

Social Model of Disability

Challengers believes that every child and young person has the right to play and to have the same choices as their peers. Play and leisure is a fundamental part of all of our lives. It is a chance to relax, to make friends and to develop as an individual. We know that families with disabled children very often have complex lives and that they often face isolation and social exclusion. This means that disabled children simply don't have the same opportunities as their non-disabled peers.

So for Challengers to offer a solution might seem like a big ask if not everyone can do this. We will make provision, whether it is to provide training or extra staffing or some other solution, to make sure that someone who wants to come to a scheme is able to. We are determined that we will never exclude a child or young person; no matter how complex that might be.

However, in addition to this we believe that we need to be an inclusive organisation and our entire approach is based on the social model of disability. This is a model that does not see the individual as 'the problem'; someone to be 'made well' or 'fixed' somehow. This model sees the barriers to be those created by society and in some cases these might be physical but so often they are attitudinal. We believe along with many others, that the solution is to bring children and young people together and normalise their experiences as much as possible.

97% of disabled children live at home now with their families which is normal and wonderful. However those children need access to the same amount of play and leisure opportunities as others and society will only ever be inclusive if we start making it that way. We know through our work that to start doing so as young as possible is the answer and at our preschool children are non judgemental and accept each other for the people they are. Our play and youth workers see the world very differently after working at Challengers and are driven to achieve inclusion both at and outside of work as a result.

So although at Challengers we are working towards increasing delivery for disabled children and young people as a priority, we are attempting to do this with an inclusive approach because we believe this should be the norm.