGNITION of a professional status: up-to-date CPD and professionally-regulated by the CIMSPA membership code of conduct. Post-nominal letters understood by allied sectors.

Personal Trainer
Advanced Practitioner
FCIMSPA

Entry Manager
Member
MCIMSPA

FELLOW

MEMBER

Releasing the
Power of our **Profession**

Making professional recognition a reality

Our strategy will deliver professional recognition through six system interventions.

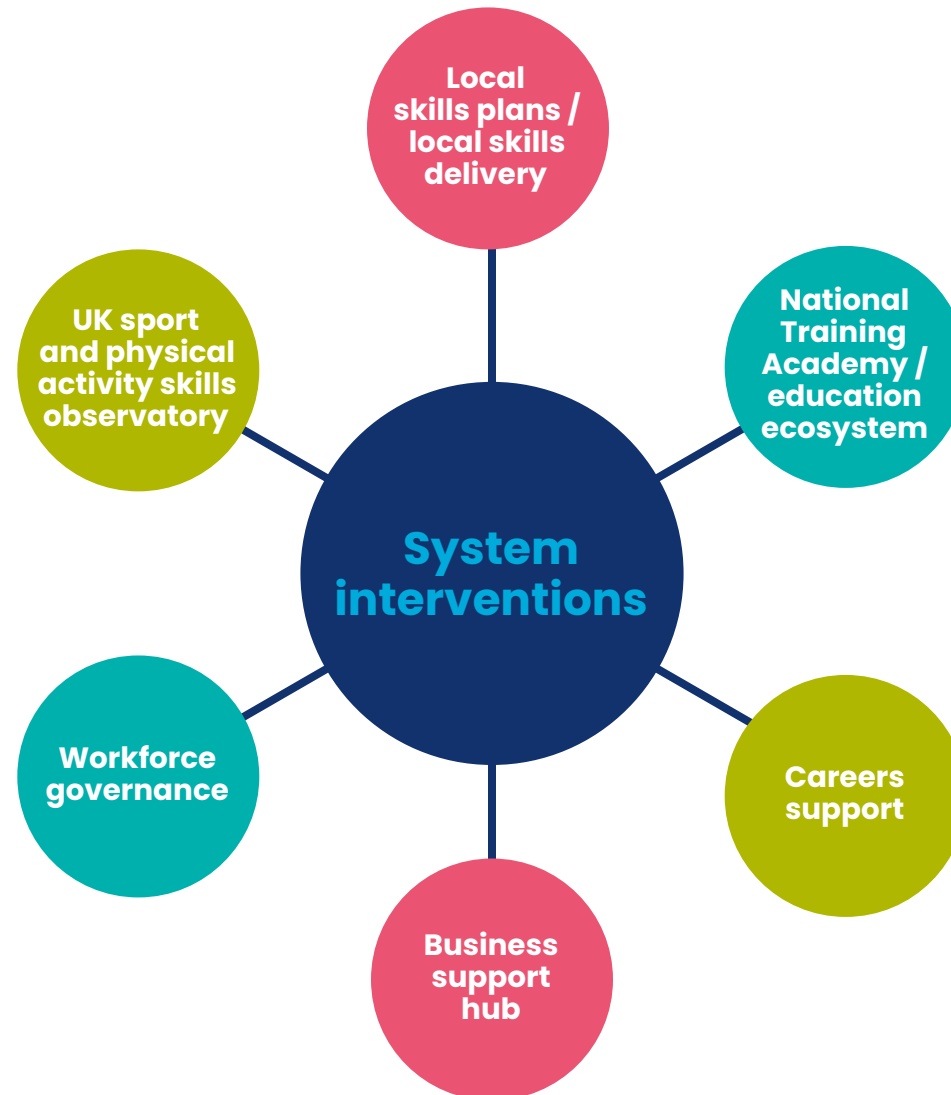


System interventions – delivering our strategy

Over the past decade, through our professional standards, education ecosystem and regulatory work, CIMSPA has created the foundational environment that will make professional recognition a genuine reality for our workforce and sector.

This strategy will strengthen professional recognition through six system interventions:

- Local skills plans and delivery
- The new National Training Academy and our education ecosystem
- Careers support
- Business support hub
- Workforce governance
- UK sport and physical activity skills observatory



Local skills plans through local delivery

The right training, delivered in the right place, at the right time, to the right people.

Our local skills plans are funded by Sport England, with additional contributions from **sportscotland** and Sport Wales.

This work is bringing together employers, education providers and employability-focused organisations to effectively and efficiently match supply and demand of quality-assured education and training for our workforce.

CIMSPA have already deployed a complete delivery team of multiple skills hub managers working at a local level across England, Wales and Scotland.

In each skills hub area, our skills hub managers are building relationships between stakeholders and capturing skills diagnostics data from hundreds of employers.

Local skills accountability boards representing employers, education providers and other skills bodies are being created in each area, with each board creating a sport and physical activity sector local skills plan.

