



Active LD

Business Plan

MARCH 2026-2029



Together we're active and able

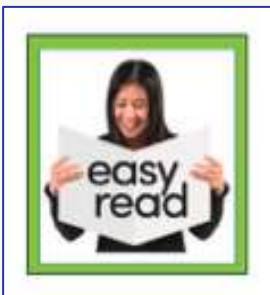
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Executive Summary

Inactivity among people with learning disabilities remains a significant health and social inequality. Nearly half of adults with learning disabilities say they would like to be more active, yet it is well documented in recent UK health literature that over 80% do not meet recommended physical activity guidelines. This highlights a clear need for more inclusive, accessible and welcoming opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity.

Evidence from Sport England shows that being active delivers benefits far beyond physical health. Participation in sport can improve confidence, independence, social connection and overall wellbeing, helping people with learning disabilities lead healthier and more fulfilling lives. Active LD CIC (Active LD) is committed to reducing these inequalities by creating opportunities that enable more adults with learning disabilities to take part in meaningful and enjoyable physical activity.



Accessibility is central to our approach. Guided by our Learning Disability (LD) Advisors, we ensure our information is presented in formats that are accessible and easy to understand. Our policies are available in Easy Read, our impact reports include accessible videos, and we are developing an Easy Read video version of this business plan so that the people we support can engage with our plans.

Active LD is proud to be a truly user-led organisation. Through co-production and partnership with adults with learning disabilities, we design and deliver opportunities that reflect the needs and aspirations of the community. Our inclusive sports events, known as Personal Bests, provide welcoming environments where participants can try new activities, build confidence, develop social connections and access volunteering opportunities.

This business plan outlines how Active LD will grow over the next three years by expanding our reach, strengthening partnerships, enhancing programmes and building long-term sustainability. Our ambition is to increase participation, improve wellbeing outcomes and become a leading voice for inclusive physical activity provision across the South of England.

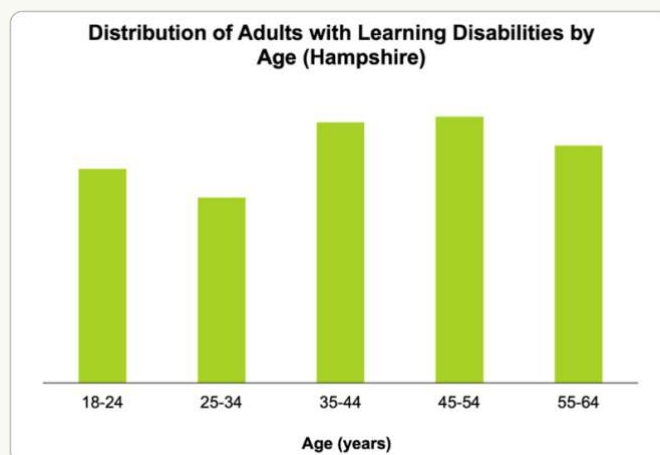
Setting the Scene – the bigger picture

Active LD uses Mencap’s definition of learning disability: “A learning disability is a reduced intellectual ability and difficulty with everyday activities, which affects someone for their whole life”. People with learning disabilities are a diverse group with different strengths, interests and support needs, and services must reflect this diversity. Active LD recognises that there is no ‘one size fits all’ and understands the importance of adapting and tailoring our offer towards each individual’s needs and strengths. Active LD is committed to treating everyone fairly, our approach is outlined in our [Equity and Diversity policy](#).

Learning disabilities in the UK are widely recognised as being under-recorded, creating what is often described as a “hidden majority”. Recording across social care, hospitals and GP registers is inconsistent, particularly for people with milder learning disabilities. While around 2.16% of UK adults (approximately 1.2 million people) are estimated to have a learning disability, many are not formally identified in health systems.

In Hampshire, Southampton and the Isle of Wight, around 26,000 adults aged 18+ are estimated to have a learning disability and approximately 16,000 people with learning disabilities live in West Sussex, yet fewer than half are registered with a GP. Actual numbers are therefore likely to be significantly higher than those recorded.

