

**SPORT**  
FOR CONFIDENCE



# Our Blueprint

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# Foreword

**Sport for Confidence is a Community Health Service. This is our Blueprint. It outlines the foundation of our work – a plan that reimagines physical activity as a vehicle for empowerment, equity, and belonging.**

**This is more than a document; it's a guide to what is important to us – a person first, occupation-focused, and systems-driven approach, showing how sport and physical activity can transform lives and communities.**

Founded in 2015, Sport for Confidence was created to bring together the expertise of occupational therapists, the physical activity workforce, and individuals with lived experience to tackle the persistent inequalities in access to physical activity and sport.

From the outset, our vision has been to narrow the gap in occupational, health, and social outcomes by embedding inclusive, person-centred practice into local systems and everyday community life.

We've worked within and alongside health, care, and community systems to demonstrate that physical activity can be a powerful tool for prevention, inclusion and occupational justice – supporting people to live with greater autonomy, wellbeing and connection.

We invite organisations, practitioners, and communities to **#PlayYourPart** in creating a future where physical activity enriches individual lives, narrows the outcomes gap, and strengthens our collective sense of purpose and belonging.



*Jake*

**Jake Turner**  
Co-CEO

*Lyndsey*

**Lyndsey Barrett**  
Founder, Co-CEO &  
Lead Occupational Therapist



# Our Vision



A future where fairer access to physical activity and sport narrows the gap in occupational, health, and social outcomes – allowing **everyone** to benefit in a way that is meaningful to people's lives.

**Sport for Confidence centres and prioritises the needs of people and communities furthest away from physical activity and sport, recognising everyone has a right to experience physical activity and sport, which can empower, provide meaningful choice and a sense of belonging.**

We work locally and national in spaces and places making use of the expertise that comes from Occupational Therapy, the physical activity sector and those with lived experience. This combined skill set is ideally suited to address barriers to accessing physical activity and sport, tackling inequalities and providing the best possible experiences for people and communities to take part in a way that is relevant and meaningful to people's lives.

We recognise and value the unique contributions of people, their environments, occupation and participation when using physical activity to promote good health and prevent ill health. We work in partnership to play our part in ensuring systems and services can meet the needs of everyone in our community.

# Our Values

## Belonging for Everyone

We go beyond 'including' people to actively challenge, enhance and improve systems and services to ensure everyone has the opportunity to experience a sense of belonging.



## Driven by Commitment

We are deeply committed to making a difference in people's lives, believing that sport and physical activity can ignite lasting change and transformation.



## Caring with Purpose

We lead with humility, empathy, compassion, and kindness, building strong, supportive relationships that prioritise wellbeing and dignity.



## Innovating for Impact

We continuously evolve, finding creative and effective ways to break down barriers and transform lives.



## Embracing the Journey

We are always learning, growing and building a more equitable future together, being brave and trying to do better.



## Championing & Celebrating

We focus first on the aspirations of the people and communities we serve. Listening to, celebrating, and elevating the voices of lived experience.



# Our Beliefs

We work locally and nationally to bring our vision to life and uphold our core beliefs.

For over a decade, we have refined our approach, focusing on continuous learning and adapting to a changing world. We are still learning, growing and striving to do better.

## We believe that:

- Movement is a fundamental right for all. Everyone deserves the opportunity to be physically active and enjoy sport.
- Physical activity and sport can create opportunities to experience play, joy and fun.
- Physical activity is powerful. It's a therapeutic tool that prevents illness, promotes health, and enhances occupational outcomes.
- Physical activity and sport can help to build a strong sense of belonging. Physical activity environments must foster inclusivity and belonging for all.
- Physical activity and sport empowers individuals, strengthens communities, and inspires organisational, economic and national growth.
- Togetherness is key. Partnerships, collaboration and a whole systems approach to understanding and tackling inequalities can bring about positive change.



Sport for Confidence exists to bridge the gap in access to physical activity and sport, prioritising those furthest from these opportunities.

# Our Guiding Principles

## Belonging Through Physical Activity & Sport

*Building connections and transforming perceptions.*

Sport and physical activity have the power to foster a strong sense of belonging.

This goes beyond creating connections during sports sessions; it extends to making people feel they belong in wider environments, like leisure centres, and in the broader community.

