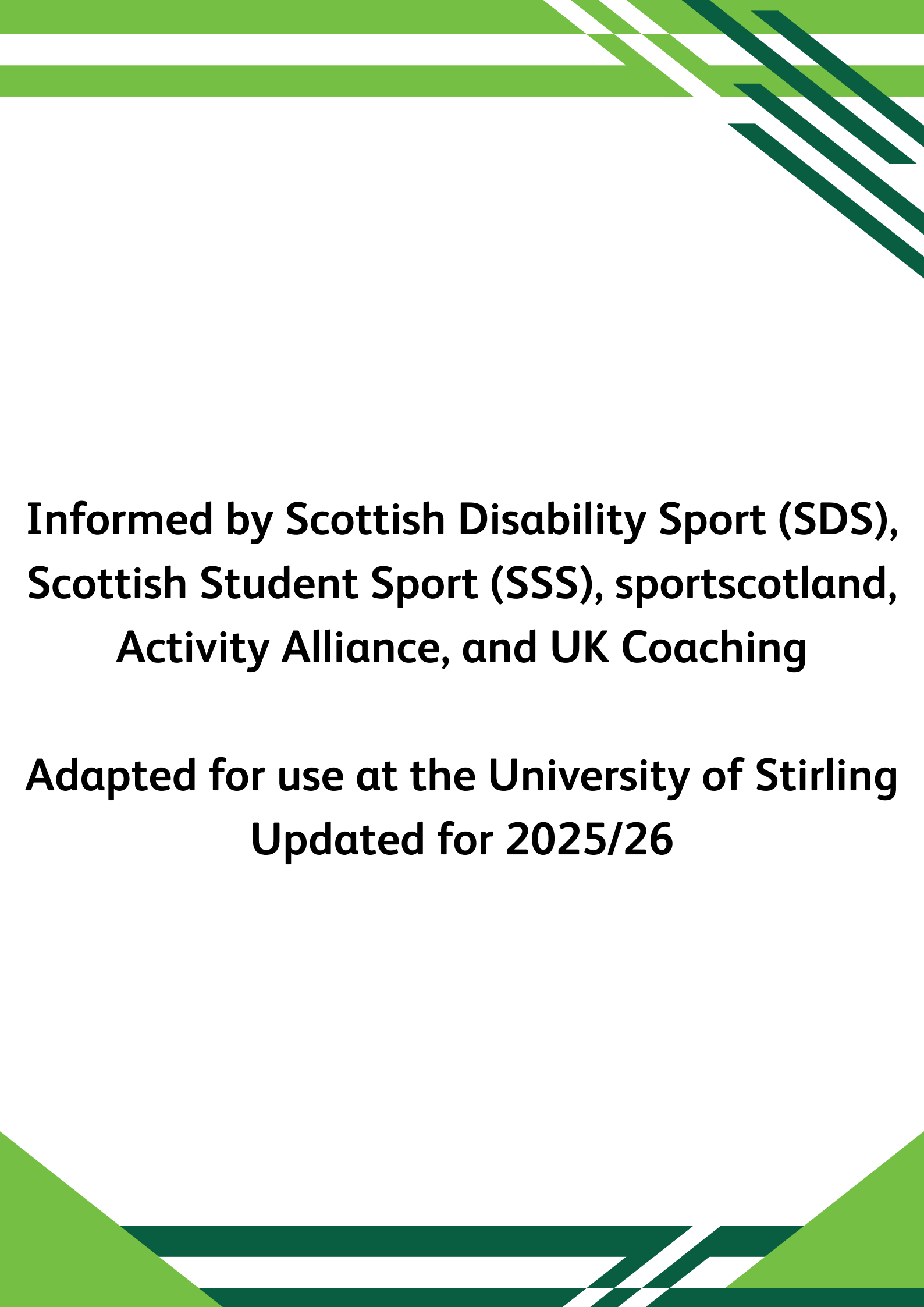




#BleedGreen

SPORTS UNION DISABILITY & INCLUSION GUIDE





**Informed by Scottish Disability Sport (SDS),
Scottish Student Sport (SSS), sportscotland,
Activity Alliance, and UK Coaching**

**Adapted for use at the University of Stirling
Updated for 2025/26**



Introduction

Every student at the University of Stirling should have access to sport and physical activity in a way that is welcoming, respectful, and inclusive. As club committee members, you play a key role in breaking down barriers and fostering environments where disabled students feel genuinely included and empowered to participate.

This digital guide complements your in-person training and can be referred to throughout the academic year. It reflects guidance from national inclusion partners and is tailored to the University of Stirling context.

“Inclusion means ensuring disabled people are considered, respected, and valued at every stage of the sporting journey.”
– Scottish Disability Sport

Understanding Disability in Sport

Definition

A disability is defined by the Equality Act 2010 as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical or sensory impairments
- Mental health conditions
- Neurodivergence (e.g. autism, ADHD)
- Learning disabilities
- Long-term health conditions or invisible disabilities

The Social Model of Disability

At the University of Stirling, we align with our national governing bodies and use the social model, which recognises that:

- People are disabled by barriers in society, not by their impairment.
- Our role is to actively remove those barriers, whether physical, cultural, communicative, or attitudinal.



