

NATIONAL SOCIAL ENTERPRISE POLICY FOR IRELAND 2019-2022



Policy Consultation Notes from the **Physical Activity & Sports Department**, Cope Foundation Cork

A primary goal of this department is to facilitate and support people with intellectual disabilities to engage in physical activity and sports in the most inclusive environment possible.

A specific objective is to consolidate existing and nurture new relationships with participants and administrators of any club, group or organization which promotes Physical Activity and Sport (PA&Sport) in the community (Cork City and county).

Since 1957, Cope Foundation has been a leader in the provision of services for people with intellectual disabilities in Cork city and county. Cope Foundation has invested significant resources in establishing high quality sports and physical activity facilities, in recruiting specialist physical activity and sports staff, who in turn have developed and implement progressive and inclusive PA&Sports policies across the organization.

Since 2002 years, Cope Foundation's PA&Sports Dept. has assumed a role of "social entrepreneur" and has engaged in significant social enterprise by sharing its indoor and outdoor sports facilities and its hydrotherapy pool with individuals, groups and organizations in the local community.

However, Cope Foundation is unique in that it shares, **AT NO COST TO THE USER**, its physical activity and sports facilities and hydrotherapy pool with local individuals, organizations and schools.

While Cope Foundation does rent its hydrotherapy pool to three commercial and "for profit" swim teaching companies, the income generated, is reinvested in the provision of physical activity and sports across the organization.

Cope Foundation has engaged in this practice to have a social impact, to highlight and promote "the Common Good" and engage in a social enterprise which others in our community could replicate.

While it is intended to charge a nominal fee from late 2019, the funds generated are solely targeted to meet the cost of hiring a contractor to provide a 12 month facilities maintenance programme.

Cope Foundation provides a very broad range of supports and services to its clients. Through this work, Cope has already very well established links in all levels of local support, such as Cork City Council, Cork County Council, various working groups within the HSE, various government departments etc.

Specifically with regard to PA&Sports, Cope Foundation is represented on the board of Cork Local Sports Partnership, the steering committee of CARA and the national organisation for sport and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities.

Cope Foundation contributes significantly to local and national inclusive sports policies, is recognized nationally and internationally as an example of best practice in adapted physical activity and inclusive sports.

Services include

- Early Intervention
- Education
- Training
- Day services
- Residential services
- Housing
- Respite
- Arts and Therapies
- Physical Activity & Sports

Further Social Enterprise innovation within **Sports Sector** in Cope Foundation:

- Employment in facility maintenance.
- Employment in office and administration of facilities.
- Energy management at the hydrotherapy pool.
- Energy management in the sports facilities.
- Use of sports facilities as catalyst for inclusive social/cultural events .
- Piggy backing on Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives from companies with whom Cope Foundation already collaborates.
- Avail of Cope Foundation expertise in capitalizing on existing and new funding streams through Dormant Accounts (Social Enterprise Development Fund) and any new funding which comes under the remit of the Department of Rural Affairs and Community Development.
- Build on the very significant physical activity, sports and health related network to which Cope Foundation has contributed enormously in the past two decades. In particular, its critical role within Cork Sports Partnership and through that, within Cork SportsAbility Forum must be consolidated and built upon. Cope Foundation has played a leading role in the sharing of physical activity and sports resources, collaboration between a wide variety of mainstream sports organizations and disability groups and improving awareness of the value and need for equality and inclusion in sport.
- Cope Foundation is intent on maintaining an influential role in social enterprise, share its best practices and improve general knowledge and understanding of the critical value of this part of its services.

Physical Activity and Sport provides boundless opportunities for social inclusion and equality and thus social enterprise; in our experience in Cope Foundation, the ease with which such opportunities can be created and achieved through Sport and Physical Activity indicates that as stakeholders, we can play a critical role in enhancing this aspect of social policy.

The importance and value of participation in physical activity and sport to the physical and mental health of our population is already established in research and is undeniable.

By creating opportunities for the teaching of fundamental movement skill acquisition of the under 4's, teaching physical education at school, providing for competitive and recreational sports and physical activity at all ages and supporting the maintenance of best functional fitness of our most elderly people, we are providing opportunities for social enterprise and Cope Foundation is very keen to play its part in influencing and actioning such enterprise.

The work of the Physical Activity & Sports Department in Cope Foundation is funded primarily by the HSE. However, many of the works and projects undertaken by this department are, by definition, social enterprises and are often funded by project grant application from sources outside the HSE.

It is planned to individualize funding for all supports received by people with intellectual disabilities and thus there is need for much greater clarity around how to fund this very important element of the support.

While I acknowledge that this contribution is a bit late getting to any discussion, I simply wish to highlight that Cope Foundation is very keen to highlight its view that the provision of quality Physical Activity & Sports services to people with intellectual disabilities is already utterly interwoven within layers of networks across the city and county, that this provision happens within a model of care which is socially and economically innovative for people with and without disabilities.



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