

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

Scottish Disability Sport  
Queen Margaret University  
National Survey 2025

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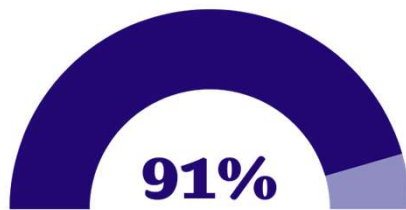
## Section 2: Physical activity and sports participation



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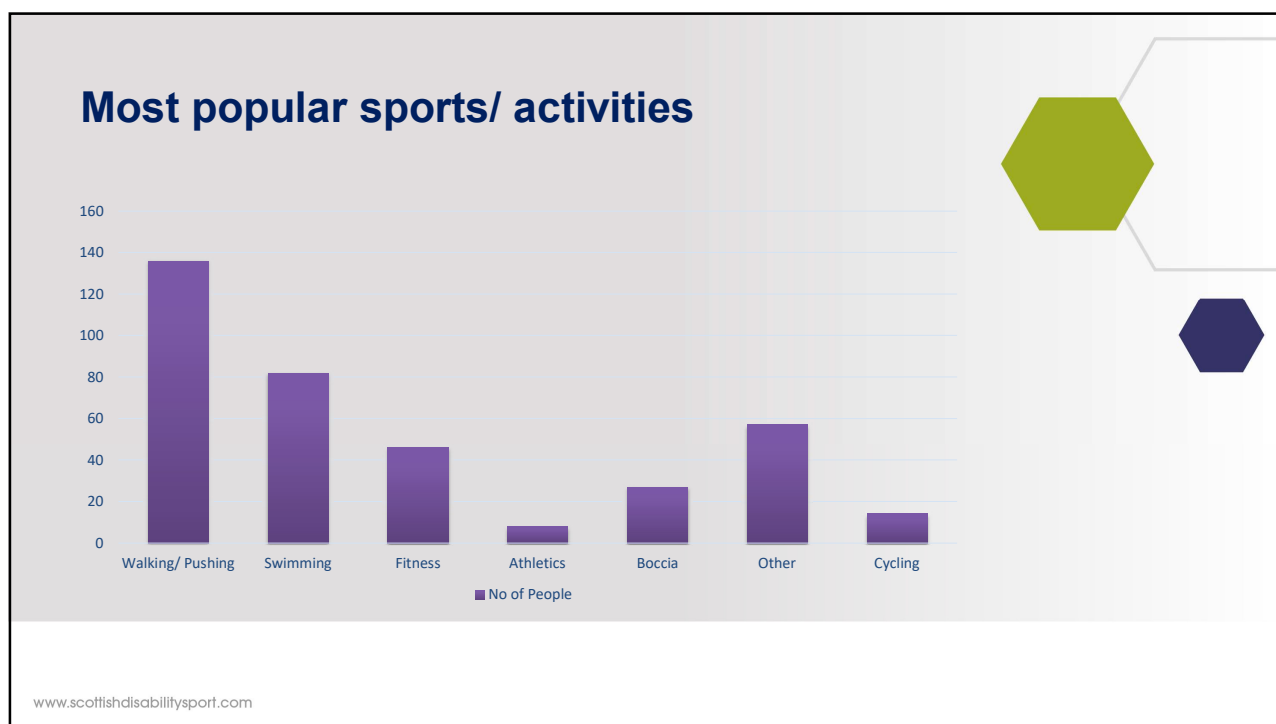


of participants **are not active**  
every day of the week.

