



ADVICELINK



Inclusive and Accessible Events

A guide for event organisers

EventScotland™



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Scotland

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Do you want to increase the audience for your event and enhance the experience for everyone attending?



How will this guide help?

This guide is useful for anyone involved in organising events, regardless of the size, nature or location of the event. Whether you're an individual, a business, a voluntary organisation, a charity, or a professional events organisation, and whether you're putting on a meeting, a conference, a gig, a ceremony, a fundraising event (or anything else that you can think of), this guide is for you.

It will give you some information on both the reasons for addressing accessibility at your event and practical advice and hints and tips on how to go about doing so.

Creating accessible and inclusive events is a key theme in our national events strategy – Scotland the Perfect Stage (www.eventscotland.org/scotland-the-perfect-stage) and we encourage you to use this guide as a reference document whenever you are planning an event. If you have any comments or additions

that you would like us to include, please get in touch, our details can be found on the back cover.

It covers:

- your legal obligations
- key things to consider when planning your event
- providing advice on getting to the event venue
- parking provision
- accessibility of the event venue – things you should consider
- the event programme – how to make sure it is accessible
- how to ensure you welcome everyone to your event
- communications – making your marketing and information provision as accessible as possible.

The value and importance of the accessible market

Accessibility is often regarded as being mainly associated with disability. It's true to say that making your event accessible for disabled people would likely be beneficial alone, as:

- There are 11.6 million disabled people in the UK, approximately 18.5% of the total population¹
- The combined markets hold an estimated annual disposable income of over £200 billion¹
- The market represents a loyal customer base.

¹ Office for Disability Issues.

However, **the accessible market is much wider than this**, and includes, for example:

- families with young children
- older people
- people with temporary physical impairments (for example, those on crutches)
- people with specific dietary requirements; and many others.

In fact, all of us are likely, at some point in our lives, to benefit from certain adjustments that can be made to make it easier and more enjoyable to attend events. Improving access won't just be helpful for those in the accessible market – it's also likely to generally enhance the experience of your event for everyone attending.



Rather than being an 'add-on' or a 'special arrangement', taking steps to improve accessibility is an opportunity to **tap into a wider market** and contribute to the success of your event.

It's not only about physical access

There's a common misconception that making events accessible is all about expensive modifications to venues and equipment to improve physical access, primarily for wheelchair users. While physical access obviously plays a very important role in making events accessible, there is more to hosting an accessible event.

The definition of disability also covers, for example, visual impairments, hearing impairments and learning disabilities, as well as any other conditions that have a substantial and long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out their normal day-to-day activities. In fact, it is estimated that 70% of disabled people have a hidden disability², i.e. one that is not apparent from looking at the person.

There are many ways in which you can make your event more accessible in addition to improving physical access, including changes to communication style, attitude, and simply making people **feel welcome**.

Research³ shows that the **level of customer service** is often a greater concern than physical access for those in the accessible market.

Therefore, even if it's not possible for your venue and event to be fully physically accessible or if you don't have the most accessible facilities, you can still make a difference to someone's experience by extending a warm welcome, providing useful information about your facilities and services and making some reasonable adjustments.



² Centre for Disability Studies

³ Capability Scotland's Accessible Tourism Consultation Report commissioned by VisitScotland

2. What are my obligations under the Equality Act 2010?*

*Please note, the below does not constitute legal advice – this is only a brief introduction to the Equality Act and how it applies to accessibility at events. If you're in doubt about, or need more information on, any of the points raised, we recommend that you seek further advice, for example from the Equality and Human Rights Commission: www.equalityhumanrights.com/about-us/devolved-authorities/commission-scotland

The Equality Act 2010 legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in society as a whole because of their:

- age
- gender
- sexual orientation
- having undergone, undergoing, or proposing to undergo gender reassignment
- disability
- being pregnant, or having a child
- race (including colour, ethnic or national origin, and nationality)
- religion or belief, or lack thereof
- their marital / civil partnership status.

These are defined by the Act as 'protected characteristics'.

Accessibility and the Equality Act

Under the Act, it's against the law to treat someone with a protected characteristic, for example a disability, less favourably than you would treat others. It's also against the law to have arrangements in place that put people with a protected characteristic at an unfair disadvantage, unless these arrangements can be fully justified.

Importantly, the Equality Act also states that service providers must make **reasonable adjustments** to ensure that disabled people are not discriminated against. These adjustments relate to the way in which services are delivered, physical features of venues, etc., and the provision of additional equipment for a disabled person. For example, if a feature of your venue or event puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in comparison to someone who is not disabled, you're required to take reasonable steps to remove the feature, change it, or provide a reasonable means of avoiding it.

