



Removing barriers for disability players

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Welcome to **Around the Table**, our regular look at the work Table Tennis England is doing to promote and support table tennis around the country.

This week we look at how we are working with our clubs to break down some of the barriers which can prevent people with disabilities from playing sport.

What is the Ability Club Support Scheme?

It's a new initiative which sees us work with our PremierClub Ability Clubs to create opportunities for players with disabilities, or other projects which promote inclusivity, focusing on the over-16 age group.

What does the scheme aim to do?

There are three main aims: To attract new players with disabilities into the sport – and keep them; to support clubs to run disabled and inclusive sessions which are also sustainable; and to pass on knowledge and share examples of good practice.

Why is this important?

According to the English Federation for Disability Sport, almost 20 per cent of the population is disabled in some way, and their activity levels are lower than the rest of the population. That is partly down to barriers and perceived barriers to playing sport, so our scheme would see us work on-to-one with clubs to help remove those barriers and to give them the knowledge and confidence to provide opportunities in their communities for

people with disabilities.

On top of that, attracting new participants with disabilities into the sport is one of the ways Table Tennis England is assessed by Sport England, which impacts upon financial grants we receive to run the sport.

In what ways are you helping the clubs?

The main way is in raising awareness of the possible barriers to participation and how clubs can go about removing them and be more welcoming to people with disabilities.

We are also offering the opportunity to apply for grants of between £300 and £1,000 which can be used for a variety of things, such as hiring a second venue, specialist coaching or adapting equipment.

There is also a resource pack to help clubs. It contains resources such as posters, disability coaching manual, marketing and communication advice, plus disability-specific contacts.

Why only Ability Clubs?

Because they have already had the Table Tennis England disability awareness training and have already shown an interest in working to bring in more disabled players. Because our staff will work on a one-to-one basis with clubs, we will only be able to work with a small number initially, so it makes sense to start with those who have already expressed that interest.

So will this be opened up to other clubs further down the line?

Absolutely. We want to encourage more clubs to do our table tennis-specific disability awareness training. Those which don't yet have Ability Club status can register as a PremierClub and get that training for free. At present, the scheme will run for a year, but that could be extended for successful projects.

So how does my club get involved?

We are asking clubs to apply to be part of the scheme – simply contact Michaela Clark on development@tabletennisengland.co.uk

[You can also click here to download an application form or guidance booklet](#)

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