

# Including People with Disabilities in Your Club

## Version 1

Ref: INCDISAMH01



## Introduction

### Section 1 Inclusive Club Definition

### Section 2 Inclusion Guidelines

- 2.1 Planning
- 2.2 Access to building, facilities and equipment
- 2.3 Participation options
- 2.4 Information and promotion
- 2.5 Coach education and training
- 2.6 Club administration and management

### Section 3 Coaching Guidelines

- 3.1 Inclusive coaching tips
- 3.2 Communication tips

### Section 4 Language and Etiquette

- 4.1 Language guidelines
- 4.2 Etiquette guidelines

### Section 5 About Disability Sports NI

## INTRODUCTION

Northern Ireland experiences the highest prevalence of disability in the UK with 21%<sup>1</sup> of the population experiencing some form of disability or health related condition; that's one in five of the population.

However, because of a complex range of economic, attitudinal and physical barriers people with disabilities as a 'group' experience the lowest participation rates in sport. Indeed, a recent research conducted by NISRA<sup>2</sup> in July 2007 found that people with disabilities in Northern Ireland are half as likely to participate in sport and physical activity as non disabled people, with only 10% participating regularly. A further 5% take part occasionally, leaving an astounding 85% of people with disabilities who never take part in any form of sport or physical activity.

Mallusk Harriers have taken guidance using these guidelines that have been prepared by Disability Sports NI to provide guidance to club officials and volunteers on how they can make their sports club more inclusive of people with disabilities.

## SECTION 1: INCLUSIVE CLUB DEFINITION

Mallusk Harriers is a club which is inclusive of people with disabilities is one which has:

'Proactively planned the inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of the club and we have taken practical steps to bring about positive change'.

This means as a club we have:

- Adopted a positive attitude about the inclusion of people with disabilities.
- Planned how people with disabilities can best participate in all aspects of the club's activities (e.g. playing, coaching and club administration).
- Pro-actively implemented an action plan.

---

<sup>1</sup> Northern Ireland Census 2011

<sup>2</sup> Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (2007) The Prevalence of Disability and Limitations Amongst Adults and Children Living in Private Households in Northern Ireland

## SECTION 2: INCLUSION GUIDELINES

In order to develop a more inclusive environment we have considered the following issues:

### 2.1 Planning

We have pro-actively planned the inclusion of people with disabilities in our programmes. This has been completed as part of the club's development plan.

### 2.2 Access to Buildings, Facilities & Equipment

We have given consideration to buildings, facilities and sports equipment, ensuring they are accessible to people with physical, sensory and learning disabilities.

We have followed guidance and advice related to the design and management of sports facilities is available from Disability Sports NI online ([www.dsni.co.uk](http://www.dsni.co.uk)) and on request:

- Access to Sports Facilities for People with Disabilities: Design & Management Guidelines (2010 Edition).

As a smaller club, there have been some challenges and difficulties to meet all recommendations, but we are mindful that under the Disability Discrimination Act that we are required by law to make 'reasonable adjustments' to facilities to ensure they are accessible to people with disabilities.

## Sample Physical Access Assessment Template

Club Name: Venue:			
Physical Barrier	Immediate Solutions	Future Solutions	Actions
Car Park			
Access to Building:			
Changing Rooms/Toilet Facilities:			
Access to Playing/Court Area			
Access to Social/Meeting Area			

## **2.3 Participation Options**

We have consulted with Athletics NI and Disability Sports NI about the options for including different people with disabilities in our particular sport.

From experience, Disability Sports NI believes that many people with disabilities can participate in most sports with little or no adaptations. However, it may be necessary to adapt some sports (rules, playing surface, court size etc) to ensure the full inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly those with higher levels of impairment.

## **2.4 Information & Promotion**

As a club we encourage more people with disabilities to participate in activities by consulting with local disability groups, and by specifically targeting people with disabilities when promoting the club's programmes and activities.

All club promotional literature should also make it clear that people with disabilities are welcome at the club. It is also a good idea to use positive images of people with disabilities participating in your sport.

