



Impact Report 2022

Special Olympics
Great Britain



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Introduction: Ian Harper

As the inaugural Chair of the Athlete Leadership Team and now entering my final months as the Sargent Shriver International Global Messenger for Special Olympics Europe Eurasia, it gives me great pleasure to open this year's Impact Report for Special Olympics GB.

For me, it was a momentous year as I ended 2022 by passing on the Athlete Leadership Team reins to Special Olympics City of Birmingham and West Midlands Ski Group athlete Katie Day, who I know will do a great job.

On a wider point from Special Olympics GB, there has been strong progress made in 2022. We have a new Chief Executive in Colin Dyer, we have benefitted from new funding opportunities not seen before and, more importantly, us athletes have been able to return to competition.

There was understandably great upset from many at the cancellation of the 2021 National Summer Games, and we endured the most challenging of periods for the charity. But the Summer Series of Sport was a very welcome addition to the calendar last year, and it created many fantastic memories.

We're in a much stronger position after several years of reform and, with 80 athletes having represented our nation at a World Games, we have a great opportunity to attract many of the



pre-pandemic registered athletes back to our clubs and to expand our reach.

Returning to the Athlete Leadership Team, I'm incredibly proud of the progress that we have made in my five years as Chair.

This time hasn't been without significant challenges, and I have no doubt that the group could have folded without a degree of stubbornness and our desire to thrive.

As a result, the Athlete Leadership Team is now integral to Special Olympics GB, it is visible to all registered athletes across England, Scotland and Wales, and it is recognised widely by our sponsors and partners.

At the start of last year we sought to complete a democratic process for the recruitment of new members and for choosing the new Chair. I'm delighted that we fulfilled both of these objectives and that we have a fair model that will work for all future elections.

'Led by athletes, for athletes' was the motto that we adopted when the concept began five years ago and it remains at our core.

I look forward to seeing the group blossom now under Katie's leadership and see many more athletes benefit from the leadership experience.

We are inclusion in action

Special Olympics Great Britain transforms lives.



Through the power of sport, we enable people of all ages and from all backgrounds living with intellectual disabilities to make friends, learn social skills, feel part of a community, increase their confidence and self-esteem, realise their potential, develop physical fitness and mental wellbeing, demonstrate courage, and experience joy and pride.



We are the largest provider of year-round sports participation, training and competition in summer and winter sports for children, young people and adults with intellectual disabilities.



We operate across England, Scotland and Wales and have a growing network of all-ability, inclusive sports accredited programmes and partners. We offer 27 different sports across those programmes – delivered by an amazing team of thousands of volunteers supporting thousands of athletes.



Our focus is on ability not disability. We provide opportunities for our athletes to compete with others at similar levels both at home and overseas – and have a competition pathway designed to nurture and progress athletes from local competitions through to accessing international level competitions.



Special Olympics Great Britain is part of the global Special Olympics International organisation which is the largest disability sports organisation in the world. As a global movement, Special Olympics reaches 5.7 million athletes across 200 countries.



Together, through the programmes we have created, we want to inspire real change by raising awareness of intellectual disability, ending discrimination, and building an inclusive world for all.



What is intellectual disability?



Intellectual disability is a term used when a person has certain limitations in cognitive functioning, including conceptual, social and practical skills, such as language, social and self-care skills.



There are an estimated 1.5 million people with a learning disability in the UK



Around 350,000 young people aged 0 to 17 have a learning disability in the UK



Nearly two thirds (59%) of people with a learning disability do not participate in sport



2 out of 3 people with a learning disability would like to do more sport and physical activity



23% of working age (18 to 64) adults with a learning disability have a paid job. This is compared to:

- 53% of working age adults with any disability
- 76% of working age adults (aged 16-64) in the general population in the UK



Source:

Mencap
Activity Alliance, 2022
Mencap/Activity Alliance

2022 highlights

Our highlights Sport Education & Training Partnership & Funding



6,618
Athletes



27
Sports



3,841
Volunteers



95
Accredited
Programs



Staged first



- 16 events covering 11 sports
- 756 athletes aged 8-80 years-old
- From 3 countries - Scotland/England/Wales
- 16 regions
- 477 volunteers



Staged



Unified Football
Showcase



Collaborated with



on Master Cyclo-Cross
World Championship



33
Athlete Leadership
Sessions Delivered



5
New Athlete
Leadership
Team members



57
Organisations
engaged



12
Athletes part of
Health Promotion
Pilot Programme



12
Trained through
Pilot inclusive
Basketball
Coaching course



15
Corporate
Partners
Engaged




 **EUROPACIFIC PARTNERS**

Unified Business
Christmas Gift
Box project



Partner charity



Systems Partner Awarding



Unified Football
Tournament



New Partnerships



Special Olympics
Great Britain



Working Group Development

Special Olympics GB athletes, volunteers, coaches, athlete leaders, staff members and Trustees came together during the year to help to guide the direction of the organisation in a number of areas through our essential and growing Working Groups.

