‘Into Inclusion’
A disability sport strategy for BUCS
2011 – 2016

Vision statement:
“BUCS provides the best Higher Education sport system for disabled students anywhere in the world.”
1. Introduction

As higher education in the UK moves into the new era of student fees, the student will be seen, and treated, increasingly as a paying customer. Institutions will be competing for students, and disabled students will be a fundamental element of that mix. The institutions that come out as winners will be those with the best record of students going into successful careers, and those with the best ‘student satisfaction’ data. That ‘student experience’ will become a crucial battleground.

Data
Much has been written about the positive impact of sport in academic attainment, in making people more complete, rounded individuals, better leaders, and more productive people in the workplace. We also know from exit data reports that disabled students typically record lower levels of satisfaction with their student experience, are less likely to leave university and go into employment, and are less likely to go on to further study.

We also know from research BUCS commissioned that disabled students are significantly under-represented in sporting and recreational participation (McTweed 2010). For example, that research shows that the majority of BUCS member institutions show less than 100 disabled students use their sport and recreation facilities, and less than 10 disabled students are members of university sports clubs in most institutions, and yet the majority of institutions do not offer discounted memberships or usage rates to disabled students, and BUCS does not offer discounted entry fees for disabled competitors.

Considering that against data from HESA, in 2008/9 there were 173,379 students in Higher Education declaring a disability, around 10% of the total student population. Within that, 3,793 were blind or partially sighted, 7,387 were deaf or had a hearing impairment, and 5,745 were wheelchair users or declared having mobility difficulties. Given that data, is there a business case to be made for taking positive action to attract disabled students into higher education sport, and make higher education sport a more attractive proposition?

Disabled students are more frequently arriving at University having been more positively engaged in community activity and school life than in previous generations, though that is not to say that the picture is perfect yet. However the challenge for BUCS and higher education sport as a whole is to keep pace with the raised expectations of inclusion that disabled students will come with, and it is reasonable to predict a significant further rise in those expectations in the wake of the Paralympic Games in 2012.

It is for these reasons of increased expectations of disabled students to be able to access the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers that we will support the principal of inclusion. Through BUCS operations and delivery, and also through our members we will ensure our policies provide a framework that ensures disabled students can access sport as participants, spectators, coaches and volunteers, and actively encourages that engagement and involvement.
BUCS Disability policy statement

“At BUCS we are committed to taking positive action to ensure and encourage the inclusion of disabled students in our activities wherever practical and possible to do so. We will develop and deliver competition for disabled students in 16 of our sports over the next 5 years through our disability strategy and develop appropriate entry standards in consultation with the national governing body where relevant for all disabled students with a current valid disability sport / IPC classification.”

This document is intended to act as a working document to provide a strategic framework to guide BUCS through the journey to maximise the inclusion potential of all its structures and operations, while also identifying and delivering on the support needed by our member organisations to contribute towards the vision:

“BUCS provides the best Higher Education sport system for disabled students anywhere in the world.”

This will be achieved through

- Establishing partnerships and generating resources to support member institutions to develop sustainable opportunities for disabled students to play and participate in the sport and activities of their choosing.
- A process to ensure there is a level of disability sport expertise engaged and available through all relevant structural levels in BUCS governance and operations, and invest in the skills and knowledge of our paid staff and key volunteers.
- A planned approach to ensure competition pathways within BUCS have clear opportunities for disabled students to compete and score points for their institution.
- Using all of BUCS communication methods to ensure all BUCS members understand the opportunities this work represents and how they can maximise the opportunities for their institution, while also establishing new communications channels to promote sport and BUCS programmes to disabled students.

This document will not change the world, but it will contribute to raising the profile of sport in higher education, and also contribute to improving the quality of the university experience for disabled students.
2. Developing ‘on-campus’ provision

This section is about developing and delivering the interventions that will support our member institutions to establish quality opportunities for disabled students to recreate, participate, play and train for sport at their chosen university. This section is crucial to underpinning the BUCS competition programme in section 4.

The research project BUCS commissioned (McTweed, 2011) highlighted significantly low numbers of disabled students both using sporting facilities recreationally, and joining AU clubs. It also suggested that recreational activity was more accessible than competitive sport, very few member institutions had links with local community groups to help deliver activity for disabled students and the major barriers were a low demand from disabled students, and the difficulties in contacting and consulting with disabled students.

The diagrams in fig.1 are intended to highlight the isolation of disabled students from HE Sport and some of the pieces of positive action that could be taken to open up communication channels and facilitate greater links between departments. Improving the relationship and establishing a referrals system with the University student support service is crucial to increasing participation by disabled students, BUT this must be matched by a commitment to make the provision and programme of activity more appropriate for, and more attractive to disabled students.

