

## **Disabilities and Special Educational Needs**

The VPC is an inclusive scheme and aims to include all those who wish to participate regardless of Disability or Special Needs.

The Force Coordinator or Unit Leader will need to speak to the prospective cadet and their family members to ascertain how we can best safeguard them and accommodate their specific needs. This may incorporate doing a cadet specific Risk Assessment, or allowing their carers to attend evenings/events.

There may be some instances when it is not possible to accommodate the young person's needs. They should be signposted on to other programs which would more suit their needs.

## **Cadet Inclusion Support Risk Assessments**

For cadets with specific medical or physical needs it may be necessary to do an individual risk assessment for them for the weekly meetings. Advice can be sought from your Force health and safety advisor or contact the National VPC Safeguarding Manager who will be able to signpost you.

If one of your cadets requires a specific risk assessment all cadet leaders and, if necessary, the cadets should be made aware of the contents.

See also:

Guidance on Managing behaviour during unit meetings/activities.

Communication Card

Physical intervention plan

Inclusion Support Assessment form

### **What do we mean by disability?**

When we talk about disabled cadets, we also include cadets who have long-term conditions. Disabilities and long-term conditions can include (but are not limited to) mental health problems, physical impairments, sensory impairments, learning disabilities or long-standing medical conditions.

Examples might include:

- Diabetes
- Autism and neurodiversity
- Anxiety
- Hearing impairment
- Chronic pain
- Asthma

- Cerebral Palsy
- Visual impairment

This isn't a complete list, and it's worth remembering that not all disabilities will be immediately obvious to you or to other people in your unit.

### **Removing barriers**

To include disabled cadets in our activities, we need to remove the barriers they experience. These barriers may be physical – like stairs can be a barrier to a wheelchair user needing to enter a building - but could be due to negative attitudes, prejudice or stereotypes. When we remove these barriers, disabled people can be fully included, have independence, choice and control.

### **What you can do**

You can take small steps to make a big difference to the guiding experience for disabled cadets.

### **Including disabled young members**

Take a look at some of the GirlGuides [good practice guidance](#) for including disabled young members.

### **Making adjustments**

The Girl Guides have some great advice on [making adjustments](#), which can help us remove the potential barriers that disabled cadets face.

### **Adjusting activities**

As a leader, it's important to adapt activities so that all cadets can take part. The Guides page on [adapting activities](#) has some great pointers.

### **One to one support**

In some circumstances, a cadet may benefit from one to one support to help them feel part of the Unit. The Girl Guides guidance on [one-to-one support](#) documents how this can happen. This option should always be discussed with a young person and their parents/carers before being decided on.

### **Flexible transition ages**

Some disabled young cadets can find it challenging to move to a new section, so legislation means that we are able to be flexible on the upper age range, up to a member's 26th birthday. This means disabled members can access the programme that's most appropriate for them and move on to the next section when they feel ready.

The decision about when to move up should be made in consultation with the young person and their parent/carer.