



## HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2024

**SUBJECT: PROVISION OF SPORT CAERPHILLY DISABILITY SPORTS CAMPS.**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to outline to Members the challenges that the ongoing provision of Disability Sports Camps during school holidays are presenting and to seek the views of the Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee for inclusion in a further report to Cabinet with an option in relation to continuing future provision.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Caerphilly Council has provided Disability Sports Camps for over 15 years in an attempt to provide opportunities for children and young people with disabilities in the borough to take part in sporting activities during the school holidays. Thus, supporting the Council's Sport and Active Recreation Strategy vision as well as the aims of Disability Sport Wales for '*more people, more active, more often*'
- 2.2 Participation levels at Disability Sports Camps have progressively declined, with further impact on attendance levels since the Covid 19 pandemic. Disability Sports Camps can support a maximum attendance of 6 children and young people however the average attendance per day to each camp is only 3 participants. In the Gwent region, other local authorities stopped providing these camps over a decade ago. The current model only offers limited opportunity for a small number of people. It limits the range of sports that can be offered and reduces opportunity to promote inclusivity as per the disability sports strategic agenda.

- 2.3 The provision of Disability Sports Camps has been reviewed following a recent consultation with users of the service and wider stakeholders and it is proposed that they cease as Sport Caerphilly are no longer best placed to deliver them and it is proving to be a less popular scheme than others. Sport Caerphilly provides numerous other opportunities and support for children and young people with disabilities such as Swimming Galas, Disability Rugby Six Nations Festival, Disability Bowls to name a few, which will continue.
- 2.4 Sport Caerphilly endeavours to make other activities provided as accessible as possible through suitable training for staff with further training proposed. The service also encourages other providers to be more inclusive in sports and to broaden options for disabled children, alongside mainstream sports activity and clubs. With reducing participants in Disability Sports Camps year on year resources would be better invested to increase disability awareness and supporting other provision and year-round sporting opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The intention is to further promote the existing Disability Sport directory which outlines opportunities across Caerphilly CBC and can be accessed at [www.leisurelifestyle.co.uk](http://www.leisurelifestyle.co.uk)

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 That Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee considers the issues set out in the report.
- 3.2 That Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee provide their views on a proposal that the existing model of delivery of Disability Sports Camps ceases noting that resources would be better invested supporting other initiatives and promoting and growing the Disability Sport directory.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1. To match individuals with disabilities with appropriate year-round sporting opportunities primarily across the borough, but also at a regional level or national level.

### **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 Disability Sports Camps have been provided by Sport Caerphilly (Sports Development) for over 15 years in an attempt to ensure equity for children and young people with disabilities in the borough to take part in sporting activities during the school holidays. Thus, supporting the vision for 'more people, more active, more often'. Disability Sport Wales (DSW) is a pan-disability National Sport agency which provides and promotes inclusive physical activity (including sport) for disabled people in Wales. DSW aim to contribute to the 'Vision for Sport' by creating a more inclusive sports sector where every disabled person is hooked on sport, offering real choice as to where, when and how often people play sport.