Local skills plans

These plans will:

- Ensure local colleges, universities and training providers are offering education and training that matches what employers need.
- Provide employers with the skilled workforce they need to offer great sport and physical activity opportunities that are inclusive and meet the needs of diverse local communities, and drive business success.
- Give the people who work in sport and physical activity great career pathways.

All with the goal of ensuring the sport and physical activity sector can deliver health, economic and social benefits to our nation.

Our local skills work will also inform the government's cross-sector local skills improvement plans.

WHAT THIS INTERVENTION WILL DO

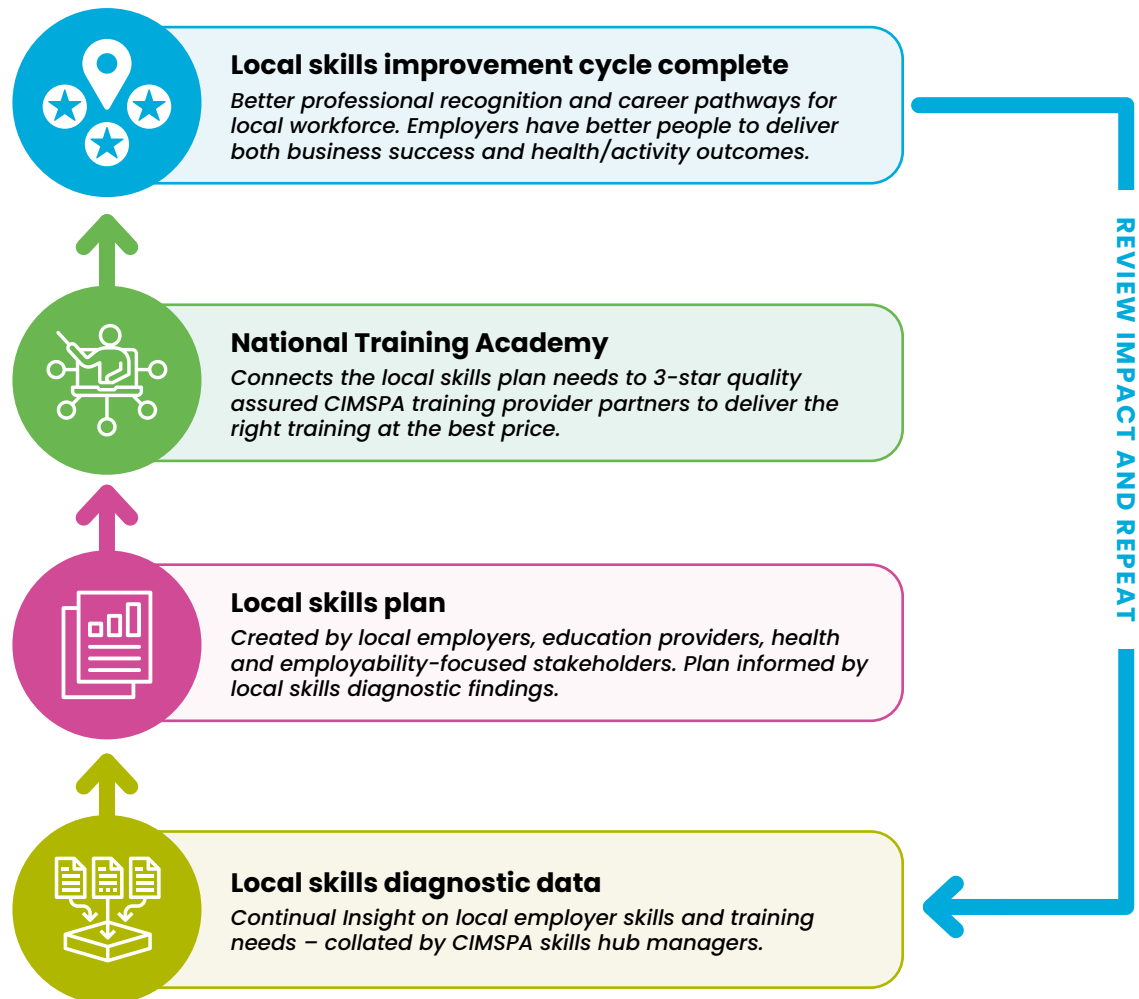
- Complete the implementation of our first generation of local skills plans across the UK, in partnership with our network of local skills accountability boards.
- Contribute to the government's cross sector skills work on behalf of the sport and physical activity sector.
- Ensure that sector micro-businesses are targeted to capture their skills needs, both to inform local skills plans and our business support hub.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Our sector has a highly skilled sport and physical activity workforce representative of the communities it serves.
- CIMSPA has successfully brokered and matched the supply and demand of sector education and training, has reduced training costs and ensured quality-assured provision through the National Training Academy.
- Our local skills work has increased the positive impact that the sport and physical activity workforce has on the health of the nation.



Our local skills improvement lifecycle



The new National Training Academy and our education ecosystem

The new National Training Academy will harness the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 to increase the positive impact of the education delivery ecosystem that CIMSPA and our partners have built over the past decade.

