



OPEN

YOUR

DOORS

BE AN INCLUSIVE TENNIS VENUE



www.tennisfoundation.org.uk
020 8487 7000
info@tennisfoundation.org.uk

© The Tennis Foundation 2018
Charity Number 298175
Registered Company Number 2138124

Please contact the Tennis Foundation to request this document in an alternative format.

MAKE A DIFFERENCE, CHANGE PEOPLE'S LIVES

"We want to be able to offer disabled people the opportunity to come and join in any tennis session at any tennis venue across Great Britain. By working together with a range of tennis venues, local communities and disability organisations, we can make a difference. Tennis should be for everyone to play their way."

Jill Osleger,
Tennis Foundation National Disability Development Manager



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 5

BEING INCLUSIVE 7

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS 15

Inaccessible facilities 16

Inexperience 18

Lacking confidence 19

Expensive equipment 20

GETTING INVOLVED 25

ABOUT US

Our Vision

To make tennis a sport which is inclusive and accessible to all people and communities.

Our Mission

To open tennis up to anyone and everyone, making it possible for them to enjoy the many health and social benefits of the sport while maximising their personal potential.

Our Values

OPEN
VIBRANT

COURAGEOUS
INNOVATIVE

Our Work

Our beneficiaries cover a diverse range of people, but our work is united with the underlying ethos that we use tennis as a vehicle to make a real difference – transforming lives, building futures and empowering and enabling people to maximise their potential.

Disabled People – Empowering & Enabling

From grassroots to the world's best, we provide opportunities to play tennis and progress in the sport to anybody, with any disability.

For more information please go to:
www.tennisfoundation.org.uk

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Tennis Foundation is working closely with the LTA to encourage and support tennis venues across Britain to open their doors to a wider diverse audience; people of all ages and from all backgrounds (including disability, faith, gender identity, race, sex and sexual orientation).

Open Your Doors is a venue based programme designed by the Tennis Foundation to tackle and support some of the issues faced by tennis venues in their efforts to integrate disabled people within their activities and facilities, so together we can give them more choice about where and how to play tennis in this country.

INTRODUCTION

OPEN YOUR DOORS AND UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL

This guide takes you through a journey; the potential membership base out there, the benefits a more diverse membership base can have, the impact tennis has on disabled people, what inclusion means and how you can measure how 'Open' your venue is.

We tackle some potential barriers to this and give you practical ways to overcome them as well and signpost you to further sources of information. All of this is based on listening to the views of tennis venues and disabled people from our insight work.

There are many misunderstandings about how a venue can be welcoming to disabled people, it's more than facility access, it's about attitude also. With a can-do approach that involves listening to people's needs you can overcome many obstacles with simple practical adaptations that are cost effective and therefore open up our sport to more people, to the benefit of everyone. Want to know more? Keep reading and come on our Workshop or CPD to find out in greater detail how you can be part of 'Playing Tennis Your Way'.

● Do you have disabled people playing at your venue now?

If so we want to hear about it! We have performance pathways for talented players within wheelchair tennis as well as GB Learning Disability and GB Deaf Tennis teams. Our Game On resource takes you through our player pathways and how we can support you in developing your players.



DID YOU KNOW?

19%

OF THE POPULATION

has a long-term illness, impairment or disability, that's over 10 million people.

INSIGHT:

6/10

In the English Federation of Disability Sport's (EFDS) Lifestyle Report released in 2013, findings highlighted that 6/10 disabled people said they prefer to take part in sport and physical activity with a mix of disabled and non-disabled people.

BEING INCLUSIVE

A POTENTIAL NEW PLAYER BASE WHICH CAN BRING BENEFITS TO YOUR VENUE

There are over 10 million people with a limiting long-term illness, impairment or disability in Great Britain (Family Resources Survey 2009/10), of whom over 6.9 million are of working age, representing 18% of the working population (Disability Rights Commission July 2008). This equates to nearly 5 million disabled people of working age who want to play more sport.

There is potential for you to grow your membership base considerably if you specifically tap into this customer group and introduce a whole new audience to tennis; this can:

- **Generate income for your venue through increased membership income**
- **Improve the quality of your coaching offer**
- **Attract new members to your venue; diversity and a welcoming environment attracts new people to your venue as people recognise the excellent customer service you provide**
- **Potential for development of your club; there is funding to support venues to improve facilities and make them more accessible for all to enjoy. This helps you meet your legal requirements for accessibility.**

“ I don't think disabled people are different in the sense that you will go to a tennis club, get your racket out of your bag, go play with your friends or have a coaching session.”