Through active support to a number of focus institutions to drive activity we will develop the good practice the whole membership can benefit from. This support will drive activity to increase membership of HE Sports Clubs by disabled students and in some cases these focus institutions will have the opportunity to benefit from added human resource in the form of athletes from the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust who have expressed an interest in sport development as a future career. Refer to appendix 2 for details of institutions and phasing.
BUCS will:

- Develop a good practice guide for working with and through student services departments to actively engage with disabled students. Having a positive relationship with this department will help Sport and Physical Activity departments and AU’s communicate more effectively with disabled students in promoting activities and opportunities, and to consult with disabled students when planning activities.

- Facilitate establishing community support networks to assist and support the delivery of activity through partnerships with home nations’ disability sport agencies.
  - Disability Sport Northern Ireland
  - Disability Sport Wales
  - English Federation of Disability Sport
  - Scottish Disability Sport

- Use those networks to enable member institutions to direct disabled students towards quality opportunities in the local community while also using those community opportunities to support the development of inclusive activities on campus through
  - Mentoring
  - Coach development (including working with partners to develop a coach education programme to support coaches in higher education sport to work more effectively and more confidently with disabled students)
  - Club development support through a toolkit for making AU clubs accessible and inclusive, with advice on promoting clubs to disabled students
  - A crucial element of this is to facilitate links between AU clubs and their nearest high quality inclusive community club. This partnership will provide disabled students with additional opportunities to develop skill sets for their sport of choice and provide support to the coaches involved with the AU club.

- We will produce a useful contact sheet of disability sport professionals and organisations for each region and nation.

This will form the essential first phase in enabling a disabled student to move from trying a new sport for the first time, through playing and receiving regular coaching, to representing their university in competition and on through NGB player pathways.

BUCS also recognises the value disabled people can bring to coaching, officiating and administrating sport, and also recognises that disabled students are under-represented in the voluntary workforce in higher education sport. With this in mind, we will take positive action to encourage more disabled students to move into these roles and take an active role in delivering sport to their peers and throughout their lives.
3. BUCS Structures – embedding expertise

Recognising that if BUCS is to become truly inclusive of disabled people, and embed disability inclusion throughout higher education sport, developing sustainable new and existing opportunities to participate and compete, experts in disability sport and in the higher education sector must be fully engaged.

With this in mind we will start to recruit people with the relevant expertise to our Sports Advisory Groups, starting with the sports in section 4. Their role will be to advise on the best way to grow the participation in those sports by disabled students.

The BUCS Staff Team clearly has a role to play in advocating and encouraging members to include disability provision within their campus sport programmes. While there has been a significant change for the good since BUCS invested in the National Disability Sport Officer, there is still much more expertise across all departments to be developed.

To this end, we will support and encourage our staff to develop their disability sport knowledge and understanding in collaboration with our National Disability Sport Officer, through encouraging participation in relevant staff training opportunities, seminars, events and discussion.
4. Inclusive competition

BUCS will be developing a competition offer for disabled students in the following sports over the next 5 years:

Phase 1: Archery  Athletics  Indoor rowing  Swimming
Phase 2: Football  Netball  Wheelchair Basketball

These sports are where BUCCS will focus its pro-active effort, but where disabled students request the opportunity to compete in other sports, or these sports earlier than the planned schedule, we will seek to enable that opportunity reactively and on a case by case basis and disabled students will be competing directly against their non-disabled peers with NO BUCCS Points available specifically for disabled competitors.

The rationale and factors considered for selecting these sports is as follows:

- **Potential participants.** In order to have viable and meaningful competition, it is important that the population of disabled students fit with the target audience for the sports, and that the sports are recognised as being popular among disabled people. For this we used data collected by Sport England through the Active People surveys.

- **Impairment spread.** Not all sports are naturally geared towards including all impairments and so we need to ensure that we offer a range of opportunities to students with different impairments.

  It should be noted that disability sport groupings and classifications do not necessarily directly relate to impairments declared by students in an education context. While the largest population of disabled students declare a learning disability, this declaration includes students with dyslexia which would not have a major impact on a students’ ability to access sport.

  With this in mind, the recommendations took into account the assumption that students with a sensory impairment and physical disability have the greater challenge in accessing sport so they are the focal point for this factor.

- **Gender equity.** Generally speaking, participation in sport is higher in men than in women, and this gap is potentially exacerbated for disabled participants. Therefore it is important that we select a range of sports that have appeal across genders.

- **Partner support.** This factor takes into account the BUCCS relationship with the national governing body and the potential support from them in developing our competition offer, and other partners (including impairment specific sporting organisations) and their potential support in attracting students with different impairments into a sporting community and opportunity.

