Health Disability Sport Partnership

Three Year Project Report
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Executive Summary

Building the Partnership

The partnership in North Wales between Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and Disability Sport Wales (DSW) is a positive example of Health and the physical activity sector (including (disability) sport) working together towards a common aim, improving the health and well being of people in Wales.

The Health Disability Sport Partnership (HDSP) has been positively supported and implemented by Health, Social Services, Local Authorities, physical activity (including sport) and third sector partners. The partnership has had a positive impact on the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the disabled people who have become involved, as well as some of their family members. The partnership model has also been demonstrated to be cost effective, with every £1 of investment producing £124 of added social value.

About the Project

The HDSP was established to create enhanced awareness, understanding and greater coherence between the Health sector and (disability) sport network in North Wales, through a planned programme of education and up-skilling of professionals within both areas, so as to better enable a pathway which informs and supports disabled people to get involved with physical activity (including sport) opportunities in the community. The initial three years of the project has been funded by a Sport Wales Calls for Action Grant, and following the successful pilot, has now been embedded within BCUHB services.
Aims

**The specific aims for the HDSP are to:**

- Increase the numbers of physically active disabled people across the 6 local authorities in the region.
- Create a robust partnership between (Disability) Sport and Health.
- Decrease disabled people’s requirement for medical intervention as a consequence of ill-health linked to physical inactivity.
- Identify a model for best practice with regard to establishing a conduit between health professionals and settings, and physical activity (including sport) professionals, which could be modified as appropriate and rolled-out through the other 6 Health Trusts/Boards across Wales.
- Contribute to the identification of talented disabled people who may be interested in/able to becoming involved with competitive or elite sport (secondary aim)

Headline Project Outcomes

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<td><strong>1190</strong></td>
<td><strong>560</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>+21%</strong></td>
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<td>1190 health care professionals have attended up-skilling sessions.</td>
<td>560 disabled people have been signposted from Health to physical activity (including sport) opportunities.</td>
<td>4 talented athletes have been identified representing Wales in their chosen sports.</td>
<td>The number of disabled people participating in physical activity (including sport) North Wales has risen from 6,207 to 7,531.</td>
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1. Building the Partnership

The Health Disability Sport Partnership (HDSP) was established with the aim of developing a strong and sustainable relationship between the Health sector and (disability) sport network across North Wales, in order to achieve a common aim, improving the health and well being of disabled people in North Wales through increased participation in physical activity (including sport).

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and Disability Sport Wales (DSW) lead the partnership following a successful Sport Wales Calls for Action Grant application. The project began in December 2013, funded on a pilot basis for 3 years.

Through a planned programme of education and up-skilling of professionals within both areas, the aim of the HDSP was to create enhanced awareness, understanding and greater coherence between the Health sector and (disability) sport network in North Wales, so as to better enable a pathway which informs and supports disabled people to get involved with physical activity (including sport) opportunities in the community.

The specific aims for the HDSP are to:

- Increase the numbers of physically active disabled people across the 6 local authorities in the region
- Create a robust partnership between (disability) Sport and Health
- Decrease disabled people’s requirement for medical intervention as a consequence of ill-health linked to physical inactivity
- Identify a model for best practice with regard to establishing a conduit between health professionals and settings, and physical activity (including sport) professionals, which could be modified as appropriate and rolled-out through the other 6 Health Trusts/Boards across Wales
- Contribute to the identification of talented disabled people who may be interested in/able to becoming involved with competitive or elite sport (secondary aim)
1. Building the Partnership continued

Project groups with mechanisms for reporting were established (figure 1, page 7). A Physiotherapist was appointed to the role of Health Disability Sport Officer (HDSO) on a three year secondment basis. The role of the HDSO was to coordinate and lead the project. Following initial consultation with Health to establish what support was required to deliver on the aims, a Health Disability Sport Pathway was designed with partners (figure 2, page 8).

