



Accessible Events Guidance

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Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Before the event	1
3. During the event	6
4. After the event	9
Appendix 1: Useful guides and toolkits	10
Appendix 2: Information for presenters	11
Appendix 3: Accessible online events	12



1. Introduction

At UKERC, we aim to foster an inclusive culture that values diversity and maintains a working and social environment in which the rights and dignity of our staff, researchers, students, partners and stakeholders are respected.

We are committed to making UKERC events inclusive and accessible. Inclusive means creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued. Accessible means everyone can go to and take part at an event. Physical accessibility, sensory accessibility and cognitive accessibility must happen for everyone to take part.

- Physical accessibility: The space has no problems, for example, for wheelchair users and people with vision disabilities.
- Sensory accessibility: The event is safe, for example, for people with allergies. There are accommodations for people who are Blind, Deaf or hard of hearing. The event makes accommodations for people who may have sensory processing issues.
- Cognitive accessibility: Give clear information about the event. Provide all material in different formats and plain, inclusive language. Let people know what to expect in advance.

The checklist below is intended to support staff involved in the planning, organising, publicising and running of events. Any additional support needed and questions can be directed to staff at UKERC headquarters. We intend this document to evolve with best practice so if you have any suggestions or comments please contact staff at UKERC headquarters.

This guidance is intended for the design and delivery of accessible in-person and hybrid events. We also have guidance on accessibility for online events and webinars in Appendix 3.

Good practice guidance from other organisations on inclusive language, inclusive web design and accessibility in venues can be found in Appendix 1.

2. Before the event

At the first planning meeting

Add EDI to the first agenda for the planning meeting and consider the following.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there time and budget contingency for providing possible additional support arrangements (e.g. costs for a sign language interpreter, live captioning, large print or Braille transcription, specialist headphones for audio description on videos. Interpreters and live captioning services need to be booked well in advance).	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are free places or reduced pricing being offered if there is a fee for the event (for example, attendance should be free for a personal support worker)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Online platforms

If your event has a hybrid element, consider the following about the online platform (e.g. Zoom, Teams) you'll be using.

Do you understand the accessibility features of the online platform you're using for your event?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you issued clear, step-by-step instructions to attendees regarding how to access these features?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you included the name of a contact person if a participant is struggling to access the event or engage with it?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the platform require the provision of human support for captioning or BSL has this been arranged and details included in communications to members?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Information

Is information about the event available in a variety of formats?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it presented in an accessible font, colour scheme and style? (Please see the good practice guides linked in Appendix 1).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it clear and logical?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does it use inclusive language? (Please see the good practice guides linked in Appendix 1).	<input type="checkbox"/>

Emails

Are emails presented in an accessible and clear style and colour scheme? (Please see the good practice guides linked in Appendix 1).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do they use inclusive language? (Please see the good practice guides linked in Appendix 1).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do these make it clear who the recipient should contact if they have a question or a specific support requirement?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Advertising

Does the advertising make it clear that this is an accessible event? (For instance, does it indicate that there will be BSL interpreters, a palantypist, step free access, wheelchair access, audio captioning, hearing loop, entry for personal assistants etc?)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the event been publicised in variety of formats/media. (print, web, email forums, posters)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does it indicate who people should contact if they have a specific support requirement?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Is the text accessible and clear? (Please see the good practice guides linked in Appendix 1).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does it use inclusive language? (Please see the good practice guides linked in Appendix 1).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide a list of accessible transportation options.	

Venue

You should always visit the venue before booking it to check that it provides accessibility and inclusivity you are looking for. You can use the checklist below as a guide.

For more information on accessibility and venues, please see the good practice guides in Appendix 1.

