

ALT: Image of four British paralympians and one guide standing for a celebratory photo. They have their arms around each other and look happy. Two of them are holding up union jack flags.

Para performance strategic framework 2023-2033

A new strategic framework for world-leading Para performance sport in the UK



ALT: Image of UK Sport logo

ALT: Two images of paralympians. First image is of two wheelchair basketball players embracing and celebrating. Second image shows a female, black paralympian with a gold medal round her neck, smiling and holding a bunch of flowers.

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ALT: Image of a smiling female paralympian. She is trackside at a busy stadium and celebrating with a union jack flag.

Connect, collaborate and change

We, the Para performance sport community, have created a strategic framework¹ to support our Paralympic performance ambitions over the next 10 years.

The framework will connect us around a shared vision for the future and drive greater collaboration leading to lasting change. It will also help us to focus on what matters most to ensure continued Paralympic success, and where Para sport nuances require a unique or enhanced approach compared to non-disabled sport.

This framework, plus our expertise and knowledge, will deepen our understanding of how best to support our ambitions and our athletes as we move through to Paris, Milan Cortina, LA and beyond.

The development of the framework has been led by UK Sport, with vital input from more than 60 people from across the high-performance community, representing 18 sports, multiple stakeholders and athletes.

We are extremely grateful for all the contributions received during the consultation process.



ALT: Image of a British Paralympian swimmer diving into a pool. He is captured mid air, looking focussed and ready to compete



1. The story so far

ALT: Three images of celebrating paralympians. First image is of a paralympian smiling and holding a gold medal. Second image shows a paralympian on a bike. Third image is a paralympian wrapped in a British flag.

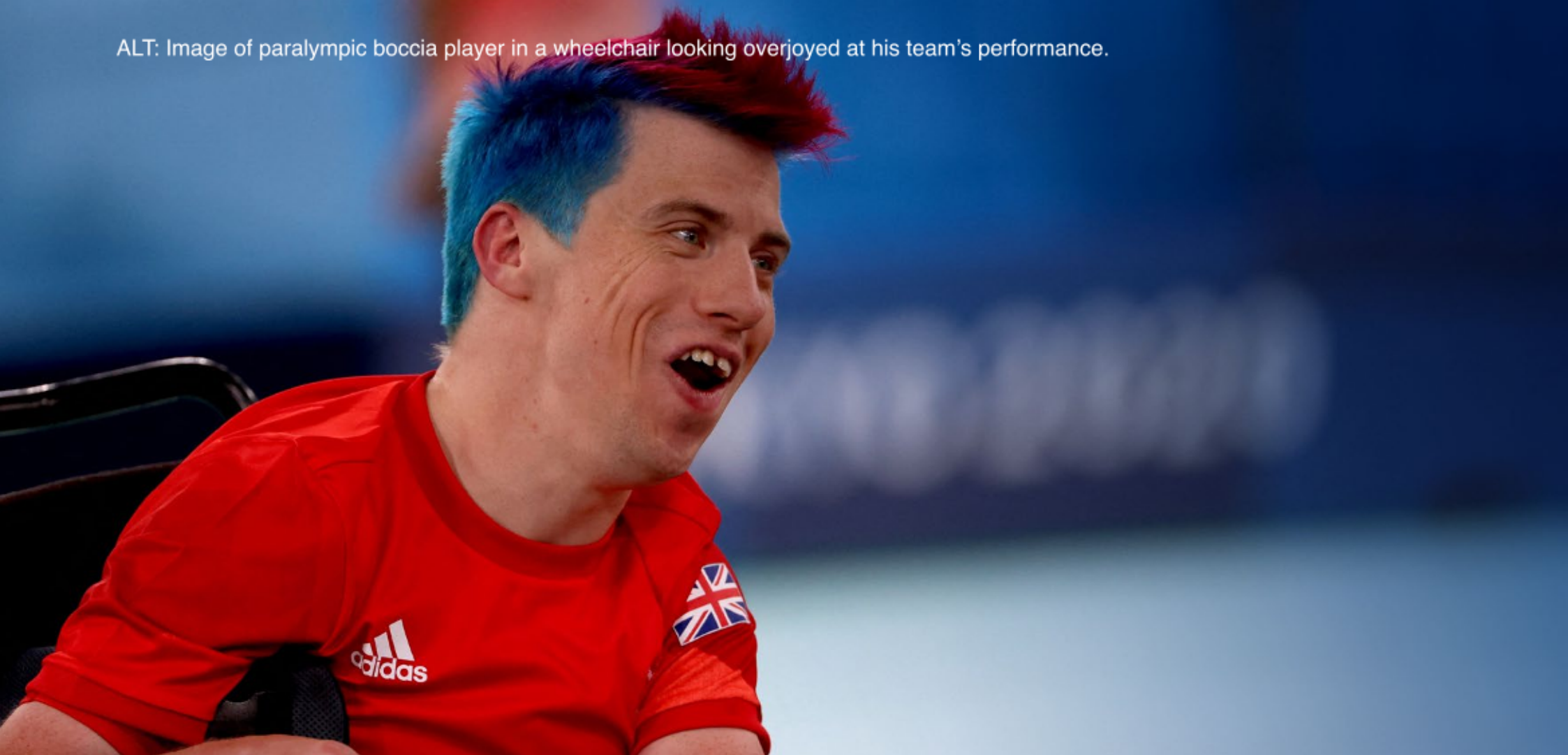
Whether it's delivering a personal or season's best or winning a medal on the world stage, every two years the Summer and Winter Paralympic Games provide disabled athletes, who are eligible and classifiable, with an opportunity to achieve their dreams.