True belonging is more than inclusion or equity, it changes how excluded groups are seen by others and how they view themselves.

Sport for Confidence recognise the well documented impact of 'not belonging' including increased risks for physical and mental illness, weakened immunity, and challenges in initiating and maintaining relationships.

We recognise that health conditions, impairments, diagnoses, or life changes can intensify social isolation, loneliness, and disconnection. Environmental barriers, coupled with a lack of meaningful opportunities to participate, can further reduce motivation and hinder a sense of belonging.

Sport for Confidence actively bridges this gap by identifying and addressing environmental barriers with personalised adjustments that go beyond structural changes.

Every day, we tailor physical activity spaces to meet individual needs, ensuring everyone can experience the transformative power of inclusion and the sense of belonging through sport and physical activity.



## Person Centred & Occupation Focused

*Prioritising individuals' unique needs and life goals over one-size-fits-all approaches.*

Sport for Confidence adopts a personalised, occupation-focused approach which involves meeting people where they are and adapting environments and sports or physical activities to suit individual needs. This contrasts with medical services which typically address specific health conditions or impairments and may prescribe interventions based on these. We prioritise the whole person, celebrating each individual's unique strengths and experiences within the physical activity and sport space.

Our dedication to personalised care and occupation-focused practices goes beyond traditional delivery models, ensuring individuals remain at the centre of everything we do.



## Movement Beyond Medicine®

*Moving beyond a medicalised, reductionist approach, ensuring physical activity becomes a tool for empowerment, belonging, prevention and positive health outcomes.*

Sport for Confidence captures the transformative power of physical activity to unlock its full therapeutic potential.

By focusing on the person and occupation, we provide a level of therapeutic value that cannot be achieved through a one-size-fits-all, prescriptive approach. We emphasise the profound meaning and value that arise from connecting unique needs with personalised ways of engaging in physical activity.

This targeted, individualised approach delivers therapeutic outcomes far beyond those of a standardised, condition-focused model.



## Celebrating Difference

*Valuing diverse contributions, challenging biases, and advancing inclusion.*

We value the unique contributions of everyone and celebrate challenges which support us to expand and develop our practice.

We aim to build a sustainable way of working where everyone can authentically belong.

Sport for Confidence acknowledges that with difference can come friction and discomfort, and it is our responsibility to lean into this to work towards a future where everyone belongs.

Acknowledging that people experience systemic harms and economic exclusion is integral to our leadership approach.



**True belonging is more than inclusion or equality, it changes how excluded groups are seen by others and how they view themselves.**



We foster environments where everyone feels they belong, contributing to improved health, wellbeing, and occupational justice.



# Our Guiding Principles

## Sharing Power

*Equal partnerships and participant-led planning.*

Sport for Confidence acknowledges the power imbalance between people furthest away from physical activity and sport and service providers.

We actively work to share power in relationships that honour human dignity, autonomy, freedom, choice and control. Furthermore, Sport for Confidence role model's 'good customer service' to adapt systems and services to meet the needs of our communities.

## No Labels

*Avoiding using labels that haven't been personally chosen, as they can fail to capture the complex vibrancy, diversity and wholeness of humanity.*

Sport for Confidence avoids using labels that haven't personally been chosen, and instead uses language which reflects the person's chosen identity and our values.

Fostering belonging, our holistic approach supports positive outcomes through participation in sport and physical activity.

We want people's experiences to be shaped by what is important to them, actively contributing and not solely pre-determined because of a medical label.

We are committed to moving beyond a focus solely on diagnostic labels to ensuring physical activity becomes a tool for empowerment, belonging, prevention and positive health outcomes. We foster environments where everyone feels they belong, contributing to improved health, wellbeing, and occupational justice.



## Compassionate & Transformative Leadership

*Leading with compassion and transforming with purpose.*

Sport for Confidence exemplifies compassionate and transformative leadership by focusing on individuals who face the greatest barriers to participating in physical activity and sport. Through compassionate leadership, we attend, understand, empathise, and help by working collaboratively with participants, occupational therapists, and those within the physical activity sector to explore how traditional environments and approaches limit opportunities.

