

OPEN FOR ALL

Making tennis more inclusive
for disabled people



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INTRODUCING OPEN FOR ALL

The LTA has an ambitious vision of Tennis Opened Up - focussed on making the sport more accessible to everyone regardless of age, gender, background or ability.

Ensuring disabled people can access and enjoy tennis without any barriers is central to this plan. Open for All is a key part of the LTA's wider Inclusion Strategy published last year and this is the third plan covering a range of ambitions relating to inclusion.

It sets out how we intend to expand our provision for disabled people beyond our award-winning LTA Open Court programme, taking a more holistic approach to ensure our sport is as inclusive as possible for people of all impairment types.

One in five people in the UK are disabled with disabled people being twice as likely to be physically inactive compared to

non-disabled people. Inflation in the UK has reached its highest rate for 40 years, and with the cost-of-living crisis closely following the Covid-19 pandemic, we know these are challenging times. We also know that disabled people are often disproportionately affected by tough economic times, which has resulted in a decline in participation across the sport and physical activity sector. That is why we believe it's more important than ever to support disabled communities and to understand how these challenges are affecting them and how we can help.

This plan outlines the successes of our journey so far and some of the key challenges for disabled people in tennis. In response to these challenges, we have developed this plan in consultation with disabled people, those supporting disabled people and seeking input from experts such as Activity Alliance and Sport England. Based on this insight the plan sets out the five strategic objectives we will deliver against, always working

collaboratively with disabled people and with our key partners.

The plan sets out how we will improve the accessibility of our sport by identifying and addressing the systemic issues for disability-inclusion, to provide a fairer and more equitable choice for disabled people to access tennis in their own way.

We will use the platform that the LTA Open Court Programme has created to develop further impairment specific, pan-impairment and improved disability inclusive opportunities across tennis in Britain. This will enable more disabled people to engage in tennis through greater reach and scale for our activity. As part of this, we will also expand our programme to support people with long term health conditions to access tennis in other formats, such as Walking Tennis.

We also want to build on the success of our elite athletes. We're very proud of the success of our players in Wheelchair, VI (blind and partially sighted), Learning Disability and Deaf tennis on the international stage and are committed to continuing to invest in our performance squads in order to ensure they can continue to represent Great Britain at the highest level. Expanding the LTA Open Court programme will also help us ensure there continues to be a strong pipeline of new talent coming through into all the disciplines we support.

We are proud to be taking decisive action in these ways. We need to ensure that tennis is a safe, affordable and social space for disabled people. We hope that this strategic plan will tackle the issues that disabled people face in our sport and enable as many people as possible to enjoy the benefits of tennis.

Scott Lloyd,
CEO LTA

“

Tennis should be a sport for everyone. This Disability Tennis Plan will improve our sport, opening it up further, so disabled people have an equal and fair opportunity to access tennis in their own way.”

David Hardman, LTA Inclusion
Development Manager

OUR JOURNEY SO FAR...

13,000

disabled people playing monthly (2019) on the LTA Open Court Programme

SUCCESSFUL

national partnerships with AoC Sport, MENCAP, British Blind Sport, Parkinson's UK and SENSE

500+

Open Court venues delivering impairment specific programmes

ENGAGING

disabled people and those with lived experience through our impairment specific advisory groups

70%

of LTA County & Island Associations and our home nations of Tennis Wales and Tennis Scotland support the LTA Open Court Programme

The LTA's Open Your Doors learning module now reaching

MORE VENUES

through a new LTA Learn Online Module

1,109

disabled people competing in disability domestic competitions (2019)

Our wheelchair performance players achieved

4 MEDALS

at the Tokyo Paralympic Games

**3 BRONZE,
8 SILVER AND
8 GOLD MEDALS**

achieved at VI, deaf and learning disability world championships

**ACTIVELY
LISTENING**

with non-sport charities to understand how we can change perceptions

The LTA hosts a full calendar of **INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS**

to cater for all levels of players on the pathway including the British Open

Continued **FUNDING SUPPORT**

from Sport England and the LTA Tennis Foundation for disability tennis

OUR AMBITION



TO CONTINUE TO BE A WORLD LEADER IN OPENING TENNIS UP FOR DISABLED PEOPLE.

We will improve the accessibility of our sport by identifying and addressing the systemic issues for disability-inclusion, to provide a fairer and more equitable choice for disabled people to access tennis in their own way.”