Figures from Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), Hampshire.



Locally almost half of Adult Service users are aged 20–39, and around 63% of those receiving long-term support are male. At the same time, a growing number of older adults (50–64) require long-term care and often present with complex health needs. West Sussex mirrors the Hampshire trends of an aging population, with a slightly higher prevalence of older residents and a growing burden on adult services from younger adults with complex needs.

It is well recognised that people with learning disabilities experience significant health inequalities. This is reported by the NHS review: Learning from lives and deaths – people with a learning disability and autistic people (LeDeR).

Adults with a learning disability on average die 19.5 years younger than the general population (LeDeR, 2025)

LeDeR found that 39% of deaths of people with a learning disability were avoidable (LeDeR, 2025)

Lack of physically activity, increases the risk of many health conditions, for example: obesity, diabetes and heart disease, as well as depression, anxiety and cognitive decline.

Regular physical activity improves cardiovascular fitness, strength and balance, supports weight management, and enhances mental wellbeing by reducing anxiety and depression while building confidence and resilience.

It also helps counter the negative health impacts of sedentary lifestyles.

Active LD addresses the need for people with learning disabilities to be more active by creating inclusive sport and physical activity opportunities that remove barriers and build confidence. Through initiatives such as our Personal Bests events, we celebrate achievement and provide a pathway into regular activity; helping people with learning disabilities become healthier, more connected and more included in their communities.

Social networks are vital for everyone's wellbeing, health and being able to live our best lives.

Active LD is part of the wider movement to close these gaps. We bring people with learning disabilities together through inclusive sport and physical activity, helping them discover what they can achieve, and creating accessible spaces where everyone can feel safe, supported, and celebrated.

Despite this, most local sport provision is limited. Disability sessions often have low numbers and can be hard to access. Families and carers also report that they struggle to find regular, suitable activities.

Active LD is addressing this gap. We create opportunities that are safe, inclusive, and celebratory. Our flagship “Personal Bests” (PB) events showcase what people can achieve, build motivation, and provide a launch pad into regular activity.



“Before joining Active LD, I didn’t do any sport. At the Personal Bests I tried football for the first time and loved it. Now I go every week. I feel fitter and I’ve made new friends.” Robert, participant from Winchester.



“Amy loved the Aqua Bests. Since then she has been every week to the disability swimming session at the leisure centre.” Mariza, residential service manager.



“I have worked with Active LD since the beginning (March 2025), I love every single aspect of being an Active LD Advisor.” Matthew, LD Advisor.

Vision

To empower people with learning disabilities to take up regular physical activity, unlocking their personal potential, building confidence, and promoting positive wellbeing for a healthy, happy life.



Mission

We Deliver high-quality, accessible and inclusive ‘Personal Best’ events - that celebrate physical activity, personal achievement, and inclusive sports, led by individuals with learning disabilities.

We Develop accessible, engaging opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities to participate in regular physical activity, fostering personal growth, community involvement, and improved health outcomes.

We Engage and Empower professionals in health, social care, and leisure sectors through an interactive training program co-designed and delivered by experts with lived experience.

Values

Doing our Best

We encourage growth, celebration and teamwork. Together we make new goals and help each other. We recognise our personal achievements and celebrate our success.



Inclusion

We find the best ways to include and empower people with learning disabilities to take part, and to be leaders, in everything we do.



Trust

Trust and respect allow everyone to feel heard, valued and supported, helping people to feel more confident.



