

# LEICESTERSHIRE DISABILITY ATHLETICS DEVELOPMENT GROUP 5TH ANNUAL REPORT FROM OFFICERS 2017/18



1st September 2017 – 31st  
August 2018

*This report contains details of the  
Leicestershire Disability Athletics  
Development Group's activities, successes  
and aspirations for the 2017/18 school year.*

Leicestershire Disability Athletics Development Group  
c/o Saffron Lane Athletics Stadium, Saffron Lane, Leicester, LE2 7NQ

# Leicestershire Disability Athletics Development Group 5th Annual Report from Officers 2017/18

1ST SEPTEMBER 2017 – 31ST AUGUST 2018

## INTRODUCTION

The Leicestershire Disability Athletics Development Group (LDADG) works to offer all disabled athletes access to high quality coaching, competition and exit routes into sustained participation. This report continues to acknowledge the LDADG as a significant and important organisation for the development of disability athletics across the counties of Leicestershire and Rutland. The group is recognised and supported by Leicester City Council, Leicestershire & Rutland Athletics Association, Leicestershire & Rutland Sport, and nationally, by Sportshall Associates, EFDS (as of 26<sup>th</sup> April 2018 Activity Alliance), CP Sport, England Athletics and British Athletics. The group also supports athletes from across the East Midlands to enable them to take part in regional and national competitions. There are few, if any, other counties that can boast a development group such as this. This report reflects the work and ethics of the LDADG and it is the fifth annual report from the group.

## STRUCTURE

The Leicestershire Disability Athletics Development Group is a voluntary group which is affiliated to England Athletics (the national governing body for the sport of athletics). Its meetings are open to all those who are interested in developing disability athletics in Leicestershire & Rutland. The group was formally established in 2010 (following 4 years of informal organisation) to provide a more coordinated approach to providing high quality opportunities for participation and competition for athletes with all forms of disability. There is very little input from paid workers and the group continues to function on the good will of a small number of dedicated volunteers.

## OFFICERS

LDADG is not a formally structured group, although it has a constitution and has elected the following officers in order for it to operate a bank account and make representative decisions.

Chair: Cherie D'Silva

Secretary: Vacant post (but some roles kindly undertaken by Nicky Collett)

[We have missed our Secretary, Rob Snart, who had been with us from the start – we wish him well.]

Treasurer: Dan Hewins

The list of partners, mainly schools, continues to grow and shows the powerful communication network across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland however there is still much to do and many areas still to be targeted and made aware of the opportunities provided by the group. There are worrying trends both locally and nationally in terms of access to opportunity and the falling number of athletes at regional and national events confirms this view. Within Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland the picture in terms of event participation is healthy. On a local level we have had personal support from John Duggan with his expertise and history of support for disability events across the whole of Leicestershire and Rutland in the city. We are also extremely fortunate that Job King has been part of our group from the start supporting our actions, increasing the circulation of information relating to our group and keeping us all up to speed with new initiatives on a local and national scale.

## SUCCESSES

Working in partnership with local athletics clubs, individual schools and local school networks disability athletics has continued to grow. Unfortunately, involvement and knowledge of the group’s programme of activities has continued to depend on individual contacts and there are still many young people not in the right place at the right time to be able to access opportunities that are appropriate to their needs. The group strives to find means of communication to ensure that opportunities are inclusive to all those who could benefit from the competitions and other opportunities e.g. training and equipment that the group promote. Below is a summary of the events that the group have organised in 2017 – 2018.

### ✓ SPORTSHALL ATHLETICS SERIES

This amazing aspect of our work continues to be popular with a steady increase of participating schools. See details below showing the number of special and mainstream schools (with individuals) entering each event. There has also been an increase in the total individual numbers

Entries	2016 /2017	2017/2018
KS2 CITY	10 (121)	19 (139)
KS2 COUNTY	13 (93)	14 (69)
KS3 CITY AND COUNTY	15 (106)	16 (122)
KS4/5	9 (72)	13 (91)
<b>Total Individual Pupils</b>	<b>392</b>	<b>421</b>

Each event involves Legacy Makers, volunteer effort, coordination and cooperation with schools and teams of Young Leaders to run the event. This is a very rewarding aspect for those who help to deliver the event.



