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OPEN your DOORS

Be an inclusive tennis venue



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About Us

The Tennis Foundation is Great Britain's leading tennis charity. Our vision is a sport which is inclusive and accessible to every kind of community. Our aim is to provide opportunities to encourage people to maximise their personal potential through tennis. We work closely with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and a wide range of partners from across all sectors to deliver our vision and aim. For more information please go to: www.tennisfoundation.org.uk



Introduction

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.

We work at all levels:

- **Grassroots level** – we will provide opportunities for disabled and non-disabled people to play tennis together, or in specific impairment sessions e.g. wheelchair tennis players only
- **Development level** – we will provide opportunities for players to compete and talent ID will take place
- **Performance level** – we will develop and sustain performance to the highest levels.

Open your doors - unlock the potential

To be inclusive means you welcome a diverse range of people to your tennis venue; this includes disabled people. This guide will show you the added benefits for your tennis venue, whether a club, park, or community centre. This guide provides practical tips so that more disabled people can enjoy playing tennis and you can broaden your appeal as a truly inclusive tennis venue.

Did you know



19% of the population has a long-term illness, impairment or disability, that's over 10 million people.

Insight



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.

Potential player base

There are over 10 million people with a limiting long-term illness, impairment or disability in Great Britain¹, of whom over 6.9 million are of working age, representing 18% of the working population². This equates to nearly five million disabled people of working age who want to play more sport. In tennis, the proportion of disabled people who have played in recent years is 5% v 12% of the total GB public³, our ambition is to make these levels equal.

By ensuring that your tennis venue is accessible and inclusive you can provide opportunities for more people to play tennis more often, bringing a number of benefits for the individuals and your venue. There is the potential for you to grow your membership base considerably and introduce a whole new audience to tennis.

“Disabled people want to be part of your tennis club - there is a sound business case to be inclusive as it increases your membership.”

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

“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, you play with friends or you go and have a coaching session.”

**Tony Knappett,
Wheelchair Tennis Player
and Tournament Director**



1. Source: Family Resources Survey 2009/10. 2. Disability Rights Commission July 2008. 3. Office for National Statistics: LTA Insight 2014.

➡ Opening doors

Tennis is for everyone! Open your doors to your local community and you will find your membership will thrive. Engagement with a wide range of diverse groups is the key to being inclusive. Disabled people can and do play tennis, are you including them in your activities?

Misunderstandings

There are many misunderstandings about disability sport including that it can be difficult to include disabled people in activity.

Understanding a person's viewpoint

We have listened to tennis clubs, community centres, coaches and disabled tennis players' views about tennis and have gained valuable insight.

Barriers removed

We can help you break down barriers and address key concerns with useful information.

Practical solutions

We offer practical hints and tips to assist your tennis venue to become more inclusive.

Inspiration for positive change

Being inclusive is so rewarding! The benefits it can bring to your tennis venue are significant, why miss out?

How to use this guide

We have four main sections that you can follow to find easy and practical solutions to any concerns you may have and to help you become an inclusive tennis venue. Just find the section(s) that apply to you and take that step forward!

Being inclusive

More and more people are aware of the terms 'inclusive' and 'integrated' and what they mean. How do you rate your tennis venue?

An inclusive activity means disabled people and non-disabled people get to

mix and socialise

with people they may not have otherwise met. This interaction helps to remove uncertainty and fear when interacting with others and helps to improve confidence as well as communication and social skills (EFDS).

By being inclusive the activity becomes available to

more of the population.

This has many benefits in terms of increased turnover and the ability to access new and different funding streams both locally and nationally.



How inclusive are you?

We can help you become inclusive for the benefit of your members, coaches and tennis venue.

We have a simple and short self-assessment checklist:

Question	Yes	No
Do you / would you integrate disabled people within your existing coaching sessions?		
Do you / would you integrate disabled people within your competitions?		
Would you say your tennis facility is fully accessible, including for wheelchair users?		
Would you say your tennis facility is accessible to most disabled people, excluding wheelchair users?		
Have your coaching workforce attended any disability awareness training?		
Are you aware of the performance pathways for disabled tennis players?		
Are you aware of the Disability Tennis Network Programme? (For more info see page 29-30).		

If you have answered yes to all of these questions you are an inclusive tennis venue, that's excellent! If you are not part of our Network we would love to hear from you. Visit: www.tennisfoundation.org.uk or email: disabilitytennis@tennisfoundation.org.uk for more information.

If you were not sure or answered no to any of these questions we can help you become inclusive for the benefit of your venue, members and coaches.

▶ Breaking down barriers

Tennis is a sport for everyone, all tennis venues should actively encourage disabled and non-disabled people to join in.

Only by listening to your concerns could we create the tools that will help you provide tennis for disabled people in your tennis venue.



