# Accessibility

For anyone with access needs or volunteers planning XR events and actions.

- Access Summary
- Principles Of Inclusivity
- Organising Inclusive Meetings
- Creating Accessible Actions
- Accessible Documents
- Website Accessibility
- Good practises when communicating with Disabled and neurodiverse people
  - Communication Checklist
  - Good Practice in Communicating with Disabled People
  - Closed Captioning

# Access Summary

## 1. Disabled Rebels Network contact

- wellbeing+drn@exinctionrebellion.uk
- Mattermost: Disabled Rebels Network Reception or direct message the Internal Coordinator, currently Sian: @sian-aubrey

## 2. Really important things!

- Build access in from the start of planning
- Include information on access and inclusivity on call-outs / broadcast messages / adverts for events
- Invite people to make their needs known by providing contact information
- It's fine to use the Disabled Rebels Network email xr.inclusion@protonmail.com providing you let us know first.

## 3. Regenerative and Inclusive Approach

- Breaks
- Quiet time
- Minimise the pressure to check-in and use hand signals
- Offer check-ins via chat or other options
- Vary ways of contributing
- Quiet spaces, needed by many



What I need to access The Big One is somewhere quiet to go that isn't the toilet!

Quote from an autistic rebel

## 4. All written information and signage / visuals

- Use a sans serif font - Karla is recommended

- Keep images and text separate
- Use accessible written language
- No italics, capitalise only headings

- Maximise accessibility for **dyslexic** and **colour blind people**
- Clear language, reduce jargon and use of initials / acronyms. Find further information on

  **Accessible documents & outreach materials**
- If producing a written document with fancy backgrounds and tonnes of images, link a plain text version near the beginning of the document for visually impaired and dyslexic rebels



# 5. Speaking

- Face others and do not cover your mouth, whenever possible
- Limit the time that people speak for
- Clear language, reduce jargon and use of initials / acronyms
- Use amplification equipment effectively to ensure your voice is as clear and loud as possible
- Speak slowly so that closed captions and BSL interpreters can keep up
- Neurodivergent people also sometimes use closed captions for comprehension
- Check that people are in a good position to hear and see

# 6. Automated Close Captions [CC]

- **Note:** Ensure Enhanced Encryption is enabled and **NOT** End-to-End Encryption otherwise some features won't be available. Here's the Zoom info on the difference between the types of encryption.
- Ensure you have updated your Zoom account to the latest version. Then enable Automated CC prior to the event in Zoom account settings
- YouTube CC setting must be activated when streaming
- Turn on CC for Facebook Live broadcasts and Live Streaming
- Big Blue Button: closed captions are available via a browser, however be aware that CC aren't available if accessing a BBB meeting on a phone. BBB FAQs

# 7. Sign Language and Speech to Text interpreters

- Association of Speech-to-Text Reporters [AVSTTR]
- To request British Sign Language Interpreters, email an XR BSL Coordinator, currently Marie, at xr.bsl@protonmail.com



# 8. Public Transport

Accessible transport websites are useful, e.g.:

- Scope's finding accessible transport
- London
- Devon

# 9. Disabled Parking

- Find the nearest spots
- And their step-free access to the event from the parking



# 10. Physical and Visual Access at the space

- Ramps, wheelchair track-way as needed
- Space for a wheelchair user and to turn
- Check lifts are big enough for power chairs and scooters and provide measurements
- Clear routes and exits, important for some anxious and neurodivergent people



# 11. Toilets

- Where and how accessible

- Provide measurements where possible
- Where are the closest fully accessible

- To find accessible toilet: Changing Places

- A RADAR key, also known as an NKS key, is a blue and silver-coloured key that opens more than 10,000 disabled toilets across the UK. RADAR keys are used by some 400 local authorities to allow disabled people access to locked, accessible toilets.



## 12. Power for power chairs and scooters and other aids

- Can this be provided and if yes, by who?
- Find friendly venues



## 13. Event Accommodation

All the above applies as well as:

- If camping, can disabled rebels bring vans?
- Can an accessible tent be provided?
- Is there alternative accommodation?