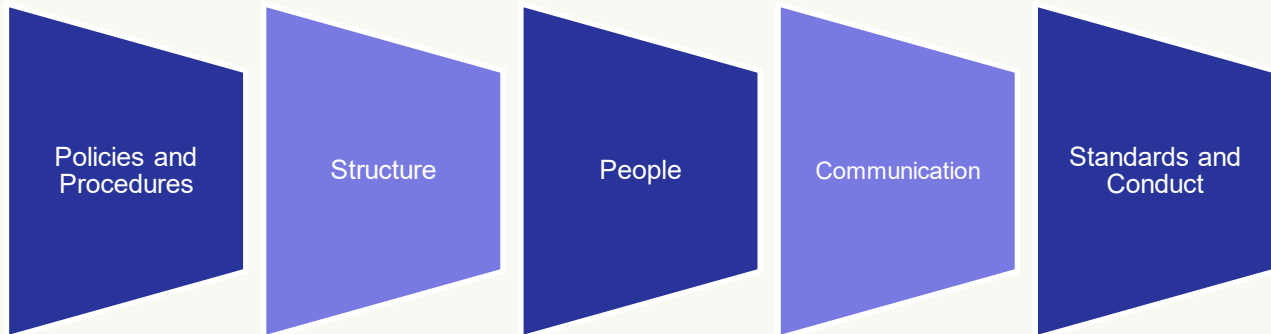
Safety

When people feel safe, they can take part without worrying. People feel happier and more secure.



Governance and structure

Active LD's experienced board of directors combine a wide range of skills with a passion for improving the lives of adults with learning disabilities; they work together, using Sport England's 5 Tier Governance model to ensure strong and robust governance, driving a culture of growth, resilience and success.



Co-production is key to all Active LD's operations. Directors meet regularly, guided by the team of LD Advisors (experts through their lived experience of having a learning disability).

LD Advisors



Daniel

Dave

Evie

James

Matthew

Ryan

People with learning disabilities have key roles and are involved in all stages of Active LD's projects: design, decision making, delivery and evaluation (<https://www.activedld.org/about-us>).

A team of skilled, enthusiastic and experienced volunteers support Active LD's work. Robust volunteer recruitment, induction and training are essential to the success of Active LD's volunteer program.

Effective risk management is crucial for identifying, assessing, and mitigating financial, operational, and reputational challenges, ensuring Active LD's resilience and mission success. Active LD maintains a risk register to document risks, their impact, likelihood, and management actions.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is a very important part of Active LD's work. All our beneficiaries are vulnerable adults, and we must always make sure they are safe, respected and supported. We also know that volunteers, staff, directors and coaches may be vulnerable too. We take it seriously that safeguarding is everyone's business we all play a role in keeping each other safe.

We aim to create safe, friendly and inclusive spaces where people feel comfortable taking part. Safeguarding is a regular item at every Director Meeting, so we can review issues, make improvements and keep our standards high. All directors and staff are trained to at least Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults (SOVA) Level 2, and all volunteers receive safeguarding training when they join. Our LD Advisors also receive accessible Safeguarding Training (adapted into Easy Read). This helps everyone understand their responsibilities and feel confident in what to do.

Active LD has a clear [Safeguarding Policy](#) and easy steps for reporting concerns, managing risk and promoting safe behaviour at events, activity sessions, training and online. Our co-production approach also means people with learning disabilities help shape how we keep everyone safe.

Through good training, clear communication and strong governance, safeguarding remains at the heart of our work and supports our whole community to feel protected, confident and able to enjoy being active.



Financial appraisal

Income generation is crucial for Active LD's sustainability and self-reliance, this is done through commercial activities (earned income) and fundraising:

- Participant led training workshops
- Event fees
- Grants
- Corporate funding support
- Event fundraising

Financial Appraisal is included at Director Meetings (regular agenda item). Quarterly management accounts and cash flow forecasts are carefully reviewed.

As a new organisation, Active LD will carefully balance growth with sustainability and resilience through the building of financial reserves.

Income generation and the planned growth of earned income is covered in detail in Active LD's Income and Fundraising Strategy.



Personal Bests

Founded in 2012 by Active LD Director, Kevin Stevens, and inspired by the spirit of the London 2012 Paralympic Games, The Personal Bests have grown to become Active LD's flagship events and a highlight of the learning disability community's calendar.