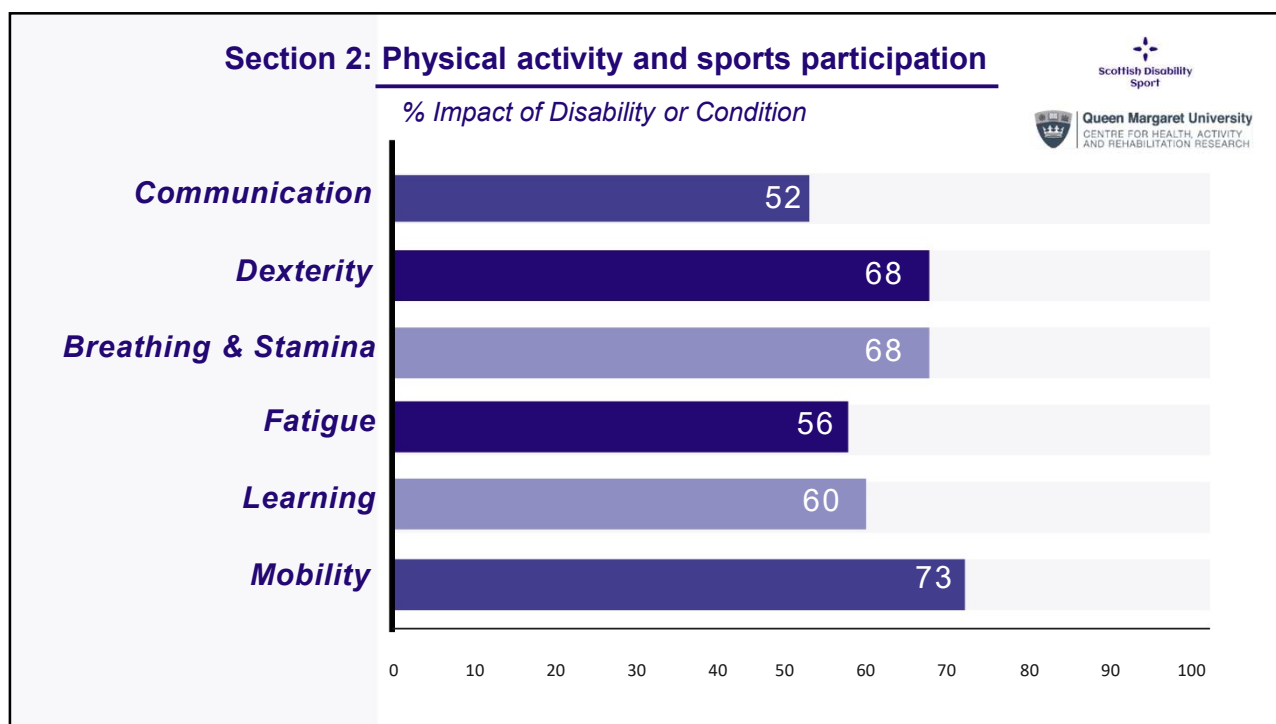


**18%** doing **zero** days of activity

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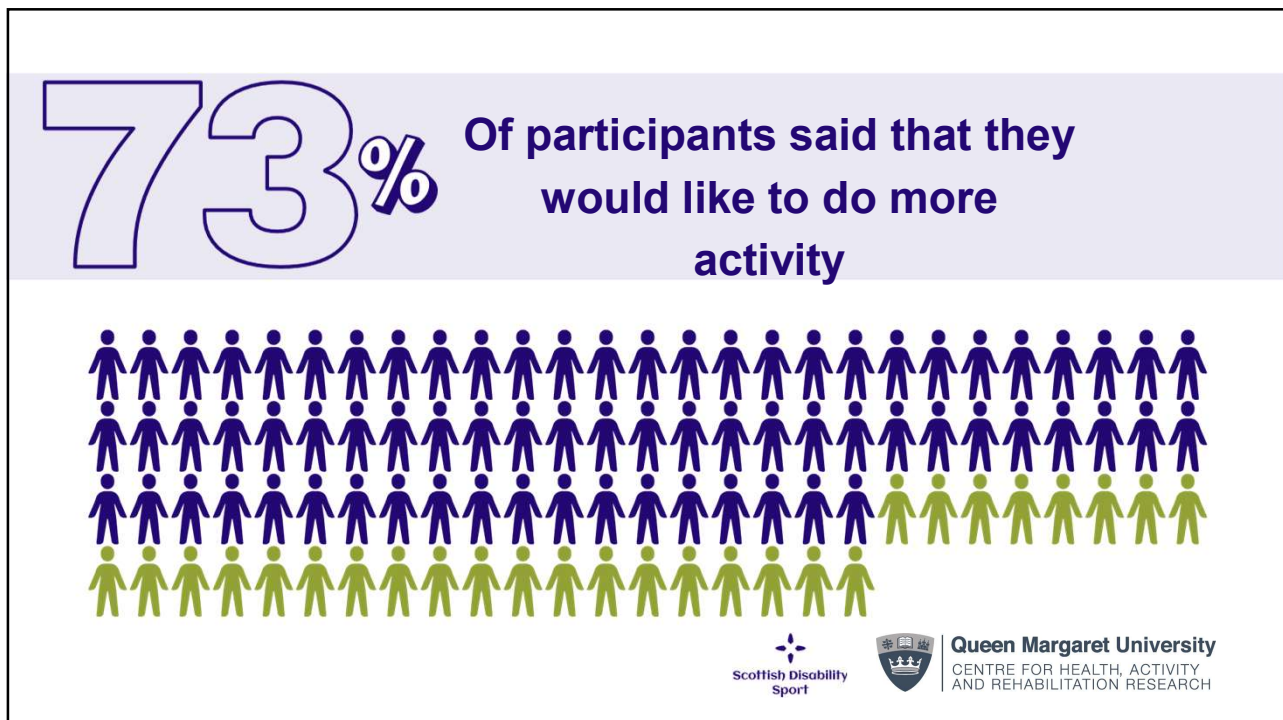
“ There needs to be an education of our medical profession and welfare system to remove the fear of people being punished for trying to keep themselves as fit as possible to enhance their quality of life without fear of losing the benefits that they are entitled to as a result of their disability. ”

“ It feels like the last 5 years seem to have decimated opportunities for disabled ”

