

#Inclusive Sports Qualifications- the next step

The Turning Tides Project

The Turning Tides Project (TTTP) is a Community Interest Company that aims to make equal access to music, the arts and life a reality for people with 'learning disability' or 'autism' labels. TTTP takes a Social Model Approach

The Social Model of Disability

The Social Model of Disability is a way of understanding the lives of Disabled People. A 'Disabled Person' is someone that is excluded from aspects of day to day life because of something that is considered 'different' about how their mind or body or both work. What disables them is not their difference but society's failure to be #Inclusive. A Social Model Approach addresses this inequality by identifying and removing the barriers that prevent #Inclusion.

Within a Social Model Approach the responsibility for removing the barriers that create 'disability' belongs to everyone.

What?

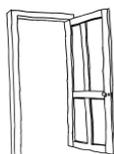
The Turning Tides Project set out to develop an assessable route to a swimming teaching assistant course.

Why?

To:

- 🌀 Enable a group of TTTP people to engage in sports and develop teaching skills,
- 🌀 Demonstrate that the population of people with 'learning disability' or 'autism' labels not only want to achieve sports qualifications but can.
- 🌀 To exchange skills and experience with swimming teachers.
- 🌀 To introduce a Social Model approach to children who participate in swimming lessons and their parents.
- 🌀 To identify the barriers that prevent people with 'learning disability' or 'autism' labels from achieving assistant swimming teacher qualifications, to demonstrate how the barriers can be removed.

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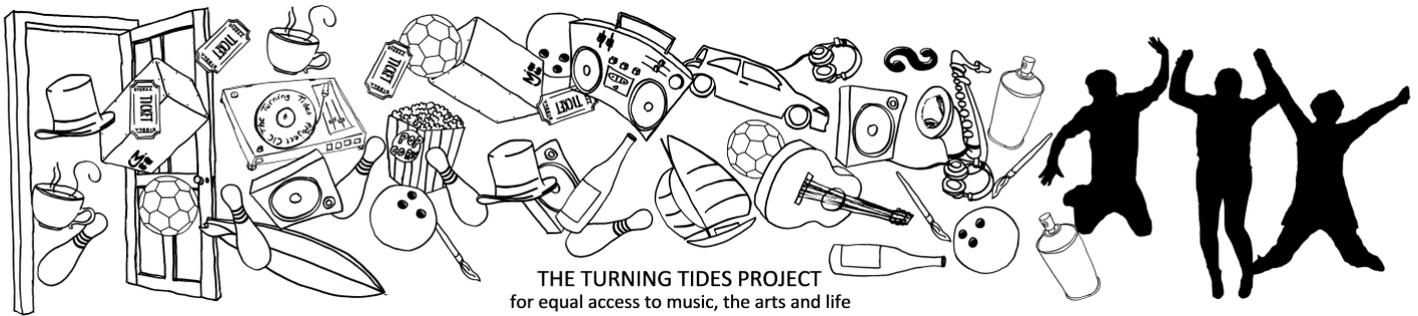


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How?

Working with Lord Meadows Leisure Centre we:

Identified the most accessible qualification

ASA accredited courses

We reviewed 2 courses, both were delivered as whole weekend courses, and involved a full day of theory and 2 full days of practical.

This made them too expensive in terms of both support provision and travel. Both courses included a whole day of theory and 2 consecutive days of practical based. We felt that this intensity of delivering would not create an accessible environment which would suit the learning styles of TTTP people. The ASA were not open to discussion about increasing the accessibility of their course.

The STA assistant swim teacher course.

The STA were keen to engage in a discussion about accessibility. They provided course content in advance and allowed this to be adapted.

The course could be split in to smaller sessions, was more practical based than the ASA courses, with less time sat in a classroom.

The course was cheaper than ASA and delivered locally.

Established a training team of 5 TTTP people with and without 'learning disability' or 'autism' labels to take the assistant swimming teacher's course.

Each training session consisted of 2, 1/2-hour swimming lessons over a period of 3 months. We worked with swimming classes for 3-6-year olds. We started training in February and completed the training sessions in May. The last Theory part of the course will be completed by the end of July 18.

