

## **Barriers faced by disabled people**

Disabled people encounter many barriers when trying to access sport and physical activity. Impairments and related aids may include:

- Wheelchair user
- Guide and support dogs
- White cane
- Hearing aids
- Communication aids
- Lip reading
- Visual impairments
- Hard of hearing
- A person with learning difficulties
- A person with mental health problems
- Speech impairment
- Paralysis of a limb
- Loss of limb
- Severe disfigurement
- Facial disfigurements
- Hidden impairments
- Epilepsy
- Asthma
- Heart conditions
- Respiratory problems
- Dyslexia
- Complications of diabetes
- Some mental health impairment
- Disabilities hidden by clothing

All impairment groups will experience all, or some, of the following barriers:

### **Physical Barriers**

- External signage
- Accessible car parking bays / location / markings / policing policy
- Access into buildings
- Poor building design – doorways - restaurants, offices, social areas
- Sports facilities
- Hearing other people's voices or seeing what is around the person
- Doors – revolving doors / door handles at the incorrect height / pressure closers too heavy / doors made from glass
- Toilets / hand basin at the incorrect height?
- No accessible changing areas / shower heads left at high level
- Low lighting levels / poor colour contrast on signage
- Limited access around fitness equipment / plinths / limited colour contrast between the support legs of fitness equipment and the carpet.
- High reception desk.

- No access to drinks fountains / vending machines
- No rest areas near steps

### **Transport**

- Public or private transport to be used - can the person drive?
- Inaccessible transport systems - Is the sports facility near a bus stop?
- Public transport may not be accessible for disabled people
- May have to pay more to travel - particularly if using a taxi
- Information on public transport - can the disabled person see / hear it?
- Lack of awareness of requirements by public transport staff
- Train platforms - are they accessible?
- Community Transport - does it service the sports facility?

### **Communication Barriers**

- No text phone / typetalk facilities
- No hearing induction loop in reception / portable induction loop for fitness suite and health check room
- Marketing materials not readily available / in stock in alternative formats
- Pre Activity Readiness Questionnaire (PAR-Q) not available in alternative formats
- Fitness/sports equipment complicated / intimidating / not tactile
- Lack of audio feedback on fitness equipment
- Small numbers on lockers in changing rooms (not tactile).
- Menu in cafeteria not in alternative formats
- Language / terminology used by staff
- Poor signage / not tactile
- Social Barriers

### **Appearance of Person**

- First Impressions - are you seeing the disability before the person?
- Stereotyping - are you grouping that person into a category?
- Shape of body - disabled people are not always a conventional body shape
- Clothes - there is often a reason why particular styles of clothes are worn
- Footwear - it may not be possible for certain people to wear a particular type of footwear

### **People's Attitudes**

Staff may immediately think that a disabled person:

- Cannot use their hands
- Cannot walk
- Cannot get up/down stairs
- Cannot see
- Cannot hear
- Cannot think

Staff may also:

- Lack confidence in providing sport/leisure services (fear factor)
- Lack understanding of people's needs
- Think the disabled person is a 'Health and safety risk'
- Have a patronising approach