

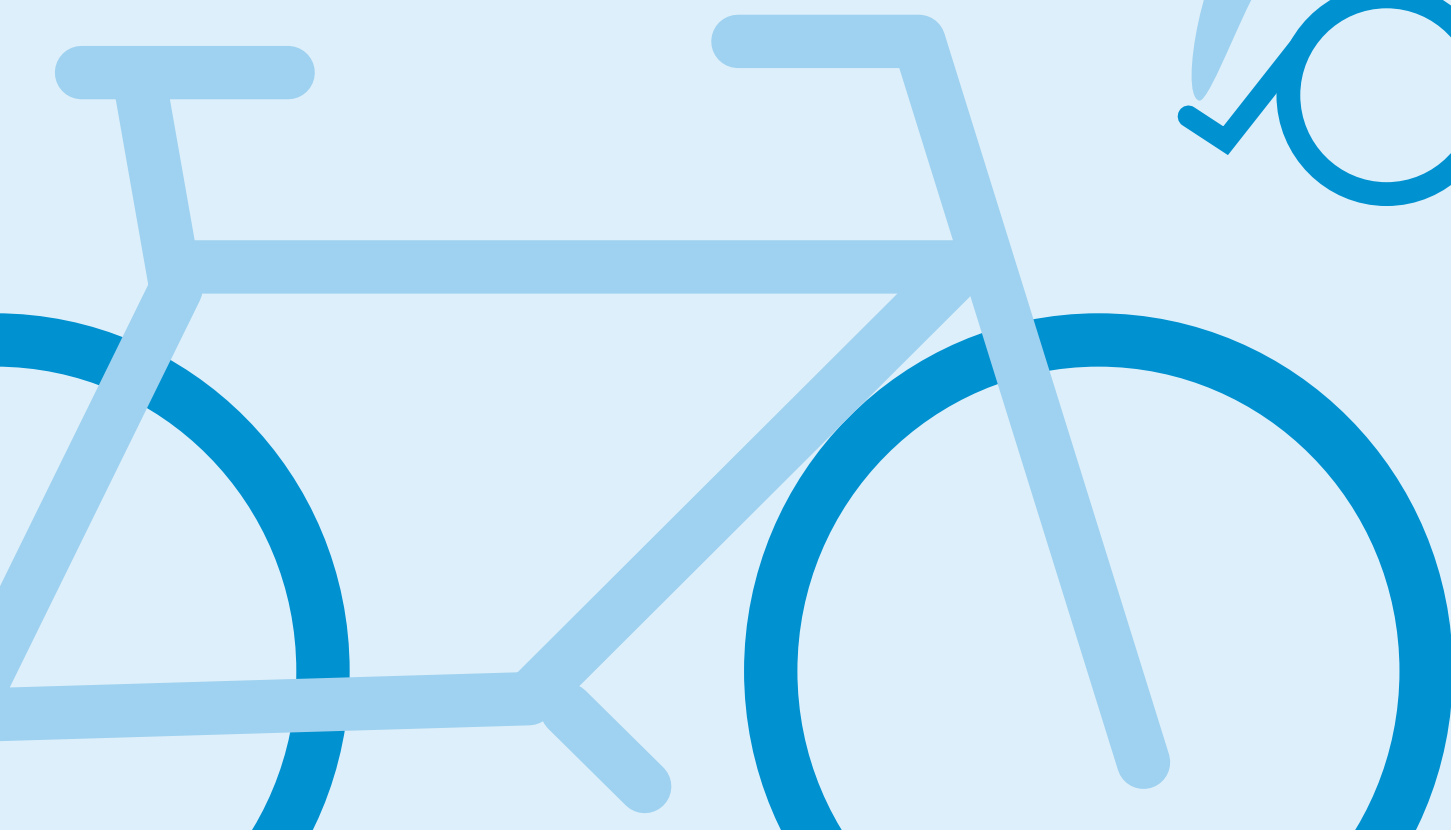
Executive Summary



Yes we can!

Engaging Deaf and Disabled People in Sport and Physical Activity

A resource for Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations
Written by Inclusion London, October 2017



What is a Deaf and Disabled People's Organisation (DDPO)?

A DDPO is an organisation run by and for Deaf and Disabled People. DDPOs provide essential support to London's 1.2 million Deaf and Disabled people by working to protect and uphold their rights, campaign for equality and inclusion and provide a range of services that support Deaf and Disabled people to challenge discrimination and exclusion and have choice, control and independence.

What is Inclusion London?

