

WheelPower's Guide to Promoting sport to wheelchair users

Introduction

WheelPower's guide to 'Promoting sport to wheelchair users' covers the key areas including terminology, session timing, venue selection, coaching considerations, promotional material and distribution tips.

The advice provided is not exhaustive but will provide the foundations for ensuring that your club sessions are accessible and are promoted to wheelchair users effectively. For further support and guidance please contact WheelPower via details provided at the end of the guide.

Knowing your customer and all about their needs is important for any business or organisation. So why can good marketing be important in clubs?

- Attract new members and retain your existing ones
- Increase attendances
- Improve club revenue
- Increase media coverage
- Embed your work within the community

Before you start promoting your session/activity

How Inclusive is your club?

Before promoting your club to disabled people, have you considered how inclusive your club is? EFDS have created a free online toolkit for reviewing and improving the accessibility of your club. The toolkit provides specific advice on different criteria. Please visit the link below for the toolkit.
www.inclusion-club-hub.co.uk

If you are looking to improve the access of your facility please see the guidelines below from Sport England:
www.sportengland.org/facilities_planning/design_and_cost_guidance/accessible_sports_facilities.aspxw

Do your coaches have a good knowledge of wheelchair sport?

WheelPower in conjunction with Sports Coach UK have produced some generic guidelines to support coaching wheelchair users. Please visit webpage below to download the guidelines.

www.sportscoachuk.org/sites/default/files/Manual-wheelchair-user-factsheet.pdf

How accessible is your venue for wheelchair users?

Not only should you think about the facility the session is held in, you should also consider the journey from the car park or public transport drop off. Consider the following:

- Are there excessive changes in gradient and camber for example big hills, steps, high kerbs, no ramp provision that make it difficult to move to and around the facility?
- Is there adequate Blue Badge car parking available and does the facility ensure that only Blue Badge holders use these spaces? If there are no Blue Badge spaces, is the car park large enough to allow for someone to park across two spaces?
- Is the car park even and of a suitable surface so it is easy to push a wheelchair across it?
- Are the doors and corridors at the facility wide enough to allow a day or sports chair through?
- Are the routes to the changing rooms and sports activity venue easily accessible?
- Are there accessible toilets available in easy reach of the activity venue?
- If there are social facilities (e.g. bar, cafe, club room etc.) in the venue are these accessible?
- Is there a quick and safe evacuation route for a wheelchair user?
- Is the facility clutter free with room to freely manoeuvre a wheelchair?

Who are you promoting your session to?

Research your local area. What activity is there currently? How much do they charge? When do they run their sessions? What service are you offering? What will attract people to your activity?

When are you going to run your sessions/activity?

Getting the timing right for your session is crucial to ensure that as many of your target audience are able to attend as possible. Investigate public transport times and find out if it possible for participants to use public transport in order to attend your sessions. Disabled people are likely to work like non-disabled people so it could be that week day sessions are not suitable even though they are available at cheaper rates.

Promoting your session/activity

What should you include within your Promotion?

- Target audience: Be specific with your communication. For example if it is wheelchair sport- 'individuals with physical impairments who can self propel' or 'for individuals with physical impairments, including spinal injury, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, amputee, muscular dystrophy etc'.
- Visibility: Is it in an area people will see it? Does it stand out and make people want to read it?
- Branding identity: Have a strong club brand which is aligned to other material so it is easily recognisable as your club.
- Layout: Is it easy to read with a strong headline to grab people's attention?
- Powerful messages: Sell the benefits of your club to the individual. Promote the benefits.
- Images: Use images that the audience can relate to.

Important information required:

- Your sessions/activity
- Why people should attend your session/activity (What's the benefit?)
- Date, time and location
- Contact details (make sure they get in contact with you)
- Cost (Is your session/activity value for money?)
- Build a database of contacts for future promotion of sessions/activities. This data has lots of value to you as club for increasing and retaining interest.

What is the correct terminology?

Sometimes people can get confused by the correct terminology to be used when talking about or to disabled people.

The English Federation of Disability Sport has created a guide which can be accessed by the webpage below. www.efds.co.uk/assets/0000/3473/Disability_language_and_etiquette_1_.pdf

The table below provides some examples from the guide that are specific to wheelchair users.

Inappropriate	Appropriate
Wheelchair bound or confined to a wheelchair	Wheelchair user or person who uses a wheelchair
For wheelchairs	For wheelchair users
Disabled parking	Orange/Blue Badge holder parking
Disabled Toilet	Accessible toilet
Carers (meaning paid home carers)	Personal assistants
Disabilities	Impairments

What forms of promotion is available?

- Leaflet/poster
- Club newsletter
- Regular press releases
- Radio
- Television
- Word of mouth

Where to promote your session/activity?

- Current members and their extended networks
- Sport specific media
- Radio
- Local television
- Noticeboards
- Schools
- Colleges
- Universities
- Local Gyms/leisure Centres
- Local Authority
- County Sports Partnership- find your local one here www.cspnetwork.org
- English Federation of Disability Sport events page
- National Governing Body of Sport
- WheelPower-British Wheelchair Sport
- Local and national charities, organisations and disability groups
- Local wheelchair and disablement services
- Doctors surgeries

WheelPower

WheelPower-British Wheelchair Sport (referred to as WheelPower) is the national organisation for wheelchair sport in the UK. The organisation, established in 1948, became a registered charity in 1972 created to provide, promote and develop opportunities for disabled men, women and children to participate in recreational and competitive wheelchair sport.

For over 50 years the charity has provided unique opportunities for sport to be used for rehabilitation, recreation and competition and was the founding organisation for the disability sports movement which led to the Paralympic Games.