- 5.2 Although the promotion of Disability Sports Camps to attract existing and new participants has been on a par with that of our mainstream sports camps participation levels have progressively declined, with further impact on attendance levels since the Covid 19 pandemic. Disability Sports Camps can support a maximum attendance of 6 children and young people aged between 7-12 years, based on a ratio of 3 coaching staff, however the average attendance per day to each camp is only 3 participants. In the Gwent region, other local authorities stopped providing these camps over a decade ago. The current model only offers limited opportunity for a small number of people. It limits the range of sports that can be offered and reduces opportunity to promote inclusivity as per disability sports strategic agenda set out above.
- 5.3 A Rugby Inclusion officer was appointed in August in partnership with the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) and Education to support Trinity Fields School and Resource Centre, the Centre for vulnerable learners (CVL) and satellite provisions across CCBC to enhance inclusion opportunities. In January 2022, Disability Sport Wales cut future funding for Local Authority Disability Sports Development officers which meant that Caerphilly CBC could only fund a part time post of 21 hours a week for Disability Sport (an annual investment of £26,806).
- 5.4 Sport Caerphilly provides numerous other opportunities and support for children and young people with disabilities. These include Swimming Galas, Disability Rugby Six Nations Festival, Disability Bowls to name a few, which run annually throughout the academic year. Sport Caerphilly have also developed a Disability Sport directory which outlines opportunities across Caerphilly CBC. This directory can be located at [www.leisurelifestyle.co.uk](http://www.leisurelifestyle.co.uk) Sport Caerphilly endeavours to make other Sports Camps provided as accessible as possible through suitable training for staff with further training proposed.
- 5.5 The existing provision of Disability Sports Camps are proving to be a less popular scheme than others and with reducing numbers year on year resources would be better invested supporting other initiatives and expanding the offer to children with disabilities throughout the year alongside existing sports offer for children with disabilities.
- 5.6 The Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the proposal to cease the provision of Disability Sports Camps noting that resources would be better invested supporting other initiatives and promoting and growing the Disability Sport directory. Sports Development staff will be able to assist in matching individuals to appropriate opportunities. Sport Caerphilly will continue to provide inclusive opportunities in their mainstream sports camps and support children and young people with disabilities to engage in sporting opportunities and endeavour to make other activities provided as accessible as possible through suitable training for staff with further training proposed. The service also encourages other providers to be more inclusive in sports and promotes this agenda across our leisure facilities, Caerphilly Adventure Group and with other

organisations in the borough, to broaden options for disabled children, alongside mainstream sports activity and clubs.

- 5.7 A stakeholder engagement consultation was undertaken in summer 2024 seeking views of the current Disability Sport Camps provision. For those attending camps, a member of the council's Engagement Team was available at the venue on specified dates and times. During this time, the children and parents/carers were invited to give their views. Those unable to attend at these times, were invited to contact the engagement team via e-mail or telephone to arrange an alternative way to share their views at a time and date convenient to them. In addition, details of the proposed changes were shared with local elected members.
- 5.8 Details of the consultation were also shared with Disability Sports Wales and Sparkle to contribute their views to the consultation and to share with other relevant stakeholders including parents of disabled children and any charitable organisations who work in CCBC. All the responses received are included in appendix 1.
- 5.9 In summary, from the consultation as outlined in 5.8 those attending the Disability camps highly value the provision, the setting and format is appropriate to the needs of those currently attending, although they said that they would enjoy a wider range of activities.
- Small group size is one of the reasons for choosing Disability Sports Camp over other provision however, it was noted that low attendance on certain days makes it more difficult to run group sporting activities.
  - Other e-mail respondents noted that the Disability Sports camps do not meet the needs of their children. They would like to see the criteria for camps extended to meet the needs of a wider range of disabilities. This could be met by widening inclusivity in other sports groups.
  - Low attendance does not necessarily equate to lack of demand for disability sports camp provision. The parent spoken to said that there is a lack of information available regarding provision and they had only just (this year) found out about the provision. As aforementioned, the groups are well publicised in line with other sporting sessions.
  - Another (e-mail respondent) also felt that the Disability Sports Camps are not well promoted. As aforementioned, the groups are well publicised in line with other sporting sessions
  - As already noted, those who responded to the consultation whose children have not attended the Camps to date have more complex needs and the current provision would not be suitable for them/their children.

## **5.10 Conclusion**

The provision of Disability Sports Camps has been reviewed following a recent consultation with users of the service and wider stakeholders and it is proposed that they cease as Sport Caerphilly are no longer best placed to deliver them and it is proving to be a less popular scheme than others. With reducing numbers of participants year on year resources would be better invested supporting other initiatives to increase year-round sporting opportunities for individuals with disabilities. They will be better matched with their interests and have access to a wider range of sports. The aim is to work collaboratively with others to grow disability awareness and in doing so take a long term, integrated approach involving a diversity of the population.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 No assumptions have been made in relation to this report.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken. There is a potential for a negative impact resulting from ceasing disability sports camps due to them being delivered for over 15 years. The consultation and engagement exercise confirmed the fact that the Camps are valued by those who do attend, but the Camps do not meet the needs of others, and the low numbers of participants compromises the activities that can be provided. The Camps offer limited opportunity for a small number of people. A better outcome would be to re-focus resources to support other provision, increase disability awareness and match individuals with disabilities to year-round sporting opportunities.