In summary, service providers are required to think in advance about what changes might be necessary to ensure that disabled people can use their service, and plan ahead for these changes.

What's 'reasonable' for my event?

What's reasonable for you and your event will depend on the size and nature of your organisation and the type of service or event that you're organising. You won't be required to do more than is reasonable for you. What's more, many of the adjustments that you can make to improve accessibility are quite inexpensive.

The Equality Act 2010 tells us what service providers are required to do, by law. But accessibility is not just about compliance – at its core, it's about taking practical and creative steps to improve the access to, and enjoyment of, your event.

It's against the law to treat someone with a protected characteristic, for example a disability, less favourably than you would treat others.



3. Practical steps towards improving accessibility

There are many steps that you can take towards improving the accessibility of your event. Below are some examples that you could consider putting into practice. The following list is not exhaustive, but rather a set of suggestions that demonstrate the principals of how accessibility can be improved.

Not all of the suggestions will apply to, or be possible for, every event, venue, and target audience. Furthermore, you may already have some of the arrangements in place. The suggestions range from relatively simple adjustments that can be made at low cost to features that require more substantial modification, which may be more relevant to consider during a venue redevelopment, or the building of a new venue, or in the construction of temporary demountable structures. Consider which of the suggestions would represent reasonable adjustments for your event.

Planning

The earlier you start thinking about the accessibility of your event, the better. Regarding accessibility as an integral part of your planning will make the process easier, cheaper, and more effective than if it is regarded as a ‘bonus’ or an ‘add on’, and will avoid the need for changes to be made retrospectively after all of the other arrangements have been put in place. Furthermore, the principles that you develop when planning your initial event can then easily be applied to all of your subsequent events.

Why not also consider asking ‘the experts’ for advice? If you have an event planning group or committee, you could contact representative disabled people’s organisations and invite disabled individuals to join the group. Alternatively, if you have a specific question, you could contact the organisations for direct advice.



Getting to the venue

If you're planning to provide information about how to get to and from the event venue, you should consider the following:

- Adding a link to 'Stations made easy', an interactive tool on the National Rail Enquirers website, which helps people with specific access needs find the easiest route round stations and includes maps and platform information with step-free routes: www.nationalrail.co.uk/stations_destinations
- Adding a link to www.travelinescotland.com, their accessibility page provides useful information for travellers with disabilities in Scotland
- Provide contact details for companies that offer accessible taxis or minicabs.

Additional information might include:

- Whether stations or platforms have step-free access (i.e. ramps, lifts, or level access mean that people don't have to use stairs or escalators to move between the street and the station or platform)
- Whether buses are 'low floor' buses
- Whether assistance must be booked in advance
- If there are only a small number of accessible taxis available in the area of your event, consider contacting companies in advance if you're aware that a number of disabled people will be attending
- Ask transport providers whether they offer assistance in making bookings (for example, text telephone numbers, which allow communication by text, for people who are deaf or who have a hearing impairment).

Parking facilities

If your venue doesn't have a car park, find out whether there is accessible on-street parking or other car park facilities in the vicinity of the event. Ensure you provide people with details of the distance of these facilities from the venue, and also the ground conditions of the route from the car parking spaces to the venue (for example, whether the route is sloping, and whether there are any roads to cross).

If your venue has a car park, some of the spaces close to the entrance could be reserved as accessible parking spaces. In addition, it is useful to do the following:

- Ensure that the car park is well signposted, and that the accessible parking spaces are easily identifiable
- Accessible parking spaces should ideally be on firm level ground, rather than on gravelled or sloping surfaces
- Offer to have staff on hand to assist people from their cars to the venue entrance, especially if the car park is not on a level surface
- There should ideally be a 1.2 metre clearance between adjacent accessible parking spaces to allow sufficient space for people to enter and exit their cars from the side. There should also be a 1.2 metre clearance at the end of each accessible parking space to allow access to the boot and operation of hoists
- Confirm with the venue management that they will monitor the use of accessible parking spaces, to confirm that they're not used by people who do not need them
- If it is necessary for people to move from the car park to a pavement in order to reach the venue, check that there is a dropped kerb to allow easy access.