1. Inaccessible facilities

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

See page 14 and learn about reasonable and practical adjustments.

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?

See page 18 and learn how easy it is to adapt coaching for disabled players.

3. Lacking confidence

Is my venue welcoming to disabled people? How can we ensure our activities are inclusive?

See page 22 for tips and benefits of being inclusive for all.

4. Expensive equipment

Don't you need expensive equipment for disabled people to play tennis? How can we afford this?

See page 26 and learn about free and inexpensive equipment.



Breaking down barriers: the main concerns

1

Inaccessible tennis facilities.

When tennis venues were asked what their main concerns / considerations were, their number one concern was whether disabled people could access their venue.

The Legal Framework

It's very important that wheelchair users have access to your facility and the adjustments made should be reasonable and practical. Increased awareness of the needs of your users and innovative thinking can lead to making your venue accessible to over 95% of disabled people. These changes are of benefit for all of your members as they will improve the general safety of your tennis venue. Still unsure about what to do? Just ask disabled people what their needs are.

The Equality Act 2010 requires all sports venues, including private clubs, and leisure providers to make reasonable adjustments so that everyone can access their facilities. The key here is the term 'reasonable'. A common misconception is that you have to make your venue wheelchair accessible in order to be inclusive, even if it's an unreasonable cost to do so, but this is not necessarily the case.

It's important that wheelchair users have access to your facility. These adjustments should be **reasonable and practical.**

Wheelchair users make up 6% of the disabled population, therefore you could make your venue accessible to 94% of disabled people without the need for expensive changes.

Inaccessible tennis facilities

Inclusive provision is about ensuring disabled people can turn up and enjoy their experience which means they are more likely to return to your venue. Although having a ramp and an accessible toilet is important, it's not the be all and end all when talking about accessibility. There is support, please visit: www.efds.co.uk

Financial benefits of being accessible:

- 1. Increase membership revenue:** word of mouth is an effective marketing tool and it will soon get round that your venue is one which is welcoming for disabled people. It makes good business sense to welcome as much of the population as possible as this will increase your ability to attract new players and increase your membership revenue.
- 2. Increased funding:** there are also funding opportunities (capital and revenue) which you can apply for to help you with the costs of making your tennis venue accessible for disabled people. A simple Google check of your local area can lead to funding grants to assist you to make improvements to your venue to become fully accessible.
- 3. Create new opportunities:** to recruit, train and find new coaches and / or volunteers to support your club.
- 4. Reach and establish further links:** with the wider community.
- 5. Increase the skills and knowledge of your coaching workforce:** improving the quality of your coaching programme.

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,
Coach at Loughborough
Lawn Tennis Club

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.
- There are performance pathways for talented disabled tennis players. The Tennis Foundation supports deaf, learning disability and wheelchair performance tennis. To find out more visit our website.



➔ Breaking down barriers: the main concerns

2 Lack of coaching knowledge - understanding the adaptations needed for disabled tennis players.

Your coaches worry about their lack of experience or knowledge of coaching disabled players. However tennis is an easily adaptable sport which suits a wide range of ability levels. Our Disability Coaching Resource will give you more information on: impairments, competitions, player pathways and specific coaching information. You can find this on our website.

The EFDS inclusive communications guide is a great resource for more information please see page 25.

Often the key consideration is how to modify your communication methods to suit the individual. For example when coaching deaf / hearing impaired players

it's important to include visual signals

and check with the player what his or her requirements are.

Disabled people can easily play with their friends and family

with some small adaptations,
such as reducing court size and using
slower tennis balls.

**Tennis is fortunate that
it is so adaptable to the
ability of the player.**

Coaching information

Coaches gain qualifications via the LTA coaching pathway. Training on disability awareness and how to integrate disabled people into a coaching session is now embedded within Levels 1, 2 and 3 of the LTA coach education courses. The courses highlight the various adaptations to tennis to suit the ability of the individuals that you are coaching.

Research shows that it's more likely that a disabled person will join in an existing session rather than a specific impairment session. So as a coach, the likely scenario will be that you will adapt your session, as it is less likely that you will have sufficient demand to put on a whole new session of a specific impairment.