Does the venue provide accessible and gender-neutral toilets?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there an accessible entrance?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lifts must be large enough to accommodate a wheelchair and one other person. Is there only one lift? What would happen if it is out of service?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the doors clearly identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the doors sufficiently wide (for example, for a wheelchair to pass through)? 38"/95cm	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the doors heavy (and therefore difficult for someone with a physical impairment to open)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are pathways sufficiently wide to accommodate a wheelchair user or someone who requires support from another person?	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is important to check whether the lift buttons are available in braille and whether audio announcements of the floors etc is available. If not then this must be communicated to participants with visual impairments.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the entrances and exits clearly identified (e.g. is someone who is neurodiverse or has another physical or sensory impairment is able to identify and access them?)	<input type="checkbox"/>
If presenters are expected to present from a stage, is this accessible? Does it involve steps and if so is there a ramp or an alternative way to access and exit it?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the venue have a functioning hearing loop system? (Has this been tested?).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the sound system fit for purpose?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are microphones available for speakers and the audience (for Q&As)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the space 'noisy' or echoey and if so are there other less noisy spaces that might be utilised? (Very noisy spaces are barriers for anyone with a hearing impairment or sensory processing difficulties)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the spaces for breaks located close to the event spaces?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a quiet room/space that neurodiverse people and others can access at any time?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a prayer room that can be accessed at any time?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have arrangements been made to ensure that anyone requiring a disabled parking space knows where these are and how to access them?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Are there disabled parking bays as near as possible to the entrance?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have the needs of people with mobility impairments or other access needs who might require parking been accommodated?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proximity to bus stop and other accessible means of transportation (or, is it appropriate to arrange for a shuttle bus or taxi service accessible for wheelchair users)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there accessible parking spaces?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the venue have sufficient lighting for those with visual impairments or those who lip read?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the lectern/microphone stand for speaker's height adjustable?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fire alarms should be visible and audible to everyone and all delegates should be made aware of where the fire exits are located should they need to evacuate.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are guide dogs/service dogs allowed in the venue?	<input type="checkbox"/>
If needed, is it close to a Changing Places toilet? (A Changing Places toilet is like an accessible toilet but is bigger and has other equipment. It will have: a fully accessible toilet a height-adjustable changing bench a hoisting system a peninsular toilet enough space for the disabled person and 2 carers). Find Changing Places toilets at https://www.changing-places.org/find	<input type="checkbox"/>
If there is a dinner venue, is the venue accessible and is it within a five minute walk of the main venue?	<input type="checkbox"/>
If overnight lodging is being provided, are there accessible options (e.g. with enough space for wheelchair users to move around comfortably, bathrooms have roll-in showers, beds are low enough).	<input type="checkbox"/>

Registration for event

Are the arrangements for registration clear?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do people understand where and how to register?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure registration form has questions about additional adjustments/requirements and space provided to note specific individual requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Online form tools can often be inaccessible for disabled people who use screen readers, have visual impairments or use the keyboard to scroll through the website. Use WebAim guidance to ensure form accessibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have alternative registration options made available (online, telephone, text phone or email)?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Staff, speakers and presenters

Are the organisers/chairs of sessions/other participants aware of best practice in relation to accessibility?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are speakers and presenters aware of any support requirements as appropriate (for example, if a BSL interpreter will be working during their presentation)?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have the presenters been sent guidance on accessibility and inclusive practice? (Please see Appendix 2).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a hearing loop system at the venue and does it work?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there easy access to outdoor space for people with guide dogs?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a named person (or named people) and a designated place to which participants can go if they have additional needs or questions during the event?	<input type="checkbox"/>
If appropriate, consider commissioning speakers that have diverse backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ask speakers whether they require anything in order for them to attend. E.g. 'Please let us know if you have any access or dietary requirements in order to attend this event.'	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure support of 'roving' microphones during Q and As and other audience participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Planning the programme

Are there sufficient scheduled breaks? (hourly is best practice, for example for people with chronic medical conditions like diabetes who require regular refreshment breaks or support workers like sign language interpreters may require regular breaks)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do people have long enough for a break (ie. people who might require additional time to go to the toilet or to move from one place to another)?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Preparing information packs

The location of lifts should be indicated in the information packs along with routes to them.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the location of accessible and gender-neutral toilets identified in the information packs?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have they been provided with a map with an indication of a step-free route?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you indicated the location of the quiet room?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you indicated the location of the prayer room?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Preparing lanyards/name tags

Are participants able to identify their preferred pronouns on their lanyards?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are people able to indicate whether they are comfortable to be approached, prefer to initiate conversations (e.g. to approach people themselves) or whether they prefer to be left alone. (This is helpful for neurodiverse people and can be indicated by the use of different coloured dots).	<input type="checkbox"/>

Catering plans

Does the catering accommodate the dietary requirements of different faith communities, of vegans and of people with particular intolerances?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prepare signs indicating allergens and gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian, or other options.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is information about the food/ingredients available?	<input type="checkbox"/>
How easy is it for wheelchair users to access refreshments?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are people able to sit down to eat? Is the seating fixed or can it be re-organised to accommodate wheelchair users?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Evacuation plans

Is there an evacuation plan in place that meets the needs of disabled people? For instance, how will disabled people with impairments that require them to use lifts, evacuate the building if they are in rooms on upper floors?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Would fire exits be accessible for those using wheelchairs?	<input type="checkbox"/>
If personal emergency evacuation plans are required then how will these be produced and who will oversee them?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have participants been given the information they require to stay safe in an accessible format?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is a fire drill due during the event? Where is the assembly point?	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. During the event

Registration table

Is the location of registration clear, is it accessible for wheelchair users?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a designated area in which anyone with an additional need can discuss their support requirements/access information?	<input type="checkbox"/>
System in place for handing out pre-arranged alternative format delegate packs?	<input type="checkbox"/>

Entrances and exits?