THE CHALLENGES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

POPULATION



1 IN 5 PEOPLE
are disabled in the UK



8% OF CHILDREN
are disabled in the UK

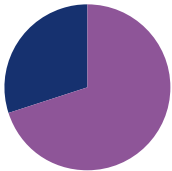


19% OF WORKING AGE ADULTS
are disabled in the UK

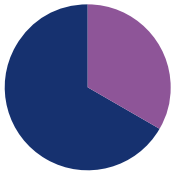


46% OF PENSION AGE ADULTS
are disabled in the UK
(Family Resources survey, 19/20)

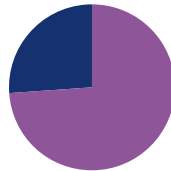
HOW DISABLED PEOPLE FEEL



7 IN 10 AGREE
that the coronavirus pandemic has made access to sport and physical activity less fair for disabled people
(Activity Alliance, 2021)



ONLY 3 IN 10
(28%) of disabled people feel encouraged to return to being active, since restrictions, compared to 50% of non-disabled people
(Activity Alliance, 2022)

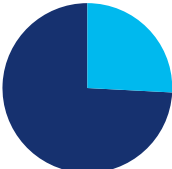


74% OF DISABLED PEOPLE
people said that their cost of living has increased; higher than non-disabled people (64%)
(ONS, Dec 2021)

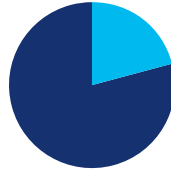
THE FACTS



TWICE AS LIKELY
Disabled people are twice as likely to be physically inactive compared to non-disabled people
(Active Lives, 2021)



26% DECREASE
in monthly disabled participation on the LTA Open Court Programme since the pandemic



21% DECREASE
in disabled competitors accessing LTA regional and national competitions since the pandemic

FACTORS AFFECTING PARTICIPATION

TOP FACTORS
that attract disabled
people to play tennis



78%
HAVING
FUN



78%
KEEPING
FIT



44%
MEETING NEW
PEOPLE AND
MAKING FRIENDS

**TOP
CHALLENGES**
that disabled people face
when accessing tennis



48%
COST OF TENNIS
LESSONS



42%
FINDING
PLAYERS OF
A SIMILAR
ABILITY

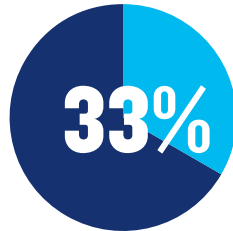


32% TRAVELING TO
THE VENUE

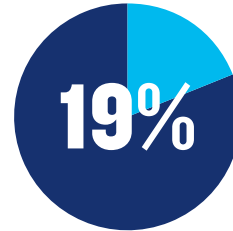
All players - regardless of impairment type - share the same challenge of finding players of a similar ability.

HOW CAN TENNIS VENUES BE MORE INCLUSIVE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE?

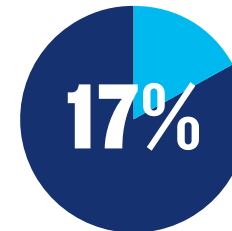
Disabled players who have not been a member of a tennis club, cited a range of barriers that prevented them from joining one.



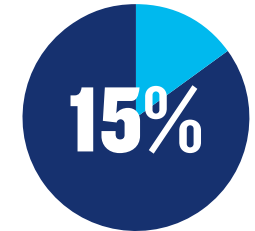
NOT PLAYING REGULARLY ENOUGH TO MAKE IT WORTH IT



NOT BEING ABLE TO PAY THE ANNUAL CLUB MEMBERSHIP FEE UP-FRONT

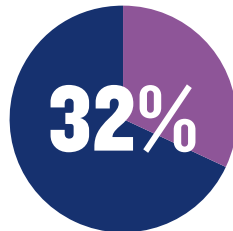


TOO EXPENSIVE

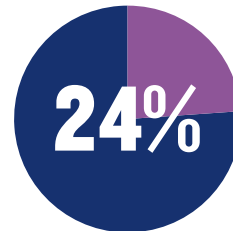


NOT FEELING GOOD ENOUGH TO JOIN A CLUB

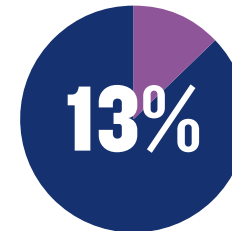
Our research suggests that these are the factors that most disabled people want clubs to address, but there is often a perception that simply addressing physical accessibility is the only or main answer.



