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# A Guide To Developing a **DISABILITY INCLUSION POLICY**



## Introduction

Developing a Disability Inclusion Policy supports the inclusion and participation of people with disabilities into sport and physical activity. Access to sport and physical activity should be diverse, fulfilling and inclusive for everyone. We encourage all organisations to broaden the range and quality of sport and physical activity opportunities for people with disabilities so that they have equal awareness, access and choice within their community.

A Disability Inclusion Policy will help guide an organisations planning and decisions on what they can do to be more inclusive.

This resource will guide your organisation in developing a Disability Inclusion Policy. It provides general information and the steps to writing a Disability Inclusion Policy statement and document. If you already have a Disability Inclusion Policy, you can use this guide to review and revise it, if necessary.

## What is Inclusion?

Inclusion means children and adults of all abilities have equal access and opportunities to participate in sport and physical activity. In an inclusive organisation the staff and members become more responsive to the individual abilities and needs of each participant. Rather than thinking of Inclusion as everyone participating together, consider inclusion as a process of ensuring ALL are included at a level appropriate to them. See Cara's Inclusion Continuum for further detail: [https://caracentre.ie/sdm\\_downloads/inclusion-continuum/](https://caracentre.ie/sdm_downloads/inclusion-continuum/)

### The benefits of an organisation becoming more inclusive are:

- A positive environment for all its members is created
- It provides more opportunities for people with disabilities to learn new skills, to make new friendships, to exercise responsibility and take on leadership roles
- Its broadens your organisations appeal for new membership e.g. players, volunteers and administrators who can help contribute to the success and running of the organisation
- It Increases opportunities for funding and to raise your organisations profile
- It provides a greater awareness of legislation and requirements for your organisation
- It will demonstrate that your sport etc. can be adapted and/or modified to include people with disabilities and it will challenge perceptions of people with disabilities by focusing attention on their abilities and not their disabilities

## Legislation

The introduction of the Disability Act 2005 and Equal Status Acts 2000 - 2012 has helped to progress the rights of people with disabilities in Ireland, but they still face many barriers in everyday life and taking part in physical activity and sport.

People with disabilities make up 13% of the population (600,000 of 4.5 million people) but their participation in sport and physical activity is significantly lower than people without disabilities. Having a greater awareness of some of the challenges that people with disabilities face will help you to be more confident when engaging with them and supporting people with disabilities to lead an active and healthy lifestyle by taking part in regular sport and physical activity.

In 2018, Ireland ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which commits to the equal treatment of people with disabilities when it comes to their participation in sport and physical activity.

### Equal Status Acts 2000 - 2012

These acts protect people with a disability from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society. An example would be if a sports organisation, club, fitness/leisure centre or association treats a person unfavourably due to their disability.

It is required by law to make 'reasonable accommodation' for people with a disability who may be users, employees or volunteers. For example, this could include physical changes to the building, including ramps for wheelchair users, automatic entrance doors, lowered counters at reception areas, induction/hearing loops at reception areas and information in accessible formats e.g. larger font/audio/braille.

'Reasonable accommodation' means providing specific treatment or facilities to make sure that people with disabilities can avail of particular goods, services, housing, and so on. The following individuals and organisations must do all that is reasonable to meet the needs of a person with a disability:

- People and organisations selling goods or providing services
- People and organisations selling or letting accommodation or providing accommodation
- Schools, colleges and other educational institutions
- Clubs

### Disability Act 2005

In short, the Disability Act 2005 places a statutory obligation on public service providers to support access to services and facilities for people with disabilities. Under the Act, people with disabilities are entitled to:

1. Have their health and educational needs assessed.
2. Have individual service statements drawn up, setting out what services they should get.
3. Access independent complaints and appeals procedures.
4. Access public buildings and public service employment.

This Disability Inclusion Policy development document and template can be used to articulate an organisations commitment to including people with disabilities and shows the practical things that can be done to promote inclusion.

An inclusive approach to sport and physical activity is not just a matter of making minor or major adjustments, inclusion is a process, which has to run through the whole organisation if it is to be genuine.

Having a written Disability Inclusion Policy gives clarity and support to an organisations management, staff and members, and is essential in ensuring that your practice is inclusive and fair. It also ensures that discriminatory incidents will be appropriately addressed. Practitioners have a duty not to discriminate on the grounds of disability (Equal Status Acts 2000–2012).

