CARE DEEPLY SHARE FREELY

with Sharity & Friends

Befriending PERSONS with DISABILITIES

AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO PROMOTING DISABILITY AWARENESS AND INCLUSION









In the spirit of



IMAGINE AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY,

where everyone is accepting of one another and always ready to help others.

How can we get there?



Thank you for exploring this theme under the "Start Small Dream Big" Initiative.

The values of caring can never be underestimated. It creates a positive environment for nurturing children and also make a difference to the wider community. Young children can learn to care for persons with disabilities in various ways, from classroom-based activities to participating in befriending activities at disability agencies. They will also learn about the importance of empathy and respect.

Seize the chance to instil positive attitudes in your students! Let us guide you through this journey with information on the definition of disability, how to plan an activity with a disability agency and the considerations when planning such an activity.

- What is disability?
- Why do we befriend Persons with Disabilities?
- 3 How to get started?
- 4 How can I work with the agency?
 - a. Preparation
 - b. During the Session
 - c. After the Session
- Success stories
- 6 Facilitating inclusive play virtually

Happy caring and sharing!

Team sharity





WHAT IS DISABILITY?

1. DISABILITY IN SINGAPORE



DEVELOPMENTAL

Autism Spectrum Disorder
Down Syndrome
Cerebral Palsy
Intellectual Disabilities

TYPES OF DISABILITIES2



SENSORY

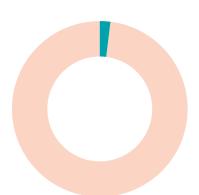
Deafness Visual Impairment



PHYSICAL

Amputation
Muscular Dystrophy
Paralysis
Polio
Spina Bifida
Spinal Cord injury
(Paraplegia or Quadriplegia)
Stroke

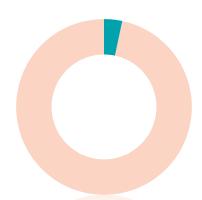
THE PREVALENCE RATE³ OF DISABILITY IN SINGAPORE



Student population

2.1%

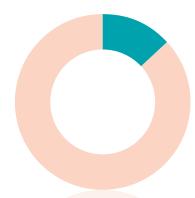
of student population



18-49 years

3.4%

of resident population



50 years and above

13.3%

of resident population

² From "Enabling Masterplan 3" (2017), Foreword. https://www.ncss.gov.sg/NCSS/media/NCSS-Documents-and-Forms/EM3-Final_Report_20161219.pdf

³ From "Removing Barriers: Understanding Persons with Disabilities" (2015) http://www.ncss.gov.sg/Press-Room/Publications/Detail-Page.aspx?id=Understanding-Persons-with-Disabilities

2. EVALUATING YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING OF DISABILITY

In 2015, NCSS conducted a study to measure the public's attitudes towards persons with disabilities ("the Study"). The study comprises three components of attitudes: affect (how the person feels), behaviour (how the person acts) and cognition (how the person thinks).

Across disability types, the public has the best attitude towards persons with sensory impairments, followed by physical impairments, autism and intellectual disability.

Before you embark on this project, take some time to reflect on your own awareness of disability and your attitudes towards persons with disabilities.



How do you feel and think about persons with disabilities? How do you act around them? How do you interact with persons with disabilities?

DID YOU KNOW?

In Singapore⁴, the public's attitudes towards persons with disabilities are **less favourable** compared to someone without disability.

Understand more about persons with disabilities through the following resources:

Removing Barriers

'See The True Me' Campaign Videos



⁴ NCSS Attitude Study (2015). In 2015, NCSS conducted a study to measure the public's attitudes towards persons with disability ("the Study"). The Study highlighted that attitude comprises of three components, affect (how the person feels), behaviour (how the person acts) and cognition (how the person thinks).

3. EVALUATING YOUR STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF DISABILITY

Children perceive disabilities from physical appearances and social competence. As such, they are likely to only understand disabilities based on physical cues from others, whether or not the person uses special equipment, and if they themselves are able to experience it (e.g. they may understand blindness by closing their eyes).

Often, they are unaware or less inclined to consider disabilities without physical manifestations as disabilities⁵.



From, "Kindergarten Children's Understanding of and Attitudes Toward People with Disabilities" (2005), Topics in Early Childhood Special Education 25:2.