This report summarises our journey:

 The things we learnt

 The things we achieved

 The difference the project made to:

- Individuals
- The Population of people with 'learning disability' or 'autism' labels
- The Community
- The Wider community

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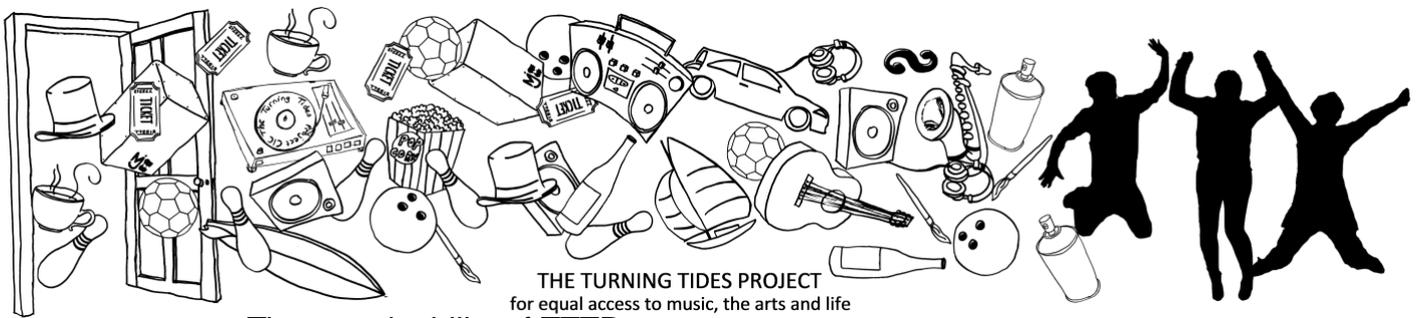


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- The sustainability of TTTP

What we think should happen next

Our Journey – The things we learnt and the things we achieved

Inaccessibility of the theory presentation and how that was changed.

We started off by all participating in the first theory part of the course. The presentation was inaccessible as it used lots of words, complicated language and was quite long. The theory was 3 hours long, which is a long time to sit down and listen to someone talk. The Turning Tides Project worked closely with Lords Meadows Leisure Centre within our Making waves session in Cridton to make the PowerPoint presentation more assessible. This was a great success, all participates could follow the presentation as well as ask questions about the course. All participates joined in, spoke up and voiced their opinions throughout this presentation, we all felt this was due to the work that Lord Meadows did with the Turning Tides to making the presentation of the theory part assessible. The presentation was made using our ‘small talk’ approach.

After we had completed our first theory part of the course we then went onto the Training sessions, were we would train to be Swimming Teaching assistants.

Some of the barriers that we all came across and overcame were:

The relationship between the course tutors and TTTP

In the early stages the course tutors were not confident that the TTTP people could achieve the qualification. TTTP believes that, in an accessible environment everyone can achieve anything they want to. The course tutors were ‘the experts’ in delivering an assistant swimming teacher qualification. Everyone is an ‘expert’ in their understanding of themselves. TTTP brought experience of creating #inclusive and accessible environments.

Top Tip: Identify and respect the knowledge and experience that everyone brings.

Poor communication about what we were doing

One member of TTTP team finds it unsettling to meet new people and to be in unfamiliar situations. Attending a training session in the pool rather than going for a swim with a friend caused her some anxiety. Her screaming at the first session, understandably made some parents anxious.

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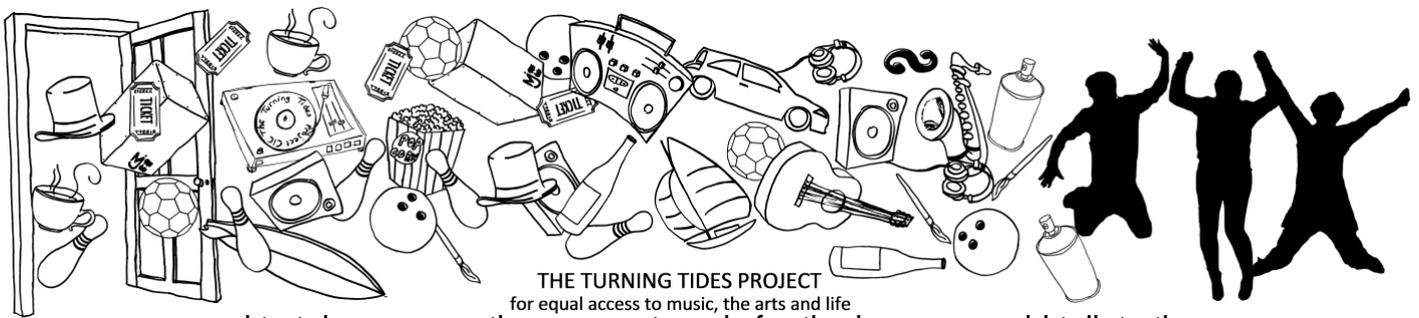


