Training disabled learners
in the fitness and leisure sector

Guide B: For Training Providers & Awarding Organisations

An evidence-based guide published by **Aspire**

Informed by independent leisure sector research

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

Durham University

Forewords

The Aspire Leisure Centre has been employing disabled people in a variety of staff roles since the early 1990's.

In addition to being a national spinal injury charity and inclusive community leisure facility, Aspire pioneered a pan-disability leisure workforce programme, called, 'InstructAbility'. The programme enabled hundreds of disabled people with physical, sensory, cognitive and mental health difficulties, to gain industry qualifications and subsequent employment with a vast range of leisure operators.

We commissioned independent, academic research to understand and share the best way to overcome barriers that stop disabled people being part of the leisure sector workforce. We sought advice from disabled people and those involved in leisure sector training, recruitment and employment. As a result, we have now produced a three-part set of evidence-based Guides full of recommendations and practical advice for disabled people, training providers and employers.

Our aim is to work collectively to develop a sector in which disabled people feel confident and valued as employees, and where they can trust that training and professional development will be equally accessible to them as their non-disabled peers. This will attract more disabled people to work in the industry and therefore bring down barriers for customers and staff alike.

This can only be achieved if everyone involved plays their part in creating this change. As an organisation involved in leisure workforce training and qualification, we hope you will play your part by adopting these guidelines across your provision. You play a vital role in encouraging and supporting disabled people to start a career in this sector and continue to develop as talented professionals.

Brian Carlin
Aspire CEO

Hilary Farmiloe
InstructAbility Strategic Lead

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" To reduce the unacceptable participation gap that exists between disabled and non-disabled people we need a more diverse workforce. This programme has been a game changer, providing career opportunities to disabled people and creating more accessible and welcoming training environments and places for people to be active. We are proud to have invested in 'InstructAbility' and will strive, alongside our partners, to ensure these guidelines, based on extensive research with disabled people, are a key tool to enable our sector to become more diverse. "

Tim Hollingsworth
Sport England CEO

" CIMSPA is the professional development body for the UK's sport and physical activity sector, committed to developing and enabling professionals and organisations to succeed and, as a result, inspire our nation to become more active.

As your chartered institute, we are here for the whole sector's development, working to make sure that we represent a diverse sector that everyone wants to be a part of. Working alongside Aspire, it is important to us that we can help everyone find a course and support their journey to employment in inclusive, accessible and welcoming training environments.

CIMSPA are supportive of Aspire's new guidelines which are a great toolkit for ensuring that the sector is accessible to everyone working in it.

It's essential as a sector that career opportunities are accessible and that our workforce footprint is representative of the society that we serve. "

Tara Dillon
CIMSPA CEO

" ukactive exists to improve the health of the nation by promoting active lifestyles. We do this by supporting our members with services to help them grow, and facilitating partnerships for a broad range of organisations, all of which support our mission to get more people, more active, more often. We want to encourage and celebrate inclusion and diversity, and are committed to ensuring that more people from all backgrounds are more active. And that is why we support Aspire's Industry Guidance and 'InstructAbility' programme with the ambition to create a sector that is equally and freely accessed by disabled people, enabling them to participate in whatever capacity they wish. Together, we can make sure that everyone has the opportunity to discover and enjoy the mental and physical benefits of physical activity. "

Huw Edwards
CEO ukactive

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Table of contents

Part A
About this Guide

Using this Guide

This Guide is one part of a three-part publication:

- **Guide A:** For disabled people.

- **Guide B:** For training providers & awarding organisations.

- **Guide C:** For fitness and leisure sector employers.

This Guide B is for you if you are:

An organisation that delivers training and/or conducts assessments for fitness and leisure industry relevant qualifications.

An organisation that awards and/or quality assures fitness and leisure industry relevant qualifications.

This Guide will focus on the accessibility and inclusivity of the training for disabled learners. We recommend you also view Guide C: For Employers, for information on how you can be an inclusive and disability confident employer.

Purpose and scope

The purpose of this Guide is to offer information and recommendations for training providers and awarding organisations to develop accessible and inclusive training courses for disabled learners. More specifically, how to:

- Reach and attract disabled people.

- Create an inclusive environment for disabled learners.

- Provide reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled learners are not substantially disadvantaged compared to non-disabled people when searching and applying for, and undertaking training and qualifications.

The research evidence for the content of this document, and the examples, quotes and case studies are drawn from the fitness and leisure industry. We will refer to the fitness and leisure sector to mean training related to physical exercise (e.g., gym instructor, personal trainer, swimming teacher, group exercise leader). This Guide is relevant to standalone fitness-industry relevant courses and CPD that are delivered in traditional face-to-face, e-learning, and blended learning formats. Many of the strategies offered, however, may also be relevant to organisations delivering full-time courses, and for further and higher education providers delivering industry-relevant qualifications, such as GSCE, A Level, BTEC and BSc courses in sport, exercise, coaching and physical education.

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Other information

Definition

Throughout this Guide we will refer to 'disabled people' to mean:

- People with a visible or non-visible impairment, illness, health condition or differing function,

- in combination with social and material barriers,

- that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on their ability to perform typical day-to-day activities.

References

References to additional useful information have a website address and a direct hyperlink to the page for those using digital devices. If the page is moved on an organisation's website the link will no longer work. In this instance, we suggest you contact the organisation directly for the information. References and links to websites in this Guide do not imply endorsement or support of any of the linked information, services, products, or providers.

Legal requirements and good practice

Being fully inclusive, requires more than just meeting legal obligations. This Guide does give advice and practical examples on how to implement reasonable adjustments as required by law. However, it also highlights how to encourage disabled people to apply for your courses and how to make the training more accessible.

Reasonable adjustments are changes to the environment that allow disabled people to work safely, productively and in a manner that is equal to non-disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments do not always have to be extensive, complicated, or expensive and in many cases they also benefit other learners.

More general information about reasonable adjustments can be found at:

- Recruitment. [1]
- Disabled Workers. [2]

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is lawful to take 'positive action' to encourage and train people from under-represented groups to help them overcome disadvantages in competing with others.

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Using the different sections of this Guide

The Guide is divided into three parts, which are split into further sections. The three main parts of the Guide are:

Part A. **About this Guide**

Part A provides context as to how and why to adopt the guidance. Part A includes sections 1-3.

Part B. **Advice and recommendations**

Part B contains guidance that you can use to review and action plan against. Part B includes sections 4-10.

Part C. **More information**

Part C provides further information to help you understand more about disability and inclusion and training provider case studies. Part C includes sections 11-15.

Every training provider and awarding organisation will be at different stages of the journey to becoming fully inclusive, and may wish to address different priorities at different times depending on their organisation's current objectives, policies and procedures.

Part B 'Advice and recommendations' has been ordered to reflect a journey from start to finish, however you can use the different sections over time, and in any order, as necessary. You may also want to delegate sections to different personnel.

CIMSPA's role

It is highly recommended that all training providers and awarding organisations are members of The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA). [3] Education partners will need to work in line with the recommendations in this Guide to achieve CIMSPA endorsement of their training products*. Other elements of the guidance such as the role of course advisors and inclusive course marketing will be monitored through CIMSPA's quality assurance process. In this instance CIMSPA will audit the existing provision and record progress and barriers towards offering an optimal level of accessibility and inclusion**.

Section 1 References

1 https://www.gov.uk/recruitment-disabled-people/reasonable-adjustments

2 https://www.gov.uk/reasonable-adjustments-for-disabled-workers

3 https://www.cimspa.co.uk/

The table below summarises each section of the Guide:

Part	Section	Guidance	Key points
Part A: About this Guide	2	Rationale	A great starting point is to understand the benefits of inclusion to your organisation and communicate this to all staff.
	3	Getting started	Start with a whole organisation approach, engage staff, benchmark and plan.
Part B: Advice and Recommendations	4	Reaching disabled people**	How to be proactive and do things differently to encourage more disabled people to consider your training courses.
	5	Pre-course information & support**	Give people the information they want to know, in a way that is accessible to them. Providing that extra bit of support before they start might make all the difference.
	6	Accessible venues*	Understand how to ensure all your training facilities meet with accessibility requirements.
	6	Accessible timetables	A course that has these will provide 'optimal' accessibility. Consider applying this guidance to at least a proportion of courses.
	7	Accessible delivery*	Ask all the right questions to consider what adjustments may be needed during training and assessment.
	8	Funding Support**	Be aware of the funding available, that can be accessed by individuals or training providers, to support disabled learners.
	9	Inclusive resources**	Does your course advertising send a positive message to disabled people? Create resources and marketing materials that are representative of the diverse society we live in.
	10	Accessible learning resources*	How to make sure all your digital and hard copy learning resources are accessible to people with different impairments. Have you thought about style, text, graphics, hyperlinks, PowerPoint, web, social media, video, BSL and print?
Part C: More Information	11-15	More Information	Do all staff understand the social model of disability? Can they apply this concept and associated language and etiquette to promoting access and inclusion across the organisation?

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"To really change things, I think it starts with their management and their staff, do they truly embrace it or is it just a tick box exercise." **Disabled instructor**

"If I was going to do a fitness course I would think, 'oh, just don't!', I'd wonder if I was fit enough and if other learners think, 'why is this person on this course?'" **Disabled person**

"We don't specifically target disabled people but that's something we could do more of." **Training provider**

"We are definitely reactive, so maybe we do need to have a different approach where we pre-empt learner's needs more." **Training provider**

"The tutor goes to the venue with a big checklist and considers as many possibilities as they can, so we know it is accessible." **Training provider**

"It can be difficult and complex for some people to do a course, so having a more accessible timetable can help people who need time to get ready in the mornings or who are on pain medication." **Training provider**

"We find out how their condition affects them and we can nearly always tailor support and make adjustments so they can do the course." **Awarding organisation**

"I knew a para-athlete who wanted to become a fitness instructor, and yet he couldn't get a job without a qualification and without a job he couldn't fund his education.'" **CEO, Leisure provider**

"Funding is definitely something everyone needs to know about, knowing how I am going to afford this, can be paramount to a disabled person." **Disabled instructor**

"A disabled leaner might go all the way through their training resource and not see a picture of another disabled person in that entire manual." **Awarding organisation**

"If disabled people are represented then it would feel natural but sadly, it's not happening in the fitness sector much. I've felt like I was completely invisible." **Disabled instructor**

"Our online software is great but it doesn't describe diagrams for learners who are visually impaired, so that's something we do need to improve." **Training provider**

The rationale for accessible and inclusive training

The 20+% rule

Disabled people make up over 20% of the UK population (more than one in five). [4]
A simple way to consider whether disabled people are being equally represented is to see if that percentage is reflected in data. For example, are 20% of learners and staff disabled? Is at least one in five people featured in your marketing a disabled person?

The employment gap

Disabled people's rates of employment are 30% lower than their non-disabled peers. [4]
Despite a lack of national data, there are clear indications that disabled people are also vastly under-represented in the fitness and leisure sector workforce. [5,6]

What training staff say about the benefits of having more disabled learners

"We all learned a lot about supporting disabled people in the gym because every learner with a different impairment did the practical session in a different way."

"We realised that we could apply an adjustment to everyone, so all learners were treated equally with nobody being visibly singled out."

"Every time I deliver training to a disabled learner, I take things I can use as examples next time."

"It's beneficial to have a group of learners with a variety of needs because it will prepare them for the diversity of clients they will face in the industry."

"Being able to adapt my teaching methods has made me a better tutor for all my learners."

Great reasons to implement these guidelines

Disabled people are underrepresented across all aspects of the leisure sector. Beyond a moral obligation to address this imbalance, there are real gains to be had for individuals and organisations. Making professional training and qualifications more attractive and accessible to disabled people can benefit everyone in the sector.

Benefits to leisure operators

- Increase diversity of workforce.
- Employ staff with knowledge of disability.
- Attract more disabled customers. [7]
- Close the activity gap between disabled and non-disabled people. [8]

Benefits to disabled people

- Widen career choices.
- Route to volunteering.
- Route to employment.
- Turn a passion for physical and mental well-being into a career.

Benefits for everyone

Benefits to training providers and awarding organisations*

- Increase diversity in groups of learners.
- Increase knowledge about disability and disabled people.

- Gain experience of adjusting training and assessments.
- Test that inclusive policies work in 'real life'.

- Enhance company reputation.
- Tap into a potential source of new learners.

*See Guide C: For Employers, to understand the positive impact of having more disabled staff in your organisation too.

Section 2 References

4   Office for National Statistics

5   SCUK Coaching Insights 2015/16

6   Raising The Bar Report 2018

7   Aspire Leisure Experience Report

8   Sport England Active Lives Survey

3

Getting started

Aim to have the following in place if you want to succeed in creating a long-term positive impact within your organisation that will result in more disabled people being included.

- **Initiate a top down approach**
- **Understand your start and end points**
- **Adopt an inclusive perspective**
- **Consult with experts, including disabled people**

Initiate a top down approach

1. **Secure commitment** from the executive board and senior management team to enhancing the inclusion of disabled people.

2. **Communicate** the rationale for the representation and inclusion of disabled people to all staff.

