



# Equipment

**activity  
alliance**

**disability  
inclusion  
sport**

**Inclusive equipment helps engage new individuals and improves experiences for everyone.**

Accessible products can unlock access to your facility and services for disabled people and people with long-term health conditions. Well thought out equipment selections will benefit customers and staff alike and enable you to attract the widest possible audience.



# What makes your equipment accessible?

Inclusive organisations routinely offer equipment which meets the needs of disabled people and people with long-term health conditions. Providing inclusive equipment typically involves:



An integral element of all services from venue access to programme delivery.



Insight and consultation with disabled people, people with long-term health conditions, and disability organisations.



Suitable and sufficient equipment available to meet the needs of a wide range of people.



Innovation and creative product selection and usage to maximise inclusion.



A continuous programme of improvement and investment to maintain high quality and fit for purpose products.



A trained workforce, aware and confident with specialist and inclusive equipment.



Equipment availability clearly communicated to staff and customers.



## Consider your existing equipment provision and ask yourself:

- Do you know what accessible products you already offer?
- Are disabled people and people with long-term health conditions consulted as part of your equipment procurement processes?
- Do you actively promote the availability of accessible equipment in your marketing and communications?



# Providing accessible equipment

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Taking a positive and proactive approach to equipment provision strengthens your offer and improves access:

## Know your existing offer

A good place to start is to map your existing assets. Take a walk-through of your facilities and look at the equipment you currently have. Think broadly about every aspect of your venue and services.

Consider which features help with access to your building. This could include having automatic doors or a hearing loop available. Think about what supports participation in activities. For example accessible lockers, a pool hoist, or even having a range of different resistance bands or dumbbells.



**Top tip:** Accessible products are not always specialist items.

## Innovate to maximise usage

Focus on the equipment you have and think about how you can use it to maximise inclusion.

- Do you have a sensory room or equipment which could also be used for mindfulness, yoga or a safe space?
- Could you add hand bikes to your group cycling sessions to engage a wider range of participants?

Being innovative and creative with your equipment can benefit and enhance the customer experience for all.





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## Draw on lived experience

Actively involve disabled people and people with long-term health conditions in your decision making when purchasing new or improving existing equipment. People's lived experiences will help you identify barriers and assess the suitability of both specialist and inclusive products.



**Top tip:** Talk to disabled people and people with long-term health conditions to help you prioritise your investments, achieve maximum benefit, and value for money. Co-production is key!



## Seek additional expertise

You may need to seek additional advice, particularly for more complex situations. Local Disabled (or Independent) Living Centres and disability organisations may be able to offer guidance. Health and social care professionals, such as occupational therapists or personal assistants, can also provide valuable input. Product suppliers are a great source of information too.

## Make continuous improvements

Providing accessible equipment is an ongoing process. It is best achieved through a programme of continuous improvement. Consider what you have now, what you need in the short term and possibilities for the future. Make sure you engage with disabled people and people with long-term health conditions to gather evidence of need and to set standards for procurement.

Investing in equipment can be a challenge with limited resources. Consider if you can build equipment investment into capital and revenue funding or development projects.

Refurbishments or change of contracts are significant opportunities to leverage resources for improvements which will improve everyone's experience.

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## Maintain fit for purpose products

Equipment should be high quality and fit for purpose. It also needs to be available for use, well maintained, and correctly stored.



**Top tip:** Implement ongoing auditing and preventative maintenance procedures for all your accessible products.

Ask yourself:

- Are your reporting processes for product breakdowns clear?
- Can you use daily/weekly checklists and inspections to embed inclusivity?



## Communicate your offer

Your workforce needs to know about your accessible equipment so they can actively promote their availability to disabled people and people with long-term health conditions. Training may need to be given on safe operation and maintenance to relevant team members. Take advantage of manufacturer installation training, ongoing support and refresher guidance if available.

It is vital you share equipment information with disabled people and people with long-term health conditions, particularly if you offer specialist products. Regularly showcasing what you have available may benefit both new and existing customers and attract them to your facility.



## Useful resources

Activity Alliance has a suite of resources that can support you with making your equipment more accessible and inclusive.

- Our [Reopening Activity: An inclusive response guidance](#) provides considerations on equipment and training for your workforce.
- [The Disabled Living Foundation](#) can offer impartial advice about products and equipment for disabled people, older people, and those that support them.



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This factsheet is part of our leisure resource.

View the full resource on our website:

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 [activityalliance.org.uk](https://activityalliance.org.uk)

 01509 227750

 [info@activityalliance.org.uk](mailto:info@activityalliance.org.uk)



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