Additionally, Sport for Confidence champions transformative leadership, where leaders, often with lived experience, challenge traditional norms. They critically reflect on the past to shape the present and envision inclusive futures, embodying new ways of being, doing, becoming and belonging through leadership informed by lived experience.

## Whole Systems Approach

*Working together across systems for lasting change.*

Sport for Confidence work with partners across systems to address barriers and ensure fairer access to opportunities.

This adds value to existing practices, connecting across frontline staff and decision-makers in health and social care, sport, and leisure.

It is enhanced by effective collaboration, leadership, and planning, all aimed at improving outcomes. By working together, we aim to create a future with fairer access to physical activity and sport, narrowing the gap in health outcomes and allowing everyone to benefit meaningfully.

We acknowledge that we are not the sole solution, but we work hard to be a key part of it.

## Challenge to Systems & Services

*Influencing and challenging with practical and effective practice.*

Sport for Confidence recognises the impact of health conditions, impairments, neurodivergence, identity and life circumstances on participation in society including physical activity and sport due to the unequal personal, community and social barriers that some people and communities face.

We apply a critical approach which means we use our influence as service providers to challenge the ways in which physical activity and sport is accessed and demonstrate practical and effective practices aligned with equality legislation.

One of the ways we use a critical approach is through applying practical and effective 'reasonable adjustments' in local spaces in line with equality legislation. We recognise our duty along with all businesses, facilities and services to ensure 'reasonable adjustments' are made to enable meaningful access to opportunities to engage in health promoting activities.



# How we work

Physical activity, on its own, can create benefits, but its impact grows exponentially when it's integrated thoughtfully, in a way that meets each individual's unique needs and aspirations.

We approach physical activity as a specialised, therapeutic tool, deeply rooted in occupational therapies founding beliefs; that what we do, our occupations, influence our health.



At Sport for Confidence, we believe that physical activity is far more than movement or sport, it's a powerful therapeutic tool that, when used to its full potential, can transform lives.

But like most tools, its true strength emerges when it's used in the right way and as part of a bigger picture.

Our approach is not about simply getting people to move; it's about intertwining physical activity with meaningful life or occupational goals that create lasting impact.

Our occupational therapists work alongside the physical activity sector, each bringing their unique expertise. Together, they facilitate activities that aren't just adapted for accessibility but are crafted to meet individual and group needs, whether it's building social connections, improving health, or preventing illness.

Physical activity is both a therapeutic means and end, an opportunity for people to build relationships, develop skills, and find purpose. The people we support are always at the centre of this process. We listen to their experiences and elevate their voices because we know they are the true experts in their own lives. We work together to centre their experiences, skills and knowledge within our services.

The outcomes we evidence go far beyond sport. For some, it's about developing social confidence after years of stigma and marginalisation. For others, it's building vocational skills and confidence after being excluded from traditional employment opportunities. And for those living with frailty, it might be about improving strength and balance to reduce the risk of falls, ultimately preserving their independence.

We use physical activity to build social capital, open doors, and help people reconnect with themselves and others. By adapting activities and focusing on personal goals, we ensure that physical activity isn't just about exercise, it's about thriving, achieving, and feeling a sense of belonging and purpose.



The outcomes we evidence go far beyond sport.



Our practices bridge the outcomes gap at individual, local, organisational and systems levels.



# Where we work



## Place-Based Practice

Our practice uses a neighbourhood health approach and takes place in local community assets such as outdoor spaces, leisure centres and in primary care settings.

Our practices bridge the outcomes gap at individual, local, organisational and systems levels, integrating the skill and influence of occupational therapists, the physical activity sector and lived experience at crucial touch points in local places during everyday community life.

Sport for Confidence build opportunities for people to develop positive personal and social connections, meaningful experiences and a sense of belonging to places relevant to them.

## National Practice

Sport for Confidence's national practice is supported by Sport England and involves a collaboration of system partners across health, social care, sport, leisure, and the community.

This collaboration focuses on amplifying best practices and strengthening connections across systems and services, working closely with individuals with lived experience to address inequality and improve outcomes.

As part of this effort, we influence the practice and education of occupational therapists, as well as the broader allied health, social care, sport, and leisure workforce; enhancing their knowledge, skills, and confidence in promoting physical activity and addressing physical inactivity.



# Our Partnerships



Our collaborative approach to prevention was found to be 12 times more cost-effective in generating wellbeing compared to the average NHS intervention.

