

Active Nottingham Leisure Centre first in the country to be recognised for tackling inequalities

Active Nottingham's Ken Martin Leisure Centre (part of Nottingham City Council) in Nottingham has become the first leisure centre in the country to achieve the Quest Tackling Inequalities in Leisure Standard, demonstrating its commitment to tackling inequalities.

The Tackling Inequalities in Leisure accolade was bestowed on the centre as part of its Sport England Quest assessment, which measures how well a facility is operating and how effective organisations are across a range of areas.

First established more than 20 years ago, the renowned Quest award has evolved over the years to keep pace with the ever-changing sport and leisure industry, now including aspects such as the Tackling Inequalities assessment and an Exercise on Referral Standard. Still the sector's best-known improvement programme, its rigorous assessments challenge even the very best leisure centres in the UK.

Councillor Pavlos Kotsonis, Nottingham City Council's Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture, said: *"I'm thrilled that our efforts and the ongoing work at Ken Martin Leisure Centre have been recognised with the Tackling Inequalities in Leisure Standard. This is a fantastic achievement and a testament to the dedication and hard work of our team. As a service, Active Nottingham is committed to providing accessible leisure facilities and I hope this encourages more local residents with disabilities and those with long-term health conditions to be active."*

Ken Martin Leisure Centre was recognised for working hard to ensure all demographics of the local community are welcome and find the centre accessible, which includes partnering with trusted local organisations, such as housing associations, primary care networks, social prescribing teams and mental health services.



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The Sport and Physical Activity team have also been working with the community to help remove any barriers to access through campaigns such as Get Out Get Active, This Girl Can and the Disability Sport Insight and Participation project, which invited people living with a disability to try the facility for free in exchange for honest feedback.

Kirsty Worthington, General Manager at Ken Martin Leisure Centre says: ***“As well as proactively researching the demographics of our area so we can anticipate some of our community’s needs, we take a more holistic and individualistic appreciation of their requirements by working with partners, such as My Sight Notts, Disability Direct and the Women’s Centre, and local projects, including community-based sports groups, to directly engage with people living in the local area.*”**

***“This includes attending local meetings and events, such as community fun days, inviting groups to attend the centre and help alleviate first-time visit anticipation, as well as offering virtual tours and subtitled centre walk-through videos on our website and social media, so people know what to expect in advance.*”**

“The area around the centre has some of the highest levels of deprivation across the UK,

experiencing a number of health challenges. Added to this, the area has a mixed population of ethnicities, including new and emerging communities, a large proportion of families and single parent families, as well as a significant population of older people. We need to offer programmes and activities that truly cater for everyone.”

Some of the activities that ticked the boxes for the Tackling Inequalities in Leisure Standard assessment team include Swim for Health, a 50+ morning and line dancing classes, which all attract a diverse attendance, as well as low intensity mental health mindfulness classes, which enable customers to learn mindfulness meditation practices to help relax, reduce stress, slow down and live their life in the present.

Along with Active Nottingham’s other leisure centres, Ken Martin also boasts CredAbility accreditation; an independent quality mark run by disabled people, and the CredAbility Access Card, a national scheme that commits organisations to providing a quality service to people with a disability. The CredAbility Access +1 card scheme also allows holders to gain free access for essential companions or carers at Active Nottingham leisure centres.



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Worthington explains: *"The CredAbility Access Card acts as evidence that someone needs support to use our services or is eligible for our offers. Not only does it mean we discreetly know they are entitled to concessionary prices and may require individual help, they know we are a verified accessible venue with their best interests at heart."*

Sarah Maxwell, Head of External Accreditations at Right Directions, which manages Quest on behalf of Sport England, says: *"We were truly impressed with the investment Ken Martin Leisure Centre has made around inclusivity for its local community. For instance, the video on the Swim School is one of the most inclusive videos I have seen as an Assessor, with information being available in picture, sound and caption formats for members of the community, users and coaches."*

"All the evidence, which includes investment in Disability Training Scenario Videos and Unconscious Bias Training to help prepare staff for their roles, demonstrates the centre and organisation are quality, not quantity, driven, with a focus on individual opportunities and thought, without taking a 'blanket approach' to their customers' needs."

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Editor's notes:

Quest is the UK Quality Scheme for sport and leisure. Managed on behalf of Sport England by Right Directions, it is a tool for continuous improvement, designed primarily for the management of leisure facilities and leisure development. Quest defines industry standards and good practice, and encourages their ongoing development and delivery within a customer-focused management framework. questaward.org



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