# 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. Below is a list of things we have thought about for events. The list is by no means exhaustive. If you have any suggestions for improving this list please let us know.

## Pre-event

Items to consider before the event day:

* Communications in advance - what promotional channels are you using and is your promotional content accessible? For example:
  + Is there a page on your event website where you explain your provisions for access needs?
  + does digital content and flyers/posters use well contrasting colours (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?
  + Make poster graphics clear and provide URLs of accessible web content for written materials.
  + Social media: remember to capitalise each word on a hashtag such as #AccessibleEvents. This helps screenreaders say the hashtag in a more natural way.
* 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? The Eventbrite platform is reasonably accessible, and there is a lot you can do to make your event content accessible within the platform. [Eventbrite have accessibility guidance](https://www.eventbrite.com/blog/66754-2how-to-creat-an-accessible-event-listing-ds00/) for their platform if you are unsure.
  + Are you using a mailing list service like Mailchimp? Mailchimp allows you to send designed html emails. If you are using their standard templates this may impose some formatting that makes your communications inaccessible. You will need to consider this or have someone test your template for accessibility before sending.
  + Are you using standard email? Standard email can often be one of the most accessible communication channels if you are keeping it simple. When using standard email, think about how you present links, alt text for images, and the colours you use.
* 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 conditions to have time in advance to familiarise themselves with the content.
  + Give attendees a heads up about interactive elements (group discussions, icebreakers etc.) and if there are any services you are using to encourage participation such as online questions submission (see Content section below).
* Are you telling speakers to make their slides accessible in advance, and providing them with advice on what you want in terms of accessibility? (See Content section below)
* 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 if any do they need (for example a blue badge)
  + How far is it from the car park to the venue?
  + What is the most accessible place for taxis to set down?
  + How accessible is the nearest train station or bus stop and the route from there to the venue?
* 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/gender neutral toilet?
  + Will there be any queuing to access the venue? Is there a way that those unable to queue can jump the queue and let you know in advance? Consider those who have difficulty standing for extended periods.
  + Is seating available in foyer spaces and low tables for buffets?
* Be explicit about accessibility arrangements to make people feel included. For example:
  + Personal assistant or companion welcome
  + Guide dogs and assistance dogs welcome
  + Fine to leave and re-enter the venue as needed etc.
* Ask delegates, staff and speakers 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

## 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 toileting and roaming space during breaks
* Braille/large print agendas, menus and signage to enable visually impaired attendees to participate
* Storage facilities for medications/ equipment
* Designated quiet spaces, these can be used for several purposes. Delegates may need a space to:
  + Get away from a too stimulated environment (noise, crowds)
  + Observe religious practices (pray)
  + Breastfeed
  + Any number of other reasons. It’s very useful to have somewhere to direct people for privacy.

### Content

* Can you use live captioning for Deaf or hard of hearing attendees present? This can also be used for generating transcripts of talks for use afterwards. The latest version of [Powerpoint has live transcription functionality included](https://support.office.com/en-gb/article/present-with-real-time-automatic-captions-or-subtitles-in-powerpoint-68d20e49-aec3-456a-939d-34a79e8ddd5f).
* Slides all made accessible so that they work with screen readers, use plain English and have clear notes to support explanation and do not cause contrast or text size issues.
* If you have question and answer sessions, think of having a way for people to suggestion questions online. Not everyone is so able to ask the question out loud. Think about using platforms such as [Slido](https://www.sli.do/) for Q&A and polling audiences.
* Recording or live streaming the event so those who may not be able to attend physically can still gain the benefit of the event, and if coupled with online platforms such as Slido (mentioned above) can even take part in the event live.

### Day support

* British Sign Language guidance prepared for non-presentation related interaction with attendees. Eg. toilet directions, talks starting soon, other FAQs
* What about staff and volunteers?
  + Do any of your staff have access needs and have you considered these to support them in performing their roles on the day?
  + 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?
* Are your staff and volunteers easily identifiable (coloured and labelled t-shirts), and have you told attendees how to contact staff.
  + Is there a help desk?
  + Can you provide a contact number if people get stuck?

## 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 with caption and alt text?
* 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?