3. **Embed** accessibility for disabled learners in strategic plans across the organisation's different departments, and make managers accountable for change.

Understand your start and end point

Create a vision of what being fully accessible and inclusive will look like in your organisation. Then measure where you currently are and decide what you need to do to get there.

7. Monitor and report

Regularly monitor and report impact of changes on disabled learners and staff. Share successes internally and externally and feed issues back into the review and planning cycle.

6. Action plan

Create an action plan that considers timeframes, resources and personnel, including any external expertise.

5. Set targets

Describe a measurable endpoint which may include targets for increasing the number of disabled people undertaking your training courses and qualifications.

1. Data collection system

Set up processes for recording data. Breaking down data into impairment types, will provide much greater insight (see **Section 15** for impairment types).

2. Benchmark

Find out how you are doing by recording:

a) Quantitative data e.g., numbers of disabled people enrolled, trained, qualified and;

b) Qualitative data e.g., levels of disabled learner satisfaction and staff satisfaction.

Accessible and Inclusive

1
2
3
4
5
6
7

4. Make recommendations

Make recommendations based upon the review and gain support from the top and across all relevant staff and departments.

3. Review policy and practice

Undertake a review with staff across the organisation and with disabled people, against each section in the Guide.

Notes on collecting data:

- Collect data at application, enrolment, and induction stages, and as an ongoing process.

- Use confidential systems and emphasise data protection and privacy.

- Ensure processes are accessible and available in alternative confidential formats.

- Explain the reason for collecting data and how it will be stored and used.

- Include a 'prefer not to say' option.

Adopt an inclusive perspective

To really embed an inclusive ethos into the organisation's work, try helping all staff to understand and embrace this approach. Some quick tips to get you started are below. For more substantial details on each point go to **Part C: More Information**.

Inclusion is about making disabled people feel like they belong and are valued. A training provider that offers equal opportunity may still not succeed in attracting disabled learners if they perceive that they will not be fully welcomed or supported **(see Section 12)**.

The social model of disability underpins an ethos of inclusion. The model focuses on the systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion by society (purposely or inadvertently) that mean society is the main contributory factor in disabling people. The onus is therefore upon society (organisations and individuals) to remove these barriers so disabled people can be included **(see Section 12)**.

A simple way to explain and remind people of this perspective is to use this practical example.

Q. Look at the picture above and ask 'what is disabling the person and preventing them from getting to the leisure centre?'

A. Using the social model when answering the question, we would say the stairs are the problem and we can fix this by providing a ramp.

When working through this Guide, apply the social model example to review and address any ways in which policies, practices and behaviours may be 'disabling' someone with an impairment.

Language has also evolved to reflect the change in our view of disability and align to the social model of disability. We recommend that any inclusive organisation adopts and promotes an appropriate language policy **(see Section 13)**.

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Consult with experts

Consider consulting directly with disabled people and liaise with disability organisations (perhaps via focus groups). This will help ensure that where content describes disability and disabled people, the language, images and messages used are appropriate and accurate. This may be relevant to references in training manuals, exam papers, marketing materials or policy documents. Consider whether any staff in the organisation have an impairment or have experience of working with disabled learners or communicating with disabled people. See **Section 13** for helpful organisations.

Part B
Advice and Recommendations

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Reaching disabled people

If you are providing courses that are very accessible to a range of people (and meet many of the recommendations in this Guide) consider how you might highlight this in your marketing.

This may encourage more disabled people to apply and also make your courses more attractive to others. For example, shorter days and higher tutor: student ratios, might attract people who are returning to education, have childcare commitments or lack confidence.

Events to engage with prospective learners

- Host an open event, where prospective learners are invited to hear talks about the courses on offer, view training resources, and speak to advisors about learning opportunities and forthcoming courses.

- Establish links with mainstream schools and appropriate special schools to provide career advice.

- Exhibit at career and trade shows which may be generic, sector specific or disability-related. For example:

  - World Skills UK LIVE [9], which is a skills, careers and apprenticeships event.

  - The National Career Guidance Show. [10]

  - Diversity Career Show. [11]

  - NAIDEX Independent Living Show. [12]

- For any events that are hosted or attended, promote your event activity via your social media channels.

Advertising channels

Most organisations advertise their courses using the same channels, such as the mainstream leisure publications. If you are not attracting many disabled people through your existing channels, consider the ideas below. In addition to targeting disabled people directly, you might also be able to reach them through others that represent or support them. For example, parents, carers, teachers, healthcare professionals and career advisors.

- When advertising on your organisation's own website and social media, ensure that information is available in accessible formats so that disabled people can retrieve and understand the content **(see Section 10)**.

- Advertise via the Jobcentre Plus (JCP). [13] Contact your local JCP if your organisation delivers courses in a specific area, or more widely if you are a national organisation. Ensure that work coaches and disability employment advisors at the Jobcentre are aware that your courses are available to individuals with a range of impairments.

- Ensure National Careers Service [14] advisors are aware of your courses so they can signpost potential learners to your courses.

- Try advertising your courses via disability user groups and organisations. This could be via their websites, newsletters, marketing communications, or their social media channels.

  - Become a member organisation of the British Association for Supported Employment (BASES) and advertise courses for free on their vacancies section of the BASES website. [15]

  - Liaise with Disability Rights UK [16] who support organisations to put disabled people's priorities at the heart of policy and practice.

  - Engage with Remploy [17], an organisation with experience of designing and delivering skills training and apprenticeships to disabled people, and supporting disabled people into employment.

  - MyPlus Students' Club is a disability careers website [18] offering advice and guidance and job listings for disabled students looking for further training and employment opportunities. They have many University and employer partners, and help employers realise the potential of being inclusive for disabled people. This organisation also hosts career events. [19]

  - Vercida [20] is a diversity and inclusion employer platform, which is supported by a number of disability user group partners. Explore the potential to advertise training courses on their site.

- Evenbreak [21] is a social enterprise that matches disabled job seekers with employers looking to build a diverse workforce.

- Target people who are already involved in physical activity through organisations such as: Activity Alliance [22] and Parasport. [23]

- You may also want to target disabled people via disability websites and publications. Some examples include:

  - Disability Horizons [24] is a subscription-based online website and magazine, which has an employment section.

  - Enable [25] is a UK disability and lifestyle magazine with a section on education and employment.

  - Pos'ability [26] is another disability lifestyle magazine with a jobs section.

  - Able magazine [27] has a work and education section.

  - All Together NOW! [28] is a health and disability news magazine with careers, education and employment sections.

Although radio is not accessible for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing, many people with visual impairments get their news from radio programmes. You could consider targeting the following stations and programmes as part of your advertising strategy.

- 'Insight Radio' is the Royal National Institute of Blind People radio station. It is an example of a station produced specifically for those with visual impairments.

- 'You and Yours' is a Radio 4 programme, that has a high proportion of stories targeted at disabled listeners.

- 'See Hear' is a BBC TV programme, which is an alternative to radio for people with hearing impairments. It is presented in sign language with open subtitles.

Other avenues to explore for advertising might be doctor's surgeries, community centres (particularly ones that deliver sessions or activities for local disabled people), and local disability organisations and charities.

When it is not possible to advertise directly on other organisations' websites or via their newsletters and social media, you might be able to engage with their audiences by connecting with them via your own social media. For example, you could follow them on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram, and tag the organisation into your posts.

Section 4 References

9   www.worldskillsuk.org/directions/our-events/worldskills-uk-live

10   https://prospectsevents.co.uk

11   www.diversitycareers.info/careers-show

12   www.naidex.co.uk

13   www.jobcentreguide.co.uk/jobcentre-plus-guide/28/jobcentre-plus-offices

14   https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/

15   www.base-uk.org

16   www.disabilityrightsuk.org/about-us

17   www.remploy.co.uk/about-us

18   www.myplusstudentsclub.com

19   www.myplusstudentsclub.com/events/

20   www.vercida.com/uk

21   www.evenbreak.co.uk

22   http://www.activityalliance.org.uk/get-involved/jobs-in-sport

23   https://parasport.org.uk

24   www.disabilityhorizons.com

25   http://enablemagazine.co.uk

26   www.posabilitymagazine.co.uk

27   https://ablemagazine.co.uk/articles/work-education/

28   www.alltogethernow.org.uk/about-us/

5

Pre-course information and support

This section outlines a learner's journey from considering a training course, through to enrolment and induction. There are a number of suggested strategies that could be used to maximise access and inclusion during this stage.
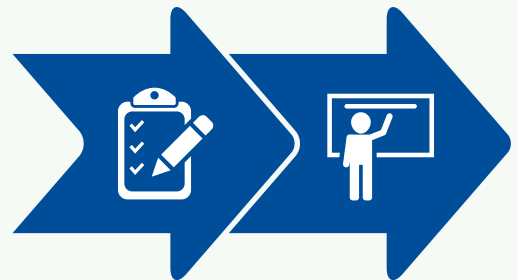
Step 1
Find out about the course

Make decisions

Step 4
Attend course induction
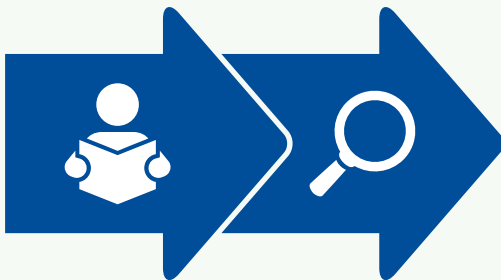
Step 2
Seek advisor support

Step 3
Apply and enrol

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Step 1. Providing course information

Some disabled people seek out particular information when considering the suitability of a course. You probably already have the details but consider how easily available the information is on your website and printed materials. This information is likely to be helpful to all potential learners. Below are questions that disabled people told us they want to know the answers to:

Course and provider

- ☑ Is the course CIMSPA recognised?
- ☑ Does the course lead to a qualification or a CPD award?
- ☑ What other follow-on courses are available?
- ☑ Are discounts available for further courses?
- ☑ Are there any pre-requisite qualifications, skills or experiences?
- ☑ Do you have any testimonials or case studies?
- ☑ What is the policy regarding absence (e.g., for medical reasons)
- ☑ What opportunities and costs are there for additional time and/or support?
- ☑ Is there any financial support?

Course delivery

- ☑ Will the course involve classroom and/or practical based learning?
- ☑ Will the course involve face-to-face learning, distance learning, online learning, or a combination of these?
- ☑ What days and times will the course be running?
- ☑ What is the daily schedule like, including breaks?
- ☑ What are the assessment methods?
- ☑ What venues will be used and are they accessible?
- ☑ Does the tutor have experience of training disabled people?
- ☑ Does the training involve work/community based placements?
- ☑ Are digital and e-learning resources fully accessible and available in alternative formats?

Course application

- ☑ When are the application open and closing dates?
- ☑ How does a learner apply and are there alternative formats for submitting information?
- ☑ Is there a selection process and if so what are the criteria?
- ☑ Will there be any pre-selection tests or interviews and what will they involve?

Step 2.
Advisor support

Disabled people often welcome the opportunity to speak to course advisors directly via telephone, email or web-based communication channels such as an online chat/message portal, or Skype.