## **2.5 Coach Education & Training**

We have provided key personnel within the club appropriate Disability Awareness Training – this has been completed in conjunction with Disability Sports NI.

## **2.6 Club Administration & Management**

We identify members with disabilities and any particular needs they may have, through some questions on 'disability' in their membership forms.

# SECTION 3: COACHING GUIDELINES

## 3.1 Inclusive Coaching Tips

We recognise that many people with disabilities will have the ability to participate fully in coaching skills and drills with little or no adaptations.

However, for some people with more limited functional ability or for those with limited experience of basic movement skills, We will adapt skills sessions, drills and playing sessions to fully include them.

Generally speaking, we achieve this by either modifying the rules used during training and/or competition or by adapting the equipment normally used in your sport.

### Including People with Disabilities in Your Club Assessment

<b>Club Name:</b>			
<b>Disability Group</b>	<b>Equipment</b>	<b>Coaching</b>	<b>Modifications</b>
Physical Disabilities			
Deaf/Hard of Hearing			
Blind/Partially Sighted			

Learning Disability			



## 3.2 Communication Tips

We acknowledge that good communication skills are vital in any coaching situation. When coaches are working with players/athletes with a disability they will consider the following points:

### Communicating with People with Physical Disabilities

In general, coaches will communicate with people with physical disabilities in the same way as they would with anyone else. However, we will follow practical communication guidance:

- Speak in a manner appropriate to the age of the player/athlete. Be careful not to patronise adults by being simplistic or over familiar.
- When speaking to wheelchair users, do so at their eye level by crouching or by sitting on a chair. This makes communication easier and is regarded as being polite by wheelchair users.
- When adapting skills or techniques, we will discuss with the player/athlete – the individual disabled person will know how his/her body moves best.

### Communicating with People with Learning Disabilities

- Speak in a manner appropriate to the age of the player/athlete with a learning disability.
- Always ask the player/athlete for specific information. Only speak to their carer/parent if they are unable to supply the information themselves.
- When giving instructions, we will use simple straightforward words and language and avoid jargon. If possible, use symbols and colours instead.
- Break skills/drills down into easily learned steps and repeat them often and in a variety of ways.
- Avoid drills that rely heavily on numeracy skills.
- Always demonstrate skills/drills.
- Be patient and give participants time to learn skills.

## Communicating with Blind or Partially Sighted People

- Remember most blind/partially sighted people have some degree of sight so the use of equipment/courts with good colour contrast will help most players/athletes.
- Use the person's name to gain attention and make sure the player/athlete knows when we are finished and when we are moving away from them.
- It is important that players/athletes hear our instructions clearly. To achieve this we will always face the person and speak directly to them.
- Before beginning coaching sessions we will always familiarise the player/athlete with the environment. This includes explaining the layout of the area, the number and location of other participants and the location of potential hazards (equipment etc).
- Give clear, accurate descriptions of each task/drill and always ask the player/athlete if they understand your instructions.
- If possible, supply written information in suitable formats. For example, large print, tape, CD or Braille. Asking individual participants what format they find most suitable.

## Communicating with people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

We acknowledge that there are varying degrees of deafness. Some people have no hearing (deaf) but most have some level of hearing (hard of hearing).

Ideally, deaf people require an interpreter to ensure effective communication. However, if this is not possible we can still communicate with deaf players/athletes. For example, many deaf people can communicate by reading lips, by using a hearing aid, by making gestures and signs or by writing information down.

The following tips will be used when talking to most deaf or hard of hearing people:

- Make sure you have the listener's attention before you start speaking.
- Position yourself in front of the player/athlete and maintain eye contact. Remember not to turn your face away from the person.

- Speak clearly but not too slowly and don't exaggerate your lip movements.
- Don't shout. It's uncomfortable for a hearing aid user and it looks aggressive.
- If someone doesn't understand what you've said, don't just keep repeating it. Try saying it in a different way and check they understand what you said.
- Where possible, use visual aids to explain technical points.
- Where possible, use demonstrations to explain skills/drills.