*Some views of our KS3 event at Crown Hills College – we are always grateful for the use of the excellent facilities and welcome from community college staff and students.*



The Sportshall Athletics year culminated with a Level 3 event attended by 13 schools. This is part of the School Games “Super Series” programme. We have always had an “All Stars team” this is made up of top performers from schools that do not qualify as part of their school group. This has been a very successful innovation but requires dedication and energy from the group (particularly Cherie) as well as the Volunteers, Young Leaders and LRS support.

✓ **LEICESTERSHIRE DISABILITY CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPIONSHIPS**

These events took place in March and continued the 2016/17 format of two separate events: a festival in Knighton Park with a 1km opportunity for both ambulant and wheelchair athletes; and competitive races over 2km and 3km for our more able ambulant athletes again staged at Maplewell Hall School. Unfortunately, due to adverse weather conditions we had to cancel the park event and within the Spring term, which in 2018 was very short (an early Easter), it was impossible to schedule an alternative date. The traditional 2km and 3km races for KS3/4/5 pupils (age 11 and over) held at Maplewell Hall School did go ahead although only after considerable discussions about the weather and ground conditions. On the day it all ran extremely smoothly thanks to Scott Handley at the school, the team of leaders from Maplewell and several of our dedicated group of volunteers. The statistics below show the importance of this event for those involved (many of the staff also seem to enjoy their run with the pupils!). The support from Maplewell Hall is fantastic and the quote below from the headteacher at Maplewell in response to our thank you email probably captures how important the event is to the school, their pupils and everyone involved.

Entries	2015/16	2016 /2017	2017/18
Wheelchair	4 (6)	3 (7)	2 (2)
All ages 1Km	9 (46)	9 (42)	9 (73)
2Km 11+	7(36)	7 (45)	5 (30)
3Km 11+	6 (31)	4 (29)	4 (18)
Adults	x	x	1
<b>Total Schools</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Total Individuals</b>	<b>(128)</b>	<b>(114)</b>	<b>(122)</b>

**Thank you email to staff and pupils at Maplewell Hall School**

*“On behalf of the athletics group a huge thank you for hosting and supporting the X Country event. It is truly appreciated. So many positives for everyone who took part, it is such a great venue and you as a school make us all feel so welcome. We loved the signage that had been put up, which adds to the importance of the event and Maplewell’s young leaders were excellent and had clearly spent time with Scott talking about their roles and responsibilities at the event. They were brilliant and great ambassadors for Maplewell. Important to note that the leaders, year 10 pupils, were very much involved with the setting up and clearing away of the Sports Hall and were very clear about what needed to be done with minimum input from Scott. We spoke to several students during and after the race and they engaged confidently in conversation.”*

**Response from the Headteacher at Maplewell Hall School, Jason Brooks**

*“Thank you so much for these kind words. I will pass your comments onto the sports leaders. They will be over the moon with your feedback. I am immensely proud of how the students were involved in the setting up and running of the event. It was brilliant to see so many young people participating and making the event such a success. The conditions were quite tricky in places but all of the young people can take great heart from taking part.*

*I was out there with a strong cup of tea to see such a wonderful event. I am a PE teacher by trade and understand the massive effort that it takes in order to provide such opportunities to young people. Thank you and everybody involved in presenting so many young people with such a fantastic experience.*

*One of my year 8 girls found me out at the end of the day to show me her medal for coming second. Quite poignant on International Women's Day. There's one girl who was inspired. Thanks again."*

The county cross country championship has been held for about 15 years even before the days of the Disability Athletics Group and we need to celebrate the wonderful commitment made by Birkett House and their P.E. lead teacher **Joe Flynn** (who has now retired). Birkett House is the only school to have attended this event since its inception (when it was a development event within the Leics & Rutland AA mainstream XC Champs). Joe also brought a small squad to the Leics and Rutland AA track and field championships – a first "parallel" event about 15 years ago in Leamington (jointly with Warwickshire).

In 2018 – 19 we will continue to offer two cross country events, with the beginners and wheelchair users having the benefits of the Aylestone Park facilities for the festival event. A huge positive for using this facility is the path for wheelchair users and the indoor changing and administration area available including full facilities for all (both changing rooms and toilets).