This can be an important first point of contact before they apply for a course. It is worth considering how well equipped advisors are to discuss disabled learners' needs and provide accurate information. For example, they should be able to:
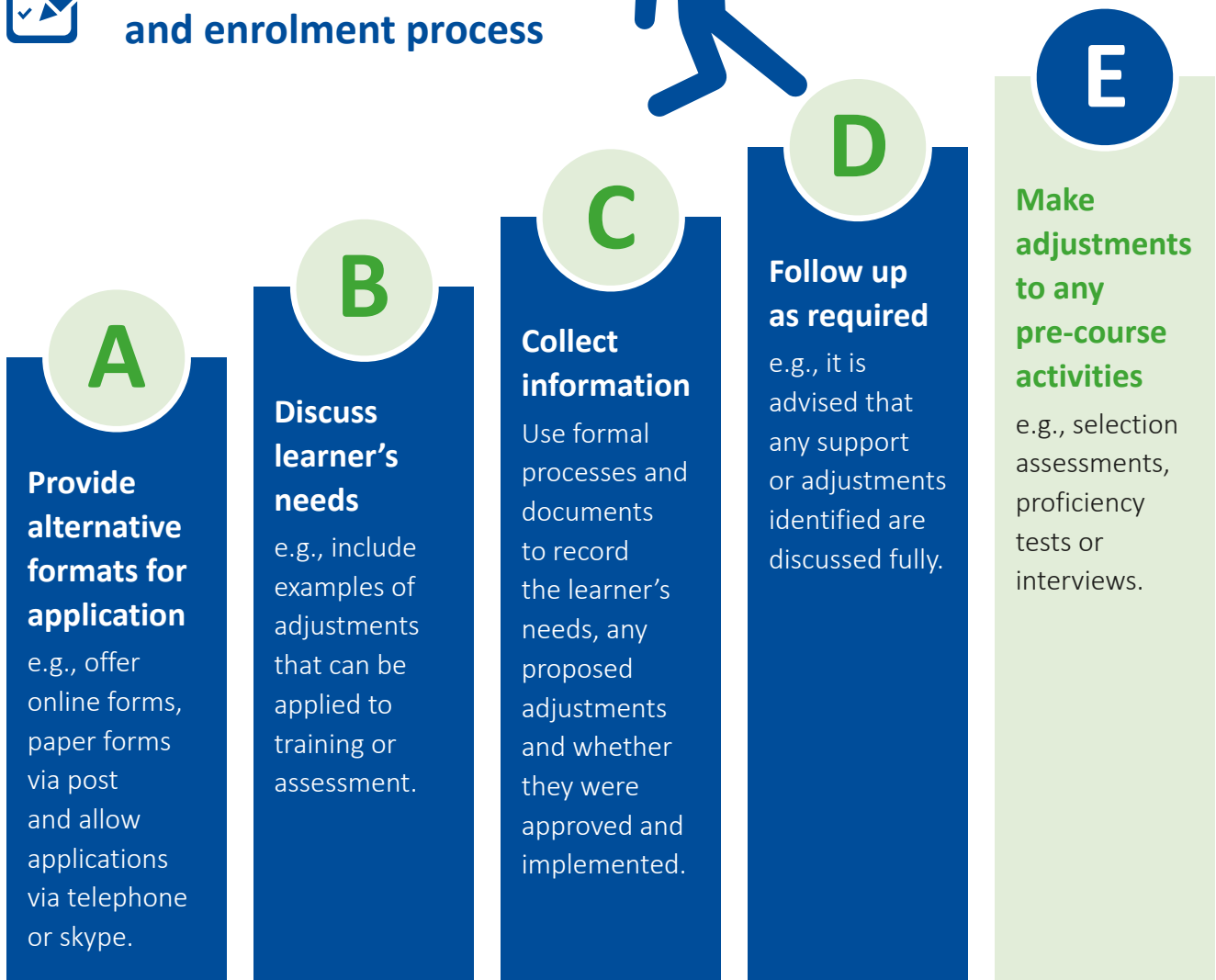
- Speak to disabled people using disability-related language **(see Section 13)**.

- Recognise common impairment types and associated reasonable adjustments.

- Make enquiries and fully investigate options for reasonable adjustments when unsure.

- State what the organisation can and cannot provide for an individual.

- Find out about the individual's previous learning experiences and adjustments that may be applicable (e.g., to learning resources, practical and classroom-based teaching, assessments and examinations).

- Where applicable use information from a young person's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and personal budget to apply for support and funding. More information can be found at SEN Help [29] and EHC Plans. [30]

- Give prospective disabled learners ongoing opportunities to specify and describe any adjustments they might need.

- Offer alternative course options if a disabled learner is unable to achieve the course outcomes despite reasonable adjustments.

- Provide information about the course, tutor and venue as already described in this section.

Step 3. The application and enrolment process

A
Provide alternative formats for application

e.g., offer online forms, paper forms via post and allow applications via telephone or skype.

B
Discuss learner's needs

e.g., include examples of adjustments that can be applied to training or assessment.

C
Collect information

Use formal processes and documents to record the learner's needs, any proposed adjustments and whether they were approved and implemented.

D
Follow up as required

e.g., it is advised that any support or adjustments identified are discussed fully.

E
Make adjustments to any pre-course activities

e.g., selection assessments, proficiency tests or interviews.

Consider the following:

- Quiet environment.
- Located on the ground floor or with a lift.
- Accessible toilets.
- Communicator support if required (e.g., a BSL interpreter, a scribe, or a guide).
- Extra time to complete any activities.

Step 4. Course induction

The following suggestions can help a learner familiarise themselves before they start. This may be particularly beneficial to learners who are concerned about physical access, or anyone who lacks confidence due to a mental health difficulty or autism spectrum condition.

Face-to-face interaction is recommended but other forms of communication will also help people connect. Most of these recommendations can be applied as an optional extra to those wanting to find out more before the first day of the course, as well as part of a course induction.

The venue

- Enable a learner to visit the training venue with an advisor or tutor to check any access issues.

- Provide verbal description and physical guidance to visually impaired learners.

- Show the locations of toilets, changing spaces, lifts and refreshments and rest areas.

- Provide opportunities for learners to familiarise themselves and navigate their way around.

- Explain any sign-in and sign-out procedures.

- Explain health and safety policies and procedures, including emergency evacuations and planned fire drills.

- Go through a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) as required, such as for leaners with cognitive, sensory and/or mobility impairments, including short term conditions such as an injury or later stage pregnancy.

Tutors and other learners

- Provide a 'meet the course tutor' session to build rapport and enable learners to discuss their needs and preferences.

- Provide opportunities to meet other learners before the course starts.

- Set up an online group forum for learners to interact with each other pre, during and post training.

- Lead icebreaker activities to allow students to get to know one another.

- Discuss different learning styles and individual's strengths to highlight the different ways everyone makes a valuable contribution.

- Agree a code of conduct which reinforces respect for each individual.

- Encourage learners to talk about their skills and if they are comfortable, to talk about what they can do and what they may need help with.

Resources

- Provide information in a format that is accessible to the learner (e.g., accessible PDFs, hard copies, large print versions).

- Send resources in advance to anyone who might benefit from being able to prepare and digest content.
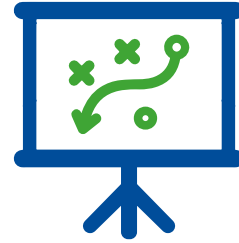
Aspire ©

Section 5 References

29   www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/ extra-SEN-help

30   https://contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/education-learning/ehc-plans-assessments/what-is-an-ehc-plan/

Planning an accessible training course

This section focuses on how to create a physical environment and course structure that anyone can access.

Providing an accessible training venue

Assess potential training facilities (e.g., gyms, fitness and leisure centres, community centres, assessment centres) for accessibility using the checklist below. If feasible, visit the centre to undertake an onsite audit. Consider if there is a disabled person who can either accompany you or be trained to carry out the audit.

✔ Are accessible parking spaces available?

✔ Does the centre have good local transport links? What is the distance from bus stop and railway station?

✔ Can a wheelchair user and visually impaired person access the centre safely, and move around easily once inside?

✔ Are door and corridors wide enough to accommodate wheelchair users, including turning areas?

✔ Are there accessible toilets, changing rooms and lockers?

✔ Are there ramps, handrails and functioning lifts?

✔ Is there a ramp or hoist to assist mobility-impaired individuals into and out of the pool?

✔ If learners are required to access higher floors, does the centre have a contract in place with the lift company to ensure that repairs are carried out promptly?

✔ Is there a hearing loop installed?

✔ Is there an audio-visual fire alarm installed?

✔ Is there a policy for learners to bring an assistance dog?

✔ Will learners be able to access refreshments and places to rest?

✔ Do the classroom environments have suitable and movable tables and chairs to accommodate wheelchair users or those with mobility aids?

✔ Does the seating offer sufficient comfort and support?

✔ Does the flooring throughout the centre allow for safe wheeling? For example, some thick carpets are hard to wheel across. Any small steps, rucking in carpets or linoleum and broken floor tiles can be problematic for wheelchair users and represent trip hazards for everyone, especially individuals with a visual impairment.

✔ Is the classroom free from noise and distraction that could make learning difficult for everyone, and be an even greater problem for people with impaired hearing or concentration?

✔ Ensure that the centre can offer a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for any learner who may not be able to reach a final place of safety unaided or within a satisfactory period of time in the event of an emergency. PEEPs may be required for leaners with mobility, hearing, visual, and/or cognitive impairments. Temporary PEEPs may also be required for a learner with a short-term injury or medical condition, or those in the later stages of pregnancy.

✔ For courses delivered in a gym/fitness and leisure facility, check if the centre has Quest Module Gplus37 Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) Accreditation (you can view the details of the Module Gplus37 [31] on the Quest NBS website [32]). This will tell you how accessible and inclusive it is to disabled customers. To see whether the facility is listed as an inclusive gym, visit the following link to the Activity Alliance website [33]. Where possible, try to use facilities that have achieved this accreditation as it will be more accessible to disabled learners. If not, encourage the centre to consider working towards undertaking this Quest Module, and becoming accredited.

✔ Encourage the venue to have their information displayed on the AccessAble website [34], so that disabled people can find out more about the centre online without the need for a physical visit.

Providing an accessible timetable for training and assessments

Consider the ideas below for ways you could structure the course timetable to improve accessibility. Aim to offer some courses that incorporate the following strategies.

Duration

Offer courses that are slightly longer in overall duration but have shorter training days to suit a combination of disabled and non-disabled learners on a course together. Disabled people frequently prefer shorter days over a longer period, as opposed to more concentrated courses that are completed in a shorter timeframe, for a number of reasons (see next points).

Start and finish times

Courses that start after 10.00am and finish before 4.00pm can make the course more accessible because learners:

◣ Can avoid busy rush hour journeys.

◣ Have extra time to travel to and from the location more easily and safely.

◣ Have extra time to undertake journeys via public transport or find suitable parking, and get to the exact location within the centre using wheelchairs or mobility aids or a guide.

- Might have fewer travel options available to them at certain times of the day (e.g., at night for evening courses or travel passes for disabled people which can only be used after 9.30am).

- Can structure their learning around childcare if they have young children. This of course applies to disabled and non-disabled parents.

Activity breaks

- If the course is being held at a public facility, timetable practical activities when the facility (e.g., the gym or pool), is less busy. This could be at off-peak times in the gym or when there is no swimming, aqua aerobic or school classes taking place in the pool.

- Ask learners in advance about their needs so that these can be accommodated during breaks of sufficient quantity and duration.

- Breaks during the day enable learners (depending on an impairment or condition) to:

    - Use the toilet.
    - Have a rest if they experience chronic pain or fatigue.
    - Take medication.
    - Take an assistance dog outside.

- Digest the information covered at their own pace.

- Listen back to recordings of class content.

- Complete or re-read their notes.

- Take extra time to complete tasks.

- Speak with a support worker who may have been taking notes for them.

These breaks may be particularly important for learners with a visual or hearing impairment, or learners who have a physical or learning impairment precluding their ability to write quickly. Individuals with a learning or cognitive impairment might also find it challenging to focus for a long period of time and require some breaks to review information delivered to them.

Tutors and assessors

Consider how you can support tutors and assessors to gain knowledge and experience of working with disabled learners. This may be achieved via a combination of external disability staff training, internal inductions and observations, workshops or focus groups led by staff who have an impairment, or have experience of working with disabled learners.

Increasing the tutor:learner ratio can enhance the support for learners with particular needs. For example it can enable the tutor to:

- Offer more in depth explanations, and allow time for learners with cognitive or learning impairments to absorb information.

- Ask and answer questions, check understanding and provide personalised feedback. Although relevant for all learners, those with learning or mental health difficulties may require greater input.

- Facilitate the involvement of all learners in group discussions and group tasks, particularly if learners require communication support, such as those with a sensory or speech impairment or learners with an autism-spectrum condition.

- Create a more comfortable, less anxiety-inducing environment for learners with mental health conditions, autism-spectrum conditions and those learners who are new or returning to education.

Online and distance learning courses

For courses that are not wholly delivered face-to-face, check that the course materials are available and fully accessible **(see Section 10)**.

Consider whether it is possible to support disabled learners with bespoke or additional support (which would also be useful for non-disabled learners), for example:

- Access to tutors via telephone, email, or skype (at pre-arranged times or days) if they need extra guidance.

- Opportunities for a face-to-face meeting with a tutor and/or other learners to discuss ideas, challenges, revise the training content and prepare for assessments.

- Access to an online learning environment, which contains accessible resources, e-learning materials, videos and tutorials, assessment preparation guidance, and practice assessment papers.

- Access to an online learning forum where learners can pose questions to the tutor or to each other (and receive timely answers), share ideas and work together to complete learning activities and assessments.

Section 6 References

31 https://questnbs.org/images/AssessmentPreparation/Q2016/FM/Guidance/GPlus37EngagingwithDisabledPeopleIFIGuidanceNotesApr18Issue2.pdf

32 www.questnbs.org

33 www.activityalliance.org.uk/get-active/inclusive-gyms

34 https://www.accessable.co.uk

Delivering an accessible course

Classroom-based sessions

Consider what adjustments you could make to classroom-based teaching to ensure good access for all learners.

- Basic classroom safety applies to all learners but trip hazards such as cables from laptops, projectors and other electronic equipment can pose a particular risk to those with mobility or visual impairments.

- Be aware of other objects such as bags and water bottles on the floor, that may pose a risk to visually impaired learners.

- Tables and chairs need to be positioned appropriately with suitable space between and around them for wheelchair users and visually impaired people to navigate around easily.

- Wheelchair users need to be able to manoeuvre around the classroom and either access tables whilst in their wheelchair or transfer from their wheelchair into a chair (this will vary depending on personal preference, impairment type and sitting duration).

- Describe the layout of the classroom for any visually impaired learners that need it. Include the position of tables and chairs, equipment such as board and projector as well as the location of bins, doors and windows. A set seating plan will also help visually impaired learners know where people are and who is talking.

