

VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS IN ROCK CLIMBING AND BOULDERING

Top tips for including people with visual impairments at climbing walls, mountaineering clubs and outdoor activity providers

Promotion and Advertising

Ensure you can produce any literature or information in accessible format if requested to do so (e.g. Large Print or suitable electronic format for a screen reader).

Digital versions are great, provided that a screen-reader can access them or the user can change the font size and colour contrast settings.

If providing specific sessions or events promote the activity with local Blind Societies, inform National Organisations such as [British Blind Sport](#), and the [BMC](#) who can promote the opportunity.

Use social media to promote your sessions but think about the overuse of hashtags and abbreviations which may make the tweet more difficult to understand.

Make the activity attractive, the EFDS's ['Talk to Me'](#) report outlines 10 principles you can follow to make the activity more attractive to disabled people.

Talk to the individual's values rather than to their impairment. People may not associate with the term disability or impairment. The EFDS [Motivate Me resource](#) outlines 6 key values.

Include information on your website or promotional material on how to access the venue, particularly if the venue is a short walk away from the car park or drop off point, or if an outdoor venue.

If you're approached by someone with a visual impairment who wants to climb, find out more:

- Ask if they have climbed before, do they need instruction?
- How the visual impairment affects them, what they are able to see?
- If they will be bringing a sighted assistant with them/if they require a sighted assistant.
- How varying light affects them?



Travel

Visually impaired people may rely on public transport; it may be helpful to check local bus and train options and promote how to access the venue by public transport in promotional material. Provide a meet and greet service to ensure participants know where to meet. This will be particularly important if climbing outdoors.

Equipment and Facilities

If you're electronic sign in systems, where members pay for their sessions through a tablet ensure they are accessible. Many devices have an option to enable accessibility to the wording is spoken, provide headphones for the climber to use to listen, select the screen curtain option for privacy on the screen when inputting sensitive data. Ensure all staff know how to do this to assist climbers.

Where possible use quiet environments so the participant is able to interpret, locate and identify different sounds. If music levels are too loud it can make it difficult to hear instructors. Different light conditions may affect a person's visual impairment.

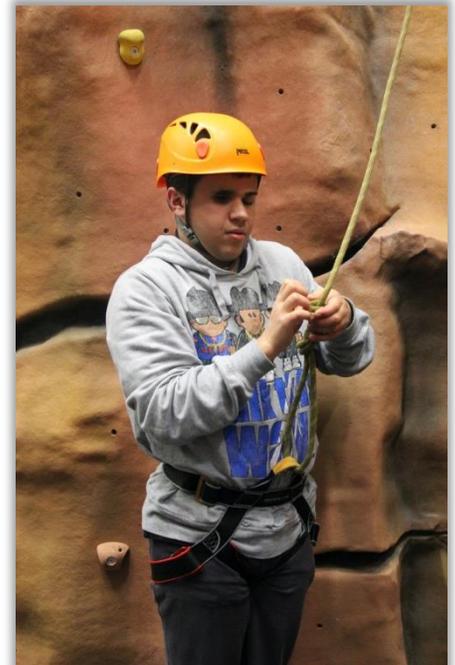
Take the climber around the venue, or talk through the layout of the venue. Highlight where the toilets are, where the café is, and where emergency exits are.

Watch out for and advise participants on objects such as chalk bags on the floor, hazards on the roof as you reach the top of a route, or lower ceiling/wall heights, uneven terrain.

Ensure steps and glass doorways are clearly marked. Tactile markers can be used to aid a person's awareness of their surroundings

Offer assistance to climbers who are registering for the first time

Think about the routes you use. For climbing indoors bright colours may be the easiest to identify amongst climbers, but individuals may see colours differently. Routes with many different holds may be confusing.



Support

A climber may require a sighted assistant who describes the position of the holds on the wall to assist the climber in making their next move. A sighted assistant may also climb alongside the climber to support the climber on the wall and give them confidence.

If you're holding a specific session consider asking your members to see if anyone would be interested in supporting a visually impaired climber.