“ It feels like accessible sports are out of the financial means of 99.9% of disabled people ”

“ Simply put we can't attend events if we have no money to fund basic personal care to get out of bed let alone be taken to event and cost of carer for the whole day or evening. ”

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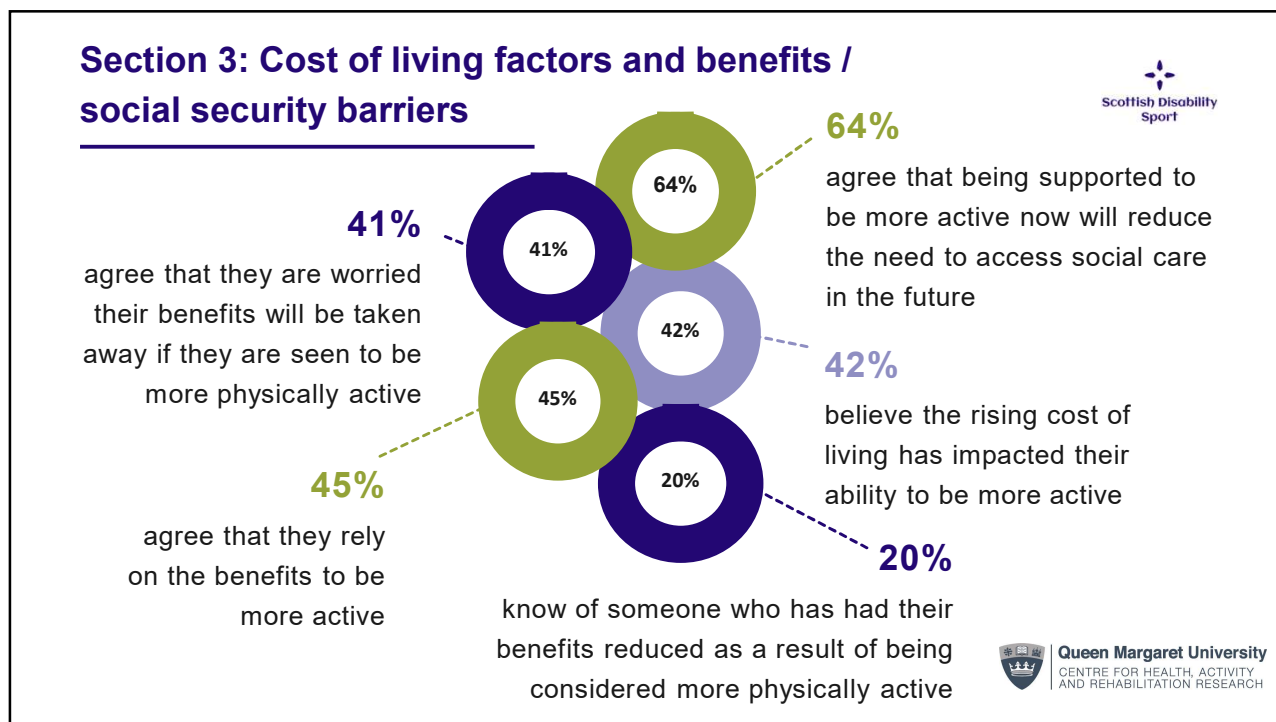
**I think for disabled people, physical activity is a necessity not a nice to have so as specialist activities come at a higher price, it would make sense for the government or NHS to support with the cost**

