# Accessible Online 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 online events.

## Pre-event

Items to consider before the event day:

### Communications in Advance

What promotional channels are you using and is your promotional content accessible?

* Is there a page on your event website where you explain your provisions for access needs?
* Does promotional content 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?
* Make promotional graphics clear and provide URLs of accessible web content.
* Social media: remember to capitalise each word on a hashtag such as #AccessibleEvents. Camel case helps screen readers say the hashtag in a more natural way.

### Promotion Platforms

What promotional channels are you using and is your promotional content accessible?

* 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 has 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.

### Distributing Materials 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?

### Additional Access Requirements

Ask delegates, staff and speakers to communicate their access requirements 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 platform, content, and guidance from your presenters/producers.

### Ground rules for everyone

* Participate from a quiet location; have your phone and any messaging apps muted. This will reduce distractions.
* Say your name each time you speak so that everyone knows who is speaking; this also helps ASL interpreters and captioners
* Speak clearly and not too fast; this will benefit many, including ASL interpreters and captioners
* Don't speak when someone else is speaking - this makes interpretation or captioning very difficult if not impossible

### Content

* Can you use live captioning for Deaf or hard of hearing attendees? 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).
* Are slides 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?
	+ Describe and explain any visuals not provided ahead of time
	+ Describe and explain any processes that are occurring (simulations, demonstrations) if necessary
	+ Provide for accessible alternatives for collaboration if needed (e.g., voting, hand-raising)
	+ If using graphics or slides, be sure that they are designed properly and are accessible
	+ Facilitate to make sure all are included and heard
* If you have question and answer sessions, think of having a way for people to suggest 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.
	+ Remind participants to announce their names before speaking
	+ Monitor (and read aloud, if needed) the chat, if used
	+ Ask everyone to introduce themselves at the beginning of the meeting
* Recording or live streaming the event so those who may not be able to attend 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

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?
* Have you told attendees how to contact staff to get help?
	+ Is there a help desk?
	+ Can you provide a contact number if people get stuck?
* Do attendees have access to accessibility help specifically related to the platform in use?
	+ [Microsoft Teams](https://support.office.com/en-gb/article/accessibility-support-for-microsoft-teams-d12ee53f-d15f-445e-be8d-f0ba2c5ee68f)
	+ [Zoom](https://zoom.us/accessibility)
	+ [Adobe Connect](https://helpx.adobe.com/uk/adobe-connect/using/accessibility-features.html)
	+ [Skype for Business](https://support.office.com/en-gb/article/accessibility-support-for-skype-for-business-fbe39411-6f25-405d-acb4-861735865d18)

## 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?

The list is by no means exhaustive. If you have any suggestions for improving this list please let us know.

<https://www.lexdis.org.uk/guides/staff-guides/accessible-events/>