

The Practical Approach

Inclusion can be a controversial concept for many people and so we have carried out research with families to understand that better and to then develop the right approach to becoming more inclusive. We found that some families are concerned about inclusion because they fear it will have a negative impact on their child's experience but conversely others believe it benefits everyone and should be encouraged. In unpicking these thoughts we found that inclusion means different things to different people so it's important we are clear about what we mean.

At Challengers, the starting point is always the individual child; what do we need to do to make sure they are included; to enable them to have a safe and happy day with us. We provide spaces for non-disabled siblings and children to come to our Playschemes (for younger children). **Providing these spaces does not impact on the number of spaces we can offer disabled children**, there is no financial implication for us and we know that the experience is beneficial for both groups of children.

We think that the pressure on spaces for teenagers is greater and that including non-disabled teenagers would have an impact on the number of disabled teenagers we can include. This is for very practical reasons such as the limited space on minibuses, and so we won't do this until that pressure is relieved. The same applies for our young adult services where the demand is even greater because we currently have fewer schemes available. **Our approach here is to offer a service that embraces the community and is 'out and about' to ensure that the young people we serve are included in the kinds of activities that are considered normal for their age group.**

Challengers is committed to providing services for disabled children and young people who have fewer choices than their non-disabled peers. We believe that it is right to do so with an inclusive approach and unless we do then nothing changes. We will continue to respond to changes in society in a way we can't always predict as well as adjust what we do to ensure disabled children and young people are included. However families can be confident we will continue to prioritise and consider disabled children first until this is no longer necessary.