- **Delivery: Simplicity, mechanism and BUCCS history.** This factors in how simple the delivery model would be from an event management perspective, whether the model is one that can be fitted into an existing event or whether a separate event / series of events need to be established and managed, and what the recent history has been of disabled students participating within our current programme of events.
Reference should be made at this point to the criteria for new sports to be added to the BUCS programme and for new disciplines within existing sports to be added:

New sports

- Applications may come from NGB’s, independent groups or other third parties. Bids will need to demonstrate clearly and with verifiable evidence that the essential criteria have already been met, and for the desirable criteria, that actions are in place to achieve them within the first year of activation. Should the application not be from a NGB then support from the relevant governing body must be identified within the application.
- Each bid must be supported by a formal presentation to a BUCS sanctioning panel (comprising the Head of Sport, Head of Commercial, Communications and Marketing, The CEO, the BUCS Board Director for Sport, the student Director and Chair of Competitions). All newly sanctioned sports will be required to take a stand at the next BUCS Exhibition (usually at BUCS Conference in July)
- All sports and events will be granted a three year licence to operate under BUCS sanctioning.
- Each year a review process will be led by the BUCS office and in December of the second year of activation, BUCS will formally review the performance of each sport and confirm whether the sport will continue to be granted BUCS status.
- BUCS points will be attributed to any sanctioned sport according to the current BUCS point’s regime.

Existing Sports

- All existing BUCS sports, events and competitions will initially be given a license to continue for the time being; however BUCS will conduct a review of all existing sports against these criteria during the season 2011/12.
- The above panel will review all sports, events and competitions and determine whether each sport, event and competition meets the criteria. Those sports, events and competitions which do will be permitted to continue and allocated a license for a period of 3 years. As with new sports, events and competitions, at the end of the second year, each sport, event and competition will be reviewed as regards its continued eligibility.

New disciplines in existing sports

- New disciplines in existing sports, event, and competitions may include but not limited to:
  - The introduction of a female category to complement an existing male category in an existing competition.
  - The introduction of a new weight category in to a make weight sport
  - The introduction of a new distance event in to for example the athletics or swimming programme
- In order for this to receive sanctioning the ‘Group’ would need to demonstrate that a race / competition / event could take place i.e. a minimum of two people in most cases and that there would be no discernable increase in resource or infrastructure.

A full set of criteria for sports and the process is available on request.

BUCS Points:
We fully understand that BUCS points represent a major motivating factor for our member institutions and can be a key driver for changing behaviour and provision. We also believe in recognising performance by disabled students and rewarding performance in the same way and with the same mechanism that we reward performance by non-disabled students.
Therefore, in line with the timetable below and in appendix 1, we will be awarding points to disabled competitors for performance with the same caveat for small fields of entrants to be employed by FISU from the 2012/13 season:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of entrants</th>
<th>Championship Medals awarded</th>
<th>BUCS points places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Gold only</td>
<td>Winners only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Gold and Silver only</td>
<td>Winners and runner up only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Gold, Silver and Bronze</td>
<td>Top 3 places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 +</td>
<td>Gold, Silver and Bronze</td>
<td>As with non-disabled competitors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be noted that this and the timetable for each sport below and in appendix 1 is the schedule for points allocation and the roll-out of inclusive competition. We will also continue to facilitate and enable disabled students to compete in BUCS competition outside of this schedule, but those disabled students will compete directly against non-disabled students with no specific points allocation available to them other than the standard points associated with that sport and competition.

Furthermore, disabled students will retain the option to compete directly with and against their non-disabled peers and battle for the places and points accordingly should they wish to do so. This strategy is about offering more choice to disabled students, not limiting the competition available.

**Multi-institution teams and non-student players:**
We recognise that some of the sports target a population with a specific impairment, and that it will therefore be very difficult for member institutions to develop their own teams. Where that is the case BUCS will enable member institutions to form teams with a limited number of players from the community or to form multi-institution teams and will award BUCS points on that basis.

The opportunity to form teams with non-student players will operate throughout the playing structure for relevant sports until the structure has evolved to a position where there is a top national division, with a series of regional conferences beneath. When that is in place BUCS reserves the right to require all teams in the top division to be formed of current eligible students only.

**Archery**
In recent years disabled archers have competed in the Archery competition at the BUCS championships but this has been on an ad hoc basis. Paralympic Archery has disciplines in both the Compound and Recurve bows, and a very simple classification system with just 3 classes:

- **Standing (ST)** where athletes have full use of their upper limbs
- **Wheelchair 1 (WC1)** where athletes have a disability affecting all four limbs
- **Wheelchair 2 (WC2)** where athletes have full use of their upper limbs

In order to allow the provision for disabled archers to grow, we would recommend using a single open group with one weapon, for disabled archers. If there are 10 or more archers wishing to compete in that group, the competition will run. If that threshold is not reached, disabled archers will compete in the main field.
**Athletics**

In the 2010/11 season, BUCS implemented the UKA Parallel Success competition model at the outdoor athletics championships and were able to award medals and points to disabled athletes for the first time. We will not be able to repeat this in the 2011/12 season but are committed to running a similar programme of events for disabled athletes in **2012/13**.

