Sports coach UK’s commitment to inclusive coaching

Sports coach UK is committed to make inclusive coaching commonplace for and by disabled people in sport.

A fully inclusive and skilled coaching workforce will be highly beneficial for our partners to achieve their objectives of increasing participation and improving sporting performances. More people from diverse backgrounds will feel confident to attend coaching sessions if they believe that the coach can support their needs. As a result, we can expect participation and satisfaction levels to increase.
Current context

Statistically speaking

There are 6.9 million disabled people of working age in the UK representing around 19% of the total working population. In addition, there are 770,000 disabled children under the age of 16.

It is commonly recognised that disabled people engage in sport in two different ways. Disabled people either participate in disability sport, which is sport created primarily for disabled people and is often impairment specific; for example, wheelchair basketball, goalball (for people with visual impairments) or boccia (a form of bowls primarily, but not exclusively, for people with cerebral palsy). Alternatively, disabled people participate in mainstream sport as part of a group or club with non-disabled members. They can also be involved in a combination of both disability and mainstream sport and at different levels; for example, they can be a Paralympic swimmer but enjoy football at a local club at the weekend. This will have implications for the development needs of coaches.

The Active People Survey 2008–2009 shows that 79.2% of disabled people do not participate in sport, which is substantially higher than the overall population figure of 57.1%. Even more alarmingly, only around 6.5% of disabled people regularly participate in sport.

The sports with the highest participation rates for disabled people are swimming, cycling, football, golf, bowls and athletics.

Barriers

Disabled people face a number of barriers to participating in sport, including, for example, accessibility, access to transportation, cost, lack of information, lack of suitable clubs and role models and lack of opportunities to progress. It is important to recognise that some barriers also exist due to social stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes; Perceptions are that disabled people are not able to participate in sport, or coach.

Another less recognised barrier is that a significant number of disabled people and their families do not believe that coaches have the right skills and training to support their participation.

Disabled people who wish to coach may sometimes need additional support but also face barriers to get into coaching due to the lack of accessible training resources, knowledgeable and appropriately trained coach mentors and tutors, and appropriate opportunities to practise their coaching skills.

Challenges for governing bodies

These barriers provide challenges for governing bodies and coaches in the context of disability coaching, some of which are perceived and some actual. Either way they have the potential to limit the number of coaches involved in disability sport and coaching disabled people. The challenges include:

• the cost to make a governing body’s coach education fully inclusive for disabled people
• the time to train a governing body’s coaches and develop more inclusive coach education material
• potential health and safety risks or medical implications of coaching disabled people.

Perceived barriers have the potential to limit the number of coaches involved in disability sport and coaching disabled people.
**Current actions being taken**

Many governing bodies use sports coach UK's generic ‘How to Coach Disabled People in Sport’ and ‘Equity in your Coaching’ workshops to help develop the skills of their coaches.

A number of governing bodies of sport have developed their own sport-specific workshops for coaches wishing to learn more about coaching disabled people (e.g. The FA, British Gymnastics, Great Britain Wheelchair Basketball Association).

Sports such as the England and Wales Cricket Board and England Badminton are taking great steps forward to ensure their UKCC resources and course delivery are accessible and inclusive, but there are few further examples of this.

Organisations exist to support the development of disability sport and sport for disabled people in the UK. Each Home Country has a Home Nation Disability Sport Organisations (HNDSO). Governing Bodies can also access support from five impairment specific Disability Sport Organisations (British Blind Sport, CP Sport, Dwarf Sport Association UK, British Wheelchair Sport and UK Deaf Sport).

The UK Disability Sports Coaching, Leadership and Learning (UKDS-CLL) group was established to lead and shape the requirements for disability sports coaching and leadership nationwide. Alongside sports coach UK, the group consists of all four HNDSOs, ParalympicsGB, UK Sport, Youth Sport Trust and Skills Active and Sports Leaders UK.

The group recently published the *Strategic Priorities for Including Disabled People In and Through Coaching, Learning and Leadership in the UK* 5. This is the culmination of the last three years’ work and identifies the goals for the ongoing development of sport in the UK, which is inclusive of disabled people.

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**Next steps**

Sports coach UK is committed to supporting the development of inclusive coaching and have agreed three key principles:

- Coaches need to understand the needs of disabled people but, more importantly, they need to be able to apply their knowledge practically to overcome any apprehension they may have of coaching disabled people.
- Sports coach UK strongly advises that all coaches should undertake some form of practical disability awareness training before coaching on their own.
- Sports coach UK advocates the development of disabled people as coaches and role models.

In pursuit of these key principles, sports coach UK will develop an action plan for coaching disabled people in response to the strategic priorities for including disabled people in and through coaching, learning and leadership in the UK.

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2. Contact a Family (www.cafamily.org.uk/professionals/research/statistics.html)
In summary

sports coach UK is committed to making inclusive coaching commonplace for and by disabled people in sport through:

• having access to greater research to identify need
• supporting the production of useful learning tools and products
• supporting the development of inclusive UKCC coach education programmes and continuous professional development
• engaging the right people.

Contact

For further information, please do not hesitate to contact:

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