### United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

Article 30.5 states "With a view to enabling persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities, States shall take appropriate measures:

- a. To encourage and promote the participation of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all levels;
- b. To ensure that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to organise, develop and participate in disability-specific sporting and recreational activities and, to this end, encourage the provision, on an equal basis with others, of appropriate instruction, training and resources;
- c. To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sporting, recreational and tourism venues;
- d. To ensure that children with disabilities have equal access with other children to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities, including those activities in the school system;
- e. To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to services from those involved in the organisation of recreational, tourism, leisure and sporting activities."

### It is recommend that this resource is used in conjunction with the following:

- Disability Act 2005
- Equal Status Acts 2000-2012
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Article 30.5)

### A successful Disability Inclusion Policy should contain:

The vision and values of the organisation and a statement of commitment to inclusion

The aims and objectives of your policy. These could be viewed under the headings of access, participation, support and reporting

A complaints policy and procedure in the event the duty of care has not being reached

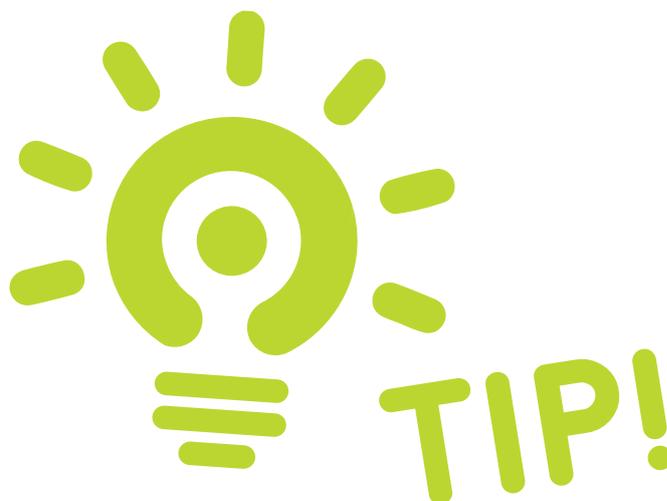
The scope of the policy on a local, regional and national level

Evaluation and monitoring of the policy. Stipulate how it will be reviewed and evaluated

A review date. The document should be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis and should reflect the practice of the organisation.

### Tips for developing a Disability Inclusion Policy:

- Provide opportunities for all levels of the organisation to engage in its development by providing focus groups or feedback opportunities
- Ensure that the views of people with a disability are heard and considered through a consultative and participative process
- Develop clearly identified actions that the organisation will carry out to achieve the policy
- Identify what will be required in the role out of the policy
- Develop clear measureable actions that will let you know that you are achieving your policy
- State how the policy will be monitored and when and how often the policy will be reviewed
- Adopt the policy at the organisations AGM
- Ensure that all levels of the organisation have an awareness and understanding of the policy and how it needs to be delivered upon
- Provide disability awareness/inclusion training to the staff and members of the organisation to ensure they can effectively implement the policy
- Appoint a Disability Inclusion Officer that will assist in the execution of the policy measurable actions and timescales



## SAMPLE Disability Inclusion Policy

### Our Mission

The mission of \_\_\_\_\_ is to value the ability and individuality of people with disabilities by providing each individual with the opportunities they need to reach their full potential as participants within an inclusive ethos/culture.

At \_\_\_\_\_ we will achieve disability inclusion by continually reviewing an approach that is implemented by the members, staff and management and by working in partnership with clubs, disability services and in consultation with people with disabilities and their families. This will ensure that our organisation is inclusive for everyone.

### Our Commitment

Our organisation welcomes all members of the community, regardless of their abilities. We will include people with disabilities in our organisation in both playing and non-playing roles to the greatest extent that we can.

We will endeavor to make our organisation as inclusive and accessible as possible, based on our commitment to comply with the Equal Status Acts 2000-2012, the Disability Act 2005 and Article 30.5 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We are also committed to fulfilling the requirement of the Sports Ireland Policy on Participation in Sport by People with Disabilities and to signing and engaging with the Sport Inclusion Disability Charter.

### Accessibility

We are committed to ensuring that as far as reasonably practicable, our organisational environment, clubs, training and education and physical facilities are accessible to people with disabilities. We are ready to consider all reasonable adjustments that would, over time, help us to achieve this aim more fully and effectively.

