

A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH PARALYMPIC CLASSIFICATION

Evidence-based sport science and
medicine guidance for developing athletes



This resource has been compiled by the English Institute of Sport / UK Sport Performance Pathways Team and the British Paralympic Association, together with the expertise and experiences of practitioners working with our GB Paralympic programmes.

The aim is to bring the most appropriate and useful knowledge being applied at the top end of British sports to the athletes, parents and coaches who are currently at an earlier stage of their development journeys.

We are confident that if this guidance is followed from an early age, positive habits will be formed that will actively contribute to an athlete achieving a great deal of success, both in and out of competitive sport.

Editable and presentable versions of these resources are available on a case-by-case basis; if you'd like to request these please email us at talent.matters@eis2win.co.uk.

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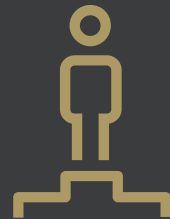
Paralympic classification

establishes who can and cannot compete, and groups athletes into sport classes

The **process** involves the submission of medical evidence, an evaluation and a decision



The athlete, their support personnel, and their parent / guardian all have clear **personal responsibilities** during the classification process



Successful athletes learn to **focus on what is within their control**



Honesty and trust underpin sustainable successful performance, and are fundamental to a positive classification experience



Classification is crucial to Paralympic sport – without it, competitive sport is not possible or meaningful.

This resource provides some quality-assured guidance regarding the above areas of Paralympic classification.

Suggestions of where to get more information are also provided, including this 3 min ParalympicsGB video ([click this link](#))

What is Paralympic classification



Does the athlete have **one of the ten** eligible impairments?

(Broadly speaking, these fall into one or more of the categories of: physical, intellectual or visual impairments).



Does the athlete meet the **minimum impairment criteria specific to the sport** they wish to compete in?



Which **sport class** should the athlete compete in?



Submit medical evidence

- For national classification, the athlete submits their evidence to their National Governing Body (NGB; e.g. British Triathlon).
- For international classification, the NGB submits this medical evidence to their International Federation (e.g. The International Triathlon Union).
- This is to understand whether the athlete has one of the ten impairments eligible in Paralympic sport, and whether they meet the minimum impairment criteria of that sport.



Classification evaluation

- Usually takes place in the days before a competition.
- There are a minimum of two classifiers who work together to give the athlete an appropriate class.
- The classifiers carry out a series of assessments unique to each sport and impairment, to establish which class the athlete should compete in.
- The classifiers can wait until they have seen the athlete in competition before finalising their class.



Status given (confirmed or review)

- Depending on the outcome of the classification evaluation an athlete will be given either 'confirmed' or 'review' status. The athlete is then able to compete in that sport class.
- If review status is given it is because the athlete's impairment is likely to change or the athlete is borderline between two classes. Review athletes will be seen again by the classifiers at a fixed time in the future.

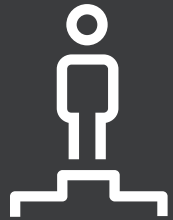
The main steps in the classification process



WINNING PERSPECTIVES

We all have personal responsibilities during the classification process

As a **British Paralympic hopeful**, under the UK Athlete Classification Code, I am responsible for:



Giving a **true reflection of my impairment and ability** during classification evaluation



Providing **accurate and up-to-date medical evidence** as directed by my National Governing Body (NGB) in advance of classification evaluation



Notifying my NGB if I experience **a change in my condition** (whether through a medical intervention or organically) that may impact on my sport class



Being respectful towards classifiers and their decisions, the classification process and fellow athletes



Arriving at classification evaluation informed of the classification process, in good time for the start of the appointment, with relevant sports clothing and equipment, and in good health, **in order to participate fully** in the evaluation



Contributing to **classification education and classification research** where appropriate



We all have personal responsibilities during the classification process

As a member of an athlete's support personnel, under the UK Athlete Classification Code, I have the right to receive classification education, and I am responsible for:



Respecting and abiding

by the UK Athlete Classification Code



Supporting athletes to give a true reflection

of their impairment and ability during classification evaluation



Being respectful

towards classifiers and their decisions



Being conversant

with the classification rules for the sport



Being mindful that my interventions **do not undermine** the classification process