The pathway was designed based on the evidence that health professionals providing advice and signposting on physical activity is a successful model for improving levels of physical activity. The pathway was designed to enable health professionals to signpost disabled people from Health to physical activity (including sport) opportunities in the community, in a way that is accessible to the health professionals, and provides meaningful information and support to disable people. A copy of the signposting form can be seen in appendix 1.
1. Building the Partnership continued

Figure 1: The HDSP Partnership groups and processes for reporting

Visual figure. The following is a text description:

The partnership group structure consists of a delivery group, an operational group and an executive group.

The Delivery Group comprises:
• Michelle Daltry, Partnership Manager at DSW who is Chair of the Delivery Group,
• Nia Jones, Administration Officer at DSW who is the secretary of the Delivery Group,
• Gareth Lloyd-Hughes who is Head of Podiatry and Orthotics at BCUHB,
• Catherine Chin who is a Health Disability Sport Officer for BCUHB,
• DSW’s Development Officers for the constituent local authorities:
  • Thomas Rogers, DO for Anglesey,
  • Mark Richards, DO for Conwy,
  • Brett Jones, DO for Denbighshire,
  • Donna Evans, DO for Flintshire,
  • Marcus Politis, DO for Gwynedd,
  • Ben Tucker, DO for Powys,
  • Leanne Brown, DO for Wrexham.

The Operational Group comprises:
• Fiona Reid, Innovation Manager at DSW who is Chair of the Operations Group,
• Jan Fereday-Smith, Head of Physiotherapy at BCUHB,
• Gerwyn Owen, Academy Manager at DSW,
• Martin Barrett, Senior Regional Officer for Sport Wales,
• Sioned Humphreys, Communications Officer at PHW,
• Michelle Daltry (aforementioned) and
• Catherine Chin (aforementioned) who is secretary of the Operational Group.

The Executive Group comprises:
• Stuart Harmes, Clinical Director of Therapy Services West at BCUHB who is the Chair of the executive group,
• Aled Hughes, who works for Public Health Wales,
• Jon Morgan, Executive Officer of DSW,
• Fiona Reid (aforementioned),
• Sue Maughan, Sport Wales,
• Martin Barrett, Senior Regional Officer, Sport Wales,
• Jon Morgan and Fiona Reid both report to the DSW board, who in turn report to the Sport Wales board.

Jon Morgan and Fiona Reid both report to the DSW board, who in turn report to the Sport Wales board.

Both the Sport Wales board and the BCUHB then report to the Welsh Government, at the top of the reporting tree.

Iain Mitchell, chair of the Executive Group, reports to CPG.

Aled Hughes reports to the Executive Group.

The Executive Group and the CPG both report to the BCUHB.
1. Building the Partnership continued

Figure 2: The Health Disability Sport Pathway

The disabled person begins with contact with a healthcare professional. The healthcare professional can then either refer them to the National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS), or complete the DSW BCUHB Health Disability Sport Signposting form.

If they are referred to the NERS, they will need to complete a four to sixteen week NERS programme, before continuing their signposting through the DSW BCUHB Health Disability Sport Pathway, via the aforementioned signposting form.

This leads to contact with the Local Authority’s sport development team, starting with telephone triage. This may lead to a meeting with the Sport Development Officer, to directly to participation in sport.

Either directly or via the Sport Development Officer, the disabled person will now be pointed toward opportunities appropriate to them, through a Leisure Card, disability specific or inclusive sport club, and finally physical activity or sport session.
2. Project Outcomes and Successes

**Up-Skilling Training**

Training resources were designed based on feedback from health professionals.

1190 health professionals (equating to 7.3% of the workforce) have attended up-skilling sessions in the three years of the project. Many more have been up-skilled through sessions delivered at local, regional and national (including one international) presentations.

44 National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) exercise professionals have attended training. NERS teams have also been trained to deliver Boccia, with many now delivering Boccia within NERS sessions.

**Signposts from Health to Physical Activity (including sport)**

- 560 disabled people were signposted via the Health Disability Sport Pathway.

- KPI figures show an increase in participation across North Wales to 7531. Participation continues to increases yearly (Figure 3).