We partner with organisations across health, social care, leisure, sport, voluntary and community sectors, working collaboratively to ensure that systems and services are inclusive and meet the needs of everyone in our community.

Our collaborative approach to prevention has been externally evaluated, demonstrating significant social value, increased levels of physical activity and wellbeing, and reduced self-reported service use. It was found to be 12 times more cost-effective in generating wellbeing compared to the average NHS intervention.

While we are not a replacement for NHS or social care services, our role as a cost-reducing complement to the NHS is both positive and relevant. *(Reference: PEM report)*

Our work is driven by evidence-based practice, balanced with the invaluable voices of lived experience, compassionate and transformative leadership. We believe this blend is key to our relationship with partners, shaping systems, services, and opportunities that truly meet the needs of the communities we serve.





# Summary

**Sport for Confidence, as a Community Health Service is founded on the belief that accessible and meaningful physical activity plays a vital role in improving lives and strengthening systems.**

Improvements in physical and mental health are a given; the significance for Sport for Confidence are the gains in social capital such as strengthened relationships and networks, enhanced trust and reciprocity, the development of social belonging norms across diverse groups, in addition to an enhanced sense of hope, agency, skills and confidence.

By working across local and national spaces and places, amplifying best practice and strengthening connections, Sport for Confidence drives inclusion and belonging, creating meaningful social transformation through occupation focussed leadership in physical activity and sport.

Sport for Confidence demonstrates leadership guided by principles which address the needs and rights of people to engage in physical activity and sport. These guiding principles support fairer occupational, social care and health outcomes; people can do what they need or want to do in their everyday lives. The whole system value can be measured in ethical, moral, economic, political and social gains.

We believe that by holding unswervingly to the principles and approaches above we will achieve our vision, a future where fairer access to physical activity and sport narrows the gap in outcomes, allowing everyone to benefit in a way that is personal and meaningful.



**How will you  
play your part?**

# Glossary

What we mean when we say...



## Agency

We mean the ability to choose and make decisions or act in situations that are personally chosen and meaningful.

## Close the gap OR Outcomes gap

We are referring to the gap in occupational, social care and health outcomes for people who experience inequalities.

## Critical

We are referring to questioning ideas, assumptions, and practices that people often take for granted. It involves exploring how certain ways of thinking and doing things become the norm, and how power is used to keep them in place.

## Co-production

We mean an approach to working together with people who have lived experience, in equal partnership, and for equal benefit.

## Environmental barriers

We mean barriers to physical activity and sport including those in constructed and natural environments, assistive technology, information technology and digital access, transport, systems services and policies, social support and societal attitudes as well as economic barriers.

## Lived experience

We mean the knowledge and understanding that comes from personally experiencing something. This may be relevant to the vision and beliefs of Sport for Confidence, for example, working in partnership with someone who has a disability and has felt excluded from sport and physical activity.

## Occupation

We are referring to everyday activities and roles that are meaningful, purposeful and valuable to people's lives. For example, '**occupational outcomes**' may include functional performance, prevention, health and wellbeing, quality of life, role competence and occupational meaning, participation, choice and balance.

## Occupational justice

We mean the concept that every individual should have equal opportunities and resources to engage in meaningful activities or occupations that contribute to their health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

## Participants

We mean people we work with who are 'furthest away from physical activity and sport'.

## People furthest away

We mean people who may have faced cultural, historic, social, political, economic and environmental barriers to full participation in society including to physical activity and sport, this is sometimes referred to as 'marginalised populations/people'.

## Places

We mean specific locations. For example, Basildon Sporting Village, Essex and or a local community hall in Ipswich, Suffolk. These places may have significance as part of a local community, or may develop significance and meaning for people when they take part in our '**spaces**'.

## Social capital

We mean the resources and benefits that individuals can access through their relationships and social networks. These resources can be information, support, or opportunities which can be shared or utilised to help individuals achieve personal or collective goals to enhance their well-being. Social capital is built on trust, reciprocity, and mutual connections within a community or group.

## Spaces

We mean the different service provisions we are involved in. This includes delivery in Leisure Centres and Local Communities, Primary Care, Health Inequalities, Long Covid, Strength & Balance and National strategic provision.

