



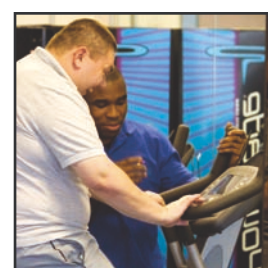
Gym Buddy Scheme Fact Sheet

Introduction

The English Federation of Disability Sport Operating Company (EFDS OC) received funding through the Department of Health's Section 64 Grant to support the development of a 'Gym Buddy Scheme'. The Gym Buddy Scheme provides disabled people with volunteer support to enable them to better access physical activity in a gym environment.

This scheme currently supports Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) accredited Sites to recruit, train and support Gym Buddies. A Gym Buddy Scheme Resource booklet and CD Rom has been developed as a toolkit to empower IFI sites to do this. The Gym Buddy Scheme Resource and training on delivery of the Scheme for IFI sites has been delivered in a series of regional workshops

The resource is also available to those IFI sites that have not been able to attend a workshop and other external organisations upon request.



Aims and Objectives of the Gym Buddy Scheme

The purpose of the Gym Buddies Scheme is to provide additional support to disabled users and therefore improve the service provision provided by IFI sites. This scheme is a bolt onto the IFI principles of inclusion and looks at breaking further potential social and psychological barriers to participation faced by disabled users. This will be achieved through the motivation and support of a Gym Buddy and gym users will be more likely to be retained as members in supporting each other's fitness goals.

The Gym Buddy's Role

- to accompany and/or work out alongside disabled user(s) within the fitness suite and provide additional support e.g. adjusting weight stacks/ start positions and programming consoles etc.,
- to provide additional support within the fitness suite during timetabled supervised sessions or as and when is convenient for the disabled person and Gym Buddy
- to motivate, encourage, mentor and befriend a disabled person and support them in achieving their fitness goals
- to help breakdown barriers to participation for disabled people i.e. access, communication, social and psychological.

Gym Buddy's will not be expected to:

- lift and carry or transfer disabled users onto any of the fitness equipment
- provide transport or assist disabled user to change or personal care
- prescribe exercise
- assist with or administer medication

Gym Buddies will be an integral part of the gym team and will receive support and recognition throughout the process.

Recruitment of Gym Buddies

The Year of the Volunteer 2005 has provided opportunities to broker existing volunteers who have an interest in working in sport and/or with disabled people.

The recruitment of volunteers for IFI sites is networked both nationally and locally, linking with existing 'volunteer involving' organisations which include:

- Schools, Colleges and Universities
- Employee Supported Volunteering
- Sports Coaching Leadership Award Schemes
- National Governing Bodies of Sport and National Disability Sport Organisations
- Disability Organisations and Charities
- Existing Gym Members
- Volunteer Centres/ Bureaus and websites; www.do-it.org.uk

Training Gym Buddies

Gym Buddies will receive Disability Equality Training and an advanced gym induction. The Disability Equality Training is either carried out by the Lead Officer at the IFI Site or via online training linked to www.efds.co.uk

If you would like any further information about the Gym Buddy Scheme and those IFI sites taking part in the Scheme please contact:-

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