REFLECT ON THE DISABILITY-RELATED EXPERIENCES YOUR STUDENTS HAVE.

- With disabilities?
- Is there a classmate with a disability?
- With them before?

Knowing your own experiences and the students' experiences make for meaningful engagements.



WHY DO WE BEFRIEND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES?

SOCIAL INCLUSION AND STIGMA

Almost 1 in 2 children with special needs

do not have typically developing friends.

(Lien Foundation, 2016)



Other Issues and challenges faced by people with disabilities in Singapore

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS AND SUPPORT (0-6 YEARS OLD)

As of 2015, there are about

7,000 children

aged 6 and below with special needs.

(TODAY, 2015)

Between 2010 and 2014, there was a

76% increase

in children with developmental delays, in particular autism spectrum disorders.

(Ministry of Health, 2016)

EDUCATIONAL PATHWAYS AND SUPPORT (7-18 YEARS OLD)

There are

1,730 students

with moderate to severe disabilities

in public-funded schools. (Ministry of Education, 2016)

Between 2013 and 2016, the number of students

with mild special educational needs in mainstream schools rose from

13,000 to 18,000.

(Ministry of Education, 2016)

LESS VISIBLE DISABILITIES

1 in 150 children

in Singapore have autism.

(3rd Enabling Masterplan, 2017-2021)

About

1 in 1,000 babies

in Singapore are born with hearing loss each year.

(The Singapore Association for the Deaf, 2016)

ABUSE AND BULLYING OF PWDs

Over the past 5 years,

abuse of adult PWDs by family members has almost

doubled.

(Care Corner Project StART, 2016)



HOW TO GET STARTED?

Based on the student's awareness of disabilities and extent of interaction with persons with disabilities, you may consider the disability type, extent of disability⁶ and age group of the group to work with.

A point to consider – students are likely to understand disabilities in terms of physical behaviour and physical competence. However, contact with persons with behavioural disabilities (i.e not physical or sensory) is likely to improve attitudes towards individuals of all disability types⁷. You may select the appropriate disability type based on readiness of the pre-school educators and pre-school students, and openness of parents to such interaction activities.





INTEGRATED CHILD CARE PROGRAMME (ICCP)

PROGRAMME TYPE

ICCP is an inclusive child care programme for children with mild disabilities. Providing these children with a natural learning environment alongside mainstream peers will help prepare them for future entry into mainstream primary education.

For a list of service providers, please refer *here*.

Mixed disability types comprising:

- 1. Children with mild to moderate range in any of the following Developmental Delays (Global Developmental Delay, Speech Delay, Intellectual Disability etc), Autism Spectrum Disorder, Physical Disability, Hearing Impairment (with prescribed hearing aids only) and Visual Impairment (with prescribed corrective lenses only)
- 2. Mainstream students

SPECIAL EDUCATION SCHOOLS (SPED SCHOOLS)

PROGRAMME TYPE

SPED schools run programmes which cater to distinct disability profiles of children with special educational needs.

For the list of schools, please refer *here*.

DAY ACTIVITY CENTRES (DACs)

PROGRAMME TYPE

DAC is a community-based facility that provides care and skills training to persons with disabilities aged 16 and above.

The DAC programme is designed to equip persons with disabilities with daily living skills and community living skills to maximise their independence. The activities also aim to meaningfully occupy persons with disabilities with social and recreational activities. Therapeutic and behavioural intervention services may be provided at some centres. DAC also provides a form of respite for caregivers during the day.

For a list of service providers, please refer *here*.

⁶ Severity of disability ranges to mild to severe.

⁷ From, "Attitudes Toward Individuals with Disabilities: The Effect of Contact with Different Disability Types" (2014), Curr Psychology, 34:223-238. Source: SGEnable

Direct, frequent and sustained contact, i.e interacting directly with persons with disabilities over a period of time is effective in improving students' attitudes towards disability.



16 YEARS OLD AND ABOVE

DROP-IN DISABILITY PROGRAMMES (DDP)

PROGRAMME TYPE

DDP is conducted in a community-based facility that provides social, recreational and/or therapeutic training activities for adults with disabilities. It aims to keep persons with disabilities meaningfully engaged and integrated within the community while providing a form of respite for caregivers.