The Venue

Physical access and the event space

- Plan for events to take place in rooms that have level entry, or in rooms that can be accessed by lift
- Doors should be wide enough for a wheelchair to pass through, and lifts should be large enough to accommodate a wheelchair user and a personal assistant. If the doors and lifts are accessible for wheelchair users, it's likely that they'll also be accessible for people using prams or people with assistance dogs, or those that are using mobility aids other than wheelchairs
- When planning the layout of the event space, make sure there is sufficient space for people using mobility aids or with an assistance dog. Gates, access points, external corridors, doors, corridors or passages need to be a minimum of 90cm wide with a rotating area (for people to turn around in) of 150cm diameter. Also, it's good practice to ensure that furniture can be rearranged if additional space is required
- If providing temporary or moveable seating, if possible provide a range of chairs – both some with arms and some without. For example, wheelchair users who wish to transfer from their wheelchair to a chair might find it easier to use a chair without arms
- If people are signing in or registering at your event, consider having a lowered counter at the reception area so that it can be easily reached by everyone. If this isn't possible, you could, for example, provide a clipboard or lap tray for people to use if they wish
- Provide a few chairs even in areas where it's expected that most people will be standing, in case someone needs to sit down
- Consider how the event space is lit – this is likely to be particularly helpful for people with visual impairments. The space should be well lit, but

not too bright. Light should be distributed evenly, and reflections, shadows and glare should be kept to a minimum

- Good colour contrast will help people with visual impairments distinguish between walls, floors and doors, and find their way around the building. An additional easy, low cost adjustment is to apply stickers to any full glass doors or windows.

Outdoor venues

- Discuss your audience with the supplier of your demountable structure, for example they may already have a system which incorporates ramped access points
- Consider the inclusion and positioning of viewing platforms
- Consider the ground conditions in the layout of your event. Ideally avoid gravel or bark or sloping surfaces, where this cannot be avoided, provide an alternative route
- Ensure you include any potentially challenging ground conditions and recommended routes in your event communication.

Toilets

- Ideally, the venue will have a designated accessible toilet. Ensure that accessible toilets are actually accessible, and not used as a storage area for cleaning materials, etc. For guidance on accessible toilet building standards go to pages 55-57 of the following document:
www.gov.scot/resource/0047/00478119.pdf
- The Purple Guide will help you calculate the number of toilets you are required to provide:
www.thepurpleguide.co.uk
- Ensure that accessible toilets are clearly signposted and that staff at the venue are able to direct people to them
- Consider whether there are baby changing facilities available at the venue.

Assistance dogs

Assistance dogs are not only used by people who are blind or who have a visual impairment – assistance dogs are also trained to help people with hearing impairments, epilepsy, diabetes, limited mobility, and others. Under the Equality Act, it's unlawful to state that assistance dogs are not welcome in communications about your event. There are a few simple adjustments that you can make to welcome people with assistance dogs to your event:

- Provide bowls of water and a designated spending (toilet) area for assistance dogs
- Consider whether there would be volunteers to walk the assistance dogs during break and lunchtimes, if necessary.

For more information and advice about welcoming visitors with assistance dogs, see the Advicelink guide **‘Take the Lead’**, which is available to download at:

www.visitscotland.org/pdf/take-the-lead.pdf



- Ensure that the venue's facilities are clearly signposted. For example, have signs to accessible parking spaces, the reception area, accessible toilets, dog spending areas, baby changing facilities, induction loops, information or assistance points, and any other facilities that your venue has to offer.
- **Some tips about good signage:**
 - * Place signs so that they can be easily seen by all
 - * Use large lettering and a sans serif font. Arial and Helvetica are easy to read
 - * Consider including both wording and a symbol
 - * Consider Braille or raised lettering, positioned at an appropriate height for easy access.

Facilities and services

- If the venue has an induction loop (a sound system that provides hearing assistance to people using hearing aids), it should be regularly tested. The induction loop should be well signposted, and, most importantly, staff at the venue should know how to use it. If a venue doesn't have a permanent induction loop, loops can be hired. For further advice: www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/supporting-you/services-and-training-for-businesses.aspx
- Have a notepad and pen on hand for anyone who has difficulty communicating with speech and wishes to write instead
- Having a magnifying glass available can help people to read any printed material that is given out at your event
- Have staff on hand to guide people from the entrance to the event space, or within the venue.

Signage

**OFFER GLUTEN FREE,
DAIRY FREE, LOW
SUGAR, VEGETARIAN
AND VEGAN OPTIONS**



Catering

If you're providing catering for your event, you could consider the following:

