

Case study

Project: Bangor Gymnastics Club
Type: How we made our facility accessible for all



Who are we?

Bangor Gymnastics Club has been established since 1996 when it was set up by a group of volunteers and it took place in the local university sports hall. Since the club first opened its doors, it has seen significant growth and has been making a huge impact on the surrounding community. By 2015 the club had grown from having a handful of members to having 350 members; therefore prompting the need to move to a larger facility. Two years later the club then moved into its current facility where it has been able to facilitate and cater for the demand and rapidly growing numbers. In 2017 Bangor Gymnastics Club was the worthy winner of two awards; the InSport Club of the Year in Wales and the Transforming People's Lives Award. Bangor Gymnastics Club has continued to develop over the 22 years since it has been established and now currently delivers gymnastics to 1400 members including 120 disabled members.

What did we aim to do?

Bangor Gymnastics Club prioritises its work on providing gymnastics to all, ensuring that each individual's needs are catered for and along with this, provides training to its staff to ensure that all participants receive the same opportunity and a quality experience. With a strong ethos on providing gymnastics for all, together with the interest from some of their disabled members in accessing all of the equipment like everyone else, the senior coaches and directors began conversations around how they could better accommodate wheelchair users, or those who have limited access to the trampolines and the podiums within the facility.

What did we do?

Following the conversations about accessibility, the club decided that a hoist system would be the best option. The club worked with Prism Hoist Installers who designed the hoist to ensure it was fit for purpose and bespoke to the club's needs. Due to the hoist being such a unique piece of equipment, it was important that the club had adequate training and specific insurances with LOLER and PUWER in place, to ensure that all health and safety requirements were met. To ensure safety the club also ensure that all of its coaches are trained to use this piece of equipment.



What did we achieve?

Following the implementation of the Prism hoist system the club is now able to provide the same access to all its participants, regardless of their impairment. The club is now able to deliver gymnastics on a frequent basis to a number of specialist schools, for which the hoist system is proving to be a lifeline to wheelchair users and as a result they are able to access activities they thought they would not be able to. An event that took place on the 26th April allowed 2 wheelchair users and 2 additional participants with Cerebral Palsy to access all activities through use of the hoist system. The hoist system has received positive feedback from carers and teachers of those participants who have utilised the piece of equipment with comments on the ease of its use. The electric hoist allows the participants to be mounted on to the trampoline safely, as well as avoiding manual handling from the coaches.



What next?

Looking ahead, our aim is to increase the number of disabled participants to 200 and plan to have a total of 6 dedicated sessions taking place; some of which will run alongside the mainstream classes.



What would we recommend?

Our successes have been due to constant forward planning and ensuring that we stick to our 5-year business plan. Through doing this, we can ensure that we are in a stable position to purchase new equipment, as well as being able to monitor areas of weakness and therefore continue to develop. Communication with our parents and local organisations has also been paramount to our success and ensuring that we can build good relationships with our community.

Our top tips would therefore be:

- 1) Do your homework, research, and get coaches to understand that coaching inclusive sessions is benefiting and developing their knowledge.
- 2) Understand what is achievable and feasible and set targets or plans for each year – and stick to them.
- 3) Create good relationships with local organisations and local disability organisations.
- 4) Ask for help when needed, additional information and shared knowledge is always beneficial.

Do you require support with disability gymnastics?

Contact us at: participation@british-gymnastics.org