![Graph showing participation from 2013 to 2015]

Figure 3: KPI Participation figures of disabled people who are physically active in North Wales.
2. Project Outcomes and Successes continued

**Talented Athletes**

4 talented athletes have been identified through the pathway who now represent Wales in their chosen sports. Additional athletes have been assessed by the DSW Talent Officer and may be ones to watch for in the future.

**Alex Wilson: Wales U’15 Wheelchair Basketball**

“I used to get bullied a lot in school, but this has stopped the bullies from coming, because I play for Wales. I want to keep training to be at captain level”.

**Sara Miliband: Wales U’19 Wheelchair Basketball**

“One of my physiotherapists suggested I tried wheelchair basketball as a way to start getting into sport again. I’m so glad I did, the sport is great, and I enjoy it so much. Not only is it the fact that I am able to do sport again, the game is fast, exciting and all round good fun. I’m applying for Medicine at University, and hoping to go to a University where I can keep on playing”.

**Kieran Jones: Wales U’15 and U’23 Wheelchair Basketball**

Kieran’s progression through the sport has been rapid, he trains up to 10 hours a week, has been named as captain of Wales U15s competing all over the UK, as well as making selection for the U’23s at the age of 14.

“I feel less isolated, and more comfortable. I use my chair every day now, and have just started GCSE PE”.

**Matthew Kennedy: Cricket**

“My mum received an email saying I had been selected to play for the Welsh cricket team in a match against England at Old Trafford cricket club. We lost this match but I enjoyed the game. I have also played a match as part of North and South Wales against Midlands Counties in Luctonians cricket ground. This time we won”.

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Health Disability Sport Partnership   Three Year Project Report
2. Project Outcomes and Successes continued

Supporting physical activity (including sport) in Rehabilitation

Boccia is being used in a range of settings across the health board as part of rehabilitation programmes, including the three stroke rehabilitation units, Ruthin Community Hospital and mental health outpatient clinics in the West. Support has been given by Awyr Las and the Therapies Charity Trust to purchase the Boccia sets and ramps. Boccia taster sessions and training have also been delivered to a number of community MS and Parkinson’s groups, with a number now running their own sessions or tournaments. There has also been an increase in the number of community Boccia clubs, supporting the transition from Health to community opportunities.

The HDSP has supported in the relocation of neurological exercises classes from a Physiotherapy department in a community hospital into local leisure centres, delivered by NERS exercise professionals, with Physiotherapy support. The HDSP has supported the new sessions with a successful application for two MotoMed bikes, exercise bikes that are accessible for people with lower limb impairments. Another two MotoMeds have been relocated from Health into Leisure Centre. The new classes and accessible equipment demonstrate a successful redirection of services from Health and into leisure centres, a more suitable environment for disabled people to be physically active long term, as well as increasing capacity for the physiotherapy team.
2. Project Outcomes and Successes continued

### Resources

To support and embed the pathway a number of resources have been developed:

- Training resources for health professionals
- Intranet and internet resources for health professionals
- Lanyards and ski reels for health professionals
- Posters for staff rooms
- Posters and information cards for patient waiting areas
- Online ‘app’ aimed at health professionals to support in signposting, available at [www.hdspathway.co.uk](http://www.hdspathway.co.uk), supported by information leaflets
- Large community and performance information board in Posture and Mobility Services waiting areas, along with videos and slideshows on the TV screens
2. Project Outcomes and Successes continued

People Stories

People stories continue to provide valuable feedback to the partnership, demonstrating the positive impacts sport/physical activity is having on individuals and families. Matthew’s story is told in Appendix 1, and Jimmy’s in Appendix 2.

Watch on YouTube: [http://youtu.be/_JkmatfCtCW](http://youtu.be/_JkmatfCtCW)

Health Professionals’ Stories

The engagement of health professionals has been positive through the partnership.

