



**Event Organisers Guide to
'Modifying Events
to Include Disabled Triathletes'**



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Introduction

As part of the BTF's commitment to providing equal opportunities to its member, this event organisers guide has been developed. The guide is designed to enhance an event organisers' knowledge and confidence, with regards to hosting events that have been modified to include disabled triathletes.

As a race organisers you will already have adopted the philosophy that focuses on building on engaging with local communities and encouraging people from all aspects of life to participate. Modifying your event to include disabled triathletes is no different. You will discover this as you explore the various ways of creating fully inclusive environments and modifying your events for disabled triathletes.

If you have already hosted events that included disabled triathletes you will be able to draw from this experience as you work through the guide. For event organisers who have never hosted fully inclusive events before, this module will offer you a great opportunity to develop your confidence, before delivering your modified events to include disabled triathletes.

Section One – Why do disabled people want to participate in triathlon?

The reasons disabled people take part in sport are the same and just as wide ranging as for non-disabled people. With this in mind we must recognise that disabled triathletes will want to participate in triathlon events for the same reasons as non-disabled triathletes. These may include:

- Improve fitness
- Achieve in competition
- Make friends
- Experience personal challenge
- Experience the thrill of competition
- Enjoyment
- Improve health
- Develop new skills
- Gain recognition

It is also important to recognise that triathlon can offer individuals a great deal more than just the list above. It can develop other skills that enhance many area of daily life, such as:

- Improving confidence
- Learning to take responsibility
- Learning to cope with success and disappointments
- Increased independence (through increased fitness)

Section Two – Language and Terminology

Language and Terminology

In order to create a positive, welcoming environment, it is vital that the language you use is sensitive, appropriate and relevant. Language is continually evolving as awareness and attitudes change. Several words which were acceptable in the past are now no longer used. This was mainly due to misuse of the term, which subsequently become one of ridicule.

The following table contains some common terms associated with disabled people. The left-hand column lists terms used in the past, which should be avoided; the right-hand column lists more acceptable alternatives.

Unacceptable	Acceptable
The blind	Visually impaired people/triathletes
The deaf	People / triathletes with a hearing impairment
Deaf and dumb	Deaf without speech
Handicapped triathlete / Athlete with a disability	Disabled triathlete
Disabled toilets	Accessible toilet
Dumb / mute	Triathlete with a speech impairment
Normal triathlete / able-bodied triathlete	Non-disabled triathlete
Triathlete with special needs	Triathlete with additional needs
Wheelchair bound triathlete	Wheelchair using triathlete
Wheelchair using triathlon coach	Triathlon coach
Retard / abnormal / mental triathlete	Triathlete with a learning disability
Spastic	Triathlete with cerebral palsy

It is worth noting that there are no comprehensive terminology guides that are followed by all and that what really matters is what is acceptable to the individual / group concerned. If you are in doubt, ask participants how they would prefer to be addressed.

Section Three – Legal and Moral Responsibilities

Since the introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act 2004 (DDA), service providers have a legal responsibility to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their service.

The BTF have already taken the steps required within the DDA for a governing body, by modifying their rules of competition to ensure disabled people can participate in the sport of triathlon. The modified rules are included in this document.

For race organisers the DDA relates to the necessary modifications they are required to make to their events to ensure all disabled people have the opportunity to participate. This could sound very daunting at first, but many of the adjustments to events can be made very quickly and may not have any financial implication at all.

There will be cases when events are organised at venues where it would be un-reasonable to make adjustments for disabled athletes. However, it is the event organiser's responsibility to ensure that they have taken all reasonable steps to try and implement any necessary adjustments.

With the implementation of the DDA, event organisers now have not just a moral responsibility to provide opportunities for disabled triathletes, but also have a legal responsibility. Event organisers must consider disabled triathletes when they are planning their races, and take steps to include disabled triathletes within their events.

Section Four – Barriers to Participation for Disabled Triathletes

To enable you to create a welcoming event for disabled triathletes, physical barriers to their participation must be recognised. The following list details some common examples of physical barriers that are often found at races. The examples listed are by no means exhaustive.