Six Working Groups met regularly throughout the year focused on:

- Return to activity following Covid-19 through the Summer Series of Sport
- Winter Sports
- Network Structure
- Volunteering
- Safeguarding and Welfare
- Communication

Listening to and understanding the challenges faced by athletes, coaches and volunteers – and putting new athlete-led projects and events in place – is at the heart of the Inclusion in Action strategy and that will continue to develop in the years to come – with more Working Groups to be established in other important areas.

Essential developments in all of the areas covered by the first Working Groups have already been seen and, along with our Athlete Leadership Team and Advisory Board, the engagement now being felt across all areas of Special Olympics GB is giving people from all aspects of our incredible network a voice and the chance to influence our growth and direction.

Thank you to everyone who has taken part in the Working Group meetings throughout the year – listening to and working alongside people from this diverse and talented network is at the very heart of the development of Special Olympics in England, Scotland and Wales.



2022 Events



After a couple of pandemic-hit years, competitions returned with a bang in 2022 through the Summer Series of Sport. From June to September, around 750 athletes, of a hugely diverse age range, took to their respective arenas for the first time since 2020, with events taking place from East Anglia to York.

And what a summer it was! A special mention to the 477 volunteers who played such a huge role in delivering the events and supporting our athletes whilst they competed.



Special Olympics GB set to return to full-scale competition with Great Britain's biggest celebration of intellectual disability sport in 2022

While the planned Winter Games were postponed in light of events in Ukraine, our winter sport athletes still enjoyed a celebration weekend in Aberdeen, as a reflection of their training and dedication.

#TeamSOGB travel to Aberdeen for a well-deserved World Winter Games celebration weekend (specialolympicsgb.org.uk)

Three equestrian athletes representing three Special Olympics GB clubs took part in the Berlin National Games between the 17th and 26th June – a test event before the World Games this summer. The team did really well, bringing home two golds, two silvers, one 4th- placed finish, two 5th- placed finishes, one 6th, and a participation medal between them.

Charlotte MacDonald (Special Olympics Grampian) said: "I loved Berlin and would love to go again. Being on the stage saying the Special Olympics Oath at the Opening Ceremony was a really special experience. Being part of the team made the trip really good fun especially meeting teams and volunteers from other countries. It was just fantastic to see everyone enjoying celebrating together."

Summer Series of Sport



Following a long wait, of nearly two and a half years, Special Olympics GB athletes returned to competition in June as the charity staged its first Summer Series of Sport for athletes in England, Scotland and Wales.

With the absence of a National Games, this concept was the best alternative method of giving competitive opportunities to athletes across the country in multiple sports, a new working group was then formed, ensuring membership voice was at the heart of its development and delivery.

The Working Group consisted of club members, volunteers and staff, who quickly recognised the vast experience that many of its clubs have in staging regional events throughout the year. Therefore, by working closely with the network, it was agreed that multiple regional and national competitions could be staged at established venues across the country and hosted by the clubs and regions.

The Summer Series of Sport subsequently teed off on Saturday, 25 June, as the Eastern Region hosted a Level 1 golf tournament at Harpenden Common Golf Club.

Promptly followed by further events in athletics, basketball, boccia, cycling, equestrian, football, gymnastics, swimming, powerlifting, table tennis, the Summer Series of Sport stretched from Suffolk to Pembrokeshire as 16 outstanding events gave competitive opportunities to 756 athletes.

Date	Sport	Region	Venue	Town	Club
25-Jun	Golf	Eastern	Harpenden Common Golf Club	Harpenden	SO St Albans
09-Jul	Athletics	Eastern	Abbeycroft Leisure Centre	Bury St Edmunds	SO Suffolk
10-Jul	Artistic Gymnastics	Eastern	Waveney Gymnastics Club	Lowestoft	SO Suffolk
16-17-Jul	Table Tennis	North West	Sir William Stainer Sport Centre	Crewe	SO North West
16-17-Jul	Cycling	Yorkshire & Humber	British Cycling Wyke Track	Bradford	SO Yorkshire & Humberside
17-Jul	Athletics	Yorkshire & Humber	University of York	York	SO Yorkshire & Humberside
5-7-Aug	Basketball	North West	National Basketball Performance Centre	Manchester	SO North West
06-Aug	Swimming	Yorkshire & Humber	John Charles Centre for Sport	Leeds	SO Yorkshire & Humberside
07-Aug	Football	Eastern	Cedar School	Benfleet	SO Essex
15-16-Aug	Equestrian	Yorkshire & Humber	Parklands Equestrian Centre	Sheffield	SO Dearne Valley
20-21-Aug	Badminton	West Midlands	WJ Sports Centre	Walsall	SO West Midlands
03-Sep	Athletics	Wales	Queensway International Athletics Stadium	Wrexham	SO Wales
03-Sep	Boccia	North West	Ellesmere Port C of E College	Ellesmere Port	SO North West
24-Sep	Swimming	North West	Palatine Leisure Centre	Blackpool	SO Blackpool Polar Bears
01-Oct	Powerlifting	Wales	Strength Academy Wales	Haverfordwest	Strength Academy Wales
08-Oct	Rhythmic Gymnastics	South	Everyone Active Leisure Centre	Haverfordwest	London Gymnastics

