



Factsheet 8: **Photography**

Our research shows the higher the quality the images of disabled people playing sport and being active are, the more successful they are at attracting people. This can be attracting people to read your story or even take part themselves. So high-quality images are essential to promote sport to both disabled and non-disabled audiences.

Use inclusive images

You should make and use images showing disabled people active in (and enjoying!) your sport. Depending on the event, choose images that also reflect the interaction in sport between teammates/competitors, not disabled people on their own.

If using photographs of people to illustrate your communications, it is better practice to ensure that your selection features a diverse range of people and where possible, try to ensure images of different groups are positively portrayed. But, you need to avoid tokenism and images that do not look or feel natural.



Use high-quality images

Promoting your sport or activity via the media is a great way to reach disabled people. At a regional or local level in particular, using high-resolution images will mean they are more likely to be included in a media article and increase wider interest. Our research found this was important because at a local level:

- Photos are less likely to be taken of disabled people taking part in sport
- When they are used, they tend to be of a lower quality
- Action shots of the sport increases recognition of athletes competing, and provide a better understanding for those new to the sport
- If there is no image, or a low-resolution/poor quality image, readership of the article is likely to be lower, with journalists less interested in covering the story



Action shots are best

Demand is highest for an ‘action shot’ of the person or people mentioned in the article. This also applies to your marketing materials. The best photographs are more likely to be ones taken at sports venues or clubs and at your events or training sessions.

However, if this is not possible, a stock image can suffice. Image libraries are a great resource and there are a number of free image libraries available, some of which are listed in the **Resources and further information section** at the end of this factsheet.

Tips for taking action shots

You should use a professional photographer if you have a budget for photography. But if you haven't here's some tips for taking action shots.

Ian Williams is a sports photographer who runs **Riley Sports Photography**. He has worked at English Premier League and Football League matches, and he has been the official photographer to Scarlets Rugby since 2007, as well as working at international rugby matches. He suggests you:

- Use the best equipment you can afford. That doesn't mean you have to shell out thousands on brand new pro gear however
- Make sure you know a little about the sport. That should give you an understanding on how the game is played, where the best action occurs and where to position yourself to capture it (and not get in the way)
- Keep focussed on the game: most sports have something going on all the time so try not to take your eye (or lens) off the game, you might miss something!
- Even when there's a stoppage in play, there will be something going on - look at spectators, officials, coaches
- As well as concentrating on the action, look beyond that. Players, spectators and coaches shouting, celebrating, or looking dejected all make great pictures
- Close-ups of single faces or groups and crowds all work well
- The local and regional press always want images of players, coaches and fans celebrating goals/points/wins. All kinds of emotions will be seen in photos at all levels of sport
- Try to capture the overall atmosphere and scene at an event or game - big (or small) crowds, dramatic or impressive backdrops, anything really that says something about what's going on, on the field of play
- Sport is primarily there to be enjoyed, so look for images of people doing just that, laughing, smiling and enjoying. Again, not just the players



Using images, diagrams and infographics

Different people respond to certain elements of communications and a well-chosen image, design or diagram can serve to reinforce the main message of your communication.

Use images to illustrate a point or to convey a mood. Some people receiving your communications may not be able to view the image in the same way. This could be someone with a visual impairment or a learning disability or difficulty such as dyslexia.

Shading or images behind text can reduce the colour contrast between the text and the background image. A blurring of the colours or a weakening of the definition between text and shading/images will make the communication more difficult for some and impossible for others to access. Highlight words or key facts by placing them into a text box or using a larger font size instead.

A clear diagram can convey a lot of information, and helps people to understand the message more quickly. Diagrams are useful for your audiences, and particularly for communicating with people with learning disability. Make sure your diagrams are correctly labelled.

Infographics can engage your audience, explain the complexities of the industry you are in and help you to tell your story visually. The designs are often highly sophisticated and complex, conveying large amounts of data visually but an infographic can be accessible if it is designed correctly.

Alt tags

In digital communications using alternative text labels (also known as alt text or alt tags) for images is vital for accessibility. All images and graphics need to be tagged with alt text labels. This is so a disabled person using a screen reader can access the alt text description of what the image used is composed of, even if they cannot see it. It is also helpful for you to send the caption with the photo to your news sources as this helps to limit the possibility of negative language.



Alt text description

“Boy in powerchair throwing a ball.”





Key points

- Use inclusive, high-quality images and action shots
- Think about how you will use images, diagrams and infographics
- Make images more accessible for digital channels with alt tags

Resources and further information

Our **Inclusive Communications Guide** can provide you with further advice on how to produce and use positive photography and imagery. Available on our website.

Free inclusive images are available on Sport England's Active Nation image library.

www.sportengland.org



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This document is available in Word format. Please contact us if you need support. Activity Alliance is the operating name for the English Federation of Disability Sport. Registered Charity no. 1075180