The Games also have the power to inspire – providing a platform to celebrate diversity and drive social change, aligning with our broader aspirations to push for better inclusion and equity for our disabled population.

ParalympicsGB has remained in the top three in the summer medal table since 2000 and has finished second in the last two Games. Since winning no medals in 2002, and a single medal in 2006, ParalympicsGB has secured at least six medals in every Winter Games since 2014.



ALT: Image of paralympic boccia player in a wheelchair looking overjoyed at his team's performance.



As a nation, we are extremely proud of Great Britain's Paralympic success. ParalympicsGB is consistently among the top three things that make people proud to be British.

This Statistic includes TeamGB and ParalympicsGB and is taken from The UK Sport Public Consultation 2018.

The story so far

London 2012

288 athletes compete. ParalympicsGB's largest ever team.

Sochi 2014

1st Winter gold medal for ParalympicsGB in the women's Super-G.

Rio 2016

58% of medals won by female athletes. Kadeena Cox wins 3 gold medals across two sports.

Pyeongchang 2018

Most medals won at a Winter Paralympic Games since 1984.

Tokyo 2020

18 sports win medals, the most by any National Paralympic Committee in the history of the Paralympic Games. Dame Sarah Storey becomes the most successful Paralympian of all time.

Beijing 2022

Menna Fitzpatrick becomes Great Britain's most decorated Winter Paralympian. 1st male gold medalist for ParalympicsGB at a Winter Paralympic Games.

Great Britain's success:

£15.6 million of UK Sport investment supporting more than 70 Para or combined events, in 25 different sports, since 1999. 718 Summer Paralympic medals won since Sydney 2000. 33 coaches associated with Para sports have been supported by UK Sport Coach Development Programmes since 2017. 21 Winter Paralympic medals won since the Turin Games 2006.

ALT: Image of a joyful paralympian in a wheelchair with a mask on, holding a bronze medal.

An evolving landscape

Continued success is vital to maintaining our world-leading performance status and provides us with a powerful platform to support the Paralympic movement in campaigning for disability, visibility, inclusion and accessibility.

We have been through extraordinary times. A global pandemic has affected our ability to engage with the next generation of athletes and we have faced environmental, economic and social challenges which have tested our resilience.

With rising global standards and more nations investing in Para sport, keeping our aspiration to be world leading, and doing the absolute best for our athletes, means we need to be focused on what matters most more than ever.

If we embrace and advocate for this new framework, we can be better aligned and more deliberate in our efforts. This will optimise opportunities to connect and collaborate to create real and lasting change for our athletes and the sporting system.



ALT: Image of paralympian wheelchair tennis players mid-point on an indoor tennis court. Athlete in foreground is serving with his racket in the air.

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2. A new strategic framework for Para performance sport



Our vision for the future

World-leading Para performance sport that enables athletes to thrive, excel and win.

During the consultation process, contributors were clear: to achieve this vision, our performance environments must meet the unique needs of Para athletes.

Working collaboratively as one Para sport community will allow us to do this, leading to enhanced opportunities for our athletes and workforce. This will in turn have a positive impact on performance outcomes.

ALT: Image of paralympian sprinter striding forwards.

Guiding principles

Underpinning the framework is a set of principles to guide what we do and the way we do it.

