

Salford CVS Annual Conference

Justice for Disabled People: The Role of the VCSE Sector in Salford

Name of workshop	Opening Doors: Inclusive access to the public realm for disabled people
Facilitator	Susan Crabb, Salford CVS
Panel members	Andrew Whitaker, Activity Alliance Michael Tusan, Salford Community Leisure
Panel speaker notes	<p>Andrew Whitaker, Activity Alliance</p> <p>Andrew introduced himself and the Activity Alliance (AA), a national charity established over 25 years ago focussed on disabled people's inclusion in sport and physical activity. Physical activity is broad e.g. as a wheelchair user, how streets are designed can determine how active a wheelchair user can be. The charity is funded by Sport England and aims to close the fairness gap between disabled people's levels of activity and that of non-disabled people by changing attitudes towards disabled people in sport and physical activity and helping organisations to embed inclusive practice.</p> <p>It is important to understand how broad it is when talking about disability: Impairments or health problems that limit or restrict activities in any way, in different areas of life. Where a limiting disability or illness is referred to it should always be considered long standing (12 months plus). 1 in 5 people in the UK are disabled with 75% of people having more than one impairment – this is what we know of, not everyone will describe themselves as disabled. The AA follow the social model of disability.</p> <p>Dave Lupton draws cartoons through the lens of the social model of disability helping to challenge people's perceptions around disability – see slide. The Equality Act 2010 aims to protect disabled people – we are not lawyers but we can look at how to make reasonable adjustments. Every year AA carry out their Annual Disability and Activity Survey with common barriers reported. AA have developed 10 principles which help sport providers deliver inclusive opportunities for disabled people – communicating disabled people's values and understanding that those values may change -Talk to me: 10 Principles</p> <p>There are lots of resources on the AA website: www.activityalliance.org.uk/communications</p> <p>The big misconception is that there are not disabled people out there – there are and engagement is important (www.activityalliance.org.uk/engagement)</p> <p>AA help challenge these perceptions and can help organisations embed inclusion in their organisations using the '5 Pillars of Leading Inclusion'</p>

Michael Tuson, Strategic Policy & Partnerships Lead, Salford Community Leisure

Michael introduced himself and gave a brief overview of Salford Community Leisure (SCL), a registered charity which works to oversee services on behalf of the Local Authority (LA) including leisure centres, libraries, galleries and museums. SCL works with the LA but is independent and recently celebrated its 20 year anniversary. SCL are working towards the creation of a new EDI strategy to provide accessible services for all.

Last year they created an internal EDI working group and in November 2022 agreed to be the first leisure provider in the country to undergo the AA's Leading Equitable and Accessible Delivery (LEAD) programme. Working alongside Andrew from AA using the '5 Pillars of Leading Inclusion' they looked across the whole workforce with senior management representatives - looking at what they were doing and how it could be improved.

In June 2023 they took a deep dive in to Leisure Centres with representatives across the workforce, scrutinising processes and looking where improvements could be made to make leisure centres more inclusive. In September 2023 an EDI masterplan was created using the LEAD blueprint - it is not perfect but there are goals to work towards to improve EDI across all protected characteristics. Michael explained it was an eye-opening experience, being able to identify barriers and make lasting change. SCL are now looking at the governance of the organisation with the aim to make the board as diverse as possible to represent the people of Salford.

They are working on a communications strategy so people will know what to expect when they use SCL services. The aim is to get more support from a wide network to help SCL work towards creating a more inclusive leisure offer in Salford.

Q&A

- **Q:** A personal story was shared about the difficulty of having a disability and how reduced mobility is a barrier to weight loss, particularly when required for physical health issues
A: There is a charity called WheelPower, which gives opportunities for disabled people to access sport and activity across the country including online. SCL are looking to improve their Comms and marketing to give members an insight around what they can offer their members and what to expect when people attend.
- **Q:** Do staff at SCL centres get deaf awareness training?
A: SCL are rolling out deaf awareness training across staff teams, this is a work in progress but all staff will get the training.
- **Q:** Could a 'mystery shopper' system be introduced to the leisure centres, with people with different disabilities accessing their services as a quality assurance measure?
A: It is important to listen and respond to real lived experiences.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q: The accessibility to Ordsall Community Arts is being hampered by on street parking and particularly cars parking on pavements. More apartment blocks are being built with no parking, which will make the situation worse. Police have said they cannot do anything unless there are double yellow lines. Access to the sports field is also restricted as gates are closed limiting accessible spaces children can play • A: Andrew said that the government have stated that LAs have the power and it is illegal to park on pavements so they have the power to move people on. SCL are looking at access and redevelopment of their Ordsall site. Access to the pitch is through the park, which is owned by the council, there has been vandalism issues in the past but they will work with the council to look at access. Michael will follow up with Ordsall Community Arts. <p>What have we learnt?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of not just saying – doing and checking progress – ‘you said, we did’ • “Wheel Power” – home exercise
<p>Practical actions (2-3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff having training from people with lived experience and using mystery shoppers lead by people with disabilities to be introduced in places e.g. leisure centres • Each Council committee to have a representative from the disabled community to be a spokesperson, ensuring a widespread representation from people with different disabilities • As well as embracing new technology keeping the ‘old fashioned’ methods of support e.g. face to face support to help completing forms • Tackling the street parking issues affecting access in Salford • Keep raising concerns and bring others in