- If possible, ask those attending what their dietary requirements are in advance
- If this isn't practical, providing options for a range of diets will be appreciated by those who have specific requirements. Some examples you could consider would be gluten free, dairy free, low sugar, vegetarian and vegan options
- If you're providing a buffet, offer to have staff on hand to assist people with selecting and carrying their food to the eating area. Also, ensure sure that the buffet table is at an appropriate height (i.e. not too high) to allow easy access for all
- Ensure that different food options are clearly labelled – even potentially with a short list of the key ingredients
- Even if you're expecting most people to stand, provide some tables and chairs, as some people may find it difficult to stand or hold a plate of food

for a long period of time, or eat without a surface on which to rest their plate

- Provide a range of cutlery and crockery. For example, it might be easier for some people to hold a mug with a handle rather than cups or glasses, and some may appreciate large or special grip cutlery
- Offering bendable drinking straws will be helpful for anyone who has difficulty holding cups or glasses
- Offer condiments or milk in dishes or jugs, rather than only in small packets, as some people may find these difficult to open
- Even if you aren't providing full catering, offering fruit or vegetables, and water or low sugar beverages as an alternative alongside tea, coffee and biscuits during a break is likely to be helpful, for example, for people who are diabetic, or people who are gluten intolerant.
- For advice on selecting food and drink providers for your event go to www.eventscotland.org/resources/food-drink-at-events



queues to having an rival time.

The programme

Thinking about accessibility when planning the programme for your event can be just as important as providing accessible facilities.

- An early start may be inconvenient for people with care arrangements, people with young children, people with other care responsibilities, or those arriving by public transport. Why not consider starting your event after 10am?
- Avoid long queues to your event by having an **extended arrival time**. Also, if you're operating a queuing system, consider in your initial planning that some people may have difficulty hearing announcements over an intercom, or reading visual information. If possible, aim to provide both audio and visual notifications, or identify an alternative way of managing your queuing system
- Take into account that some people, for example those with limited mobility, may need more time than others to move between rooms. Factor this into the **timing of changeovers** between sessions

- Schedule **regular comfort breaks** and allow adequate time to use the facilities (especially if the accessible toilet isn't close to the room in which the event is being held). Regular breaks will also break up the day for those who have difficulties sitting or concentrating for long periods of time
- If you have hired communication support professionals for your event (for example, sign language interpreters or palantypists – go to page 26 for details) include extended breaks and time for regular changeovers. Ask the professionals themselves for information about their requirements so that you can plan appropriately.



Welcoming people to your event

As well as addressing the physical and organisational elements of access, you could make a significant, positive difference to someone's experience of your event by asking your staff to complete disability awareness training or equality and diversity training. The training is likely to result in your staff being more in tune with the experience of those with access requirements, and will equip them with the knowledge of how to provide the best support and customer service.

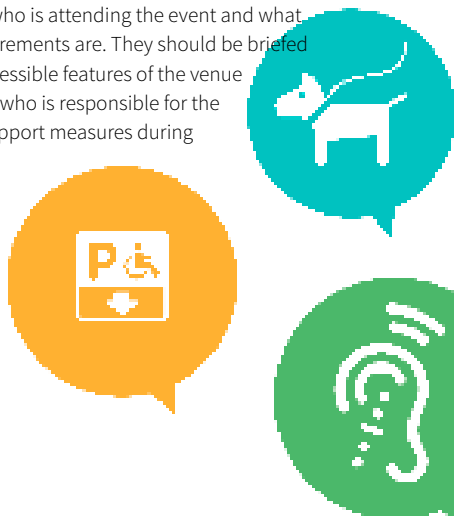
Investing time in training is

likely to be worthwhile: in a survey of disabled people and their friends and family, 76% of respondents stated that venues could improve their accessibility through staff training. Moreover, 63% of respondents stated that their decision to visit a particular venue is influenced by how friendly and helpful the staff members are.⁴

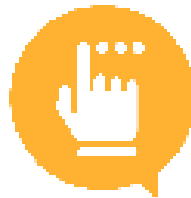
VisitScotland has developed a free online Accessible Tourism training course designed for managers and frontline staff of tourist accommodation, attractions, events, eating and drinking establishments. The course features a series of short videos and podcasts to help illustrate learning points. There are five modules, covering all aspects of disability, equality and diversity. The training takes approximately 90 minutes and can be completed at your own pace over several days or weeks. Once you complete the course successfully you will be awarded an Accessible Tourism Training Certificate, which you can print out and keep. Access the course from www.visitscotland.org/Accessible-tourism-training.

aspx

Also useful to consider, as part of your pre-event briefing, is to ensure that all staff are aware of who is attending the event and what their requirements are. They should be briefed on the accessible features of the venue and know who is responsible for the various support measures during the event.



⁴Euan's Guide Access Survey 2015

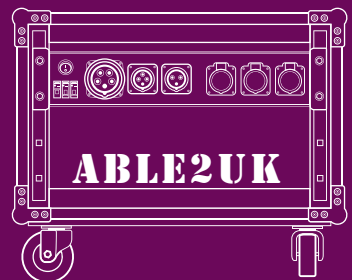




Howard Thorpe with Gail Porter.
©TartanZone Photo

HOW ABLE2UK ROCKED GLASGOW IN 2016

...en when you dream
... CEO and founder of
... idea of putting his
... events industry and
... an inclusive, accessible
... with disability.