Watch on YouTube: [http://youtu.be/rw2XjeWPzDg](http://youtu.be/rw2XjeWPzDg)
3. Demonstrating the Impact: A Health Impact Assessment and Social Return on Investment Analysis

In 2015 a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) was conducted, followed by a Social Return on Investment Analysis (SROI) in 2016. The purpose of the studies was to assess the impact of the HDSP on the main stakeholders, and demonstrate the social value created in order to examine if the HDSP is a cost effective intervention that should be rolled out across Wales.

The research identified positive outcomes on lifestyles and engagement in physical activity (including sport), resulting in better physical and mental health and wellbeing for those disabled people who become involved. Positive outcomes were also found for some family members of disabled people, including increasing their own physical and mental health and wellbeing. The results found that for every £1 invested in the HDSP, £124 of added social value was created. The SROI demonstrated that the HDSP is a cost effective model for increasing levels of physical activity (including sport) amongst disabled populations, creating social value through improved health and well-being of disabled people, and that of their families.

Health and (disability) sport working in partnership represents a cost effective intervention that can contribute to reducing the burden of physical inactivity.

Full version of the SROI report available here:
HIA SROI Report
HIA (pdf)
3. Demonstrating the Impact continued

**Improved Health and Wellbeing**

- Improved physical health. Supporting rehabilitation.
- Better management of health conditions, which leads to a reduction in appointments with physiotherapists and dieticians.
- Improved mental health. Increased self esteem, feeling happier, reduced depression.
- Reduced bullying in children.

**Positive Lifestyle Changes**

- Socialising more, making new friends.
- Increases confidence.
- Gives people a sense of belonging.
- Family members improving their physical and mental health and wellbeing.
2. Health Impact Assessment continued

Increased Engagement

- Earlier engagement = better engagement
- Support from DSW Development Officers support engagement
- Endorsement from health professions
- Improves societal awareness of disability sport

Increased Opportunities

- Increasing provision through increased membership and identifying gaps
- Positive impacts on partnerships with leisure
4. Challenges

- The HDSP influence on participation can be challenging to measure. Following signposting and working with the DSW Development Officers, disabled people are RAG coded for their stage in the pathway to becoming active. Once they have become physically active (including playing sport) and do not require additional support, they are coded as being active (green). Following up participants later down the line to measure long term participation poses some challenges. Additionally, not all disabled people will be directly signposted but become involved due to the wider impact of the project, therefore defining the number of new participants who have come from the Health Disability Sport Pathway is not possible.

- It is likely that some disabled persons become physically active but engage in an informal setting (recreationally) rather than a formal club setting, in which case it will be difficult to measure this through the sport network.

- There may be a time lag on the increase in participation numbers; because some disabled people may have acquired their impairment and be engaged with Health for rehabilitation purposes, they may gain information regarding the physical activity, including sport, opportunities available to them, but as a consequence of their phase of rehabilitation they may not be in a position to engage until a later stage.

- Collecting data on the long term implications to the health system of a person being more physically active is challenging. Data collected by BCUHB on disabled people is limited, and the ability to measure what health interventions individual may have required if they were less physically active is challenging.

- Through the partnership DSW are now engaging with a new group of people, potentially at earlier stages in their pathway. The current opportunities may not match all of these demands. However engaging with new participants has helped identify demand and support in the development of new opportunities.

- It is acknowledged that it takes time to embed the message in health. The messages will be revisited and repeated until the pathway becomes part of core practice.
5. North Wales Legacy

Following the success of the three year pilot, the HDSP is being embedded within BCUHB services. The role of the HDSO has been extended for an initial 1 year. The intention of the HDSP was always that is should become a sustainable project, embedded within BUCHB, following the three years of funding from Sport Wales. A North Wales Legacy Plan has been written, and has began implementation, with the intention of continuing the momentum of the partnership, and to reinforce the embedding of the Health Disability Sport Pathway in everyday clinical practice. To enable this, the legacy plan identifies the following processes:

1. Identification of Health Disability Sport Leads within the Health Board
2. Continuation of the Delivery, Operational and Executive Group meetings
3. Annual review of the Legacy Plan

