



Strategy

**activity
alliance**

**disability
inclusion
sport**

An effective strategy provides a clear roadmap and guiding principles to achieve your organisation's long-term goals.

It also sets organisational culture and behaviours. Creating a well-informed strategy sets a strong foundation for improvement and is a great place to start your inclusion journey.



What makes your strategy inclusive?

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Most physical activity sector strategies set out ambitions to increase participation levels amongst under-represented groups - including disabled people and people with long-term health conditions. However, the most effective strategies also outline an explicit and genuinely inclusive approach to tackling inequalities. These plans:



Are sustainable, linking positive outcomes for disabled people and people with long-term health conditions to your organisation's vision, behaviours, and resources.



Are evidence based, using insight and co-production to ensure a person-centred and demand-led approach.



Go beyond participation targets to include disabled people and people with long-term health conditions within all aspects of business leadership, development, and service delivery.



Take an organisation-wide and partnership approach, enabling diverse teams to come together behind shared outcomes.



Embrace and prioritise inclusion for everyone at all levels, from Board members or centralised teams to regional and locality-based colleagues.



Value disabled people and people with long-term health conditions for their ability to strengthen many areas of your business. This includes building a strong brand and successful workforce, to effective procurement and programme design.



Celebrate successes to build confidence and organisational learning.



Influence others through inclusive behaviours, partnerships, and policies.



Think about your current strategy and ask yourself:

- What is your organisation's commitment to tackling inequalities?
- Is your business plan co-produced with disabled people and people with long-term health conditions and based on local needs and priorities?
- Is it clear what inclusion looks like for your customers and business?

Developing an inclusive strategy

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The best way to create an inclusive strategy is to take an inclusive approach to its development. Here are some areas to consider:

Identify needs and priorities

Consider your organisation's existing assets and expertise, and ask yourself:

- What insights does your customer data hold about the experiences of disabled people and people with long-term health conditions?
- Can your financial performance, complaints procedure, staff diversity or other KPIs help you identify successes and barriers?
- Where are your knowledge gaps?



Top tip: Drawing on disabled people's demographics or insight from organisations like **Sport England** and **Activity Alliance** can aid your understanding. Local authority and health commissioning plans may also be useful to identify inclusion priorities.

Take a whole organisation approach

You need to harness your full workforce to develop a strategy that is meaningful and owned by all. Ask yourself:

- How can you challenge and support your teams to proactively identify and embed more inclusive approaches?
- Who within your workforce has inclusion expertise, through their role or lived experience as a disabled person?



Top tip: It is not unusual, particularly within larger organisations, for positive change to be happening within individual facilities or services. Embrace this and use it as a tool to inform and shape strategic planning for the wider business.

Use partnerships and lived experience to co-produce

To be truly inclusive disabled people and people with long-term health conditions should be fully involved in your strategy's development and delivery. Think about:

- Whether you can partner with disability organisations to achieve shared outcomes.
- Consider how you could work together to co-produce effective solutions.
- Could an inclusive advisory group add value to your approach?



Top tip: Be honest about your organisation's aspirations and challenges. Successfully demonstrating your commitment to inclusion will help external partners to become your allies and advocates. They will also help to keep you accountable for your inclusion goals.



Truly embed inclusion

Inclusion should be identified as a priority throughout your overall strategy. Start by thinking about how it can be embedded as a core principle across all business activities.

It's likely you're engaged with a complex mix of local priorities and national outcomes, balancing these with commercial and contractual needs. You may be involved with public health, active travel or climate change agendas for example.



Top tip: Ask yourself how does the inclusion of disabled people and people with long-term health conditions fit into these conversations?



Continue to review and improve

Once developed, your strategy needs to be communicated in an accessible format, both internally and externally.

[Activity Alliance's inclusive communication resources](#)

can support this. It is important that your commitment to inclusion is embedded across all future business and service improvement plans. Operational procedures and success measures should also reflect your inclusive approach. Beyond increasing participation levels amongst disabled people and people with long-term health conditions, critical measures may include:



Quality of service



Revenue generation



Retention rates



Workforce diversity



New partnerships

Embedding inclusion takes time. Don't forget to draw on the inclusion expertise you've built up to regularly review and refine your approaches.

Useful resources

Activity Alliance has a suite of resources and services that can support you with developing an inclusive strategy.

- Our **Lead programme** supports providers and organisations to self-assess their offer for disabled people under a range of key themes. These include strategy, leadership, community engagement, and people management.
- Our **engagement resources** cover a range of topics around effectively engaging disabled people.



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This factsheet is part of our leisure resource.

View the full resource on our website:

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This document is available in Word format. Please contact us if you need support. Activity Alliance is the operating name for the English Federation of Disability Sport. Registered Charity no. 1075180.