

# HOW?

## Involving disabled people in your organisation

A general wish to be more inclusive, backed up by legislation such as the Disability Discrimination Act is causing organisations to think seriously about how they are accessible to disabled people either wishing to access their service, or get involved in service delivery e.g. by being a volunteer or part of a management committee etc.

The purpose of this short article is to get you thinking about positive changes you can make to become more inclusive. It is not just aimed at large, funded organisations but also at small groups active in our local communities.

It will look at ways you can involve disabled people in service development and delivery. Too often disabled people are seen solely as “service users” or within the context of “disability groups” - in reality disabled people also want to contribute to the Parish Magazine, organise local events, and be involved with the local kids’ football team....

A useful way of considering this is to highlight some of the barriers that might be preventing disabled people getting involved with your group or organisation.

### Physical access

the first one people always think of...

- ✓ Think about where you hold your meetings – is the room on ground level or is there a lift if it’s not?
- ✓ Easy to find?
- ✓ Is it well lit?
- ✓ Is there designated parking?
- ✓ Do you cover travel expenses? What if public transport is inaccessible – would you cover a taxi fare?

### Access to information

- ✓ Are your publicity materials clear and in plain language?
- ✓ Do you have large print copies? (font size 18 – an easy thing to do straight away!)
- ✓ Do you have Braille copies, or do you know where to get them from should somebody ask (e.g. DCIL)?

- ✓ Do you read out the minutes at the start of every meeting?
- ✓ And stick to a clear agenda?

### Joining in

- ✓ In meetings do people know that they will be given time to finish what they want to say?
- ✓ Is there a hearing loop system, or if not can you hire one from somewhere (e.g. the CVS)? Do you know how to use it?
- ✓ Do you know where to find a Sign Language Interpreter?

### Recruitment

- ✓ Where do you advertise for volunteers?
- ✓ In your publicity is it obvious that you will meet people’s access requirements?

There are two things you may have been thinking while reading the above; one is that a lot of the changes would benefit everyone – how often have you been faced with complicated information about some organisation or other which even after reading it several times still can’t figure out what they do? Or got lost trying to find some obscure meeting place? Or attended a meeting which jumps about from subject to subject, and not been able to contribute because you’re not quite sure what they’re on about?

The second thing might be “well that’s all very well but it looks rather expensive”. The easiest long term solution is to **assume** that you **will** have disabled people wanting to be involved in your organisation (because your group is great and why wouldn’t everybody want to be involved?!) and when you apply for funding for new projects or running costs, include budgets for taxi fares, to hire a sign language interpreter, to produce a couple of Braille copies of your leaflets or minutes. It is not an unreasonable request to a funding body – if your organisation wants to reflect the community it is part of, it comes with the territory (quite literally!). Short term, you can apply for funding to “widen your service”, “reduce social exclusion” – all positive stuff!



**HOW?** Guides are written by High Peak CVS, for use by voluntary and community groups across the High Peak.

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There are a number of places where you can get further information, advice and support.

- The **Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living** is currently operating a project in the High Peak specifically to work with organisations to involve disabled people in what they do (contact Siobhan Gilbertson, Phone/Minicom 01433 623 596, email [Siobhan@dcil.org.uk](mailto:Siobhan@dcil.org.uk))
- The **Disability Rights Commission** can offer advice and guidance on the Disability Discrimination Act (Phone 0845 7622 633)
- You can contact your local **Access** group – currently there are groups for Buxton, Glossop, Hope Valley, New Mills and District, and Countryside Access.
- **High Peak CVS** can loan equipment such as hearing loops, and also have funding available for inclusion resources if you are running your own training – for example, if you need Braille handouts or a signer.

Thanks to Siobhan Gilbertson, DCIL, for writing this HOW? Guide



## Who are we?

*High Peak CVS works to ensure that local voluntary and community groups can access as much support, advice and information as possible. We help groups in many different areas, such as funding, charity registration, practical services including printing, training and links to training and with legal issues. We have resources, including a meeting room, computers and OHP for use by groups.*

**To find out how we can help you, please contact us on 01663 735 350 or email [hello@highpeakcvs.org.uk](mailto:hello@highpeakcvs.org.uk)**  
Visit us at [www.highpeakcvs.org.uk](http://www.highpeakcvs.org.uk)