What began as a small event with just 30 participants now welcomes around 200 participants each year. Its success lies in a simple but powerful principle: everyone is celebrated for doing their personal best. The event creates a supportive, inclusive and non-competitive environment where people with learning disabilities can try new sports, build confidence and enjoy being active.



Personal Bests brings together participants, learning disability groups, support staff, volunteers and coaches for a day of energy, connection and celebration. It reflects everything Active LD stands for: accessibility, inclusion, co-production and partnership. People with learning disabilities are involved at every stage of the event, from planning and volunteering to participating and sharing feedback.

The event also demonstrates our commitment to continual learning and improvement. We adapt and develop each year by listening to participants, LD Advisors, volunteers and partners, ensuring the experience becomes increasingly inclusive. This commitment was recognised in 2025 when our Winchester event was the first event in the UK to achieve Autism Friendly Award status.

The Personal Bests also act as a springboard for ongoing participation. Participants can try new activities and connect with local accessible opportunities, while coaches and providers build relationships with the learning disability community.

Importantly, we have learned that the Personal Bests model can be replicated. A successful new event in Chichester and the introduction of Aqua Bests pool activities in 2025 show the potential to expand this approach and bring its impact to more communities across the South of England.

Goals and Objectives

Strategic Goal	Objective
Promote Physical Activity	<p>Introduction of at least one new physical activity group/year from each Personal Best Event.</p> <p>Increased attendance in regular groups (10% growth in attendance each year).</p> <p>Expand magazine delivery service (double our deliveries by Year 3).</p>
Encourage Community Participation	<p>Collaboration and connection with partner organisations through Personal Bests.</p> <p>Signposting and increase awareness of what's on.</p>
Grow Personal Bests events	<p>Increase participant numbers each year (double total participant numbers by Year 3 to over 550).</p> <p>Deliver consistently high-quality events</p>
Develop Training	<p>Equip professionals, volunteers and providers to better support people with learning disabilities</p> <p>Income generation through co-produced training.</p>
Empower Leaders	<p>LD Advisors to develop and share their expertise.</p> <p>Participant development.</p>
Improve Health Outcomes	<p>Qualitative measures (surveys, interviews, focus groups).</p> <p>Tracking Personal Bests participants</p>

These objectives provide a high-level overview of our strategic priorities. They are supported by a detailed internal delivery plan which outlines specific actions, timelines and key performance indicators used to monitor progress and impact.



Monitoring and Evaluation

- LD Advisors play a crucial role in monitoring and evaluation.
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) measure progress against our operational activity and financial objectives, which are vital for balancing Active LD's purpose with performance:
 - Participant data (number of participants, participant age, postcode, etc).
 - Number of repeat participants.
 - Health / wellbeing outcomes (self-reported).
 - Number and quality of partnerships.
 - Financial health (income, expenditure; reserve levels).
- Case studies and feedback for qualitative monitoring.
- Regular review cycles: quarterly monitoring; annual strategic review.
- Produce an annual impact & performance report, shared with stakeholders.
- Achieve and share local and national achievements (e.g Autism Friendly accreditation, Mayor of Winchester Community Award, National UK Active awards finalists, National LD and Autism Awards finalists).

Challenges – what we need to be aware of

- Competition for funding and for service delivery.
- Limited resources available to help adults with learning disabilities from adult social care, support providers and other local charitable organisations.
- Reliance on volunteers (and the need to retain them) which can bring variability.
- Event venues that are affordable and available.
- Accessibility barriers e.g. transport, cost, or limited local provision.
- The population health and wellbeing data for adults with learning disabilities is limited. This adds to difficulties in measuring long-term health outcomes.
- External risks such as public sector cuts or health crises that limit group activity.

Impact

Active LD has already started to make a significant impact by empowering individuals with learning disabilities to engage in regular physical activity, fostering their physical and mental well-being, confidence, and social engagement.

Through our inclusive Personal Bests events and tailored activity programmes, we have successfully increased participation rates and enhanced local offers of regular activity sessions.

