

Is your club friendly, welcoming and open to all?

An Open Day can be a fantastic opportunity to build relationships with your community, attract new people to your club and provide existing members with great experiences.

- **Firstly, why do you want to run an Open Day?**

If it is just about putting up a few posters around town and then preparing tea/coffee and some biscuits, then don't bother!

There has to be a genuine, widespread desire throughout the club and it is a great opportunity to tidy up and give the club a good clean.

If you hire facilities such as at a leisure centre or school, get them involved with the day promoting their facilities and what they can offer to the local community.

Commitment and enthusiasm are prerequisites to having a great open day.

- **The more exciting your open day is, the more likely you are to attract media coverage**

Link up with a dynamic, local charity and raise money for them in connection with the open day. It demonstrates your community spirit, adds engagement through them and provides you with the opportunity of linking up with their supporters and perhaps even a local celebrity who is supporting the charity. A picture of a local celebrity trying out your sport raising money for a local charity is much appreciated by local newspapers.

Engage with potential and current community partners such as housing associations, resident and community groups, local council, health services or chambers of commerce.

- **Make sure you make everybody feel welcome**

Make sure that you place 'your friendliest members' at the entrance to welcome people when they arrive and wish them a 'safe journey' when they leave.

Plan your day in line with your target audience. If you are inviting children/families to come along organise games, face painting etc.

Let people get a feel of the club. Offer tours of the clubhouse and facilities so that they can see what facilities you can provide.

Create a social atmosphere: Try to use your open day to introduce new food and drink options into your club and see what works. You may have culinary skilled people within your club, people from other cultures or local restaurants who want to promote themselves.

▪ **Promotional materials**

Before you start spending lots of money on printing posters and leaflets decide where will you display these and how many will you need? Consider all places within the community where parents will be going, e.g. shops, doctor's surgery, community centres, libraries, dentists, church or local parish notice boards.

Get the parents involved, e.g. ask them to display a poster at their place of work.

Send an invitation to all past enquirers and lapsed members and remember to invite all those parents who have registered their children but have not yet started at your club.

If your club is facing a busy road, produce a big sign promoting your open day. To save money for the future, design it in such a way that it can re-used in future years simply by changing the date.

▪ **Logistics on the day**

Allocate roles for the day. Ask club members to talk to visitors or give a tour of the club, etc. Give all volunteers a briefing including the emergency action plan.

Set up a registration desk. Ensure you take down name and contact details, enabling you to follow up enquiries and offer them a taster session.

Make sure that everything and everywhere is clean and tidy, including toilets and notice boards.

Give visitors membership forms to complete or take away or even better give people an incentive to join there and then.

▪ **Follow-up**

Now that you have done all the hard work and run a successful open day it can be tempting to relax. However, don't stop now! Now is the time to recruit those new members and volunteers and follow up with potential partners, while the great experiences from the open day are still fresh in their memory.

Make sure you fulfil all your promises to your new members and send those follow-up emails and texts; assign a buddy to each of them.

Take photos and videos, put them on your Facebook page, website and send them out via Twitter - tell the world about your great event!