

University's Inclusive Sport Plans Welcomed by Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport



Monday, 22 September 2014

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, The Right Honourable Sajid Javid MP, has given his approval to the University of Worcester's 'ambitious, bold' plans to create an International Centre for Inclusive Sport.

During a visit to the [University of Worcester Arena](#) last week, Mr Javid heard from the [University's Vice Chancellor, Professor David Green](#), and the [Head of its Institute of Sport and Exercise Science, Mick Donovan](#), about the plans to expand on the existing vision in place at the University, to form a world-leading centre for inclusive sport.

The University Arena was designed and built specifically with the needs of wheelchair athletes in mind and, since opening its doors last April, has provided increased opportunities for athletes and participants of all ages and ability levels to enjoy, and thrive in, a sporting environment, in line with the legacy targets of the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

The new proposals would see the University's research, participation and development initiatives expanded and its expertise utilised further to deliver truly inclusive sport to a wide range of athletes and participants, including women, disabled competitors and older people.

After hearing of the proposals, Mr Javid said: "I think the plans are very ambitious, very bold; but I think that's the kind of thing you need if you truly want to see a change in approach towards having more inclusive sport.

"I'm very keen to take a much closer look at the proposals because I think that it's something that can continue to build on that legacy of 2012.

"This is my first visit to the University Arena – I've heard about what's going on here and have wanted to come down for a while – and it's been great to have a look and I'm really impressed by what I've seen. The inclusivity is especially impressive – getting more people to participate in sport is hugely important, and is again a key legacy of the Olympics."

Whilst at the University Arena, Mr Javid observed an induction session for first year University students and met participants taking part in an 'Active Ageing' strength and conditioning class.

He also met with [Sophie Carrigill, a second year student and the captain of Great Britain Women's Wheelchair Basketball team](#); and Adam Nixon, who captained Great Britain's wheelchair basketball team to victory in the recent Invictus Games – both of whom use the University Arena as their main training base.

Mr Donovan believes that the plans to develop an International Centre for Inclusive Sport will mean that more of the country's top disabled athletes can benefit from the inclusive approach at Worcester.

"Since opening in 2013, the University of Worcester Arena has come to exemplify true inclusion at all levels of sport, and that is something we want to continue to build on in creating an International Centre for Inclusive Sport," he said.

"Worcester and the University of Worcester are already synonymous with an innovative approach to inclusive sport, and these new developments would allow even more elite Parasport athletes to excel, while also removing the barriers to participation and development to participants at all levels.

"We are delighted that Mr Javid was so enthusiastic about the proposals, as we firmly believe that the facilities, infrastructure and approach at Worcester can continue to build an environment in which sport is accessible for all – a key aspect of the London 2012 legacy."

The full set of proposals is expected to be formalised and announced in early 2015.

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