



# PROMOTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN THE SPORTS SECTOR

Current status and success stories from the European Union  
Member States of the WHO European Region



# ABSTRACT

This report presents the results of a collaboration between WHO, the European Commission and European Union Member States. Information was collected by a network of physical activity focal points using a questionnaire with 23 indicators established to monitor implementation of the European Union physical activity guidelines. In addition, success stories or examples of good practices in the promotion of physical activity through sport were compiled through a follow-up brief survey related to two indicators in 2019. The background, methods and complete results of this exercise are presented in the publication *Physical activity factsheets for the European Union Member States of the WHO European Region*, published in 2018. The definitions, operationalization and the data used to define the indicators are available in a European Commission working document that also describes the monitoring framework.



## KEYWORDS

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

SPORTS

HEALTH PROMOTION

SPORTS-FOR-ALL

HEALTH POLICY

EUROPEAN UNION

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# INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of a collaboration between WHO, the European Commission and European Union (EU) Member States. Information was collected by a network of physical activity focal points using a questionnaire with 23 indicators established to monitor implementation of the European Union Physical Activity Guidelines (1). Success stories or examples of good practices in the promotion of physical activity through sport were compiled through a follow-up brief survey related to two indicators – national sports-for-all policy or action plans for promoting physical activity, and guidelines for sports clubs for health – in 2019. The background, methods and complete results of this exercise are presented in the publication *Physical activity factsheets for the European Union Member States of the WHO European Region*, published in 2018 (2). The definitions, operationalization and data used to define the indicators are available in a European Commission working document (3), which also describes the monitoring framework.

Physical activity can be defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require energy expenditure. This involves various activities such as active play, active transportation, house chores and recreational activities such as sports and exercise (4). Sport therefore is considered a form of physical activity and covers a range of activities performed within a set of rules which are undertaken as part of leisure or competition. Sporting activities usually involve physical activity carried out by teams or individuals and are supported by an institutional framework (4). They aim to improve physical fitness, health and well-being, and to form and strengthen social relationships (5).

Strengthening the accessibility and promotion of participation in sport across all ages, genders and abilities is an important component for increasing physical activity levels within society (6). Participation in sport is also known to have psychosocial benefits that can promote social inclusion (7). The term “sport for all” is used to define sporting initiatives that are inclusive of all people, despite ability level and background, as opposed to elite or professional-level sports. Sport-for-all policies promote the importance of amateur recreational activities and unorganized sport that can provide increased opportunities to address the specific needs of different target groups. They can also help promote multisectoral policies to increase participation in physical activity among the general population (8).

Sport is a fundamental right for all and can yield a wide range of benefits not only for individuals, but also for communities and wider society through its ability to foster social connectiveness, physical literacy, health and well-being (9). Sport also has the potential to reduce violence by nurturing social values such as inclusion and cooperation and by uniting people of different ages, genders, socioeconomic status, nationality and political beliefs (10). Increased participation in sports plays an important role in the United Nations 2030 Agenda through the achievement of

a number of Sustainable Development Goals and targets, including the promotion of gender equality and female empowerment, as well as sustainable tourism and job creation.

To increase participation in sport and thereby support individuals in reaching recommended physical activity levels, it is crucial to improve accessibility to sports and offer adequate types of activities that are suitable in the given context and which consider the needs of different groups. The sports sector plays an essential role in implementing national physical activity policies and action plans within Member States. Nonetheless, cooperation with other sectors, such as health, education, transport and urban design, is needed to fully utilize the potential of sport to promote physical activity and health.

Sport clubs play a vital role in increasing participation in sports, thereby increasing physical activity levels. It is recognized that additional health benefits may be gained by offering health education and promoting health initiatives in sports club settings (11). A health-promoting sports club is one that offers health-related activities and/or health promotion at organizational, club and coaching levels.