Athlete Leadership Team

We cannot express enough gratitude to Ian Harper for his work as Chair of the Athlete Leadership Team over the past five years. Now, he will be passing the reins to Katie Day who is also the Athlete Representative for City of Birmingham and the West Midlands Region. Katie has been a key figure within the ALT since its formation in 2017 and in her own words, wants to expand the foundations laid down by Ian and her fellow ALT members “to ensure that all athletes have the confidence to express their voice.”

A strong advocate for inclusion, Ian was named in the prestigious Learning Disability and Autism Leaders’ List, enabling him to continue lobbying government for improved inclusion and at the same time, being an inspirational role model for his fellow athletes.

In addition, we welcomed five new members to the ALT ranks, taking the total number of representatives up to 12. One of the new faces is James Wyatt, who runs the Derbyshire Allstars Badminton Club to give aspiring badminton players living with intellectual disabilities the chance to take to the courts. James says that sport has helped to improve his self-esteem and confidence.

Another new addition was Matt Chilvers, who became our first Athlete Leadership Development Officer in November 2022. Matt has been a Special Olympics athlete since 2011 and represents the East Midlands in tennis on a national level. With his knowledge as both an athlete and a sports fan, coupled with a degree in sports management, Matt has long been an ambassador for Special Olympics and we are proud and excited to have his insight into inspiring the next generation of athletes.



In Numbers



20 athletes trained in core modules of Athlete Leadership.



10 athletes trained in advanced modules of Athlete Leadership.



5 members joined the athlete leadership team.



50+ meaningful opportunities created for our athlete leaders.



2 Athletes taking on international roles for Special Olympics (Ian Harper, Kiera Byland BEM)

Taylor MacKenzie

Athlete, Team SOGB Swimming | Monifieth Swimming Club



My journey with Special Olympics GB started when I was seven. I was competing at a disability gala in Dundee and a coach from a disability swim club came up to my parents and spoke about Special Olympics and asked if I would like to get involved.

My first memory of being in a pool was the multiple times that my Mum took me to the Olympia Swimming Pool [in Dundee] to build up my confidence in the water. After my mum got me my first pair of goggles, she got me sinking toys and after that you couldn't get me up to the top of the water – I was always below. I used to scare the lifeguards a bit as they would always have to check on me to see that I was ok. That was a key moment of my mum getting me used to the water. I wasn't scared of it, I loved it.

It was like an adventure. Like going to a new world. It was a great experience and a new experience as well, but I think that's where I found my love of swimming.

Swimming to me is an escape. It gets me away from everything and gives me something else to focus on. It lets me express myself and just be me. It's kind of like my second home and I care about it a lot.

Competing all started when I was at the Olympia and a lifeguard came up to my parents, when I was seven, and suggested that I go in a club. So my parents took me to a club and it progressed from there. I trained and trained and at my very first competition I swam three races and won all three of them.

I think that the difference between a normal swimming competition and Special Olympics is it makes me feel part of a family and I can be myself and I'm not afraid of being different or misunderstood. Everyone is on the same level and you can just bounce off each other and have fun and I think that's a very important thing.

You create long-lasting friendships. I still speak to the people who I met at my first competition, which was the National Games in Sheffield in 2017.

I think that the major thing about the Special Olympics is just making friends

and I didn't think that this World Games opportunity would happen to me this year. I was gobsmacked when I was told. I couldn't speak, I had no words. I thought my parents were just coming in to annoy me. As soon as I read out the full email, I was astounded, I was so happy and I can't wait to go. I thought I would be too young.

I'm so appreciative of it happening. Just going out and meeting new people, feeling part of a family and not getting judged. Special Olympics GB is just amazing.

Berlin 2023 feels to me like it's like a stage where I can figure out my path. It lets me see where my progress is going to take me to meet so many people and speak to so many people from across the whole world.

Just to share my personality and see if I can win a medal and I can't wait to make everlasting friendships.



Tim Curtis

**Coach, Team SOGB Cycling | Father of athlete Ella Curtis |
Director, Summat Creative Cycling**



Seeing our athletes return to competition in 2022 was incredible.