1. Athletes will be at the heart of the framework.
2. Para sport will be respected for its own merits and recognised and valued for its diversity.
3. At the centre of any decision making will be the desire to ensure equity and fairness of opportunity.
4. It will be acknowledged that achieving an equitable outcome might mean doing something differently or more deliberately.
5. We will connect and collaborate to maintain our performance platform, inspire individuals through Paralympic success, and use our voice, knowledge and experience to drive change.



ALT: Image of paralympian on skis holding poles with an excited expression.

Achieving our vision using the framework

The framework has five pillars, each based on the insights gathered during the consultation process.

Each pillar has an overarching objective, with the ways we can achieve it laid out in the “making it happen” section of the table on the following page.



The framework

These pillars provide a clear way to organise our intentions. In practice, activity will take place across the pillars.

Pillars and objectives				
1. Athlete recruitment and development Supercharge the recruitment and development of individuals eligible for Paralympic sport with aspirations of competing at the highest level.	2. Environments Explore innovative and creative approaches to the development and delivery of performance environments that positively impact on high-potential, high-performing eligible athletes.	3. Workforce Attract, recruit, develop and retain a workforce representative of disabled people, who are recognised and valued, to support Paralympic success.	4. Knowledge Identify and explore key questions with importance to the advancement of Para sport. Ensure effective knowledge sharing to support individual development and sustain organisational competitive advantage.	5. Influence for impact Create a knowledgeable and increasingly diverse representative group of international postholders who are key advocates and decision makers, ensuring the interests of Para athletes and sports are appropriately represented. Uphold the integrity, and support the development, of the classification process both nationally and internationally. Enhance the visibility and profile of Para athletes.
Making it happen				
Recruitment (Unearthing new potential) Proactively engage in novel and existing recruitment activity, providing focused opportunities for eligible individuals to explore their potential in performance sport. Recruitment (Existing potential) Offer talent transfer opportunities for eligible athletes to explore their potential in other sports. Development environments Provide effective and appropriate development experiences to athletes, maximising their chances of meeting standards to progress towards Para performance programmes.	Performance environments Develop individual and cross-sport opportunities (including facilities, coaching and practitioner support) to enhance training environments that meet individual athlete development and performance needs. Domestic competition Explore innovative approaches to competitive opportunities within the UK, exposing athletes to an appropriate quality and quantity of competition through single and multi-sport approaches. International competition Influence and support the delivery of international competitions to ensure athlete exposure to developmentally appropriate competition environments.	Leadership Ensure there are informed leaders and decision makers within sport recognising and committing to the unique needs of Para sport. Athlete to... Identify and address barriers to recruiting disabled athletes into the sport workforce, to ensure insights can be drawn from those with lived experience. Coaches and coaching Support the recruitment and development of Para coaches. Provide appropriate Para experiences that enable coaches to grow through formal and informal routes. Performance services Across practitioners, operations, and all members of performance teams, effectively attract, recruit, develop and retain people with Para expertise to provide world-leading support to athletes and coaches.	Knowledge opportunity Systematically identify the key questions to answer that will enhance athlete development and performance. Knowledge generation Facilitate the answering of key questions through effective and focused use of research, innovation and expertise. Knowledge dissemination and connection Drive connection and collaboration across the Para sport community, ensuring that knowledge is shared and implemented widely and effectively to support athlete development and performance.	International Develop a diverse group of UK representatives, supporting their ongoing development for positive impact that benefits both the Paralympic movement and the sports they represent. Classification Ensure the collective responsibilities of delivering the international and national classification codes are understood and upheld. Create well-informed athletes and workforce committed to upholding the integrity of Para sport. Support the innovation and development of the classification system. Athlete profile Generate opportunities for athletes to gain visibility and recognition, share their stories, inspire future generations and impact on wider social change.

What does success look like?

Pillars

1. Athlete recruitment and development

Clear and multiple entry routes into Para performance sport, that are contextually appropriate to athletes from different backgrounds. Sustainable and collaborative recruitment and development initiatives across sports, charities, Disability Sport Organisations, and the Home Nations. A sustainable and well supported talent pool below World Class Programmes.

2. Environments

Aligned cross-sport offers are an embedded way of working that enhance the daily training environment for Para athletes and workforce. A domestic competition schedule that meets the developmental and performance needs of Para athletes enabling them to compete in high-quality, multi-sport events at iconic venues.

