



Adaptive Paddlesport Equipment

This list gives a starting point to help you source equipment that can make paddlesport more inclusive for people with disabilities. It is by no means exhaustive and people are always coming up with new ways to improve the paddling experience and performance of paddlers with disabilities. In many cases, equipment can be made or adapted by coaches and club members.

Adaptive equipment should improve an individual's ability and performance when undertaking paddlesport activities, whilst not creating an undue level of risk. Before using any additional equipment it is up to the individuals involved to undertake the necessary risk assessments. Any adaptations or deviations from the manufacturer's intended use should be approved by your technical advisor or other competent individual.

We have suggested possible suppliers, but many of the products are available from a number of outlets. Please shop around to find the best deals and most reputable suppliers.

To gain a better understanding in selecting the correct equipment and its use, we would strongly recommend undertaking a BCU accredited Disability Awareness Training course.

This list has been compiled by the Lake District Calvert Trust based on their extensive experience of working with people with disabilities for over 34 years.

Version 1: 28/02/12

Product	Image	Suppliers	Notes
Seating			
Old Town Canoes snap in centre seat		Canoe and kayak retailer such as: Brookbank canoes www.canoesandkayaks.co.uk	Lower seat height than most permanent seats. Lowers the centre of gravity and improves balance.
Old Town Canoes Sitbacker chair		Canoe and kayak retailer such as: Brookbank canoes www.canoesandkayaks.co.uk	Fixes on top of any canoe seat. Provides some increased back support but no lateral support.
Old Town Canoes webbed seat back		Canoe and kayak retailer such as: Brookbank canoes www.canoesandkayaks.co.uk	Only works on wooden/webbing seats but fixes securely providing good back support however doesn't provide any lateral support.
Plastic chair		Hardware supplier/office furniture retailer	Chair legs can be removed and the seat fitted onto any canoe seat (using webbing straps) or placed on the bottom of a boat. Provides additional back support. Designs with curved backs give minor lateral stability.
Foam blocks		Canoe and kayak retailer such as: Brookbank canoes www.canoesandkayaks.co.uk (often used in outfitting kayaks)	Can be sat on directly in the bottom of a canoe or in conjunction with a plastic chair to provide a low stable seat with back support.
High backed sit on top back rest		Canoe and kayak retailer such as: Brookbank canoes www.canoesandkayaks.co.uk	Some designs provide better back support than others. They can also be used to improve support of canoe and kayak seats.
Jackson Kayaks Sweet Cheeks		Canoe and kayak retailer such as: Brookbank canoes www.canoesandkayaks.co.uk	Vacuum bean bag pad can provide low level pressure relief. Can also be used to improve connectivity with a seat.
Vicair allrounder		Care products supplier such as: Gerald Simonds Tel: 0800 220975 www.gerald-simonds.co.uk	Pressure relief cushion with waist and leg straps. Will move with the user. Caution: this will significantly affect how the user floats in a swimming situation: consider replacing air padding with alternative like roll mat foam.

Aquabac		Equal Adventure Tel: 01479 861200 www.equaladventure.org	Specialist highly adaptable and highly supportive seating system. Time consuming to set for different users.
Steve Derwin seat		Lake District Calvert Trust Tel: 017687 72255 www.calvert-trust.org.uk/lake-district	Fibre glass moulded seat that provides a high level of support. Requires use of additional padding to customise fit.
Armadillo		Equal Adventure Tel: 01479 861200 www.equaladventure.org	Adjustable bean bag design and high level of support but limits active paddling position.
Bean bag		Reefer sails Tel: 01404 831333 www.reefersails.com Funky starfish Tel: 01286 830890 www.funkystarfish.com	Offers a high level of support but limits active paddling position. Very quick and easy to place in a canoe.
Burnett bath support		Care Ability Tel: 0191 4159777 www.care-ability.co.uk	Waterproof vacuum bean bag seating designed for use in baths. Provides highly customised fit and pressure relief, requires additional shell or seat to provide support.
Anti slip matting		Hardware retailer such as: www.maplin.co.uk www.wilkinsonplus.com	Rubberised matting to prevent seats slipping in boats or participants slipping out of seats.
Pressure relief cushion		Care products supplier such as: www.betterlifehealthcare.com www.gerald-simonds.co.uk www.sunrisemedical.com	Some individuals will require specialist pressure relief cushions. If required, most people will have their own but there may be issues with it getting wet. Not all cushions float.