- Learners who are deaf or hard of hearing should be positioned where they can clearly see the tutor and other learners speaking.

Practical-based sessions

Consider what adjustments you could make to enhance accessibility of practical teaching areas such as a gym, studio or pool.

- **Noise levels.** People who are deaf or hard of hearing, learners with concentration difficulties, and learners with mental health conditions might be affected by busy, noisy or echoey pool and studio environments, or loud music playing in the gym. Noise might also affect the extent to which visually-impaired learners can hear instructions and contributions from the tutor and other learners.

- **Visibility.** Visually impaired learners might be affected by low level lighting in studios, poorly highlighted steps, pool edges, or exercise equipment in the gym that has not been put back on racks. Remember to describe the layout of the practical areas and equipment including fixed and moving objects.

Physical access

- Ensure wheelchair users and those with mobility issues can access changing rooms and lockers.

- Wheelchair users or physically impaired learners need to be able to navigate around machines in the gym, and as an instructor, get alongside a client. This may necessitate moving some equipment.

- If training in the pool, wheelchair users will need to use the pool changing rooms, and they may need to use an aid to enter the pool (e.g., a lift or hoist). They may need to use a pool wheelchair when instructing from poolside.

- Facilities that are busy with other customers can make navigation more difficult, add to noise levels and cause some learners with mental health conditions to feel more anxious.

- Consider the length of time it will take learners to move between classroom and practical areas. For example, if a number of people need to use a lift which only accommodates one person, it may take some time for all students to reconvene together. Structure sessions to allow for any extra time so learners do not feel rushed. If you are giving everyone a break during this time, ensure it is long enough for the disabled person to relocate and have a break like everyone else.

Adjustments to activity

When demonstrating and teaching practical activities, assess whether disabled learners might need some adjustments or require additional support from the tutor.

- A learner with a physical impairment may not be able to do an exercise in the traditional way that a non-disabled individual might, and so alternative (safe and practical) techniques might need to be discussed.

- An individual with a physical impairment may have limited capacity to lift weights or other equipment, so it is recommended that a limit be put in place that suits the individual.

- A leaner with impaired spatial awareness may need to be advised not to use or demonstrate with free weights.

- A visually impaired learner may require a familiarisation period with the centre and equipment prior to starting practical activities. They may also require additional verbal description from the tutor about any pieces of equipment, or any practical demonstrations that are shown, as well as verbal feedback from tutors about their own performance of the activities.

- A visually impaired learner might also benefit from additional touch-based feedback. The tutor could physically guide the learner to demonstrate a movement (if the learner has given permission for the tutor to make physical contact).

Learning aids and resources
(see also Section 10 for accessibility considerations)

- A visually impaired learner might need a hard copy of the slides and resources in large print, and/or an additional electronic copy of slides and resources on a memory stick, so that they can access them with screen-reading technology in their own time **(see Sections 9 - 10)**.

- Learners with a physical impairment that precludes them from writing (e.g., cerebral palsy, dominant arm amputee) may need additional electronic copies of resources, or to have a note-taker present.

- A learner who is deaf or has a learning difficulty may require additional information, diagrams or resources to explain what is being said by the tutor.

Recording the tutors speech may be useful for:

- A deaf learner to transcribe or revisit information after the session.

- A learner with a cognitive impairment when concentrating for long periods is difficult.

- A learner with an autistic-spectrum or mental health condition who may experience anxiety when overwhelmed with new information.

- A learner who is unable to take notes due to limited hand function.

- A learner with a condition such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorder or cognitive difficulties which makes taking in and retaining information difficult.

Tips for using recording devices

- Ensure that other learners are happy for their contributions (e.g., answering of tutor questions, discussions during group tasks) to also be recorded in line with data protection principles. If not, recording devices will need to be switched off when other learners (who have not consented) are speaking so that the device records only the tutor.

- Place the recorder as near to the tutor as possible so that it clearly picks up his or her speech, and not that of others. This may be more challenging during practical-based activities in sports hall or outdoor environments, but try to discuss with the learner how best to support their needs.

- It is advisable that you have a policy on the use of recording equipment that includes the confidentiality of both the tutor and other students.

- A free digital tool such as Otter ai, [35] will record audio and automatically transcribe it into text, which can be saved and shared. Photographs taken during the recording will appear in line with the text, which can be useful for capturing flipchart notes or demonstrations.

Online resources
(see also Section 10 for accessibility considerations)

Providing online learning resources will benefit all learners, but particularly learners who:

- Have cognitive impairments impacting on comprehension and/or memory.

- Require communication support in face-to-face teaching sessions to enable them to recap content.

- Need to access content written in simpler language and smaller chunks.

Options might be in the form of:

- An online virtual learning environment where resources are available to be accessed at all times.

- Recordings of teaching sessions that learners can revisit and revise from.

- Photographs of flipchart paper that is used to support group discussions and activities, or where learners are required to write or draw ideas in a session.

- Videos with subtitles and British Sign Language (BSL) to demonstrate practical activities.

- Additional information and links to relevant websites.

- Revision materials and practice assessment questions.

- Access to an online forum where learners can pose questions to the tutor or to each other.

Workplace based training, placements and apprenticeships

If training is being provided to a learner in the leisure workplace, either as part of a work placement or an apprenticeship, there are a number of ways that the employer can support the learner's experience. These are discussed in Guide C for Employers. You may wish to consult this Guide and offer suggestions to students about adjustments they can discuss with the employer.

Adjustments to assessments
(see also Section 10 for accessibility considerations)

Adjustments for written assessments and examinations might include:

- Providing examination papers and materials, assessment guidelines and criteria and answer booklets in accessible formats.

- Access to technology to complete assessments and examinations, for example, on a computer with capabilities for screen-reading, zoom, and changing text colours and fonts.

- Access to communication support (e.g., readers and scribes) to assist learners in completing the assessment. This might be useful for visually impaired and cognitive impaired learners, or learners who might find writing difficult (e.g., a learner with cerebral palsy).

- Options for some learners to have additional time to complete the assessment (for example, an extended deadline for coursework submission, or extra time allocation in an examination). This might be necessary for learners with a cognitive or learning impairment, learners requiring a reader or scribe, and learners with a mental health condition.

- Breaking down assessments into smaller chunks on the same day, or different days to alleviate the need for people with cognitive or learning difficulties to remember and recall so much information at once.

Consider whether these adjustments need to be made for disabled learners only, or whether the adjustments be made for everyone so that all learners complete the assessment in the same way. This would result in a more inclusive and equal environment so that some learners' impairments are not unduly highlighted. For example, could a multiple-choice examination typically completed with pen and paper, be completed by everyone in a computer suite together at the same time, rather than one or two learners completing the assessment in a separate room? Of course, some adjustments need to remain separate so as not to disrupt others. For example, where a learner requires a reader or a scribe, a separate quiet room will likely be necessary. Where possible, when learners are completing assessments in separate rooms, ensure that they are conducted at the same time and the same facility as the other learners, to reduce the sense of isolation or segregation. Allow all learners to convene together after the assessment to facilitate discussions and peer support.

It is important to remember that it is the learning outcome that is being assessed and not the method of how it is demonstrated.

Adjustments for practical assessments (e.g., gym or pool-based) might include:

- Facilitating physically impaired learners to demonstrate an exercise or activity in a different way, or allowing them to verbally describe an exercise or activity that they cannot safely perform (note: this may require extra time in an examination).

- Access to communicator support (e.g., a BSL interpreter) to support a hearing impaired learner communicate with the assessor and 'client' where necessary.

- For examination activities where a learner needs to provide feedback to a 'client', a visually impaired learner may not be able to gain visual information about the 'client's' movements. In this instance, a guide may be used as an assistant.

Disability Rights UK have published a useful factsheet containing information on impairment-specific adjustments that can be made to support disabled students Adjustments for disabled students. [36]

The Joint Council for Qualifications have a downloadable booklet with very detailed guidance about assessment adjustments for learners with physical and learning impairments. Reasonable adjustments booklet. [37]

A supportive environment

Many further examples of learner support are not necessarily reasonable adjustments per se, but help to create an inclusive environment where conversations about disability unfold, and each learner (disabled or non-disabled) is supported to achieve their full potential during a training course. This inclusive ethos should allow all learners to feel comfortable saying 'these are the skills and this is the knowledge I have, and this is what I can do' and 'this is what I would like help with'.

Collect feedback

Enable learners to give feedback about the course, including location and facilities, training and assessment methods, ideas for new teaching and learning strategies, and any challenges they have faced.

This could be via:

- Peer-mentoring processes set up between pairs of learners.

- Open discussion forums in face-to-face sessions or via an online platform.

- Regular one-to-one formal or informal discussions between tutors and learners about their progress.

- Formal satisfaction surveys, which can be used as part of your monitoring and evaluation process.

Section 7 References

35   https://otter.ai/starter-guide

36   www.disabilityrightsuk.org/adjustments-disabled-students

37   www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/access-arrangements -and-special-consideration/regulations-and-guidance/

8

Funding support for disabled learners

Many disabled students have reported that they would have found it difficult to complete training courses without some financial support. Below are some potential funding streams that students may be able to access to support their learning.

You should make learners aware of any financial support that the learner can access if they undertake a course with you. Some funding streams require the learner to apply directly, others may require some support from the training provider.

Potential funding options for learners directly

1. **Government 16-19 bursary fund**

    If a learner is aged 16-19 and studying in a publicly funded college in England (not a University), or is completing unpaid work experience, this bursary may offer financial support towards education-related costs, for example, clothing, books, equipment and travel.

    If a student is over 19, they can apply for a discretionary bursary if they are either continuing on a course that they started aged 16-18, or if they have an Education, Health and Care Plan. Find out more at

    - Disabled Student Allowance. [38]

    - SEN Help. [39]

2. Government advanced learner loan

This type of loan is non-means tested (i.e., does not depend on your income and credit checks), and is available if a learner is 19 or over, and is undertaking a Level 3, 4, 5 or 6 course with an approved college or training provider in England. Learners do not need to borrow the total cost of the course, they can borrow as much as they need, and pay for some independently. Ensure that as a training provider, you give accurate information as to which courses you offer qualify for this loan.

Advanced Learner Loan. [40]

3. Student tuition fee loan and maintenance loan

New full-time or part-time students attending college or university in England may be able to apply for a tuition fee loan or a maintenance loan to support their learning.

Student Loan. [41]

Student Finance. [42]

Additional financial support may be available for students with a low income, students with children or dependent adults, and for disabled students.
(See point 4) Extra Help. [43]

4. Government disabled students' allowance

This type of allowance may be available in addition to other student finance, to cover some of the extra costs because of a mental health condition, long term illness or any other disability. Students will not need to repay this allowance back.

Disabled Student Allowance. [44]

5. Learner support

If a learner is aged 19 or over, on a further education course and facing financial hardship, they can apply for Learner Support directly through a training provider. To get Learner Support the student must be studying with a learning provider funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ensure that as a training provider you are aware as to whether this applies to you). Funding depends on the learner's personal circumstances and can be used to pay for accommodation and travel, and course materials and equipment.

Learner Support. [45]

Additional in-house funding options

Many options might also be possible to support not only disabled learners but learners on low income or with caring responsibilities.

Consider whether, as an organisation, you can offer:

- Discounts for people on low income.

- Bursaries or loans towards tuition and/or assessment/examination fees.

- Free of charge or reduced cost resits and re-marking of assessments.

- Bursaries or loans towards specialist equipment.

- Free of charge one-to-one support sessions and/or revision days.

- Free of charge access to additional e-learning resources.

- A fee payment plan.

- Discounts for students completing an additional/next-level course with you following successful completion of an initial course, or discounts for booking two or more courses concurrently.

- Apprenticeships that can also be part-time and/or open to people over 25.

Section 8 References

38   www.gov.uk/1619-bursary-fund

39   www.gov.uk/children-with-special-educational-needs/extra-SEN-help

40   www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan

41   www.gov.uk/get-undergraduate-student-loan

42   www.gov.uk/student-finance

43   www.gov.uk/student-finance/extra-help

44   www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas

45   www.gov.uk/learner-support

Inclusive resources

Consider how your organisation might revise the content of your marketing, communications and course/qualification materials to represent diverse populations, and be more inclusive.

Why include disabled people in marketing and other literature and resources?

Including disabled people helps to:

- Show that disability is a normal part of life. Disabled people are not a separate population of people who do not engage in the fitness and leisure sector, or who need specialist training or support to engage in the sector.

- Convey to disabled people they are a significant part of your audience. This helps them to connect with your communications, and shows that they are welcome to engage with your services. This can change attitudes and challenge society's often low expectations of, and for, disabled people.

What can be made inclusive?

All language, examples, case studies, testimonials, imagery, diagrams, videos and webpages associated with the following:

- Marketing and promotional materials (e.g., posters, circulars, flyers and advertisements for training courses and qualifications).

- Newsletters and e-communications to existing and potential new learners.

- Course information documentation.

- Application, booking, induction information and forms.

- Learning resources (e.g., handbooks, manuals, worksheets, PowerPoint presentations, videos, demonstrations, revision guides, practice exam papers).

