

A Club for All?

'... and while not everyone may exercise their right to participate in Community life such as sports clubs, it is wrong to assume that this is the only reason why people do not access [sport through sports clubs]'.

'Until everyone is aware of the opportunities for participation [in sport] that recognises the realities of peoples lives, the barriers to inclusion are so great that people have not in fact been offered a real choice at all.'

(Neighbourhood Resources and Development Department, Dundee City Council, 2003).

This insert of **clubwise** aims to help sports clubs in the community consider the potential barriers that deny people access, the possible ways clubs can begin to tackle these barriers and identify what the benefits of being inclusive are to your club.

Below is a list of questions about your club. Your answers are simply intended to give some indication of whether or not your club is 'A Club for All', in other words 'is your club welcoming and accessible to all sections of the community'?

When answering yes or no please be realistic as possible. You may feel that your answer lies somewhere between the two possible responses. If this is the case then you need to decide on where the balance lies.

1. Does your Club have members who are Under 18 years of age?

Yes No

2. Does your club have any female members?

Yes No

3. Does your club allow its members to pay their annual subscriptions in instalments?

Yes No

4. Does your club operate specific recruitment programmes/teams focussed on any of the following?

Women and girls	Yes	No
Ethnic groups	Yes	No
People with a disability	Yes	No
Over 65's	Yes	No

5. Do you have any of the following coaching staff in your club?

Female Coaches	Yes	No
Coaches from ethnic minorities	Yes	No
Coaches with a disability	Yes	No
Coaches over 65 years	Yes	No

6. Do you operate a recreational team/section in your club?

Yes No

7. Do you offer reduced membership fees for recreational players/members?

Yes No

8. Are the facilities your club utilises on a main bus route?

Yes No

9. Does your club have a "hand me down" system for used equipment/clothing?

Yes No

10. Does you club offer financial support to less well-off members, such as reduced subs, support with competition entry fees etc.?

Yes No

Now you have completed the questionnaire, assess how many YES answers you have ticked. The more YES answers you have ticked indicates how much your club is a 'Club for All.' Where you have tick a NO answer will demonstrate areas that need to be worked upon to become a 'Club for All.'

Hot Tip: Running Sport has published a book called 'A Club for All'. It aims to help clubs reach more sections of the community by assessing how well you are doing at the moment and what else you may want to consider. To order telephone 0113 201 5555 and quote ref. BRSK16. Cost £9.00.

A Club for All?

Barriers

Before setting out trying to recruit members from all groups within Society, it is important that as a club, you recognise the barriers to participation that particular groups may face. Only by recognising these barriers can you then begin to tackle them.

Many barriers to participation affect many under represented or excluded groups in society. Therefore when considering the barriers it is easier to consider the following four themes. Try to think about your own club situation when reading these through - and be honest!

1) Institutional

These are the barriers that the people within clubs consciously or unconsciously may create, and which may discourage or restrict participation. They include:

- Unsuitable or unduly restricted club times;
- Assumptions, stereotyping and prejudice;
- Inappropriate attitudes e.g. unwelcoming, unfriendly and unhelpful;
- Direct or indirect discrimination;
- Inflexible methods and approaches;
- Inappropriate rules and regulations;

- Charging policies that disadvantage those on low incomes, particularly large families.

- Lack of adequate provision for people with special needs or disabilities

2) Personal & Social

These barriers can be experienced as a result of individual, family, community or cultural circumstances.

- Family crisis / conflict;
- Poor core skills;
- Low income and poverty;
- Isolation / Lack of social contact;
- Low confidence / self esteem / motivation;
- Insecurity / self depreciation;
- Lack of personal resources, choice and control;
- Lack of time and money to provide access to people and places;
- Lack of health / fitness;
- Lack of permanent fixed address;
- Not enough attention given to fun and social elements.

3) Perception & Awareness

Perceptions that sport clubs are 'not for us' exists in individual and community terms. These can cause difficulty for people who:

- Are educationally disadvantaged;
- Live in isolation;
- Do not think that sports clubs are relevant to their lives / needs;

- Lack belief in their ability to develop personally and effect change;

- Insecurity / self depreciation;

- Have had past negative experiences;

- A lack of knowledge of sports clubs in the community and how to access them;

- Fear of the unknown;

- Sees sports clubs as 'middle class'.

4) Environmental

These include:

- Difficult physical / disabled access to buildings used by clubs;
- Peoples basic needs not being met;
- Lack of stability in families / neighbourhoods;
- Prohibitive transport costs / poor transport links;
- Insecurity / fears for personal safety;
- Lack of affordable childcare;
- Poor / non-effective marketing.

So how do these barriers affect your club?

Many of these barriers may not directly affect your club, nor will they be something that your club will be able to directly address. However, the starting point is raising awareness within the club membership and particularly with those who are in a decision making position, of these barriers.

Hot Tip: Clubs who encompass and target all members of the community are looked on more favourably by Funding Bodies.

i.e. Awards for All

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Now we have an awareness of the variety and complexity of the barriers many groups within our community face with regard to accessing our club, **what can we do to try and address these barriers?**

Firstly we need to be realistic! We cannot overcome these barriers overnight. However clubs can implement subtle changes to their structures and activities that can make a big difference to under represented groups. Some areas to consider include:

Location

Where do club activities take place? Are they easily reachable by public transport? Can you establish sessions within local communities that are more easily accessible? Are the facilities welcoming for all sections of the community? Is there disabled access to the facilities?

Cost

What does it cost to join your club? Is this realistic for those on low incomes or those with large families? For example £2.00 per session may not appear to be very much, but for families with two or three children this can start to get too expensive. Does the club have a family membership

scheme? Does the club offer reduce costs to those on low incomes? Is financial issues dealt with privately and in confidence? If people have problems with payments is there any support offered to them by the club?

Activities

Are activities suitable for all members of the club? Are there other activities the club should consider e.g more recreational / fun based activities? Are there separate activities for different age groups / genders / ethnicities? Can people with a disability be integrated, where appropriate, into 'mainstream' club activities? Is there any support available for them from the club if required?

Marketing and Promotion

Where do you market and promote your club? Is your marketing and promotion likely to reach all sections of the community? Do you specifically target groups who are poorly represented within the club? Does your marketing make specific reference to some of the issues these groups face, for example disabled access, reduced costs, equipment availability? How can people access the club? Can they turn up on the day or do they have to book / pay in advance?

People

Are the people within your club welcoming to all sectors of the community? Are there issues with regard to prejudices towards particular groups from club members? How does the club deal with any allegations of inappropriate attitudes / prejudices from club members? Do coaches / volunteers need any additional training to aid the inclusion of groups within the club?

These are just some of the areas you may wish to give a bit of consideration. The best advice is use a common sense, flexible approach but try to ensure fairness to ALL members.

Benefits

Remember there are clear benefits of having a 'Club for All'.

- A Club for All will be seen favourably by funding agencies;
- A Club for All will have a larger membership and a bigger income for membership fees;
- A Club for All will enhance the social element of the club!
- A Club for All will have more volunteers to share the responsibilities;
- A Club for All will have a larger support at competitions!

Hot Tip: Since December 1996, it has been unlawful for service providers - that is anyone providing a service directly to the general public - to discriminate against disabled people: * Refusing service * Offering a worse service * Offering a service on worse terms