



Athletes Commission

Terms of Reference

Approved by the Board of Directors

Version 1	19/02/2017	2017-2020
Version 2	18/09/2019	2019-2021
Version 3		2022-2024

Terms of Reference

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of the Athlete's Commission is to give the athletes a forum to have an input into Paralympics Ireland. It also provides a direct link for Paralympics Ireland to confer with athlete advocates on particular issues and ongoing activities.

The International Paralympic Committee have a stated policy requesting all National Paralympic Committees to ensure athlete representatives are involved in decision making at all levels of the organisation. These terms of reference outline the means by which athletes are central to the decision making of Paralympics Ireland.

2.0 Role of Paralympics Ireland's Athletes Commission

2.1 To act as a voice representing athletes at all levels of the organisation from strategy and programme planning to Board level.

2.2 To ensure strong channels of communication are in place to ensure athlete specific issues are highlighted at the appropriate level of the organisation.

2.3 To support the work of the Paralympics Ireland Board and Management Team in an advisory capacity.

2.4 To ensure strong athlete advocacy throughout the organisation.

2.5 To act as advocates for Paralympic Sport and Paralympics Ireland.

2.6 To propose the main priorities for the commission in agreement with the CEO, at the start of its term, and set out annual goals thereafter.

2.7 To support the activities of the Paralympics Ireland Paralympians Club

2.8 To nominate suitable representatives to sit on other Paralympic Ireland working groups or panels when requested by the Board of Paralympics Ireland.

3.0 Structure & Membership

3.1 Paralympics Ireland will appoint between 6-8 Athlete Advocates to comprise the Paralympics Ireland Athletes Commission

3.2 The term will be for the period of a Paralympic Games summer cycle (usually 4 years). It will start in the 1st quarter of the year of a new cycle and finish by the end of December post summer games.

3.2 Athletes who competed at either the Athens2004, Beijing 2008, London 2012, Rio 2016 or Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games as members of the Irish Paralympic Team are eligible to become Athlete Advocates.

3.3 Athlete Advocates will be representative of Paralympic Athletes, not representatives of their individual sport.

4.0 Frequency of Meetings

4.1 The Athletes Commission will meet at least three times a year. Further meetings maybe convened by the Chairperson as required to carry out the business of the Athletes Commission effectively.

4.2 On at least one occasion each year, the Athletes Commission will meet in an open forum session with Paralympics Ireland's Management Team and CEO to share ideas and strategies re the organisations programmes and policies development.

4.3 Meetings may be convened at Paralympics Ireland training camps/information days or at squad training sessions providing prior agreement is received from the Performance Director or manager of the team.

4.4 Meetings (other than those at training camps/information days) where possible will be held at Paralympics Ireland's Head Office at Irish Sport HQ, National Sports Campus, Blanchardstown, Dublin 15 or can also be held virtually.

5.0 Appointing the Athlete Advocates

5.1 Paralympics Ireland will seek 'expressions of interest' from athletes who have competed at the Paralympic Games between 2004, 2008, 2012 & 2016 to become Athlete Advocates (members of the Athletes Commission).

5.2 Eligible Athlete Advocates will be contacted using Paralympics Ireland database. Nominations will also be sought through National Federations and Governing Bodies.

5.3 The Board of Paralympics Ireland retains the right to appoint up to two athletes to the Athlete's Commission.

5.4 In determining the composition of the Athletes Commission, the Board will consider the spread of sports represented, the nature and complexity of disabilities of the athletes, experience and gender.

5.5 The Board of Paralympics Ireland retain the sole right to appoint or withdraw individuals as members of the Athletes Commission.

6.0 Appointing the Chairperson

6.1 The Chairperson of the Athletes commission will be appointed by a majority vote of the members of the commission at the first meeting.

6.2 This position will be for the duration of the current commission unless he/she steps down.

6.3 The Chairperson of the Athletes Commission will also represent the athletes as a member of the Board of Directors with full voting rights and responsibilities and a Director of the Company.

6.4 In the event of the Chairperson stepping down, a new Chairperson will be nominated to the Board of Paralympics Ireland by the commission following a further ballot of the remaining commission members.

6.5 Unless otherwise agreed by the Board of Paralympics Ireland the appointed chairperson of the Athlete's Commission should reside in Ireland.

6.6 Unless otherwise agreed by the Board of Paralympics Ireland the appointed chairperson should not be an athlete seeking qualification for the next Paralympic Games.

7.0 Responsibilities of the Chairperson

- 7.1 Act as the link between the commission and Paralympics Ireland for all correspondence.
- 7.2 Act as the Athletes Commission representative on the Board of Directors of Paralympics Ireland.
- 7.3 Convening & chairing of meetings and the design of meeting agendas.
- 7.4 Agreeing the draft minutes of meetings with the Secretary prior to issue to commission members and the CEO of Paralympics Ireland
- 7.5 Liaise with a nominated staff member from Paralympics Ireland on the logistical elements of preparing Athletes Commission meetings.
- 7.6 Following consultation with the CEO/President of Paralympics Ireland an annual report of relevant issues and activities will also be brought to the attention of the Board of Paralympics Ireland.
- 7.7 The Chairperson may be requested by the Board of Paralympics Ireland to attend a recce visit during the Paralympic cycle.

8.0 Appointing the Secretary

- 8.1 The Chairperson will be responsible for appointing the Secretary of the Athletes Commission.

9.0 Responsibilities of the Secretary

- 9.1 Recording of minutes of all Athletes Commission meetings
- 9.2 Issuing the draft minutes to the Chairperson for approval following each meeting.
- 9.3 Agreeing the agenda for each meeting with the Chairperson and issuing the draft agenda and minutes of the previous meeting to each commission member at least seven days prior to each meeting.
- 9.4 Unless otherwise agreed by the Board of Paralympics Ireland the appointed secretary should not be an athlete seeking qualification for the next Paralympic Games.

10.0 Voting

- 10.1 Any agenda item that requires a vote will be conducted on a one attending member, one vote system.
- 10.2 In the event of a tied vote, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.
- 10.3 The quorum for a valid vote is 50% of Athlete Commission Members.