*Geoff Ellis, Chief Executive DF Concerts,
welcoming fans. ©TartanZone Photo*

THE MESSAGE WAS SIMPLE —
THOSE LIVING WITH
DISABILITY, IN WHATEVER
FORM, CAN DO ANYTHING.

How Able2UK rocked Glasgow in 2016



*Sir Elton John was one of many to support the event.
©TartanZone Photo*

"I've been fortunate to have attended quite a few gigs and concerts over the past 15 years, working with festivals on accessibility issues.

Back in 2012, I helped organise a concert in London aimed at raising disability awareness, which proved a great success and attracted many big names from the world of music. In 2014, we wanted to go one better and host an event specifically tailored towards those living with disability."

Using contacts built up over many years, Howard was able to approach Geoff Ellis, the man behind T in the Park, to see if his events company, DF Concerts, would consider staging a unique concert for disabled and non-disabled people. "Geoff and his team, especially James Walker, provided unbelievable support. Together with invaluable support from Holly Remzi, Operations Coordinator at Academy Music Group, owners of the O2 Academy in Glasgow, we began to turn my idea in reality. It was a huge joint effort. "I'd attended the MTV Music Awards in Glasgow a few years ago, so I knew the venue, but living in Southampton I relied on the team in Scotland. Geoff,

James and Holly really pulled the event together, I just had to send numerous emails and find the bands!"

Fast forward to summer 2015 and a conversation with Hozier behind the Pyramid stage at Glastonbury. "He came on board straight away," says Howard. "Shortly after, I bumped into Chris Martin and asked if he would provide a short film for the concert. I've known the Kodaline boys for a number of years but had never met Pride before, our opening act. After speaking to their manager they came onboard quickly as well."

Supported by video messages of support from Sir Elton John, Radio 1 DJ Annie Mac, Radio X presenter Chris Moyles and rockers Royal Blood, the line up of artists quickly filled up.

With AMG's support, the O2 Academy was transformed, with a viewing platform constructed and additional seating added for those with physical impairments. Wheelchair capacity was raised from just four spaces for a traditional gig to 40 places.

Signage was added to inform customers of the venue's built-in hearing loop for those with hearing loss, on-stage sign language translation was provided and additional disabled toilets were installed and a quiet zone bar was installed upstairs for those wishing to turn the volume down.

"For visually impaired customer's we allowed guide dogs into the venue and provided staff to assist with ordering drinks from the bar. The O2 team delivered a day of disability awareness training for all the event volunteers with the result that on the night everything ran like clockwork. It was incredible to see everything come together."



Hozier was one of the first acts to sign up. ©TartanZone Photo

After months of planning and preparation, the night of the concert finally arrived on 7 January 2016. Introducing his vision and the forthcoming line up to more than 1,500 expectant customers proved more than a little daunting. So who did Howard turn to for a little moral support before opening the gig? None other than his close personal friend, Hollywood actor Mark Wahlberg, who called Howard via Facetime before he went out on stage to welcome fans. "Feedback was amazing, especially the press coverage, but the highlight was receiving a letter of

thanks from one grateful parent who attended with her disabled son.

"Organising an event of this nature required a huge effort, but its amazing how making the smallest of changes can really help transform an event for someone living with a disability. The music industry has come a long way in the past 20 years, but the most important advance is an increased awareness that disability comes in all forms. It's not just about improving wheelchair access."



Music fans on the night. ©TartanZone Photo



Organising an event of this nature required a huge effort, but its amazing how making the smallest of changes can really help transform an event for someone living with a disability.

So what did Howard take away from the event and would he do it all again?

“It proved that it could be done. That a truly accessible, inclusive concert is possible, and that was truly rewarding. As for doing it all again? All I can say is watch this space!”

Communicating about and during your event

Communicating about access to your event

Research and consultation has consistently shown that a key priority for disabled people when attending an event is that accurate information is available prior to the event.⁵ If, for example, part of an event is outdoors and some of the paths are steep or gravelled, this information is likely to be helpful for someone with mobility difficulties in deciding whether they will attend.

Providing accessibility information **in advance** will mean that those who are interested in attending your event won't have to proactively contact you with the details of their access requirements in the first instance. From the information you provide, people will be able to get a first impression of the accessibility of your event, and can then contact you if they require more information. Making the information available in advance may also allow people a greater degree of spontaneity when deciding whether or not to attend your event. Consultation with disabled people has found that having to plan far in advance puts many people off attending events or visiting new places where they are unsure of accessibility.