[Link to IIA](#)

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Whilst the authority has supported a core funded role of 21 hours for a sports development officer with a focus for disability and inclusion, Disability Sport Wales withdrew their part of the funding of this role which made it full time. The role then became part time in April 2021.

8.2 In order to deliver these camps (daily), the income from attendees should fund the coaching staff hours (3 coaches @ 5 hours each), Leisure attendant opening and closing the leisure centre and the hire of the facility. The current Disability Sports Camp provision is making a loss every day that it is delivered due to costs such as facility hire and staff to deliver the sessions. The annual loss is circa £10,000 which will need to be addressed should they continue.

8.3 Disability Sports Camps are provided during the school holidays, which equates to 5 blocks across February half term, Easter, Whitsun half term, summer and

autumn half-term. Sport Caerphilly do not provide any mainstream or disability camps during the Christmas period. Below is a breakdown of the costings associated with the delivery of Disability Sports camps:

Holiday period 2023	Number of coaches per day	Coaching costs in total	Facility hire	Attendant to open and close facility	Income generated from bookings	Overall profit or loss after delivery of camp
February (2 days)	3	£450	£242.00	£136.68	£52.20	-£776.48 loss
Easter (5 days)	3	£1125	£605.00	£340.00	£173.66	-£1896.34 loss
Whitsun (1 day)	3	£225	£121.00	£68.34	£27.42	-£386.92 loss
Summer (17 days)	3	£3825	£2057	£1161.78	£694.64	-£6,349.14 loss
Oct / Nov (2 days)	3	£450	£242.00	£136.68	£34.80	-£793.88 loss
						Total loss in a year = <b>£10,202.76</b>

## 9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific personnel implications associated with this report. The issue of the lack of suitably trained and experienced staff is covered in the main body of the report (section 5).

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

10.1 The consultees listed below have been consulted on this report and their views have been incorporated accordingly. A stakeholder exercise took place within the summer 2024 where invited stakeholders were invited to provide their views on current provision. The responses received are included at Appendix 1

## 11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Author: Jared Lougher, Sport and Leisure Development Manager

Consultees:

Councillor Chris Morgan, Cabinet Member for Waste, Leisure and Green Spaces  
Councillor Andrew Whitcombe, Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor Shane Williams, Vice Chair Housing and Environment Scrutiny Committee  
Dave Street, Deputy Chief Executive  
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment  
Richard Edmunds, Corporate Director for Education and Corporate Services  
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services  
Stephen Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer  
Gareth Jenkins, Interim Corporate Director for Social Services  
Jo Williams, Assistant Director for Adult Services  
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services  
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer  
Jeff Reynolds, Sport and Leisure Facilities Manager  
Natalie Thomas, Sport Caerphilly Team Leader  
Sarah Mutch, Early Years and Partnerships Manager  
Sarah Ellis, Lead for Inclusion and ALN  
Becky Griffiths, Service Manager, Adult Services, Physical Disabilities  
Steve Pugh, Corporate Communications Manager  
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer (Equalities and Welsh Language)  
Liz Sharma, Consultation and Public Engagement Officer  
Hayley Lancaster, Engagement Manager  
Paula Beaman, Corporate Finance

Background Papers: None

Appendix 1 – Disability Sports Camp Feedback

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **DISABILITY SPORTS CAMP FEEDBACK**

#### **Session 1: 2pm-3pm 29th July 2024**

Attendees – 6 young people.