Sports Club for Health (SCforH) is an approach designed to provide guidelines to support sports clubs in delivering programmes with a stronger focus on health and to encourage them to invest in health-related activities and/or health promotion within sports. Health promotion may not be the main goal in health-oriented sports clubs, but it is recognized as one of their main operating principles. The guiding principles of the SCforH approach include committing to promoting an enjoyable social and motivational climate for practising sports, posing no or minimal health and safety risks, using qualified and competent personnel and promoting health-enhancing sports activities (11). SCforH guidelines were prepared by a working group of the Health-enhancing Physical Activity (HEPA) Europe Network and the Association for International Sport for All, supported by a grant from the European Commission (12).

This report provides a snapshot of efforts to promote physical activity through sports among Member States of the EU. It presents a collection of case studies and data collected as part of the monitoring framework of the EU Physical Activity Focal Points Network, focusing on two indicators:

- Indicator 6, reported national sports-for-all policy or action plan for promoting physical activity; and
- Indicator 7, reported guidelines for SCforH.

Indicator 6 asked countries to report whether they had a national sports-for-all policy or action plan for promoting physical activity, and indicator 7 asked countries if they had implemented the guidelines for SCforH.

# RESULTS

As of September 2018, 148 physical activity policies had been reported across all sectors, of which 105 (72%) were national sports-for-all policies or action plans. These were implemented most commonly by the sports sector, followed by the health and education sectors. At the same time, seven countries (25%) had implemented SCforH guidelines and an additional 10 (36%) had similar programmes, guidelines or frameworks in place.





# SUCCESS STORIES

Between 2018 and 2019, Member States provided several success stories or examples of physical activity initiatives through sport. The most common schemes were community-based approaches that had a sport-for-all focus. Other examples consisted of incentives for employees or employers and organizing workplace sports leagues or competitions, but some are of sports policy initiatives and only a few were SCforH-focused. The variety of examples of good practices can provide further guidance and inspiration for policy-makers, implementers and researchers who intend to explore initiatives in promotion of sport in their context.

## AUSTRIA

### Move children healthy 2.0

"Move children healthy 2.0" ("Kinder Gesund Bewegen 2.0") is a nationwide programme to promote various forms of physical activity to children in sports clubs, kindergartens and primary schools. The initiative started in 2009 with the aim of strengthening cooperation between organized sports and education institutions and establishing positive attitudes towards sports in children aged between 2 and 10 years. Although children are the primary target group, the programme also includes parents, teachers, instructors and other stakeholders within the children's environment.

The programme is based on a cooperative partnership of sports organizations and education institutions. The cooperation agreement includes the promotion of physical activity units in groups or classes, information campaigns and holiday camps. All units are characterized by a large variety of age-appropriate physical activity options and different movement patterns that aim to improve the health and cognitive abilities of children. To achieve this, "Move children healthy" congresses and training courses are offered regularly to sports-club coaches.

The programme offers free participation in physical activity opportunities for children thanks to financial support from the Federal Ministry of Civil Service and Sport, which is ensured by three sport umbrella organizations – ASKÖ, ASVÖ and SPORTUNION – that comprise around 14 000 sports clubs nationwide. Recent years have seen a progressive increase in the number of organizations and children taking part in the programme since its creation in 2009.



Kinder gesund bewegen



<https://www.kindergesundbewegen.at>

# CROATIA

## Encouraging local sport

"Encouraging local sport" is a measure implemented by the Central State Office for Sport, through which programmes promoting sport at local level are financially supported according to public needs. The measure recognizes the importance of recreation and amateur sports activities in contributing to the development of creativity, health, optimism, satisfaction and quality of life. The aim of this measure is to provide children, young people and other age groups with opportunities to engage in organized sports on a daily basis. It has helped increase opportunities and improve conditions for participating in sports within the entire territory of Croatia.

The Central State Office for Sport annually publishes a call for co-financing of programmes promoting local sports. These are based on four priorities: the inclusion of amateur and recreational programmes promoting physical activity, programmes that include high numbers of athletes, non-swimmer training programmes, and international conferences that aim to promote physical activity and sports. Successful programmes are supported from the state budget and are implemented at local level. This shows a recognition of the importance of investment in grassroots sports and physical activity. Support of, and the budget for, these programmes have increased significantly in recent years.