Swim

Pool

Lanes not wide enough	For visually impaired triathletes, who are tethered to a guide
No easy entry/exit in/out of the pool	For wheelchair using triathletes entry/exit in/out of the pool could be difficult
Briefing on pool side	No other methods of communication for hearing impaired triathletes or triathletes with learning disability

Open Water

Inappropriate wave start	Disabled triathletes may require to swim in a small wave, that has no threat of the following wave swimming over them
No easy entry/exit to the water	For wheelchair using triathletes entry/exit to the water could be difficult
Mid-swim exit	For wheelchair using triathletes entry/exit to the water would find this practically un-raceable

Bike

Very steep hill climbs (20%+)	For hand bike, wheelchair and tri-cycle using triathletes, this kind of climb may be too difficult
Speed humps	For hand bike, wheelchair and tri-cycle using triathletes, this kind of obstacle may be dangerous and very difficult to pass

Run

Over fields, sand or mud	Wheelchair/racing chair using triathletes can not complete run
Crossing roads	Disabled triathletes may find crossing the road difficult / dangerous – ie, hearing impaired triathletes, wheelchair using triathletes
Change of terrain – ie, cutting corners from a path over grass	Visually impaired and wheelchair using triathletes may find this dangerous / difficult

Transition

Small spaces in transition	Not enough room for disabled triathletes who may use racing chairs, tandems, wheelchairs, etc
Based on grass	Wheelchair/racing chair using triathletes can not access the area
Poor link from swim to T1 – ie, steps from pool, up a very steep hill, over gavel, across grass.	Wheelchair/racing chair using triathletes can not reach transition easily

Parking/Registration

No disabled parking at venue	Wheelchair using triathletes require wide bays to assist with entry/exit from their vehicle
Registration tent based on grass	Wheelchair/racing chair using triathletes can not access the area
Accessible toilets are only accessible by signing out a key from the venues reception	Degrading for disabled triathletes – having to ask to go to the toilet
Race details are not displayed	Hearing impaired triathletes may not be aware of changes to race pack information, etc

There are numerous other physical barriers. You may be able to think of some examples of barriers that are relevant to specific facilities that you may use.

Section Five – Removing the Barriers to Participation

Removing many of the physical barriers to participation that were highlighted in section four, can be relatively simple and in some case completely expense free. The following list details the kind of solutions to removing the barriers. The examples listed are not the only strategies for removing the barriers.

Swim Pool

Lanes not wide enough	Provide a wider lane for visually impaired triathletes, who are tethered to a guide
No easy entry/exit in/out of the pool	Ensure there is a hoist/ramp/steps/adequate assistance for wheelchair using triathletes entry/exit in/out of the pool
Briefing on pool side	Provide diagrams/written race briefing notes for hearing impaired triathletes or triathletes with learning disability

Open Water

Inappropriate wave start	Select appropriate times and sizes of waves for disabled triathletes
No easy entry/exit to the water	Ensure there is a ramp/steps/adequate assistance for wheelchair using triathletes entry/exit in/out of the water
Mid-swim exit	Do not include a mid-swim exit within your event, or provide an alternative for disabled triathletes (ie, no exit)

Bike

Very steep hill climbs (20%+)	Try and avoid very steep climbs and descents on the bike route (If possible provide an alternative route)
Speed humps	Try and avoid speed humps on the bike route (if impossible – provide warning signs, and detail in race pack)

Run

Over fields, sand or mud	Try and avoid this kind of terrain. If impossible, provide an alternative run route for wheelchair / racing chair / disabled triathletes
Crossing roads	Try and avoid crossing roads during the run. If impossible, have competent marshals positioned appropriately (use signposting on the roads to warn vehicles)
Change of terrain – ie, cutting corners from a path over grass	Try and avoid this kind of change of terrain. If impossible, provide an alternative run route for wheelchair / racing chair / disabled triathletes