Inclusion London is the only organisation run by and for Deaf and Disabled people working across every borough in London. It promotes Deaf and Disabled people's equality and inclusion by supporting DDPOs to have a strong and influential collective voice and to deliver empowering and effective services to Deaf and Disabled Londoners.

The context for the Into Sport project

Disabled people should have the same right as anyone else to be active and enjoy the benefits of sport and physical activity (SPA), yet four out of five Disabled people are routinely inactive.¹

We therefore believe that engaging in SPA (and the exclusion and disadvantage Deaf and Disabled people currently face when trying to take up and sustain SPA) must be seen as a rights, equalities and discrimination issue.

1. 'Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation', HM Government, December 2015, p.22

Get in touch:

Sian Williams, Into Sport Project Manager, Inclusion London
336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA

intosport@inclusionlondon.org.uk | 020 7237 3181

www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/intosport

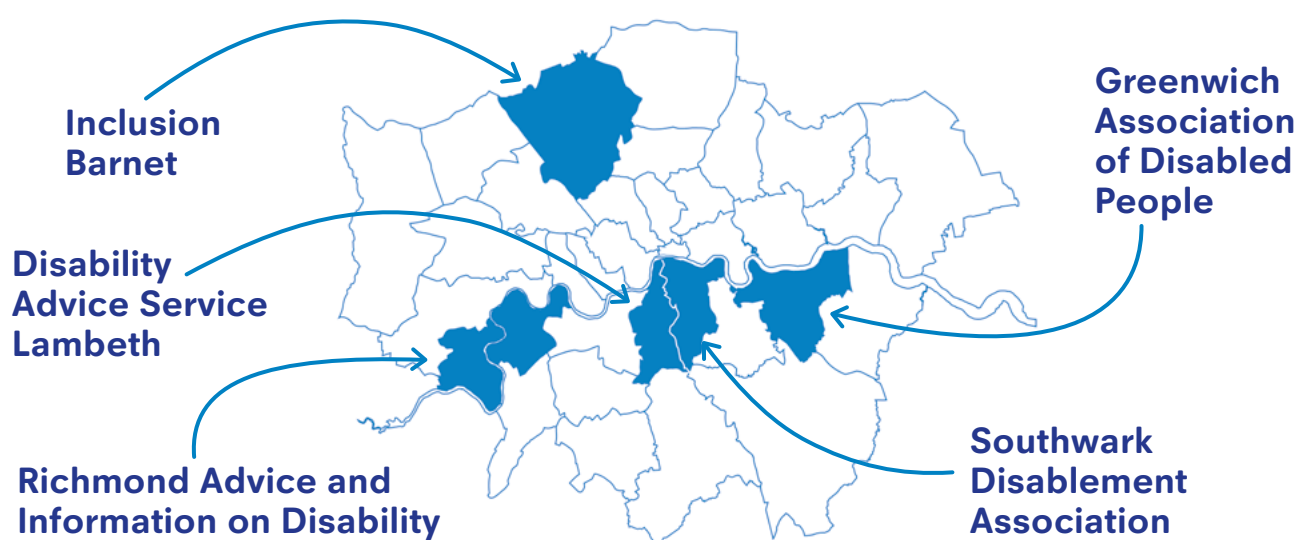


Introduction

This report is a summary of the information resource '[Yes we can! Engaging Deaf and Disabled People in Sport and Physical Activity](#)', which details the learning gathered from the Into Sport project.

What is Into Sport?

Into Sport is a three-year (2014-17) project, funded by Sport England. It is a unique partnership of Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations (DDPOs) across five London boroughs:



It is led and managed by Inclusion London, with sports advice provided by Interactive (now merged with London Sport).

The aim of the project

The aim of the project was to increase the number of Deaf and Disabled Londoners participating in sport and physical activity (SPA) by building the capacity of DDPOs. At the end of the three years:

901

Deaf and Disabled people have gone from being inactive to active

42,343

sport activities have been undertaken*

*This figure includes initial one-to-one advice and information sessions.

The barriers Deaf and Disabled people face in engaging in SPA



Learning from the Into Sport project shows that Deaf and Disabled people encounter complex physical, economic and attitudinal barriers that hinder and prevent them from getting involved in SPA. We have categorised these as follows:

Attitudes

- 'I'm not sure SPA is for me'
- 'I never see other Disabled people at the leisure centre'
- 'I'm bothered by other people's opinions when I talk about SPA'

Lack of accessible information and advice

- 'I don't know where to look for information'
- 'The information isn't in an accessible format for me'

Inaccessible venues

- 'Where do I go when I arrive?'
- 'Will the equipment work when I get there?'

Transport barriers

- 'Is there anyone I could travel with?'
- 'What about accessible parking?'
- 'How do I get there?'