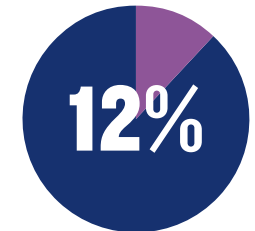
FRIENDLY WELCOMING MEMBERS



HIGH QUALITY COACHING



AFFORDABLE AND ADAPTABLE PRICING



STAFF TRAINED IN DISABILITY AWARENESS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Based on the current challenges and the response needed to provide disabled people with fair and equitable opportunities to access tennis, we have set out the following objectives:

1 CONTINUE TO RECOVER AND REBUILD

We will listen more and listen better to ensure that our future plans are co-designed and co-produced with disabled people, continuing to work to understand the impact COVID-19 has had on disabled people and how tennis can respond effectively and inclusively.

2 MAKE TENNIS MORE INCLUSIVE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

We will embed a higher standard of inclusive practice in all aspects of the game to include disabled people, explicitly as part of our new Inclusion Strategy. By doing this, we aspire to change perceptions of our sport and remove barriers where necessary, enabling disabled people to access tennis in their own way.

3 GROW AND IMPROVE THE LTA OPEN COURT PROGRAMME

We will use the views of disabled people to inform further our decisions on how to grow and improve our disability tennis participation programme, so that more disabled people can access specific opportunities locally.

4 REACH NEW AND DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

We will identify and maintain key national partnerships to help us reach new and different audiences. Through these partnerships our aim will be to explore intersectionality with other characteristics such as Age, Lower Socio-Economic Background and Ethnicity/Race.

5 CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE PLAYER PATHWAY

To support a player pathway, across multiple impairment types, which effectively engages and transitions players throughout the tennis journey, so we have a rich group of players from different backgrounds achieving their full potential.

1 CONTINUE TO RECOVER & REBUILD



WHAT IS OUR AIM?

Continuing to ensure that disabled people are at the heart of the experience and creating solutions so that our plans and campaigns are inclusive.

We will continue to consult with disabled people who have been and continue to be affected during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure our sport is a safe space for them to return to.

WHY IS IT A FOCUS?

Based on our own insight through surveys and focus groups, added with insight from national partners, disabled people are one of the most inactive groups in society. The coronavirus pandemic has widened this gap even further and, therefore, it's our role to ensure that tennis opens its doors again, but with an improved confidence.

HOW WE WILL DO IT:

By ensuring that our sport has an holistic approach to engaging disabled people back to tennis, post restrictions. We will aim to achieve this by:

- Co-design and co-produce with disabled people on how we continue to enable them to come back to tennis.
- Adding an inclusion impact assessment to all LTA priority projects to embed a culture of co-production.
- Create a variety of easily accessible online content via the LTA website, social channels and via national partner relationships to reach more disabled people who may not have returned to the court.
- Use our inclusively focused brand - Play Your Way - to make tennis look and feel more welcoming to disabled people.
- Re-engage and support our LTA Open Court venues to provide improved tennis programmes.
- Improve the confidence and competence of our workforce to welcome back and engage with disabled people.
- Encourage disabled people to return to competition through the delivery of relaxed and informal localised competition – linking to regional and national opportunities.

2 MAKE TENNIS MORE INCLUSIVE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

WHAT IS OUR AIM?

We will address current systemic issues by improving the way we listen, plan, deliver and communicate our work inclusively for disabled people in tennis, in line with our broader Inclusion Strategy.

WHY IS IT A FOCUS?

We know that there is still a large barrier for disabled people to engage actively in a variety of tennis environments and this is due to a range of factors, including a lack of visibility for disabled people in tennis, people's unconscious bias, and a lack of confidence to include disabled people outside of a disability specific environment.

HOW WE WILL DO IT:

By raising the level of disability confidence across our sport - whether through the use of data, education or highlighting models of best practise. We will aim to achieve this by:

- Increasing the number of disabled people trained as part of our coach workforce through greater accessibility and incentivised schemes.
- Embedding high quality disability-inclusive education into the curriculum, and made available in specific modules to all workforce.
- Launch a new disability tennis mentoring scheme with the aim of improving the disability-confidence of our coaches and deploying newly trained disabled coaches into sustainable opportunities.
- Ensuring that our investment into venues, whether capital or programme focussed, is fully inclusive.



