

About Me

To develop the Sport Inclusion Disability Charter, we spoke to people with disabilities and parents of children with disabilities from all across Ireland. What they told us formed the five elements of this Charter. However, alongside that, they shared so much more information with us; information which will help you gain a better understanding of what it is really like for a person with a disability to be active in Ireland.

Benefits for me

There are many reasons why people with disabilities want to be active. These can vary from physical benefits, improved functioning, and mental health benefits among others. However the social aspect of being active was the most significant reason mentioned by those we spoke to.

- “The social side of it is so important, to feel that you’re part of a team. Fulfilment, empowerment. You’re part of something.”

It takes effort

Participating in or attending any activities can often require significant effort and planning. This may involve transport, cost, additional equipment, personal care needs, Personal Assistant or family support. Being cognisant and understanding of this is essential.

- “It was like climbing Mount Everest. It’s often those logistics. You can’t just go out the door and go running. You can’t just hop in your car and drive to the training. You have to find an infrastructure to get you around the place.”

What you might not know

Some people may experience different issues as a result of their disability. Depending on the disability, this may include pain, reduced mobility, or reduced independence for example. If someone has acquired a disability, or their disability has changed over time, the changes that have come about in that person’s life can be significant. Although you cannot directly impact this, being understanding of this, and how that can affect someone, is very important.

- “For me my injuries have... emasculated me. You lose your sense of being a man because I have to watch my wife doing the jobs that I should be doing, bringing in the fuel, stuff like that. Feeling emasculated is a horrible thing. You just don’t... There’s no way out of it.”

About my parents

Parents of children with disabilities work very hard to provide for their children across all aspects of their lives. This effort can be significant and should be considered with your interactions.

- “As a parent, I’m constantly grovelling, whether it’s the hospital, a club, his school... It really takes its toll on you because, apart from the fact that you’re dealing and you’re living your everyday life with a child in your family with a disability, which is not easy in itself, you have all those other challenges. It would just be nice if there was even one aspect of their lives that wasn’t so much of a chore.”

No two people are the same. Please ensure your first step is to speak to the person – understand their abilities and experiences and never assume.