The UK is a key player in the hosting of high-quality international Para events, which support development and performance ambitions of Para athletes and workforce as well as contributing to positive change for disabled people.

3. Workforce

A workforce that is reflective of UK society with significant disability representation across the entire Para sport community. Multiple entry routes and opportunities established into and within the Para sport community workforce to enable those with a passion for Para sport to be supported.

4. Knowledge

An established suite of virtual and physical knowledge management methods and tools enabling connection and collaboration across the Para sport community. Para athletes and workforce benefiting from world-leading knowledge management practices and solutions.

5. Influence for impact

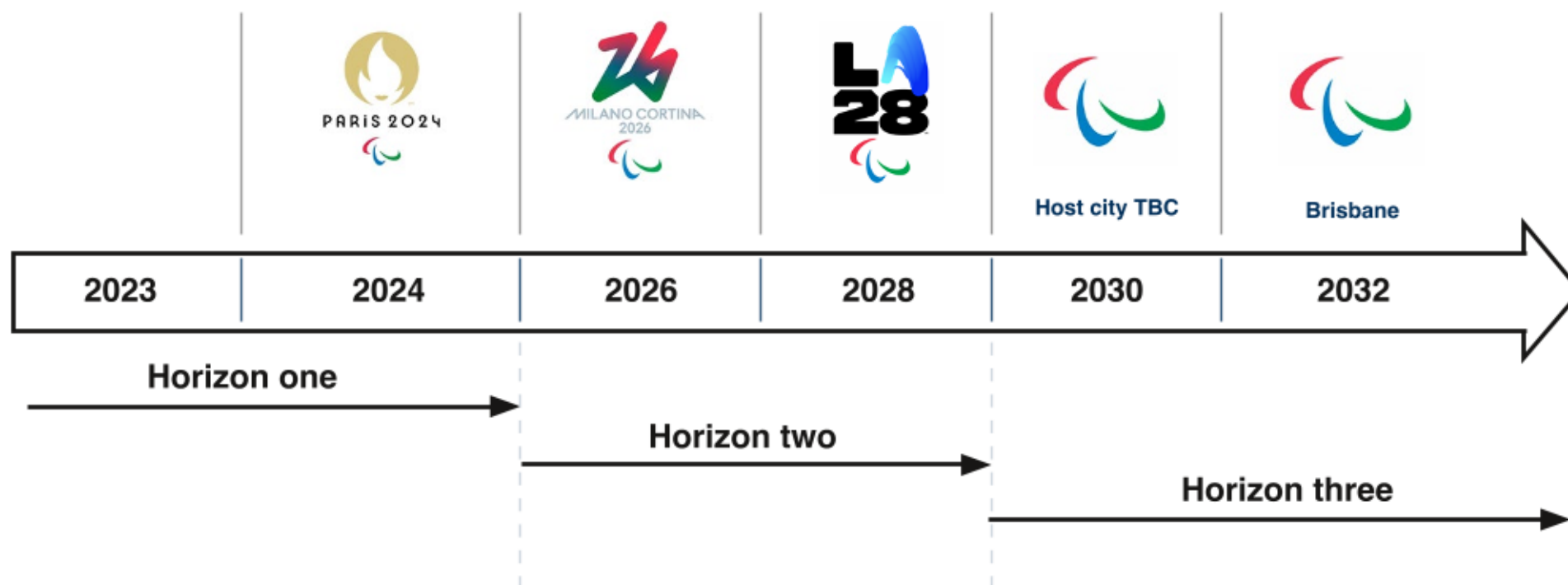
Through the contribution of representatives in key international positions, the UK is a significant contributor to a flourishing and sustainable Para movement, underpinned by good governance.

Para athletes are household names, their personal sporting achievements are valued and their contribution to social change is recognised.

Timeline

To help us on our journey towards achieving our vision for the future, we have set out three horizons that span Summer and Winter Paralympic Games between now and 2033.

Each horizon represents a time period, with the table on the next page showing the potential outcomes of the first horizon. To remain agile to changes in the environment, and to apply the insights and learnings gathered through the first horizon, outcomes for Horizon two and three will be defined later.



ALT: Table showing a timeline of the Paralympic Games from 2023 to 2032 and the years that each of the horizons cover.

Horizon one at a glance

Pillar 1: Athlete Recruitment and Development

Pillar 2: Environments

Pillar 3: Workforce

Pillar 4: Knowledge

Pillar 5: Influence for Impact

We, the Para sport community, will:

Know how to connect and collaborate to provide effective and supportive athlete recruitment and development activity.