Our insight work and stakeholder engagement has given a clear picture of how education and training supply and demand is imbalanced in the sport and physical activity sector.

We have a market oversupply of training for some roles such as personal trainers and sports scientists. However, in areas such as leisure management and its front line, and in new roles such as in health navigation and rehabilitation, training pathways are in short supply.

As the sector's professional body, this strategy will see CIMSPA intervene to correct the current education supply and demand system's imperfections.

This strategy has aligned with important changes in legislation and how government sees the role of further and higher education in driving employability.

Our key tool to achieve this will be the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, which gives us the tools to better manage skills and training supply and demand in sport and physical activity.

Across all sectors the Act has identified the need for a greater employer voice in how skills and training are planned and delivered.

Through this strategy, CIMSPA will play a key role in:

- Extending our education ecosystem to further education colleges.
- Encouraging our higher education partners to provide sector-specific post-graduate qualifications.

WHAT THIS INTERVENTION WILL DO

- Launch and establish the National Training Academy as the exemplar of high-quality education provision and supply and demand matching in our sector.
- Establish our graded quality assurance system as the new normal for education providers in our sector to aspire to, and for employer partners and potential learners to benefit from as a clear metric of quality education provision.
- Facilitate the creation of flexible and accessible learning for our people, through new education products such as micro-credentials.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Lower training costs for employers and individuals through efficient management of supply and demand.
- Sector-wide understanding and adoption of our quality assurance grading system – a real-world representation of our guardianship of the sport and physical activity education ecosystem.

The Skills and Post-16 Education Act

How we will benefit from a generational realignment of supply and demand in vocational education provision.

The new Act became law in 2022. It reshapes how employers and education providers work together at a local level. The act is closely linked with the devolution of adult skills funding and its ambition is to make it easier for people to access the skills required to secure well-paid jobs in industries with skills gaps.

To unlock support and funding, further education colleges and training providers must now work together – and with employers – to identify local skills needs and to document this work in local skills plans.

Further education colleges have been placed front and centre within this new environment and are being asked to think of themselves as “employability centres” rather than just academic institutions.

- Through this strategy CIMSPA will maximise the opportunities that the 2022 Act presents to our education partners and to our workforce.
- The new National Training Academy – created and managed by CIMSPA – will act as a key broker in managing supply and demand – efficiently aligning employer demand with education provider supply and maximising learner outcomes through our next-generation quality assurance systems.

National Training Academy

Ensuring everyone in our sector can easily identify and access quality-assured training.

The new National Training Academy will understand employer training needs through our local skills data collection process. These training needs will then be met by the very best of our quality assured education providers.

Education partners identified as three-star quality assured (see below) will form the core of the National Training Academy and be closely aligned with targeted investment as part of the local skills plans system. The enhanced accreditation of a three-star rating will drive customers to their courses and further reduce marketing spend.

The National Training Academy is, at its core, a matchmaking service that signposts our employers (with their specific needs in a specific place) to a quality-assured training provider who can meet this need.

The National Training Academy will be the sport and physical activity sector’s quality-focused skills brokerage.

It will harness the tools provided by the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 to achieve this.

Next-generation quality assurance

CIMSPA has already implemented the sector’s first-generation education and training quality assurance system, with over 110 quality assurance reviews completed in its final year.

Our strategy builds on this achievement and the second generation of sector education provision quality assurance is now a reality. Through this every CIMSPA education partner will be given a one-to-three-star rating of their training provision.

For our further education partners, this rating will be additional to, and independent of, their Ofsted rating.

Education partners will benefit from the trust that the CIMSPA brand has earned as THE guardian of education, training and professional standards in our world – employers and individuals will understand the quality of an education partner’s training provision by default.

The star rating system is meritocratic and aligned to employer and government asks – ratings are not influenced by provider size or marketing spend, but instead by the education partner’s employability strengths and positive learner outcomes.

One and two-star partners will be supported by CIMSPA through a development programme to improve their quality assurance rating.

This QA system will drive professional recognition – ensuring the best learning is being delivered in the most efficient way.

Our graded quality assurance system

The second generation of sport and physical activity sector education provision quality assurance is now a reality. Every CIMSPA education partner will be assessed and a one-to-three-star rating determined.

Enhancing (3 star)

Training provider and further education partners who have achieved the highest quality assurance standards.

These providers have evidenced best practice within their operations, processes, and procedures.

CIMSPA has identified these training providers as offering the highest quality of education provision to their learners.



Enabling* (2 star)

Quality-assured training provider and further education partners who have evidenced good practice within their operations, processes, and procedures.



Emerging* (1 star)

Training provider and further education partners who have achieved the quality assurance baseline to deliver CIMSPA-endorsed education products.

**CIMSPA will support one- and two-star providers with an action plan to help improve their quality-assured grading.*

SYSTEM INTERVENTION 2

A flexible and inclusive delivery model

Education pathways that blend work and study.