General discussion with 5 of the children/young people collectively and four coaches/Sport Caerphilly staff

Key areas of questioning for children/young people:

#### **Do you like coming to Sports Camps?**

Consensus that all the young people like attending – some have been attending for a number of years, others were very new to the camp.

#### **What's good about it?**

Young people gave a range of responses including the games that are organised, playing with the parachute, new games that have been purchased for the camp, they enjoy playing football and taking penalties and lunchtime! They also spoke of the kind people at the camp (young people and coaches) and that it is nice to see their friends.

Coaches indicated they feel as though they learn something new every day and that they enjoy seeing the young people having fun. They enjoy facilitating educational games, such as bowls which has an element of maths included and dodgeball. Some felt this camp offers some of the young people an opportunity to participate in a sports camp that they may not have elsewhere.

#### **What isn't so good?**

Young people gave a range of responses, saying they wish they could bring their computer games/consoles, they wish they could use the gym and also that they could take part in more water activities. One young person indicated the camp lacked beds for a lunchtime nap!

Coaches felt the young people may benefit from further sensory activities and opportunities for them to take participants to different places – including a leisure centre that has a pool, local parks, Parc Penallta etc.

#### **What other holiday clubs do you go to?**

One young person stated they are a member of a local football club. Two coaches confirmed they are based within schools during term time, one is usually based at Islwyn Bowls club and the fourth is the council's disability inclusion officer.



## **If we stopped running this camp, what difference would it make to you?**

As indicated above, a number of the young people were fairly new to the camp. Those that had been attending for some time suggested that if they didn't come to the camp, they would be in the house all day, chilling in the back garden or sleeping.

### **Session 2: 2pm-3pm 6<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

Attendees – none

Only 1 child was attending camp that day and was collected early.

### **Session 3: 2pm-3pm 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024**

Attendees – the 3 children in attendance on this date had been at camp and engaged in conversation at session 1. The ratio of coaches to child was 1:1 due to not all places having been filled for this day.

They confirmed that they enjoyed camp, one has been attending for over 3 years and is due to turn 12 so will no longer be able to attend. Another (aged 8) was attending for the first time this summer and also really enjoys the camp. They did ask for more “boy” coaches.

One parent was unable to stay and chat but took contact details and indicated that they would call at a more convenient time.

1 parent attended to give their views.

The main reasons for enrolling their child was to get them to socialise and learn to control mood in an environment with other children with differences. The child attends mainstream school but is easily influenced by other (unkind) children. They also like that this is a sports camp – child has a lot of energy. Sport is good for all children.

They haven't used other provision – they are not aware of what else is on offer. Partner usually books these things so unsure how to book etc. Partner would look online for information so that would be a good way of sharing what is on offer. Camp is good value for money but would send their child even if it cost more as their child enjoys attending.

10-3 is a good time. It's good that there is a later start for the child during holidays, so it doesn't feel like another school day. Given the needs of children attending the camp, the total time is adequate.

Camp is appropriate to the needs of their child as noted above – other (non-disability) provision would be less suitable for their needs

Not sure what else their child would be able to attend if the provision wasn't available – lack of information and lack of suitable alternatives. This is the first year attending

and we are definitely going to send them in other school holidays (and maybe more days per week during the summer as they are enjoying this so much)

**From: Parent**

**Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 7:32 PM**

**To: WWW: Public Engagement [publicengagement@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:publicengagement@caerphilly.gov.uk)**

**Subject: Fwd: Consultation details - disability sport camps Caerphilly**

Thank you for your recent email regarding the future of the provision; please find my comments below:

The location and the camp being held entirely separately from the mainstream provision works incredibly well for these children. Many would not have their needs effectively met within an inclusive session or busier public environment.

Over the past six years, the quality of the staff and provision has declined significantly.

The staff have little to no specialist training in hidden disabilities and have, at times, wrongly considered children with autism and ADHD as 'naughty.'

The age cap of twelve years old is discriminatory, when many children with developmental needs present at a much younger age. This results in a significant amount of children being excluded and isolated and families left in crisis. It is unlawful to fail to make reasonable adjustments to the council's age-range policy concerning disability.

