

CASE STUDY

Investing in Inclusion: Empowering Staff to Deliver Accessible Fitness

IDENTIFYING THE NEED

People with learning disabilities often face barriers to taking part in sport and fitness activities. These barriers can impact not only physical health but also opportunities for social connection and community participation.

At the Montrose Centre in Fort William, staff recognised the importance of tackling these barriers by improving their skills to make physical activity more accessible and inclusive.

With a £1,200 grant, in April 2025 they delivered a full-day accredited UK Disability Inclusion Training workshop from Scottish Disability Sport. Although the Centre required only 8 places, the training accommodated 24 participants, allowing colleagues from across the wider organisation and local services to benefit.



THE CHALLENGE ON THE GROUND

Support workers play a vital role in enabling people with disabilities to engage in physical activity, but many lack specific training in adaptive sports or inclusive practice. Without these skills, staff can feel unsure about how to make sessions safe, engaging, and inclusive for all participants.

This lack of knowledge limits opportunities for the people the team supports to take part in fitness activities that could improve their physical health and wellbeing.



HOW WE RESPONDED

Thanks to our donors, the charity funded a Disability Sports Inclusion workshop for support workers, focusing on practical strategies, adaptive techniques, and communication skills to break down barriers to participation.

By completing this training, staff developed the confidence and skills to deliver coordination and fitness classes that meet the needs of individuals with learning disabilities, while also gaining the confidence to advocate for inclusion more widely across our services.

THE CHANGE WE ACHIEVED

- **For staff:** Staff gained a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. The training provided practical tools and strategies to adapt sports programmes, making them more inclusive. With enhanced knowledge and skills, staff feel more confident in their ability to engage with individuals with disabilities.
- **For people we support:** With better-trained staff, individuals with disabilities will have greater access to inclusive sport and fitness opportunities. This will support improved physical health, enhanced mental wellbeing, and stronger community connections.
- **For the NHS Highland:** The training reached beyond the Montrose Centre team. Staff across the organisation now share a clearer understanding of inclusive practices, strengthening our overall capacity to deliver equitable health and wellbeing opportunities.

“The team felt that the training was highly informative, they enjoyed the hands-on activities and real life scenarios that allowed them to practice the skills learned during training” - Shona, Montrose Centre Manager

THE JOURNEY AHEAD

The impact of this initiative has sparked demand for additional training opportunities in adaptive sports, such as Boccia, which is designed specifically for people with disabilities. By continuing to invest in staff development, we can build on this momentum, create sustainable inclusive fitness programmes, and strengthen our commitment to health equity.