

How 2 remove barriers that prevent young disabled people getting involved in activities

Introduction

BYC believe that all young people should be able to participate in activities that interest them, empower them, and allow them to make a positive difference to their communities.

This guide is to help you think about how you can remove barriers that might prevent young disabled people joining in the activities you are involved in.

Can you remove any barriers to participation?

Answer these five questions and see if you can take action to remove barriers to participation by everyone:

- 1) Can you improve your understanding of everyone's support requirements?

Young disabled people often say it is often other people's attitudes that stop them enjoying play leisure opportunities and activities for young people. Sometimes people might incorrectly think that young disabled people are unable to participate in activities or not make it clear that their requirements can be met and support provided to help them participate.

Perhaps you could organise training for your group so everyone can work together to learn more about each others requirements, and what requirements disabled young people might have, to develop better ways of working together.

Make sure that your group is a safe space for everyone and that everyone is clear about what happens if there is any bullying behaviour, for example you could write your own youth-led bullying policy. Disabled children and young people are more likely to be bullied, which is a major barrier to feeling safe enough to take part in opportunities.

- 2) Can you make the space that you use for your activity more physically accessible?

If you meet in a building that doesn't meet the needs of all young people, this can make things difficult for young people in terms of physical access.

Some changes to spaces that can increase access for young people include:

- lighting paint and layout to help with visual impairments
- lifts and ramps to help with mobility impairments
- audio induction loops at reception to help young people with hearing impairments

Why not ask everyone in your group if they have ideas about what they would like to change to make accessing your activity easier? You can use our iGuide on Disability Discrimination to think of things to consider and questions to ask (see find out more).

If you have ideas of how to improve access to your space why not share them with your youth worker and see what can be done. It is the law that young disabled people have the same right to access services and facilities as other people, and that services must make 'reasonable adjustments' to turn this right into a reality.

It is also just as important to consider whether all the activities you do together as a group, for example you may visit somewhere or go out for a meal together, are accessible to everyone in your group and that everyone's requirements are catered for.

3) Can you improve transport links?

Young disabled people want the same chances as other young people to do things with their friends and without their parents. A lack of accessible transport which means that young disabled people don't feel safe or able to be independent, often forces them to rely on their parents or other adults to take them places.

You can take steps to make sure that the public transport system in

your area is enabling young disabled people to get to your activity by considering the following questions:

- Do you meet at a place where there are good public transport links?
- Are your local council working with transport providers, such as your local bus company, to ensure young disabled people can access your group?
- Are public transport staff receiving disability equality training?
- Can people accompanying a disabled child or young person in the capacity of short break worker or personal assistant travel free?

If you feel that more could be done to improve public transport in your local area for young disabled people, your group could contact your local transport provider or email your local councillor via <http://www.writetothem.com> to outline your concerns.

4) Can you make communication in your group more inclusive?

Over one million children and young people have communication impairments in the United Kingdom – which means that they find speech, language and communication skills difficult. These young people may need support with clarity of speech, getting their message across, and understanding what is being communicated to them. They may also use speech and language in a

more simplified or less clear way than usually expected. These young people are sometimes referred to as having a “hidden impairment” as their impairments may not be easy to see.

It’s important to recognise that all ways of communicating are equally valuable. Everyone who takes part in your activity should be open to people using simplified language or unclear speech as well as alternative ways of communication including symbols. You can also agree to recognise that some young people need additional time to process the language they hear and to formulate their responses and make their own contribution.

- 5) Can you improve how you provide information?

Make sure there is always the option to provide information about activities in a range of accessible formats and ask everyone if they have any specific requirements about how information is presented.

Information that is normally provided in writing (such as handouts, timetables and textbooks) can be made more accessible by providing it:

- in Easy Read
- in Braille
- in large print
- on audiotape
- using a symbol system

Top tips for removing barriers that prevent young disabled people getting involved in activities

- 1) Respect and recognise everyone’s differences.
- 2) Make no assumptions.
- 3) Ask members of your group if they have any access requirements.
- 4) Decide together that bullying is not acceptable.
- 5) Consider whether the space where you meet has good physical access.
- 6) Make sure any information you provide is accessible to the whole group.
- 7) Value all types of communication.
- 8) Give everyone the space and time to have their say.
- 9) See if you can improve transport links to your group.
- 10) Find out what’s best for young disabled people when they join your group by asking them from the start.

A case study of removing barriers to participation.

KIDS, a charity working for disabled young people, told BYC how they had recently been approached by a disabled young woman and her family who were anxious about her being able to take part in an organised canoeing session with a group of young people. They were worried that she would not receive enough support to be safe in the

water as she was very unsteady on her feet.

Through everyone - KIDS, the group leader of the canoeing activity, and the young woman and her family – working together they were able to define what the young woman’s requirements and needs for this activity would be. This was done through a risk assessment (a procedure to work out how many hazards people face in a situation) and by ensuring there were enough staff/instructors to provide appropriate support for all the young people involved.

The decision was made to provide one to one support for the young woman, from the moment she arrived at the activity and while out on the lake. Meeting this requirement to enable her inclusion proved really successful and it was reported that the young woman was grinning ear to ear the whole time she was out on the water and is now a regular canoeist!

Find out more

iGuide on Disability Discrimination

This iGuide aims to inform adults and young disabled people about disability discrimination. It outlines what disability discrimination is, and the legal requirements and level of service that local services have to provide in relation to young people with disabilities.

<http://www.byc.org.uk/youth4u-resources>

How to support disabled and non-disabled children and young people to work together.

A guide for those who want to ensure that the groups they are working with, and in, are inclusive by providing support and advice.

<http://www.participationworks.org.uk/resources/how-to-support-disabled-and-non-disabled-children-and-young-people-to-work-together-in-inc>

Top tips poster for participation

A great poster created by young disabled children to print off and remind you of top tips.

http://www.ncb.org.uk/cdc/moh_top_tips_poster.pdf

How to involve children and young people with communication impairments in decision-making.

A guide that provides information and ideas about how you can enable children and young people with communication impairments to participate.

http://www.ncb.org.uk/dotpdf/open_access_2/how_to_involve_children_and_young_people_with_communication_impairments_in_decision_making.pdf

KIDS

A charity working to create an inclusive world for disabled children, young people and their families.

<http://www.kids.org.uk>

Every Disabled Charity Matters

A campaign to ensure disabled children have the services and



support they need to lead ordinary lives.

<http://www.ncb.org.uk/edcm/home.aspx>

For more information

about BYC training:

www.byc.org.uk/training

or to download further resources:

www.byc.org.uk/resources

British Youth Council

We empower young people across the UK to have a say and be heard.

www.byc.org.uk

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