Have proactively explored cross-organisational working to improve athlete access to high-quality training environments, support, equipment, and domestic competition.

Share informed and creative approaches to workforce recruitment (including board appointments) and development, to underpin the growth of a more diverse workforce.

Understand our role in enhancing knowledge management processes and consider new ways of working which impact athlete development and performance. Provide opportunities to connect to one another and ensure that existing knowledge and expertise are more widely shared for mutual benefit.

Organise our collective efforts and build on existing opportunities to enhance our sphere of influence internationally.

Use the power of the Paralympic Games to provide our athletes with a platform to be recognised, valued, and contribute to wider social change.

ALT: Dynamic Image of winter paralympian heading down the slopes on skis and holding poles.

The framework in practice

Using the pillars of the framework³ to inform our activity will help us make connections and develop new, and strengthen existing, relationships. It will create environments that allow us to be more efficient and effective in our use of resources as we drive forward change.

Using the framework to guide our work will:

- Challenge the thinking around those areas where achieving an equitable outcome might mean applying a more specific Para approach, doing something differently or doing something more deliberately.
- Make us feel more positively connected to the effort within and outside the immediate Para sport community.
- Allow us to align our efforts, creating activities and interventions that will make a difference and lead to change.
- Serve as an advocacy tool allowing the Para sport community to unite around collective ambitions and use its voice to leverage system change.
- Empower individuals and organisations to talk with authority to funding agencies, commercial sponsors and government to identify where alignment of existing, new or additional investment could make a difference.



ALT: Image of British and Spanish wheelchair basketball players challenging one another. They are both focussed but the British player has reached the ball first.

3. Making it happen



ALT: Image of a triumphant paralympian holding the finish line banner above her head. She is overjoyed.

Our commitment to the vision for the future

To enable change we, the Para sport community, will:

Commit to the framework by understanding the ways the organisations we represent can contribute to taking action and delivering solutions.

Advocate for the framework and share it with other networks so it has a wide reach and lasting impact.

Celebrate and share outcomes and create learning opportunities by sharing the practical experiences of putting the framework to work.



ALT: Image of highly focussed paralympian table tennis player preparing to hit the ball.

UK Sport's role and commitment

One of UK Sport's core ambitions within its 10-year Strategic Plan is to keep winning and win well – delivering a broader range of champions and medallists than ever before, winning with integrity and powering a diverse and inclusive team. Commitment to the framework is one step towards achieving this.

UK Sport will:

- Promote the framework: using its voice to influence and advocate towards creating change.
- Lead on creating the right environments to facilitate discussion and provide opportunities to unite, inspire and drive performance.
- Engage the Para sport community to ensure that activity is prioritised where it can have greatest impact.
- Create a roadmap for the next 10 years, with clear markers and evaluation points.
- Lead by example by being committed to ensuring the organisation as a whole understands, embraces and advocates for the framework.

UK Sport is already working on activities that are aligned to the framework. See the annex on Page 23.



Evaluating and measuring success

Led by UK Sport, the cross-organisational Project Para Impact Group (PPIG), will work with us to monitor and evaluate the outcomes, impact, and ultimate success of the framework against our vision:

World-leading Para performance sport that enables athletes to thrive, excel and win.

For more information on any element of the framework, please contact UK Sport Senior Performance Advisor Michele Hammond at michele.hammond@uksport.gov.uk

Annex

Examples of activities being delivered or under consideration by UK Sport against horizon one.