Through the lifecycle of this strategy, our education delivery model will always look to prioritise flexibility of learning. This will include work-based, micro-credentialled, standalone and academic pathways.

National Training Academy learning provision will be a part of many of these pathways to meet the specific needs of the individual.

We understand that people learn differently at different stages of their careers and practicalities, such as blending working and studying, may determine education pathway choices.

By doing so, and by always ensuring the value of each unit of learning is understood in reference to the relevant professional standards (and can be assessed and credentialled appropriately), our education delivery model will be accessible and inclusive.

PROGRESSION	WORK-BASED	MICRO-CREDENTIALLING	STANDALONE	ACADEMIC
Chartered practitioner	Degree Apprenticeships	Micro-Credentials	Standalone Qualifications	Degree / Chartered
Senior practitioner	Higher Apprenticeships	Micro-Credentials	Standalone Qualifications	Higher Technical Qualifications / FD
Advanced practitioner	Apprenticeships	Micro-Credentials	Standalone Qualifications	A-Levels / T-Levels Highers / Advanced Highers
Practitioner				
Student / Graduate	Traineeships	Micro-Credentials	Standalone Qualifications	Study programme

The potential of micro-credentials

Modernising the learning experience.

Through our local skills training needs insight work, we have identified that employers are looking for bitesize, flexible and bespoke education products to help their staff balance work and personal professional development.

Through this strategy, CIMSPA will encourage its education providers to continue to modernise the learning experience.

Micro-credentials will be a key tool in this ambition.

learning experience which results in a credit award. They are subject to quality assurance and may be used as stand-alone qualifications or may be “stackable” into larger awards alongside other education provision. All micro-credentials that CIMSPA endorse will be aligned to professional standards.

By their nature micro-credentials are inclusive – enabling learners to quickly achieve credited outcomes lowers the barriers to accessible continuing professional development.

Micro-credentials explained

A micro-credential is a flexible, short, transparently-assessed

See the case study below for more insight on micro-credentials.



CASE STUDY

Micro-credentials in action – entry manager

CIMSPA higher education partners Cardiff Metropolitan University are leaders in understanding how micro-credentials can amplify the power of flexible learning in sport and physical activity.

The Cardiff Met School of Sport and Health Sciences has secured funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) to pilot a stackable micro-credential Certificate of Higher Education aligned to the CIMSPA Entry Manager professional standard.

Micro-credentials are short, credit-bearing courses aligned with formal National Qualifications Frameworks.

These bitesize learning opportunities can be studied individually or can be stacked together in clear pathways

to provide a flexible route to completing larger higher education qualifications.

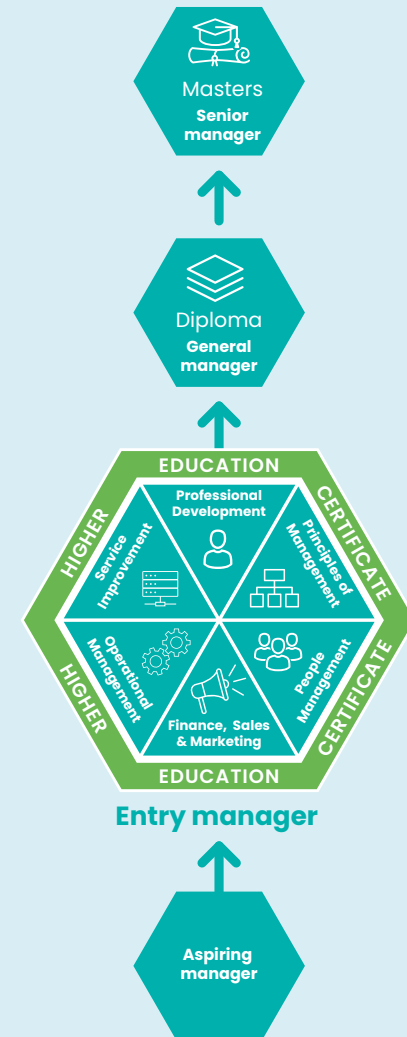
Entry manager higher education certificate

Entry managers are individuals operating in a firstline management position, who are able to work independently under some supervision and direction. They may be, for example, coordinators, team leaders or duty managers. They could be working as a first-line manager in leisure or fitness, or as a sports development officer or community sport and health officer.

When learners have stacked all the micro-credentials in the Cardiff Met Entry Manager Certificate of Higher Education they will have:

- Demonstrated both knowledge and skills in a range of management related topics under the themes of service improvement, people management and development, business functions and operations and risk management at the entry management level.
- Developed personal effectiveness in their management role and contributed to organisational performance.

