



TENNIS IRELAND  
RESOURCES

# INCLUSION in TENNIS

## INTRODUCTION

One of the key principles to which Tennis Ireland is unwaveringly committed is that of equal opportunity and inclusion for all. In upholding this principle, we are guided by the Irish Government's National Sports Policy 2018-2027, and the equivalent declaration from the Government of Northern Ireland:

“Sport must be welcoming and inclusive, offering appropriate opportunities for participation and improvement to all. We will promote inclusion to deliver our desired outcomes with a focus on addressing social, disability, gender, ethnic and other gradients. Irish society is increasingly multi-cultural. Sport can make an important contribution to economic and social cohesion and a more integrated society by using the potential of sport for social inclusion, integration and equal opportunities, whilst emphasizing the total unacceptability of racism and xenophobia”.

Research has shown that certain groups participate significantly less in sport than the overall average.

These groups include:

- People with disabilities.
- People from lower socio-economic backgrounds.
- Ethnic minority groups, such as the Traveller community.
- Immigrant communities.
- People from the LGBT community.

## WHO CAN HELP?



**Parks Tennis provides tennis coaching at grass roots level nationwide in 140 locations during the summer holidays for girls and boys between 5 and 17 years.**

Parks Tennis Ireland is a non-profit making company in operation for almost half a century.

“We are supported by Tennis Ireland, Sport Ireland and various Local Authorities. The aim is to provide tennis at a very low cost to children not exposed to the game from all social and ethnic backgrounds, during the long summer holidays. Over 15,000 children take part in the programme annually”.



Working with Parks Tennis venues is an ideal way for tennis clubs to reach out to the community and potentially recruit new members.

**MORE:** [parkstennis.com](http://parkstennis.com)



**LGBT Ireland is a national support service for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender people and their families and friends.**

The service was established in 2010 by seven local LGBT helplines, who shared a vision to create an infrastructure to enable them to offer support and information nationally through their network of trained volunteers.

“Today LGBT Ireland offers a comprehensive range of services which provide support and information on issues relating to sexuality and gender identity”.

**MORE:** [lgbt.ie](http://lgbt.ie)



“The Out2Tennis group aims to provide the opportunity for members of the gay community and their friends to come together and play tennis, regardless of their playing level, while also giving them the opportunity to compete in a few different tournaments annually”.

**MORE:** [out2tennis.com](http://out2tennis.com)



**SCHOOLS DEVELOPMENT:**

**The Tennis Ireland Development Team works with tennis clubs and the Parks Organisers, to design and implement strategies for clubs that have signed up to our Club, School and Parks Link.**

This helps clubs both to grow membership and to introduce as many children as possible to our sport.



“Clubs can reach out to their local schools by sending in their coach for a Blitz day or a 6 week programme of introductory skills. The next step is to set up an Open Day at the club, in order to recruit new family and junior members”.

**MORE:** [tennisireland.ie](http://tennisireland.ie)



Tennis Ireland's Women in Sport Policy identifies four different areas (coaching & officiating, active participation, leadership & governance and visibility) that need to be improved upon to develop the overall landscape of women's sport in Ireland.

This programme is in place to support and empower girls and women across Ireland to take up leadership roles within tennis.

Through our Equal Advantage Strategy, Tennis Ireland expresses its commitment to women in our sport. We recognize the opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of women through their involvement in tennis.



The strategy provides a blueprint for Tennis Ireland's future work in this area, and is fully aligned with the Government's National Sports Policy 2018-2027, and Sport Ireland's strategy. Our vision is that tennis is seen and acts as an Equal Advantage sport in every area of what we do on and off court.

**MORE:** [tennisireland.ie](http://tennisireland.ie)



The Access Tennis Foundation exists so that all people, regardless of background or circumstance can gain improved physical and mental health, and can integrate with their local community through tennis.



"We make tennis, a healthy sport for life, accessible to all, from people in emergency accommodation, to rural communities, to areas of deprivation, to those in Direct Provision and working with Irish charities to bring happiness, health and wellness to all".

**MORE:** [accesstennisfoundation.ie](http://accesstennisfoundation.ie)

## WHAT CAN YOUR CLUB DO?

Inclusion should be the default. Clubs are the venues where most Irish tennis is played, and so have a vital role and responsibility in making this a reality. An inclusive club will ensure a positive experience for everyone, regardless of their background and circumstances.

A great start would be to generate discussion about the barriers faced by certain sections of society in accessing tennis. Ideally this discussion will involve input from those who are most affected. This process should lead to the implementation of an all-inclusive ethos and policy at your club.

### Issues worth discussing:

- Are players with a disability able to access our club's facilities?
- Are we confident that people from all races and cultures will feel comfortable at the club?
- Is our club a safe environment for people from all walks of life?
- Many people still regard tennis as an 'elitist sport' - what can we do in our club to overcome this perception?



## PLAYERS WITH A DISABILITY

People who live with a disability and wish to participate in our sport should be offered every opportunity to do so. Currently, research indicates that those with a disability are considerably more likely to live a more sedentary lifestyle than those without a disability. These players, like all others, should be able to get involved in the playing, coaching and social life of the club.

“With a view to enabling persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities, States Parties shall take appropriate measures to encourage and promote the participation of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all levels...”

### **Article 30.5 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Tennis is easily adaptable to ensure that everyone can enjoy it. Examples are two bounces for wheelchair players, or a ball with a bell embedded in it for players with visual impairment.

## ENJOY TENNIS

Enjoy Tennis is Tennis Ireland's programme for players with an intellectual or physical disability, helping these players become integrated into the life of their local tennis club.



Through a collaborative approach with partners, coaches, players and (crucially) clubs, Enjoy Tennis provides an accessible and inclusive sport to people of all abilities in their communities. The programme is strongly supported by Sport Ireland and a range of Local Sports Partnerships. In 2018 Tennis Ireland received the National Governing Body Award for the Enjoy Tennis Programme at the CARA National Inclusion Awards.

Enjoy Tennis has Development Officer staff that you can get in touch with for advice and guidance (contact details at the Tennis Ireland website).



The Tennis Ireland Coach Education and Qualification Programme now includes coaching players with a disability as part of the core curriculum. This means that all coaches participating in our Coach Training Courses will have both the theoretical and practical skills to run programmes for players with a disability.

## WHAT CAN YOUR CLUB DO?

It's important that there are opportunities for players with a disability to benefit at your club from all the advantages tennis provides.



- Invite your Enjoy Tennis Development Officer to meet the Committee and discuss opportunities.

- Do an accessibility analysis at the club to identify potential barriers and challenges to the participation of people with a disability.
- When planning for future development of the club, integrate plans that will make it possible for players with a disability to have easy access to the courts and related facilities.
- See the resource document entitled 'Volunteering at the Club – Role Descriptions' for details of appointing an Enjoy Tennis Liaison Officer for your club.

By working together with Tennis Ireland, Enjoy Tennis and other organisations, your club can play a major role in ensuring that our wonderful game is a sport for all, regardless who they are or where they are from.

### MORE INFORMATION:

- Go to [caracentre.ie](http://caracentre.ie)
- Contact your local Sports Inclusion Disability Officer – details at [sportireland.ie](http://sportireland.ie)

### NEED FURTHER GUIDANCE?

**Leinster:** 01 269 6024

**Ulster:** 0044 7734 252334

**Munster:** 087 758 1214

**Connacht:** 086 351 4123