 <https://sdus.gov.hr/izdvojeno-88/sportski-natjecaji/poticanje-lokalnog-sporta/118>

# CYPRUS

## Sport for all

Since 1985, the Cyprus Sport Organization has implemented the national "Sport for all" programme, which aims to promote healthy lifestyles while providing enjoyable activities through opportunities for all people in society to participate in various sports.

The programme encompasses a large range of actions, including programmes for general exercise, opportunities for children to learn and participate in sports such as athletics, handball and volleyball, and specialized programmes that cover other sports. All age groups are included in the initiatives, which are reached through pre-school education, programmes for adults and sport for senior citizens. Specialized sports activities are organized to provide opportunities for people with special needs to participate in sports, including adapted and tailor-made programmes. Sporting events are also organized, aiming to teach children about fair play while competing in various sports. Children with exceptional talents are offered special support to participate in competitive sport.

Overall, the programme has developed positively over time. In 2018, participants exceeded 10 000 from all over Cyprus, a significant number considering the small population of the country.



 <https://cyprussports.org/en/activities/national-programs/sports-for-all.html>

# ESTONIA

## Workplace sport

The Estonian Sport-for-all Association and the Estonian Olympic Committee run a campaign featuring a variety of events, inviting the general population to participate in and also organize their own sporting and fitness activities in the workplace. All companies and organizations can register their sporting initiatives in a workplace-fitness-month calendar.

The Estonian Government decided in 2018 to make health and sports expenses for employees tax-exempt for an amount up to €400 per employee per year.

The Company Sport Union has been established to promote physical activity among employers and employees. It organizes competitions and other sport-for-all events and offers an electronic system through which companies can administrate their employees' visits to sports clubs and fitness centres.

# FINLAND

## Promoting physical activity for young people with special needs: the Valtti model

The Valtti project started as a pilot in 2016 as part of the Sports Empowers Disabled Youth Project (SEDY), supported by the Erasmus+ Programme of the EU and partners from seven European countries (Finland, France, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United Kingdom). SEDY aimed to reduce the exclusion of children and young people with disabilities from sports. Results from the project have demonstrated the growing need for individual physical activity offers for people with disabilities and other long-term conditions. The Finnish Sports Association of Persons with Disabilities (VAU) therefore has continued the programme with the support of the Finnish Ministry of Culture and Education.

Currently, the objective of the Valtti project is to increase physical activity levels among children and young people with disabilities by supporting them in discovering physical hobbies. The project builds on the potential of hobbies to prevent social exclusion. The Valtti model is based on personal guidance and instruction on performing physical activities. Students of health and social care, sports and leisure management or education act as personal adapted physical activity instructors (PAPAs) for children or young people with special needs aged 6–24 years. PAPAs are encouraged to participate in a variety of adapted physical activity training sessions and material is available for them in multiple languages. Valtti coordinators support families, PAPAs and sports clubs, and act as links between schools and VAU.

According to an evaluation, 37 forms of physical activity have been practised as part of the programme. The most popular hobbies included different forms of combat



sports, such as judo and taekwondo, dance, basketball, horse riding, attending diverse exercise clubs, swimming and going to the gym.

In the near future, VAU aims to develop and expand its services within sports clubs to facilitate the finding of venues for adapted physical activity. It also continues negotiations with universities, vocational schools and municipalities to find solutions to make Valtti activities more sustainable at local level.

 <https://www.vammaisurheilu.fi/ajankohtaista/valtti/in-english>

## FRANCE

### VIDAL: medical dictionary, including sports health

The focus on sports in France traditionally has been devoted to competition. Since 2015, sports federations have included a sporting license for individuals who want to practise sport to increase their physical health in primary, secondary or tertiary prevention. Each voluntary federation created a national committee to propose activities adapted for people with chronic diseases. More than 50 federations participated in describing evidence-based advantages of practising different sports, including improving endurance and strength and decreasing fatigue, as well as limitations and contraindications. The result of this process was submitted to a scientific committee of the National Olympic Committee who proposed to define three levels of indications depending on the state of the disease (A, B and C).

In France, VIDAL is the most widely used dictionary for drugs and their interactions by physicians and other health-care workers. Sport has been included in VIDAL since 2016, so physicians can prescribe physical activity, including specific sports, for people with chronic disease, depending on their wishes and condition.

