

## CASE STUDY

# BEN



Finding a sport he loves has turned Ben's life around. The 12 year old from Sprowston was recently diagnosed as having metaphyseal chondrodysplasia, a rare bone condition that affects growth, as well as having epilepsy and autistic tendencies. Ben was frustrated and angry, feeling left out of the sports and activities that his friends were doing. Then last year he took up wheelchair tennis and he hasn't looked back.

Having identified a lack of inclusive opportunities, Active Norfolk worked with the Norfolk LTA's Disability Lead to coordinate a number of free sessions at various locations, which is where Ben got his first taste of wheelchair tennis. Active Norfolk then worked to identify a tennis facility with the interest and appropriate provision to support a sustainable inclusive tennis club.

Ben has now been training at East Anglia Tennis and Squash Centre on Lime Tree Road in Norwich for over a year. In August he played his first competitive match at the British Open in Birmingham, where he came away with the Runner Up spot in Junior Singles, narrowly missing the top spot by 2 points, and has got more tournament dates lined up this year.

His mum, Samantha, says his whole outlook on his life and future has changed. "The difference between a year ago and now is just unbelievable," she said. "He was low, feeling that he was rubbish at everything. Now he's found something that he enjoys, and win or lose he just genuinely loves playing. He's proud of himself, and he can see that other people are proud of him, and now he can't wait for the future and to play more tennis."