



Overcoming barriers to attending competitions

Factsheet

1

To be inclusive means running an event or competition that welcomes and develops disabled people in any sport or physical activity.



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Travel	Barrier	Solution
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of suitable events locally. • Young disabled people miss out on after-school activities if there is no accessible, safe or reliable way to travel home at a later time. • It might be difficult to get to a club on time, or often enough. • In rural areas, long distances can rule out participation. • The journey may not be accessible. • Research shows that most young people rely on parents to organise their travel to a sports club, rather than using public transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basing activities in local venues, where young people already meet and are comfortable, overcomes many of these access issues. • Source local funding for extra accessible transport. • Some local authorities have specific help for disabled people: Community Transport. • Advertise importance of activity to parents and guardians. Maybe a relative or sibling can help. • Promote events to local authority area Inclusion schools and School Games Organiser (SGO) network to enlist travel support. • Cluster resources so schools can share transport, facilities and staffing cover. • Ensure you promote local accessible transport links when promoting venue of competition. • Ensure the venue chosen has orange/blue badge holder parking and wheelchair accessible toilets and changing facilities.

Travel	Barrier	Solution
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity times do not fit everyone. • Young people cannot get to activities or sessions on time. • Parents/carers/personal assistants have other commitments after school. • Not enough time is given in the activity for disabled people to take part. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools-based events will most likely run from 10am-2pm. Allow alignment with existing school transport. • Liaise directly with parents. Someone else maybe able to assist. • Base activities in local venues, where young people already meet. • Ensure logistics and timings are organised well in advanced to promote times to everyone, and take into account additional preparation time where needed. • Consider events or sessions that take place during the school day e.g. lunchtime activity.
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Club/session membership fees may be too high for the family budget. • The cost of equipment and kit adds to the burden. • Families are already paying for other youth activities. • Money spent upfront seems wasted if the young person quits. • Offer different (lower) prices than your usual entry fees if you charge participants. • Consider flexible fee structures, like pay-as-you-play or spreading membership fees over a period of time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the equipment and kit for participants to use, i.e. bats, rackets, sports wheelchairs, balls. Set up an equipment loan scheme for first-time athletes. Cluster resources with other schools. • Look at access to external funding streams to pay for activity delivery, E.g such as Sportivate, Change 4 Life, local authority leisure pass schemes.



Confidence	Barrier	Solution
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of people with the confidence to support a disabled person in an activity/sports session. • Young people can be nervous about meeting new people on their own – they want to bring a friend or join in with someone they already know. • There is a common perception that you must be ‘good’ at sport to join a club. Young people often feel their skill level is not high enough or they are not generally ‘sporty’. • Not wanting to go to a session where only non-disabled people are present. • Not wanting to go to a session where only disabled people are present. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easier for young people to join in with their friends. Make sure you promote your activity as a place for everyone, with no experience or skills necessary. • The local nature of opportunities means that word of mouth will become a great way to recruit new participants. • Contact local networks and inclusion experts for advice to ensure a fully differentiated approach. • Ensure activity is relevant and engaging for those attending, making it a young person-centred approach. • National Disability Sports Organisations (NDSOs) provide CPD for deliverers and participants to ensure a better experience for, please see the NDSO Accessible Sport For You factsheets.



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Delivering meaningful competition for disabled people

Factsheet

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Top tips

To be inclusive within your competition, just remember the following:

- Ask the individual about themselves and what they want to achieve.
- Focus on the ability of the individual, not disability.
- Adapt your competitions to ensure you can include everyone.
- It is ok to have an understanding of a specific impairment, but every person is an individual. You cannot assume their ability just by having knowledge of the impairment.
- Good communication is essential when delivering a sport or physical activity competition. Language is not only a means of communication but it shapes perceptions of everyone around you. As a leader or coach you should be a role model for your group. It is therefore essential that you use the correct terminology.

For more information see the Activity Alliance **Inclusive Communications Guide**.