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agreed to take our own time, we set goals for the lesson, would talk to the teacher beforehand so we knew what was happening and agree which activities we'd focus on.

Top Tip:

If it takes time, take time.

The Difference the Project made (Its Social Impact)

- To Individuals
During the 3-month course, the impact on the people with and without labels has been positive. Each member of TTTP Team looked forward to each training session. The more training sessions we attended the more we understood what was expected of us and therefore the more confident and happy we felt with each training session. 4 of the Team will qualify as Assistant Teachers, the 5th member of the Team will be able to work with a support worker in an Assistant Swim Teacher team of 2. The TTP Team are extremely proud and excited to have completed this course.
- The Population of people with 'learning disability' or 'autism' labels
In demonstrating that it is possible to create an accessible assistant swimming teacher's course we hope that more people with 'learning disability' or 'autism' labels will also look for opportunities to train and that they will be actively invited to do so by swimming course tutors.
- The Community
This Project gave parents, teachers and children the opportunity to be actively involved in the an #inclusive environment. We believe that having that experience makes a difference.
- The Wider community
We anticipate that feedback to STA will increase the accessibility of their courses.

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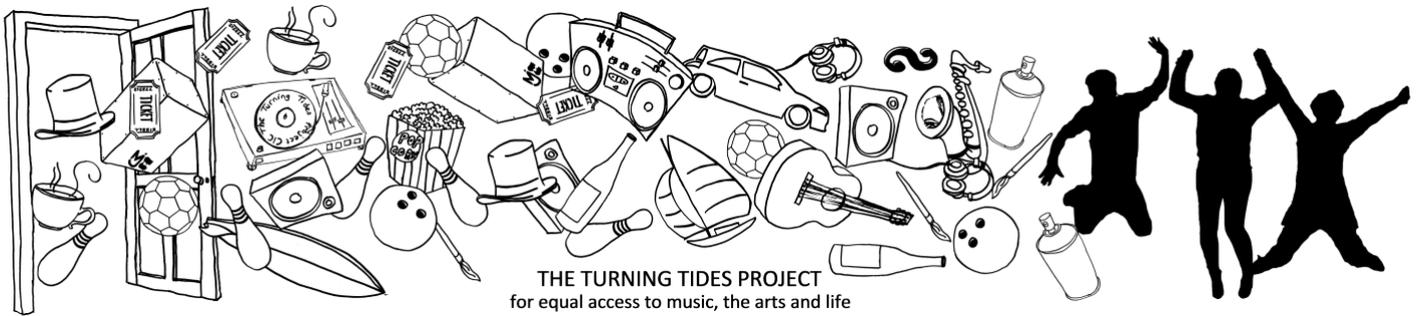


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What we think should happen next

- ❧ The TTTP Assistant Swimming Teacher Team would like to assist some swimming teachers with lessons. This will be discussed with Lord Meadow Leisure Centre.
- ❧ TTTP would like to work with Lords Meadow to establish #inclusive swimming sessions, swimming lessons and swimming courses.
- ❧ TTTP would like all swimming teachers, swimming tutors and leisure centre staff to participate in Social Model, Total Communication, 'Autism' and Creating Inclusive environments Training Workshops.
<http://www.theturningtidesproject.org.uk/training.html>
- ❧ We will actively look at how to develop the course and bring our work to the attention of the STA and Active Devon.

<http://www.theturningtidesproject.org.uk/inclusive-sports-qualifications.html>

Alix Mason, Support Worker and Jane Williams July 18

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