 <http://www.vidalfrance.com/>

## GERMANY

### Physical activity prescription (Rezept für Bewegung)

The German physical activity prescription (Rezept für Bewegung) is a nationwide initiative of the German Society for Sports Medicine and Prevention (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sportmedizin und Prävention (DGSP)), the German Olympic Sports Confederation (Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund (DOSB)) and the German Medical Association (Bundesärztekammer (BÄK)), through which physicians can provide their patients with a written prescription for physical activity and sport.

The recommended physical activities are certified by the quality seal SPORT PRO GESUNDHEIT [SPORT FOR HEALTH], with a focus on the cardiovascular system, posture and mobility, relaxation, stress management coordination and motor support. On the prescription form, the physician can select a focus that fits the profile of the patient and insert specific instructions for the trainer. The costs of these activities normally are covered through health insurance.

The websites of the participating organizations provide various free information materials for doctors, such as posters, flyers and brochures, and offer guidance on searching certified sport offers for patients. The initiative has been successfully implemented in several states in Germany.

 <https://sportprogesundheit.dosb.de/projekte-und-initiativen/rezept-fuer-bewegung/> and <https://www.dgsp.de/seite/375176/rezept-f%C3%BCr-bewegung.html>

## GREECE

### Sports for people with disabilities

"Sports for people with disabilities" is an annual nationwide programme directed at all ages and social groups in Greece. The purpose is to promote the engagement of children, young people and adults with disabilities in sports and in the adoption of a physically active lifestyle. Particular emphasis is given to physical and social integration through participation in sports with a competitive, pedagogical and therapeutic character. In the same framework, the sports-for-all programme includes initiatives specific to the Roma population and for prisoners. Group or individual training in multiple disciplines is offered, depending on individual needs and abilities.



Sports days are organized to create closer bonds and more integration between the general public and people with disabilities through common sports lessons, involving the participation of primary and secondary schools and promoting the development of friendships among children with and without disabilities. Parents' participation in sports programmes is encouraged, aiming to support and foster friendships among parents. The programme is conducted by the General Secretariat of Sports in cooperation with the municipalities' foundations and sports clubs.

 <http://gga.gov.gr/athlitismos/athlhsh-gia-olous>

## HUNGARY

### More than a club

The National School, University and Leisure Sport Federation, in cooperation with the University of Debrecen's Athletic Club, launched a social innovation project based on the SCforH approach. The project aimed to widen and develop the sports services of local clubs and highlight the health benefits of sports. Local and regional capacity was used to increase access to physical activity among wider groups of the population to enable them to benefit from its health-enhancing effects.

The University of Debrecen Athletic Club focuses on providing professional sports opportunities to talented students, but this was extended under the project to providing health-oriented sporting opportunities for the wider population.

The club recruited non-professional athletes, including local citizens and students and employees of the university, to participate in the sporting opportunities for one year, following an assessment of health status before the project started. Results showed a change in their attitude towards regular physical activity and better health



outcomes at the end of the project. A methodological guide and toolkit were developed for other universities and sports clubs to help them incorporate the SCforH approach, aiming to increase its use.



## IRELAND

### Watersports Inclusion Games

The Watersports Inclusion Games is a two-day free event that celebrates water sports for all abilities and is open to everyone. It aims to celebrate Irish inclusive water sports, encourage water sports in training centres and clubs nationwide, embrace inclusion and address barriers to accessing mainstream water sports. The initiative also aims to promote wider awareness of accessible Irish water sports opportunities and connect providers with individuals who could benefit from participating. Participants can take part with up to two family members or friends and other family and friends can attend to support and enjoy the celebrations.

In 2019, the activities included sailing of keelboats and yacht activities, rowing ergometers, paddle sports and powerboating, along with special sports such as surfing, water skiing and solo sailing. The event was held in several locations with all activities running in parallel. Over 300 participants took part over the weekend. Awareness of the event has continued to grow over the past three years. Success has led to expansion in multiple locations for the event around the country for 2020. The Watersports Inclusion Games are led by local sailing centres in collaboration with local water sports providers.

