

Jon Burrows MLA
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw, Stormont
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Dear Jon

**AQW 47359/22-27 – INFORMATION TO BE PLACED IN THE ASSEMBLY
LIBRARY**

Due to the volume of information provided I have arranged for the detail to be placed in the Assembly Library.

Yours sincerely



**Gordon Lyons MLA
Minister for Communities**

Actions Sport NI is taking with (i) local councils; and (ii) community organisations, to improve (a) accessibility; (b) facilities; and (c) inclusion, within public outdoor spaces in light of findings that 80 per cent of adults want to spend more time outdoors but many face barriers to participation

Sport NI fund several organisations engaged in outdoor sports to improve accessibility, facilities and inclusion within public outdoor spaces, for example:

- The Ulster Federation of Ramblers has been awarded £161,210 Lottery funding in the last three years with £55,620 awarded for 2026/27 via System Partner Investment Programme.
- Paddle NI has been awarded £270,000 Lottery funding in the last three years with £92,295 awarded for 2026/27 via System Partner Investment Programme.
- Ulster Angling has been awarded £142,900 Lottery funding in the last three years with £51,490 awarded for 2026/27 via System Partner Investment Programme
- Mountaineering Ireland has been awarded £169,000 Lottery funding in the last three years with £59,740 awarded for 2026/27 via System Partner Investment Programme.

The System Partner Investment Programme focuses on outcomes such as increasing participation in those from underserved communities, such as women and girls, those with a disability and those from areas of high deprivation.

- Outscape has been awarded £236,450 Exchequer funding in the last three years with £50,313 awarded for 2026/27. This aided in the delivery of the <https://out-scape.com/pomni/> (POMNI) research which can be used to identify accessible public outdoor spaces; and supported the development of a Sustainable Trails Development Guide, of which accessibility and inclusion are key pillars (<https://out-scape.com/work/sustainable-trails-development-guide/>).
- Disability Sport NI has been awarded £1,463,400 in Exchequer funding in the last three years with £120,650 Exchequer funding and £184,875 Lottery funding awarded for 2026/27 for delivery on key areas. Disability Sport NI has produced guidance in response to a growing demand from disabled people in Northern Ireland to access and use outdoor places for exercise and recreation.
- Please see Disability Sport NI's www.dsni.co.uk/resource-library-1/access-guide/ and www.dsni.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Guide-5-Accessible-Outdoor-Places-Design-Guidelines.pdf for detail.
- The Outdoor Partnership were awarded £12,000 in 2025/26 to support the delivery of a Female Hill Skills Project across the Sperrins and Mourne.

Sport NI also seeks to promote the Disability Sport NI Inclusive Sports Facility Guidelines referenced above. In Northern Ireland, the primary recognition for accessible design is the Inclusive Sports Facility (ISF) Accreditation Scheme managed by Disability Sport NI. This seeks to embed the ethos of inclusion throughout the design and construction

phases, and awards facilities that meet the Accessible Sports Facilities Design Guidelines.

The guidelines aim to promote a greater understanding of inclusive design and provide detailed technical advice and information which will encourage and support designers to move beyond the basic requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and Building Regulations.

The scheme provides District Councils and other sports facility operators with a mechanism to ensure that new, extended, or refurbished sports facilities are fully inclusive and meet the sporting needs of disabled people. For example, the Sport NI National Lottery funded project at the Newforge Sports Complex and Event Hub received its ISF Award in November 2025.