- Assessment guidance and procedures, and examination papers.

- Content of all webpages, and social media accounts and posts.

- Case studies and testimonials.

- Smartphone Apps, online portals or virtual learning environments (for learners booking onto training courses, checking class programmes and assessment timetables, submitting work, engaging in conversations with peers and tutors).

- Also consider how inclusive your internal systems and policy documents are.

How to portray disabled people in training and work

There are a number of recommendations to follow when communicating about disabled people:

- Adhere to the principles of the social model of disability **(Section 12)** and language **(Section 13)**. For example, remember to use 'person with impairment' or 'disabled person', not 'person with a disability'.

- Portray disability and disabled people positively and realistically (e.g., a disabled student contributing to a class discussion or a disabled instructor working with a client in the gym).

- Describe disabled people in an 'enabling' not 'disabling' manner, by highlighting individual strengths and roles that they can undertake, not focusing what they might be unable to do (e.g., case studies about disabled people gaining different qualifications and following different career pathways, with the focus on what makes them a great student and employee).

- Depict disabled people as active and independent individuals who take charge of their lives, not as passive people or victims (e.g., showing or describing a disabled person working with fellow students in a practical session).

- Avoid the 'hero' and 'champion' connotations by describing disabled people as brave, or having overcome challenges. This can often be patronising and many disabled people do not identify with these terms. Many individuals with impairments do not want to be viewed as 'inspirational', and don't always have (or want to talk about) an emotional, poignant, thought-provoking or motivating story. Additionally, as with non-disabled people, depictions of very high achievers can lower the self-confidence of regular people. Many high achievers don't want to be thought of as having achieved highly despite of, or because of, an impairment. For testimonials and case studies, use a diverse range of disabled people with different impairments as students or fitness and leisure professionals, rather than a Paralympian or elite para-athlete.

- Avoid making assumptions about ability levels, intelligence levels, skills or experiences of people with different impairments (e.g., show a hearing-impaired learner leading a teaching exercise, or a wheelchair user delivering a group fitness class).

- Show the diversity amongst disabled people (e.g., show disabled people of different ages, ethnicities, fitness and mobility levels, in a variety of professional roles).

◣ Note that many impairments are not visible (e.g., mental health conditions, autism spectrum conditions, long-term health conditions, hearing and visual impairments), and so they are difficult to portray in communications. Avoid using an over-representation of wheelchair users to represent all disabled people. In written and audio communications, a variety of impairments can be described, but with imagery, this is more difficult. Nonetheless, pictures of wheelchair users, individuals using mobility aids, amputees, and people using sign language can all be used.

◣ Many disabled people also have personal assistants who are regularly under-represented in communications about disability. Include these assistants also, but in a manner depicting them as equals, not superior to, the disabled person. Images and communications about assistance dogs can also be included.

◣ Aim to include disabled people in a natural way, where they are inherently part of the wider objectives and practices of the organisation, without their disability being the focus of it, and without them being added in a 'token' manner. A person's disability is not their defining characteristic. Where possible include descriptions and imagery of disabled people in conjunction with non-disabled people to convey inclusivity and integration. In addition to course advertising, include images and description of disabled people in general strategy, planning and policy documents as well as other generic marketing and communications.

◣ Depict disabled and non-disabled people together in all roles of your organisation, particularly senior positions as this can help to change limiting assumptions about disabled people (e.g., encourage board members and senior and middle managers to share their stories and experiences of an impairment which will make others feel more at ease discussing disability issues).

◣ Where possible use real life case studies, quotes, photos and testimonials about the organisation as opposed to creating fictitious ones. This can make your messages more accurate and genuine.

◣ Ensure that the underlying messages communicated about disabled people observe all of the above recommendations, and that there are no intentional or unintentional negative connotations.

◣ Consider consulting with experts, including disabled people when creating resources.

Accessible resources

When something is accessible, it means it can be used by everyone. Accessible design is good design. Everything that is created should be as accessible, legible and readable to as many people as possible without any 'disabling' elements. It is recommended that the organisation updates their communications policy to ensure that all newly created resources meet basic accessibility standards. By applying a proactive not reactive approach from the beginning across all documents, it will likely save time and money recreating bespoke accessible resources for a learner upon request. Existing materials can also be made accessible via a periodic review and update.

The key areas affecting accessibility are:

A. Writing styles.

B. Digital compatibility with screen reading software programmes.

C. Access to hard copy.

What should be made accessible?

All online and hard copies of the below should be created in accessible formats.

This includes the text, examples, case studies and testimonials, images, tables, diagrams, videos and webpages associated with each.

- Marketing and promotional materials (e.g., posters, circulars, flyers and advertisements for training courses and qualifications).

- Newsletters and e-communications to existing and potential new learners.

- Course information documentation.

- Application, booking, induction information and forms.

- Learning resources (e.g., handbooks, manuals, worksheets, PowerPoint presentations, videos, demonstrations, revision guides, practice exam papers).

- Assessment guidance and procedures, and examination papers.

- Content of all webpages, and social media accounts and posts.

- Smartphone Apps, online portals or virtual learning environments (for learners booking onto training courses, checking class programmes and assessment timetables, submitting work, engaging in conversations with peers and tutors).

- Also consider how accessible your internal systems, policy documents, etc., are for a disabled staff member.

In this section there are some key points for accessible designs and formats that will enable people with a variety of impairments, and anyone who uses assistive technology to access learning and your resources. These recommendations will also help support individuals with different learning preferences, and those whose first language is not English. Links to websites with further details are provided.

The table below summarises these different types of accessible designs and formats included in this Guide, and highlights the relevance of each for different impairments.

Adjustment	Visual Impairment	Deaf/Hearing Impairment	Cognitive Impairment
Easy Read and Plain English.	Generally helpful for everyone including non-disabled people.		
Text.	Generally helpful for everyone including non-disabled people.		
Hyperlinks.	Generally helpful for everyone including non-disabled people.		
Tables.	Generally helpful for everyone including non-disabled people.		
Forms.	Generally helpful for everyone including non-disabled people.		
Images and diagrams.	✔		✔
PowerPoint.	Generally helpful for everyone including non-disabled people.		
Reviewing and saving documents.	Generally helpful for everyone including non-disabled people.		
Websites and Apps.	✔		✔
Social Media.	✔		✔
Video Media.	✔	✔	✔
British Sign Language and 'speech to text' technology.		✔	✔
Accessible Printed Resources.	✔		✔
Braille and 'text to speech' technology.	✔		
Tactile and 3D resources.	✔		✔

A. Writing styles

Easy Read

Easy Read is a way of making information more accessible for individuals with learning difficulties, and concentrates only on the essential points of a document. Short sentences are used, and less common words are fully explained.

More information about Easy Read can be found at:

- DH Easy Read Guidance. [46]
- NHS Easy Read Guide. [47]

Plain English

Plain English is "a message, written with the reader in mind and with the right tone of voice, that is clear and concise" (Plain English Campaign).

*Research shows that people with higher literacy levels may also prefer plain English, because it allows them to understand the information as quickly as possible.

Find further guidance about writing in Plain English at Plain English Website. [48]

Top Tips

- Keep your sentences and paragraphs short.

- Use 'you' and 'we'.

- Use the simplest words that work. For example 'need' not 'require', 'tell' not 'inform'.

- Don't be afraid to give instructions.

- Use active verbs. E.g., 'Julie stopped (active verb) the treadmill', not, 'the treadmill was stopped (passive verb) by Julie'.

- Avoid nominalisations (changing a verb into a noun) e.g:

  - Develop, not development.

  - Available, not availability.

  - Refuse, not refusal.

- Use lists where appropriate.
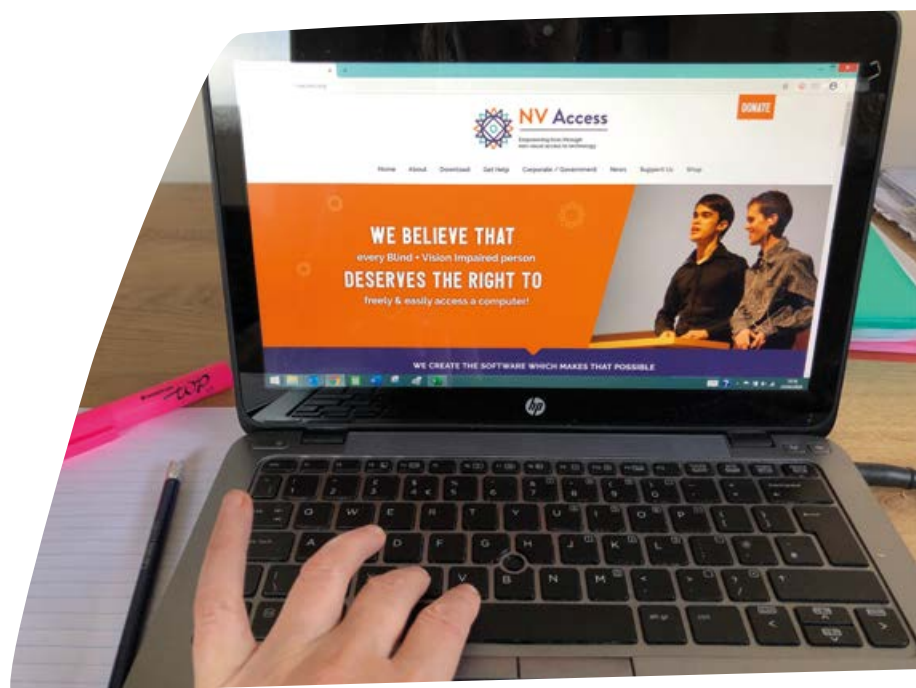
* The Public Speaks: [49] An Empirical Study of Legal Communication, Christopher R Trudeau.

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B. Digital accessibility

Screen readers are software programs used by blind or visually impaired people to read the content of the digital screen by translating text on a screen to a user via a voice synthesiser or braille display. Screen readers can also be used by anyone who prefers to listen to audio rather than read.

To experience how screen readers work and test digital accessibility, the NVDA screen reader [50] can be downloaded free. Further information on screen readers can be found at Abilitynet Screen Reader Factsheet. [51]

The recommendations in this Guide for accessibility of digital documents are intended to provide an overview of the accessibility features that need to be considered, and links for further reading. You can take immediate action to improve the accessibility of resources by implementing the top tips. This Guide is not, however, designed to give exhaustive step-by-step technical instructions on inserting these features. This is because specific steps of how to include accessible features are dependent on which version of a software program (e.g., Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint) is being used, whether the documents are being created on Windows or Mac operating systems, and whether the free or full version of software (e.g., Adobe Acrobat) is being used.

Creating fully accessible digital documents requires a level of technical knowledge and experience, and an input of time and resources. It is recommended that organisations commit to training the relevant staff members, and factor in time and a budget for disabled and non-disabled user testing. If design of documentation is outsourced, ensure that the chosen developers are familiar with, and experienced in producing fully accessible resources.

For text (printed and digital versions)

Do use:

- Size 12 font and above.
- Simple sans serif fonts such as Arial or Calibri.
- Contrast between the text and the background.
- Standard formatting for lists such as bullet points and numbers rather than spaces and dashes.
- Text in regular lines with an easy to follow order.
- Bold text for emphasis, not italics or underlined text.
- Left-aligned text, not justified or centred text.
- Formatting styles such as Headings, Titles and Quotes.

Don't use:

- ALL CAPITAL LETTERS.
- Fonts with decorative detail or serifs such as Times New Roman.
- A mix of text colours, and avoid having red and green text together.
- Text laid over images or patterned backgrounds.
- The font (colour, shape, size, placement, etc.) to solely convey meaning.
- Blinking or moving text.
- Tables, graphs and diagrams unless necessary.

For hyperlinks

- Insert a 'table of contents' in a document, provide a content slide at the start of a PowerPoint presentation, and include a navigation page on a website.

- Ensure all of these will automatically hyperlink to headings, page numbers and or subpages on a website.

- When inserting hyperlinks in text use meaningful words in short phrases for hyperlink titles. For example, title the hyperlink 'Inclusive Gyms' rather than 'Click Here'.

For tables

- Format tables with column headings that repeat when a table spans multiple pages.

- Left justify all information in all rows, even the heading rows.

- Avoid using vertical text in columns.

Forms

- Create fillable form fields with instructions for how the field is to be completed.

- Create clear spaces between form fields, and ensure each field is underneath the previous (avoid having fields to complete which are side by side).

- Sequence the fields in logical order.

For more information on how to create forms in Microsoft Word, and as PDF forms in Adobe Acrobat, see these links.

Microsoft Fillable Forms. [52]

Adobe Fillable Forms. [53]

For images and diagrams

- Text description (also known as alternative text or Alt text) is an additional commentary that describe photographs, pictures and diagrams in written format.

- Text description should describe important aspects of the image or diagram, but not be too long. For help in writing effective Alt Text see Image Description Guidelines [54] or Poet Training Tool. [55]

- For complex diagrams, charts and infographics, there may not be a way to provide a short text description. In this instance, it would be of benefit to all users to have a thorough description of the image in the text of the document itself, either immediately before or after the image. If adding additional content and length to the document is not feasible, a hyperlink can be added to take the user to a footnote or appendix where additional text description is placed.

