

# People

Creating an inclusive club culture



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Imagine someone with disability who has never been part of a club before. They have always loved sport but never truly felt like they belonged. They may be looking to compete or just a place to have fun, make friends, and connect with like-minded people.

Now imagine they enter your club for the first time. What would they experience? Would they be greeted warmly and feel welcome? Would someone help them find their way around or explain how things work?

That first impression matters. If a person feels unwelcome, they may never return. But if your club takes the time to connect, listen, and adapt, you can create a sense of belonging that lasts a lifetime.





# **Inclusion starts and thrives with people.**

**It is about attitudes, behaviours, and the culture that every coach, volunteer, and committee member helps to shape. When inclusion is embedded at every level of the club, it becomes part of everyday life, not an add-on or afterthought.**

# Building inclusion through people

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**People with lived experience of disability bring valuable insight and leadership to clubs. Creating opportunities for all people to take part in ways that work for them helps drive change from within.**

That could mean supporting someone to volunteer, mentoring them to take on a committee role, or encouraging them to share their experiences to guide decision-making and practical change.



**First impressions count! Make sure new members are greeted warmly and shown around by a friendly face.**

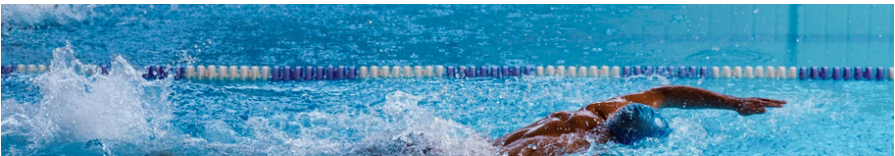
To truly foster inclusion, your club needs buy-in from everyone: committee members, coaches, volunteers, players, and their families. Providing disability awareness and social inclusion training will help build confidence, compassion, and consistency across all interactions.

Change doesn't happen overnight, but every small action adds up. Start conversations, listen with curiosity, and look for opportunities to remove barriers. Over time, these small steps create a strong foundation for an inclusive culture where everyone feels valued and supported.



## 10 tips to make your club culture more inclusive

- 1 Involve people with lived experience of disability in your committee or advisory group.** Be proactive: reach out, provide support, and create mentoring pathways to build confidence and participation.
- 2 Make inclusion a standing item on every committee meeting agenda.** Assign a committee member or an inclusion officer to lead this area and keep the momentum going.
- 3 Invest in disability inclusion training for coaches, volunteers, and committee members.** Encourage open conversations about inclusion and ensure everyone knows it's part of their role, not just someone else's responsibility. Contact your SSA, local government, or Inclusion Solutions to find out how you can get support.




- 4 Set clear expectations around behaviour.** Foster a respectful club culture where offensive or dismissive behaviour is addressed fairly and promptly. Psychological safety builds trust and belonging.
- 5 Empower coaches to be inclusive leaders.** Encourage them to focus on fun, connection, and personal growth, not just competition. Adapt training activities to meet different needs and recognise that participation can look different for everyone.
- 6 Be clear and flexible with roles and commitments.** Offer volunteering opportunities that range from one-off events to regular roles, and make these visible on your website or social media. This helps people choose involvement that suits their capacity and comfort level.



**Ask, don't assume.  
A quick conversation  
about how someone wants  
to get involved can prevent  
misunderstandings later.**



- 7 Provide structured onboarding and support.** A simple induction process paired with a buddy or mentor can make a huge difference for someone new to your club.
- 8 Represent diversity in your communications.** Feature stories, photos, and testimonials from people with disability involved in your club. Representation helps others see what is possible and feel that they belong.



**Buddy up! Pair new members or volunteers with a supportive teammate to help them settle in and feel welcome.**



**Small roles count too!  
One-off volunteering or  
casual involvement can  
open the door to  
ongoing participation.**

- 9 Create feedback opportunities.** Encourage members to share ideas or concerns about inclusion through surveys, suggestion boxes, or informal chats. Include options where people can share feedback anonymously. Showing that you listen and act on feedback builds trust.
  
- 10 Celebrate contributions that advance inclusion.** Acknowledge individuals, both people with disability and inclusion champions, whose efforts strengthen accessibility and belonging. Share their stories through awards, newsletters, or social media. Meaningful visibility can inspire others to participate and help build an inclusive culture.







# inclusion solutions

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