Guidelines for customers with additional support requirements

At Go Ape, we want everyone who wishes to take part in a Go Ape adventure to be able to. We welcome anyone provided they meet the age and physical pre-requisites to take part. However, whilst our activities are designed to be accessible to the great majority of people they do offer a degree of physical and mental challenge. For some persons with additional support requirements this may mean that additional equipment and/or levels of supervision will be required for safe participation. For others the risks of injury may still be too great despite taking such additional measures, preventing their participation. This document gives you guidance about what to do if you are planning to Go Ape with persons with additional support requirements.

Risk Assessment

The staff at Go Ape are not medically qualified and so are not in a position to assess the capacity of participants with additional support requirements to undertake an activity. It remains your responsibility to undertake such an assessment prior to participation.

We are not in a position to set out a definitive list of all the conditions that might adversely affect a person's ability to undertake each of our activities safely. We therefore advise you to visit the location prior to booking to undertake your own risk assessment. You may also wish to contact the participant’s doctor for further advice.

What do the activities require?

Physical ability

Go Ape activities can be physically challenging, requiring a degree of physical fitness and coordination.

For Tree Top activities participants may need to be able to climb a number of rope ladders, attach karabiners to the safety system or manhandle safety system trolleys, cross obstacles and run into landing zones at the bottom of zip wires without physical assistance.

For Forest Segways all participants must be able to stand unaided for the full hour of the session. Whilst the machine balances itself it cannot be used as a support for the rider. All riders must be able to maintain three points of contact with the Segway whilst riding. Prosthetic limbs can be worn to achieve this.

Riders who may be visually impaired may be able to take part but riders must be able to steer and ride the machine independently. For this reason customers who are blind will be unable to take part.

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1 This is subject to operational constraints which differ for each activity but can be found online or in the 'who can Go Ape' Doc.
Mental maturity

All customers are given training in the use of safety equipment and systems prior to taking part in the activity. It is vital that all customers are able to understand this training and apply it throughout the activity, especially when not under direct supervision. If the safety instructions and advice are not followed a customer is at risk of serious injury or death.

If a participant is unable to remain attentive for the training and then apply what they have learned on the session, then the activity will be unsuitable for them.

Inappropriate or unsafe behaviour can create a risk of serious injury or death not only to the participant but also to other participants and/or park users. All participants must understand the responsibility they are assuming when taking part in the activity.

Due to the possible adverse affects of medication and the risk of unpredictable behaviour, the following conditions are likely to preclude participation in a Go Ape activity or require increased supervision ratios, where appropriate:

Psychiatric conditions
• Any acute psychosis
• Chronic schizophrenia
• Hypomania/Mania

Learning/behavioural disorders
• Severe Learning disorders;
• All severe developmental disorders – including Asperger’s Syndrome, autism, severe communication disorders, attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder; and
• All severe behaviour disorders – including personality disorders, Non-Epileptic Seizure Disorder and post head injury disorder.

Tree Top activities with physical disability
The physical ability required to undertake Go Ape activities has been set out above. Due to the individual nature of Forest Segway activity the ability to provide additional support for participants is limited. However, with Tree Top activities the following examples are ways in which we have been able to accommodate parties with physical additional support requirements to date:

• Blind participants – a minimum of 2 fully sighted participants to 1 blind/partially sighted participant is required. One fully sighted participant should complete the course on either side of the partially sighted participant. A communication system (vocal) or a brake line is required at the end of the zip line;
• 1 missing upper limb – where available we can provide a Trac pulley system to assist in completing the course;
• 1 missing lower limb – we can provide a chest harness.

Participants with prosthetic limbs have taken part on Go Ape courses in the past and their suggestions and recommendations have been as follows:

• Possibly remove prosthetic limb or ensure it is securely attached (potential danger of it “falling off” and hitting someone below). Customers have taken both approaches depending on the nature of the limb and attachment.
• Climbing nets (and in particular the Tarzan Net) is very difficult as it is moves around a lot. It is more difficult than it looks so take a break before attempting it.
• Where possible land backwards in the landing sites and drag your leg to slow down. Ask the instructor how to “rotate” to achieve this.
• Inform the Duty Manager on arrival. If a high amputation, you may be required to wear a Chest Harness.
• If you remove your prosthetic limb and are walking between sites you may want to use a stick or crutches - ask the Duty Manager for assistance in moving them from zip line landing to zip line landing.
• Go on a quieter day so you have time to enjoy the course.

Conclusion

If your risk assessment concludes that additional equipment and/or supervision and/or time will be required for the activity to be undertaken you must contact the Site Manager to discuss whether these additional support requirements can be accommodated.

We will try to provide as much assistance as we can to help those with additional support requirements to undertake an activity. However, the primary responsibility of our staff is to ensure the safety of all participants and other park users. We are sure that you will understand that, where this conflicts with individual needs, safety will be given priority.