- In our efforts to deliver on this we will:
- Improve on the physical layout out of the facilities that we use
- Update our training and education to reflect disability awareness/inclusion
- Adjust how we deliver/promote our information to people with disabilities
- Organise disability awareness/inclusion training for all board, staff and members
- Ensure that all resources are produced in accessible formats
- Improve accessibility of all programmes
- Review all areas in line with health and safety requirements

## Participation

By developing our capacity and capabilities within our organisation we will strive to deliver inclusive programmes, promote and advocate for disability inclusion and increase the numbers of people with disabilities participating in our sport and organisation.

### In our efforts to deliver on this we will:

- Adopt an inclusive approach across all aspects of the entire organisation by consulting with our members
- Consult with and listen to the voices of people with disabilities in all of our deliberations and programme development
- Work in partnership with other organisations and individuals who are advocates for the inclusion of people with disabilities
- Promote good governance across the entire organisation to ensure that participation of people with disabilities is delivered
- Acknowledge and support the contributions, achievements and successes of people with disabilities in our organisation
- Commit to and adopt the Sport Inclusion Disability Charter

## Support

In the development of a Disability Inclusion Policy we understand that it requires a lot of support across all aspects of our organisation. We will endeavor to provide supports where they are needed and where financially and strategically possible.

### In our efforts to deliver on this we will:

- Increase the capabilities of our management, staff and members so that they have a better understanding of what is required to deliver an inclusive environment. We will do this by providing disability awareness/inclusion training to all our board members, staff and members
- Appoint a Disability Inclusion Officer to monitor, support and assist in our work to be more inclusive of people with disabilities
- Educate and support management, staff and members to be accepting of people with disabilities throughout our organisation
- To ensure that all future policies, strategies and plans are inclusive of people with disabilities
- Develop our coaching/training pathway to include disability awareness training
- Develop a standalone disability inclusion workshop specific to our sport or organisation
- Collaborate with external organisations who work in the area of disability and consult with them and their members in the development of our programmes

### Reporting

We will endeavour to review and update the organisations Disability Inclusion Policy annually and to review any recommendations and developments that will have arisen as a result of the development of the policy.

#### In our efforts to deliver on this we will:

- Review the work that has being completed during the time frame
- Check the list of actions or measurable outcomes that were set as part of the policy development
- Consult with people with disabilities, members and organisational staff on their views and achievements in relation to the policy
- Update the policy where necessary
- Request approval of any updates to the policy by the board of management

### Measureable Outcomes

It is important to set a list of measureable outcomes so that the organisation can monitor and track that the Disability Inclusion Policy is being implemented.

#### In our efforts to deliver on this we will:

- Ensure that the Disability Inclusion Policy has being approved by all board of management and all members of the organisation
- Ensure that the board of management, staff and members understand the policy
- Ensure that the board of management, staff and members commit to the policy and adopt the Sport Inclusion Disability Charter
- Ensure that the policy is included in the organisations handbook and is part of induction training of all new staff
- Ensure that the policy is displayed publicly within the organisation
- Ensure that the training needs of the organisations board, staff and members in relation to the Disability Inclusion Policy has been identified and met
- Ensure that all incidents are recorded and dealt with in line with the policy
- Conduct an inclusion audit of the organisation and all the environments and facilities used for programmes and events

## Examples of Disability Inclusion Policies

### Sport Ireland

[https://www.sportireland.ie/Media/Latest\\_News/Sport%20Ireland%20Policy%20on%20Participation%20in%20Sport%20by%20People%20with%20Disabilities.pdf](https://www.sportireland.ie/Media/Latest_News/Sport%20Ireland%20Policy%20on%20Participation%20in%20Sport%20by%20People%20with%20Disabilities.pdf)

### Gymnastics Ireland

[https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/gymnasticsireland/downloads/GymABLE-Disability-Policy-2018\\_final.pdf](https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/gymnasticsireland/downloads/GymABLE-Disability-Policy-2018_final.pdf)

## Further Information

### Equal Status Act 2000 – 2012

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2012/act/41/enacted/en/print.html>

### Disability Act 2005

<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2005/act/14/enacted/en/html>

### United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/article-30-participation-in-cultural-life-recreation-leisure-and-sport.html>

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