

## Messaging, wording, better practice terminology

Using the wrong kind of language can itself create a barrier. As the English language evolves and adapts so do the terms we use to describe disabled people in our communications. How we describe people is important as labels of whatever kind have a habit of sticking. If you were to survey the national, regional and trade press you would find frequent mentions of unacceptable terms such as 'wheelchair bound' or 'Cerebral Palsy-sufferer'. Both of these terms and many similar ones convey an image of the disabled person as helpless, dependent, to be pitied when the reality is that a wheelchair enables someone to live an active life and play sport.

Here are some dos and don'ts when choosing terminology:

Do use	Do not use
Disabled person	The disabled, handicapped, crippled
Person or non-disabled person	Able-bodied person, normal person
Dwarf, person of short stature, person of restricted growth	Midget
Person with a certain condition or impairment	Sufferer
Wheelchair or mobility-scooter user	Wheelchair or mobility-scooter-bound or confined
Learning disability or person with an intellectual impairment	Retarded, backwards, slow, mentally handicapped
Deaf people/hearing impaired	The deaf
Blind people/visually impaired	The blind
Brain injury	Brain damage

### Examples in sport:

Good example:

In our sports club, disabled and non-disabled people are actively encouraged to join in.

Bad example:

In our sports club, able-bodied people love seeing the disabled join in around their club.

Can you see the difference in the terminology and tone used?