

How to communicate and promote your sport to young disabled people.

A common issue when trying to promote sport to young disabled people can often be how do we find them in the first place?

It is impossible to come up with a hard and fast rule but here are some tried and tested methods to reach young disabled people in your locality.

1. Contact your Partnership Development Manager (PDM)

Many disabled children are based in a mainstream school.

Almost all schools in the country are part of a School Sport Network. One Partnership Development Manager (PDM) oversees the work of this group and they are usually based at a local Sports College. The communication is usually to the PDM, who will forward to their School Sport Co-ordinators (SSCos), based at local secondary schools, who if relevant forward to their Primary Link Teachers (PLTs).

A good explanation and chart of the communication channel is given on the Youth Sport Trust website: www.youthsporttrust.org
Click on 'Our Core Work' and then 'Specialist Sports Colleges'.

In many cases there is also a '*Special Schools, school sport co-ordinator*' (SSSCo) or a '*School Sport Co-ordinator, Inclusion*'. These will be pleased to share communication from you, and are usually working on their own database of local disability sporting contacts. Ask your PDM if there is this local person and ensure you make direct contact with them.

To find the name and contact of your PDM either ring the Youth Sport Trust or ask your County Sport Partnership, or your regional EFDS manager.

2. Contact your Advisory Teaching Service

All local authorities have a specialist teaching services team which offers support to children with 'special educational needs' in the education system. Their contact details are usually hidden in the education services of the county council website.

Try these search tools:

key words: '[Devon](#) (or your county / local / borough authority) advisory teaching services'

key words: support and advisory teachers

Both these options work in the vast majority of cases.

An alternative is to log on to your local authority website and search through:

Education

Special Needs / Special Educational Needs

Then the information is usually listed according to impairment group: physically disabled, hearing & visually impaired and learning difficulty / disability.

You may also see 'communication and interaction' this is essentially a reference to autism and related areas.

Explain to the person that you have an activity to promote, you are not expecting any personal details but would like to know how they communicate with disabled children and their families. There may be a regular newsletter or bulletin that you could submit information in, or they may offer to send some information for you. They should be able to tell you the numbers of children they support and could probably tell you the schools in which they work.

Fingers crossed you get an advisor with a strong sporting interest!

3. Planning Database for disabled children – Social Services

This is another area where there are slight differences between authorities. It is a requirement of the Children's Act 1989 that Social Services keep a register of disabled children, to enable consultation and aid effective planning of future services.

A search through your Local Authority / county / borough website will make reference to this.

Try key words search as: 'register of disabled children' or 'disabled children's planning database' along with the name of your Local or County Authority.

Again, some send twice yearly newsletters that you could contribute to and some may have an email communication link. You will not be able to access the information yourself but you will be able to send to someone for distribution.

The register has to be held by Social Services but parents voluntarily contribute the details of their son / daughter, so it can sometimes be only a small list. Equally some times the register is only for those children who have an educational statement – there are differences across the country. Sometimes this information is held by the Primary Care Trust (PCT)

4. Primary Care Trust (PCT)

Often Primary Care Trusts have officers that are responsible for linking with Sports Development teams. They would also hold their own register, liaise with parents and groups and may produce a newsletter. It can though

sometimes be difficult to track down the correct person in what is a very large organization.

Try finding your local Primary Care Trust and search for 'disability sport' or 'leisure', some have directories for example: 'Directory of health & social support for..... area.' This will then provide a whole host of disability charities and organizations for you to make contact with.

5. Community Paediatric physiotherapy team.

These are a great local contact to have but tracking them down can be a little tricky. Try logging on to your local PCT website and searching for 'community physiotherapy service'

You could also ring the general PCT helpline number or you may strike it lucky and find an A to Z of services on the website.

An alternative way may be to speak to a contact in a special school or someone you know from a family with a disabled child.

These teams will be keen to pass on appropriate information to the children that they see often on a regular basis.

6. Carers Centres

Try a google search using your area / county / town name and 'carers centre'. If you find the right person you may be able to submit information which will be communicated to a register of carers in the locality perhaps via a newsletter.

7. County Childrens Information Services

Try a google search using county / area / town name and 'Childrens Information Services' You may get an excellent local contact with whom you can liaise and submit information for newsletters and / or directories. This information is held on the local authority or council website.

8. Special Schools.

Try a web search using the key words: '[Devon](#) (your county or local authority name) special schools'

Be aware though that sometimes you will be presented with a list of Specialist Schools / Colleges and this is quite different!

Again the contact details of schools will usually be found on the education pages of Local Authority / district websites.

You will need to make contact with the school and find out the person in charge of school sport. Don't think that a general email or flyer posted will

get to the right person, persist! Ask for a name, when you find the sports person they will be pleased to hear from you.

9. Contact your County Sport Partnership

All counties have a County Sport Partnership and you should already have a contact for yours. Ask to speak to the person responsible for disability / equality in the Partnership.

10. Contact your Local Authority Sports Development Officer.

Details available from your Local Authority website and / or your County Sport Partnership office / website.

11. Contact your Regional EFDS Manager

Contact your EFDS Regional Manager who will have county disability contacts and may be able to advise you of local disability contacts. Contact details of EFDS Regional Managers are found on: www.efds.co.uk
If you are running a county wide event we will also be able to put information on our Events website. www.disabilitysport.org.uk

12. Contact local disability groups / charities.

Look on the EFDS website for impairment specific national disability sports organizations who may be able to help you communicate information.
Some organizations have development officers such as:
Wheelpower, (sports organisation for wheelchair users)
British Blind Sport (for visually impaired)
UK Deaf Sport (for hearing impaired)
Mencap Sport (learning disabilities)
CP Sport (Cerebral Palsy)
Dwarf Athletics and many others.

13. Press Release

A press release in the local paper is a very effective way of reaching out to young people. You should submit an article about your club / group / event and include a photograph which will reach and appeal to parents. Many people have commented that a positive photo clearly showing a disabled person enjoying their sport sends out a positive message that this is for their child. Make sure you include clear details of how people can get in touch with you.