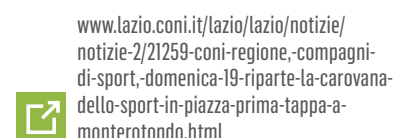


## ITALY

### Sports mates

Through collaboration of the Lazio region and the Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI), CONI & and Region Sports Mates (Regione, compagni di sport) has been running since 2016. It focuses on promoting physical and sporting activity for all in the Lazio territory. The project had involved around 20 municipalities by the second half of 2018, with more than 50 000 participants engaging in one or more sports.

In addition to street sports, sports nights and special initiatives are organized. An example is the multi-sport village of CONI Lazio, a full-day free event in which people can choose from among a range of sports disciplines under the supervision of expert personnel. CONI and the Lazio region are the main organizers, supported by partners from sports federations and associations and qualified technicians.



# LITHUANIA

## Grassroots curling

The Lithuanian Curling Federation carries out promotional physical activities during community events and in schools around the country to promote participation in curling. The Federation created a video showing the rules of curling, which is presented to event participants. Those wanting to try curling are provided with an opportunity to do so either on ice or by using special floor-curling tools. Invitations to activities are shared through the Federation's website and Facebook profile. Curling is considered an appealing health-friendly sport due to its relatively low-intensity physical load.

Special focus has been given to increasing children's involvement in curling. Schools are encouraged to invite the Federation to organize educational classes as part of physical education lessons or through extracurricular activities. Future plans for the initiative include continuing the promotion of curling and supplying as many schools as possible with floor-curling equipment.



# MALTA

## OnTheMove

SportMalta's OnTheMove programme offers over 50 sport and physical activity courses in more than 20 sport complexes, schools and sport clubs across Malta and Gozo. The programme ensures that use of any available space is maximized by using the time slots at regional sport complexes when not occupied by clubs. Some courses are offered in local schools, making it easier for participants to join and be less dependent on transport as they are enabled to walk to and from the session. Other courses are held in club facilities, creating links for the public to join.

The programme uses the services of over 450 qualified coaches and is generally based on weekly sessions during the academic year and daily sessions in summer, including short intensive programmes during school holidays that focus on a specific sport or general fitness. The programme offers parent and child sessions in swimming, gymnastics and basic sports skills to infants and toddlers, designed to serve as the first stepping stone to a physically active lifestyle. It also caters for participants over 60 years, who are offered free courses in line dancing, ballroom dancing, yoga, tai chi, aqua fitness and resistance training. OnTheMove also offers adapted courses for children and young adults with special needs and an adventure course as an alternative to traditional sport courses.

The programme aims to inspire children and adults to take up sport and physical activity on a regular basis by providing them with positive sports experiences. An important outcome of the programme is to instil a sense of enthusiasm for sport and physical activity, encouraging children and adults to understand the health benefits of participating throughout life, which in itself is an important pillar of SportMalta's mission.

# POLAND

## Open Active Zone

The Open Active Zone (Otwarte Strefy Aktywności) programme provides an accessible and inclusive outdoor infrastructure for individuals and families of all ages for sport and physical activity. It consists of an outdoor gym, a recreational zone and active playgrounds. Since 2018, 2900 open active zones have been built all over the country. The project was supported by the Sport Development Programme 2020, implemented by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, Ministry of Health, Ministry of National Education and others. The main objective of the initiative is to create the necessary environmental conditions to enable progress towards a more active and healthy society.



# PORTUGAL

## National Walk and Run Programme

The National Walk and Run Programme (Programa Nacional de Marcha e Corrida) was developed by the Portuguese Athletics Federation and supported by the Portuguese Institute of Sport and Youth along with municipalities and other national stakeholders throughout the country. The programme aims to promote sports participation by all Portuguese citizens regardless of physical activity levels through the development and implementation of adjusted walking and running programmes.



The programme promotes participation in regular physical activity regardless of individual circumstances, motivation levels and abilities. It also raises awareness of the importance of sport as a tool to improve quality of life, well-being and health among different age groups. More than 50 centres have been developed in municipalities all over the country.