The Health Disability Sport Leads will act as the link between Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and Disability Sport Wales (DSW). 10 leads have been identified and began training at the end of 2016. Leads will work alongside the HDSO and be responsible for maintaining the strong links between BCUHB and DSW. This will include being the point of contact for Health and Social Care Professionals in relation to the Health Disability Sport Partnership, as well as the point of contact for DSW into Health. Leads’ roles will also include maintenance and dissemination of resources, the delivery of training sessions and influencing future Health-based policy and practice within BCUHB in relation to physical activity (including sport) for disabled people. A ‘BCUHB HDSP Project group’ will be established, with the current group structure (figure 1) remaining in place, with potential changes to the terms of reference as required.
6. Proposed All-Wales Plan

The intent behind this project was always two-fold:

a) To influence cultural change within and between physical activity (including sport) and Health services and professionals

b) To act as a pilot project to establish an effective delivery model for a Health and (disability) sport partnership, and to roll-out this to the remaining 6 Health Boards/Trusts in Wales

The HDSP has been successful in improving the health and wellbeing of disabled people, and their families, and has been demonstrated to be a cost effective model. Disability Sport Wales Development Officers across Wales have been well engaged in the North Wales pilot, and are keen to engage with Health across Wales. The proposal is that the other Health Board’s in Wales now adopt a HDSP with Disability Sport Wales, utilising the learning, the pathway, and the resources from the North Wales pilot.

The most significant element of developing the partnership was to appoint a health professional (based within therapies) to the role of Health Disability Sport Officer. The role of the officer is to deliver, develop, coordinate and embed the partnership across the Health board, working with stakeholder in Health and (disability) sport, as well as other partners in education, social services and third sector. It is essential that the HDSO is a health professional as an understanding of the health sector has proven to be vital to the project delivery and impact. It is suggested that the officer should be from a therapies background.

It is proposed that HDSOs are employed on a three year secondment basis to begin the delivery of the project, as done in North Wales. Following the three year initiation period, a review of the projects will take place. The model will then continue with one of these two options, based on the ongoing learning of the North Wales project:

1. Health Disability Sport Leads should be identified, who work across a range of services, patient groups and geographical locations, who will continue to sustain and develop the partnership as part of their core practice, with protected sessions each month to deliver this. Health Disability Sport Leads will be managed locally by the Health Disability Sport Officer, with time allocation of this role agreed locally.
6. Proposed All-Wales Plan continued

2. Ongoing employment of the Health Disability Sport Officer in each Health Board, managed by the National Project Lead. Time allocation to be discussed and agreed locally based on service need.

The All Wales Project proposal has been presented to the Directors of Therapies and Healthcare Science (DoTHS), and we currently await further feedback.

7. Executive Support

**Gary Doherty: BCUHB CEO**

“I am immensely impressed by the Partnership. Whether as an enthusiastic beginner or an elite athlete representing Wales, the Partnership is for everyone. Having watched some participants play in a local disability sport club, and having spoken to both the players and their families, it was clear that the Partnership had benefits on everything from self confidence to school work.”

**Sue Maughan: Sport Wales Senior Officer**

“Sport Wales is delighted with the success of this Calls4Action Project, the benefits of which will be felt for years to come. It has not only seen impressive training and participation figures, but will help with the future approach of the Health Board, as well as the opportunity to expand this project across Wales. Evaluation from this Calls4Action project will help inform future working and we are pleased it is being embedded within Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board services and will continue inspiring others.”

**Adrian Thomas: BCUHB Executive Director of Therapies & Health Sciences**

“I really enjoyed my visit to Creuddyn to see Conwy Thunder Wheelchair basketball and meet some of the players. Their stories were really inspiring and the difference it has made to them, coupled with their achievements, is a testament to the benefits the partnership have delivered. Catherine’s excellent presentation about the Health Disability Sport Partnership to the Executive Directors of Therapies and Health Sciences was really well received and they were extremely impressed with both the work that had been done and the paper presented with the ideas to make it a fundamental part of “what we do around here” both in BCUHB and in other Health Boards.”
Appendix 1:  
Health Disability Sport Pathway Signposting Form

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<th>NATURE OF DISABILITY / IMPAIRMENT</th>
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<td>Physical (permanent wheelchair user)</td>
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<td>Physical (as required wheelchair user)</td>
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Please give further details which you think might be relevant:

(Use extra space on page 3 if required)
Appendix 1: Health Disability Sport Pathway Signposting Form continued

Health Disability Sport Pathway Signposting Form

PATIENT CONTACT PREFERENCES

☐ Tick if you are happy for us to leave you an answer phone message.