- If images are used for decorative purposes only (for example, a coloured bar to separate paragraphs on a page), then they do not need alternative description.

- Text description should not duplicate text already presented with the image unless it is part of the image itself.

- Information on adding alternative text to all images and diagrams in Microsoft Office software programs can be found at:

Microsoft Alternative Text. [56]

For PowerPoint

- Use short, clear, and unique titles for each slide.

- Use a pre-defined PowerPoint slide template.

- Use minimum size 30 point text on PowerPoint Slides.

- Always include alternative text for images.

- Use sans-serif fonts and use full stops at the end of bullet points.

- Ensure slide templates, headings, font types and sizes are used consistently throughout a presentation.

Microsoft Office has a guide for creating accessible PowerPoint slides:

Microsoft Power Point Guide. [57]

Reviewing and saving documents

- Provide a clear and descriptive file name because this is the first piece of information that a user will access, and will give them a clear idea of the content.

- Provide a clear and descriptive first page title for the document, as this is the first piece of information a user will see on a document. This is also the first piece of information that assistive technology will read out when an individual opens the document.

- Assign the correct language to allow the assistive technology to automatically select the correct synthesizer for proper pronunciation of words to the reader.

- Be aware that scanned documents are created as JPEGs or image-based PDFs and so any text cannot be read by screenreaders.

- Use 'Speak' functions to check how the text will sound with a screen reader. Microsoft Speak Text to Speech. [58]

- Use the Accessibility Checker. [59]

The Microsoft Office website has a comprehensive guide for creating accessible Word documents and covers all of the recommendations above in detail. Microsoft Accessible Word Docs. [60]

Grackle [61] is a useful free to tool to check accessibility of GSuite files, e.g. Google Docs, sheets and slides.

Exporting to an accessible PDF

- You can create a document in either Microsoft Word and PowerPoint (or via GoogleDrive) then 'save-as' or 'export to' a PDF file.

- You can then use PDF editing software such as Adobe Acrobat to create tags in your documents after you convert them from the word format (Microsoft Word, Google Docs) to PDF.

  Tags ensure Assistive Technology can:

  - Follow the reading order.
  - Ignore decorative images.
  - Read the structure of tables.

The standards created by UKAAF (UK Association for Accessible Formats) are broken down into two levels. Level 1 ensures that a PDF is accessible for re-flowing (rearranging text that has been magnified or zoomed) and text to speech users. Level 2 ensures that the PDF is accessible for screen reader users. UKAAF PDF Standards. [62]

More information on accessible PDFs can be found in the following guidance:

- Gov Accessible PDF. [63]
- Adobe Accessible Resources. [64]
- Adobe Verify PDF. [65]
- Adobe Accessibility Features. [66]

Websites and applications

The way in which websites are designed can sometimes create barriers for people accessing information online with the use of assistive technology such as screen readers. Web content and design can also be a barrier for individuals with cognitive or learning impairments.

By law all public sector websites and mobile apps must meet the new accessibility regulations which came into force in 2018. You can read more on the Government website. [67]

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) have been produced by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C, the web's Governing Body). WCAG is essentially a series of checklists to help web designers ensure that websites are designed and written in an accessible manner. W3C provides an easy check overview for you to assess whether your website if accessible. The areas W3C highlight are:

- Clarity and positioning of page titles.
- Text alternative for images (Alt Text).
- Sufficient colour contrast between background and foreground. WebAIM [68] is a website that provides guidance and tools in regards colour contrast.
- Text resizing and zoom functioning works according to user preference.
- Hyperlinks make sense by themselves.
- Keyboard access and visual focus.
- Forms and labels.
- Error messages.
- Multimedia alternatives.
- Basic website structure.

The Web Accessibility Initiative [69] also provides strategies, standards, and supporting resources to help make your websites fully accessible. Website accessibility evaluation guidance is available at:

- WAI Selecting Tools. [70]
- WAI Involving Users. [71]

Ensure your web developers are familiar with WCAG guidelines, and during web development stages, factor in time and budget for disabled and non-disabled user testing before it goes live.

Social media

- Use short and simple captions in easy to read, plain and simple language.
- Use alternative text descriptions for any images.
- Use subtitles and captions on any video content, this will increase likelihood of video being watched by all users.

The following links provide guidance on social media accessibility:

- RNIB Twitter Guide. [72]
- Social Media Guide. [73]
- Digital Blog. [74]

Video media

- All video content should have captions and subtitles which are on-screen text representing speech and sound effects that may not be audible to people with hearing impairments. It can help some people with learning impairments, and people whose first language is not English, as well as being useful in a noisy environment, or when audio can't be played in public places. Captions can either be open or closed. Closed captions can be turned on or off with the click of a button. Open captions are part of the video itself and cannot be turned off.

  - Further guidance can be found at: Techsmith Captions. [75]

- Avoid videos with no sound, and provide an audio voiceover of what the video is showing for people with a visual impairment. Avoid background music or other sounds during the voiceover.

- Add alternative text description for media content such as animation, audio or video.

- Do not set audio and video content to play automatically. For example, a visually impaired user could click on a webpage and hear audio from an embedded video playing which they have not selected to listen to. This automaticity makes it difficult to know what is happening and how to turn it off. Multimedia content should have a specific 'play' button that can be selected, which also contains built in description of the media, and text/audio instructions as to how to use the content.

- British Sign Language translation on videos will enable deaf people to access the information (more information on the next page).

Speech to text

You can automatically transcribe audio recordings into text using voice recognition software. The text will need to be reviewed and edited to ensure it is accurate. The text document can then be used to produce video captions or to provide a digital or hard copy of the transcript.

Transcribing speech into text in real time can improve access for people at meetings and events. The text can be accessed on a conference screen or sometimes it can be viewed on a personal device such as a laptop, tablet or mobile phone.

This not only helps deaf people to follow what is being said, but it can help anyone who is unable to hear clearly, or keep up with the conversation. For example, when someone takes notes, loses concentration, has difficulty processing what they hear or if English is a second language.

In addition to automatic voice recognition technology, a trained palantypist can attend in person and type on a keyboard as the speaking occurs.

To find a communication professional such as interpreters for deafblind people, lipspeakers, notetakers, sign language interpreters, sign language translators and speech to text reporters, visit Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) [76] and National Register website at NRCPD. [77]

British Sign Language (BSL)

BSL is a gestural language used in the UK's Deaf community. It is not related to English or any other spoken languages, and some deaf people are unable to read English, or read subtitles at the speed required.

Embedding a BSL presenter into a video will allow users who cannot hear or read text to be able to access material, such as learning resources, online learning, training films and adverts.

BSL interpretation might also be essential during face-to-face meetings, interviews, inductions and course delivery. A range of companies can provide BSL translation services in person or via live stream online using computers or mobile phones. More information about BSL and the role of BSL interpreters can be found at British Deaf Association. [78]

C. Access To Hard Copy

Accessible printed resources

Provide accessible hard copy materials such as marketing leaflets, course documentation and application forms, learning resources and assessment papers.

- Minimum font size point 14 will help some individuals with visual impairments, and learning and cognitive impairments.

- Have options for the document to be printed on a different coloured paper, which might be useful for individuals with dyslexia and some visual impairments.

- Offer clear print and large print documentation for individuals with visual impairments.

  - UKAAF Print Guidelines. [79]

  - Sensory Trust Print Factsheet. [80]

- Offer Braille versions for an individual with a visual impairment.

- If diagrams are essential and cannot be substituted with text description you can create tactile versions for individuals with a visual impairment (see following information).

Braille

Braille is a tactile form of written language using raised dots. Sensory Trust and The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) offer some guidance on producing these accessible formats for written resources:

- Sensory Trust Braille. [81]

- RNIB Braille. [82]

Tactile and 3D resources and teaching styles

There are a number of options available to support learners with visual impairments and learners who prefer physical resources to enhance their understanding.

- Tactile resources allow learners to access diagrams and pictures through various textures on the page. For example, see the Basic Tactile Anatomy Atlas by Judith Tamburlin and Charles Severin.

- Many companies produce learning aids such as 3D anatomical models and skeletons. For example, see Healthedco. [83]

- Interactive anatomy apps and web resources can be offered to learners. For example, see Visible Body. [84] and Innerbody. [85]

- Tutors can also guide learners through touch. For example, tutors can demonstrate an arm movement in a swimming stroke by guiding the learner's own arm movement, or explain different joint movements through feeling their own or others' elbow action. Tutors should always ask the individual's permission before making physical contact.

Contact Royal National Institute of Blind People RNIB. [86] or Sensory Support Service [87] for advice and guidance on creating and using tactile resources.

Other considerations for delivery of accessible training

◢ It may be necessary to dim the lights when showing a video or presentation to prevent glare on the screen, but this may prevent a learner with a hearing impairment from lip-reading the speaker, or viewing a language support professional. Dimming lights may also prevent people from being able to take notes. Consider whether closing blinds or curtains and keeping some lights on may also prevent glare. Ask the group of learners what would work best for them.

◢ Check the quality of sound systems and the Hearing Loop system before playing videos with sound or before using a microphone. Ensure any radio systems for microphones or language translation do not affect the system in place for people who wear hearing aids.

Other good practice recommendations

◢ Create standard, consistent and accessible document and slide templates to be used across the organisation.

◢ Create summary versions of documentation and resources in Easy Read and large print format.

◢ Ensure that accessible versions of resources are available at the same time as all other resources.

◢ When less common accessible resources need to be provided on demand, such as a manual in Braille, ensure that these needs are identified early, and that there is enough time to have these produced before they are required by a learner for training or assessments. Creation of these less common accessible formats may also require extra funding, so ensure that there is a budget set aside and available for when the need arises.

◢ Allow access to written and online materials before course delivery begins (or before a meeting, revision session or assessment where possible), so that learners have a chance to review the content and assess accessibility in advance and report any issues.

◢ Access a free online course on Inclusive Teaching and Learning Strategies. [88]

Section 10 References

46 https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130703133435/http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/iod/easy-read-guidance.pdf

47 https://www.easyonthei-leeds.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/EasyreadGuide2009.pdf

48 http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/

49 http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=christopher_trudeau

50 https://www.nvaccess.org/download/

51 https://abilitynet.org.uk/factsheets/introduction-screen-readers

52 https://support.office.com/en-ie/article/create-a-fillable-form-39a58412-107e-426b-a10b-ac44937e3a9f

53 https://acrobat.adobe.com/uk/en/acrobat/how-to/create-fillable-pdf-forms-creator.html

54 http://diagramcenter.org/making-images-accessible.html#guide

55 https://poet.diagramcenter.org/

56 https://support.office.com/en-us/article/add-alternative-text-to-a-shape-picture-chart-smartart-graphic-or-other-object-44989b2a-903c-4d9a-b742-6a75b451c669#PickTab=Windows

57 https://support.office.com/en-gb/article/make-your-powerpoint-presentations-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-6f7772b2-2f33-4bd2-8ca7-dae3b2b3ef25#PickTab=Windows

58 https://support.office.com/en-us/article/Use-the-Speak-text-to-speech-feature-to-read-text-aloud-459e7704-a76d-4fe2-ab48-189d6b83333c

59 https://support.office.com/en-us/article/improve-accessibility-with-the-accessibility-checker-a16f6de0-2f39-4a2b-8bd8-5ad801426c7f?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US

60 https://support.office.com/en-us/article/make-your-word-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US#PickTab=Windows

61 https://www.grackledocs.com

62 https://www.ukaaf.org/standards/#pdf

63 www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-publish-on-gov-uk/accessible-pdfs

64 www.adobe.com/accessibility/resources.html

65 https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/create-verify-pdf-accessibility.html

66 https://helpx.adobe.com/uk/reader/using/accessibility-features.html

67 www.gov.uk/guidance/accessibility-requirements-for-public-sector-websites-and-apps

68 https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/

69 http://www.w3.org/WAI

70 www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/tools/selecting/

71 www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/involving-users/

72 https://www.rnib.org.uk/rnibconnect/image-descriptions-twitter-a-quick-guide

73 https://literatureallliancescotland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Accessible-Social-Media-Guide-2018.pdf

74 https://digitalblog.ons.gov.uk/2017/07/12/making-social-media-accessible/

75 https://www.techsmith.com/blog/add-captions-subtitles-video/

76 https://rnid.org.uk/information-and-support/communication-support/

77 www.nrcpd.org.uk

78 https://bda.org.uk/help-resources/

79 https://www.ukaaf.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/G003-UKAAF-Creating-clear-print-and-large-print-documents-v2.doc

80 https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/information/factsheets/access-information-print.html

81 https://www.sensorytrust.org.uk/information/factsheets/access-information-braille.html

82 www.rnib.org.uk/practical-help/reading/braille-and-moon-tactile-codes/writing-and-producing-braille

83 www.healthedco.co.uk/Subject/Anatomy

84 www.visiblebody.com

85 www.innerbody.com/htm/body.html

86 www.rnib.org.uk

87 www.sensorysupportservice.org.uk

88 https://www.lexdis.org.uk/course/inclusive-teaching-and-learning-strategies/

Part C
More Information

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Whilst equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) are often listed together, it is important to understand the definition of each.