## SECTION 4: LANGUAGE & ETIQUETTE

### 4.1 Language Guidelines

We understand that some words and phrases commonly used to describe people with disabilities may increasingly cause offence.

Because acceptance of the language used in society differs between individuals and cultures and changes over time there are no hard and fast rules. However, the following guidance has been prepared based on what is currently found most acceptable by people with disabilities in Northern Ireland.

- Do not use medical labels to describe people with disabilities: (e.g. 'spastic', 'epileptic'). Medical labels are often misleading and tend to reinforce stereotypes of people with disabilities as 'sick' people dependent on the medical profession. Most people with disabilities find being described in terms of a medical condition as dehumanising. Instead, put people first, not their disability (e.g. 'a person with epilepsy' or 'a person with cerebral palsy').
- Use language and words which emphasises abilities not limitations. For example, say 'wheelchair user' rather than 'wheelchair bound'. Remember that a wheelchair can represent personal freedom for its user.
- Do not use emotional or sensational language to describe people with disabilities e.g. 'unfortunate', 'pitiful', 'afflicted', 'crippled', 'suffers from' etc. Remember the vast majority of people with disabilities have the ability to lead full and active lifestyles and to contribute fully to society.

Listed below are some words commonly used in Northern Ireland which many people with disabilities will find unacceptable or offensive, together with an alternative preferred by people with disabilities.

***List of ‘Unacceptable’ Words and Phrases and Preferred Alternatives.***

<b>Unacceptable</b>	<b>Preferred Alternative</b>
Handicapped/cripple/invalid/special needs	Person with a disability or disabled person
Wheelchair bound/confined to a wheelchair	Wheelchair user
Mentally Handicapped	Person with a learning disability
Deaf & Dumb/Deaf Mute	Deaf Person
Epileptic/Diabetic	Person with epilepsy/diabetes
Dwarf*	Person with restricted growth
Mental	Person with mental health difficulties
Spastic	Person with Cerebral Palsy

\* Please note that in recent years organisations promoting sport for people with restricted growth have used the term ‘Dwarf’ e.g. ‘Dwarf Athletics Association’ and ‘World Dwarf Games’. However many people with restricted growth continue to prefer the use of ‘restricted growth’ in everyday conversation.

## 4.2 ETIQUETTE GUIDELINES

- **Treat People with Disabilities as Adults:** Make appropriate contact with disabled people according to the situation. Do not be over familiar and only call a person by their first name if you are doing the same to others present.
- **Talk Directly to People with Disabilities:** Do not assume anyone accompanying this person is a 'carer'. Relax and talk directly to the disabled person.
- **Do not be embarrassed about using everyday expressions** such as 'see you later' or 'going for a walk' in the company of disabled people. Most disabled people also use these phrases.
- **Do offer Assistance to People with Disabilities**, but only if they appear to need help and always wait until your offer of help is accepted. Do not assume you know the best way of helping – ask the person and listen.
- **Do Not be Over-Protective.** People with disabilities are not fragile – do not underestimate their capabilities. If you are not sure ask the person concerned.

*Remember Be Open Minded –  
Positive Attitudes Are Key To Change*

## SECTION 5: ABOUT DISABILITY SPORTS NI

We have taken guidance from Disability Sports NI (DSNI) as Northern Ireland's main disability sports organisation. Established in 1997, the organisation is representative of the vast majority of Northern Ireland's disability sports clubs and organisations and works to promote equality of opportunity for people with disabilities to take part in sport and physical activity at a level of their choice.

Disability Sports NI currently had 96 member groups made up of sports clubs, special schools and adult centres.

Disability Sports NI organises a wide range of projects, events and training courses, all designed to give people with physical, sensory and learning disabilities the opportunity to lead an active life through sport and physical activity, as well as supporting more talented disabled sports people to train, compete and perform in their chosen sport.

Further information on the work of Disability Sports NI is available from the DSNI website: [www.dsni.co.uk](http://www.dsni.co.uk).

Contact Details: Disability Sports NI  
Adelaide House  
Falcon Road  
Belfast

Telephone: 028 9038 7062  
Fax: 028 9038 7063  
Textphone: 028 9038 7064