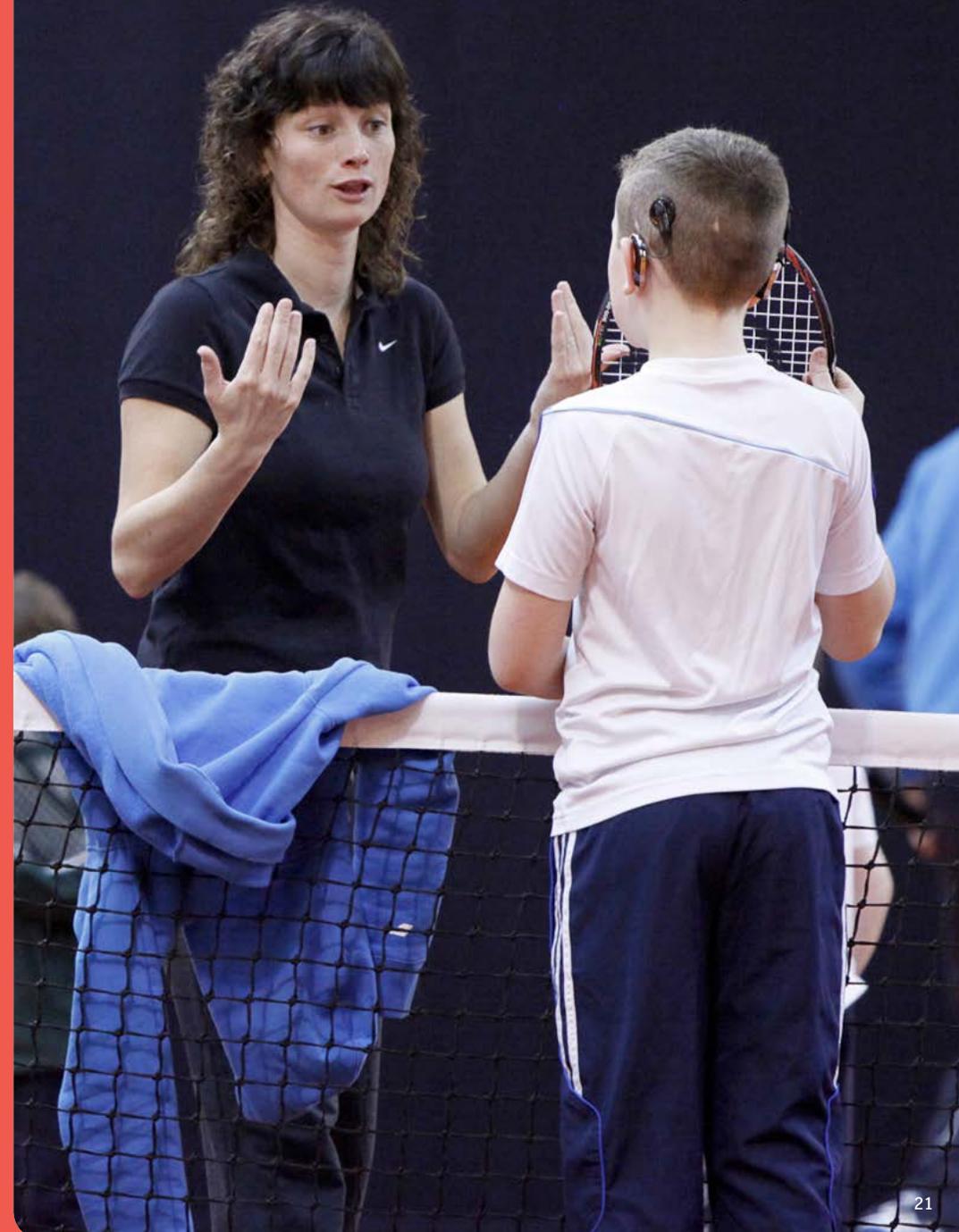
The Functional Approach and STEPS provide a useful framework to follow in preparing tennis sessions for disabled people and those with a long-term limiting illness.

To find out more you can download our Disability Coaching Resource: www.tennisfoundation.org.uk

“I love coaching disabled people as every lesson is different and I’m always thinking of new ideas and teaching styles to help players of all different abilities. Every time a player walks off my court they have a smile on their face and they really appreciate my efforts, which makes my job so much more enjoyable.”

Andy Jeffery,
Head of Disability Tennis,
Sutton Tennis Academy

Functional approach	STEPS (considerations for Inclusive Tennis)
Consider the functional ability of the player	Space - what is required to make the activity successful?
Assess the impact of this on their chosen sporting activity	Task - how can it be adapted to make it appropriate?
Determine how the environment affects a person's functional ability	Equipment - how can it be adapted to make it appropriate?
Look at what other factors can impact on a person's ability to participate	People - are additional coaches or volunteers required?
	Safety - what is required to ensure the session is safe for all participants?



➔ Breaking down barriers: the main concerns

3

Lacking confidence -
understanding motivation.

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.

A good way to promote your tennis venue as inclusive is to consider the needs of disabled people when putting on taster days or open weekends, so that there are opportunities for them to get involved.



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.

Tennis doesn't just offer people the chance to develop their fitness and coordination, but also to build social skills, confidence, self-esteem and independence.

Disabled people want the same things from a club and sport as non-disabled people do.

