



#10 Herts Disability Sports Foundation

Leading organisation: Herts Disability Sports Foundation

Country: United Kingdom

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Type of discrimination

Disability Discrimination in Sports

Target group

UK citizens with physical or mental disabilities – specifically working with individuals, groups, schools and businesses

Problem/Solution

The programme was originally established to promote sports development of disability sport across Hertfordshire. This is due to the fact that disabled adults are less likely to be physically active than non-disabled people, with only 45% of disabled adults found to be active in England. Having more physical activity for disabled adults can increase physical health, mental health, and overall wellbeing.

This practice acts with disabled peoples and not around them. Instead of creating programs without the input of disabled peoples, disabled people are directly interacted with. Their needs are kept in mind, such as when the dangers of COVID-19 are addressed through solely virtual workout sessions. This Foundation has supported inclusive training and coach development opportunities for people within sports.

Objective

The objective is to help disabled peoples find more easily accessible physical activity. The wish for everyone to feel valued equally and included with the belief that everyone's quality of life can be improved through involving yourself in sport. They aim to provide and support other individuals to provide

opportunities in sport which can be accessed by everyone regardless of their disability. This participation in sport can take the form of physically playing, volunteering or coaching.

Activities

The Foundation offers open sessions which can be accessed easily by anyone with a disability, as well as their family/friends. Although these sessions are numerous, sports and activities such as archery, doughnutting and bell boating have been held in the past. Moreover, the foundation has a desire to further advance education around disability sport, such as training and development, focusing on promoting social inclusion and equality. The organisation claims to offer a fully inclusive service which tailors the work around the individual, understanding their needs as a priority. As well as daily activity, they run holiday programmes and corporate away days. Of the staff at HDSP, 50% of their team has a disability, which ensures that there is a true understanding of individual needs. The practice, primarily used throughout COVID-19 and quarantine, was virtual physical activity sessions, which was very popular with people with disabilities. Employees were also sent to training sessions to learn firsthand about the programs disabled people would go through when joining with the HDSF.

Results

The developments that have been made across the years thanks to this organisation have had a profoundly positive impact on disability sport inclusion in the UK. Their links and funding from Sports England has ensured the sourcing of necessary equipment and training which has continued to inspire more and more disabled people to become involved with sports. ➔

Moreover, they have greatly increased their income through more grants and fundraising carried out over the last few years which has enabled their organisation to grow, increasing the access to equipment and activities for all. Despite the Covid situation, there was a 31% increase of disabled participants over the year 2020-2021, which is impressive when considering quarantine requirements. This was mainly due to the increase in accessibility of online sessions, with 11,152 attendances at virtual events.

Top tips

- The project has clearly benefited from financial aid, so it would be worth bearing in mind how this could be sourced. Getting in contact with local authorities to ensure that there is sufficient support in place to access the equipment required and having the manpower/volunteers to undergo the necessary training.

- Another key point with regards to varying the programme would be hiring more immigrant workers, or having current Red Deportees employees go through the Red Deportees programs firsthand, in order to give more context to the types of programs and changes that immigrants would need in Red Deportees sports programs.

More

- Website <https://hdsf.co.uk/about-us/charity-policies-and-documents/>
- Report <https://hdsf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2020-2021-signed-annual-report.pdf>