#### ✓ **LEICESTERSHIRE DISABILITY ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS AND FESTIVAL**

In 2018 we were able to deliver three outdoor track and field events again. There were more schools and individuals attending across the three events and the format ensured that the competitions met the needs of the athletes. The Festival was accessed by special schools and the Special Olympics multi-sport group whereas the County/Regional championships were attended by both special and mainstream schools, together with individual club athletes. The Championships is part of our selection process for the East Midlands team for the nationals and this year we increased participation from Derbyshire schools and organisations. We continue to struggle with contacts from Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Northamptonshire – despite circulating all clubs and club contacts and the CSPs in the area. The primary "parallel" athletics day attracted a higher number of pupils from the city schools (which was possibly a result of the interest and participation in the Sportshall Athletics series). This year for the first time the National Championships included young people aged 9-11 in limited events and we were able to invite talented performers to take part in their first national championships.

We regularly receive feedback after events. Below are two quotes from emails following the Parallel Primary Athletics event in 2018:

*"Thanks to you Cherie for your enthusiasm and determination to ensure everyone has a great time, another brilliant day that it was a privilege to be part of"* – a volunteer

*"The children and staff were buzzing on their return. Thank you for all your efforts. It was an amazing event."* – Jane Gadsby Headteacher, Stokes Wood Primary School, Leicester.

And a quote from Cherie, the LDADG chair after one of the track events: *"We are all privileged, I suspect, to be part of a unique set of events which are driven by different passions and commitments by a small group of enthusiasts - but my view is that it is all our different strengths which keep it going - exhausting, frustrating and time-consuming - but so worth it! "*



*Job, James and Dan enjoying a “moment”!*

**SOME ENTRY STATISTICS**

- **Parallel Primary Athletics Participation**

	2016	2017	2018
Total Individuals	156	114	154
Schools	23	13	15

- **Regional Disability Athletics Championships**

	2016 (joint event with Festival option)	2017	2018
Total Individuals	112	77	109
Total schools/orgs	15	11	18

- **Leics and Rutland Disability Athletics Festival**

	2016 (joint event with Champs option)	2017	2018
Total Individuals	52	55	64
Total schools/orgs	7	7	6

- In next year’s report (2018-19) we hope to provide statistics which will highlight the range of physical, sensory and intellectual impairments of our participants.

✓ **CONTINUED SUCCESS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Athletes were selected from the Championship event for both MENCAP and DSE National Championships.

- **Mencap National Championships:** By far the largest number of athletes at the event were from Forest Way School, with other adults from Leicestershire (Thomas, Karim, Marcel, Connor and Vinny) having “A VERY successful day” in terms of medals and performances.
- The National DSE (now ‘Activity Alliance’) Junior Championship event was very successful particularly in the new U12 category (including wheelchair users). We received several very positive emails from parents and staff from participating schools. Overall 23 Gold, 10 Silver and 3 Bronze medals were gained - but many more reached finals for the first time and others should be proud that they had achieved the national standards to attend the events. Schools that excelled themselves in supporting the event with staff and parents were Ashfield, Babington, Crown Hills, Lutterworth High, Marriott, and St Bartholomew’s. The individual parents were also fantastic! Overall we had 31 entries with almost

twice this number having made the qualifying standards but who were unable to attend due to lack of transport or lack of school/parental support.

Our East Midlands team provided a large number of entries in the new U12 category and the organisers seemed happy to accommodate them and adjust events to the needs of the young athletes. Through our Sportshall Athletics programme we were able to identify athletes at an early stage but we realised we may have lost track of those from previous years who had changed schools to attend secondary school. Additionally, it is interesting to note that we now have a much broader participation from pupils with a variety of disabilities across all age groups – sensory, physical and intellectual: this is important for future developments. More work is needed though to ensure the needs of these groupings are understood by schools and clubs at our events.



The quotes below show the impact these events have on individual athletes and school groups:

*"Just wanted to say thank you to you and your team for all the help and support today. Elisha had a great time and it has certainly given her an enthusiasm to try the Wednesday night club, seeing her having a sense of accomplishment is priceless, thank you." Parent*

*"As you would expect, our students came to see me after the weekend, proudly displaying their medals. I did suggest to them that if I had ever earned such a wonderful medal that I wouldn't take it off for a week and would have even slept with it on... so they now think I'm nuts! Free ice-creams have gone to the whole team, staff and students alike, to celebrate. Thanks all for putting on such a wonderful event. My only regret is that I couldn't be there as I was away for the weekend. I did get regular text updates though throughout the weekend. As you know, I am blessed with the wonderful staff team I have here at Babington and our students make us immensely proud every single day. It's lovely though to hear feedback from you about them." Headteacher*