Transition

Small spaces in transition	Ensure that there is enough room for disabled triathletes who may use racing chairs, tandems, wheelchairs, etc
Based on grass	Locate transition in an area that Wheelchair/racing chair using triathletes can access. If impossible, create a separate transition area for them to use.
Poor link from swim to T1 – ie, steps from pool, up a very steep hill, over gavel, across grass.	Try and avoid steps from the pool to T1, or other difficult terrain, if impossible have an alternative route to T1 for disabled triathletes. Wheelchair using triathletes will need access to their wheelchairs as soon as they leave the water, to enable them to get to T1 (in unusual cases they could be carried, if T1 is very close – please ask the triathlete if they are happy with this)

Parking/Registration

No disable parking at venue	Ensure there are wide bays available at the race venue for disabled triathletes
Registration tent based on grass	Ensure you registration tent is based in an accessible place, and on an appropriate surface
Accessible toilets are only accessible by signing out a key from the venues reception	Ensure the accessible toilets are open, and no key collection is required
Race details are not displayed	Provide diagrams/written race briefing notes for hearing impaired triathletes or triathletes with learning disability

Section Six – The Classification System for Disabled Triathletes

BTF Classification System for Disabled Triathletes

The BTF have developed and adopted a 'Classification System' for disabled triathletes. This is the first comprehensive classification system for disabled triathletes in the world. The classification system is an attempt to ensure fair competition for all disabled triathletes.

Disabled triathletes are assessed using a functional profile system. There are 48 different functional profiles, within the system. Each triathlete is appointed an appropriate profile number, which best describes their disability (functional profile). At this stage of disabled triathlon development, it would be inappropriate to have 48 different race categories (one for each profile). With this in mind, a Class grouping system is used for racing, where a group of similar functional profiles will be put into a Class for competition (i.e.: Profiles 1,2,3,4,5,6,7 all race together to form Class TRI 1).

There are nine classes of competition. Class TRI 1 to TRI 6 would be described as physical disablements, Class TRI 7, 8 and 9 would be described as sensory disablements. If a triathletes' disablement spans two or more Profiles, the triathlete will be classified into the racing Class of least numerical value, as Class TRI 1 is for the more severely impaired triathletes and Class TRI 9 is for the least severely impaired triathletes.

Disabled Triathletes must be officially classified for all National and International competition. Details of 'Classification Days' will be made available as part of the build up to these events. For all non-National competition, triathletes and coaches can use the Classification System detailed on the BTF website to make a self-assessment of their Profiling and Class for competing. The details of a triathletes Profile and Class must be documented on their 'Statement of Declaration' form which must be submitted with their race entry forms. The 'Statement of Declaration' form is designed to assist race organisers and referees with planning for their event.

All relevant documents can be found at
<http://www.britishtriathlon.org/about/index.php>

Section Seven – Modification of Rules for Disabled Triathletes

Disabled triathletes will abide, in most part, by the same rules of competition as non-disabled triathletes, detailed by the British Triathlon Federation. Modifications to these rules have been made for disabled participants to ensure that they can experience the same fair competition within the sport of triathlon as non-disabled triathletes.

A Classification System for disabled triathletes has been adopted by the British Triathlon Federation, and should be used by all disabled competitors, participating in triathlon events. The system is an attempt to ensure fair competition, and by requesting all disabled triathletes complete a 'Statement of Declaration', and submitting this with their race entry form, event organisers and referees will be aware of any additional considerations they must undertake.

All disabled triathletes who intend to enter national championships must be classified by a process of assessment by a trained British Triathlon Federation Classifier.