While the indoor championships and cross country championships are significant events for BUCS they are not high priority versions of the sport in the competition calendar for disabled athletes so we intend to continue to focus on the Outdoor Championships version of the sport for inclusion for the foreseeable future.

**Football**

Working collaboratively with the BUCS Football Development team, we will establish partnerships between member institutions and county football associations (initially through 5 counties in 2011/12) and establish a HE disability focus or hub site in each county. The spread of focus counties will enable each disability focus institution to host a regional competition on pan-disability basis for multi-institution teams in a small-sided game format from **2012/13** season.

**2012/13:** Regional central venue tournaments.

**2013/14:** Regional central venue tournaments with the winning teams progressing to national finals.

BUCS points will be awarded on the placings at the national finals in 2013/14.

**Netball**

We understand this sport is a major sport in Higher Education, it is also very popular within the deaf community. With this in mind, we will encourage the formation of teams and the establishment of regional tournaments in 2013/14, repeated in 2013/14 leading to a national finals / playoff for winners of regional tournaments. BUCS points will be awarded from the national finals in 2014/15.

**Rowing**

Adaptive rowing is a relatively recent addition to the Paralympic programme, making its debut in Beijing in 2008, though is growing rapidly in popularity.

It is open to athletes with a physical disability and visual impairment, and there are 4 classes of boat available and rowers compete over 1000m.

- **LTA4+** (legs, trunk & arms, coxed 4) has sliding seats and is a mixed gender boat.
- **TA2x** (trunk and arms double scull) has fixed seats and is a mixed gender boat.
- **ASM1x** (mens arms only single scull) has a fixed seat and is for men only.
- **ASW1x** (womens arms only single scull) has a fixed seat and is for women only.

BUCS currently offers a main outdoor regatta and an indoor series (around 15 institutions will host events in November 2011). We will facilitate adaptive rowing to feature in the indoor series in the 2013/14 season.

We recognise that it would be extremely difficult to provide competition in the Outdoor regatta for adaptive rowers. Therefore we will work closely with GB Rowing to ensure opportunities for disabled students through their adaptive regatta.
Swimming
The 2010/11 season saw BUCS use the British Swimming disability points system to award BUCS Points and places to disabled swimmers. We will continue to use this system to deliver inclusive competition for disabled swimmers at both the short course and long course championships.

Wheelchair Basketball
Wheelchair Basketball has grown in popularity in recent years and is a sport that sits very highly in the public consciousness. Players are awarded a points value from 1 to 4.5 (or 5 for a non-disabled player though non-disabled players are not permitted internationally or in the top domestic league) depending on the severity of their impairment. Teams may have a maximum of 14 points on court at any time.

Wheelchair Basketball operates under a separate governing body, The NGB has a plan to grow provision through Higher Education and will need to apply to become a BUCS Sport. If that application is successful, and in order for the sport to grow, we will enable multi-institution / regional teams to compete where necessary if member institutions are finding it difficult to develop their own teams with BUCS points will be allocated depending on how many players institutions have in each team. We also expect to operate as simple a classification system as possible and aim to have our first tournament / competition in the 2013/14 season.
5. Communicating the message

We understand the difficulties of identifying and communicating with disabled students and then in encouraging disabled students to play sport. While there is plenty of guidance regarding communicating and marketing opportunities to disabled people, this is largely community focussed. With this in mind we will produce guidance for HE Sport departments and Athletic Unions, taking into account the support structures and mechanisms around disabled students during their time at University. We will also consider a campaign about the value sport and physical activity brings to disabled students to secure greater buy-in from university student support departments.

We will support this by establishing communication links with other non-sport related media and organisations to broaden the impact of the message that Higher Education Sport and the BUCS programme is very much ‘open for business’ for disabled students. These communication links will include closer associations with generic disability organisations (e.g. RNIB, RNID, Scope etc) as well as building on the relationship with home nations disability sport development agencies (EFDS, SDS etc) and national disability sport organisations (BBS, CP Sport, Wheelpower etc). and partners in the Higher Education sector such as the NUS.

In addition, during the season before a sport begins providing inclusive competition, we will use these and BUCS various communications channels to promote that enhanced offer for the following season, and ensure accurate relevant details about the nature of the competition in each sport is communicated across the sector as early as possible.

We also fully intend to shout very loudly indeed about the innovative work we and our members are doing in breaking new ground to ensure we can rightly claim to be delivering the most inclusive Higher Education Sport system anywhere in the world.