Qualified technicians in the walk and run centres provide advice to individuals on the best choice of activities to fit their profile. A specific training plan, based on the individual's condition, is prescribed for each participant before integration in the walk and run groups. These groups allow access to structured regular activity that is always supervised by certified national coaches several times per week on weekdays and weekends. Special meetings are organized during some weekends to increase motivation and raise awareness about the programme. The programme organizes an annual walk and run seminar to discuss scientific and technical issues related to the project, build capacity and educate coaches.

This programme involves more than 50 000 people each year. Participants from all segments of the population have reported great benefits across multiple dimensions of life, including physical, mental and social health. It provides a great opportunity to socialize, promotes inclusion and gender equality, and is considered a relevant tool for improving participants' health and well-being. The Portuguese Athletics Federation

and its partners intend to increase the number of stakeholders involved and extend the programme to a larger number of municipalities to include more people from all segments of the population.



## SPAIN

### Inclusive Sport (Deporte Inclusivo)

The Inclusive Sport (Deporte Inclusivo) programme seeks to promote sport among people with disabilities as a tool for social inclusion. It promotes awareness and respect for people's differences and encourages healthy habits by promoting sport among people with disabilities of all ages. The public administration in Spain is responsible for guaranteeing universal access to sports that are delivered with high standards and for promoting healthy habits to foster a healthier society with greater levels of social cohesion.

Some of the main actions of the initiative include the promotion of physical activity in inclusive environments, such as schools, and providing support for sports federations and clubs to offer inclusive sporting activities. Promotional campaigns are held in various media platforms to raise awareness of physical activity and inclusive sports. Specialized training (including educational material on best practices to serve as benchmarks for all professionals in this area) is provided to physical education teachers, sports technicians and coaches. Individuals are offered access to sports facilities and aid to purchase adapted sports materials.

The Government of Spain has classified the Inclusive Sport programme as an Event of Exceptional Public Interest (AEIP in Spanish), enabling any enterprise that collaborates in the dissemination of the event and which donates funds to the programme to obtain significant tax benefits. Since the programme was introduced, several large companies have been involved by donating financial resources, making it possible to launch a range of new projects.



## SWEDEN

### Policy using sports for integration and inclusion

In addition to annual state subsidies for Swedish sports, the Government gives specific funding to special projects through the Swedish Sport Confederation. Funding recently has been allocated to projects looking at integration, reduced segregation, socially vulnerable areas and asylum seekers. Most of the funds have been distributed to the Swedish Sport Confederation's 19 districts, which are located throughout the country.

The purpose is to provide opportunities for newly arrived refugees and migrants to be physically active and involved in sports. These efforts aim to increase opportunities for settling into Swedish society through an investment called "Sports for newly arrived immigrants".



Coordinators in the districts are at the hub of the work. Generally, they have been coordinating the regional work and dispersing the grant, as well as giving support, education and training to sports associations and representing the districts in central meetings organized by the Confederation. The meetings aim to create a value-based and knowledge-based consensus to guide the districts' work on the initiative. The coordinators have come to act as experts in matters of diversity and inclusion at district level, while the associations primarily carry out initiatives for the target group. The emphasis gradually has shifted from activating the target group to focusing on inclusion and association development to achieve more lasting and long-term effects.

The initiative has shifted focus towards the broader role of sport in society and has driven sports associations towards being more inclusive. It is a good example of the influence government can have on national sports movements and highlights the role of sport in intersectoral work to build stronger and more sustainable societies.



## UNITED KINGDOM (ENGLAND)

### Cross-sectoral action through sport, health and charity

Sport England and Public Health England provide strategic leadership to bring the health and sport agendas and sectors closer together. This work aims to strengthen joint advocacy efforts for sport and physical activity to promote health and to remove some of the systemic barriers for individuals to enjoy positive physical activity experiences.

The partnership has focused on reducing inactivity and inequalities, targeting people living with long-term health conditions and understanding the barriers they face to becoming more active. For the first time, 15 of the leading health and social care charities in the United Kingdom, including Diabetes UK and Age UK, were brought together to launch an England-based campaign called "We are undefeatable" to inspire and support people with a range of health conditions to be more active. The collaboration is supported by funding from the National Lottery, Sport England and Public Health England.