☐ Tick if you are happy for us to add you to our mailing list.
  (Your details WILL NOT be shared with any third parties.)

PATIENT CONSENT

I hereby give my consent for the Transfer of Information (in accordance with Data Protection Act 1998). I have been informed about the Health Disability Pathway and consent to this form being sent. I consent to processing the data for the purposes for which it was supplied.

Signature: ______________________
Date: ______________________

Please send your completed form addressed to ‘Sport Development team, BCUHB Signposting Form’ to the address below depending on county.

Anglesey: Sports Development Unit, Plas Arthur, Llangefn, Ynys Mon, LL77 7QX
Conwy: ACL, Library Building, Mostyn Street, Llandudno, LL30 2RP
Denbighshire: Caledfrin, Smithfield Road, Denbigh, LL16 3RJ
Flintshire: Deeside Leisure Centre, Chester Road West, Queensferry, Flintshire, CH5 1SA
Gwynedd: Gwynedd Council, Arfon Tennis Centre, Bethel Rd, Caernarfon, LL55 1DU
Powys: Neuadd Brycheiniog, Cambrian Way, Brecon, Powys. LD3 7HR
Wrexham: Sports Development, Wrexham Waterworld, Holt Road, Wrexham, LL13 8DH
Appendix 1: Health Disability Sport Pathway Signposting Form continued

Health Disability Sport Pathway
Signposting Form

NATURE OF DISABILITY / IMPAIRMENT CONTINUED (if required)

Please continue providing further details regarding the nature of the disability / impairment:
(If required)

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Appendix 2.1:
James’ Story

James’ Story

James has always been involved in sport and was an active football coach with junior teams in Abergele and Colwyn Bay, also leading Blessed Edward Jones High School to the Ifor Tuck Trophy in 1977.

Due to James’ involvement within local football, that also saw his eldest son Bruce play against for Bangor City against Atlético Madrid in the Cup Winners’ Cup, he took up golf late in 2008 but soon fell in love with the sport and soon enough won the Professional’s Tournament at North Wales Golf Club.

James was fortunate enough to be elected as Men’s Captain in 2013 but a week into his captaincy had a stroke whilst on the course after hitting just one shot on the first tee. James was taken to Llandudno Hospital by the club professional and was there transferred to Ysbyty Glan Clwyd. Although James was scheduled to be sent home the next day he had a further stroke whilst in hospital that left his left side paralysed.

“I was devastated. I thought my golf days were over as I couldn’t even sit up.” After five or so months James started moving his limbs under the helpful guidance of his physiotherapist, Leigh Campbell, and with a splint fitted for his leg he started playing golf on the Wii. After seeing James’ eyes light up playing golf on the Wii Leigh suggested getting in touch with the local Disability Sport Wales Development Officer through the partnership set up between DSW and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

continued overleaf
Appendix 2.1: James’ Story continued

"Meeting Mark, Conwy’s Disability Sport Wales Officer, gave me a glimmer of hope and I told everybody about it. Before that I was so despondent that I wouldn’t be able to play golf again that I gave away my putter.

What hurts me is that I overlook a golf course in my living room – it’s bitter sweet but Disability Sport Wales have given me the hope to one day be a part of that view again. I was given the option of different sports but I wanted to try golf as it’s my passion. It may take a long time but I will get there. It’s given me an achievable goal, not an unrealistic one, as lying in my hospital bed sport seemed a million miles away. Mark kept in touch and worked with Golf Development Wales and Conwy Golf Club to set up an inclusive golf event.

