

Case Study

Equity focused
- disabled

Kent Outdoor Pursuits

What were our objectives?

To develop a network of outdoor sport pursuits for disabled people



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Project description

Sport England awarded £218,500 revenue funding through Active England out of a total project cost of £254,500 to Kent County Council. The Kent Outdoors Pursuits project aimed to develop a co-ordinated network of outdoor pursuit opportunities for disabled people living in Kent. The project employed a co-ordinator and a support worker to develop new opportunities for disabled people to access local facilities. The project started in December 2004.

The project offered a number of opportunities, including Walks for All, cycle hire (adapted cycles), archery courses, sailing and canoeing, gliding and skiing. Any organisation wishing to offer these outdoor pursuits for disabled people is welcome to contact the project. The project also offered support with development including access to funding, coach education and information on the Network of disability organisations within Kent County Council.

Rationale

This project developed from the Kent Sports Development Manager for disabled people. Research was carried out among Kent's disabled community to establish areas of current provision and assess current need. He recognised that individuals were only accessing one of the opportunities and that there was no sustainable development within outdoor activities.

Project aims

The desired outcome was to develop sustainable activity – to demonstrate how local disabled people can become more involved in outdoor activities.

Project performance

This project had a strong partnership approach. The main partners in terms of delivery are the Countryside Agency and the Forestry Commission. One of the main roles

of the coordinator was to build strong links between the various agencies within disability sport delivery.

Key disabled athletes such as Hilary Lister and Kevin Alderton have been involved with the project. This helped raise its profile in the region and encouraged more people to take part.

Participation figures up to March 2007 were 3,134 and increased to 3,623 by the end of the project. Total throughput for the project was 12,068. The total number of coaches went up from 88 in March 2007 to 96 by the end of the project.

Innovation

The project ensured that it regularly consulted with the people it was designed to serve. It remained both pro-active and re-active. Re-active by working with a team of dedicated associated officers, support staff and coaches. These people are responsible for specific sports and providing up to date information to aid development across the county. Pro-active by ensuring that development matches needs. An example of this is Hythe Ability Cycling club. The Club offers not just a sporting opportunity but also a chance for people to come together socially for the first time and share a common interest. The Kent Outdoor Pursuits project gave initial funding for equipment and coach education. The project then encouraged the organisation to become self-sustaining.

What's next?

Active England funding finished in December 2007 but the posts are now being funded by Kent County Council. The ethos of the project will remain the same.