Cooperating with any investigations concerning classification violations



Not prejudging the outcome of classification evaluations



Reporting **any suspected cases** of intentional misrepresentation



We all have personal responsibilities during the classification process

As a **parent or guardian**, under the UK Athlete Classification Code, I have the right to receive classification education, and I am responsible for:



Respecting and abiding by the **UK Athlete Classification Code**



Respecting the **classifiers, process and outcome** of classification



An athlete may ask a parent or guardian to accompany them through the classification evaluation procedure – in such circumstances, parents or guardians are

considered athlete support personnel





VALUES

Honesty

The value of **honesty** can be displayed in classification in the following ways:

0 1 —————
Recognising that **classification is an essential element** of Paralympic sport

0 2 —————
Cooperating fully with classifiers, allowing them to determine the most suitable sport class

0 3 —————
Recognising that **intentional misrepresentation is a serious offence**, carrying a sanction of up to four years ineligibility

0 4 —————
Recognising that I am not an expert on a **rival athlete's medical condition**

0 5 —————
Appreciating it is often **not possible to understand the full extent** of another athlete's impairment just by watching them train or compete

0 6 —————
Understanding that **falsely accusing an athlete** of intentional misrepresentation is a serious offence

0 7 —————
Acknowledging that **I am a role model** for less experienced athletes

0 8 —————
Ensuring my success in sport is a result of **hard work and determination**, not the exploitation of the classification system



VALUES

Trust

The value of **trust** can be displayed in classification in the following ways:

0 1 Knowing that international classification is carried out by **classifiers accredited and trained by the international federation**

0 2 Knowing that **international classification outcomes always overrule national classification outcomes**

0 3 **Accepting support** from the person accompanying me through the classification evaluation process

0 4 Acknowledging that **no two Paralympic athletes are identical**

0 5 Recognising that there may be athletes in my class that **are less or more impaired than me**

0 6 Knowing that even if there are athletes in my class that are less impaired than me, I am talented, well-coached and **can compete against other athletes in my class**

0 7 Knowing that every athlete in my class has been through the **same classification evaluation process** as me

0 8 Appreciating that **classification is evolving**





CONTROLLING THE CONTROLLABLES

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As a Paralympic hopeful, the following aspects **are** under my control:

Giving my **best effort** for the classifiers during classification evaluation

Providing **accurate and up-to-date** medical evidence as part of the classification process

Arriving at classification evaluation **in good time**, wearing the necessary kit and with the necessary equipment to undergo classification evaluation

Making my NGB aware if my **disability or impairment changes**

How I **talk to classifiers**

How I **treat the other athletes** in my class

How I talk about classification and classifiers **with other athletes**

How I talk about classification and classifiers **with people outside the sport**

CONTROLLING THE CONTROLLABLES

As a Paralympic hopeful, the following aspects of are not under my control:

The classifiers **appointed to classify me**

Which athletes are in my class

FURTHER INFORMATION

[ParalympicsGB Classification Explainer \(animated video\)](#)

An easy to understand 3 minute video explaining the aims of classification and a high-level overview of the key points raised within this guidance.

[British Paralympic Association classification overview](#)

An up-to-date section of the British Paralympics Associations' website that is dedicated to communicating key aspects regarding classification, in a reader-friendly format.

[UK Athlete Classification Code](#)

Aims to clarify organisational and individuals' responsibilities and rights, and to protect the integrity of Paralympic sport in the UK, thereby improving the experience of everyone involved. Note that this document is updated periodically, so always check for any latest updated versions on the BPA website.

[The IPC classification overview](#)

A useful website regarding all things Paralympic classification, with links to further relevant policies and resources.

[The IPC International Standard for Eligible Impairments](#)

Contains a list of the 10 impairments considered eligible by the Paralympic Movement, as well as examples of the type of health conditions that can lead to each of those impairments. Also contains examples of impairments that are not seen as eligible by the Paralympic Movement. Note that this document is updated periodically, so always check for any latest updated versions on the IPC website

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