

## English Federation of Disability Sport

### Top Tips for Disabled People Becoming Club Volunteers

Active People 5 suggests that only 5.5% of disabled people regularly volunteer within sports clubs compared to 7.6% of non disabled people.

The EFDS Understanding Barriers to Participation 2012 found that a Lack of confidence and self belief prevents disabled people from even considering trying sport or physical activity - Attitudes often linked to bad experiences in past. If more disabled people volunteered within sport clubs then more disabled people would participate.

The census 2011 stats that there are 9.3 million disabled people in England which equates for 20% of the population.

### Why recruit disabled people?

Employment is hot on everyone's agenda and volunteering is a great start to securing a job for both disabled and non disabled people by providing disabled people with the skills and experience needed to get one step closer to a rewarding career in sport whether it is as a coach or an administrator.

- **Experience and skills:** The challenges that disabled people face in living their daily lives can lead to developing transferable knowledge, expertise and problem solving skills.
- **Development:** Including disabled people as volunteers will provide opportunities to not only use their existing skills and experience but also support the development of further skills to increase employment opportunities.
- **Diversity:** According to the Census data there are 18% of disabled people in England and Wales. Your club should be representative of the community and support equality and inclusive activity for all.
- **Positive Role Models:** Enabling disabled people the opportunity to volunteer in sport assists them to act as positive and proactive role models.
- **Reputation:** Involving disabled volunteers can only enhance the reputation of your club to be inclusive and promoting equality to encourage more disabled people to participate in sport.

## Barriers to Sports Volunteering

Every disabled person's needs are different with this in mind It is important to consult and involve disabled people to identify and remove any barriers they may have to volunteering. Here is a list of common barriers with some suggested solutions.

**Access:** accessibility; parking, signage, changing facilities/toilets, doors, no lift or ramp, lighting etc., Signs ideally in large print, symbols and Braille; are doors wide enough for wheelchairs?

**Communication and Marketing:** Staff unable to communicate clearly, marketing material should be available in accessible formats, poor signage, BSL user etc.

**Transport;** how to get to the club? can the person drive?, is there public/community transport? Develop links with local community transport and volunteer driver's schemes. Discuss deals with local taxi firms.

**Accessible changing facilities** that will accommodate both men and women (carer or PA may be different sex to the disabled person)

NB: Further details on these above areas can be found in the EFDS Access for all Opening doors - A guide to support your sports club to improve physical access for disabled people guide for clubs [www.efds.co.uk](http://www.efds.co.uk)

**Attitudinal, Social and Psychological:** First impressions, perceptions, stereotyping and assumptions, people's lack of understanding, 'health and safety risk'.

**Financial:** Potentially extra cost of transport and/or personal assistant/ carer to attend with them i.e., signer. Larger disability charities may fund expenses for your inclusive volunteer policy (see [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk))

Consider upfront payment or ensure expenses are repaid promptly. Confirm both parties are happy with your expenses policy.

Ensure all staff attends basic disability awareness training. EFDS have a Disability Inclusive Training (DIT) See the <http://www.efds.co.uk/resources/training> website for full details.

Ensure all staff are aware of volunteer schemes available and respect and support its purpose. Use a volunteer coordinator to centrally coordinate a successful scheme.

## Engaging with Disabled Volunteers

When advertising your volunteering opportunities ensure that your marketing communication is accessible to disabled people. Most national disability charities will provide information on their website on how to communicate effectively with disabled people. Also, proactively target the volunteering placement to disabled people i.e., within disability specific press or websites, or in your local volunteer bureau or advocacy centre.

As with engaging with any volunteer have a clear volunteer role description, carry out an induction and provide on-going training and support. A volunteer coordinator will provide the scheme with the support and time it needs to be competently run and therefore lead to properly trained and motivated volunteers. Appreciated volunteers tend to stay longer in their placements.