**Thank you for acknowledging caring commitments. Few do.**

**Would be good to get cheaper access to council premises.**

**Sometimes, I also must pay for my carer. If I could use my self-directed support to pay for it, that would help a lot.**

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“ It isn't so much the cost of transport but availability and practical options. For example, it takes too long to get to a venue ”

“ Having very little access to sports activities has a detrimental effect on my mental and physical health ”

“ Cost and access are the biggest barriers to me. ”

“ The NHS prescription has just been withdrawn in my area it took a lot of persuasion to get help in the gym for myself . I know of people who would like to be more active but are embarrassed and worried about lack of hoists to get in the swimming pool and lack of provision for anything else ”

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## Section 4: Travel and urban vs rural

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51% live outside of a city or a large town

“ More local facilities would be good. I have to drive over 50 miles each way to take part in wheelchair sports ”

40  
30  
20  
10

36%	33%	31%
Better public transport connections / faster / more frequent	Improved societal attitudes to people with disabilities or long-term health conditions	A personal assistant / 'exercise buddy' to drive or accompany on public transport

Participants' Top 3 items identified as making a positive difference for public transport

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## Motability



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Believe public transport is not an acceptable alternative



Motability Scheme users



Not aware or hadn't considered the Scheme

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It's a life saver. Without it I would not be able to get around

Many charging facilities are not wheelchair accessible

The advanced payment is starting to make it unaffordable for large cars that can take a wheelchair basketball chair in the boot



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Can't run my home without the disability money so need it all just to live. Can't afford the scheme as a fulltime wheelchair user.

The use of a Motability car does allow me to participate in sport and physical activity as I live in a small town and have to travel to all of the opportunities I access.

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## Section 5: Personal and emotional factors and life experiences



