

# JAMES

**From an early age, James saw physical activity as something that was done to him to 'fix' his disability.**

At school, he was often pulled out of classes to travel to a rehab centre for physiotherapy. He also attended some camps for children with disabilities, but didn't enjoy them as they were run by non-disabled helpers and often framed as way to give parents a break.



*"It wasn't something that I had a huge amount of agency [in]."*



*"Disabled people can be outgoing and competitive too! I'm always looking for ways and spaces to express that side of me."*

**However, as a competitive younger person, James absolutely loved sport.**

He enjoyed watching his friends play anything from foursquare to pingpong, to team sports - and would often referee for them. Now, James still loves following lots of sports - on TV, playing on the Playstation, and going to live games when he can.

**When it comes to accessing outdoor recreation spaces, James gets tired**

of the amount of time it requires to find out if a track, path, or space is actually accessible, and being let down. Websites rarely have any accessibility information, and ringing the local council can take days to hear back and still might not provide clear or accurate answers. Often, when they do find an accessible path, it will get to a point where it's no longer accessible and his family have to leave him behind.

**He has a friend in a wheelchair who does boxing, which he'd be interested in trying,**

but the logistics required are a barrier as mainstream active spaces, such as gyms, are usually inaccessible. Often the only option for people with disabilities is to use gyms in rehab centres alongside people recovering from traumatic brain injuries, which isn't the most positive environment to be in.



*"Going to a pathway or track that you've heard is accessible, and then there's three stairs. That can only happen so many times before you become sceptical. It's demoralising, to be given this false sense of hope for being invited."*



*"Fresh air, sunlight, trees - they're all good things, but they're hidden behind soft gravel pathways, or stairs, or gates, or curbs. And they don't have to be."*

**Looking forward, James wants to see more inclusion by design, where online and sport and rec spaces are explicitly welcoming for people with a range of abilities.**

He wants clear information about how accessible spaces are, so he can make informed decisions about where he can and can't explore outside of his comfort zone. In the future, he hopes there is comprehensive accessibility legislation, and recreational spaces that enable fun and movement in a way that doesn't ask people to be anyone other than who they are.

**To create a physical activity system that works better for James, see opportunities 2, 3, 4 and 5.**