

## **What are reasonable adjustments?**

Making reasonable adjustments means that we do what we can to remove the barriers that disabled people can face.

The Girlguides have some really good resources in relation to including disabled people. [Learn more about ways to include disabled people](#) and download their [good practice guidelines for including disabled young members](#).

The *Equality Act 2010* requires us to consider:

### **Ways of doing things that might put a disabled person at a disadvantage:**

These are the formal or informal rules that can make it difficult for a disabled person to get involved. We need to make sure the rules we have are not unintentionally creating a barrier and excluding people. For example, saying that a disabled volunteer doesn't count in adult/child ratios.

### **Physical barriers:**

Things in the environment or location, like in the unit meeting space, can be barriers for disabled people. We need to make adjustments, such as changing the way we use the space, so that we remove these barriers.

### **Providing something that would remove the disadvantage:**

We may need to provide equipment or a service (like one to one support, or an interpreter) to make it easier for disabled people to get involved.

Make sure that parents/carers are aware that we rely on volunteers to operate units, and that the majority our activities are run by volunteers. So we may not be able to meet the same support standards as the young person's school, for example.

There may be times where you can't reasonably make adjustments for some young people because of cost or need for additional volunteers. Every effort should be made if it is deemed reasonable to do so. But some young people may have needs that can't be accommodated, and this is ok.

## **Involving Young People**

Talk to any new or current disabled members in your unit. Try to find out about the barriers they experience. Discuss what changes they would find most useful and what has worked for them in the past. For young members you could also ask parents/carers what has worked well before. They could have some creative ideas that can help.

### **Ask them to tell you about their impairment:**

Their illness or medical condition and how it affects their normal activities. You don't need to know all the details but knowing if it's constant or changes and how it affects them at cadets can help you create the right plan.

### **Ask what they can do with the right help:**

Don't ask what they are unable to do. Where appropriate, ask what can be painful or tiring to do or what they would need some help with. You can ask questions like: These are the sorts of things we do in cadets... what do we need to think about so you can join in? We'd like to take the unit camping, which involves these things... what do we need to have in place so you can come along? If you're are getting anxious or upset, would you like a quiet space to yourself? What would that look like?

### **Work together:**

Make the changes with them. Ask for their ideas and if they can tell you what has worked for them before. Share any ideas you have and check if they think will work. Remember, it's not their responsibility to make these changes.

Use a care plan template to write your plans down and agree with everyone involved what will happen.

Be positive and honest. With a positive attitude and a flexible mindset, you can achieve a lot! Be open about what will be difficult to do, but always work on ideas for next steps.

Don't make assumptions. Remember that what worked as an adjustment in one place, like at school, won't always work well or be possible in cadets where we have fewer resources and are run by volunteers. Also remember that people are different. Just because a certain adjustment worked in one case, it doesn't mean it will be suitable for a different person who has same, or similar, impairment. Talk together about previous experiences and how you can adapt them to work in guiding.

Keep a record. It's useful to keep short notes of any ideas tried, conversations you had, and what has worked well.

It might also be necessary to complete an Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the action you have considered and decide to take or decided not to take in line with the Public Sector Equality Duty which is s149 of the Equality Act 2010.

### **For example:**

A cadet with autism, Sinita, finds change very difficult. She's just moved schools and is now due to move up to cadets from junior cadets. She's worried about making this change and finds it distressing.

After talking with her, her parents and other volunteers, you decide to let her stay in the junior cadets for a bit longer and slowly introduce the idea of moving up. Within a few months Sinita has started to attend some cadet meetings. She visited at the start of their session first, then did a full meeting accompanied by a volunteer she knows. Finally, she feels ready to move up sections. You have made reasonable adjustments for Sinita's transition.

### **Making a Plan**

The law requires us to consider and make changes in advance to include disabled people. Don't wait for someone to ask you to make a change.

Think about the experience for people with a visual impairment, a hearing impairment, a mobility impairment or a learning disability. We need to make adaptations for our current members and volunteers but should aim to remove barriers for anyone who would like to get involved or might visit the unit.

- When looking at venues, think about the physical space and how people might use it. Is there an accessible toilet? Does it have a loop system installed?
- Before buying new equipment consider how a disabled person might use it. Would another model be easier?
- If planning a trip, does the venue allow a disabled member to have similar experience as the rest of the group? For example, could they share a room if they wanted to?
- Before using any resources consider if printing out a larger handout or using a different colour might help
- When making signs think about using icons and symbols as well as text. Some units use pictorial signs for drink, biscuits, toilet and big crosses to mark the no-go areas like cupboards, kitchen etc.
- Share what works. When new volunteers join your unit, let them know what you've done to make adjustments for your members.

### **If someone raises a concern**

Any worry or concern about the lack of access or failure to make a reasonable adjustment should be taken seriously. Sometimes this can be raised informally. But it could be raised formally as a complaint.

Remember that disabled people can take legal action if an organisation fails to make a reasonable adjustment. If you need any advice about managing a concern contact the

### **Adapt your programme so that everyone can take part**

These hints and tips will help you to make small changes to make VPC available to all young people.

Think **RECIPES**

- **R**ules
- **E**quipment
- **C**hanges to speed and force
- **I**nstructions
- **P**ractice
- **E**nvironment
- **S**kills

#### **Rules**

Can the rules be simplified or relaxed?

#### **Equipment**

Can you change the equipment? You could use bigger targets, soft balls or equipment that makes a noise.

What equipment is necessary to make an activity happen? If a cadet needs different equipment for a craft or activity, it may make them feel less self-conscious if all the cadets are given this equipment rather than singling anyone out.

#### **Changes to speed and force**

Do cadets have to run to play the game? Can cadets move in a different way across the space? For a craft, could it be completed over multiple weeks? Consider whether you could have multiple activities happening at once in case some cadets finish quicker than others.

#### **Instructions**

What is the simplest way to explain an activity? Try using visual prompts, such as flashcards, to make things clearer. How about getting the cadets to explain the activity to each other? Remember, it doesn't matter if cadets make mistakes or don't understand.

#### **Practice**

Have a practice run of the game. This means you can check if all the cadets understand how the game is played.

#### **Environment**

Think about where you are playing the game or doing the activity. Do you need more space? Do cadets all need to be sat at tables or can the use of the space be more varied?

#### **Skills**

What skills are needed to complete the task and are these completely necessary? Could cadets tear paper rather than use scissors? Can they work as a team or in pairs? If taking this approach, apply it to everyone in the unit rather than an



individual. Remember, things do not have to be perfect! It's better that cadets try and develop their own skills rather than have activities be done for them!