



inclusive fitness

## **Inclusive Fitness Initiative**

The Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) supports the fitness industry to offer a provision that caters for the needs of both disabled and non-disabled people alike.

In 1998 The Gary Jelen Sports Foundation commissioned some research and identified that the fitness industry was not catering effectively for the needs of disabled users. Following on from this research, a pilot programme was set up by the English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS) after receiving £1million of Sport England Lottery Funding in 2001 to test the IFI model, and build the foundations of a much more substantial programme which resulted in 29 accredited Inclusive Fitness Facilities. Due to the success of the pilot programme, Sport England supported the scheme further with £5million from the Lottery Fund. This resulted in the main rollout of the scheme incorporating 150 Facilities across England.

The IFI has recently been successful in securing £1.95million funding from the National Sports Foundation to work with a further 200 fitness facilities throughout England but this time shall target the Private Sector in a more substantial Fashion.

The Inclusive Fitness Initiative operates based upon five key principles:

- Accessible facilities
- Inclusive fitness equipment
- Staff with suitable knowledge and expertise
- Facilities that develop and implement inclusive marketing strategies
- The development of other inclusive physical activity opportunities

The IFI recently launched the Inclusive Fitness Mark (IFI Mark) which is the quality mark accreditation scheme based upon the principles of the £6million Lottery Funded Project the Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI). The IFI Mark is relevant to any fitness facility in the UK wishing to become more inclusive and accessible and is available on a fee paying basis.

Since its launch the IFI has had a staggering impact upon both the lives of disabled people and the fitness Industry on a domestic and international level. The Inclusive Fitness Initiative has managed to change the face of the leisure industry by making facilities accessible through creating an inclusive attitude and culture.

Within the South East there are currently 19 main scheme and 4 pilot scheme sites, and this is set to increase over the next two years due to the National Sports Foundation Programme.

If you would like further information on the Inclusive Fitness Initiative and the IFI South East Sites please contact:

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