Entry manager higher education certificate
Cardiff Metropolitan University
Micro-credential modules and progression

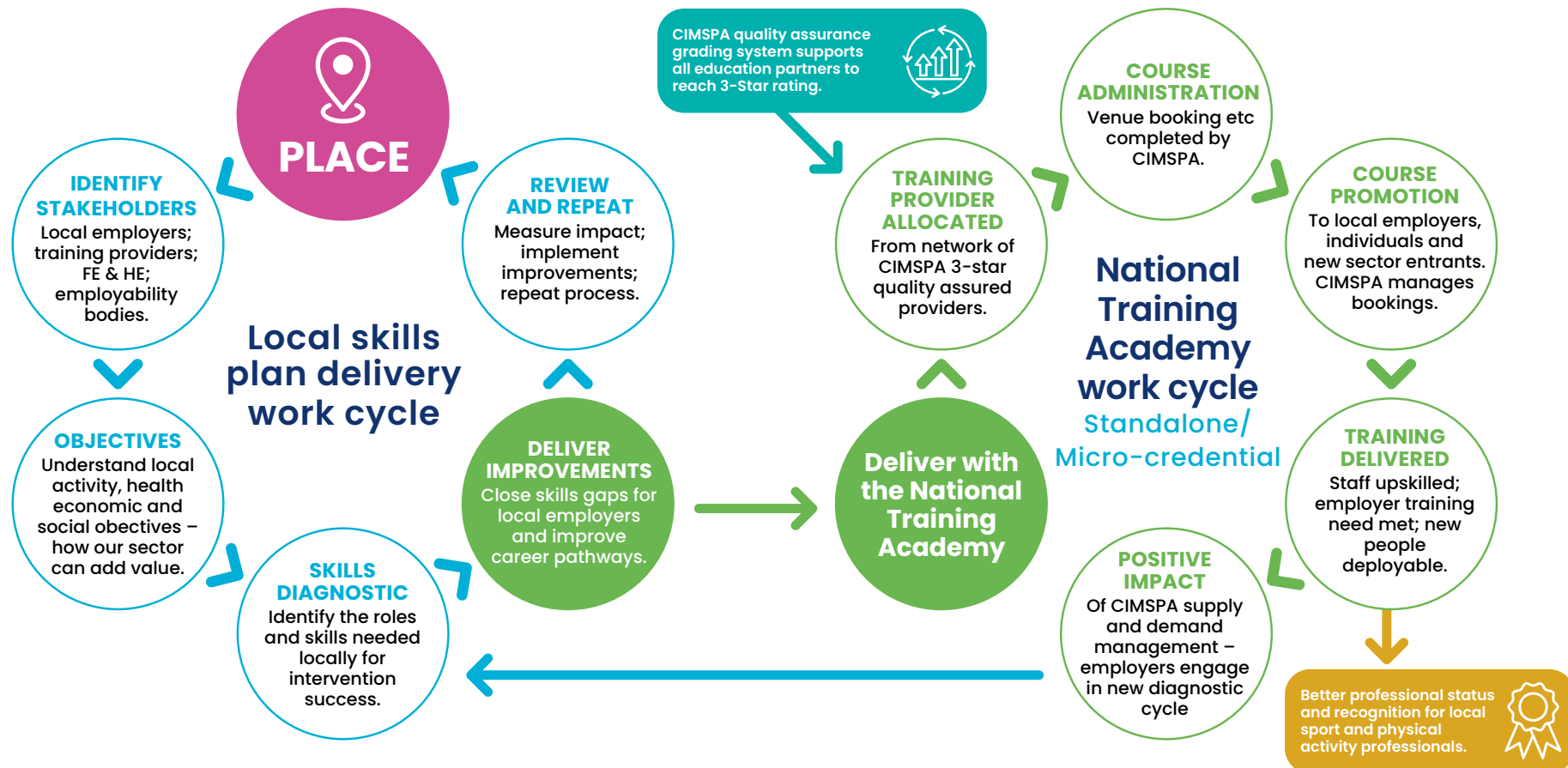


SYSTEM INTERVENTIONS 1 AND 2 TOGETHER

How the National Training Academy will support local skills plans delivery success

Success with these two closely linked system interventions will demonstrate our system realignment of education and skills supply and demand, all brokered and managed by CIMSPA as the sector guardian.

The diagram below shows one example of local skills delivery working with the National Training Academy (NTA). This example shows the NTA direct delivery model – delivering standalone or micro-credentialed qualifications. Other routes would include further and higher education and/or work-based learning.



Careers support

Recruit, train, retain and support a diverse and inclusive workforce.

For individuals

We will grow and expand the sector's first career support service – a one-stop shop for wherever you are in your career journey.

- Resources to help everyone understand our sector – what we are and what our people do.
- A focus on ensuring our potential workforce understands our sector has lifelong career opportunities, clear pathways for progression as a sector professional, and is accessible and inclusive.
- The first sector-wide jobs board – connecting talent with great employers in one single place, verified and endorsed by the sector's professional body.
- Signposting the accessible and achievable CPD or micro-credentials, as provided by our quality-assured training providers, that will credential the next role in your career and guide your progression to a higher grade of professional status.
- Content focused on plotting out your career journey and aspirations, making great job applications, interview skills, and how to connect with a mentor.

