

ACCESSIBLE EVENTS SUPPLEMENT– Helpful Tips for Event Organisers

This supplement aims to help you to make events more accessible for people with disabilities who may be attending as presenters, participants or sponsors. It gives information and guidance on best practice that will open up to you a section of your potential market that is often overlooked, and help you to meet your existing legal responsibilities.

This information does not attempt to list everything that will need to be done for every type of event and is to be used in conjunction with the event planner. It is not designed as a technical checklist covering detailed specifications. Instead, it outlines principles which will lead to the development of best practice and increase access for people with disabilities to a range of events.

Additional Tips for finding an accessible venue

The following list of tips is not exhaustive, but will assist in identifying accessible features at a venue:

- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> If there is a reception desk? Is it (or a part of it) at a height that is accessible for people using wheelchairs? If not, can an alternative desk be provided for the event? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are there any steps or other barriers to facilities being used by participants such as 'break-out' or workshop rooms, dining areas, outside areas and exhibition areas? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> If there is a speaker's or performer's platform, is it accessible? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are the accessible toilets at the same location as other toilets or close by? Check to make sure they are not being used as a storage room! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are there good acoustics? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are staff aware of the right of people using assistance dogs to bring them into the venue? |

Outdoor events

If you are organising an outdoor event you will need to consider other issues including:

- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring the event layout, for example, where stalls are located, provides for the best access and circulation; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Covering some grassy areas with materials that make mobility easier; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ensuring cables are secure and don't present a trip hazard; |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Allocated undercover rest area |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Producing an 'Access Map' for the event. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Designated seating areas to be made available around the venue for people in wheelchairs |

Drop off points

- | |
|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Areas where cars taxis and coaches set down passengers should be as close as possible to the entrance of the venue. Check if there is a kerb ramp at the drop off point to allow a person using a wheelchair to get from the road to the entrance. |
|---|

Top Tips for car parking

- | |
|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> If there is an intercom system at the entrance of the car park, make sure a person with a hearing impairment or reduced limb movement is not disadvantaged in using the system. |
|--|

Top tips for promoting your event

<input type="checkbox"/> If you promote your event on a web site, check it is accessible and compatible with the range of specialist hardware and software that people with disabilities use to access electronic information. All web pages should comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (W3C guidelines). Generally, pdf documents are not considered to be accessible and should not be the only available format on your web site (see Section 15).
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide alternative contact details such as a telephone number, fax or e-mail address. Some people with disabilities will require one or another of these. You should also consider offering a National Relay Service number for Deaf people or people with a hearing or speech impairment to contact you directly (see Section 15).
<input type="checkbox"/> In all your promotional material, ensure the content is finalised in an accessible electronic format such as Word, html or rtf before sending it for desktop publishing. This will mean that if a blind person requires access to the material it is easy to produce it in a preferred format.
<input type="checkbox"/> In your written material use a large font size in a clear sans serif style such as Arial and use a good contrast for text and background. You can find out more about this in Section 9 – Making information accessible.
<input type="checkbox"/> Use appropriate language in your promotional material when communicating information to people with disabilities. For example, talk about ‘accessible toilets and parking’ rather than ‘disabled toilet or parking’, talk about ‘access for people with disabilities’ rather than ‘disabled access’, talk about ‘people who use wheelchairs’ rather than ‘people confined to wheelchairs’, talk about ‘a person who is blind’ rather than ‘a person who suffers blindness’.
<input type="checkbox"/> Having made the effort to ensure good access, don’t forget to promote your event through organisations and networks aimed at people with disabilities in order to fully access all possible markets (see Section 15).

Top Tips for Catering

<input type="checkbox"/> If self-service is the only option available, ensure that staff are available to assist people with disabilities, including those with mobility and vision impairments with their food choice and there being able to carry their food to the eating area.
<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure that there are seats and tables available. Some people with disabilities need to sit down. Seating also helps those who are talking to a person using a wheelchair so that they do not have to constantly look up to engage in conversation.
<input type="checkbox"/> Make menus more accessible by printing them in large sans serif fonts using contrasting paper and print. Ensure staff are prepared to talk through the menu.
<input type="checkbox"/> Provide a choice of cutlery and crockery. A mug may be easier for some people with disabilities to use than cups and saucers or plastic cups that do not have handles. Offer drinking straws as standard.
<input type="checkbox"/> Don’t overlook the small things. Sachets of condiments, and milk in very small containers, can be difficult to open. You could consider ensuring help is on hand for people experiencing difficulty.
<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure there is room for everybody to manoeuvre safely between tables. When you conduct a site visit to the venue think about what it will be like when lots of people are moving around and sitting at tables.
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider having a number of food and beverage service areas spread around the venue. This is helpful for people with disabilities as there is likely to be a service point closer to where they are. Everyone will benefit from the shorter queues if you only have a short period for a break before continuing the event program.
<input type="checkbox"/> Consider dietary needs such as gluten-free food and the needs of people with diabetes and ensure buffet food is clearly marked as being gluten-free or vegan for example. Registration

forms may need to include a question on dietary needs.

Quiet Room

- It is a good idea to provide a quiet room for rest especially if your event is going to be long and crowded. Some people with mental health issues or fatigue will particularly welcome this.

Glossary or terms

Audio Description - audio description is available on some videos, DVDs, digital TV and cinema films. Digital access equipment enables people with a vision impairment to listen through personal headphones to a narrator describe what is happening on the screen.

Braille - Braille is a tactile system of reading and writing used throughout the world by people who are blind. It is based on a 6-dot "cell", and by using various combinations of these 6 dots, it is possible to represent the alphabet, as well as the specialised symbols used in subjects such as Mathematics and Science.

AUSLAN or Australian Sign Language - AUSLAN is a language that uses visual gestures and space using the hands, body, face and head and has its own principles of grammar. AUSLAN interpreters translate what is being spoken to AUSLAN for Deaf people.

Hearing Loop system and infrared system - assists people using hearing aids to hear more clearly by cutting out background noise. A loop system can be set up with a microphone and a transmitter to send signals via a loop system to be picked up by hearing aids that are switched to 'T' setting. In larger event situations, infra-red systems that allow for stereo sound may be more practical.