- **Equality**, often referred to as 'Equal Opportunity' is a legal requirement within the Equality Act 2010. It means that a person should be able to access the same opportunity and not be discriminated against based on any 'protected characteristic'.

Disabled people may have different support or pathways to others that enable them to access the same opportunity.

- **Diversity** is about understanding that each individual is unique, and recognising similarities and differences. These can be in terms of age, disability, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, educational background, personality type, nationality, etc.

- **Inclusion** is about making all people feel included. An organisation with an inclusive approach:

  - Engages each individual.

  - Offers opportunities for input and decision-making.

  - Gives people a sense of belonging and makes them feel valued.

An inclusive culture is created through the environment, processes and behaviours.
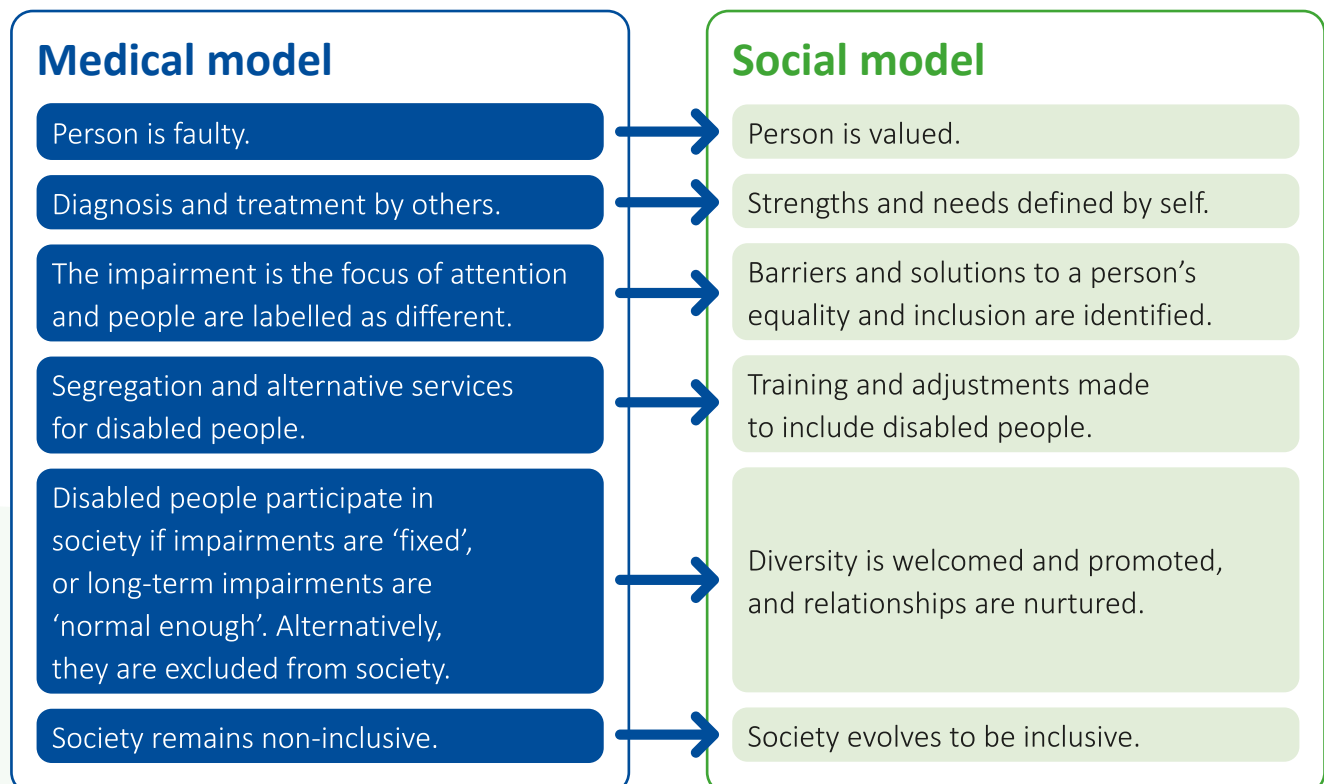
An organisation that offers equal opportunity, may still not succeed in attracting a diverse range of people if they don't demonstrate an inclusive culture. For example, disabled people may not choose to take up an opportunity to train or work in the fitness and leisure sector if they perceive that they will not be welcomed or supported.

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The social model of disability

The 'social model of disability' focuses on the systemic barriers, negative attitudes and exclusion by society (purposely or inadvertently) that mean society is the main contributory factor in disabling people. That is, disability is imposed on top of individuals' impairment, because of the way society is organised. Impairments alone do not have to lead to disability unless society fails to take account of and include people regardless of their individual differences.

In summary, a disabled person is a person with an impairment (a condition, illness or loss/lack of function), who experiences disability (barriers and discrimination). This compares to the medical model, whereby the individual is expected to overcome their impairment in order to be included in society.

Medical model

- Person is faulty.
- Diagnosis and treatment by others.
- The impairment is the focus of attention and people are labelled as different.
- Segregation and alternative services for disabled people.
- Disabled people participate in society if impairments are 'fixed', or long-term impairments are 'normal enough'. Alternatively, they are excluded from society.
- Society remains non-inclusive.

Social model

- Person is valued.
- Strengths and needs defined by self.
- Barriers and solutions to a person's equality and inclusion are identified.
- Training and adjustments made to include disabled people.
- Diversity is welcomed and promoted, and relationships are nurtured.
- Society evolves to be inclusive.

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Going back to this example we used on page 16, consider the different approach between the social and medical model to resolve the issue.

The outdated medical model would consider the disabled person to be the problem. The solution therefore would be to fix the person's legs or for the individual to overcome their problem without inconveniencing others.

The social model focuses on removing the barrier that is disabling the person. In this case by providing a ramp or a lift.

Some other barriers are harder to see but can have the same disabling effect and require solutions.

For example, consider the impact of some of the following:

- Bullying
- Fear
- Ignorance
- Inaccessible resources
- Lack of role models
- Low expectations
- Poor communication
- Rigid assessment methods
- Unconscious bias

Language has also evolved to reflect the change in our view of disability. If we understand that the disabling factor does not belong to the individual but to society, then we use terms such as 'person with an impairment' or 'disabled person' as opposed to 'person with a disability'.

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13

Disability language and etiquette

Language is powerful and understanding why certain terms are used can be as important as implementing them.

There have been many changes to disability-related language and terminology over the years and creating a specific policy will help to embed appropriate language across the organisation.

Consider how you can help all staff to become familiar with this and apply the policy to all aspects of work. For example:

◥ Verbal communication between people such as course advisors and prospective learners, and tutors/assessors and student.

◥ Written documentation such as training course materials, resources, and assessments.

A formal language policy can help align the organisation to its inclusive ethos and there are some commonly accepted examples below.

Not everyone will agree on everything, including disabled people, so whilst there may be a formal organisation policy, this should not prevent staff adjusting their language to suit a disabled person's preferences during direct communication.

Rather than	**Use these words /phrases instead**
1. Person with a disability.	1. Person with an impairment/condition.
2. 'The disabled' or 'disabled community'.	2. A disabled person/disabled people.
3. 'Victim' or 'suffers from'.	3. Has/experiences/lives with (impairment or condition).
4. Wheelchair-bound.	4. Wheelchair user/user of a mobility aid.
5. Special needs.	5. Specific requirement or adjustments.
6. Assuming someone is a carer.	6. Personal assistant, family member, relative, friend. Ask what their relationship is and use that term.
7. Assuming it is a 'Guide' dog.	7. Assistance dog.
8. Disabled facilities. e.g. toilets, parking etc.	8. Accessible facilities.
9. Able-bodied or normal.	9. Non-disabled.

Types of impairments

Categorising impairments is a simplistic approach but will enable you to capture and analyse data in a more detailed manner. For example, if an organisation has 20% of disabled learners it may appear very positive, however if the breakdown shows that the majority are people with a mental health condition and there are no learners with a physical or sensory impairment, it may highlight that some barriers still exist and need addressing.

Not everyone who might be disabled will identify with that terminology, so it is advisable to ask: Do you consider yourself to be disabled or have a long-term health condition, impairment or illness?

Impairments may be categorised into five basic groups (physical, sensory, cognitive, mental and behavioural). You may wish to divide the categories further. A useful way to gather this information is to ask the question: Do these health conditions, impairments or illnesses affect you in any of the following areas? Please select all that apply.

Physical

- Breathing or stamina.

- Chronic health condition (for example, but not limited to, diabetes, cardio-vascular disease, epilepsy).

- Dexterity or co-ordination (for example, lifting and carrying objects, using a keyboard).

- Long term pain.

- Mobility (for example, walking short distances or climbing stairs).

Sensory

- Hearing (for example, deafness or partial hearing).

- Vision (for example, blindness or partial sight).

Cognitive

- Learning or understanding or concentration.

- Memory (for example, difficulty in recalling recent information).

- Speech or making yourself understood.

Mental

- Mental health (for example, but not limited to, depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, post traumatic stress disorder).

Behavioural

- Social or behavioural (for example, but not limited to, associated with autsim, Asperger's syndrome or attention deficit disorder).

Other

- Other (please specify).

- Don't know.

- Prefer not to say.

Disability etiquette

- Use your regular tone of voice and address a disabled person in the same way as you talk to everyone else.

- Talk to the person directly, even if they have a personal assistant, companion or family member with them (e.g., look at the learner in the classroom not their BSL interpreter).

- Never attempt to speak or finish a sentence for the person you are talking to.

- Don't worry about being too politically correct. Being over-sensitive to the right and wrong language may make you feel awkward. It is important that as an organisation you adhere to an appropriate language policy, but when talking with a disabled individual use the terms they are comfortable with and ask if you are not sure.

- Ask if a person requires assistance. Never assume and give help without asking. Most people will wish to get around independently where possible. If a person does want help, ask how, and wait for their instructions before you act (e.g., picking up gym weights for someone because you assume they are too heavy).

- Be sensitive about physical contact. Never lean on someone's wheelchair or push it for them unless they have asked you to. Don't invade their personal space which includes their equipment. Don't touch a person with a visual impairment unless you have asked permission.

- Never touch or stroke an assistance dog as they are working.

- Focus on the abilities that an individual does have, not what they cannot do.

- Be mindful of invisible disabilities (e.g., mental health conditions, autism spectrum conditions, hearing loss, visual impairments, conditions such as epilepsy, cancer, Crohn's disease, and impairments causing joint or muscle pain, or chronic pain or fatigue symptoms).

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Further support

Below are some links to other organisations that provide disability related resources and/or training packages. This is not an exhaustive list and many more can be found with an internet search.

- Activity Alliance [89]
  (Talk to me principles, Inclusive communication guide).

- British Deaf Association [90]
  (BSL and Deaf communication guide).

- Disability Matters [91]
  (e-learning resources).

- Disability Rights UK [92]
  (Advice, training and consultancy).

- Government [93]
  (Inclusive communications).

- Government [94]
  (Reasonable adjustments).

- Inclusive Employers [95]
  (Consultancy and training).

- MENCAP [96]
  (Learning impairments: Communication guide, Employers resource).

- Mind [97]
  (Mental health advice and workplace guidance).

- Royal National Institute of Blind People [98]
  (Business services, Teaching guides).

- Sensory Support Service [99]
  (Visual and hearing impairment training and resources).

Section 13 References

89   www.activityalliance.org.uk

90   www.bda.org.uk

91   www.disabilitymatters.org.uk

92   www.disabilityrightsuk.org

93   www.gov.uk/government/publications/
      inclusive-communication

94   www.gov.uk\recruitment-disabled-people\
      reasonable-adjustments

95   www.inclusiveemployers.co.uk

96   www.mencap.org.uk

97   www.mind.org.uk

98   www.rnib.org.uk

99   www.sensorysupportservice.org.uk

Case study

YMCAfit is Central YMCA's commercial health and fitness training deliverer. It was the first training provider to deliver health and fitness training programmes in the UK, and the first to offer externally validated qualifications.

" YMCAfit is part of Central YMCA, and our mantra is that we want to create safe spaces, where people are welcome, can learn new skills, make connections and can flourish. We look across the board and identify certain groups that we think we can support better to create equity.

We work in partnership with other organisations such as CIMSPA, REPS, and Aspire because we know that we can't do this alone. "

Rob Johnson
Director of Education and Training, YMCA

" We identify individual needs and implement action as early as possible, but we also continue to monitor and adapt as a learner progresses through their training.

Any support needs are recorded on the course booking system. The Learning Support Team follows up and completes an additional learning needs plan.

We provide the course manuals in an electronic format for those that cannot use the hard copy. Sometimes we adapt the timetable to accommodate extra movement time or for a visually impaired learner to complete a practical assessment.

On occasions we may need to make some reasonable adjustments to assessments. We evidence what we have provided for the learner on the system so it is recorded for quality assurance. We have to seek approval from the awarding body for any significant changes.