CIMSPA will also work to encourage clarity and standardisation of the naming of sport and

physical activity job roles, which will help the development of occupational pathway maps, and the adoption of these by the whole sector.

For careers advisers, teachers, tutors, assessors and people developers

The hub will also support education and career development professionals.

- Providing the teaching products and resources to help them communicate to their students and job seekers the great career opportunities on offer in our sector.
- Detailed advice and guidance on how to make the best use of placement opportunities and how to engage with employers will be provided for career development professionals to support young people on a pathway into working in sport and physical activity.

WHAT THIS INTERVENTION WILL DO

- Ensure the tools are in place for our people to achieve their ambitions and for employers to be supplied with talented people that will support their businesses to thrive.

WHAT THIS INTERVENTION WILL DO

- Connect talented people with great employers from the start of their learning journey and throughout their careers.
- Provide great information about our sector for the public and educators, a sector-wide jobs board, and understanding of how to gain higher professional recognition through incremental CPD.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Clearly understood career pathways, supported by clear routes to achieving professional status through a high-quality education provider with a method of learning that suits the individual and their employer's needs.
- All underpinned by clearly defined grades of professional status that define the differences between new recruits and experts.
- Our workforce, and those that might want to join it, understand the accessible, inclusive and rewarding career pathways available in sport and physical activity, and how to follow them.

Introducing the importance of these case studies

Coach Core and Skills360 (case studies below) both work effectively to eradicate barriers into the sector workforce, as experienced by under-represented groups. CIMSPA has supported and invested in these two programmes with the specific goals of:

- Understanding what these barriers are and how to remove them to open up genuinely inclusive routes into our workforce.
- Taking these learnings and leveraging them into our careers support system intervention.

The insight gained here will also translate across to guiding how our future local skills plans can encourage inclusive employment best practices by default.

CASE STUDY



Coach Core

Employment and education charity Coach Core have deployed an employability coach in the North of England to target young people from disadvantaged areas, placing them into apprenticeships and starting their sporting careers.

Employers benefit from this talent pipeline of 16–24 year-old apprentices keen to transition into long term employment – building an inclusive and diverse workforce.

CIMSPA's local delivery team will support projects like this – including targeting and intensively supporting young offenders and those with limited academic achievement into positive destinations.

"We're delighted to be working with CIMSPA to show the young people we work with that the sport and physical sector is an attractive lifelong career opportunity with a rich tapestry of career options and progression opportunities. The investment from CIMSPA has enabled us to engage with an increasingly diverse community of young people, providing them with individually tailored advice, guidance, and support on their career journey – linking them to meaningful employment through our relationship with them."

Gary Laybourne, Chief Executive Officer, Coach Core

CASE STUDY



Skills360

Skills360 is a charity that supports community-based projects and organisations to become safer, more diverse, more efficient and more resilient.

They have worked effectively in Birmingham and Solihull where badminton is particularly popular within the local British Bangladeshi community. The badminton coaches that deliver in this area have been supported to professionalise and access career pathways.

The CIMSPA local delivery team will work to leverage this success into a wider project – connecting with partner stakeholders to give this sporting workforce everything they need for a great career in our sector.

“We’re delighted to be working with CIMSPA to increase the opportunities for people to engage with the Skills360 people development platform. The investment from CIMSPA has enabled us to engage with an increasingly diverse community of people across the West Midlands providing them with opportunities to learn and grow their confidence to volunteer and work in the sport and physical activity sector.”

Adam Warden, Senior Partnerships Manager, Sport Birmingham.

Business support hub

Our strategy will enhance business resilience and success for sector enterprises with a focus on smaller employers and those in a startup phase.

Our sector is full of great businesses delivering great sport and activity opportunities. However, our insight has discovered that a high rate of sector enterprises fail, not because of the quality of their sport and activity offer, but because of business management weaknesses.

There is a pressing need to equip these enterprises with improved business resilience to develop their non-sector specific skills – for example management, HR, finance and marketing.

This need is amplified by the structural picture of our sector's businesses that skew towards both "smaller" in size and "startup" in terms of business maturity.

What we know – a reminder

56% 56% of our workforce are employed as sole traders, in micro-businesses or in small-to medium enterprises (<249 staff).

91% Over 91% of sector enterprises have fewer than 50 employees.

70% 70% of sector enterprises are considered to be "startups" – yet to fully-develop their business model, potentially lacking adequate capital and needing to grow their resilience.

Expanding our focus

The 44% of workforce in large organisations have been our historic focus – working within large organisations that are relatively easy to partner with and help their workforce.

The system realignment this strategy will complete is to readjust our focus to recognise the importance of the 56% of our people who work within smaller organisations.

In particular we will engage with micro-businesses – understanding their needs through our skills diagnostic process and helping them be more resilient and more successful enterprises.

A wide range of support

Our business support hub will be the key location for all sector employers to access a wide range of resources, guidance, and opportunities to develop and grow their businesses.