Myths vs Reality

“We can’t include disabled students without expert training”

You already have the tools - just ask, adapt, and learn

“Disabled people don’t want to take part in sport at the university”

Many do but participate elsewhere if they expect to be excluded

“We need expensive equipment”

Many effective adaptations cost nothing

“Inclusion compromises competition”

Inclusion enhances participation and team culture

Using Inclusive Language & Attitudes

Respectful Language

Language shapes culture. Use terms that are positive, respectful and empowering.

Say

- “Disabled person” or “person with a disability”
- “Wheelchair user”, not “wheelchair-bound”
- “Accessible” rather than “special” or “normal”

Avoid

- “Suffering from...”
- “The disabled”
- “Patronising terms like “inspirational” without context

Attitude and awareness

- Don’t make assumptions - ask how someone prefers to be supported
- Avoid tokenism – take actions that are meaningful, not performative
- Prioritise participation - not perfection or performance

“The way we speak about people shapes whether they feel like they belong.” – Activity Alliance



Creating Inclusive Club Environments at Stirling

The University of Stirling Sport facilities are modern and committed to accessibility.

When planning club activities:

- Use accessible venues (ramp/lift access, changing spaces, accessible toilets)
- Ask members about access needs in advance
- Ensure signage and directions are clear and visible

Contact Stirling Sport Duty Officers in advance for venue accessibility info or to request adjustments. You can do so either through the Sport Development Coordinator or by calling 01786 466900.

Creating Inclusive Club Environments at Stirling

Adapt Your Sessions

Use the STEP model (used widely by SDS and sportscotland):

- Space – smaller areas, clearer boundaries
- Task – simplify or adapt rules
- Equipment – use lighter or alternative equipment
- People – pair members up, use buddies or groupings

Example: Modify warm-ups so seated or low-impact alternatives are available.

Adapting Communications

- Share session info ahead of time
- Provide text-based materials in accessible formats (e.g., PDFs with alt text)
- Include accessibility icons and clear language in promotional materials

Your Role as a Club

Inclusion is the responsibility of everyone involved in sport at Stirling but as committee members of clubs, you can make a real impact on the participation experience. By doing so you are also developing your club.

Club Promotion & Recruitment – reach a new audience and display your inclusion achievements

- Use inclusive language and imagery in social media and flyers
- Offer alternative formats for info (digital, verbal, visual)
- Include a clear contact person for accessibility queries

Event Planning

- Offer quiet or low-sensory taster sessions
- Encourage a buddy system or assign a point of contact at sessions
- Be flexible - allow participants to take breaks or take part in alternative ways

Identifying an inclusive sport champion

- Work with your President, Welfare Officer, and Sport Development Coordinator (Sports Union) to identify someone on your committee to lead on inclusion
- This role should be visible, approachable, and will be supported by the Sport Development Coordinator

Self Check

Set some time in your early committee meetings and ask these questions to determine where you are at as a club.



Have we considered accessibility info in our club communications?



Do we ask for access needs in taster sessions or sign-up forms?



Have we reviewed our venues for physical and sensory accessibility?



Do we actively encourage feedback from all members?



Do we know who to contact for support or adjustments?

Creating an Inclusion Action Plan

1. Review responses to the self-check questions.
2. Identify an inclusive sport champion.
3. Promote your sessions as being accessible visibly online or in-person (at Sports Bazaar).
4. Give it a Go sign-ups will be asked if they have accessibility requirements, make it clear that you will make adaptations for them if necessary.
5. Complete the Scottish Disability Sport inclusion e-learning.
6. Contact the Sport Development Coordinator with questions.

Final thoughts

Inclusion is everyone's responsibility. You don't need to be an expert to make an impact, just open and ready to learn. Through your actions as a committee, you can create a more welcoming, and representative club culture.

Together we can ensure that sport at Stirling is something everyone can be part of, on and off the field.

Appendix – Example Action Plan

Committee Discussion & Training Assigning an Inclusive Sport Champion

Action

- Discussed inclusion at first full committee meeting of the semester
- Added inclusion and accessibility to monthly/quarterly committee meeting agenda
- Attended the Sports Union's Disability Inclusion Training
- Shared the Disability Inclusion Guide with all committee members

Action

- Welfare Officer agreed to act as Inclusive Sport Champion for 2025/26
- Inclusive Sport Champion met with Sports Union for 1-to-1 induction

Session adaptation and venue accessibility Feedback

Action

- Used STEP model to adapt warm-ups and drills for a member with requirements
- Added time at start of sessions for quieter arrivals or briefings
- Created a "low-intensity" option during Welcome Week taster

Action

- Sent out a mid-semester feedback form (with optional disability section)
- Held informal coffee chat with one member who has a hidden disability
- Logged all feedback anonymously to build insight over time

Highlights from the Year Future Aims (2026/27)

- 3 members disclosed long-term health conditions who previously hadn't felt comfortable joining
- Taster session featured a seated option (led by committee member with lived experience)
- Inclusive Sport Champion now attends monthly University of Stirling Disability Sport Working Group
- Deliver a "Disability in Sport" social media week during Disability History Month
- Train two additional committee members through SDS Disability & Inclusion course
- Work with a local disability sport club (e.g., Forth Valley Flyers) for a joint session