****

**News release**

**Thursday June 1st**

Norfolk athletes with learning disabilities began their countdown to the Special Olympics GB National Games being held at Sheffield in August with a team-building session at UEA Sportspark on Wednesday evening (May 31st)

Special Olympics Norfolk (SON) is sending 28 athletes to the four-yearly games as part of an Eastern Region squad of around 180. Nine of Norfolk’s contingent will compete in track and field events, alongside seven footballers, five swimmers, two gymnasts and five boccia players in t**he largest disability sports event held in Britain this year.**

**This week’s get-together was attended by 21 of the county’s team along with coaches, family members and supporters. Each squad member received a kit bag for Sheffield including their official Eastern Region shirts and Special Olympics Norfolk T-shirts and took part in team-building games against a backdrop of the National Games official flag.**

**“It’s a big squad from Norfolk and everyone’s very excited and hopeful we’ll bring back some medals,” said Nicola Fish, chair of SON. “So far we’ve fund raised over £15,000 to cover the costs of the**athletes and their family or carers to attend the four days of competition. But most of all we’re hoping that the athletes reap the rewards of confidence, friendship and physical and mental wellbeing that the event offers those taking part.”

For further information, go to www.specialolympicsnorfolk.com

**Contacts:** Nicola Fish 07948 353245. Tom Walshe 01953 789510 / 07799 048405

**Notes:**

**Special Olympics Norfolk** is a county branch of Special Olympics Great Britain. It was originally formed around 15 years ago, and relaunched in 2013. It is one of 6 branches in the Eastern Region, along with East Herts, Essex, Peterborough, Suffolk and St Albans. **SON** currently supports around 70 registered athletes with about 120 training regularly and the numbers are growing. It offers 7 sports: Alpine skiing, athletics, artistic gymnastics, boccia, cricket, football and swimming. [www.specialolympicsnorfolk.com](http://www.specialolympicsnorfolk.com)