Are entrances and exit clearly identified?	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Signage

Is signage clear and accessible? (Is it appropriately large, obvious, presented in an accessible style and font, placed in appropriate places to enable someone to move around a venue, does it indicate step free routes and the location of lifts)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure signage is not displayed too high/out of sight of wheelchair users	<input type="checkbox"/>

If a particular route involves stairs then this must be indicated, as should step free routes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a secondary, 'accessible' route is being used, ensure signage directions in place there too.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure signage for accessible/gender neutral toilet facilities is in place.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Room and seating

Ensure aisles and walkways are clear of wires and other trip hazards	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a projection screen is being used, is it visible from every seat in the room?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is seating available near the presenter for lip reading?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the furniture of the room organised in an accessible manner enabling wheelchair access? Is the seating fixed? Can the layout be altered to meet people's needs? Is there appropriate space for wheelchair users? Can space be made for a guide dog to rest?	<input type="checkbox"/>
make sure that you can control and adjust the lighting if necessary	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a well-lit space for an interpreter if needed?	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a window needs to be opened then how noisy is the room?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make sure the sound in all rooms is a good volume? Are there any echoes in the room? Echoes can cause problems for people with hearing impairments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the temperature appropriate (this can be an issue for people going through the menopause or on hormonal treatments for cancer)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Any transitions from dark to light need to be a gradual process. It is also a requirement that you should have warnings ahead of time for any flickering lights, strobe lighting and flash photography for anyone that has epilepsy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have seating reserved for people who are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hearing impaired, to be near the interpreters, captionists, note-takers • vision impaired • short statured • sign interpreters • wheelchairs and motorised scooter users • people accompanied by guide/service dogs 	<input type="checkbox"/>

Managing staff, speakers and presenters

Are staff aware of attendees with additional needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do staff have the information they need to support them appropriately?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assign volunteers to meet with disabled speakers or attendees or arrival and to be their contact point throughout the event.	<input type="checkbox"/>

During presentations

Check the hearing loop and make sure that the audience has joining details for it.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Make sure you have a second and even third microphone with runners for getting audience questions	<input type="checkbox"/>
During a Q and A, make sure to repeat questions posted by audience before responding, especially if there is not a roving microphone available. Presenters or audience members may express confidence that they are loud enough and do not need a microphone. Regardless, ask them to speak into one.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure support of 'roving' microphones during Q and As and other audience participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inform participants how things will work and how they can participate e.g. through chat, Q&A, hand raising, turn taking, etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indicate at start of each presentation if you want questions as the presentation goes along or to be held to the end. Ask participants to say their names before they contribute.	<input type="checkbox"/>
For hybrid events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • test the setup in advance and make sure there is internet connectivity • make sure that the camera feed has both the speaker and the slides in shot, and make sure the speaker is not standing in the way of the slides • consider sharing slides directly to the web feed – this will give the clearest view but of course will mean remote participants can't see the speaker's face or gestures • ensure remote participants can submit questions and take part fully in Q&As and feedback 	<input type="checkbox"/>

Catering

Clearly indicate allergens and gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian, or other options.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is information about the food/ingredients available?	<input type="checkbox"/>
How easy is it for wheelchair users to access refreshments?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are people able to sit down to eat? Is the seating fixed or can it be re-organised to accommodate wheelchair users?	<input type="checkbox"/>
If a self-service buffet is offered, have a server assist wheelchair users or mobility impaired people by bringing food directly to their table?	<input type="checkbox"/>
If tables are being used, are they at a height appropriate for wheelchair users?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can chairs be set up for anyone who needs to sit?	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. After the event

Provide alternative sources to access information after the event such as Slideshare, realtime video streaming of presentations and handouts in large print or braille.	<input type="checkbox"/>
You should add a question at the end of your feedback form allowing anyone to give you specific information regarding how they found the accessibility of your event.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 1: Useful guides and toolkits

Inclusive Language

Oxfam's [Inclusive Language Guide](#)

The Royal Town Planning Institute's [Inclusive Language Guide](#)

The Governments's [guidance on Inclusive language: words to use and avoid when writing about disability](#)

The United Nations' [Guidelines for gender-inclusive language in English](#)

Accessibility in web design

W3C WAI's [guidance on Accessibility, Usability, and Inclusion](#)

Hobo SEO Company's [guidance on How to design websites for blindness, deaf, disability & dyslexia](#)

Accessible Venues

[Euan's Guide](#) is a disabled access review site where disabled people, their family, friends and carers can find and share reviews on the accessibility of venues around the UK and beyond.