DDP is best suited for persons with disabilities who are sufficiently independent and require a few hours of social, recreational and/or therapeutic activities each week to maintain their level of functioning and remain engaged in the community.

For a list of service providers, please refer <u>here</u>.

SHELTERED WORKSHOPS

PROGRAMME TYPE

Sheltered Workshops offer employment and/or vocational training to adults with disabilities who do not possess the competencies or skills for open employment.

Sheltered workshops allow participants to practice in jobs or tasks where the processes are either simple or broken down into simpler steps. Participants will gain valuable experience at the workshop, thereby improving their prospects for open employment.

For a list of service providers, please refer <u>here</u>.



Alternatively, you may contact your nearest disability agency to collaborate. To locate a nearby disability agency, consider using the NCSS' Social Service Navigator.

It is recommended to engage an agency nearby so as to facilitate regular interaction and meaningful engagement. Direct, frequent and sustained contact⁸, i.e interacting directly with persons with disabilities over a period of time is effective in improving students' attitudes towards disability⁹. It is also likely the children will encounter persons with disabilities from the nearby partnering agency and will be able to practice what they learnt.

Another way to decide on the partnering agency can be based on key disability awareness days. Throughout the year, there are days dedicated to raising awareness for a particular disability type. You may consider organising an event around such a day and engaging an agency related to that disability. Here are some examples:

- 1. Last day of Feb: Rare Disease Day
- 2. **21 March**: World Down Syndrome Day
- 3. 2 April: World Autism Awareness Day
- 4. **7 September:**World Duchenne
 Awareness Day
- 5. **23 September**: International Day of Sign Languages
- 6. **6 October**:
 World Cerebral Palsy Day
- 7. **15 October**: International White Cane Day
- 8. **November**: Purple Parade

⁸ From, "Kindergarten Children's Understanding of and attitudes toward people with disabilities." (2005), TECSE 25:2, 95-105.

⁹ From, "Interventions utilising contact with people with disabilities to improve children's attitudes towards disability: A systematic review and meta-analysis." (2017), Disability and Health Journal, 1:11-22.



HOW CAN I WORK WITH THEM?

Once you've found a partnering agency, you may consider the following initiatives, with suggested timelines, for a more holistic engagement:



PREPARATION ABOUT 2 MONTHS BEFORE ACTUAL ACTIVITY

UNDERSTANDING THE DISABILITY TYPE AND ENGAGING THE ORGANISATION

Read online resources, such as NCSS' e-brochure "Removing Barriers: Understanding Persons with Disabilities".

1. GO AND SEE!

- Arrange a visit to the disability centre to understand the partnering agency and profile of persons with disabilities. The partnering agency may also consider arranging a visit to the pre-school to understand the profile of the students.
- Consider how to measure the attitudinal and behavioral change from the interaction.
- You may find out more from online resources such as NCSS' e-brochure "Removing Barriers: Understaing Persons with Disabilities"

2. DISCUSS IT!

Share expectations and needs of each organisation and discuss the respective roles and responsibilities. Some suggested topics to cover (this list is not exhaustive):

- What are the abilities of the participants?
- What kind of activities should be conducted? How regular will the engagements be?
- What are the potential risks and mitigation strategies? How to best support the participating pre-school and disability centre?
- What guidelines does each agency have, such as photo-taking, space constraints, frequency of breaks, duration of interaction, hygiene and safety protocol?
- Which organisations will prepare the relevant logistics?
- Expenses and budget (e.g. activity materials, refreshment, transport)

3. ORGANISE THE VISIT!

- Consider 3 parts to the event: Warm-up, activity and on-site debrief.
- The activity should be simple, where the children and the person with disability can participate equally and befriend each other, for example, picking litter or playing simple sports. Try to avoid activities where students are almost always 'helping' persons with disabilities.
- Please refer to Annex A in the "Let's Play" booklet for easy and fun activities for students of varied abilities and resources such as the "SPARKS! Art for Wellness" Toolkit and "Hand in Hand" Activity Guide, developed by Agency for Integrated Care (AIC) and its partners, for other activity ideas. Both parties from the pre-school and disability agency could discuss further on how to modify the activity to better suit the needs of the participants.

