

DISABILITY PARTICIPATION

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"Building on London 2012 Paralympic Games' success, we have taken great strides in supporting more disabled people to be physically active. To support this, EFDS has brought new insight and evidence about what is needed to get more disabled people active for life. However, there is significantly more to do. *The ukactive Blueprint* adds new momentum to show how much further we can go. As EFDS's Chief Executive, I fully endorse ukactive's calls and share their goal of supporting everyone, disabled and non-disabled people, to make activity a central part of their life."



CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

Local facilities should be supported to undertake a comprehensive modernisation programme to ensure all their facilities are inclusive and accessible to everyone.

Fig 8.

INTRODUCTION

Disabled people can face a vast number of psychological, logistical and physical barriers to getting physically active. Perceptions of feeling unable to take part in sport or exercise, insufficient transport links and inaccessible facilities all currently contribute toward disabled people being some of the most isolated and inactive people in the country. Disability may not always be visible – physical activity can help support people living with lifelong conditions or struggling with mental health issues.

Urgent action can and should be taken to ensure disabled people have the same opportunity to choose to be active in the widest range of activities – whether that be in their home, their community, or their local gym.

There is the potential for activity to become a central part of any support programme, embedded within personal care plans and seen more widely as a path to empowerment, independence and progression. In addition to this, it's crucial for considerations around accessibility of active environments and active travel to be included.

The 2012 Paralympic Games showed that having an impairment doesn't preclude being active. The activity sector has disabled customers training and progressing every single day – and seven in ten disabled people still want to do more.²³ The time is ripe to now make inclusion of disabled people a mainstream non-negotiable, as opposed to an area of standalone consideration.

²³ E Spring, "EFDS Report: Disabled People's Lifestyle Survey, September 2013", English Federation of Disability Sport, (Sept 2013), <http://www.efds.co.uk/assets/0000/7297/Disabled_People_s_Lifestyle_Survey_Report_Sept_2013.pdf>, [accessed 16/10/15]

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

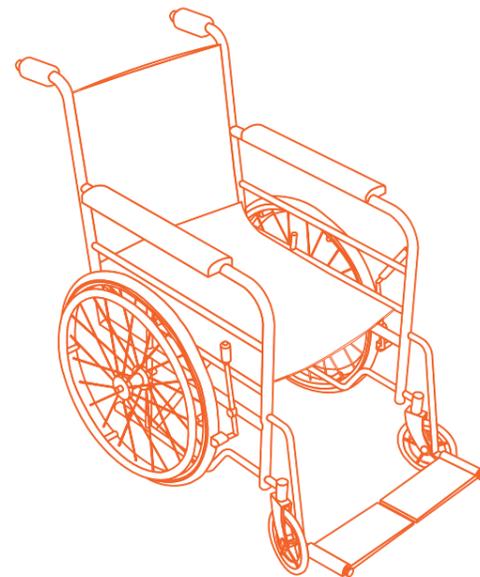
1 Everyone living with a disability must have the opportunity and the motivation to be regularly physically active. Proactively ensuring that this happens will be a vital component in any overall strategy to get more people, more active, more often.

>> All disabled people should have access to a named physical activity behaviour change intervention at their local GP surgery, utilising evidence-based techniques like motivational interviewing, and involving disabled people as peer mentors and role models in its design and delivery. All community exercise professionals running and overseeing such schemes should have specific knowledge of the benefits physical activity can offer to disabled people, what activity is appropriate for people with different disabilities and impairments and what local opportunities are available to get active.

>> As part of any broader marketing campaign designed to encourage more people to be more active, specific and adequate resources should be allocated to target the most inactive and marginalised groups, including disabled people. This has the potential to have a wide ranging impact on the inclusion of disabled people in wider society.

>> The spirit of the London 2012 Paralympic Games and major initiatives such as Invictus should be harnessed to challenge both the positive and negative stereotypes of disability and impairment. Role models must also be created from every day disabled people and inspirational people with a disability who train within the facilities of the active leisure sector every day.

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2 The physical activity sector, supported by government and local authorities across the country, should utilise its vast resources to ensure there are ample opportunities for disabled people to get active.

>> With government support, local authorities and other agencies should help local activity and fitness facilities undertake a comprehensive modernisation programme. The aim will be to ensure that all facilities are inclusive and accessible to everyone, based on the successful *Inclusive Fitness Initiative* criteria.

>> Training on the specific needs of disabled people should be incorporated into the national standards for activity professionals so that everyone leaving a training course has a basic underpinning knowledge of how to support people with a disability.

>> Every fitness and activity facility should nominate a member of staff as an 'Inclusivity Champion', and include in their responsibilities the requirement to continually work to recommend and implement measures to make their facility more accessible and appropriate for disabled people.

>> A clear message of inclusion should be sent through the scaling-up of the multi-award winning *Instructability* programme led by Aspire and funded by Sport England. This programme has placed more than 200 disabled people into work in the physical activity sector, with disabled people supported in their onward career progression in the sector including to senior levels of executive leadership and management. This programme, and others that deliver the same outcome, should be expanded nationwide.

>> The physical activity sector should work closely with CCGs to determine the exact requirements of disabled people in their local area and offer free or subsidised targeted physical activity sessions in both peak and off-peak hours as part of a strategy of growing participation.