**Tony Knappett,
Wheelchair Tennis Player**



“Disabled people want to be part of your tennis club, they probably already are! But by tapping further into this community group you can take your venue forward through increased court utilisation, membership and coaching income. It makes a sound business case.”

**Jill Osleger, Tennis Foundation
National Disability Development Manager**

THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF DISABILITY TENNIS

Our research gave us some great findings on the personal impact tennis can bring.

THE IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH, SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Players cite the positive effect playing tennis has had on their mental and social wellbeing.

Supporting facilities to deliver more sessions and making sure disabled players feel welcome at these sessions have been vital in building this self-confidence and self-efficacy.



91%

say playing tennis has improved their self-confidence



89%

attribute their feeling of increased happiness to playing tennis



47%

of tennis players reported feeling less stressed



98%

of coaches report a positive impact of coaching disability tennis on their professional development, saying it has improved their ability to coach generally



84%

say that playing tennis has had a positive impact on their social support network

IN ADDITION, SINCE STARTING TO PLAY TENNIS:

"I'm a lot calmer. It's very good for your mental health as well. You can just go out there and blast as many tennis balls as you need. At the end of the session you feel like you've done something as well. You have this massive sense of accomplishment at the end of each session."

Wheelchair tennis player, Grantham

BARRIERS & SOLUTIONS TO PARTICIPATION

The greatest

CHALLENGES

facing disabled people when it comes to playing tennis are:



38%

of players said finding players of a similar ability



25%

of players said traveling to the venue



27%

of players said the cost of lessons

The Tennis Foundation's Disability Programme tackles some of the barriers above through the delivery of disability specific tennis activities, however not all disabled people want to play with other disabled people as they prefer to play with non-disabled people, family and friends.

By opening up your venue to this customer group together we can tackle barriers to participating as there would be more sessions closer to home which would increase the opportunities and choices to play. This can also increase income to the club through club membership and coaching fees. By being as accommodating as you can to their needs through reasonable adjustments, this could reduce 54% of the identified barriers and get more people playing!

The following would

ENCOURAGE

players to play tennis more often:



37%

of respondents said the availability of more frequent sessions



31%

of respondents said sessions being available 'closer to home'



23%

of respondents said if there were more competitions to take part in



23%

of respondents said if facilities were more accommodating of their disability

BEING INCLUSIVE, WHAT DOES THIS REALLY MEAN?

More and more people are aware of the terms 'inclusive', 'inclusion' and 'accessibility', but what do we exactly mean by them?

- **Accessibility** = ensuring disabled people can access your facility, website, competitions and marketing materials without any barriers. If there are barriers to access the 'standard' offer you have provided alternatives. For example:
 - Your tennis courts have steps to reach them, however you have a ramp on an alternative route to the court.
 - Your marketing material has both the standard and an easy read version in a larger font.
 - Your website has an 'accessibility' feature which enables the user to change the print size and contrast to enable them to read and see it better.
- **Inclusive/Inclusion** = your offer reaching a broad and diverse audience as possible and they are involved together. For example:
 - Your club competition has both disabled and non-disabled people competing against each other.
 - Your adult Cardio Tennis sessions have been adapted to suit the wheelchair user who regularly accesses it.
 - Your club open day leaflet inviting new players to join in for a day has been sent to a broad range of community groups and you have sessions open to all to join in together.



HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR TENNIS VENUE IN TERMS OF ACCESSIBILITY AND INCLUSION?

We have a simple self-assessment you can do to see how you fair:

1. Do you have an accessibility feature on your website?
..... Y / N
2. Do you have alternative formats of any marketing materials such as leaflets and flyers to make it easier to read and see?
..... Y / N
3. Do you have disabled people in your tennis venues?
..... Y / N / Don't know
4. Do you have disabled people in your social play sessions/coaching sessions/competitions?
..... Y / N / Don't know
5. Do you have disabled parking bays?
..... Y / N
6. Do you have some ramps, handrails or flat pathways to increase access to your venue and courts?
..... Y / N / Unsure
7. Do you have a hearing loop at your venue?
..... Y / N
8. Have your coaches and any staff or volunteers at the venue attended any disability awareness training?
..... Y / N

The Tennis Foundation can support you on all of the above questions, so if this gets you thinking more about how you can be more accessible get in touch with us: www.tennisfoundation.org.uk or email: disabilitytennis@tennisfoundation.org.uk for more information.

In addition in connection to any facility development requirements to improve access please see www.lta.org.uk/venue-management/facilities-advice

1

GETTING STARTED

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

The Tennis Foundation is an insight led organisation, we listen to the views of disabled people both inactive and already playing tennis, as well as to a range of other tennis audiences such as County Associations, Clubs, Coaches and Volunteers; all to see how we can support everyone and their needs as best we can.

