

# what is disability?

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## Definition

The 1995 Disability Discrimination Act defines a disabled person as anyone with 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect upon his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'

Disability covers a wide spectrum of impairments, including:

- Physical impairments  
(difficulties in moving parts of the body)
- Sensory impairments  
(hearing or sight)
- Communication difficulties  
(speech impairments)
- Learning difficulties (for example Autism, Down's Syndrome)
- Mental health issues  
(eg. depression, schizophrenia)

\*see contacts page 69

Although a wheelchair is often used to symbolise disability, only 5% of the disabled population are permanent wheelchair users.

## Facts

- There are about 9.8 million disabled adults in the United Kingdom (22% of the adult population) and 700,000 disabled children (5% of all children).
- Disabled people are under-represented within volunteering. According to CSV\* only 6% of volunteers in the UK are disabled ('Disability Need Be No Handicap', 2000).

## Attitudes to disability

Disabled people experience exclusion from mainstream opportunities due to environmental, attitudinal and organisational barriers rather than due to the effects of their impairments.

# what is inclusive volunteering?

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Inclusive volunteering is about making volunteering accessible for everyone. The Government's Compact Code of Good Practice recognises the need 'to effectively tackle discrimination to ensure that volunteering is open to all.'

A major barrier to more young disabled people becoming involved in volunteering is the basic problem of disablism in society.



# why become more inclusive?

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## Because it's fair

Inclusive volunteering is essential to avoid discriminating against individuals.

***“Discrimination against young disabled people is unfair and a huge waste of potential for the individuals and organisations involved. Young disabled people need their rights recognised, and that includes their right to access volunteering.”***

*Nick Palfreyman, young deaf person*

## Because it's beneficial for your organisation

Your pool of potential volunteers increases so you can benefit from more volunteers.

You will attract a more diverse group of volunteers that will:

- offer a wider range of skills, experiences and perspectives
- be more flexible
- be more sustainable
- better reflect the community as a whole
- offer increased opportunities to develop community relations and partnerships
- help to broaden your client group's understanding of diversity.

By involving a diversity of volunteers, the stereotypes of volunteer work are broken down and the profile of volunteering is improved.

Involving previously untapped groups of volunteers can bring new ideas and 'a breath of fresh air'.