WHAT THIS INTERVENTION WILL DO

- Our strategy will help sector enterprises improve their resilience and business maturity through a business support hub that addresses the identified and specific needs of our employers.
- The business support hub will help our employers develop and grow their businesses.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Improved resilience for our micro and small employers, leading to better staff retention, and lower recruitment costs.

CASE STUDY



Aspire Accelerate Programme

CIMSPA partner Aspire Sports worked with 50+ start-up coaching companies to increase their business resilience. The pilot identified key needs around understanding their customer journeys, digital marketing and their people and HR practices.

Aspire Sports delivered a focused support package to these businesses with clear and measurable success and value – reducing vulnerability during a crucial phase of their development.

Aspire assessed the before and after impact of the programme on the participant organisations’ performance across financial, commercial, operation and people (HR) metrics.

The improved performance and resilience of these start-up business demonstrates that sector-specific and carefully targeted support can be of great value.

Aspire business support scorecard

(before and after the programme)



CASE STUDY



CIMSPA Digital Marketing Hub

Launched in September 2021, funded by Sport England.

This free learning platform helped individuals and organisations improve how they apply digital marketing tools and techniques to encourage more people to play sport and be active.

This award-winning programme with over 8000 users (59% female) was open to anyone involved in sport, fitness, health and physical activity.

- 88% have improved their confidence with digital marketing.
- 66% feel more confident communicating in an inclusive way.
- 83% have improved their skills with digital marketing.
- 54% believe they have improved the way they communicate with people from low socio-economic groups.
- 46% reported increased engagement from customers/ participants.

Workforce governance

A professional, well-governed sport and activity workforce delivering safe and high-quality participation opportunities for all.

Completed work

CIMSPA have already completed two phases of work related to workforce governance.

- Phase one: CIMSPA facilitated independent research and consultation on the potential for a sector-wide registration scheme to support qualified and competent sport and physical activity professionals in England.
- Phase two: CIMSPA completed further independent research and consultation to consider, understand and improve the structures, processes and systems that exist within the sector, to make engaging in sport and physical activity safer and more enjoyable for all participants.

The context

In January 2023, in response to the Whyte Review, Sport England and UK Sport issued a joint policy response. One commitment was for Sport England and UK Sport to work in partnership with CIMSPA and national governing bodies of sport. This work would cover:

- Working with CIMSPA to better structure the career path of modern coaches, underpinned by a broader curriculum incorporating non-technical skills.

- Working with CIMSPA and national governing bodies, to develop a national registration scheme for sports coaches. Acknowledging that this is a complex piece of work, requiring significant input and cooperation from stakeholders, this will first take the form of a pilot.

What we have been commissioned to do

Sport England have funded CIMSPA to deliver two connected interventions that contribute towards more effective workforce governance systems across the sector through better registration, regulation and recognition of frontline workers.

- The first intervention is piloting a coach registration scheme with up to nine sports governing bodies, understanding the processes, structures and systems needed for a nationwide system.
- The second intervention is undertaking an integrated workforce audit of sports governing bodies, to identify areas of concern and improvement.

WHAT THIS INTERVENTION WILL DO

- Building on our previous work, we will complete the two-year project that Sport England and UK Sport have asked us to complete to define what an effective workforce governance culture looks like, and what systems and tools are needed to bring this to reality.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Continued support for the project from the whole sector, particularly national governing bodies, and a clear understanding of any future project phases.

UK sport and physical activity skills observatory

Research-informed decisions: from insight to foresight.

CIMSPA has generated a body of uniquely valuable sector-specific insight data and findings that sets the boundaries of our profession. And our workforce insight reports provide an evidence baseline to inform our decision-making, programmes and actions.

From insight to foresight

Through the CIMSPA Data Lens project we have realtime **insight** into what is happening now in our sector.

The founding of the UK sport and physical activity skills observatory will provide us with **foresight** – curating multiple streams of intelligence, trend analysis and future modelling – looking ahead and supporting the workforce with a future focus.

Harnessing our academic base

There is an existing base of academics and system partner data specialists working within higher education who already publish research into workforce development in sport, leisure and physical activity.

The founding of the research observatory will draw this community together, encourage collaboration, avoid duplication and streamline the translation of their research into operational practice within sport and physical activity. This

data will help us make more informed decisions for the benefit of our workforce.

“Over the horizon” – observatory themes

Potential research themes for the observatory include:

- Career lifecycles.
- Workforce and education trends.
- Lived experiences of the workforce.
- External factors on workforce e.g. the impact of technology, participation trends, economic trends etc.
- The impact of our workforce on the health of the nation.

This strategy will help the sector look beyond “now and next” insight to further over the horizon – and then connect this research back to our work.

The research observatory will also be vital in understanding the next generation of the professional standards that underpin our profession and the education products that enable our career pathways.

It is future-focused academic research that will ensure our professional standards remain relevant to include new job roles as needed, and that our qualifications, credentials and CPD have the right content.

