

# Case study: Super Mash Up! at the Manchester Children's Hospital

## What is this case study about?

This case study is about the Super Mash Up! event, a sports and activity taster day hosted by the Manchester Children's Hospital Spina Bifida Multidisciplinary Team, which consists of Consultants, Specialist nurses and administration team. The event introduces children with mobility impairments and their families to different sporting activities.

The event is championed by staff from the Manchester Children's Hospital and is targeted at young patients with mobility impairments (in particular, spina bifida).



## What does the approach aim to do?

- Introduces children and their siblings to sport in an inclusive family day-out at a sports venue.
- Connect disabled children and their families with clubs and activities through experiencing several different sports first-hand.
- Show parents the opportunities that are available for their children.
- Educate children, parents, and the health sector about sports and activity opportunities.
- Link physical activity organisations and hospital staff.
- Enable continued rehabilitation outside of the hospital through community sport and activities.

## How does the approach work?

The annual event is held on a weekend, in the regional arena in Manchester. Several sports activities are set up for children to try (like a climbing wall, indoor athletics, tennis, cycling, archery). There is also an area called 'Activity Street' where local clubs and organisations can share information.

Parents are invited through clinics, and there is no need to book to take part. Each event has been attended by around 80 people, including parents and siblings.

## What makes this approach work?

**Fun:** Children have so much fun and it gets siblings and parents involved.

**Sibling-inclusive:** Including all the children in the family reinforces the message that sport is inclusive. It also means that parents don't have to worry about childcare for other siblings.

**Educating and inspiring parents:** Parents were struggling to know where to send their children for sports opportunities. Some organisations run events or activity weeks for children who need SEND support, but many children with these conditions don't see themselves as disabled, or may be disabled but not classed as needing SEND support.



**“It was all about showing parents about what their child is capable of doing, given the opportunity.”**

**Involvement of healthcare professionals:** The time and support of passionate hospital clinicians and staff who helped run the day was key.



**“Having the surgeons fully involved is a real success. They can run their clinics and promote the activity day and give families information about what is available.”**

## Success smash



**“One man who came in 2019 as a child then became a tennis coach and now comes back to help run the day.”**

## Who is involved?

The event is driven by a core group of partners including:

- A key volunteer disability and inclusion consultant;
- Manchester Children's hospital Spina Bifida Team: Consultants, Specialist nurses and administration team;
- Sportshall Associates, who deliver athletics for children around the country; and
- Local sports clubs and groups.

**Funding** for the event was from the hospital (including charitable sources close to the Spina Bifida MDT Team, Kidneys for Life and Harry's Hydrocephalus Awareness Trust).

The hospital organised some of the practical **governance** issues, such as risk assessments.



“You are educating the children, educating the parents, and educating the health sector.”

## Opportunities for scaling up

- This event builds on **local champions** who are passionate about sport and physical activity, and who want to show families that sport can be inclusive and open up opportunities for everybody.
- Focusing on a healthcare-promoted **annual event** provides a fun opportunity for clinicians to share their passion about sport and raise awareness of local opportunities.

## Top ideas for inspiration

- **Co-produce the event name:** Children named the event themselves.
- **Work with partners:** Hospital clinicians and staff took part, and voluntary sector support organisations also attended, alongside Sportshall Associates.
- **Have some theatre!**



“There’s a small opening ceremony and a closing ceremony as well. The parents really get a lot back from the closing ceremony where everyone gets presented with certificates – everyone gets their moment to be celebrated.”

