**IMPACT Inclusive Volunteering Project**

**CSP: Northamptonshire**

**Creating new Partnerships**

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Figure 1 below shows the different types of impairments faced by all volunteers recruited and deployed through the IMPACT project in Northamptonshire. Learning disabilities was the most common impairment (53%) and nearly a third of the volunteers had a mental health condition. This is representative of some of the key partner organisations that were involved in the Northamptonshire project; including a group of students from Northampton College (all with learning disabilities and some with complex needs) and Northampton Hope Centre and REMPLOY (mental health conditions and complex needs).

**Figure 1. Impairments of deployed volunteers in Northamptonshire**

Northants brokered a relationship with an employment agency called REMPLOY. They specialise in helping people with disabilities get back into volunteering and employment while also helping to support other complex needs.

The Volunteer Officer worked in close partnership with REMPLOY’s Employment Advisor to provide support for individuals who would benefit and would be ready for volunteering in sport. Many of these individuals had complex needs including confidence when around other people, and anxiety in certain environments and situations. Other barriers included; self-confidence, self-esteem, anxiety issues, transport to sessions, costs, lack of time.

REMPLOY helped to identify potential volunteers who would be ready and would benefit from volunteering in sport, all of which had mental health issues and complex needs. As the REMPLOY officer already had built up trust with the volunteers, this helped get over any initial anxiety issues when meeting the Volunteer Officer for the first time to discuss volunteering opportunities. The journey from that first meeting to discuss opportunities to being deployed took longer than expected, sometimes 3 or 4 separate meetings to build their confidence, not turning up at sessions to name just some of the issues along the way.

In total Northants recruited 7 volunteers through the partnership with REMPLOY and have deployed 4 so far. 3 volunteers dropped out of the process along the way for various reasons including health, not the right opportunity available currently, and time constraints.

Although there have been many challenges working with REMPLOY to recruit a small number of volunteers, it is important to recognise that there have been huge benefits for these particular volunteers in terms of their personal development.

Now that a working relationship has been developed with REMPLOY, the CSP will continue to work in partnership with REMPLOY to recruit more volunteers and work with clubs to support these volunteers.