



Writing A Sports Development Plan

Sports Development

Fundamentally, Sports Development is about providing opportunities for people of all ages, regardless of gender, race or ability, to participate in sport at a level that is appropriate to their ability – from beginner to world class performer.

Quite simply it is about creating pathways and setting up structures that enable sports performers to get started, keep going, get better and be the best!

Why Plan?

Writing a sports development plan can often help a club to focus its efforts and ensure that everyone is working together in striving towards the same goal and a shared vision. It can help ensure that resources are maximised, priorities identified and a duplication of work is avoided.

What is a Development Plan?

A sports development plan is a clear and concise document that outlines a clubs goals and how they will achieve them.

It does not need to be a long and complex document, but essentially needs to answer three questions:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How are we going to get there?

Who can help?

When writing a sports development plan it is important it is not done in isolation.

There are many agencies and organisations that are involved in sports development who can help, support and advise. County Sports Partnerships, National Governing Bodies and most Local Authorities employ sports development officers who are responsible for providing and creating opportunities for everyone to participate in sport at their chosen level.



Where are we now?

Before a club can move forward, it needs to determine a starting point in order to identify the progress the club will make. Identifying this starting point can help establishing exactly where the club would like to be in the future.

The information a club could gather could include:

- The number and qualifications of coaches
- The number of volunteers, their skills and training needs
- Links with the County Sports Partnership, Local Authority Sports Development Officers, National Governing Body Officers local school and community groups.
- Facilities and equipment available
- Number of members and number of people who regularly attend sessions
- Reasons why some people decide not to maintain their participation
- Potential participants (number of people in the district)
- Strengths (and weaknesses) of the club
- Number of local schools and community groups in the area that play and provide the sport

Other information could include marketing, competitive structures, finance etc.

Where would you like to be?

Having identified where the club is, it then needs to be decided where the club wants to go, a clear vision. The club needs to decide what it would like to offer its members in the future and what it would like to do better or differently.

How will you get there?

To start achieving the clubs vision and making it a reality the club needs to set specific aims, goals and tasks. It needs to be broken down into bite-sized objectives and placed in order of priority. It is also helpful to identify some short, medium and long term goals that the club can work towards to ensure everyone stays motivated.

The aim describes what the club will do, the objective how the club is going to do it. The objectives need to be SMART

- Specific (specify what the club wants to achieve)



- Measurable (is the club able to measure whether it is meeting the objectives or not?)
- Achievable (are the objectives achievable and attainable?)
- Realistic (can the objectives realistically be achieved the objectives with the resources it has?)
- Timed (when does the club want to achieve the set objectives?)

Into Action

When producing the development plan a club will need to break it down and determine who will take responsibility, what they will do, where they will do it and by when. It might be useful for clubs to also consider the resources and budget that the objectives might incur.

There are many organisations that can offer help, support and advice. These can include:

- Local Authority Sports Development Officers
- National Governing Body Officers
- County Sports Partnership
- Sport England
- scUK
- Schools and Colleges

Monitoring the progress

A sports development plan is a working document that needs to be annually reviewed. The plan can be used to raise the profile of a club, to inform the local sports networks of their intentions, as a publicity tool to help seek and secure funding and as a means of informing others of their plans and progress.

Reviewing the plan can help a club to keep moving forward and decide what direction to take next. A good plan will be flexible enough to accommodate changes and include new opportunities. Planning is an on going process that needs to continually reviewed through a rolling process of Plan, Do, Review.