Lack of accessible, inclusive SPA

- 'Can someone meet me and show me round?'
- 'Can I start off by trying something with other Disabled people?'
- 'Will it meet my access needs?'

SINCE 2012

the levels of physical activity among Disabled people have been decreasing

43% of Disabled people are inactive compared with **21%** of non-disabled people

ONLY 9%

of volunteer coaches and referees are disabled people

Sources: http://www.efds.co.uk/assets/000/000/476/APS10_Interim_Factsheet_June_2016_original.pdf?1465988372

<https://www.sportengland.org/media/12458/active-lives-adult-may-16-17-report.pdf>

Lack of specialist equipment

'Do I need to provide my own equipment?'

'How much does it cost to purchase or hire equipment?'

Lack of support to participate in a session

'How can I get motivation and support to keep doing SPA?'

'Can someone come with me?'

SPA engagement is too costly

'Are there any concessions?'

'Does my support worker have to pay too?'

Lack of support for Disabled people with high support needs

'Can I use my personal budget to engage in SPA?'

'How can I find a PA to enable me to participate?'

Lack of role models in the SPA workforce

'Lots of my Disabled friends are volunteers but not in the SPA sector'

'Why aren't there any Disabled people working at my leisure centre?'

How DDPOs are breaking down barriers to SPA: Innovative solutions from the Into Sport project

The Into Sport project tried and tested many approaches to removing barriers to SPA. Many of these solutions can be implemented with little or no investment simply by changing a DDPO's way of working and its attitude towards SPA. However, some solutions clearly have funding and resource implications. Furthermore, there are barriers that cannot be removed by DDPOs alone, particularly the lack of role models in the SPA workforce and lack of support for Disabled people with high support needs. These will require major change and investment across the whole SPA sector and in adult social care.

The following solutions reflect the real experiences of the five Into Sport partner DDPOs and what they found worked well.

- 1 DDPOs show that SPA is possible for Disabled people
- 2 DDPOs are building relationships with local SPA providers
- 3 DDPOs are helping to make SPA more accessible
- 4 DDPOs are skilled at supporting and encouraging Disabled people to get engaged in SPA
- 5 DDPOs are contributing to diversifying the SPA workforce

1 DDPOs show that SPA is possible for Disabled people

There is a belief among many Disabled people that SPA isn't relevant or important to them. Many experience low levels of confidence and fear in relation to their ability to participate, the ability of SPA providers to meet their needs, and the attitudes of staff and the public in SPA settings.

Solutions developed by the Into Sport DDPOs:

- Use photos of ordinary Disabled people when advertising SPA opportunities and avoid images of elite sports and Paralympians
- Use real case studies of local DDPO service users
- Provide one-to-one support for attending sessions and set up buddy and volunteer schemes
- Help to challenge the attitudes of family, friends and support workers
- Set up accessible SPA activities for people to get started, such as relaxed-pace walking sessions or boccia groups
- Introduce people to a range of activities including non-traditional and non-competitive sports, such as wheelchair-dancing
- Develop Easy Read resources about accessing SPA for people with learning difficulties



2 DDPOs are building relationships with local SPA providers

Through Into Sport, DDPOs have found that building relationships with local SPA providers is key to the provision of accessible information and activities. DDPOs are in the perfect position to educate SPA providers in good practice in engaging and communicating with Disabled people.

Solutions developed by the Into Sport DDPOs:

- Support service users to be 'mystery shoppers' and assess the suitability of local SPA provision
- Develop channels of communication with local SPA providers
- Help inform SPA providers about what it means to be fully accessible and cultivate a more inclusive culture
- Ask for regular feedback from service users; share feedback with SPA providers
- Promote the importance of Disability Equality Training to SPA staff



3 DDPOs are helping to make SPA more accessible

SPA providers sometimes advertise a venue and activities as being accessible when they aren't. Getting to and from the activity can also be a barrier for some disabled people.

Solutions developed by the Into Sport DDPOs:

- Work with local SPA providers to create activities that are fully inclusive
- Help to schedule disability-specific sessions at local venues, as a first step for some service users
- Support people to find specific activities that meet their needs
- Support local clubs or providers to apply for funding for specialist equipment and dedicated sessions
- Use local knowledge to help support service users with accessing and planning transport and travel
- Coordinate volunteers to accompany service users
- Encourage participants to support each other to get to activities



4 DDPOs are skilled at supporting and encouraging Disabled people to get engaged in SPA

Some Disabled people will need support while engaging in SPA. This can mean encouragement and motivation, or communication support, or personal assistance during the activity itself. Into Sport has found that many Disabled people with high support needs want to engage in SPA but do not have the means to pay for the right support. Into Sport ran a Personal Assistance Access Fund which successfully enabled a small number of people with high support needs to recruit PAs and get engaged in SPA. However, since the pilot project finished, attempts to get their care packages increased to include SPA support have, so far, been unsuccessful.

