Accessible Events Cheat Sheet

Whether you are putting on a large conference or a small meeting, you should consider the needs of the people who may attend with seen or hidden disabilities. When putting on events think about how you make them accessible to all from start to finish.

# Pre Event

Items to consider before the event day:

* Communications in advance - what promotional channels are you using and is your promotional and sign up content accessible? E.g.
  + Is there a page on your event website where you explain your access provision for Deaf and disabled customers?
  + Is digital content and flyers/ posters colour contrasted (e.g. light text on a dark background or dark text on a light background) and in a readable Sans Serif font?
  + Can you make some large print flyers?
  + Social media: remember to capitalise each word on a hashtag, i.e. #AccessibleEvents (This helps screen readers say the hashtag in a more natural way)
  + Make poster graphics clear and consider using QR codes and linking to accessible web content for written materials.
* What platform are you using for sign up and can you make it as accessible as possible?
  + Are you using a sign up site like Eventbrite?
  + Are you using a mailing list service like Mailchimp?
  + Are you using standard email?
* Are you sending out slides and other information in advance?
  + Sending slides out in advance allows time for users with visual impairment, dyslexia or other consideration to have time in advance to familiarise themselves with the content
* Are you sending out travel and parking information with directions on how you reach your venue from major routes car/train/bus etc? For some users preparation of travel arrangements may be crucial.
  + Is there accessible parking? If yes, how many spaces?
  + Do people need to book parking in advance? What evidence do they need (e.g. blue badge)
  + How far is it from the car park to the venue?
  + What is the most accessible place for taxis to set down?
  + Is there a step free route from the nearest bus stop or train station?
* Have you provided sufficiently detailed information about the venue? Think about:
  + Accurate and detailed descriptions of access (if there are steps, how many? How steep? If there is a lift what’s the maximum weight it can bear? Width of doorways?)
  + Designated quiet room/ respite space?
  + Refreshments provided or can they be brought into all spaces?
  + Storage facilities for any medications/ equipment?
  + Nearest accessible toilets/ Changing Places toilet?
  + Will there be any queuing to access the venue? Is there a way that those unable to queue can jump the queue?
  + Is seating available in foyer spaces, low tables for buffets?
* Be explicit about accessibility arrangements to make people feel included, e.g.
  + Personal assistant or companion welcome
  + Guide dogs and assistance dogs welcome
  + Fine to leave and re-enter the venue as needed
* Ask delegates and speakers/ performers to communicate their access requirements (and those of anyone accompanying them) to you in pre event communications so you are better able to prepare and respond to requests

# Post Event

Post event communications:

* All presentations recorded for sharing afterwards with full captions and transcripts to support users with a range of impairments
* Are your post event communications accessible? If there is video content shared, is it captioned? If there are post event photos shared, are they described?
* What are you going to communicate after the event?
  + Access to photos?
  + Video content?
  + Access to all presentations and materials from the day?
  + Outcomes and what happens next?
* Are you giving people an opportunity to feed back on their accessibility experience as well as the content? Do you have a process for following up on any complaints/ negative or positive comments on access?

# On the Day

On the day you have a number of areas that could cause accessibility issues such as the venue and catering, the content, and guidance from your staff helping on the day.

## Venue and Catering

* Accessible toilets and access - do all those staffing the event know where they are and are they clearly signposted?
* Emergency supplies in addition to planned refreshments if you have attendees who might have diabetic requirements.
* Food labelled clearly for those with allergies/ intolerances
* Straws available on request
* Supplies for guide/ assistance dogs including water bowl, additional waste bags and designated roaming space during breaks
* Braille agendas, menus and signage to enable visually impaired attendees to participate
* Storage facilities for medications/ equipment

## Content

* Can you use live captioning (using [Otter AI](https://otter.ai/login)) for Deaf or hard of hearing attendees present on a second screen? Can also be used for generating transcripts of talks for use afterwards.
* Slides all made accessible so that they work with screen readers, use plain english or have clear notes to support explanation and do not cause contrast issues.

## Day support

* BSL guidance prepared for non-presentation related interaction with attendees. Eg. toilet directions, talks starting soon, other FAQs
* What about staff and volunteers?
  + Have you briefed your staff and volunteers on the access requirements you have put in place and on how to respond professionally to a range of additional needs your attendees may have?
  + Do all staff know current acceptable terminology and does and don’ts such as not to ask for evidence of a requirement? Do they know who to ask if they come across a situation they don’t feel confident to resolve?
  + Are you able to make reasonable adjustments for any disabled people who want to work or volunteer at your event?