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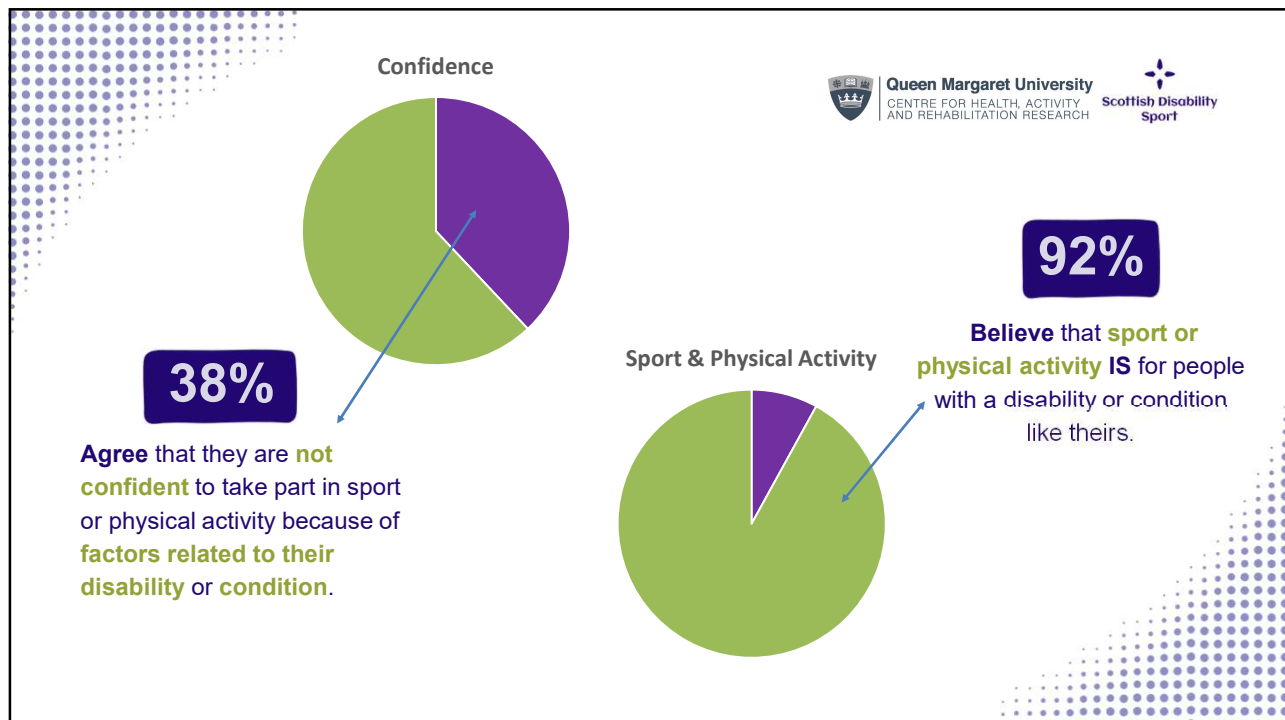


feel that taking part in sport and physical activity has **benefits** for their **health and wellbeing**



would find it very hard to take part in sport or physical activity **without the support of family and friends**

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“  
There was little support for people with learning disabilities to maintain an active lifestyle causing health issues for the future  
”

“ I'm newly disabled in later life. I had no idea how much I'd miss exercising. There are so many barriers to appropriate exercise activities ”

