

# **Vision Sports Ireland 2020 Annual Report**



Vision Sports Ireland began 2020 with limited staffing resources with two part-time development officers. In March NCBI announced it had formally merged with Vision Sports Ireland a body dedicated to the promotion of sports and leisure activities for blind or vision impaired people.

At the launch 5 times Paralympic sprint champion Jason Smyth said “***Vision Sports has continuously encouraged and supported me as an athlete. To know more blind or visually impaired people could benefit through this merger is really heartening for me***”.

Following the launch, the COVID-19 pandemic had huge implications across the world and essentially put a stop to all sporting activity. All local, national, and international events supported by Vision Sports were indefinitely postponed or cancelled.

Vision Sports sought the views of its members by conducting a survey which found 75% were unable to meet national physical activity guidelines during Covid-19, with an alarming 90% reporting their physical activity had been severely limited largely due to the physical and social distancing guidelines restricting the use of guides/pilots for exercise.

Vision Sports responded by developing two World leading solutions.

Firstly, we pioneered the highly successful socially distant **long cane guide walking and running programme**. This allowed members to participate in the activity of running while complying with social distancing guidelines.



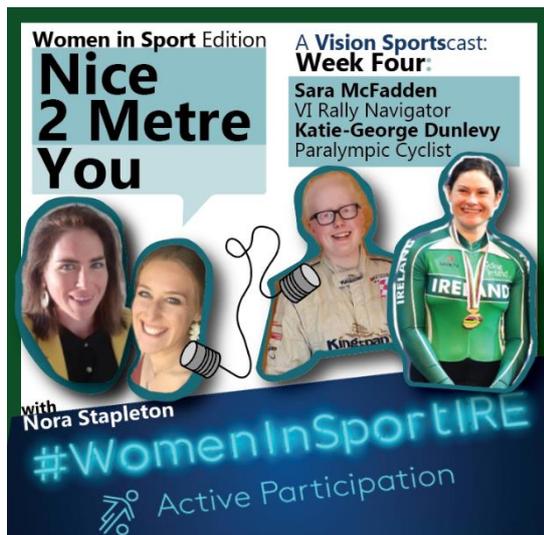
Secondly, the Government Expert Group on Return to Sport adopted and commended **Vision Sports Pass-Sport**, the designated guide buddy solution.



Through regular bulletins we engaged with members promoting positive health, wellbeing, fitness, and nutrition. With our sports sector colleagues we collaborated on home exercise and information programmes.

In November Vision Sports employed Pádraig Healy as its first ever full-time National Sports Development Manager. Pádraig reports to Aaron Mullaniff, Head of National Services at the NCBI.

In addition, we ran **Nice2MetreYou**, the Vision Sportscast, where members met and chatted with our top sports stars.



At Board level Paul Ledwidge, Group Chair at NCBI, took over as Chairperson of Vision Sports. Paul was joined on the Board by Donnacha McCarthy and Bernie Everard.

Vision Sports were successful in grant applications through Sport Ireland for core activities as well as the restricted Dormant Account Funds. In addition, we were awarded funding for the COVID solution EyeCan Project, incorporating a new accessible digital platform (app and web) as well as an audio-visual awareness campaign.

Notwithstanding the significant challenge of the pandemic 2020 was a most successful year for Vision Sports Ireland.

### **Sport Ireland Funding**

Vision Sports was awarded €78,500 through Sport Ireland Dormant Account Fund.

€40,000 - Sport Inclusion Disability Fund

€18,000 - Equipment

€15,000 – Volunteer Supports  
€5,500 - Youth Leadership

Covid-19 Recovery Fund - €97,500

Core Funding - €48,000

Audited accounts available on our website [www.visionsports.ie](http://www.visionsports.ie)