Lockdown does seem like a distant memory to many of us now, but it was heart-warming to see so many smiley faces together when we got back on the track in the Summer Series of Sport.

Like other parents of Special Olympics GB athletes, I could see how much Ella missed competing. Throughout the period I was often contacted by athletes and parents from across the country on Facebook, WhatsApp and phone about competitions returning.

Thankfully we did it and getting onto that Wyke Green cycling circuit on 16 and 17 July created many memories for the group of 200 athletes, coaches, families and supporters who were there on that weekend of Mediterranean sunshine in Bradford.

It was the first event that I had ever led, but the spirit of Special Olympics GB shone through. It was a great team effort from Summat Creative, Special Olympics Yorkshire & Humberside and the National Office to make this happen.

The journey for Ella and I with Special Olympics GB started back in 2015. A friend of mine recommended it and within three months I was Head Coach of the club and I was learning quickly about the great competition opportunities that lay ahead.

Yorkshire had never previously had Special Olympics GB cyclists, let alone a squad. However, cyclemania was huge at this time in the county, which had hosted the Grand Départ (Tour de France start) in 2014.

We subsequently created a team of two and entered our first national competition in 2016 at Tameside in Greater Manchester. It's fair to say that we were not prepared to the same level of some of the other regions, but they could not have been more accommodating. They immediately saw that we needed a bit of support and provided a gazebo and kit to make the experience all the more memorable.

This is something that I always see and practice whenever we have a new team or athlete participating. Other clubs and regions can't wait to offer support and the athletes, coaches, volunteers and supporters are all part of one big family at our events.

We started with two athletes in Yorkshire, but we now have 14 and continue to grow. People come to our cycling club because they have seen Ella and the other athletes, and if you can't see, you can't be.

The self-confidence that I have seen Ella develop since joining Special Olympics GB has been amazing. From that first event in 2016, she quickly made friends with other cyclists from across the country and then from around the world at the Abu Dhabi Games in 2019.

As her dad I sat back and saw my child, who I didn't think would be able to talk to anyone, chatting away and making so many friends with people who like her for who

she is. Most people don't get the chance to witness their children having fun with their friends in their mid-late teenage years, but I do and I'm very lucky.

I knew that Ella had a competitive streak before she started participating in Special Olympics GB events, but I didn't realise how much she would relish it. I knew that she was working hard and improving in training, but she just stepped up another level in competition. The change in her face when it came to race time was a shock to me, but also brilliant to see.

It is remarkable, looking back on when she was born, that I didn't even know what Down Syndrome was. I wasn't sure if Ella would be able to do any of the things I considered typical, but because of her, our family has been on an incredible journey. Then to top it off with your child being able to perform at a really high level on a world stage, that's an amazing thing. I am so proud of her.



Alexis Williams

Special Olympics West Wales volunteer since 2005 |

Interim Chair Special Olympics Wales



My journey with Special Olympics GB began in 2004.

I'm now retired but I had a long career in teaching, initially as a PE teacher. However, when I had a family we moved from London to Wales and I started working in special education at Ysgol Heol Goffa in Llanelli.

We had a ski group for the children down at the local slope in Pembrey and, as a skier myself, I got involved in the weekly sessions and school ski trips.

One week we were approached by Special Olympics GB about sending a school team to 2005 National Summer Games in Glasgow and that's how the journey began for me as a volunteer.

Glasgow was incredible; I was just blown away by the impact that an event like this could have. I went into it very much aware of what the athletes could achieve, because I had seen them in PE at school and skiing on the dry slopes. It was the reaction of the families that stood out the most to me.

I remember one mother was in tears of joy. Since an early age she had been told that her child would not really achieve anything in life because of stereotyping of their intellectual disability, yet there she was standing proudly on a podium being presented with a silver medal for the standing long jump.

There were multiple cases of that that I saw amongst the parents in Glasgow, yet the athletes took it in their stride and were just having fun competing and making friends.

After Glasgow, we got more involved in the winter sports programme and I have volunteered at every national and world Winter Games since.

I had the honour of being Team Special Olympics GB Assistant Head of Delegation at the Pyeongchang (South Korea) 2013 World Winter Games and then Head of Delegation at Graz & Schladming (Austria) 2017.

Every moment is an incredibly special with Special Olympics GB because it gives athletes a chance to do what many of us take for granted. Everyone can compete but, more importantly, take part whether that's completing a race, performing a standing long jump, or balancing on a beam.

There are so many great memories that I have made since being part of Special Olympics GB. Watching a novice race can be the most rewarding experience because you have seen them work so hard and often overcome fears to achieve something that they have never done before. Seeing

the smile light up their faces afterwards reinforces exactly why we get involved as volunteers.

