



## 10 Steps: Starting a programme

If you are a sailing organization, enthusiastic about the prospect of being able to offer regular sailing to people with disabilities, the following will help you avoid re-inventing the wheel and smooth the pathway towards the integration of people with disabilities into the mainstream sailing community.

### Step 1 - Make a commitment

Experience has shown that one vital ingredient is common to all successful groups - a leader.

This is the main contact for the group – a link between the group and the outside world. It has to be someone who is prepared to be at the end of the phone, as well as ready to scrub down a boat at the end of the day.

You need recognition within your constitution or mission statement of a 'Sport for All' policy of integrating people with disabilities into the sailing community. This may entail seeking full membership agreement, which is often the hardest task.

### Step 2 - Contact existing groups for help

I.e. Sailability, Yachting New Zealand, Blind Sailing New Zealand and the New Zealand Hansa Class Association

There are several organizations that are ready to help you with information. Consider visiting a sailing group for people with disabilities that is already running and learn from their experiences.

*Now you've got the basics, you can start putting together a solid plan*

### Step 3 - Which disabilities?

Consider what disabilities you can and want to cater for. Some groups are in a position to offer opportunities to all categories of disability. Some can offer sailing for only one or two type of disability, based on things like equipment available and the physical environment.

### Step 4 – When will you sail?

Decide when your sailors could meet and how often. Remember that your organisation has the opportunity of operating outside the normal hours of your host yacht club.

Try not to exclude your group from interacting with other people and enjoying the life of the sailing club by arranging too many sessions outside general sailing times. Consider which club activities your group could become a regular part of, for example Friday night social racing.

### Step 5 – Where will you sail?

An appropriate base on shore as well as the right sailing area is essential. Initially, keep it simple is the best advice here. Upgrades to physical facilities can be planned for the future.



### **Step 6 - What boats will you sail in?**

If you are a sailing club you may already have club-owned boats for anyone to use or privately owned boats that members might be willing to lend. There are no special insurance implications with lending your dinghy to a person with a disability versus anybody else.

With only minor modifications, (often none) many boats can be sailed by many sailors with disabilities. You might consider contacting other local groups and clubs to see if they would be prepared to lend their boats to help you get started.

### **Step 7 - Finance**

Look at how much it will cost you to get going and sustain activity. Membership fees and boat hire costs are all acceptable, but keep it realistic. Remember, while many people with disabilities are employed and earning, many others only receive a benefit and therefore it is important to keep opportunities affordable to be accessible to all.

### **Step 8 – Communication and Marketing**

There may be lots of people wanting to go sailing, but they need to be aware of the opportunities out there for them. A great way to do this is to make contact with local disability organisations.

Research has shown that people with disabilities who take up new sports learn about them through friends and relatives, not expensive advertising. The golden rule is not to promise something you cannot deliver. If you only have two boats do not invite twenty people to go sailing.

Inclusive programmes generally start with only a handful of sailors and the group will grow gradually as the word spreads over the following months and years.

### **Step 9 - Name the programme/ group**

It is essential to give the programme/ group an identity. Not only will this unique identity give an association for the sailors to belong to, it will also aid in fundraising separate from club activities.

### **Step 10 - Review / evaluation date**

Finally, set yourself a review date in the short term. Look at the goals that you have set yourself from the above and evaluate. You may need to set up a small committee to run the group. This, in turn, could lead to the creation of a group constitution and an application for consideration for charitable status.

***Remember... Keep us updated!!***