Event framework (PIDS)

It is good practice to work within the following four framework codes when coordinating your event or competition:

- Plan
- Inform
- Deliver
- Sustain

Plan

Inform

Deliver

Sustain

The principles

These are some key principles to consider when providing inclusive sports competitions for disabled people.

1. Ensure disabled people are involved in the ideas, planning, delivery and evaluation.
2. Ensure the people who deliver it are confident and capable.
3. Provide inclusive opportunities for all ensuring promotion through various partners, channels and formats.
4. Create and sustain partnerships as well as grow participation opportunities.



1. Inclusive planning

This supports you to plan and budget for any additional requirements for disabled people within your competition:

- Find out as much information as possible on participants prior to the competition. This will allow you to plan appropriately in advance taking into account any additional requirements.
 - Age/Ability (groupings)/Gender – use Activity Alliance **Groupings Factsheet** to assist.
 - Additional needs of participants – assistance or support measure adaptive or additional equipment.
- When scheduling make sure there is enough time for everyone to compete:
 - Are participants competing in more than one event?
 - What is the distance between these events?
 - Some events take slightly longer to run; make allowances for this.
 - Participants may need extra time to change/warm up/cool down.
- Is your venue accessible for all?
 - Take a look at the Activity Alliance **Access for All Guide**.

2. Engage and inform

This supports you to identify all the right people through the right channels and ensure participants will attend.

Proactively engage with a variety of people and networks to ensure maximum exposure, don't limit communication to online, always use different methods – email, social media, forums, direct mail. Some examples of different organisations/people to engage with:



Education Networks:

- Schools
- Further Education (FE) Networks
- Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs)
- Special Educational Needs (SEN) Associations / Units / Advisors
- Lead Inclusion Schools

Community Networks:

- Disability Forums
- County Sports Partnerships (CSPs)
- Primary Care Trusts (PCTs)
- Guides / Scouts / Rainbows / Beavers
- Youth Centres / networks

Parental groups:

- Parents/Guardians

- Voluntary community groups
- Primary Care Trusts PCTs
- Parent and Teachers Association (PTA)
- Sure start centres / children's services
- Disabled Peoples User Led Organisations (DPULOs)
- Local disability groups

Activity Alliance Engaging Disabled People Guide

3. Inclusive delivery

This supports you to deliver an event which ensures disabled people are included and have a quality experience.

- Make sure you offer a range of sports that cater for all young people, disabled and non-disabled.
- You may need to use different methods of grouping, time banding or adaptations to ensure that every participant is catered for.
 - For simple groupings see the Activity Alliance **Groupings Factsheet**.
 - Also for some ideas on adapting sports, see sport specific cards on www.yourschoolgames.com.
- Not all events are just for disabled people. Provide clear communication about the competition and who it is for in order to attract all young people. Promoting what the event is – disability-specific or Inclusive and parallel - as an opportunity for young people to take part alongside their peers or siblings.
- Ensure staff and volunteers are both engaged and supported throughout delivery.
- Provide training sessions for staff, volunteers and parents.
- Host a briefing at the start and end of the event for all partners.
- Ensure a detailed competition schedule is available for everyone.
- Take time to understand why they are at your competition and what they want from it. Be aware of this as you run your competition.
- Ensure throughout the competition that everyone is having fun and achieving what they want to achieve.



Good communication at your competition is essential:

- Ask how you can best communicate with the person, don't assume.
- Find out if they have a carer who might interpret.
- If they need help moving around (e.g visually impaired); let the person take hold of your arm rather than vice versa.
- Don't shout or overemphasise words or lip movements with people with a hearing impairment.
- Think about where to stand to optimise light (e.g so can see your face to lip read or facing the light if visually impaired) and for clarity (e.g 3-6 feet if deaf).
- Always speak to the person not to his/her personal assistant/carers or interpreter.
- Speak directly to a wheelchair user rather than communicating through their personal assistant.
- When communicating; try and be at eye level where possible as it can be uncomfortable for wheelchair users to look upwards for long periods of time.
- Avoid touching a person's wheelchair.
- Don't push the person's wheelchair without asking initially if it's ok to do so.
- Learn to use different communication methods (e.g finger spelling for those with a hearing impairment); become skilled at using gestures and subtle changes in tone and volume to help get your message across.
- Be patient and give people time; never finish sentences for them.
- Don't pretend you understand if you don't; ask them to repeat it or use another form of communication.
- Introduce yourself and tell people necessary information (e.g visually impaired need to know who's in the room, what equipment is laid out).
- Make sure you are clear, precise and simple in your language, treat people according to their chronological age rather than presumed IQ.
- Break down large blocks of information for those with learning impairments.
- Provide an opportunity for feedback from all partners and participants involved.



4. Sustainability

This is a key to ensuring the further development and delivery of more events and opportunities which meet the needs of disabled people, with the right partners. It helps to provide an impact and increase participation for longer than one event.

- Ensure that you are aware of opportunities and pathways that exist for people to continue in their chosen sport. These may be some of the following:
 - Structured opportunities offered by the governing body of the sport.
 - Local voluntary opportunities.
 - Local Disabled People User Led Organisations (DPULO) opportunities.
 - National disability Sports organisations (NDSO) opportunities.
 - NDSO information can be found on the Activity Alliance Partners section on our website.
- Make sure these links and partners are promoted throughout the competition.
- Keep track of the participants for future promotion, information and determining the success of the event and gain insight into sustained participation.

All resources can be downloaded from the Activity Alliances Website:

www.activityalliance.org.uk/how-we-help/resources



Activity Alliance works to make active lives possible. We do this by enabling organisations to support disabled individuals to be and stay active. Our work is centred on research and insight with disabled people as well as our engagement with disability and sports organisations. Activity Alliance is a national charity and supports a wide range of organisations to deliver more inclusive programmes.

We are very proud to provide opportunities through our inclusive programmes.

To encourage more disabled people to lead active lifestyles, there needs to be a wide choice of activities. Increasing the variety of participation opportunities is an important part of our charity's work.



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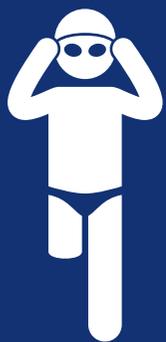
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Engaging young disabled people



Factsheet

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Top tips

Here are some top tips on how to engage young people:



- Proactively engage with parents / guardians, ensuring they are fully involved in the process.
- Allocate sufficient resources focused on the identification of young disabled people and the promotion of activities. This element can often require the greatest level of input.
- Share effective practice with other partners. This will encourage others to do the same and will result in new ideas for your own implementation.
- Be clear on the aims and objectives of engagement, ensuring that all partners are aware of what they are and that they are clearly communicated to participants to manage expectations.
- Establish a lead for engagement and identify key leads within relevant networks to maintain communication with e.g. head teachers within schools.
- Be clear about what you want to achieve. If appropriate, target specific audiences.
- Gain access, where possible, to local young disabled people data sets and use as evidence to base engagement on.
- Phase your engagement. First, target areas with strong proactive people / schools / organisations and those areas with high populations of young disabled people. Then use this network as your advocates. E.g. head teacher promoting to neighbouring head teachers.
- Proactive engagement of young people to support buy in to activity i.e. competition designed and delivered by young people for young people.
- Identify strategies to reach smaller rural communities. Infrastructure available will impact on the ability to communicate so one approach will not necessarily be effective for all.
- Don't rely on one route of communication. Utilise as many as possible.