Disabled Triathlete Competition Classes

- a) Competition Classes are:
- (i) **TRI 1** – Wheelchair users with arm impairment. Swim, tricycle or hand cycle and wheelchair. (Profiles 1,2,3,4,5,6,7)
 - (ii) **TRI 2** - Severe impairment of 2 or more limbs. Swim, tricycle, run. (Profiles 12,13,14,17a,31,32,27)
 - (iii) **TRI 3** – Wheelchair users with no or minimal arm impairment. Swim, hand cycle, wheelchair. (Profiles 8,9,10,11,17b,18a)
 - (iv) **TRI 4** - Severe impairment of one lower limb, or moderate impairment of 2 lower limbs, or minimal impairment of 4 limbs. Swim, cycle, run. (Profiles 18b,19a,20a,26,28,25)
 - (v) **TRI 5** – Impairment in one or both upper limbs. Swim, cycle, run. (Profiles 16,21,22)
 - (vi) **TRI 6** - Slight impairment of one or 2 limbs. Swim, cycle, run. (Profiles 15,19b,20b,23,24,29)
 - (vii) **TRI 7** - Totally blind and partially sighted as defined by BBS. Swim, tandem, run (all with guide). (Profiles 36,37a,37b)
 - (viii) **TRI 8** - Learning impairment as defined by UK SAPLD. Swim, cycle, run. (Profile 39)
 - (ix) **TRI 9** - Hearing impairment as defined by Deaflympics and UK Deaf Sports. Swim, cycle, run in age group categories. (Profile 38a, 38b)

General

- a) For disabled triathletes in any competition registered by British Triathlon, the rules of the federation will apply with only the specific modifications outlined in this section;
- b) All triathletes are requested to complete a 'Statement of Declaration' form, and submit this with their race entry form;
- c) All TRI 7 triathletes must be guided regardless of the degree of visual impairment;
- d) TRI 7 triathletes may not be seen to be pulled through the race course at any time by the person guiding them. Especially during the run portion of the race the guide must not, at anytime, be in front of the blind triathlete and be judged as pulling the triathlete along;
- e) All TRI 7 triathletes competing in an ITU World Championship must be guided by the same gender as the triathlete. TRI 7 triathletes can be guided by either gender during British Triathlon Federation events;
- f) On the run portion of the race course the only acceptable footwear attire are running shoes. The only exception of this rule is with leg amputees who may use a flexfoot or like prosthetic;
- g) At the ITU World Championships all disabled triathletes will be required to provide a confirmation of their classification, signed by the trained British Triathlon Federation Classifier.

Transition One (T1) and Two (T2)

- a) Providing handlers (support in transition) is the responsibility of the triathlete not the race organiser. Disabled triathletes are permitted to assistance from the following number handlers during transition (T1 & T2):
 - TRI 1 - up to 3 handlers
 - TRI 2 and 3 – up to 2 handlers
 - TRI 4,5,6,7,8 – 1 handler
 - TRI 9 – No handlers
- b) All handlers must be identified to the Race Referee
- c) All disabled triathletes are entitled to assistance in and out of the water, except class TRI 9.
- d) Swim to T1 can be up to a few hundred metres. Disabled triathletes must make appropriate preparation to ensure they can reach T1. TRI 1,2,3 triathletes must brief and position handlers in preparation to be assisted to T1, or position their wheelchair appropriately to use to reach T1 (handbikes and tricycles are not permitted to be used to reach T1)
- e) Handlers are permitted to assist in all aspects of T1 (i.e., taking wetsuit off, putting footwear on, getting on bike, etc.)
- f) TRI 1,2,3 triathletes are permitted to mount their handbike/tricycle before the mounting line (ie, in the transition area – though care must be take whilst riding through transition)
- g) All handlers shall be subject to British Triathlon's rules of competition and further instructions deemed appropriate by the Referee;
- h) Handlers are permitted to assist in all aspects of T2 (i.e., getting off the bike, changing footwear, etc)
- i) TRI 1,2,3 triathletes are permitted to mount their handbike/tricycle after the dismounting line (ie, in the transition area – though care must be take whilst riding through transition)
- j) Guide dogs will not be allowed in the transition area.

Swimming

- a) Artificial propulsive devices, including but not limited to fins, paddles, or floating devices of any kind are not permitted and use of any of the above will result in disqualification;
- b) Wetsuits will be allowed in open water at all temperatures. It will be left up to the athlete to determine if it is too warm to wear a wetsuit.
- c) TRI 7 triathletes may be guided by tethering around their waist or foot, swimming by the side a canoe/boat, or by verbal communication from a canoe or boat.