PREPARATION OF THE STUDENTS

Before volunteering with persons with disabilities, it is recommended that the students are equipped with an understanding of the disability, what to expect and how they should behave towards persons with disabilities. Here are some ways to do so:

1. HEARING FROM A PERSON WITH DISABILITY

You may invite a person with disability to share with the students.

2. VISITING AN INCLUSIVE PLAYGROUND

Inclusive playgrounds have adaptive equipment for children of all abilities to play. Find your <u>nearest</u> <u>inclusive playground</u> and organise a trip there for students to learn about disabilities through the play equipment.

4. READING STORIES ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

One example is the "I am Unique" book series from Helang Books.

5. WATCH THE SHARITY & FRIENDS ANIMATIONS

These <u>cartoons</u> educate children about caring for persons with disabilities.

PREPARATION FOR OTHER COLLEAGUES

- ldentify and engage colleagues who will be involved in the implementation of the programme. Obtain their buy-in to reduce potential resistance and to ensure the smooth implementation of the programme. Here are some ways to do so:
 - Highlight benefits of the programme
 - Increase their knowledge on persons with disabilities using NCSS' brochure or e-learning modules
 - Encourage them to voice their concerns and work with them to resolve the issues
 - Have a clear delegation of roles and responsibilities for the implementation of the programme

ENGAGEMENT OF THE PARENTS

- Share the planned activity with parents to ensure parents are open to their child participating in the event.
- Reinforce key messages of disability awareness to parents and enlist their help to cultivate positive attitudes in their child.



section 4: How can I work with them?



DURING THE SESSION

Create opportunities for children to interact organically by providing encouragement and support. While supervising the children, take note of the following:

- Bridge children and persons with disabilities by initiating conversations or starting the activity between the two groups.
- Remind the children of respectful behaviours.
- Ensure children know who to look for if they have any questions or require help.



C. AFTER THE SESSION

DEBRIEFING THE CHILDREN

Provide affirmation and look for ways to recognise positive behaviour and actions.
Take the chance to clarify any misconceptions the students might have immediately after the session or as soon as you can.

DEBRIEFING WITH COLLEAGUES

- Gather input and feedback about the programme.
- Oetermine changes and improvements.

DEBRIEFING WITH PARTNER AGENCY

- Consider doing an After-Action Review with the agency. Reflect on the experience: how do the students feel after interacting with the persons with disabilities? Have the students learnt how to include one another?
- Oiscuss plans to sustain the partnership

SHARING OF EVENT WITH PARENTS

Share the progress of the child with the parent.



DRUMS FROM THE HEART

Grace Orchard School & Rulang Primary School

STUDENTS FROM GRACE ORCHARD SCHOOL AND RULANG PRIMARY SCHOOL PLAYING DRUMS TOGETHER



An example of inclusive play is the **Children-In-Action (CIA) programme**, run by Muscular Dystrophy Association Singapore (MDAS). The CIA programme, started in 2019, aims to create awareness towards the inclusive play opportunities available for children with and without special needs. By playing together, children of varied abilities developed a deeper understanding for one another hence they became more accepting and thoughtful.

In July 2019, MDAS and the teachers from Grace Orchard School and Rulang Primary School organised an inclusive Taiko Drumming session, where 15 students from Grace Orchard School and 15 students from Rulang Primary were each paired up with a student from the other school to learn the basics of Taiko Drumming.

Initially, students from both schools were apprehensive about interacting with each other. However, through the many rounds of Taiko drumming, the students were able to put aside their differences and focused on beating the same rhythm as a pair. The teacher from Grace Orchard and the principal from Rulang Primary School noted that their students worked very well together and collectively they have noticed a strong sense of confidence in their students.

"MY FRIENDS ARE SPECIAL BUT THEY ARE CHILDREN,
SO DO NOT TREAT THEM DIFFERENTLY."

Student, Rulang Primary School

- ➤ CIA activities are **co-created and planned** by Rulang Primary School, Grace Orchard School and MDAS.
- Teachers and students shared how the journey had made a positive impact in their lives and that students with and without special needs were able to work well together. A teacher from Grace Orchard School also commented how her students had gained confidence and could articulate better now.



FACILITATING INCLUSIVE PLAY VIRTUALLY 2



Conducting activities on virtual platforms are becoming increasingly popular. This section provides some tips on how to optimise facilitating virtual sessions.