*"Thank You so much for looking after them, I am so pleased they both came and did well." Teaching assistant*

*"Cherie and the gang - Thank you thank you for all your hard work and support and help and smiles and understanding and encouragement. It was an epic day for my girls thanks to you guys. Don't worry I have told the entire world about it! Please keep us involved in the new secondary and age categories 😊." Parent*

*"Just want to again thank you and your team for all that you do and offer for our children. They have loved the opportunities and competition again this year and one of our pupils is now completely submerged in athletics, which can only benefit her physical and mental wellbeing" Teacher*

*"Thank you for all your hard work. The students thoroughly enjoyed it. They have been talking about it all week and are keen to take part in some more events." Teaching assistant*

- **WHEELCHAIR RACERS**

The training group has continued to be available on a fortnightly basis and is regularly accessed by a group of young people. This is successfully supported by three local experts and also by Job King, from British Athletics. It is also really helpful that athletes have the opportunity of joining with the group that Job coaches at Coventry. This year athletes did represent Leicestershire in the London mini marathon wheelchair event both Floss and Kuba took part. At all our events athletes are made aware of the training opportunities available at Saffron Lane but in 2017-18 we had no additions to the established group. (We were delighted that Umaymah was selected to compete at the School Games Final in Loughborough in September 2018.)

- **TEAM LEICESTERSHIRE (SCHOOL GAMES)**

Our involvement with Team Leicestershire and the Schools Games is as much as success as it is a challenge. We have started discussions with Team Leicestershire about disability athletics being part of the offer that is made to all schools. At present the offer is only in mainstream events and athletics (track and cross country) is not part of the offer and in the short term is unlikely to be. The school sport offer in Leicestershire has several strands to it and the Disability Sportshall Athletics for Secondary schools is already part of the School Games offer. In 2018 – 2019 we would look to bring on board the Primary Parallel Sportshall athletics, as well as elements of the cross country and the track championships. Being part of Team Leicestershire should support information getting to all schools and provide some additional financial support. Discussions are very much in their infancy.

## **CHALLENGES**

The LDADG committee is made up of a small number of dedicated volunteers. Throughout the year we have tried to find likeminded people to join the committee. Despite repeated communication with schools, clubs and local authority personnel we have not found any suitable candidates and a regular agenda item at our committee meetings is the sustainability of the group. We are so fortunate that Job King attends our meetings and gives invaluable contributions not only as a wheelchair racing coach but through his role with British Athletics as a member of the Paralympic Coaching team. Job is a regular attendee at our meetings and is always available to answer queries and make suggestions for improvement and development.

- **ATHLETE CLASSIFICATIONS**

This remains an issue particularly when new schools and athletes come on board. To run our events and ensure that everyone is competing on a level playing field we need the correct information about the athletes. Time constraints and lack of knowledge by some schools (particularly in terms of learning difficulties) means that paperwork and then results might be inaccurate. As a group we are delivering a unique range of events and want to try to extend this practice to other counties and other sports. This is very much the case with sportshall athletics where on the national database there are very few results outside Leicestershire. We are still looking for more national support for the calibration of sportshall athletics results which can reflect better the performances of our athletes. Many of the local staff agree that our events provide opportunities for staff to understand the capabilities of their pupils and we look for a better grasp of the staff in completing the paperwork to enable us to present a more competitive environment for progression to a national platform.

- **WORKFORCE – ADMINISTRATION, ORGANISATION AND DELIVERY OF EVENTS**

During this year it has become increasingly obvious that there have been many changes in the roles and responsibilities of paid workers involved in our association. The majority of administration tasks and

support at events is now carried out as voluntary hours rather than part of a paid work programme. We have experienced some positive support as part of the “2012 Olympic Legacy” – but it seems that the so-called “golden years” are over and there is just not the availability of the paid workforce to be part of the work of the disability athletics group. Leicester City Council believes it is unable to provide any support although they say they will help as and when they can. The School Sport and Physical Activity (SSPAN) networks through their Legacy Maker roles have contributed time to deliver events but this has not been easy to track down and is not equitable across the districts.

We cannot underestimate the ongoing contribution of Dan who links with schools across city and county in his role as SSPAN manager. He also keeps us up to speed with developments at Leicester-shire and Rutland Sport. Delivery at events is reliant on the group of unpaid UKA officials that continue to be involved and the school “young leaders”. This year saw representation from North West Leicestershire area as well as our mainstays from the city i.e. Crown Hills and Lancaster Young Leaders.