Wheelchair		Participant's own wheelchair Numerous wheelchair manufacturers	Canoes with thwarts moved towards the ends of the boats and rafted together create a stable platform that enables a wheelchair to be placed in the centre of one or both canoes, allowing participants to remain in their wheelchair: often a last resort.
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Increasing stability			
Crew saver mast head float 9L		Crewsaver Tel: 023 9252 8621 www.crewsaver.co.uk	Used as outriggers for kayak or canoe. Using webbing straps two floats can be attached alongside the canoe/kayak and inflated/positioned to suit.
Fenders		Chandlery supplier such as: www.force4.co.uk	Used as outrigger for kayak. Range of shapes and sizes available. Fixed to the hull by means of webbing straps.
Kayak outriggers		Brookbank canoes www.canoesandkayaks.co.uk	Harmony (USA) inflatable sea kayak outriggers. May need adapting to fit river kayaks.
Canoe outriggers		Linder canoes www.linder.se	Custom outriggers that bolt into the gunwale of the canoe. DIY versions can be made from aluminium tubing and foam blocks tied to thwarts.
Foam bits		Any source of soft foam (old buoyancy aid foam is ideal)	Small pieces of soft foam can be used to pad seating making it more comfortable and increasing paddler connectivity.
Bean bags		Home made (fabric and polystyrene beads)	Small beanbags can be used to pad seats making them more comfortable and increasing paddler connectivity.

Moving and handling aids			
Slide board		Care products supplier such as: www.betterlifehealthcare.com www.patient-handling.com www.care-ability.co.uk www.westholme.co.uk	Used to bridge a gap between wheelchair and alternative seat. Enables an individual to slide across rather than being lifted.
Slide sheet		Care products supplier such as: www.betterlifehealthcare.com www.care-ability.co.uk www.silvalealtd.co.uk www.westholme.co.uk	Used in conjunction with slide boards slide sheets can aid in transfers from wheelchairs to boats and back.
XL slide board		Home made.	Larger slide board to bridge bigger gaps e.g. from jetty to canoe. Ensure it is of sufficient thickness and has one side with a smooth surface to aid sliding.
Bench		Home made.	Can be used as a "stepping stone" to aid transfers between wheelchair and boat and back again.
Patient handling belt		Care products supplier such as: www.betterlifehealthcare.com www.patient-handling.com www.silvalealtd.co.uk www.care-ability.co.uk	Used to help an individual who is unsteady on their feet to balance. Preferable to holding the buoyancy aid so as not to pull it out of place.
Transfer seat		Care Ability healthcare Tel: 01914 159777 www.care-ability.co.uk	Patient handling sling. Enables a team of trained individuals to safely lift and transfer someone with limited mobility.
Promove transfer sling		Promove UK Ltd Tel: 01970 820 893 www.promove.uk.com	Patient handling sling. Enables a team of trained individuals to safely lift and transfer someone with limited mobility.
Hoist sling		Care products supplier such as: www.care-ability.co.uk www.patient-handling.com www.silvalealtd.co.uk www.westholme.co.uk	Some people will require a hoist to transfer in and out of their wheelchair. Most people will have their own slings but may not wish them to get wet. Wide range of designs and sizes available.

Grip aids			
Active Hands gripping aid		The Active Hands Company Ltd Tel: 0118 9618481 www.activehands.co.uk	Product designed to aid people with limited grip strength.
Fish II paddle retainer		Equal Adventure Tel: 01479861200 www.equaladventure.org	Device to enable a participant to use a canoe paddle with one hand. When attached to the shoulder of the buoyancy aid it supports the T grip end of the paddle.
North Water paddle anchor		Canoe and kayak retailer such as: Brookbank canoes www.canoesandkayaks.co.uk	Alternative to the Fish II. It has a press stud fastening instead of quick release cam buckle.
Fist 3		Equal Adventure Tel: 01479861200 www.equaladventure.org	Product designed to aid people with limited grip strength.
Velcro glove		Home made (waterproof glove, Velcro)	Velcro sewn onto the palm and thumb of an old waterproof glove can assist someone to grip the paddle when used in conjunction with a paddle with Velcro strip (see paddles)
The Slip B		Equal Adventure Tel: 01479861200 www.equaladventure.org	Specialist device to enable someone with one arm to use a kayak paddle.