I'm still volunteering at Ysgol Heol Goffa ski club and try to get along to as many Tuesday afternoon sessions as I can. However, my volunteering work has expanded more to the administrative side in recent times with Special Olympics West Wales and as interim Chair of Special Olympics Wales. We lost a few clubs during the pandemic, but I'm trying to support the network to see how we can develop in Wales and recruit more athletes and volunteers.

My main work is in communicating to the clubs, making sure meetings are set and minutes are subsequently written and shared. I love the challenge but I would like give more time more support to the ski group in time.

Interacting with the athletes, hearing their stories and supporting their journey is what I love doing the most.



Three Lions star joins Special Olympics GB



In June 2022, we were delighted to announce Manchester City and England footballer, Jack Grealish, as a principal ambassador. It has been incredible having such a prominent figure championing our cause and supporting our athletes.

Jack and his teammates spent time with our athletes for a training session the day after a League Cup match, with one lucky athlete even getting Manchester City goalkeeper Ederson's gloves as a souvenir of the day!

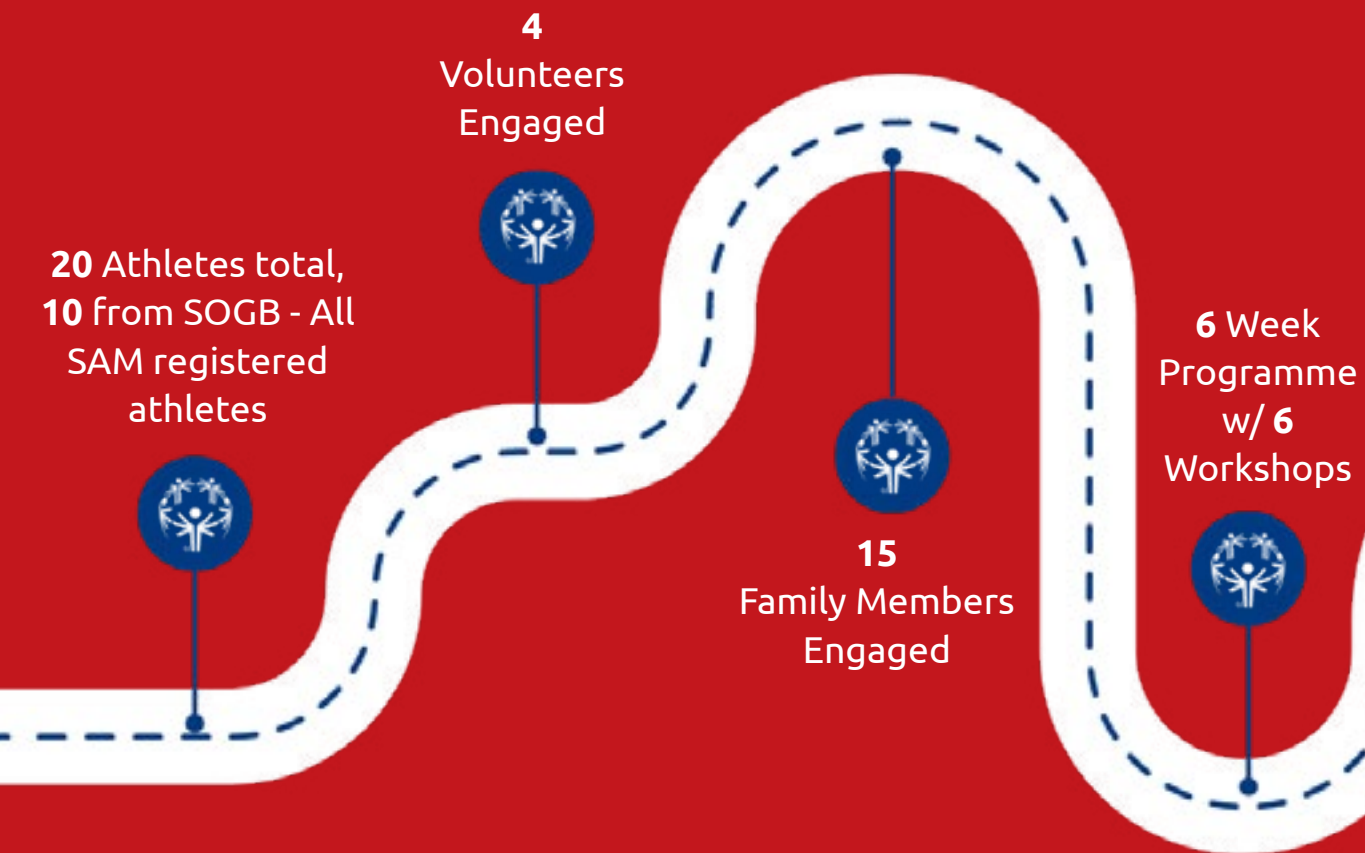
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Special Olympics GB is such an important organisation, playing a huge role in tackling the lack of inclusion for hundreds of thousands of kids in the UK with intellectual disabilities. Nobody should be excluded from opportunities, and I can't stand bullying or discrimination! I'm proud to stand side-by-side with all the children, young people and adults living with intellectual disabilities, and the incredible families who support them. I hope that everyone in Great Britain gets behind Special Olympics GB and its incredible athletes and volunteers.