The key concerns about inclusion that came up time and time again are on the following pages.

INACCESSIBLE FACILITIES

“How will a person in a wheelchair access the courts or the building? Won't ramps cost a lot to install?”

There is a tendency to focus on wheelchair users only when you think about access to the courts, reception area, the changing & toilet facilities and café. Although this is very important, wheelchair users make up only 6% of the total number of disabled population, so if you do have a number of steps etc. you can still be accessible to 94% of other disabled people. There are cost effective means to overcome this such as temporary ramps. There are also funding opportunities, such as Transforming British Tennis Together, which can also support changes to your facility to include wheelchair access. Another practical guide on reasonable adjustment and facility access requirements can be found at www.efds.co.uk.

The other tendency is to forget that it's the welcome and openness of a venue that can make it more accessible or not. By asking your potential customer or member what they need and working together to overcome them shows how much you value them and your customer service levels. With a can-do approach you can find that many reasonable adjustments can be made, which means your facility becomes more accessible for everyone to enjoy.

“Everybody out there is a potential tennis player. Clubs need members and it doesn't matter if they are disabled players or not. They are still a tennis player and part of that club.”

Jonny Rudge, Tennis Coach



2

INEXPERIENCE / SPECIALIST

“I’ve little to no experience or qualifications to coach disabled people to play tennis. How would I include a disabled person within my lessons?”

Coming from a coach’s viewpoint, we know that they are concerned regarding the adaptations they may need to make, to accommodate disabled people. If they have completed their Level 3 LTA Coaching Qualification they will have received some disability awareness training, the Tennis Foundation offer’s supplementary CPD courses in Wheelchair Tennis, Learning Disability Tennis, Deaf Tennis and Visually Impaired Tennis can add to this. They are aimed at increasing confidence and knowledge in teaching disability tennis. However, you do not need these to do so; with an open mind and ‘can-do’ attitude, where you ask your player what requirements they may need to be included in your session, then you are on the right lines already. Focus on their ability and not their disability and tailor your offer accordingly. Communication is key; asking questions and listening to people’s needs, it’s what you do for everyone you coach.

The Tennis Foundation can support you with practical hints and tips based on the STEP’s Principle of inclusion www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/drive-tennis/coaching.



3

LACKING CONFIDENCE

“Is my venue welcoming to disabled people? How can we ensure our activities are inclusive and are to the enjoyment of all?”

There may be a lack of confidence when it comes to understanding disabled people’s needs and motivations to play sport. However disabled people have the same attitudes to getting active as non-disabled people. The majority of disabled people want to play with non-disabled people however some may prefer impairment specific sessions such as a visually impaired or learning disability session. The best way to find out what is required is to ask! Include disabled people within your current activities, focus on ability and not their disability as tennis is a sport everyone can play.

Increase participation by promoting your tennis offer as inclusive to local disability groups, special schools and other community groups. Also, programmes such as Mini Tennis, Cardio Tennis and getting involved in the Great British Tennis Weekends provide your venue with opportunities to attract new players in a fun and social setting.

Remember to adapt your marketing and communication to suit difference audiences, include easy read formats to make them more accessible, this can include making simple changes to your website also. All of this will demonstrate your venue’s commitment to be open and welcoming, which will come across positively to anyone visiting or reading your material. There is a great resource which can help you further, please visit this website: www.efds.co.uk



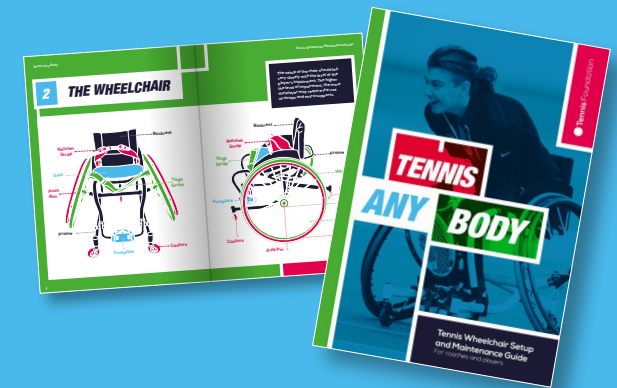
4

EXPENSIVE EQUIPMENT

“Don’t you need expensive equipment for disabled people to play tennis? We can’t afford this.”