- Ensuring all products and programmes include disabled people as a key group e.g. young disabled people accessing tennis via LTA Youth.
- Expansion of ITF World Tennis Number to include impairment specific competition formats.
- Creating new formats of competition that open up opportunities for disabled people for whom our traditional formats are not a good fit.
- Creating regular personal stories focused on disabled people based in a variety of roles and settings. We will aim to use key inclusion awareness moments,

- in an intersectional way, to show the way that people's physical and social identities can overlap in tennis.
- Gaining an enhanced understanding of disabled people to improve the way we communicate with this audience.
- Embedding a disability representation measurement and consideration into our colleague recruitment and LTA membership processes.
- Applying to become a Disability Confident Employer to attract disabled people to apply and work at the LTA.

3 GROW & IMPROVE THE OPEN COURT PROGRAMME



WHAT IS OUR AIM?

To provide disabled people access to greater local impairment specific, pan-impairment and inclusive opportunities to play tennis at a variety of different venue types e.g. clubs, parks, indoor.

WHY IS IT A FOCUS?

Although our insight informs us that players are willing to travel further if programmes have high quality coaching and involve participants of similar playing abilities and impairment, we must continue to improve the local experience for disabled people. This will support with our ambition to grow and improve local opportunities, so players have access to an LTA Open Court session within 30 minute travel.

HOW WE WILL DO IT:

We will improve the scope and quality of tennis infrastructure which is most relevant to disabled people, including our LTA Open Court venues, where we are working with our National Partners, and how that programme joins up with other LTA initiatives. We aim to achieve this by:

- Increasing the number of LTA Open Court Programme venues within accessible locations across the UK.
- Increasing the quality and quantity of coaches delivering on the LTA Open Court Programme.
- Identifying and addressing impairment specific issues to improve participation in all groups.
- Developing a clear and consistent on-boarding process for LTA Open Court Programme venues.
- Adapting our delivery mechanism to include local County & Island Associations so we have increased resources to support growth locally by adding this as part of their committed county core activities.
- Align the LTA Open Court Programme with other LTA programmes to ensure greater focus and reach to disabled people e.g. LTA Youth and LTA Serves.
- Developing new delivery models to expand the scope of the LTA Open Court Programme into more park and community settings.
- Improving the online customer journey so all LTA Open Court Programmes venues and their programmes can be found, booked and accessed, seamlessly, online via the LTA website.

4 REACH NEW AND DIFFERENT AUDIENCES

WHAT IS OUR AIM?

To ensure that our sport is relevant and accessible to more disabled people, we will identify and engage with new and different audiences in the community, whilst considering how their intersectionality may add additional barriers to engaging in tennis.

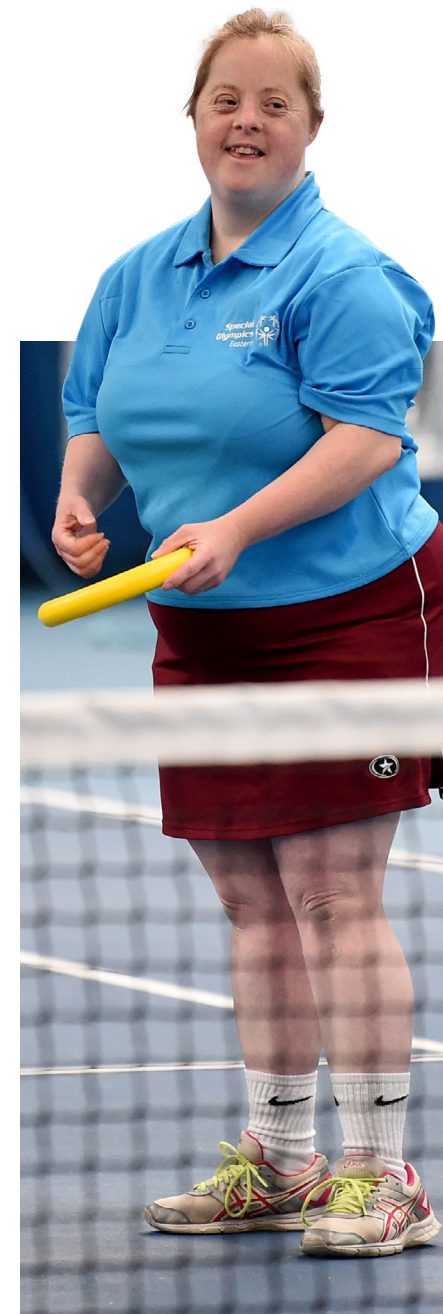
WHY IS IT A FOCUS?