Top tips

Here are some more top tips on how to engage young people:



- Develop pre-prepared promotional material to ensure consistency in messaging is maintained. Where you are delivering in more than one area, ensure that these templates allow for localised input.
- Ensure audience-specific materials are used to communicate to different channels.
- Identify a strong brand that encompass all activities within it to grow credibility of opportunity.
- Where possible avoid a virtual relationship. Face-to-face and one-to-one contact is likely to achieve better results.
- Provide opportunities for young disabled people to take part in activities alongside their peers or siblings.
- Consider timings of events and the impact on attendance. For example, does the activity clash with any other known opportunities for this audience?
- Demonstrate how the activity links in with other opportunities, programmes and targets.
- **Download the Activity Alliance Motivate Me research**, our report into understanding what motivates and appeals to disabled people to take part in sport and physical activity.
 - Motivate Me.
- **Download the Activity Alliance Talk to Me research report** that outlines 10 principles that sports providers could follow to help make their sport or activity more appealing to disabled people.
 - Talk to Me.

You can find further information support and resources at **activityalliance.org.uk**



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Young Person Focus: Top Tips



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Top tips

Here are some top tips that have come directly from Inclusion Schools and School Games Organisers (SGOs):

Young Person Focus & Knowledge

- Spend time to identify pupils you will be targeting for your inclusive School Games events.
- Ensure schools and young people are involved in developing inclusive opportunities and that they are empowered, taking ownership and making decisions.
- Ensure activities are realistic and relative to the needs of the young people; consider offering activities that schools may not be able to provide additional opportunities.
- When planning events for SEND pupils, take the time to meet with members of staff from the schools you are targeting to ensure activities are suitable for the identified pupils.
- Talk to staff in schools before shaping your offer to find out what the pupil's individual needs are and what training needs staff may have; every school is different.
- Focus on the children and what they enjoy most.
- Listen to what students want.

Supporting Schools and Staff

- Talk to the schools that will be involved; find out what opportunities they would like to access in terms of School Games competitions.
- Ensure the structure and staffing are in place and that all staff are aware of the opportunities.
- Be prepared to support schools on an individual level.
- Use TOP Sportsability - <http://topsportsability.com> - as much as possible; these resources are often overlooked especially in mainstream schools. Especially useful is information about adapting sports to make them inclusive.
- Make any specialist equipment available for schools to loan to support delivery of intra-school inclusive opportunities and preparation for inter-school and School Games county competitions.
- Get the schools on board and look to meet specific needs.

Top tips

Here are some more top tips that have come directly from Inclusion Schools and SGOs:

Building Capacity & Pathways

- Work collaboratively; Lead Inclusion schools, School Games Organisers (SGOs) and Local Organising Committees (LOCs).
- Engage all relevant bodies; Lead Inclusion schools, SGOs, LOCs, National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Teachers, County Sport Partnerships (CSPs). Communicate the benefits of the work for the young people and the supporting organisations.
- Develop clear partnerships with local clubs and CSPs.
- Ensure that the sports you are looking to set up have a clear pathway from intra-school to School Games county finals, so participants can increase their competitive opportunities further.
- Sell your vision to your strategic partners.
- Combine local and national skills and expertise to create strong and effective pathways. NGB can provide formats, rules and training to develop a strong structure, SGO's of knowledge and understanding of the local context to adapt this to meet local circumstances and needs.
- Identify and engage pro- active and appropriate organisations and individuals to build capacity.

Unlock Doors & Overcome Barriers

- Work with both P.E. departments and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCO) in the schools you have identify.
- SENCOs can be the key to the door, playing a valuable role in raising the profile of opportunities within their schools to ensure young Special Educational Needs / Disability (SEND) pupils participate and achieve.
- Work closely with mainstream schools throughout the year to promote their attendance at events.
- Target people who are passionate about SEND pupils achieving their potential in sport; ensure a good point of contact within schools and don't put a minimum on attendance at any of the events you organise.
- Look for a 'way in' that is of benefit to the institutions you are looking to work with.
- Some schools are still afraid to let SEND pupils out on trips; support the risk assessment process.
- Transport can present a stumbling block, try and think of ways to overcome this.