As a lead facilitator, pre-schools will need to provide guidance and activity demonstrations for the disability agency. Ample preparation is key to a successful and engaging virtual engagement. Do get the children involved in the demonstration and activities!



PREPARATION FOR VIRTUAL ENGAGEMENTS:

- Ensure that the disability agency and your pre-school have the required resources for the virtual engagement. These include:
 - » Wi-Fi/data connection
 - » Sufficient number of devices (e.g. computers/tablets)
 - » Adequate equipments (e.g. project, speakers, headphones with microphones)
 - » Guide on the use of virtual platforms (e.g. Zoom, Skype, Teams)
- If possible, conduct a dry run two days before the engagement so that everyone is familiar with the technical aspects. Otherwise, provide step-by-step instructions (with visuals, preferably.) to guide the involved disability agency before the actual virtual engagement. Aside from testing the devices (visual/sound), do also agree on the roles of each party during the session (e.g. facilitator, technical support).

- ➤ Be sure to include the following in your email to the disability agency:
 - » Virtual platform link details (e.g. meeting room and password)
 - » Programme flow (including breaks, question and feedback sessions)- remember that the social component is just as important as the activity!
 - List of items required for the virtual engagement (including technical equipment and activity materials)



² Adapted from Agency For Integrated Care (2020) Planning Effective Group Activities: A Supplementary Guide to the AIC Wellness Programme and Other Group Activities for the Community Care Sector.

FACILITATING INCLUSIVE PLAY

- » A reminder on good practices as some participants may be new to virtual engagements:
 - Find a conducive space (quiet, uncluttered or use a virtual background) and turn on the virtual platform app camera during the session.
 - Switch on videos to encourage social interactions.
 - Switch on microphones and participate during discussion segments
 - If the session will be recorded, notify all participants and ensure that consent/media clearance from all parties have been sought prior to the virtual session. (Note: Do not record and/or share photos and videos without consent!)
- » Provide a contact number so that participants can reach the facilitator in the event any issues arise
- Limit the number of participants to a smaller group (depending on the activity nature), to enable enough attention to be given and for there to be ample social interaction and participation.
- ➤ Set aside at least 15 minutes to setup the virtual session. More time may be required if you have a more complex setup.
- Remind participants about what they can expect during the session. Providing some basic information about the participants can also help to facilitate the interaction.



TECHNICAL ASPECTS

1. KEEPING WITHIN THE INTERNET BANDWIDTH:

- Observers not facilitating the session can turn off their videos.
- If internet bandwidth is still an issue, observers can share devices having separate account logins on the same network.

2. CHECK YOUR VIDEO SETTINGS:

- Lighting: Have a light source either directly facing you (e.g. window with sunlight streaming through, monitor adjust your screen brightness accordingly) or no more than 45 degrees away.
- **Background:** Have an uncluttered background or a simple/plain virtual background so that participants can see you clearly.
- Framing: Make sure you are centred in the frame. For proper framing, your laptop camera should be eye-level. You can prop the camera higher with books, etc. Many virtual platforms have preview options, check how you/your activity looks and the camera angles required and adjust accordingly before your actual session and adjust accordingly.

3. CHECK YOUR AUDIO SETTINGS:

- **Location:** Find a quiet and conducive environment to minimise background noise or distractions.
- **Microphone:** You can use an external microphone including lapel microphones or those linked to headphones to ensure that you can hear and be heard clearly.

4. OTHER TECHNICAL MATTERS:

- Finsure that your technical devices are fully charged and that you have the charger handy, including contingency items such as spare extension cords, lights, computers/tablets, microphones, data card for internet connection.
- Ensure devices are placed far apart to prevent interference between devices.





TIPS

Some virtual platforms offer "breakout" rooms, which enable you to have smaller sub-groups for closer interactions and monitoring. Explore the functions of the virtual platform you are using to see how to customise and bring the experience "closer" to participants.

Be creative and have ice-breaker/warm-up activities that are connected to the main activity to get participants ready for the session or find out more about them as they engage in the activity.

For example, have participants identify themselves using their favourite animal and to address them accordingly either verbally via actions associated with it during the activity.