We need to understand fully how we open up tennis to disabled people with one or more impairments and long-term health conditions. To achieve a greater level of understanding we will need to upskill our tennis workforce but work in partnership with those that have greater reach and expertise of disabled people with a variety of characteristics. This is important so we can ensure our communication and offers are relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable to them.

HOW WE WILL DO IT:

By working with carefully selected National Partners, we will develop specific interventions to tackle current inequalities faced by disabled people. We will explore longer term partnerships with national and local partners also delivering for disabled people, based around:

- Investing resource and time into National Partnerships whose core values align to the LTA.
- Organisations which can provide high quality advice on our policies, inclusive practices, and leadership.
- Reaching disabled people who don't currently see tennis as a sport for them.
- Exploring intersectionality with other under-represented characteristics such as age, those from lower socio-economic background and ethnically diverse communities.
- Creating delivery, education and awareness opportunities to support the LTA with reaching disabled people e.g. SENSE tennis resource.
- Scalability of adapted products and programmes targeted at specific disabled audiences e.g. Walking Tennis.
- Exploring innovative projects to improve the accessibility into tennis for disabled people e.g. VI tennis ball, Action Audio at major events.
- Tackling the current barriers faced by disabled people in tennis such as affordability. Use partners to offer affordable tennis in park and community settings both inclusively and specifically for disabled people.
- Ensuring the experience at our major and other international events is accessible and engaging for disabled people.
- Support with the showcase and activation of disability tennis at our major and international tennis events.



OUR KEY NATIONAL DELIVERY AND SUPPORTIVE PARTNERS

DELIVERY PARTNERS



ADVISORS



FUNDING CONTRIBUTORS



We will aim to work with additional partners over the lifetime of this plan.

5 CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE PLAYER PATHWAY

WHAT IS OUR AIM?

To support a player pathway, across multiple impairment types, which effectively engages and transitions players throughout the tennis journey to produce a rich group of players from different backgrounds achieving their full potential.

WHY IS IT A FOCUS?

Our insight has informed us that we need to improve how we support players at all levels of the pathway. We know that competition and building a community leads to improved retention in tennis. Having more opportunities to play, compete, perform and belong to a community will only support us with achieving greater success.

HOW WE WILL DO IT:

Working closely between the teams responsible for participation, competition, major events and performance, we will provide accessible opportunities to play, compete and nurture talented individuals to reach their fullest potential. We will aim to achieve this by:

- Enabling more tennis venues to host and deliver impairment specific and inclusive competition through improved support and guidance.
- On-boarding and educating a workforce to nurture talented disabled players, across all impairment groups, with supported mentoring from our LTA national coaches.
- Increasing the number of localised competitions delivered to improve the accessibility into friendly, affordable and fun based competition.
- Introducing disability events into the Play Your Way To Wimbledon competition structure.
- Delivering LTA impairment specific camps that are focused on retention and connecting communities in disability tennis.
- Delivering talent identification and recruitment campaigns to attract disabled people, whilst identifying talent who will be supported and nurtured through the Wheelchair, VI, Learning Disability and Deaf pathways.
- Work with impairment specific partners in developing the GB pathway and international pathways e.g. Special Olympics, BBS & UK Deaf Sport.
- Creating new guidance for players, workforce and venues that paints a clear picture of the pathway and classification requirements for international impairment specific competition in tennis.
- Delivering a broad range of international events that highlights tennis in Britain as a leading tennis nation for disability tennis. We will also bid for future international events that benefit our elite players and increase the visibility of disability tennis with the British public.



WORLD STAGE



CONTRIBUTIONS AND THANKS

Thank you to Sport England and the LTA Tennis Foundation for continuing to invest in disability tennis.

Thank you to our national partners for advising how we can improve our offer to be more relevant, accessible, welcoming and enjoyable to disabled people.

And thank you to Activity Alliance, our LTA Open Court Programme venues, the IDEA community group and our impairment specific advisory groups for your constructive feedback on how we can strive to improve our programmes and broader disability inclusion across tennis in Britain.





Other accessible formats will be available on the LTA website and on request.