

Swimming for People with Disabilities – Supporting Information

“Coach the Ability NOT the Disability”

WHY SWIMMING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES?

Swim21 focuses on a swimmer centred approach, putting the needs of the swimmer first. This applies to all participants in swimming, regardless of ability. All swimmers deserve the opportunity to achieve their full potential. Great Britain leads the world in disability swimming, and for this to continue we must endeavour to provide those opportunities.

INTEGRATING DISABLED SWIMMERS INTO YOUR CLUB

It is important to assess swimmers ability *in the water*, in order to determine which group would be appropriate and which sessions would be of best benefit. Talk to the swimmer about their ability, they are the best judge of what they can and cannot do.

All swimmers should receive appropriate levels of coaching, water time and land conditioning related to the level at which they are performing. If land training is to be provided, consideration must be given to the access requirements of disabled swimmers, and the support needs of those who are providing that training.

Practical tips may include ensuring sessions are always written out and placed at the end of the lane, which would help swimmers with hearing difficulties. Additionally, those swimmers with learning difficulties benefit from repetitive programmes which over time they can learn and feel secure in doing.

CLASSIFICATION

If you are dealing with Learn to Swim and early swimmer development then classification is not an issue, but as swimmers move up the competitive ladder, they will need to be classified, especially if they are looking to compete at National or International level. Classification is based on a swimmers functional ability to swim a particular stroke. It can be a complicated issue but there are experts around to help and guide in this area.

WHO ELSE CAN HELP?

There are a number of disability specific organisations that serve people with disabilities. The umbrella organisation which serves as the development arm for disability sport is the English Federation of Disability Sport, which works closely with the ASA to assist with the development of disability swimming.

The EFDS has 10 regional offices. Contact details are:

EFDS - East	Regional Development Manager, The Bedford Centre for Voluntary Services, 43 Bromham Road, Bedford, MK40 2AA Tel: 01234 212343 email: east@efds.co.uk
EFDS – East Midlands	Regional Development Manager, Sports Development Centre, University of Loughborough, LE11 3TU Tel: 01509 228030/1 email: eastmidlands@efds.co.uk
London Sports Forum	Regional Development Manager, Ground Floor, Leroy Business Centre, 436 Essex Road, London, N1 3QA Tel:02073458666 email: lsf@disabilitysport.freemove.co.uk
EFDS – North	Regional Development Manager, Sports Development Centre, University of Durham, House of Sport, Leazes Road, Durham DH1 1TA Tel: 0191 374 1759 email: north@efds.co.uk
EFDS – North West	Regional Development Manager, Recreation House, Corporation Street, St Helens, WA10 1HF Tel: 01744 455452 email: northwest@efds.co.uk
EFDS – South East	Regional Development Manager, University of Brighton, Falmer, Brighton, BN1 9PH Tel: 01273 643951 email: southeast@efds.co.uk
EFDS – South	Regional Development Manager, Slough Borough Council, Community Services, Town Hall, Bath Road, Slough, SL1 3UQ Tel: 01753 875579 email: south@efds.co.uk
EFDS - South West	Regional Development Manager, Bristol City Council, Leisure Services, Colston House, Colston, Bristol, BS1 5AX Tel: 0117 9222717 email:southwest@efds.co.uk
EFDS – West Midlands	Regional Development Manager, 26 Woodbury, University College Worcester, Henwick Road, Worcester, WR2 6AL Tel: 01905 855429 email: westmidlands@efds.co.uk
Yorkshire Federation	Regional Development Manager, Unit 9, Milner Way, Ossett, West Yorkshire, WF5 9LN Tel: 01924 279305 email: staff@yorksdisabilitysport.freemove.co.uk

Some counties have Disability Liaison officers in place, it is anticipated that all ASA Counties will have someone in post in the future. These Liaison Officers are a valuable contact, they will have access to knowledge about competition opportunities, extra training opportunities and be a source of help to clubs who are wanting to integrate swimmers with disabilities into their clubs. If you want to know if your county has a Disability Liaison Officer, please contact your RDO.

How can you integrate swimmers with a disability into your club?

What do you want to achieve?	How can you go about it?	Who can help?
To give teachers more training in disability swimming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a Helper/ Assistant Teacher/ Teacher course (The ASA grant aids disability courses) • Coordinate course with local disability swimming club 	ASA Education Department County and District Education committees Disability swimming clubs
Promote awareness within the club on disability issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Disability Awareness Training • Invite swimmer or coach with a disability to speak to club members 	EFDS ASA RDO Sportscoach UK
Provide training opportunities for swimmers with a disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create links with disability clubs and special schools in the area • Mainstream coach works in a disability club for a period • Maintain links and dialogue between coaches • Swimmers from disability club invited to mainstream club in order to access more water time, as appropriate for swimmers needs 	EFDS ASA RDO Local Authority Disability Sport Unit County Disability Liaison Officer
Increase knowledge of disability swimming – training and competitive opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint a club disability liaison officer to link in with county liaison officers • Contact Regional EFDS Office for contacts • Create links with disability clubs who are accessing competitions 	ASA RDO County Disability Liaison Officer County Secretaries EFDS