Our robust monitoring and evaluation framework, which includes KPIs such as participant data, satisfaction surveys, and health outcomes, ensures that we continuously measure and enhance our effectiveness. By maintaining strong partnerships and securing diverse funding streams, we have built a sustainable model that supports our mission and drives positive change in the community.



Active LD is well-positioned to make a stronger impact by working alongside people with learning disabilities to support more people to be active, confident, healthy and happy. With clear goals, strong partnerships, good governance, and ongoing learning, the organisation can grow sustainably and deepen its positive effects on individuals and communities.

Don't just take our word for it! Read what our partners say:



Together our Community (Chichester Personal Bests Partner)

On behalf of everyone at TOC we want to pass on our sincere thanks to you both for offering excellent sporting opportunities for our young people. They loved the PB Event and are now loving the tennis and running sessions. Looking forward to the cricket next year!



Hampshire's Active Partnership

Active LD is such a strong project and organisation — after attending the event in Winchester, I could clearly see the impact it has on participants, not just in terms of physical activity but across wider aspects of health and wellbeing too.



Chichester + Winchester Leisure Provider

We are incredibly proud of what Winchester Personal Bests has become and how it has grown, with Aqua Bests proving to be an inspiring introduction and a new, accessible way to encourage people with learning disabilities to get active. Being named finalists at the UK Active Awards two years running has also been a huge achievement and reflects our commitment to facilitating inclusive opportunities alongside our Community Champions, Active LD (Bex Woodford, Health and Wellbeing Manager, Winchester).

The legacy activities off the back of CPB have been fantastic. I'm so pleased that the Tennis Club and Chichester Runners were keen to establish these new sessions. TOC regularly attend Tennis sessions with Justin and at the Westgate we are staging monthly athletic sessions with TOC and The Apuldram Centre (Ben Polhill, Contract Health Activity & Wellbeing Manager, Chichester)



Winchester City Swimming Club

The Aqua Bests was brilliant. It went beyond our expectations, we loved it!



Simplyhealth

Lead Partner of the Winchester Personal Bests

We're incredibly proud to partner with Active LD and support the Personal Bests events year on year. Our colleagues really value the opportunity and experience to support the events through volunteering, in particular meeting new participants, as well as reconnecting with familiar faces every year. Most importantly, supporting our local learning-disabled community ensures that we're offering meaningful opportunities for participants to reduce physical inactivity, through making physical activity more accessible and subsequently improving participants overall wellbeing and health outcomes. The events are always expertly organised, well-attended and they have become a regular and highly anticipated feature of our community and colleague calendar (Charlotte Cook, ESG Lead, Simplyhealth Group).



Corporate Personal Bests volunteers from Mitie

We would absolutely love to join you again this year, will keep an eye out for the registration. Last year we attendee Winchester and had the best day!

This year we would like to support Chichester too (Zoe Maclean, Social Values and ESG Manager).

Vision Map (2026-2029)

How we want the future to look and how we demonstrate delivery

	What success looks like	How we measure it
Promote Physical Activity	More people with learning disabilities who are regularly active.	Attendance records and follow up on club participation.
Encourage Community Participation	Wider network of clubs, services, volunteers and families engaged.	Partnership numbers, joint activities, social media and website connections.
Grow Personal Bests	Personal Bests at 3 locations Aqua Bests at 2 locations	Number of events and numbers attending. Participant, volunteer and coach satisfaction.
Develop Training Opportunities	Professionals and volunteers better equipped.	Number of training sessions, feedback and accreditation.
Empower Leaders	People with learning disabilities in leadership roles.	LD advisors appointed, training completed, case studies.
Improve Health Outcomes	Reported improvements in Health and Wellbeing.	Surveys, case studies, research partnerships.

Together we're active and able

Active LD is building a movement where people with learning disabilities are not just participants but leaders.

By celebrating achievements, creating inclusive opportunities, and changing systems, we work together to make physical activity accessible to everyone.



Active LD