Cycling

- a) All bicycle, tricycles and hand cycles shall be propelled by human force. Arms or legs shall be used to propel the cycle but not both. Prostheses are permissible. Any violation shall result in disqualification.
- b) There are no specifications as to length, height, width and number of wheels for a hand/bi/tricycle for disabled triathletes, however, the cycle must be safe and road worthy. The cycle could be subject to inspection by the race referee before the event;
- c) No protective shield, faring or other device that has the effect of reducing resistance will be used.
- d) There must be at least one working brake (generally on the drive wheel) capable of safely stopping / slowing the cycle;
- e) Disabled triathletes, who use a bicycle, shall be governed by the British Triathlon Federation rules regarding length, height, width, number of wheels, and front to centre distance.
- f) It is permissible to use a racing wheelchair for the cycle section of the race, providing there is no risk to the safety of any participant.

Running

- a) Disabled triathletes may use prosthesis, canes or crutches to ambulate the course;
- b) Disabled triathletes, who perform the run section of the race in a wheelchair, shall ensure;
 - (i) The wheelchair shall have at least two large wheels and one small wheel;
 - (ii) The wheelchair design must not incorporate any device to enhance its aerodynamic capacity. (NB: 'wheelchair design' does not include wheels; all wheels may be spoke, solid or composite construction. Wheel covers are permitted);
 - (iii) The maximum diameter of the large wheel including the inflated tyre shall not exceed 70cm and maximum diameter of the small wheel including the inflated tyre shall not exceed 50cm;
 - (iv) Only one plain, round, standard type handrim is allowed for each large wheel;
 - (v) No mechanical gears or levers shall be allowed that may be used to propel the chair;
 - (vi) There is no limit on the length of the racing wheelchair;
 - (vii) Only hand operated mechanical steering devices shall be allowed;
 - (viii) Triathletes must ensure that no part of their lower limbs can fall to the ground during a race;
 - (ix) Triathletes may receive technical advice from cyclo computer type devices installed on their own wheelchairs;
 - (x) The use of a bicycle, hand cycle, tricycle or motorised vehicle is prohibited during the run section of the race.

Section Eight – How do Disabled Triathletes Enter Events?

For all non-National competition, disabled triathletes are encouraged to make a self-assessment of their Profiling and Class before entering a race. The disabled triathlete is then encouraged to state their details of their Profile and Class on their 'Statement of Declaration' form which must be submitted with their race entry forms. Once a race organiser receives the entry form partnered with the 'Statement of Declaration', they will be able to use the 'Modified Rules' document to clarify what type of disability a triathletes has, and what considerations they must make to ensure the athlete is able to participate in their event.

The 'Statement of Declaration' form is very simple in design, and has been developed to assist race organisers and referees with planning for their event.

Entry Forms

To assist disabled triathletes in selecting appropriate races, event organisers are encouraged to state on their entry forms that their race is **'Fully Inclusive for Disabled Triathletes'**.

Event organisers are encouraged to ask triathletes on their entry form whether they are a disabled or not (with the appropriate sign-posting to the 'Statement of Declaration') <http://www.britishtriathlon.org/about/index.php>
This will assist the organiser in recognising disabled triathlete entry forms, who may not have completed the 'Statement of Declaration', and enable you to take appropriate action before the athlete turns up on race day.

If you are confident that your event is fully inclusive, please contact Julian Wills, National Equity Manager, julianwills@britishtriathlon.org who will add your races details to the list of disabled triathlete friendly events. This list will be circulate throughout a network of disabled sports organisations and registered disabled triathletes.

Section Nine – The Benefits to being a Fully Inclusive Event

The legal responsibilities aside, there are numerous benefits to making your events fully inclusive for disabled triathletes. These include:

- Greater number of participants in your event
- More income
- Attract new volunteers to assist with your events
- Gives out a positive public image
- Greater promotion of your event
- Reflects good practice
- Attract additional sponsorship

Section Ten – Further Information

Further Information

If you require further information about the issues relating to 'Triathlon for Disabled Athletes'

Please contact:

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