

## Include Project September 2018 - August 2019

### OVERVIEW

The aim of this 12-month pilot project (Sept 2018/Aug 2019) was to support Sported member groups to become more knowledgeable and accessible organisations for young people who are blind or partially sighted, thus helping to remove barriers and increasing opportunity for involvement. Learning from this pilot will be shared within Sported across the UK and used to roll the project out further, as part of our strategy to improve opportunities for under-represented groups to access sport and receive the benefits it generates.

Sported have been working with Angel Eyes NI to develop and deliver this project. [Angel Eyes NI](#) is a small local charity that advocates, communicates and educates to support and empower parents of blind and partially sighted children throughout Northern Ireland, to ensure their child will have equal opportunities in life to fully achieve their dreams, aspirations and potential.



By working in partnership with Angel Eyes NI, the project provided opportunity for young visually impaired people to become involved in local community sports clubs. The young people, along with their parents, were linked to and engaged with the clubs, offering their 'lived experience' to help clubs understand how to make their clubs more accessible and inclusive. It is hoped this will lead to more opportunities for these young people to become active in sport.



### PROJECT OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

The Include Project aimed to provide support to Sported members operating mainstream clubs to develop their understanding of how to offer opportunities for young people who are blind or partially sighted to become involved in their club.

#### **Project Outputs delivered:**

- 1 x Understanding Visual Impairment training programme developed (incl. resources & handbook)
- 7 x Sported Volunteers and Staff trained
- 1 x Good Practice Site Visit for all participating groups, Sported Volunteers and young people / their parents
- 4 x Visual Impairment awareness training delivered to group representatives
- 1 x bespoke confidence building session developed and delivered to 4 participating young people
- 12 x 1:1 support sessions delivered to participating groups (3 per group)
- 4 x Visual Impairment inclusion plans developed
- 1 x End of Project shared learning event
- 4 young people who are blind or partially sighted involved in sharing their experiences with clubs

**Project Outcomes:**

- **Sported members have a greater understanding of how to engage with and include young people who are blind or partially sighted into their group's sports activities.**
  - o Visual impairment inclusion action plans developed & implemented by the groups
  - o Qualitative feedback from participating Sported member groups highlights greater level of understanding of how to engage young people with visual impairment
  - o Qualitative feedback from Angel Eyes young people and parents highlights how groups have successfully embedded learning into their inclusion action plans & session delivery
  - o Sported's [Capacity Model](#) 'distance travelled' results show increased capacity of participating groups around '*Embedded in the Community*' and '*Diverse Participants*'.
  
- **Participating young people who are blind or partially sighted (members of Angel Eyes) have increased self-confidence having participated in supporting the development of clubs' awareness around Visual Impairment**
  - o Parents' feedback highlights their children have increased confidence and are more able to share their additional support needs with clubs/coaches.
  - o 2 young people involved in the project now attend their respective clubs on a regular basis as they feel more confident to engage in the activities
  
- **More young people who are blind or partially sighted have access to sports or physical activity through a Sported Member**
  - o 4 young people involved in sharing their 'lived experiences' with Sported member groups
  - o 2 young people involved in the project now attend their respective clubs on a regular basis
  - o As a direct result from the 'good practice site visit', Angel Eyes started a club on Tuesday evenings in Magherafelt, with around 11-12 kids attending weekly from March -June 2019.
  - o NICCA have offered taster sessions to Angel Eyes young people outside of the project
  - o Sported member groups have increased awareness of promoting their accessible projects and events to young people with visual impairment, utilising links with Angel Eyes families and partners.



"It's not about focusing on *disabled young people*, but rather understanding that we are all "**differently-abled**" and should make changes accordingly."

*(Attendee at end of project learning event)*



### ADDITIONAL BENEFITS:

In addition to the planned outcomes and outputs, we believe a number of unexpected benefits have been achieved through this project:

#### *For Sported member groups:*

- The opportunity to have Angel Eyes bring Virtual Reality headsets to each group's Visual Impairment awareness training session gave groups an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the reality of visual impairment. Groups cite this as having greatly improved their understanding and awareness
- Increased 'general awareness' of visual impairment within the participating groups – one group has a volunteer with visual impairment who hadn't told anyone. They've since made adjustments to suit their needs and they feel more comfortable asking for support
- One participating group received additional marketing support from a Sported Volunteer to better promote their programme and activities to a wider range of participants.

#### *For Angel Eyes young people & their families:*

- In addition to the young people's 'Confidence Training' day, Angel Eyes parents had a session with trainers re: supporting their child's confidence at home. This was not planned and was provided pro-bono by the training providers
- Two Angel Eyes parents connected to each other as part of Young People leadership/confidence training and have since met up to share learning and support
- As a direct result from the 'good practice site visit', Angel Eyes started a club on Tuesday evenings in Magherafelt, with around 11-12 kids attending weekly from March -June 2019
- Participating groups have offered 'taster sessions' to Angel Eyes young people outside of the project
- A Sported Volunteer was linked with Angel Eyes to provide training around guide running. The Volunteer also then led a relay team at the Belfast Marathon (2019), raising funds for Angel Eyes.

**Sported are delighted with the success of this pilot project, and the benefits experienced by Sported members and young people living with visual impairment.**

**We are confident of the application of learning beyond Northern Ireland, as our disability programme aspirations continue to grow and develop.**

**With thanks to our funders:**