Leadership & Volunteering

- Use of Young Leaders is vital.
- Identify enthusiastic, motivated leaders and staff.
- Encourage young people to lead at every opportunity; whether it is to assist with giving simple instructions, making up an activity, demonstrating activities, officiating / refereeing or being a team captain.
- Ensure that leaders are well trained and motivated to deliver.
- Communication & Promotion.

Communication & Promotion

- Publicise and promote events as much as possible on school websites or internally on a notice board to make pupils feel proud and motivated. Using quotes from pupils about the activities / project is also really effective to share the benefits of participation with others.
- Communication- make sure all schools know what the purpose is, what you are trying to achieve, and what the expectations are.
- Provide information on opportunities to the schools and colleagues as early as possible to remove potential barriers further down the line.
- Have a 'hook' as a main activity to incentivise involvement.

Unlock Doors & Overcome Barriers

- Change perceptions on what is possible!
- Go for it! As long as you have a good relationship with those you are going to work with and can ensure quality delivery, then do it!
- Sport is an amazing vehicle for raising awareness of what SEND pupils can, moving away from a deficit model. Ability, confidence and behaviour can all be improved by participation in competitive sport.
- Out there is someone who shares the same passion as us and is willing to go the extra mile for their pupils, you need to identify this person within your areas and then nurture and support them.
- Keep jumping over those hurdles, it will be worth it in the end!
- Perseverance and collaboration is essential.
- You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.
- Listen, plan, nurture, celebrate.
- Try and adopt a 'can do' approach and work through the obstacles positively.
- Focus on what pupils can do, not what they can't do.
- Realise that every student, whatever their disability can succeed.
- Make a commitment and stick to it.





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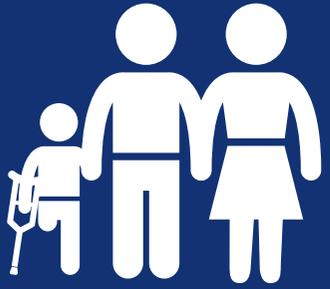
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Engaging parents of young disabled people



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Continued parental support is crucial to help sustain young disabled people and their continued interest in participation in the chosen sport or activity. Through its participation programmes Activity Alliance has highlighted the following key benefits from engaging with parents of young disabled people.

- Parents / guardians play a key role in supporting first engagement into sport in addition to supporting continued involvement.
- Parents help manage the transition from school to community sport as this relies a lot upon trust and effective relationships.
- Parents are advocates for other parents. There are existing parents / guardians who having seen the impact of sport first-hand and can encourage others to support their young people.
- Engaging with parents will increase the number of young disabled people within sport.



“I could not have reached this level without the support of my parents who have given up their time and have encouraged me.”

Peer-to-Peer participant

Top tips

Here are some top tips on how to engage parents:

“After two years coming to terms with his accident, to see others, including his peers, looking up to him again while he performs well in table tennis and football, is really pleasing. He has bounced back into sport in an incredible way.”

- Effective communication and marketing of opportunities is critical to engagement and continued support.
 - Provide specific, clear and relevant information to participants / parents (parent factsheet or similar) on the competition, pathway and existing opportunities.
 - Provide follow up contact to ensure parents have received info and how to get involved in community provision.
 - Highlight success stories at all levels for parents.
- Listening to feedback, bad experiences from parents / guardians and young people can have a significant impact on their trust to engage in sport.
 - Ensure that there is effective signposting to existing opportunities and that these opportunities are inclusive.
 - Give parents the opportunity to discuss the needs of their young people and what they need, this will allow them to build trust and confidence and have a quality experience.
- Where possible provide feedback on every child in every sport to parents, this provides encouragement should they want to take it any further.
 - Work with parents to identify and work through any barriers that they maybe encountering in attending your competition.
 - Make sure parents have a point of contact for information, face to face communication is as important as non contact communication.

Advice to parents

“Support your child to take part in and enjoy sport. Put the effort in and take your child to events like these. It brings fulfilment, confidence and another purpose in life.”





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