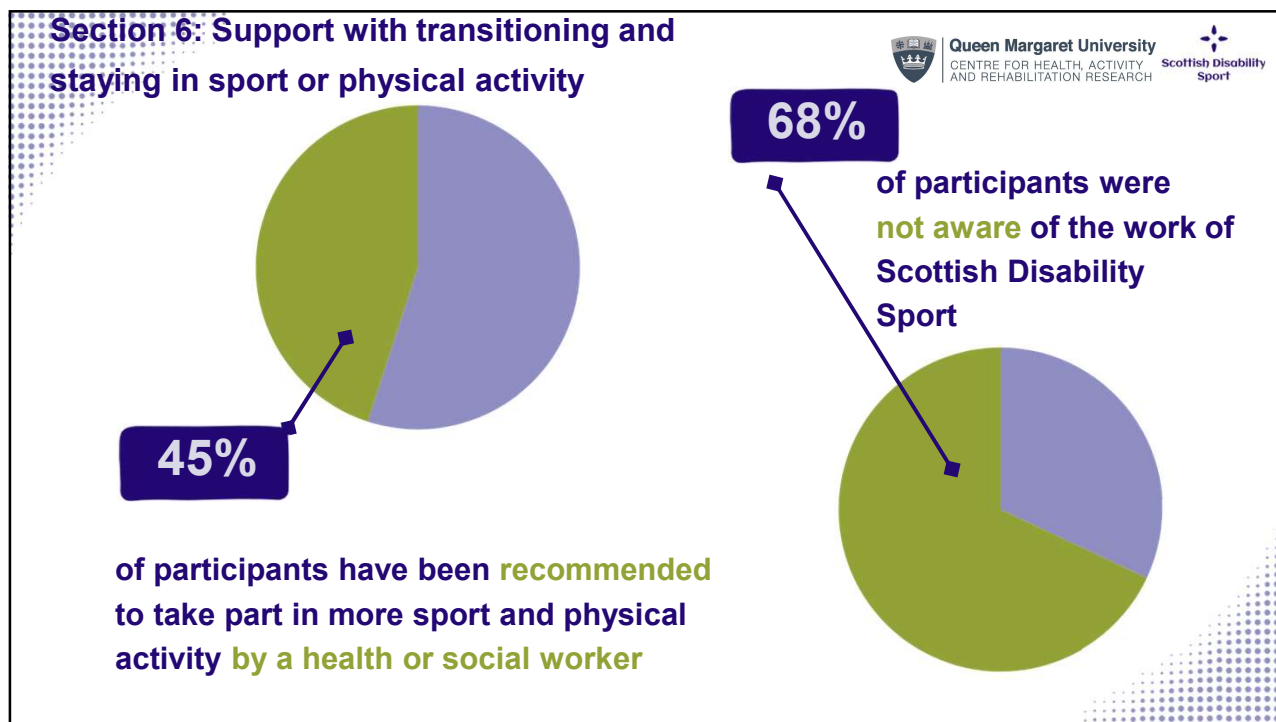
“ I'm socially and physically isolated due to my disabilities ”

“ I honestly feel that care packages should consider the importance of physical activity and how this would save money in the future ”

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## Section 6: Support with transitioning and staying in sport or physical activity



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“ Yes, the cardiologist did recommend exercise, but the local council would not allow me to use self-directed support budget to pay for sport activities ”

“ I haven't had any support from health professionals ”

“ In fact, they [health professionals] seem surprised that I am taking part in sport. Not that I am at a level to break a world record, but just that I am in general. There still seems to be a 1950's mentality that disabled people can't (or even shouldn't), rather than they can, should or might want to. ”

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“ I've been disabled for half my life. I had no idea who you (SDS) were. ”

“ People who are on PIP, struggle to look after themselves and struggle to leave the house. [They] would benefit from physical activity if supported but fear of losing benefits is a big factor ”

“ Physical activity should be part of the NHS prescription, so the expectation is that you would participate (with support), rather than the onus being on the individual to find their own way into being active as appropriate to their disability ”

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## Intersectionality

The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalised individuals or groups.



[www.scottishdisabilitysport.com](http://www.scottishdisabilitysport.com)



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## Section 7: Intersectionality



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Personal characteristics that participants believe negatively impact their involvement in physical activity and sport:

MY DISABILITY OR  
HEALTH CONDITION

. 81%

MY DISPOSABLE INCOME

. 23%

MY AGE

. 19%

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## Call to Action

<b>Plan to include</b>	Reduce inequalities for people with disabilities through inclusive strategy, policy, development and proportionate funding
	Invest in systemic change to remove barriers to accessible travel, affordable and accessible facilities and inclusive spaces
<b>Deliver an inclusive whole system approach</b>	Every person with a disability has the right to take part in quality inclusive physical activity, physical education and sport
	A health and social care system that prescribes appropriate physical activity opportunities at every stage of the individual's pathway
<b>A benefits system that equips individuals to be active</b>	Provide safeguards to reassure people with disabilities that being active will not negatively impact any government financial assistance
	Those in receipt of Self-Directed Support in Scotland should be able and encouraged to use their budget to engage in physical activity and sport.
<b>Champion intersectionality through a person-centred approach</b>	Collaborate with partners across sectors to champion intersectionality within policy, strategy and development
	Ensure the needs of people with disabilities with intersecting identities are considered and met by co-production with those with lived experience

[www.scottishdisabilitysport.com](http://www.scottishdisabilitysport.com)