- Start the session earlier (e.g. 15-20 mins) to admit participants into the meeting room. You may choose to play some music to enliven the atmosphere while waiting for the disability agency to enter (especially when you have a larger number of participants).
- Check that they are able to see and hear you and vice versa, it is helpful to have another team member assist you (e.g., to mute participants, monitor the chat window, manage technical queries, etc.), while you facilitate the session.
- Invite the disability agency to turn on their videos.
- Give a short introduction of yourself.
- Share ground rules of the virtual engagement such as keeping the video on so participants know who they are speaking to and to create a warm atmosphere, having one participant speak at a time, etc.





- Encourage disability agency's participants (with their videos on) to provide a short introduction of themselves.
- Provide an overview/recap of the programme, including showing an end-product (if appropriate), providing details of break times and instructions on how the session will be conducted (e.g. if there will be a question and feedback time, include instructions on how to chat via the microphone, safety precautions that may need to be heeded, etc.).
- Speak in short and clear sentences. Check regularly if everyone is clear and are able to follow the instructions.
- Be mindful of the time, you may want to set a timer for yourself (or have a team member keep time for you) so that you can keep to the schedule.
- Look out for the needs of all participants, and make sure that all the seniors/clients are able to complete the necessary steps for the activity before proceeding to the next one. Offer a close up view if the activity requires a person to speak or demonstrate the activity.
- Take note of the atmosphere. Remember that the volunteering activity should be a positive experience, hence if participants are tired, it is alright to end the session slightly earlier.



- Provide time for participants to share and give feedback about the activity. Some questions that you could ask include:
 - **Q.** What did you enjoy most about this activity?
 - **b.** Are there any other activities that you would like to do in the future?

You may leave it open-ended, or do in a roundtable format where you can call the names of each participants to gather their responses.

- 1 Thank the participants for their time.
- 3 Seek feedback from the disability agency and observers if there were any areas of concern to address (e.g. virtual platform, activity). You may need to adjust and make changes to your next activity accordingly.
- Remind participants (if applicable) about the date and time for the upcoming session and any materials that they will need to prepare beforehand.



SUCCESS STORIES

RECYCLING FROM THE HEART

MIJ Special Education Hub & PCF Sparkletots @ Potong Pasir Blk 14

66 Working with Community Chest (ComChest) (NCSS) had been a joy from start to end! During the course of Start Small Dream Big (SSDB) program, ComChest had provided us with Sharity educational resources in regard to early childhood character development.

We used these Sharity videos and activity booklets to instil values and educate the children about inclusiveness – The theme for SSDB 2020.

Through ComChest, we are proud to also have an opportunity to partner with Muscular Dystrophy Association Singapore (MDAS). Our children made some snow globes using recycled glass jars and present them to MDAS for MIJ Special Education Hub. This gave our children to share their art and love with their counterparts in MIJ.

Due to the Covid-19 safety measures, we also managed to conduct some combined games and activities with MDAS and MIJ virtually. The activities organised by MDAS through Zoom was very interactive for the children which they really enjoyed participating in.

We want to take this opportunity thank everyone involved to piece together these beautiful activities together with PCF Sparkletots @ Potong Pasir Blk 14. We look forward to the following opportunity to work together! 99

Ms Vejaya

Pre-school teacher from PCF Sparkletots @ Potong Pasir Blk 14



CHILDREN VIEWING SHARITY VIDEOS



CHILDREN TAKING PART IN / VIRTUAL ACTIVITIES WITH NCSS



ZOOM EVENT PARTICIPANTS DURING VIRTUAL INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES WITH MIJ



CHILDREN PREPARING SNOW GLOBES USING RECYCLED GLASS JARS

WE'VE DONE IT!

We have enabled your students to meet people with different abilities and understand them better. However, this is not the end of the journey.

With the skills learnt by your students, may they enjoy their interaction with persons with disabilities.

Happy Caring and Sharing!

Team sharity

Staff-child ratio to be met during outdoor activities*

Level	No. of adult (including qualified programme staff	No. of Children
K2	1	15
K1	1	13
Nursery	1	10
Pre-Nursery	1	9
Playgroup	1	6

- The qualified programme staff-child ratio during programme hours must be met
- There must be at least 2 adults during the outdoor activity time, 1 of whom must be a qualified programme staff

Click *here* to find out more.



^{*} Requirements that centres are required to comply with at all times.