[AccessAble](#) provides detailed information about venue so that you can decide if it's right for the event you're planning.

Find wheelchair accessible places on [Wheelmap](#).

[Make Venues](#) provides accessible venues in Leamington Spa, London and Bristol.

Appendix 2: Information for presenters

Presenters and speakers should:

- Use Microsoft Accessibility Checker tool for documents created in Word or PowerPoint. Ensure documents are open, unlocked with public access to enable participants to use assistive technology to adapt the text size or formatting.
- use high contrast colours in any powerpoint presentations
- ensure that the use of colour is NOT the only way in which the audience is expected to distinguish information
- use a large (at least 24 point), simple, san serif font (e.g., Arial, Verdana, Helvetica)
- reduce the amount of text on slides and ensure that people have the opportunity and time to read the slides
- ensure that they read out the text on the slide to make sure that people with visual impairments know what everyone else is reading and provide an audio description of every image or video that they present. Graphs and charts should be described and summarized. It is helpful to provide a brief description of what is in the video before it is played in order to help a blind person establish the context for what they will hear
- make graphics as simple as possible
- ensure that the question and answer session is accessible. If there is a microphone then it should be used. Otherwise, it is important to repeat the question so that everyone can hear what is being asked.
- some neurodiverse people find the lights and hum of projectors very difficult, particularly once the presentation itself has stopped. It is useful to ensure that this additional sensory input is reduced during Q&As.
- activate captions in any videos shown.
- organise breakout group activities to maximize distance between groups (e.g. each group going to a corner of the room or side rooms).
- if you're using a hand-held microphone, keep it close to your mouth at all times – imagine you're eating a rapidly melting ice-cream on a hot day
- if you're using a fixed microphone, try to keep as near to it as possible, even when you're addressing someone in the audience

Appendix 3: Accessible online events

The event organiser should ensure presenters are made aware of access needs of those attending.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use Microsoft Accessibility Checker tool for documents created in Word or PowerPoint. Ensure documents are open, unlocked with public access to enable participants to use assistive technology to adapt the text size or formatting.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use captions. This feature may be built in (e.g. MS Teams and PowerPoint) but where it is not a speech-to-text reporter will need to be booked. Plan ahead to ensure availability.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where it is not possible to use captions, ensure that you describe the content for those unable to view it.	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you are using BSL interpreters or speech-to-text reporters, a practice session with presenters is highly recommended.	<input type="checkbox"/>
For better audio, advise speakers to use a headset to cut out background noise and choose one with a microphone, as this will give greater clarity.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider tools to enable participation and engagement in different formats such as chat, polls, questions and answers. However you should ensure that these tools are accessible to all participants. If using these options for large events - appoint a moderator to manage responses etc. while the presenter is busy presenting.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inform participants how things will work and how they can participate e.g. through chat, Q&A, virtual hand raising, turn taking, etc	<input type="checkbox"/>
All participants should join the event with their microphone muted and video turned off.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Describe all onscreen activity when onscreen tools are used, as some tools may have low contrast and not always be usable with screen readers.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indicate at start of event if you want questions as the presentation goes along or to be held to the end. Ask participants to say their names before they contribute.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure there are sufficient breaks (5-10 minutes break every 30-40 minutes). Being online for long periods can be exhausting for all, but acutely so for some.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Record the event to enable people to review content afterwards. If recording events using MS Teams, remember to activate auto captioning – the recording will store the captions, and these can be edited for accuracy later.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure the presenter is visible while presenting, even while sharing presentation content – Presenters can be ‘pinned’ on MS Teams and Zoom This may support lip reading and enable any participants who may find it difficult to track the discussion to get emotional intelligence clues from the presenter’s face e.g. this may be helpful to some neurodivergent participants.	<input type="checkbox"/>

When using systems like MS Teams and Zoom remember that your background is important. Choosing a simple background, or blurring the background, is best practice.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have a backup plan ready if things don't work as planned, for instance a standby Chair.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consider the use of break out rooms for quieter space for discussion, bringing people back to share. Teams Live Events does not have a breakout room feature. However, you can create breakout rooms in a standard Teams Meeting.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Please be mindful that switching tasks (to Q&A or break out rooms) will take time for some attendees. Please be patient and respectful.	<input type="checkbox"/>
It is a good idea to send attendees a link to the recording and other key details following the event. You may want to edit auto-captions before you do this, but be aware this is time consuming! This allows those who need more processing time to catch up and to feedback any additional points.	<input type="checkbox"/>