Jack Grealish



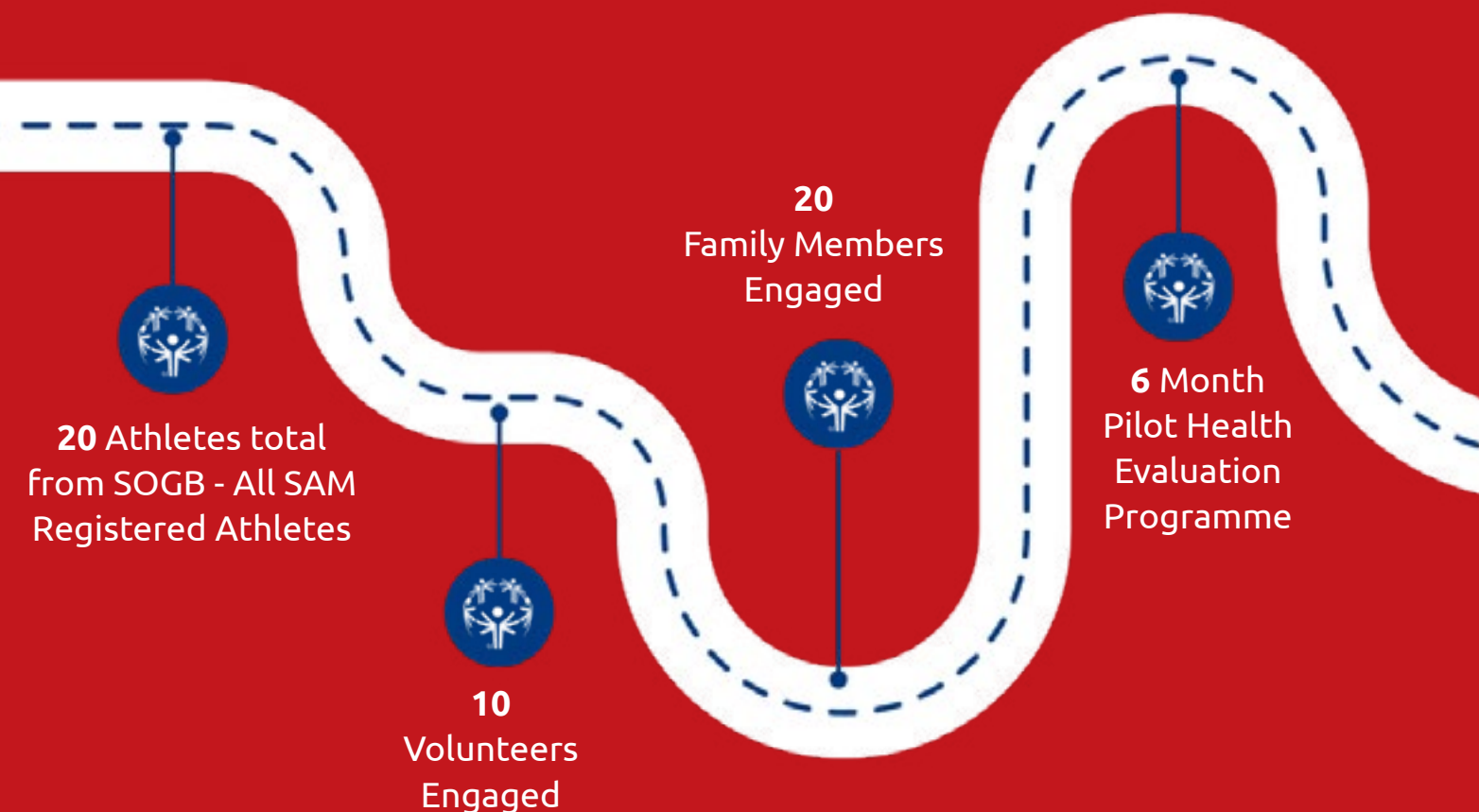
Health Promotion Pilot Workshop Programme in collaboration with Special Olympics Ireland:



In October and November, Special Olympics GB collaborated with Special Olympics Ireland to deliver a six-week Health Promotion virtual workshop programme, which focused on educating our athletes about how they can choose to live healthier lives. Workshop topics included: Strong Minds, Nutrition, Physical Activity, Oral Health, Bone Health, Heart Health etc.

