



Hold your own sports event

mencap
presents

**LEARNING
DISABILITY
WEEK 2019**
17-23 June

Holding a sports event during Learning Disability Week (LD week) is a great opportunity for people to experience something new, take part in a competition or be active in a community setting – this can encourage people to take up something new on a regular basis. To start with, you should find out what different sports and activities clubs you have in your area. The chance to increase membership, promote the club and show-off their facilities may be a great incentive for them to be involved during LD week. Involving these clubs will also help ensure someone will have somewhere to continue to participate should they enjoy it.

You should also research what your participants or group want.

Consider questions such as:

- What are your audience's interests?
- What is the age of your participants?
- How do you ensure that all activities are relevant for all abilities?

Some examples of events you could run during the week include:

Taster sessions

These give people the opportunity to try new activities they may not have done before. Trying a number of different sports will create a positive and fun atmosphere as people discover something they wouldn't have even considered previously. Try and have a mix of traditional sports activities (such as football, rugby or cycling) and some smaller, less traditional sports such as softball, boccia, kinball which may provide a different and unique experience. Work with local clubs to help provide coaches, volunteers and opportunities for people to continue playing the sport after, if they really enjoy it.

Competitions

You could run a sports competition during the week. There are a number of different ways to do this, but first decide what the sport and format will be.

Some questions to help decide this include:

- Do you want a winner?
- Do you want as many opportunities for people to play as possible?
- Which sports format best suits your needs (small-sided, doubles, individual etc.)?
- What facilities/equipment do you have available?

After considering these questions you will need to consider the venue, time available, how many people will take part and the age and ability level of the competitors.

If you decide to hold some competitive games then you should decide whether you want to declare a winner, give out medals and certificates at the end, or whether people can just play as much as they please.

If it's a team game are you going to invite actual teams or form them on the day?

Could you include games people could play as a family, like rounders or croquet for instance? Whatever competition format you go for, remember to set a time limit on games so that they

don't go on all night. You will also need well briefed volunteers and officials who will ensure everything runs smoothly on the day. The officials will need to be provided with rules, they need to be aware of ability levels of participants and all other relevant documentation to ensure everything runs safely and efficiently.

Unified sessions

Another option is to partner with a club or leisure centre to run some unified activity. This could mean partnering with a local football club and inviting them to participate in a mixed ability match with your group or participants. There should be an emphasis on fun and inclusion with members from both groups socialising and spending time together. You should start conversations with local clubs or leisure centres by pointing out this is a fantastic opportunity to attract new members and to promote their club.

Join existing activities

Finally, there may be plenty of activities happening during the week which you could participate in. Projects such as Parkrun and Goodgym have public access sessions which you could bring a group or participants along to engage in the activity. Search for opportunities in your area and make sure you contact the provider first to let them know of any access requirements and your ideas.

Raise awareness of your event

You can help raise awareness of your event by reaching out to your local media (newspapers, television, radio and their social media channels) asking if they can share your event details with their audiences. It is an effective and cheap way of ensuring everyone is aware of your event.

Promote your event using the hashtag **#LDWeek19** on social media too!