



Organising a conference, seminar or other public meeting – a checklist for accessibility

Achieving access for all





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All forms of physical disability, sensory impairment or learning disability are implied when reference is made to disabled people or disability etiquette.

Arranging the venue.

- Check that access to the building and within the venue the access is level.
- Check that suitable parking is available on the level, within 50 metres of the entrance and there are dropped kerbs. If parking is restricted, ensure that spaces are reserved and permits issued in advance or car registration details given to the parking management.
- Where there are steps or other changes of level, check that there is a ramp, stair lift or passenger lift suitable for people using electric and or manually propelled wheelchairs, with escort. Check that lift buttons are accessible from a wheelchair. Are there Braille or audio instructions with the lift buttons?
- Are doors on automatic openers? Which way do they open? Where there are manually opened doors check that there will be someone to assist with opening if the doors cannot be fixed open.
- If a stage, platform or other raised area is to be used for speakers, check that a ramp with a maximum rise of 1:12 and minimum width of 1000 mm can be provided.
- Does the venue have accessible toilets? Can they be reached on the level or by ramp or lift? Accessible toilets should be on the same floor as the event or at very least in the same building. Are they well signed, do they work and is access ensured? Are the wash hand basins, soap dispenser and hand drier accessible?

NB: A venue with no accessible toilet is not accessible!



- Does the venue have an induction loop? Ensure a few days before the event that it is working and on the day that it is switched on.
- The seating area should allow for aisles wide enough (a minimum of 1.5 meters) for wheelchairs to access comfortably and seats are removable to accommodate wheelchair users alongside friends.
- Check that facilities around the building are clearly signed, that print is in a clear font, on a contrasting background and at eye level.
- If seminars or workshops are part of the event, check that these rooms meet access standards.
- Having easily identifiable people who are ‘meeting and greeting’ to welcome and assist delegates at the entrance to the venue can help to reduce the fear factor presented by an unfamiliar situation.

Arranging speakers.

- Check if speakers have any access and dietary requirements.
- Ask speakers to provide a brief outline of their speeches including any technical terms at least two days before the conference so these can be passed on to signers.
- If using OHP or PowerPoint it is important that any bullet points shown on slides are equally spaced. (See Card 9 for further guidance)
- Ask speakers to provide printed material (preferably by email), in advance, in a minimum Arial 12 point (preferably 14 point) so these can be transcribed onto tape, large print (20 point) or other alternative formats. These should be available in delegate packs or at the reception.



Publicising the meeting.

- Leaflets and posters advertising the meeting should meet minimum print standards of Arial 12 point. The typeface should be bold and have a clear contrast with the background. Avoid fancy font styles or printing over artwork.
- All publicity should prominently state how to obtain information in alternative formats.
- Where the notice of a conference or meeting includes a registration form a facility for notifying access requirements should be included on the form. This should include:
 - Written materials in large print (Arial 20 point), on tape, or Braille and whether translation into a community language is required (excludes Braille);
 - Dietary requirements , such as vegetarian, gluten free, Kosher, Halal;
 - Sign language or palantype interpretation - individuals may need to be seated near the front, or to one side of the hall, to access this;
 - A telephone number and named person(s) to ring to discuss access requirements;
 - Registration should be available by phone, tape or e-mail;
 - Give extra notice for events to allow for support and transport to be arranged for individuals.



Joining information.

All participants should be sent a guide to access the venue and other facilities. This should include:

- Public transport, road and pedestrian directions to the building;
- Parking arrangements and access to the building including location of ramps, lifts, automatic opening doors and direction of door opening;
- How to locate toilets, including accessible toilets, and other facilities within the building and whether access is level or via a lift or ramp;
- Buffet and refreshment arrangements and location within building;
- If workshops are part of the event, access to and facilities in these rooms;
- All conference and meeting papers should be in a minimum of Arial 12 point (preferably 14 point) and available in accessible formats;
- Send papers to delegates well in advance, particularly to allow time to go through the information with support if required.

Booking signers or palantype operators.

- Signers or palantype operators should be booked through an interpreting and translation service (Croydon Council's services is on **020 8407 1369**). Charges are made.
- Where attendance is by open invitation signers must be booked.
- For events which are by specific invitation, the invite must include a section where delegates can notify the requirement for sign language interpretation. Signers should be at least provisionally booked until it is certain that they are no longer needed.
- Unless the meeting provides for short breaks at least every 45 minutes, two signers or palantype operators should be booked.



Arranging refreshments.

- If participants state that they have specific dietary requirements, obtain information you can pass on to the caterer.
- Ensure that the food is labelled in large print (lower case Arial 48 point) for example beef, chicken, pork not just meat, and that vegetarian, vegan, Halal, Kosher food is clearly labelled as such and separate.
- Arrange for tables and chairs to be easily available for people who need to sit or need to rest their plate or cup.
- Request coloured table cloths, rather than white to assist visually impaired people.

Final checks.

- Ensure those on reception are aware disabled people will be attending and are aware of any assistance required and disability etiquette.
- Ensure that any other adjustments required by the venue have been made or will be available on the day.
- Check with caterers that they are clear about dietary requirements.
- Ensure that speakers' notes have been sent to the signers, a minimum of two days in advance.
- Ensure that you have handouts, agendas and conference packs in the accessible formats required for the potential audience and speakers.