Solutions developed by the Into Sport DDPOs:

- Develop local networks of Deaf and Disabled people and volunteers that provide support for each other
- Set up Facebook pages and groups where service users can safely connect with and support each other, and share their SPA experiences
- Find out about local SPA providers that offer free taster sessions and/or concessionary rates, or have policies where the personal assistant/carer goes free
- Set up peer support and buddying initiatives



5 DDPOs are contributing to diversifying the SPA workforce

The SPA workforce should reflect the communities it serves. However, the SPA workforce significantly lacks Disabled employees.¹ Addressing this disparity lies beyond the influence of DDPOs alone and requires major change and investment across the whole SPA sector.

¹ 'Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation', HM Government, December 2015, p.66

However, there are some things that Into Sport DDPOs have started to explore:

- Encourage service users to volunteer with local sports clubs and activity groups
- Look into which coaching and leadership programmes are welcoming Disabled applicants
- Support service users who would like to train or work as coaches. This might mean liaising with training bodies about a service user's access needs, negotiating a transparent recruitment process, or helping him or her to apply for Access to Work funding
- Find out if there are bespoke courses for people with specific impairments



Why the SPA sector needs to work with DDPOs to support inactive Disabled people to become active

DDPOs have unparalleled reach into their local communities of Disabled people. They are informed by, and can voice, the needs of local Disabled people and are therefore essential to ensuring that local SPA provision becomes fully inclusive. They are well-positioned to inform, shape and co-design local SPA services, contribute to the development of local SPA strategies, campaign to promote equality of opportunity for Disabled people, and improve the accessibility of the wider community. This expertise will help to make existing SPA provision more accessible and inclusive.

A summary of the unique skills and characteristics of DDPOs that will support this process includes:

1.

Expertise of lived experience of the barriers Disabled people face

2.

Understanding of how to create accessible environments and accessible models of service delivery





3.

Provision of ongoing, sustained and personalised support



4.

Skill in identifying service gaps and overcoming barriers to SPA by creating new, innovative approaches to service delivery



5.

Service user feedback, which helps to strengthen relationships between DDPOs and SPA providers



6.

A holistic approach to the needs of service users, including an understanding of the benefits of SPA to overall wellbeing



7.

Connection with the local community, leading to a higher take-up of services by Disabled people who non-DDPOs find it hard to reach and who are often excluded from mainstream SPA provision



8.

Use of peer support, buddying and volunteer models of delivery, which are proving very effective in increasing SPA engagement



9.

Creation of employment, training and volunteering opportunities for Disabled people, which will help to make the SPA sector more diverse

Conclusion

Although there is clearly much still to be done in tackling the barriers faced by Deaf and Disabled people engaging with SPA, the Into Sport project has proven that even small steps towards inclusion can create positive change.

Key to this change is partnership working between DDPOs and SPA providers and evolving the ways that DDPOs work so that SPA becomes embedded into other services such as information, advocacy and advice.

Peer support is also essential, as it has been proven to increase Disabled people's confidence in SPA, providing encouragement and sustaining engagement. Furthermore, peer support contributes to the growth of strong communities and reduces social isolation by linking people into wider networks, local services and support.

Much more needs to be done to diversify the workforce and get more Disabled people into volunteering, coaching, paid posts, leadership roles and positions of influence within SPA organisations. This will lead to greater awareness and understanding of the needs and barriers faced by Deaf and Disabled People, more positive role models, greater take up of SPA by Disabled people, and eventually a cultural shift where it becomes expected and routine to see Disabled people engaged in every aspect of the SPA sector.



Due to the success of the Into Sport project, further funding has been secured to extend it until March 2018

Useful Links

English Federation of Disability Sport

www.efds.co.uk

London Sport

www.londonsport.org

Full version of the 'Yes we can! Engaging Deaf and Disabled People in Sport and Physical Activity' resource (written March 2017)

www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/yeswecan

Sources of support for DDPOs to get SPA on their agenda

There are different sources of support available for DDPOs interested in SPA, including the local authority, the disability team at London Sport, local sport and physical activity networks, various funding opportunities and a range of local, regional and network organisations. For full details please go to Section 5 of the full version of '[Yes we can](#)', pp. 39-44.

Produced by Inclusion London, October 2017

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