

FreeSport - Disability Inclusion Factsheet

Overview

One of the Mayor's sporting priorities for London is to help get more disabled Londoners involved in sport and physical activity. Every project funded through the Mayor's Sports Legacy Programme is required to put in place strategies to address the issue and to ensure that their project is able to attract and engage disabled people to their programme.

In order to create an inclusive and active London, it is essential that all FreeSport projects are able to demonstrate how they will be inclusive of disabled people.

This factsheet, produced by Interactive in partnership with the Greater London Authority, outlines some basic principles all projects will need to follow to address these issues.

About Interactive

Interactive is a Disability Equality in Sport Charity with a vision of London as the world's leading city for equality and inclusion in sport and physical activity participation. Through the FreeSport programme, we are working with the Greater London Authority to achieve our mission, to lead change, challenge attitudes and connect different sectors to create opportunities so that disabled Londoners can choose to be active for life.

Delivering an inclusive FreeSport project

All FreeSport projects are required to have disability participation targets of at least 10%. In order to achieve these targets, it is vital to concentrate efforts on stimulating demand, as well as improving supply. This means ensuring that disabled people are aware of the activities on offer, and given an incentive to attend.

There are a number of ways that this can be achieved, but it will take more than sending posters to disability partners and Special Educational Needs (SEN) schools.

Directly contact local Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations (DDPO, also known as DPULOs). These are primarily local third sector organisations, run by and for disabled people. They are often a central point of information for disabled people in a community, which can provide access to many inactive disabled people that would not otherwise be aware of the activities on offer. Contact them directly, meet with them, and present to their members if there is an opportunity. These are often small organisations with limited capacity, so be prepared to be proactive; this will create an important local partnership that will last beyond your FreeSport project.

Inclusion London - <http://www.inclusionlondon.co.uk/> - works with and provides support to 87 DDPOs in London. Additionally, a list of organisations can be found on the Office for Disability Issues website, at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/disabled-peoples-user-led-organisations-list-and-contacts>.

Other types of organisations to get in touch with are local disability charities, such as borough branches of Mencap, national charities operating in London, the local County Sport Partnership London Sport, local authorities' Sports Development Officers, and National Disability Sports Organisations (NDSOs - impairment-specific organisations that support National Governing Bodies to be more inclusive – a list of contacts can be found at http://www.efds.co.uk/assets/0000/5138/Find_the_sport_for_you.pdf).

Contact local schools, and not only SEN schools. Over 80% of young disabled people in education are in mainstream schools. Again, think beyond only sending out marketing materials. Good outreach is invaluable. Meet with the school, present at assemblies, find out who is interested and adapt your sessions in advance.

Do not only focus on one impairment group. Consider physical impairments, sensory impairments, learning disabilities and difficulties, autism, and mental health conditions when promoting and delivering the project.

When creating electronic or printed marketing materials to attract disabled people to the project, make sure it is accessible. A clear font of at least size 14, appropriate colour contrasting, good spacing, avoid unnecessarily complex wording, and use Microsoft Word if sending anything via email (many computer screen readers used by people with a visual impairment do not read pdfs). Also, think about the imagery being used. When trying to encourage disabled people to attend sessions, use images of disabled people doing the sport being delivered. When aiming sessions at specific impairment groups, make sure people can relate to the images being used.

Ensure the project delivery team is confident running inclusive sessions for participants of all abilities and impairments. Interactive can provide online disability equality training through the “Be Inclusive and Active” course, and deliver disability inclusion workshops for coaches and other support staff, tailored to their needs. Interactive can also signpost projects to our partners’ impairment specific courses, should these be more appropriate. For further information contact our Training and Education Officer at josef.baines@interactive.uk.net, or tel: 020 7717 1699.

Finally, if you are unsure about anything, ask the experts. Again, this is where disability sector partners will be invaluable. DDPOs, disability charities and NDSOs can all help.

Good luck!