Increase participation by promoting your tennis offer as inclusive to local disability groups, special schools and other community groups.

Spotlight on Loughborough LTC

Loughborough LTC has been a part of the Tennis Foundation's Disability Tennis Network programme since it started in 2012. This Network is made up of a number of tennis venues within the county working together to provide opportunities for disabled people to play. It is a great example of a venue which gives disabled people the choice to play in impairment specific sessions and / or be integrated into the club's activity programme.

The venue run sessions for wheelchair, learning disability and visually impaired tennis players on a weekly and monthly basis and achieve good participation numbers; 35 weekly and 52 monthly players (Jan 2015). They also integrate their players fully within the club's activities, such as their league matches and social play.

Since joining the programme they have trained their coaching workforce through various disability tennis coach education courses, greatly enhancing the quality of the sessions from both the participant and coach's point of view.

The club has recruited new members and volunteers and increased their club team player base through developing links with the local community. This is key to the success of the programme, by forging links with local disability groups and education centres, including Loughborough University, they have created pathways into opportunities at the club.

All tennis venues can get involved like Loughborough LTC and have a positive impact. If you would like to know more, watch Loughborough in action at www.disabilitytennis.org.uk

"I think people have started to understand that we are doing this because we want to do it and it is part of the bigger picture. The message needs to get out there that these guys can play, they need to be on court with everyone else."

Jonny Rudge,
Coach Loughborough LTC

"You are not made to seem as a bolt on. I'm a member the same as everyone else. Everything is done at the club to make it as easy to be a member here, it's inclusive for everyone."

Carl Sanger, Tennis Player
and Coach Loughborough LTC



Find out more

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

Info on Access for All, Effective Communication & Insight and Research: English Federation of Disability Sport: www.efds.co.uk
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)



Breaking down barriers: the main concerns

4

Cost of equipment – specific needs for disabled tennis players.



The equipment needs of the vast majority of disabled people are the same as non-disabled people: rackets, balls, nets and courts.

Equipment needs

For those who require the use of a sports wheelchair to maximise their ability to play tennis there is support out there to assist them.

- All of our Disability Tennis Networks (pages 29-31) run wheelchair sessions and have wheelchairs available for individual use. You can refer that person to their nearest Network.
- If you want to purchase a sports wheelchair there are many options, an internet search will show you the range of companies selling this product.
- If they want their own chair but financially are unable to buy one, they can apply for grant support from the Dan Maskell Tennis Trust: www.danmaskelltennistrust.org.uk or Whizz Kidz: www.whizz-kidz.org.uk. There may also be local charities that can assist with this.

The Tennis Foundation also has a number of Adapted Equipment Bags which we distribute each year, if you would like to be considered for one of these bags please write to us letting us know about your club and how you would use the equipment bag: disabilitytennis@tennisfoundation.org.uk



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 size of the court
 - Use smaller tennis rackets
 - Change scoring method – for example in Mini Tennis
 - Change the ball used; softer / larger, a sound ball for those with a visual impairment

Getting involved; mobilising Networks

Since 2012, the Tennis Foundation has created 42 Disability Tennis Networks across Great Britain, which are made up of over 140 venues: tennis clubs, parks, indoor tennis centres and community facilities.

The purpose of the Disability Tennis Network programme is to deliver monthly and weekly tennis programmes to increase participation in tennis by disabled people in both an integrated environment and impairment-specific sessions. These programmes include coaching, competitions, outreach sessions, festivals and coach education opportunities, and are developed in partnership with many different local organisations. Our venues are examples of best practice, offering disabled people a choice as to how they want to play tennis.

Any tennis venue can get involved, whether you are a small or large club, leisure facility or a local park there are benefits to being inclusive across the board.

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

Jill Osleger,
Tennis Foundation
National Disability
Development Manager

Did you know ?

The Tennis Foundation provides funding, equipment, advice and training for these Networks. If you would like to join one please contact us at: disability@tennisfoundation.org.uk

Disability tennis is growing!

Tennis Foundation support

The Tennis Foundation supports the Networks in four ways:

1

Providing equipment

All Networks have received adapted equipment bags, wheelchairs and resources to support their participants.

2

Coach education

Networks have been supported through the training of their coaches and to increase their disability knowledge.

3

Funding

Networks receive funding to support their impairment specific sessions, with focus on long - term sustainability and advice on additional funding opportunities.

4

Advice

Networks are supported by the Tennis Foundation Disability Development Managers and the LTA Participation Managers to help guide them through their action plans to ensure targets are successfully met.

Next Steps

Contact your local Tennis Participation Manager, Disability Tennis Development Manager or email us for more info: disabilitytennis@tennisfoundation.org.uk

A 40% increase

in participating tennis venues since the programme started in 2012. Why not be part of this exciting opportunity?