### ➤ **PATHWAYS AND PROGRESSION**

We continue to signpost athletes to clubs and activities that will enhance their progress in athletics. Our dedicated wheelchair group continues to offer opportunities to a select group of athletes and we always have the potential to link with Coventry Godiva’s through Job. The Leicester Special Olympics Group now has links with Leicester Coritanian AC but unfortunately no athletes came through this pathway to take part in our events. Saffron AC has ensured that their disabled athletes enter our event. Charnwood AC has several Paralympic and elite athletes in their club but, so far, the links with our events have been through individual contacts.

On a local front a real challenge for us has been to keep track of the children who might move from a primary school with links to our events to a secondary school without these links. Without doubt and despite the many challenges we can be enormously proud of the number of athletes the Leicestershire group support at the national junior championships in the summer.

### ➤ **RAISING AWARENESS OF OPPORTUNITIES**

We continue to attract new participants to our events. It does though remain a lottery and often those involved are simply happy accidents because they are in a school that truly believes in providing appropriate opportunities for all their children. Sometimes it is because a specific person at the school is supportive; sometimes because of a proactive parent. The group continue to promote our events but do not have the resources and knowledge to use social media and other marketing methods to promote further. Being part of Team Leicestershire could support this, but our lack of human resource is again a barrier to progress in this area.

## **PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

Leicestershire Disability Athletics Development Group would like to thank its partners and participating schools for their support in developing Disability Athletics in Leicestershire and Rutland and for their continued hard work and dedication. It has been a remarkable achievement to have local teachers, carers and assistants attending the competitions and providing encouragement and support. We have particularly found that the increase in mainstream school attendance across the county has been an enhancement and a challenge for all participants. We have continued to work closely with national organisations to provide input for their development and to receive advice and guidance for our events.

<b>Leicestershire and Rutland Schools/Colleges as Participating Partners</b>	
All Saints	Ashfield Academy
Ashmount School	Babington Academy
Badgerbrook Primary School	Birch Wood School
Birkett House School	Brocks Hill Primary School
Brookvale Academy	Burbage School
Buswells Lodge Primary School	Catmose College
Christ the King Primary School	Church Langton Primary School
Crown Hills Community College	Dorothy Goodman School
Ellesmere College	Evington Valley Primary School
Forest Way School	Gateway College
Glen Hills Primary School	Glen Primary School
Glenfield Primary School	Heathfield Lane Academy
Inglehurst Junior School	Judgemeadow Community College
Leicestershire Academy	Maplewell Hall School
Marriott Primary School	Mayflower Primary School
Millfield LEAD Academy	Montrose Primary School
Mountfields Lodge School	Netherhall Primary School
Oakham C of E School Oaklands Primary School	Parkland Primary School
Parks Primary School	Queensmead Primary School
Rawlins Academy	Spinney Hill Primary School
Stokes Wood Primary School	St Barnabas Primary School
St Joseph's Primary School	St Bartholomew's C of E Primary School
St Mary's CofE Primary School	St Mary and St John's Primary School
St Mary and St Joseph Primary School, Rutland	Westgate School
Wigston Academy	Woodland Grange Primary School
Woodstock Primary School	
<b>National, Regional and Local Organisation Partners and Participants</b>	
Bennerley Fields School, Ilkeston, Derbys	Bladon House, Burton, Staffs
British Athletics (UK Athletics) and UKA Officials	Charnwood AC
CP Sport	Crown Hills Community College Leadership Academy
Derby AC	Disability Sport England (DSE and EFDS)
England Athletics	Leicester City Council
Leicester (SPSAN) School Sport & Physical Activity Network	The Lancaster School Young Leaders
Leicestershire & Rutland AA	Leicestershire & Rutland Sport
Leicestershire & Rutland Legacy Makers	Lions International
Mencap Sport	Rutland District Council
Rutland School Sport Partnership	Saffron AC
Special Olympics Multi-Sports, Leicester (SOL)	Sportshall Associates
St Andrew's School, Derby	Transitions2, Derby
Typhoo (for Regional Sponsorship)	

**FINANCE REPORT:** This is available as a separate document to our financial partners. All our events are financially self-sufficient and rely on entry income and support from schools for some venues.