Consideration must be given to the paddler's ability to release the grip/paddle in an emergency. The inability to release the paddle in the event of a capsize can pose an entrapment issue and may prevent a paddler from being able to position themselves so their face is out of the water.

Paddles			
Praddle		Chandlery supplier such as: www.force4.co.uk	One handed paddle - very simple to use. Can work well for individuals with learning disabilities as well as people with limited arm function.
Leaf pickers		Garden centre such as: www.hayesgardenworld.co.uk	Alternative to the Praddle. Larger surface area so requires greater effort to use.
Webbed gloves		Swimming or outdoor retailer such as: www.wetsuitoutlet.co.uk www.namronuk.com	Useful to improve hand paddling and to keep hands warm. May prove very difficult to put on.
Junior wooden canoe paddle		Canoe and kayak retailer such as: Brookbank canoes www.canoesandkayaks.co.uk	Very light with small blade area, ideal for people with limited strength or who tire very quickly.
Lightweight sea kayak paddle		Canoe and kayak retailer such as: Brookbank canoes www.canoesandkayaks.co.uk	Light weight and small blade area to assist people with less arm strength or no trunk rotation (all power coming from the arms). Longer shaft allows for a shallower paddling stroke which aids balance.
Adjustable feather kayak paddle		Canoe and kayak retailer such as: Brookbank canoes www.canoesandkayaks.co.uk	Adjustable feather can aid people by simplifying forward paddling by removing the need to rotate the paddle.
Paddle with Velcro strip		Home made (Velcro)	Used in combination with a velcro glove to improve the grip on the paddle.
Unfeathered painted paddle		Home made (coloured paint)	Different coloured blades assist with communication particularly with people with visual impairments or learning disabilities.
Paddle with padded grips		Home made (anti slip mat, gaffa tape)	Increases paddle shaft diameter and friction to assist people with limited grip strength
Paddle with bike inner tube grip		Home made (bike inner-tube, cable ties and gaffer tape)	To aid with grip strength hands can be slid under the slightly tensioned inner tube.

Miscellaneous			
Quick release belt		Home made (webbing, cam buckle, ladder buckle, float)	Wheelchair users may need chest straps to provide additional trunk support to prevent them falling out of seating. The system must be designed to be quickly and easily released in an emergency. The possibility of release systems jamming/breaking must be considered. Risk assessments must be undertaken as people are being secured to boats.
Stump angels		Equal Adventure Tel: 01479861200 www.equaladventure.org	Adaptation for lower limb amputees allowing them to brace themselves when sitting in a canoe or kayak.
Caterpillar		Equal Adventure Tel: 01479861200 www.equaladventure.org	Provides neck support. Has a quick release mechanism.
Neck support		Care products supplier such as: www.betterlifehealthcare.com	Can be used to provide neck support. Useful if participants wheelchair has a headrest.
Simple canoe sail		Brookbank canoes www.canoesandkayaks.co.uk	Sail can be used for extra layer of protection from the wind, 'log roll' rescues or as a slide sheet.
Canoe rudder		Home made. (plywood, sailing rudder fixing pins, thin cord)	Steering strings can be used by a paddler with limited strength or mobility to actively steer the boat.
Haul Tapes		Home made (old climbing ropes)	Loop of old climbing rope or similar. Used to assist a wheelchair user on steep or rough terrain. Fix to a solid section of the chair at the front.
Webbing straps		Online supplier such as: www.absoluteindustrial.co.uk	Very useful for fixing seats into boats or creating leashes for paddles that may be dropped. Lengths cut to suit.