The initiative includes a social marketing campaign consisting of real-life case studies of inspiring stories of people living with a range of conditions becoming active in ways that suited them. Cross-media advertising, a website with behaviour change support and workforce resources for the sport and health sectors are used to promote the message. The campaign has served to provide a platform to bring partners together to discuss sport and physical activity and accelerate actions that can help more people with health conditions to be active in ways that are suitable for them. By 2018, the campaign video had reached 16.4 million people and further qualitative and quantitative data were being collected to establish the attitudinal, behavioural and policy impacts of the initiative.



# UNITED KINGDOM (SCOTLAND)

## Community Sports Hubs programme

Community sports hubs are one of Sport Scotland's key programmes of support for local sport clubs. The Community Sports Hubs programme aims to bring together sport clubs and community organizations to develop and grow community-based sport. It is funded by the National Lottery and is central to Sport Scotland's aspiration of building a world-class sporting system for everyone in Scotland.

The initiative acknowledges that sport and physical activity are powerful forces for positive change in communities, empowering people to improve their lives and bringing people together through sharing the enjoyment of being active.

The Community Sports Hubs programme is based on sustainable, community-led approaches that encourage clubs to work together to develop welcoming, safe and fun environments for sport. Sport Scotland is also developing the potential for community sports hubs to contribute to tackling inequalities. To achieve this, it is working with community sports hubs in a number of the most deprived areas of Scotland to create more opportunities and explore barriers to participation in sport.

**sport**  
scotland



<https://sportscotland.org.uk/clubs/what-is-a-community-sport-hub/>

# DISCUSSION

The results from the responses to the survey and the success stories submitted by Member States demonstrate a clear recognition of the importance of promoting sport-for-all policies to increase population-wide physical activity levels. The large number of policies implemented by the sports sector highlights the important role of this sector in influencing promotion of physical activity, as well as the potential for collaboration with other sectors.

Sports-for-all policies can serve to reduce inequalities in participation in sport and physical activity by encouraging disadvantaged groups, older people and people with low physical activity levels to be more active. Based on the success stories provided, the role of sports in health promotion and social inclusion seems to be well recognized and commonly utilized among Member States. Nonetheless, the limited number of countries with SCforH or related policies reflects that more emphasis could be made on taking advantage of the important role of sport clubs as settings for health promotion. Adequate evaluation is crucial to understanding the effects of implemented initiatives and informing refinement of actions (13).

The challenges related to developing health-promoting sports clubs, including the long-term investment this may involve, are recognized. Further efforts and long-term commitment for the promotion of SCforH guidelines or similar initiatives therefore are needed across Member States.

Sports-for-all policies contribute to strengthening the link between health and sports and can serve to improve and establish intersectoral cooperation based on multiple common focus areas. In many countries, sports initiatives are delivered through various sectors, including sports, health, education and youth (14), offering potential for intersectoral collaborations. Utilizing a broad range of policy instruments and including multiple sectors to promote physical activity through sports can lead not only to more enabling environments for physical activity, but can also facilitate financial incentives for increased participation in sports (15). Such policies should be inclusive of all segments of the population and contain actions to increase participation within subgroups such as people with disabilities, gender groups, disadvantaged people and older people (8).

In some countries, elite sports tend to receive more government funding and political attention compared to sports-for-all initiatives. This may be due to the high national and international visibility elite sports may offer and the financial gains involved (14). Nonetheless, the population-level health benefits (16), the health-care savings offered by increasing levels of physical activity and the economic burden of physical inactivity (17) should not be underestimated. Other benefits of promoting sport for all include job creation, increased tourism related to sporting events, social cohesion and community well-being (14).

Although highly promising efforts have been made to promote physical activity through sports among Member States of the EU, more support is needed for establishing and maintaining health-promoting sports clubs. It is important to continue to foster the existing sports culture to be more inclusive of the general public, particularly for vulnerable groups. Investing in recreational sport facilities and opening existing elite sports clubs to the general public are potential solutions.

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