The following are some ideas to enhance communications about access to your event:

- If your event has a website, consider including a **dedicated 'Accessibility'** section in which you give details about accessibility at your event. This is a straightforward and effective way to reach a wide audience. The information you provide should be clear, honest and to the point – for example, what **facilities will be provided** (and, as importantly, those

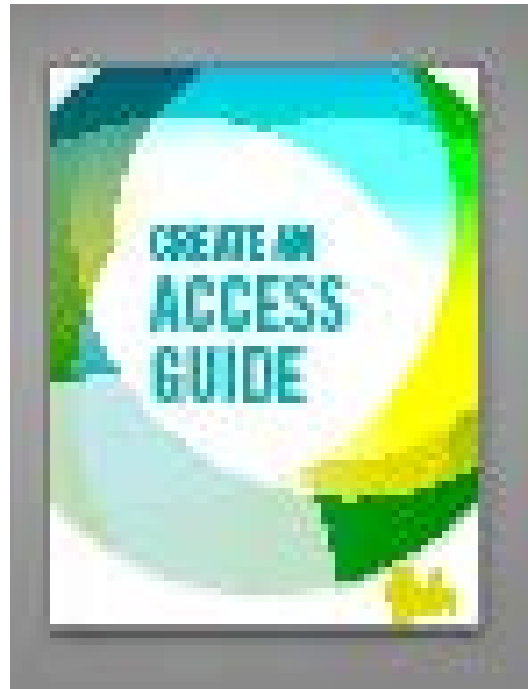
that **won't be**), flexibility for **alternative arrangements**, and whether staff members have completed **disability awareness training**

- Information about accessibility is often hard to find and is not always accurate. Making your accessibility information a clear feature of your website and other promotional material is likely to be a useful marketing tool to help widen your potential audience
- You could also consider creating an **Access Guide**, featuring it on your website, and offering to send out a printed copy if necessary. An Access Guide, also known as an Access Statement, is a detailed description of the event venue and the facilities and services that you will be offering, as well as information about the area surrounding where your event is being held and advice about travel. VisitScotland have developed a free online tool (www.visitscotland.org/access-guide.aspx) to guide you through the steps of building an Access Guide
- Include **photos** along with written information about accessibility (for example, photos of the area immediately outside the venue, car parking, the venue entrance, toilets, bars and restaurants or in-house catering facilities, and the layout of rooms within the venue itself or for outdoor events, photos of all outdoor spaces and facilities). A picture is often just as informative as a written description, and can be more accessible for those with learning disabilities or speakers of other languages
- Provide clear details of how people can get in touch if they have further questions about accessing your event. Where possible, provide alternative contact options (for example, a phone number, e-mail address, a fax number and a postal address) so that people can contact you in the way that is easiest for them. You could also use any enquiries about accessibility to identify gaps in the

information that you're providing on your website or in your Access Statement

- Include relevant images of people with access requirements in your promotional material, for example, disabled people and their friends and family, elderly people, families with young children – there are lots of options. Avoid tokenistic images – instead, incorporate representation of the accessible market into the overall design of your promotional material and the event itself
- Promotional **videos**, where possible, should be **subtitled**. You could also consider sign language interpretation of videos, or arranging for videos to be audio described so that they can be easily accessed, for example, by people with visual impairments. If you're producing new videos, aim to integrate these considerations into the initial planning process
- Review the **terminology** that you use when talking about accessibility – small changes to the words that you use can make a difference to how welcome someone will feel at your event. For example, avoid referring to 'the disabled', 'the handicapped', 'wheelchair bound' or 'disabled toilet' in your communications. Disabled people or people with disabilities, wheelchair users, people with a hearing or visual impairment, and accessible toilet are examples of more appropriate terms
- There is a lot of helpful guidance on accessible web design, which can help you to make your website more accessible. For example, for people with learning disabilities, those who are colour blind, or those who use assistive hardware and software (such as text-to-speech software) when using a computer. The Royal National Institute of Blind

A picture is often just as informative as a written description, and can be more accessible for those, for example, with learning disabilities or speakers of other languages.



⁵ Capability Scotland's Accessible Tourism Consultation Report commissioned by VisitScotland and Euan's Guide Access Survey 2015

Communicating during the event

As well as considering accessibility when letting people know about your event, you can also make some important adjustments to communication style and format during the event itself.

