

Volunteers: your questions answered - 7

*This series of information sheets has been developed to help you recruit, train and retain volunteers, both disabled and able-bodied, to support sailing programmes which include disabled people. To safeguard yourself and your volunteers, please ensure that you also read the series entitled **Volunteers - essential information**, available from www.rya.org.uk/AboutRYA/RYSailability/Bestpracticemanual.htm*

Overcoming barriers - physical

Bear in mind that disabled people may have different needs because of constraints beyond their control. Their lifestyle may rely on public transport, or they may have to work around appointments for their medical or physical support. Their income may be less than others', and their money may have to be used on items more essential than volunteering. This sheet focuses on removing the **physical** barriers that your club may have, and which are preventing disabled people from becoming volunteers.

Access and facilities

Many disabled people may find difficulty with getting to your club at all. If they do not have their own transport, they are dependent on other people, or public transport which is not often accessible and may be expensive. Even assuming that they are able to get as far as the front door, will they have full access to the club? Consider access to club buildings, showers, toilets and the bar as well as launching and recovery facilities. Many alterations can be easy to implement at a very small cost. Please see the leaflet [Making your premises more welcoming to disabled people](#) and also our [guidelines](#) on how to adapt toilets/showers/pontoons/boats, put ramps in etc.

Help and assistance

The quality of experience for everyone involved will be greatly enhanced if you appoint volunteers who are disability awareness trained, enthusiastic and informed.

Cost

It is a fact that a high percentage of disabled people are unemployed, so the equipment and clothing necessary for sailing activities may be beyond the budget of some disabled people. Explore and emphasise ways in which sailing can be made affordable.

Transport

Many sailing clubs are not on regular bus or train routes. Explore ways to ease this situation. Can you use the local community bus? Can volunteers organise a rota and offer lifts on a shared basis?

Availability and regular commitment

The constraints of everyday life may make a regular commitment difficult for some.

Communication

Some disabled people will be dissuaded from applying if they cannot access the recruitment process due to lack of alternative formats eg Braille, large print, easy read, or British Sign Language (BSL).