

# Introduction

## Why does accessibility matter?

There are over 16 million disabled people in the UK. This is around a quarter (24%) of the population, and shows how important it is to make venues welcoming for everyone.

Sport England's Active Lives shows disabled people are **twice as likely to be inactive than non-disabled people**. Being active provides both physical and mental health benefits. However, many people face significant barriers to accessing both indoor and outdoor spaces. These barriers can be societal, financial, psychological and physical. By removing these barriers, we can ensure that more people can enjoy the positive impact of being active.

Whether you're a physical activity provider, venue owner, coach, event organiser, volunteer, parent, carer, or supporter, this resource will empower you with practical, cost-effective solutions to create accessible indoor and outdoor environments. Some permanent changes may be out of your control, but ensuring venues are accessible to everyone does not have to be costly or complicated. From creating accessible paths and clear signage to installing rest areas and adaptable equipment, this resource provides a range of ideas to make spaces more inclusive.

**Please note:** This resource is not for new buildings, major construction, or extensive refurbishment projects, or for those working in the built environment sector. For such initiatives, refer to the RIBA's Inclusive Design overlay and

**Sport England's Accessible and Inclusive Sports Facilities (AISF) Resource 2024.**

## Becoming more accessible

Activity Alliance follows the social model of disability. This model was developed by disabled people and states that people are disabled by attitudes and barriers in society and not their impairments. Therefore, by removing these barriers we can create more accessible spaces, promote equality and grant greater independence and choice. For more information, please see **Scope's explanation of the social model of disability.**

It is important to talk to disabled people and understand that everyone faces different barriers. No two individuals experience disability in the same way. Co-production actively involves disabled people in designing, delivering, and evaluating services that affect them. This approach ensures people's voices are heard and their needs are met.

Other aspects of a person's identity, such as age, race, faith, gender or socioeconomic status can also influence their experiences and create additional challenges. This 'intersectionality' helps us understand the multiple layers of discrimination faced by disabled people. Lived experience is key to understanding these barriers and finding the best ways to break them down. It is therefore important to co-produce solutions with people with different lived experiences and backgrounds. It is important to stay open and regularly invite feedback and learning.

When using this resource, we would encourage you to work closely with disabled people and a range of diverse partners to improve accessibility and inclusion. There are also professional resources you can refer to including the **National Register of Access Consultants** and Sport England's Accessible and Inclusive Sports Facilities guidance.

## How to use this resource

Access for All offers practical and cost-effective solutions to create accessible indoor and outdoor environments for everyone. The guide is divided into five sections. It can be downloaded and read as a full guide, or you may find it easier to just download and read the section most relevant to you.

- Introduction
- An accessible welcome
- Accessible indoor spaces
- Accessible outdoor spaces
- Further support

At the end of each of the three main sections you will find a list of key actions to help you check the accessibility of your facility. There is also a list of organisations offering further information and support at the end of the resource.

We have also developed a user guide to help you navigate this resource. You can find this on the next page.

## Sport England's Accessible and Inclusive Sports Facilities (AISF)

Sport England have produced a valuable resource which provides comprehensive technical information. It's called **Accessible and Inclusive Sports Facilities (AISF)**.

AISF is specifically written for planners, designers, building owners and operators to support the design and operation of safe, welcoming, accessible and inclusive sports and leisure facilities.

Access for all is intended as a good starting point for low cost, easy to implement solutions for community based and volunteer organisations. AISF and Access for all are designed to complement each other, and throughout this resource you will find references to specific parts of Sport England's AISF guidance that are relevant to the section you are reading. These references will be highlighted in bold blue text, like this: **AISF part H 3.3**.



Credit: Calvert Trust