Written communication

Ideally, all written communication about your event (for example promotional materials, application forms, agendas, programmes, and handouts) should be written in a style and format that is as accessible as possible. The following are some general suggestions on making your written information accessible (adapted from Mencap's 'Am I making myself clear?'):

- Use clear and simple text with short sentences, simple punctuation, and no jargon (for example, avoid complicated abbreviations). If it's necessary to use jargon, include a glossary in which the terms are explained
- Use a sans serif font like Arial, Helvetica or Verdana. Avoid ornate fonts and serif fonts, like Times New Roman
- Use large print. Type should be at least 12 point (14 point if possible)
- Make sure there is a good contrast between the text and the paper / background – this is especially important on coloured backgrounds. Avoid yellow font, and avoid reverse type (light letters on a dark background)
- Avoid relying solely on changes in font, size, or colour to highlight that particular information is important
- Avoid large sections of block capitals, italics, or underlining. These make text difficult to read. Use sentence case and restrict the use of bold and italics to headings and the highlighting of important points

- Text should be justified to the left, rather than using full justification
- Avoid breaking up words with a hyphen at the end of a line
- Break text into short chunks with plenty of white space around them
- Use bullet points and fact boxes to make the main points clear
- Provide a clear contents list and short and clear section headings
- Use images or illustrations to support your text, where possible. For example, this can particularly help readers with dyslexia and / or learning disabilities to follow the information in the text
- Make sure images are placed in a way that does not interrupt the flow of the text. Allow plenty of space between the text and the image. Embed a description of the image so that a screenreader can access it
- Do not run writing over the top of an image
- Make documents available in both PDF and Word formats
- Circulate written information such as agendas, programmes, and handouts, in advance of the event. This will give people the chance to read the materials in their own time and come to your event prepared, so that they can concentrate on what is being said at the event.

If applicable to your event, consider circulating details of speeches or speakers' notes in advance to those that may find it useful, for example, to attendees who are deaf or who have a hearing impairment.

These suggestions are likely to be helpful for everyone attending your event, but in particular for those who use assistive technology when using a computer and reading documents, for example people with visual impairments.

Ensuring that your communications are as accessible as possible is also likely to reduce the demand for your written information to be produced in alternative formats.

Circulate written information such as agendas, programmes, and handouts, in advance of the event. This will give people the chance to read the materials in their own time.



Information in alternative formats

Remember to promote that you are happy to provide alternative formats, such as Braille, audio or Easy Read, upon advance request so these materials can be produced and delivered in time for your event. Braille agencies on average, require at least two weeks to produce and deliver a Braille document. (Easy Read is a way of presenting information in short, clear sentences accompanied by representative images or illustrations. It is generally designed for people with learning disabilities, but can also be useful for other audiences, including older people, or people whose first language is not English).

There are a number of organisations that produce Easy Read, and these offer a range of services, from producing formal booklets / programmes, to producing accessible minutes and agendas. The learning disability charity Mencap offers advice on Accessible Communication and Easy Read services (help@mencap.org.uk).

Videos / Media

As was outlined above for videos about your event, consider arranging for videos that are used during your event to be subtitled. Sign language interpretation of videos, offering to provide a transcript of a video, or arranging for videos to be audio described are also options to consider.

Professional communication support

If relevant to and reasonable for your event, you could consider hiring the services of communication support professionals. Communication support encompasses a wide range of services, including:

- **British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters** (support communication between deaf sign language users and hearing people)
- **Lipspeakers** (support people who are deaf who communicate by lipreading and speech. Lipspeakers repeat what is said without using their voice, in a way that it is easy for people to read their lips)



- **Note takers** (produce a set of notes for those who can't take their own, for example because they are lipreading)
 - * Manual (produce a set of handwritten notes)
 - * Electronic (take notes on a laptop. The laptop is usually linked using software to the laptop of the person that they are supporting, so that the notes that they take appear on the person's screen. Note takers provide a summary, rather than a verbatim account of what is being said)
- **Speech to text reporters / palantypists** (type on a computer a verbatim account of what is being said, which appears on a large screen or laptop screen in real time).

Note takers produce a set of notes for those who can't take their own, for example because they are lipreading.

