

Aim	To encourage pupils to experience a range of activities outside the school environment.
Outcome	Pupils and teachers taking full advantage of all available opportunities to maximise the pupils development and potential.

Organisation: Action for Blind People

Initiative: Huddersfield Actionnaires Club

Huddersfield Actionnaires Club provides sporting activities for young people with a visual impairment after the need for the club was identified in preliminary meetings with Kirklees Services for Visually Impaired People, Calderdale Visually Impaired Support Unit, Kirklees Active Leisure, Kirklees Sport Development, West Yorkshire Sport, The Federation of Disability Sports Organisations and Huddersfield Blind Society.

Meetings were held over a period of 6 months facilitated by the Sports Development Officer from Action for Blind People (AFBP). Originally these meetings started off by presenting the Actionnaires ideal to members of the visual impairment sector and to get them to actively take on promotion of the launch of the club, towards the end the meetings existed as an update of the progress made within the club for everyone involved.

Whilst all partners are actively involved in the development of the club, the AFBP Sports Development officer took on the initial responsibility of organising the venue, promotional materials, public relations, coaches for the sessions, recruitment for Club Coordinators, recruitment of volunteers and all the ingredients it takes to launch successfully. The Sports Development Officer then worked together with the club coordinators and local partners to run the club with input from children, parents and volunteers.

Club coordinators play an essential role within the structure of an Actionnaires club and are the 'face' of the club. All the staff who volunteer at the club are provided with professional Visual Awareness training which helps with working with visually impaired people.

The Huddersfield Actionnaires has now been successfully operating for two years with sessions being organised weekly around a 2 hour dry-side slot and 1 hour swim slot. All the activities are organised by the AFBP Sports Development Officer supported by qualified coaches and the club not only caters for visually impaired children but also their sighted siblings and friends.

A wide range of sports activities are offered including football, cricket, ju-jitsu and athletics. Each coach takes four or five sessions leading up to an 'event' or a special occasion that can bring reward for the participant's efforts. Ideally the 'event' would be the visually impaired child joining a mainstream/fully sighted club and in this case Action for Blind People would provide visual awareness training for the club concerned so that they are encouraged to be accessible to visually impaired people of all ages. Other events could be a grading or competition including those specifically for blind or visually impaired players.

Competitions that the Huddersfield Actionnaires have recently attended include the British Blind Sport (BBS) Junior Football Championships in Birmingham where the club came away with 2 trophies, a Goalball development tournament in Leeds organised by the Federation of Disability Sports Organisations and, after a period of cricket training, a Cricket InterClub fun day in Manchester. The club has also competed in the National BBS Athletics Championships, 3 children competed in a national climbing competition against sighted peers and several children have learnt how to swim. In addition several members have achieved their white belt in ju-jitsu and are now working towards their yellow belt.

The main emphasis for the future is to ensure the sustainability of the club. This would involve facilitating the forming of a user group to be the voice of the club and to take on some, or all, of the responsibilities of the club including key issues such as fundraising in partnership with local voluntary group and societies.

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