We will be piloting our own GB standalone pilot this year as the first major step on our health journey. Athletes from Cheshire North & West as well as athletes from Stafford & Lincolnshire took part in this collaborative pilot programme.

Health Evaluation Collective Survey Tool:



Unified Football Showcase Event



12 Athletes
8 Unified Partners



100 Spectators



8 Volunteers Engaged



20 Family Members Engaged



On August 7th, during the Summer Series of Sport Eastern Region Football Competition, a Unified Football Showcase event was staged to highlight to clubs what ‘Unified Sports’ is. The showcase was the first of its kind we have ever put on, and also acted as an informal qualifier for the WSG Unified Football Team.

It took place between Special Olympics Essex athletes and Unified Partners from the club, with athlete spectators from SO St Albans & SO Norfolk.

Unified Basketball Match – Partnership event with WWE

In September, we staged a Unified Basketball Match in partnership with WWE and Special Olympics Ireland during the Clash at the Castle event in Cardiff.

Twelve athletes from Special Olympics Wales took part in this Unified Match, playing alongside four WWE superstars, most notably Drew McIntyre & Liv Morgan.

All participating athletes were then invited to watch the event at the Principality Stadium. During this event, we had just over 50 fans in the stands to support our athletes. Most of the fans were players from local basketball clubs and their families.



Fuller's Unified Football Tournament



12

SOGB Athletes



280

Fuller's employees
engaged with as
Unified Partners



4

SOGB Volunteers
Engaged

In addition, we are building links with Hasbro, with the aim to secure funding for the next Summer Series of Sport and for Secured Unified Champion Schools. We are also building a relationship with ESPN to partner on our Unified Football Showcase & Wider Unified Sport Development programme.



Trusts, Foundations, and Community Fundraisers

We are incredibly grateful for the continued support of trusts and foundations through grants in 2022, including The Grey Court Trust, The Rubin Foundation and The Hometown Foundation. The support from all these organisations enables us to continue delivering the services and programmes we provide for people with intellectual disabilities.

The support from our fundraising community is vital to the continuation of the work we do. From local fundraising initiatives, regular individual donors, to taking on challenge events, we would like to thank everyone that has supported Special Olympics GB this year. This support included marathon runners, dance school shows and Channel swimmers.

And of course, a special mention to everyone who gamed, streamed, and supported Special Olympics GB during Jingle Jam!





Fuller's Pubs

As one of Special Olympics GB's longest standing partners, Fuller's Pubs has once again gone above and beyond and supported us across multiple areas, from its Thames Bridge Walk to its Unified Football Tournament and ongoing support. As we look forward to our work together in 2023, we'll be moving into the employability space, with Fuller's Pubs continuing to champion those with an intellectual disability to gain employment.

“

Working with Special Olympics GB is a real delight. The support we receive for our fundraising is outstanding and working together on events such as our six-a-side football tournament – which was unified for the first time this year – really breaks down barriers. We are now working on a wider project which will create a virtuous circle of fundraising, inclusion and sustainable employment opportunities – and that is exciting, rewarding and makes commercial sense.

Georgina Wald, Corporate Communications Manager, Fuller's Pubs



Jingle Jam

We were fortunate to be chosen as one of 12 selected charities for 2022's Jingle Jam – the largest annual gaming fundraiser in the world, organised by YogCast. Thanks to the generosity of the gaming community, we received a final total of more than £251,000, one of the largest tallies we've ever raised from a fundraising event, and which will go towards getting a GB team to the World Games in Berlin in June 2023.



An outstanding result, with YouTube boxer Viddal Riley also championing our message across social media as the Special Olympics GB Jingle Jam ambassador, while at the same time preparing for a boxing match in Manchester. It was an honour for us to have the support from Viddal, and the generosity of his followers, during Jingle Jam. Thank you!

“

We were delighted to raise funds for Special Olympics GB as one of our 12 charity partners in the 2022 Jingle Jam and we can't wait to see the impact of the World Summer Games on not only the Team GB athletes we are directly supporting but all the participants from across the world. The Jingle Jam exists to help make the world a better place for children and young people, and the physical and mental health of young people with disabilities is particularly important to us, so we are thrilled to support this project and wish everyone the best possible trip.

Richard Keith, Chair of Trustees, Jingle Jam

Ocean Outdoor



Special Olympics GB announced a new official partnership with premium digital out of home (DOOH) media owner Ocean Outdoor. Under the agreement, Ocean Outdoor becomes the only UK media owner to have long term partnerships with all three organisations recognised by the International Olympic Committee (IOC). Becoming a unified partner for Team GB, Paralympics GB and now Special Olympics GB, underlines Ocean's commitment to upholding the objectives of the Olympic movement and allows for new opportunities to reinforce and highlight the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in particular. The agreement is in place until the end of 2024.