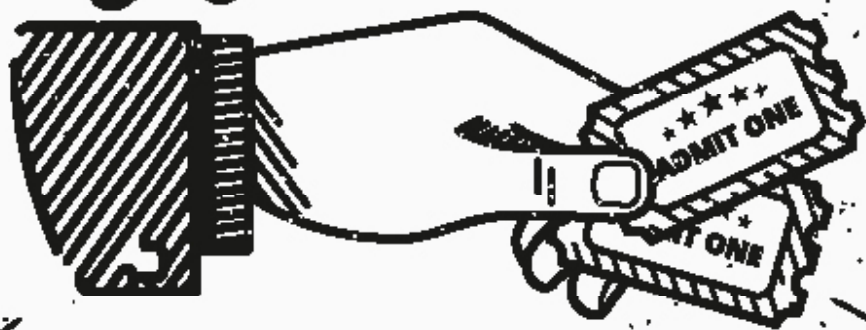
If you are able to offer the option of hiring communication support, you could include this as an option on your event / ticket booking form in order to gauge the level of demand from your audience, and determine whether it will be necessary to book someone for the event.

Many disabled people's organisations offer advice on how to book communication support, or offer a communication support service themselves. An example is Action on Hearing Loss, which provides comprehensive information about different types of communication support, and how to book these for your event. Communication support professionals must usually be booked relatively far in advance.

Go to the Action on Hearing Loss website for advice and support on hiring communication support professionals:
www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk/supporting-you/services-and-training-for-businesses.aspx



Tickets



Registration / ticket booking and seat allocation

Ticket bookings

- If tickets are being sold for your event, consider whether you, or the ticket agency that you are using, can make reasonable adjustments to your booking system to ensure that the tickets are accessible to disabled people and others in the accessible market. For example, offer to accept bookings by a range of different methods, including by phone, online, and by post
- Disabled people or others may be accompanied by a carer, support worker, or personal assistant, whose presence is required for them to be able to attend your event. Consider in advance what arrangements you can put in place for support workers. For example, it may be possible to offer support workers free admission, charge them a reduced admission fee, or charge them only for additional costs, such as catering.

Seat allocation

Consider whether you can arrange to have a designated area of accessible seating, for example for wheelchair users, families with young children, or people with limited mobility. You may be able to offer specifically designed accessible seating, or alternatively offer that furniture can be rearranged to create additional space, for example for wheelchairs or assistance dogs. Also, people who lipread may prefer seats that offer a clear view of what is happening on stage / during the event, particularly if the event involves presentations by speakers.

Booking / registration forms

If people are required to complete a booking or registration form for your event, consider including options (or expanding existing options) for people to give details of additional requirements they may have. For example, you could consider including sections for details of:

- accessible parking requirements
- dietary requirements
- access requirements
- communication support requirements (if you're able to offer communication support)
- care arrangements
- request for information in alternative formats.

Including an option to request access to information (for example, handouts) prior to the event may also be particularly helpful for people using assistive technology to interpret the information, or people with learning disabilities who may need to plan in advance of attending your event.

The booking form also provides an opportunity to communicate what accessible facilities will be available at your event, for example that you have a hearing loop, or that you are able to arrange for a British Sign Language interpreter to attend.

Additional

You may be asked by people attending your event for advice about accessible accommodation or attractions close to the event venue. Therefore, it may be helpful to find out about these in advance.

Accessibility checklist

The following checklist has been developed to help small businesses address the most critical access issues in order to improve inclusivity and accessibility of planned events. It should not be relied upon as a comprehensive assessment tool to ensure compliance with anti-discrimination legislation.

Access Feature	Comments
Have you considered access issues, including choice of venue, accessibility of information and how you will respond to requests for further information on issues such as ease of access? Have you also considered accessibility requirements in relation to staff, performers and volunteers?	
If registration is required prior to attendance, does your registration pack include space for people with disability to inform you of any access requirements such as hearing loop or sign language provision?	
Is there easy access to the venue or outdoor area? Accessing the venue or outdoor area from the car park (flat even path, no obstructions)? Accessing the main entrance (access ramps, wide doors)? Accessing all areas used by participants?	
Are the venue's doors wide enough to accommodate wheelchair or push buggy access easily?	
Is there at least one accessible unisex toilet at the same location as other nearby toilets? If the event is to be held outdoors, have you provided at least one accessible portable toilet?	
If lift access is required to reach your venue, does the lift provide sufficient access for wheelchair users? Do the buttons have Braille and/or raised tactile numbers?	
Has someone been designated as a key point of contact for accessibility issues during the event? Have you added the details of the designated accessibility contact to all staff briefing documents?	
Have any of the event team taken part in disability awareness training?	
Are materials provided on the day, such as programmes or menus, available in accessible formats?	



Members of the 'Uphill Ski Club' – an organisation allowing the disabled to experience some snow bound fun, at the Lecht 2090 Ski Centre, Moray.

Inclusive and Accessible Events

For further business advice, visit **Business Support** at www.visitscotland.org

If you have any comments on this publication or ideas for future guides or if you need this publication in an alternative format, please contact the Accessible Tourism Team on:
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www.eventscotland.org

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