For example, to break down two theory assessments into sections for a learner who could not sustain one long exam period.

Adjustments can be made for a practical assessment. For example, a wheelchair user doesn't need to demonstrate a squat but they need to be able to explain how that's done safely and effectively. We're not training them to train other wheelchair users, they need to be able to provide those instructions to everyone. A visually impaired person might be assigned a spotter, who observes the class participants and feeds back to the instructor if everybody is doing the movements correctly, their body language, etc. That translates to working in the real world where a blind instructor might use a support worker to observe their clients. "

Kyriacos Panayi
Process and Administration
Manager, YMCAfit

" The Learning Support Team contacts any student who identify a disability or learning need upon booking their course. Once we've received evidence of their condition, we have a phone conversation with them to get to know them or if they have more complex needs we may even invite them into the office, sometimes accompanied by parents or carers. We find out what support they have received in the past (e.g., at a school of college) as a student often know what works for them.

We then create a 'support plan' which details exactly what support we have agreed to put in place for them on their course and an overview of their condition. We share this with their tutors and make recommendations. This really helps to ease any concerns the student may have had about attending their course.

Sometimes we'll even put on an extra tutor if a student requires a reader during the course or for an exam. Support in the way of additional staff is an extra expense for us as an organisation but we feel it's necessary in order to fully support our students to ensure they have the best chance of succeeding and to ensure more disabled people are given the chance to make their way into the fitness industry. "

Tom Griffin
Former Curriculum and Learning Support Manager, YMCAfit

" I have been a YMCAfit tutor for over ten years, delivering courses such as Personal Training, Exercise for Disabled People and Exercise for Older Adults.

The percentage of disabled learners is sadly quite low. When I do have disabled students on mainstream courses. I think, 'oh, this is absolutely great.' It shows that they don't have to go on a separate course designed for their needs. Having a mix of people on a course we all learn from each other about adapting our teaching.

Sometimes I adapt my lessons by deviating a little, slowing down or being more visual. If I have a student with sight loss, I might decide to scrap the PowerPoints because it's not going to work for everybody. I deliver the session in a different way, a more descriptive style, but still get the same message across.

To be more inclusive in practical sessions, I might say, 'OK, this is what the book says, but this is how it might work for you'. We can use a range of other exercises that will work the same muscle group or use a different piece of equipment. You sometimes have to be creative.

If I am not familiar with an impairment or condition I'll do some research and then have a one-to-one chat with the student. What I've learnt from disabled people on my courses is actually more valuable than anything that you find online. It's important that a tutor has training and gains experience of working with disabled people. It gives you confidence, because even as tutors, we have doubts and think, 'oh no, how am I going to approach this?' With experience you just learn to think and adapt. "

Trisha White
Course Tutor, YMCAfit

YMCA Awards

YMCA Awards is the awarding organisation that develops and awards the qualifications that YMCAfit use.

" Any centre can make modifications for a learner to complete their internal assessments. We have a whole set of published reasonable adjustments that centres can make, for example, someone who is dyslexic can request extra time.

With external assessments, there is a typical model that we expect learners to complete, for example, a one-hour, 40-question exam, sat at a screen or completing on paper. But we can make adjustments if that is going to disadvantage a disabled learner.

On one occasion we allowed a reasonable adjustment to be applied to all learners, including those who didn't need it. The centre wanted to extend the assessment over several days because some disabled students couldn't complete it in one sustained period. At first, I was a bit unsure, because I thought some people won't want it. But then I thought about the course and group of learners as a whole. One of the problems with reasonable adjustments is they can be very visible as exceptions to what everybody else is doing. A reasonable adjustment is usually an option and a learner doesn't have to have it. However, by structuring the assessment over four sessions, everybody had the same reasonable adjustment, they all sat it in that way, and everybody was treated in the same way.

We have approved a learner with an anxiety-related condition to have rest breaks and animal pictures to look at during an exam.

The pictures were not related to the course and something she found soothing. It was her usual way of working, so we put what's normal for her into the assessment process because it's not giving her any kind of advantage.

You're always trying to make sure you're not advantaging or disadvantaging learners. There are barriers, people are partly disabled by the society in which they live. I read on a training provider's website, 'you will need to have a general level of fitness'. And I thought that's quite a barrier statement, I didn't like it. People might see themselves as not fit, and what is a good level of fitness? It means something different for everyone. If you're disabled your level of fitness might be fantastic in the context for you.

I hope that training providers approach us, and they don't just think you can only have the things that are in the reasonable adjustments policy. We do need to think more broadly about what people need. When we write an assessment, do we take it for granted that everyone can access it and make some reasonable adjustments for those who can't? Or do we think how to make this accessible for everybody in the first place? "

Fiona Summers
Head of Quality and Assessment,
YMCA Awards

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Case study

SOSA Dance Fitness is an exercise programme that covers international dance styles including Salsa and Latin. It involves authentic steps, arm and body styling movements, with fun-packed routines to catchy songs. The subsequently developed Seated SOSA is a CIMSPA-endorsed programme designed for disabled participants, older adults, and GP referral clients including those recovering from injury.

" We now have approximately 480 instructors delivering SOSA and 80 instructors, 15% of whom are disabled instructors, delivering Seated SOSA. The SOSA training course is an online programme for instructors who already have a fitness or dance qualification. There are a number of theoretical principles and videos to go through, and at the end of it they do a practical assessment.

When I first started Seated SOSA, I didn't have experience of working with disabled instructors. I was very open to adapting both the delivery and content of the training course.

I've learnt so much by training disabled instructors. As a tutor, I think it is such an incredible learning journey. I have learnt more about different needs and how to make things more accessible for learners. The disabled instructors on my course have also given me advice about delivering exercise classes to disabled participants.

Having people with impairments and health conditions on a training course has really, really opened my eyes. Every time I do a training day, I think 'oh yeah I could try that'. As I come across new learners with different abilities, it's a chance to learn and make the course even better and more inclusive each time. *"*

Katy Barrow
Founder of SOSA Dance Fitness

" The biggest thing I have learned from training disabled instructors is how we can all achieve the same result but in different ways, and that's really exciting. *"*

As soon as someone books onto a training course I speak to everyone personally and see if there are any additional needs that I need to know about, so that I can make the appropriate adjustments to the training.

Training Michelle Felix with a visual impairment

Michelle has limited vision but can see shadows of my outline. I sat directly opposite her and wore black clothing against a white background so that she could see the outline of my arms and legs. Also, I described every action in detail verbally. Training Michelle made me think about what language to use to describe a movement and not just show it. It's about explaining that movement in a way that people will understand, so not using technical terms.

Each month I release new content and choreography on our online academy website (for qualified instructors). Where others would just watch the videos on their phone or iPad, it's not big enough for Michelle, so I granted Michelle back-end access to my streaming platform, so she can stream them on her big TV to see them more clearly. For the training content, all manuals and resources are available online as PDFs which can be accessed via screen readers and other assistive technology, and I do take a printed manual for everyone on the live training days so they have a hard copy. The training manual is available in large text format too for instructors with a visual impairment.

" I was interested in not just the Seated SOSA but also the standing SOSA, because I do audio-described exercise classes for visually impaired clients who do standing exercise also. Katy arranged for a one-on-one instructor training session with her. She invited me to review the training videos and written material, so I could provide feedback on accessibility ahead of the training.

I checked the video quality was high definition because I would probably need to view it on a larger monitor. I also require good contrast between the instructor's complexion and clothing and the background. It was also important that the instructor could be heard clearly. A lot of people do things visually when it comes to dance fitness classes, but if you are visually impaired, you're listening for the cues. When the video showed the whole body, it was difficult for me to see the fingers so Katy filmed the finger placements in close-up shots of the hands so I could see more detail. That was really useful.

The course manual was a PDF, but Katy provided it to me in Word document, which enabled my screen-reading software to easily navigate the information. It was brilliant because it had live links from the content page. So, it might say 'warm up and cool down on page 26', and you can click on that to take you straight to that page. This was a godsend for me, because if you're a sighted person, you can flick or scroll through the pages until you get to page 26. Using a screen reader without direct links means I have to listen to all the content first to navigate to the right place in the document.

After I qualified, I did find it hard to navigate the website with the screen reader to access the music and routines. To overcome this issue Katy created a table of the songs and playlists, with links to the Vimeo platform where I could view the videos. "

Michelle Felix

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Training Garry Puddifoot with a physical impairment

Gary is a wheelchair user, so for him and other learners with mobility impairments I have to make sure the training venue is accessible. I have a bank of venues now, but sometimes I might get recommendations from the learners too as they know what local centres are accessible for them.

The dance routines incorporate linked footwork and arm movements but Gary is able to deliver the seated exercises with arm movements and additional adaptations for the upper body, whilst also learning to verbally describe leg movements. That way, he can deliver a class that accommodates all participants whether they have leg movement or not.

During assessment for Seated SOSA, Gary couldn't demonstrate a full range of movement, but he made adaptations and verbally described other movements. As the programme is designed for those with impairments, I have found I don't necessarily have to change it that much, as they still meet the criteria of demonstrating a movement or routine because they're demonstrating it to their own ability. It is also really nice to see how they adapt movements for themselves.

" I've always been into fitness and played football to a high standard until I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. I am a qualified Personal Trainer with a Level 3 qualification in Exercise and Disability and Seated SOSA Instructor. I currently work at Stratford Leisure Centre.

I found out about SOSA through my wheelchair tennis teacher and when I saw a class on YouTube, I thought 'Oh it looks amazing' so I signed up for the course to become an instructor.

Katy made sure the training wasn't too serious, we had a giggle. She said, 'if you want to ask a question, you ask the question'. On some other courses you feel quite scared asking questions because you feel like an idiot. The personable approach is important and makes you feel confident instead of feeling useless. A good tutor doesn't make learners feel disabled, because nobody wants that.

Katy encouraged me to adapt movements for myself. She said some people in my classes might not be able to do what I can do, so she would show me how to adapt that specific move. It is important to have a tutor that asks questions and finds out about what the instructor might need. "

Gary Puddifoot

The research

The research that informs this Guide is a pioneering piece of work that draws together the thoughts, ideas and experiences of disability within the fitness and leisure industry from all layers of the sector.

The evidence gathered from the research was translated into a set of validated guidelines, aligned to the social model of disability **(see Glossary)**.

The project was funded by Sport England, which has aims to increase the number of disabled people in the sector workforce, Working in an Active Nation [100] and in coaching and volunteering. Coaching in an Active nation [101]

The researchers:

Professor Brett Smith (Durham University) & **Dr Juliette Stebbings** (University of Portsmouth).

- Professor Smith has over 20 years of experience conducting world-leading research with disabled people and disabled organisations on how to promote physical activity and ensure fitness and leisure, sport, and exercise industries are inclusive.

- Dr Stebbings is a Senior Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Psychology, and conducts research aimed at increasing the levels of community-based sport and physical activity in marginalised populations, including disadvantaged young people, older adults, and disabled people.

Hilary Farmiloe (InstructAbility Strategic Lead) was also a key collaborator throughout the research process.

The research participants included:

- Disabled fitness professionals and their clients (disabled and non-disabled).

- Staff in a range of roles within training provider organisations.

- Individuals from a range of roles and levels within leisure operator organisations. These included senior management, human resources, marketing, media and communications and frontline staff.

- Individuals from other disability organisations and fitness and leisure sector stakeholders.

Section 15 References

100 https://www.sportengland.org/media/13505/working-in-an-active-nation-11-e-version.pdf

101 https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/coaching-in-an-active-nation_the-coaching-plan-for-england.pdf

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Glossary of terms

- **Accessibility:** The design of products, devices, services and environments to ensure that they are available and usable by all, and are created in such a way to not exclude a person due to their impairment. Find out more about accessibility here.

- **Additional needs:** Requirements for products, services, or environments to be adapted, specialised or made more accommodating (e.g., additional / specialised equipment, adjustments to the layout of the physical environment, presence of a support worker) to assist a disabled person to participate fully in day-to-day activities.

- **Disability:** The ways in which a health condition or impairment, in interaction with the wider environment, results in a functional limitation.

- **Disabled person:** Someone with an impairment who experiences the loss or limitation of opportunities to participate in society on an equal level with others because of social, attitudinal, physical or environmental barriers.

- **Discrimination:** Treating a person unfairly, in an unjust or prejudiced manner, because of who they are or because they possess certain characteristics.

A disabled person may be disadvantaged, or denied opportunities, compared to their non-disabled peers, because of their impairment.

- **Equality Act 2010:** The Act legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. It replaced previous anti-discrimination laws (e.g., the Disability Discrimination Act 1995). The Equality Act 2010 states that a person has a disability if:

  - They have a physical or mental impairment.

  - The impairment has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

For more information about the definitions of 'substantial' and 'long-term', about progressive conditions and what is not counted as a disability, see Equality Act Definition. [102]

- **Impairment:** A physical or mental injury, illness or congenital condition which has a 'substantial' and 'long term' impact upon an individual's physiological or psychological function, thereby affecting their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities.

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Part C. Glossary of terms

Glossary of terms References

102 https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010

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Guide B:
For Training
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and Awarding
Organisations