Before that I was very nervous and wondered whether I should go through with it but I’m so glad I did. Kim and Andy were very supportive and Kim even talked to me about adapting my grip to assist. Everybody was so supportive and didn’t see the disability, just the sport, and I wanted to be a part of that. Andy’s expertise was helpful and I went back home on a high – just being on a golf course again was nice.

Golf has given me my life back. It has kick started me and made me more determined to do my rehab and if I hadn’t done that I wouldn’t be able to stand up. When I was doing rehab I used to count how long I could stand and would get excited if I made 30 seconds – now I can stand for 10 minutes and DSW’s programmes have given me the motivation to do more. If DSW hadn’t set this up I’d just be sat in my chair but now I’ve even taken to using my walking stick as a golf club to practice! My wife commented that I’m even dressing like a golfer again. I’m wearing a long sleeved shirt for the first time in months and I sit here every day working my hand knowing that it will help my golf grip and improve my hand even more. My goal is now not just to get into golf but into competitive golf against non-disabled people."
Appendix 2.2: Matthew Pugh’s Story

Matthew Pugh’s Story

Matthew was signposted to Disability Swimming and Brickfield Rangers Football Club by Wrexham’s Disability Sport Wales Development Officer. Matthew has been diagnosed with SLI and is currently under assessment for ADHD, ASD, and SPD. Lynn, Matthew’s Mum, was keen for Matthew to start swimming as water safety is a life skill, and Matthew chose to play football.

Matthew initially started in one-to-one swimming sessions and after six weeks he integrated in to group sessions in Wrexham’s Activ8-2-16 programme Under 8’s swimming session. Matthew has been scared of water since he was two years old, and within the first six weeks of swimming sessions, he went from not leaving the changing rooms and sitting on the side of the pool to jumping in and swimming widths of the pool on his own with a woggle.

Lynn has taken Matthew swimming since the beginning and is so proud of Matthew’s achievements over the last 15 weeks, she says:

“There are no words to describe how proud I feel about Matthew when he is in the water; from where he started, he screamed and cried and clung on to me for dear life and he was so upset, to now where he can walk along poolside by himself, jump in the water by himself, go underwater and not freak out, and kick his legs and swim is unbelievable!”

Rob, Matthew’s Dad, hadn’t seen him swim since he was terrified of water, and Matthew was very happy to show Dad his new confidence in the water. He can’t wait to go swimming in different places now, and Lynn and Rob are hoping to take Matthew to a different pool so he can go swimming with family over summer.

Matthew loves football; ‘Football is my favourite [sport]’. Rob takes Matthew to Brickfield Rangers Football Club every Thursday to their disability specific junior session. “The Coaches are great with Matthew, they adapt the session to meet Matthew’s needs, and they let him score a goal.” Matthew has made friends in the session and they high five him when he scores. Matthew says, “I enjoy kicking the ball and scoring goals”. Brickfield Rangers is a great environment for Matthew and although it took him a while to get used to football, he now loves it!

continued overleaf
Appendix 2.2:
Matthew Pugh’s Story continued

Lynn and Rob have seen a huge difference in Matthew’s ability, confidence and enjoyment of sport. Leanne, Wrexham’s Disability Sport Wales Development Officer, says, “I have been there since day one when Matthew started swimming and he has significantly progressed over the last 15 weeks. He has a new found confidence in the water and now he really enjoys swimming.” Lynn is very pleased with the support Matthew has received from not only the coaches and swimming instructor, but from Leanne too, she says “I thought it was brilliant as she actually understood where we me from with Matthew and what we were going through. She helped a lot and if it wasn’t for Leanne giving us the sessions then Matthew wouldn’t be where he is at the moment with swimming and football”.

‘Matthew is very active and always on the go, and we have tried sports clubs in the past but he couldn’t last long enough to concentrate and listen due to his disabilities and the coaches couldn’t understand him. But now with swimming and football he has come out of his shell and he is enjoying and learning all about it. His face lights up when he accomplishes something new.”
Appendix 3:
Key Personnel Contact Details

Contact One

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