WHAT THIS INTERVENTION WILL DO

- Harness the academic base of our sector to encourage co-ordinated research through the creation of a sector observatory.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- A strong relationship between the sector and academia.
- Ongoing labour market analysis, skills gap identification and remediation.
- Updating and evolution of the sector’s professional standards.
- Professional recognition for academics researching sport and physical activity.

Workforce planning, management and development

One of the workforce observatory's core roles will be to create and deliver authoritative insight and foresight to support this strategy's ambitions. This will also enable CIMSPA to evolve and iterate the operational implementation of this strategy.

New data and evidence trends will develop over the lifecycle of this strategy, including political, economic and social factors, and the observatory will contribute to this required flexibility.

The observatory's work can be categorised into these areas:

Data-driven workforce planning

- **Data collection and analysis** – labour market trends, skills requirements, training needs, and workforce demographics.
- **Forecasting future workforce needs** – providing insights into emerging trends and challenges in the sector.
- **Skills gap and mismatch identification** – advising on strategies to address these gaps.
- **Knowledge sharing and networking** – sector trends, challenges, and innovations.
- **Facilitating knowledge exchange** – organising forums and networks for knowledge exchange and collaboration.



Workforce development

Strategic development and best practices

- **Sharing best practices and benchmarking data** – encouraging partners to align their workforce plans with sector standards and norms.
- **Providing benchmarking services** – industry analyses for partners and stakeholders for comparative value assessment.
- **Partnering** – with QUEST/NBS where appropriate.

Policy advocacy and collaboration

- **Policy recommendations and advocacy** – to support every level of sector workforce needs.
- **Collaborative efforts with educational institutions** – graduate transition dynamics and destination data; work-based learning management.
- **Stakeholder engagement** – understanding differing needs and challenges and translating these into workforce strategies.

Workforce management and organisational support

- **Developing guidelines** – disseminating best practices for effective sport and physical activity sector workforce management.
- **Workforce planning and management** – developing or recommending tools and systems that can help organisations in the sector to manage employee performance more effectively.
- **Consultancy and change management** – assisting organisations in managing workforce-related changes.

Releasing the
Power of our **Profession**

What this strategy means for our sector

What success looks like – strategic outcomes, initial milestones and a reminder of value to stakeholders.



Strategy outcomes – releasing the power of our profession

Outcomes

Through the delivery of this strategy, we will:

- Champion equality, diversity and inclusion across the sport and physical activity workforce.
- Lead our sector on workforce policy and regulation.
- Empower individuals to realise their potential by supporting career progression through professional recognition.
- Deliver a localised approach to skills and education that systemises how we enable people and organisations to succeed.
- Enhance public trust and confidence in the value of our workforce and profession.

Initial milestones

Careers support	By 2025 we will have launched the sector's first careers support system. This will feature pathways that are understood by all stakeholders and underpinned by occupational maps, giving multiple opportunities for the workforce to achieve their career aspirations.
Local skills delivery	By 2025 we will have a UK-wide network of established local skills hubs that deliver against their local skills plans by working effectively with the CIMSPA National Training Academy. The local skills delivery team will inform the local sector skills plans and support local economic, health, social and wellbeing priorities.
National training academy and education ecosystem	By 2025 we will have a network of quality-assured education partners that can respond to the training needs highlighted in each local skills plan.
Business support hub	By 2025 we will have established our business support hub as a crucial support for small and micro businesses and sole traders to be more resilient and adaptable.
Workforce governance project	By 2025 we will have completed the two-year project that Sport England and UK Sport commissioned to define what an effective workforce governance culture looks like.
UK sport and physical activity skills observatory	By 2025 the workforce skills observatory will have established a consistent and data led approach to strategic workforce planning and workforce development within the sport and physical activity sector.

Milestones will be updated annually at www.cimspa.co.uk/strategy

Through the delivery of this strategy we will...



Our strategy's stakeholder value

If you are working in our sector

- You will be professionally recognised for your experience and commitment to ethical, safe practice, helping you stand out from the crowd.
- You will have a clear understanding of where you are in your career and how to take the next steps on your professional pathway.
- There will be opportunities for everyone to thrive in a career in the sector whatever their background. Our workforce will reflect the rich diversity of the communities that it serves.

If you are an education provider in our sector

- You will be recognised as a provider of quality-assured training and professional development that improves learner outcomes and employability.
- You will be able to evidence how your provision supports employers and local skills needs in the context of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act.

If you employ people in our sector

- You will be recognised as providing high-quality services delivered through skilled and experienced staff, whose ongoing professional recognition you support.
- You will maximise the investment that you make in your people to enhance how you recruit, train, support and retain them.

If you are a strategic leader in our sector

- You will experience how we are aligning the sector workforce as a catalyst to improve the activity, health, wellbeing and socio-economic value of our nation.
- We will support the provision of the right people and the right policies that encourage strategic and operational success in organisations across the sector.

If you are taking part in activity in our sector

- You will have enhanced confidence and trust in how sport and physical activity professionals will work with and support you.
- You and your dependants can be confident that the sector professionals that you engage with are well-governed and deliver safe and enjoyable experiences.



Our vision

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



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