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| Aim | To demonstrate clear pathways for young disabled people to access quality sporting opportunities in the community |
| Outcome | Clearly signposted pathways into community clubs and events and increased participation in activities by disabled young people. |

Partnership: Northamptonshire Sport (NSport) – Northamptonshire Federation of Disability Sport, (NFDS) Northamptonshire Football Association (NFA)

Research was undertaken by the NFDS in 2003/4 to assess in which sports disabled people in Northamptonshire wished to participate. One of the key sports found was football, and this information prompted NFDS and NFA to develop an action plan to provide opportunities across the county to enable young disabled players to fulfill their potential.

Initial contact was made with Northampton Town and Rushden & Diamonds Football in the Community Teams and with two other community clubs, Woodford United and Bugbrook St Michael. Further to this it was decided that two school sport partnerships would be approached; one with and one without special schools in their Partnership. This enabled strong links to be developed, not only between the two Partnership Development Managers (PDMs) but also with the Inclusion Support Teams (IPS) and the Special Needs Index (SNIX). These links were important in order to develop club sessions that would provide the pathway from school to club involvement and to provide opportunities for G&T players to progress to a County Centre of Excellence, linking directly with the FA Disabled Player Pathway.

As the project developed, regular consultations took place between key partners to expand the targets and actions so they would better represent the needs of both the partners and the community. Additional targets and actions included:

- a) creating links with the Sports Leadership Academy (Step into Sport) as a number of students were interested in leadership roles in football;
- b) continue working with the clubs to ensure both inclusive and dedicated opportunities for young disabled people within local clubs;
- c) teachers and teaching assistants accessing mentoring by professional coaches to raise the standards of football opportunities in schools.

The project was split into 3 areas: A Special Schools cluster, South Northamptonshire & Daventry School Sport Partnership and Wellingborough & East Northamptonshire School Sport Partnership.

Special Schools Cluster –teachers from the Special Schools attended the Coaching Disabled Footballers Course and were given specialised equipment to enhance the quality of football provision in their schools.

South Northamptonshire & Daventry School Sport Partnership – This School Sport Partnership does not include any special schools and the aim was to investigate after-school sessions for young disabled people attending the schools in the Partnership and to link them with the local Charter Standard Clubs. The Partnership Development Manager (PDM) brought in coaches from the local chartered standard clubs to deliver the sessions at the Specialist School and to encourage the players to join the club.

Wellingborough & East Northamptonshire School Sport Partnership - the NFDS and NFA worked with the PDM to establish football sessions, in curriculum time, for young disabled people attending both mainstream and special schools within the Partnership. These were then linked to local Charter Standard Clubs with the key focus being on establishing a dedicated team at Rushden & Diamonds FC. The PDM co-coordinated the 3 sessions to ensure attendance was possible for both staff and students. Thirty people attended from 6 schools (2 special schools and 4 mainstream schools) with a range of ages from 10 to 14 years. Due to the success of these sessions and the need which the sessions have identified, Rushden & Diamonds FC have set up a dedicated opportunity for young disabled people to take part in football at the club.

Continued

As a direct result of this project:

- i) 181 young disabled people have so far been involved in this project, all having access to a local football club.
- ii) The project has led to an increase in the quality of the PE provision in the Special Schools by providing teachers with the FA Level 1 accreditation and by their continued mentoring from Football in the Community coaches and staff;
- iii) There has been a significant increase in awareness surrounding disability football and the inclusion of disabled people in all areas of football;
- iv) Charter Standard Clubs have been considerably more proactive in developing opportunities within their club for young disabled people;
- v) A Northamptonshire Disability Football Steering Group has been created and has become an established consultative voice for the Local Football Partnership;

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