Annex

Pillar	UK Sport activity	Connections	Horizon one outcomes
Athlete recruitment and development	Athlete Recruitment Network: Establishing and coordinating a network approach to Para athlete recruitment, enabling multiple sustainable entry routes to Para performance sport through charities and organisations that support active disabled people and between Para sports.	Lead: UK Sport Performance Development team. Collaborators: British Paralympic Association, Para sports, Home Nation Sports Councils (sportscotland, Sport Wales, Sport Northern Ireland, Sport England), Home Nation Disability Sport Organisations (Scottish Disability Sport, Disability Sport Wales, Disability Sport Northern Ireland, Activity Alliance).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athlete Recruitment Network Manager employed through the British Paralympic Association. • Organisations and charities that provide early sport experiences to disabled individuals have been identified and stronger relationships are growing. • Novel approaches to collaborative athlete recruitment have been piloted. • An approach to talent transfer, prior to performance programmes, is agreed between Para sports and has been piloted and/or fully adopted.
Athlete recruitment and development	Athlete Development Framework: Collating an evidence-based athlete development framework which can be utilised to enhance the development offer to athletes and as the basis for piloting centrally-led development offers that supplement the work of sports.	Lead: UK Sport Performance Development team. Collaborators: British Paralympic Association, Para sports, Home Nation Sports Councils (sportscotland, Sport Wales, Sport Northern Ireland, Sport England), Home Nation Disability Sport Organisations (Scottish Disability Sport, Disability Sport Wales, Disability Sport Northern Ireland, Activity Alliance), the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme, UK Sports Institute.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Para athlete development framework has been created by the Para sport community. • The framework is utilised by sports and organisations to support their development activity. • Centrally-led (multi-sport) development activity which is aligned to the athlete development framework has been piloted and the most effective approaches committed to.
Environments	Investigate possible options for the development of a Para hub at Loughborough University.	Lead: UK Sport Performance Advisor team Collaborators: Loughborough University, British Paralympic Association, World Class Programmes, UK Sports Institute, UK Sport (other teams).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partners have a clear understanding of their respective role, and the viability of a hub approach to the delivery of environments, for both athletes and workforce, that are effective and efficient as well as performance impacting.
Environments	Para Athlete Experience Project: Understanding the lived experiences of World Class Programme athletes to inform development of optimal performance environments and support athlete wellbeing.	Lead: UK Sport Performance Advisor team Collaborators: Sheffield Hallam University, UK Sports Institute, World Class Programmes (current and retired athletes).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use initial learnings where they might have implications for Games time preparation and Games performances. • Interrogate outcomes to identify whether further research is required.
Workforce	Explore how to maximise the opportunity of Paris 2024 being a close proximity Paralympic Games to expose future leaders to a Games time environment.	Lead: UK Sport Culture, Talent and Development team Collaborators: UK Sports Institute, British Paralympic Association.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore a concept for an experiential development opportunity to be held during the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

Annex (continued)

Pillar	UK Sport activity	Connections	Horizon one outcomes
Workforce	Explore a potential pilot work placement programme for retired Paralympians.	Lead: UK Sport Culture Talent and Development team and UK Sport International Relations Team. Collaborators: British Paralympic Association, UK Sports Institute, BEAA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pilot programme (up to 12 months) to provide a unique development experience for retired Paralympians as they transition into the next stage of their career.
Workforce	Para Coach Communities – virtual and face-to-face sessions every 8-10 weeks.	Lead: UK Sport Coaching team. Collaborators: Head Coaches and Coaches in all Para sports.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A regular gathering of coaches in similar roles to explore challenges, opportunities and potential ways forward for their roles. • A connected cross-sport community which supports each other when needed. • A place to openly discuss cross-sport athlete development stories – both successes and current challenges.
Workforce	Scoping of UK Sport role in coaching and supporting coaches.	Lead: UK Sport Coaching team. Collaborators : All Paralympic sports, UKC, Partner organisations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of Para-specific needs – how this may be considered in the future strategy direction.
Knowledge	Explore how a Knowledge Management Group (KMG) could be effective in assisting World Class Programmes to address key questions that impact athlete development and performance.	Lead: UK Sport Performance Advisor team. Collaborators: British Paralympic Association, UK Sports Institute, Home Nation Sport Institutes, World Class Programmes, UK Sport (other teams).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish terms of reference and membership for the KMG. • KMG meet a minimum of three times per annum to strategically support 1) the identification and exploration of key performance/development questions 2) the dissemination of performance/development insights.
Knowledge	Facilitate deliberate connection across the Para sport community to ensure that knowledge and expertise can have the widest benefit.	Lead: UK Sport Performance Advisor team. Collaborators: British Paralympic Association, UK Sports Institute, Home Nation Sport Institutes, World Class Programmes, UK Sport (other teams).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a road map to explore and deliver virtual (e.g. UK Sport Learning Arena) and physical (e.g. Communities of Practice, Para Conference) approaches to sharing knowledge and expertise.
Influence for impact	Supporting the British Paralympic Association to deliver its International Relationship Influencing Strategy specifically the International Leadership Programme for Para Athletes.	Lead: UK Sport International Relations team. Collaborators: British Paralympic Association.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy engagement has raised awareness of opportunities in international leadership.

Para Performance strategic framework 2023-2033

Connect, collaborate and change