The complexity of the children attending over the years has decreased. What has changed, however, is more inexperienced staff being employed.

The sessions used to run daily, with the option of some trips out. The trips have ceased in recent years, and the sessions dropped to just three a week.

The decrease in numbers I propose is due to a lack of promotion within the children with disabilities teams, children's centres, schools etc. Additionally, parents have also removed their children due to the inexperience of staff to meet their child's needs.

The provision would be much more successful if properly promoted and experienced staff employed who value the children.

Sadly, however, it has become apparent that the council wishes to cut funding and target the most vulnerable by removing a much-needed service that could change the lives of children and their families with proper investment and training.

With such a high rate of children in care in Wales compared to other countries, more significant provision must be provided for all disabled children and young persons under the age of twenty-five.

Kind Regards

**From: Parent**

**Sent: Monday, July 22, 2024 7:14 PM**

**To: WWW: Public Engagement [publicengagement@caerphilly.gov.uk](mailto:publicengagement@caerphilly.gov.uk)**

Hi,

I have received the below email as my [child] is connected to Caerphilly's Centre/Sparkle.

My [child] is 10 years old and attends Trinity Fields school. [Child] is a very active ... and with support ... very much enjoys taking part in different sports in school and outside of it (parkrun etc). However, as [child] is autistic and non-verbally, ... requires support from a familiar adult or a person experienced in working with people with additional needs.

We attend a lot of events that are run by a local group called "Sparrows", and I know there are many children there who would benefit from attending the camps you run. However, the vast majority would not be eligible to attend due the criteria you currently have listed.

Therefore, I feel if you would like better take up of places, I would suggest looking extending the level of disability your camps are willing to accommodate/support.

Yours sincerely,

Parent

**From: Parent**

**Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 4:57 PM**

**To: WWW: Public Engagement <publicengagement@caerphilly.gov.uk>**

**Subject:**

Hi,

The current provision does not meet my child's needs. Children need to be able to toilet themselves at minimum in order to attend, our daughter is 90% there but it's not guaranteed. Also, if i were to leave her with anyone I'd want reassurance that those looking after her, had adequate experience with autistic non verbal children, and would be familiar with her current communication method which is an electronic device. We've never attend so closure would not impact. But it's disappointing that the only open holiday provision available for Caerphilly Council for disabled children discriminates against and excludes a large cohort of disabled children.

There is no suitable provision available.

Even the quiet/SEN swim sessions available in some of CCBCs leisure centres during term time, are not available during the holidays. So the little we did have, is taken away.

If it wasn't for local groups such as Sparrows, there would be nothing.

In consideration of what you could do, going forward. I appreciate the heavy staffing overhead required to staff parent-drop and go sessions, and many of us parents would not be happy to leave our children with someone who we had no idea of experience etc. you could consider running some quiet disability sessions where parents and children could attend. There are limited safe, non judgemental places for SEN parents to access during the day time of the school holidays. Even providing this minimal service, would help more than the provision currently available at present. With parents present, inclusion would not be compromised.

Thanks

Parent

**From: Parent**

**Sent: Thursday, August 1, 2024 3:36 PM**

**To: WWW: Leisure leisure@caerphilly.gov.uk**

**Subject: Disability sport Wales**

Hi there,

I've seen this advertised and would love to be able to send my [child], ... who has autism as [sibling] attends the playscheme in Caerphilly and its fabulous that there is childcare available at such an affordable price through the holidays. We really struggle to find anywhere for ... to go out of term time. It's a massive issue for us that I'm hoping won't ultimately lead to me having to leave work. In order for .... to attend a disability session like this [child] would need to be in an enclosed space, where eloping wasn't possible. [Child] would ideally have one to one but if this wasn't possible [child] would be fine but need to have a watchful eye on them throughout the day. [Child] also isn't potty trained just yet so that would also need to be monitored.

Kind regards

Parent