“

This new partnership with Special Olympics GB reinforces our commitment to the Olympic movement. Ocean becomes the only UK media partner to have long-term agreements with all three organisations within the Olympic family. Extending our commitment to include Special Olympics GB allows Ocean as a business to deliver on its EDI objectives and help to transform lives by shining a spotlight on children and adults of all abilities through the opportunity of sport.

Kevin Henry, Ocean Outdoor head of content and sponsorship

Dreams Beds

Dreams, the UK's leading bed retailer, has become the first British brand to partner with all three national multi-sport event associations in the UK – British Olympic Association, British Paralympic Association and Special Olympics GB. Dreams announced its partnership with Special Olympics GB reconfirming its commitment to inclusion. As part of the partnership, Dreams will be the official "Sleep Partner" of Special Olympics GB and be the title sponsor of the Special Olympics National Winter Games in 2024.

“

It's such an honour to be the very first British brand to partner with Team GB, Paralympics GB and Special Olympics GB. Special Olympics GB is truly one-of-a-kind. Not only in the opportunities it provides for people with intellectual disabilities to try new sports and compete, but also in the amazing community it has created. We're thrilled to be a part of this community, and we look forward to supporting Special Olympics GB – both as an organisation and through our colleagues – in the huge number and variety of events and activities it has in store.

Jonathan Hirst, CEO, Dreams





Coca Cola Euro Pacific Partners (CCEP)

CCEP is a long-term corporate partner of Special Olympics GB and together we've created the Unified Business Programme. Through this programme, CCEP and SOGB volunteers worked with three athlete entrepreneurs with intellectual disabilities – Marcus Mason-Williams, owner of greeting cards business, CoolArt2021, Michael Beynon, owner of Coalpit Welsh Cakes, and Niall Guite, owner of social enterprise, Art with a Special Goal. Via a structured programme of workshops, the entrepreneurs successfully developed, contributed products to, and pitched 100 limited edition Christmas gift boxes to be given as corporate Christmas gifts.

www.specialolympicsgb.org.uk/athletes/social-enterprise/unified-business

Mitsubishi Electric

Mitsubishi Electric continues its long standing partnership with Special Olympics GB. The suite of regional competitions, our inaugural Summer Series of Sport as well as delivering the plethora of programmes designed to holistically support our athletes would not have been possible without Mitsubishi Electric's stalwart support.



Toyota Motor Europe (TME) and UPS

Our grant funded partners continue to be enormously important, allowing us to connect our root grass and community athletes to our larger regional competitions. UPS helped us deliver our Lee Valley regional athletics competition in event and TME provided vital support in funding our Summer Series of Sport.

Sport England

We're very grateful to Sport England for its increased grant funding in 2022.

This funding increased from £230,000 to almost £580,000, due in some part to Sport England's support of the Summer Series of Sport.



A word from our CEO, Colin Dyer



I was incredibly honoured to join Special Olympics Great Britain last year – arriving in time to get out and about to some Summer Series of Sport events and seeing the positive impact that returning to action, and getting back together after the worst of Covid, brought to everyone.

We continue to move forward and are working hard to build and better engage with the SOGB network across England, Scotland and Wales, while also creating more investment in all our programmes to support people with intellectual disabilities.

Our focus for 2023 is on exactly that – making our organisation and network as stable and robust as it can possibly be, and working alongside our members to ensure that our plans for development are moving in the right direction.

Those plans include widening the reach of Special Olympics Great Britain participation, training, and competition – in addition to our projects to develop athlete leadership, healthy athletes, unified sport, and in advocating for better employment and inclusive opportunities.

On top of that, we will continue to spread the word about the impact of Special Olympics GB, inclusion, and participation as far and wide as possible, and the World Summer Games

in Berlin in June will be a perfect platform for that. The athletes that will represent us all in Berlin will help to shine a light on the opportunities Special Olympics can create, and their stories will help us all to demonstrate the benefits of a more inclusive society for all.

The role that the coaches and volunteers supporting that team for the World Summer Games are playing is also a fantastic example when it comes to the essential part played by so many volunteers across the Special Olympics GB family. Everyone involved with the organisation simply can't thank you enough for the support you give to athletes and families across the whole of Great Britain.

And that thanks must be extended to the individuals, organisations, companies and foundations that have funded, and continue to fund, the development of the Special Olympics movement in Great Britain.

We have much to do if we are to achieve the goals we have set out for this organisation, but it has been clear since arriving at Special Olympics GB last year that so many of us share the determination to make a truly meaningful impact.

Working together and pushing as hard as possible for real inclusion will be vital to that success.

For more information and to get involved:

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