The equipment needs of the vast majority of disabled people are the same as non-disabled people: rackets, balls, nets and courts. For those who play wheelchair tennis and visually impaired tennis then the additional equipment needs are for a tennis wheelchair and sound balls. As a venue you are not expected to provide wheelchairs, those that need them will often have their own or access a group which has shared use of tennis wheelchairs. Sound balls are available to purchase from specific retailers, often known to groups who play VI tennis.

The Tennis Foundation can help support anyone who needs a tennis wheelchair, we can also assist with support for sound balls.



DID YOU KNOW?

Disabled tennis players can represent your club in matches alongside non-disabled people. They can also play in your club and county tournaments.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Wheelchairs can be played on all court surfaces without causing permanent damage to courts. This includes grass, clay and artificial surfaces.
- Some general adaptations that may help you to deliver tennis to disabled people include:
 - Change the size of the court
 - Use smaller tennis rackets
 - Change the scoring method – for example in Mini Tennis
 - Change the ball used; sponge, mini Red / Orange / Green, a sound ball for those with a visual impairment
- The Tennis Foundation provides funding, equipment, advice and training to support disability participation.

A SPOTLIGHT ON IPSWICH SPORTS CLUB



CASE STUDY

Ipswich Sports Club has embraced a more inclusive approach to how it interacts with the wider community and has developed a warm and welcoming environment for its members and the local community, including disabled people, to feel included into all aspects of the club environment.

Disabled people who play at the venue play with non-disabled members and within disability specific sessions. Their coaches and other staff have received disability awareness training for both Wheelchair tennis and Visually Impaired (VI) tennis from the Tennis Foundation and are really keen to continue to learn and develop in this area.

One example of the type of sessions which has been set up is the Visually Impaired tennis group in partnership with the Tennis Foundation, Suffolk Sport and iFit Suffolk. This session has now attracted many participants who are blind and partially sighted, even an existing member, Gary Bull, has greatly benefited from participating in them: **"All of the players get a massive enjoyment and camaraderie out of the sessions. My self-confidence in all aspects of my life has improved. It's the highlight of my week. We are all great friends with each other."**

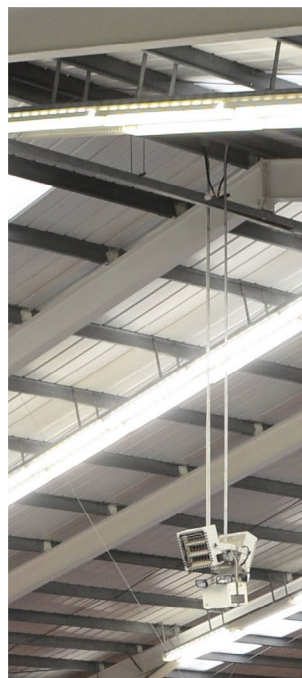
The Tennis Foundation asked the club to be a host venue for our 'Push 2 Podium' scheme, our talent ID programme, which attracted a number of participants with a physical disability to try wheelchair tennis and have since retained a large cohort of players, many of which have become members of the club.

Emma Potkins who initially attended the event said: **"I knew instantly that this was something special that had me hooked right then and there. It hit me... The smile on my face. I've not smiled since my accident & here I was beaming, still am actually. Sunday wasn't just another day for me, I really feel that it was the day that I started to live my new life."** Emma is now an ambassador for the club and sits on their club's committee to ensure that the club keeps up with its inclusive approach.

FURTHER INFORMATION

You can find out more on including disabled people in your activities through the organisations listed below:

- www.efds.co.uk
(Access for All, Effective Communication and Insight and Research)
- www.ukdeafsport.org.uk
- www.britishblindsport.org.uk
- www.mencap.org.uk/sport
(Learning Disability)
- www.specialolympicsgb.org.uk
(Learning Disability)
- www.wheelpower.org.uk
(Wheelchair)
- www.dsauk.org
(Dwarf Sports Association)
- www.cpsport.org
(Cerebral Palsy)
- www.mind.org.uk
(Mental Health)
- www.limbpower.com
(Amputees)



TAKING THE NEXT STEP

If this guide has got you thinking about changing practices and processes at your venue and you would like to know more we offer a range of support options for you:

- **Disability Tennis Programme**
If you want to get more involved in the delivery of disability specific sessions and need support we can help you directly, as well as put you in touch with experienced coaches, clubs and volunteers locally. We have over 380 venues nationwide, to find your nearest session look at www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/play-tennis
- **Open your Doors Workshop**
Contact us at the Tennis Foundation to find out when the next course is: info@tennisfoundation.org.uk
- **General Club Support**
Contact your Regional Disability Development Manager: www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/about-us/meet-the-team