## 14. Marches

- Route:

- ○ ensure it's step-free, choose as level a route as possible.
  - ○ are ramps needed?
  - ○ is track-way needed?
- Provide a block for people with access needs but do not ask all wheelchair users to be in that block
- Pace: ensure it's good for the slowest by:
  - ○ inviting slow walkers to be near the front
  - ○ ensure clear communication along the length of the march, e.g. Mic check (pass the info along the march)
- Offer lifts
- Check and provide info about public transport
- Breaks can work in marches, if well-managed and purposeful
- Non-disabled people can carry folding chairs for ambulant disabled people who need to sit during breaks
- XR Rhythms and other active blocs, with equipment, and costumes:
  - ○ accommodate disabled people within blocs
  - ○ ensure well-trained stewards / Action Wellbeing are along the rest of the march to spot anyone needing support



# 15. Disability Access Training

If you'd like training, please contact the Disabled Rebels Network using the contact info at the top of this page. For more information and to learn more, view the Disability Access Training slides

# Principles Of Inclusivity

In order to build an inclusive approach towards involving all sections of society in the struggle to highlight the climate emergency, it is necessary for XR to pay particular attention to five activity areas:

- Organisation and running of meetings
- The production of documentation – including leaflets
- Accessibility of the XR websites
- Accessibility of demonstrations and other activities
- Good practices when communicating with disabled people

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## What is inclusivity?

An inclusive product, service or environment does not exclude any section of society. Inclusive solutions consider all users and participants, including disabled people, and is a positive step towards a holistic, universal system.

## The Principles of Inclusivity

- Individuals have unique and particular needs in learning, social and campaigning environments.

- Respect each individual's right to express and present themselves relative to their religion, culture, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender-identity, identity as disabled people.

- Promote inclusivity by reasonably adjusting procedures, activities and physical environments.

- Focus on the learning or support needs of the individual without assumptions or labels.

- Be inclusive in all forms of communication.

- Serve all with sensitivity, respect, and within boundaries of social justice.

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## Learn more about oppression

# Disabled Rebels Network

For further advice you can reach out to the Disabled Rebels Network either on Facebook or by Email at **wellbeing+drn@exinctionrebellion.uk**

# Organising Inclusive Meetings

**When considering an accessible and inclusive meeting, there are 3 aspects you need to think about:**

- Planning and preparation
- The equipment and information
- The conduct of the meeting.

You should always build access in **from the start** of your planning. Not as an afterthought.

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## 1. Planning - Choosing a venue

When considering whether a venue is accessible, the first obvious thought may be to avoid entrances with steps.  There are however, many other things to watch for or that you can provide to make the venue accessible:

- **Is there a barrier-free pathway to the meeting space?** A barrier-free pathway means that a person with a mobility impairment can make it from the street into the meeting room without encountering stairs.
- **Is it easy to reach the meeting space from public transportation?** Many disabled people rely on public transportation to get around. Scope's guide on finding accessible transport should help with this.
- **Is there adequate parking, including disabled parking?**
- **Is there an accessible toilet nearby?** Some Disabled people need more facilities than you find in a standard disabled toilet. See here for info on Changing Places toilets that will provide this.

### Consider:

- **Dimensions** - door width, sharp corners, wheelchair ramps, access to parking for anyone with limited mobility, angle of slopes, toilets, background noise levels, lighting, clear signage.
- **Size of the venue** in relation to the number of wheelchair users expected to attend. Space is required for wheelchairs to be manoeuvred. As a general guide allow two spaces for every wheelchair user.

- Check **lifts** are big enough for power chairs and scooters and provide measurements if requested.
- **Lighting levels** for people with visual impairments, as low lighting is a barrier.
- **Availability of induction loops** or arrange reserved front seating for attendees who are hard of hearing
- **Crèche facilities** if these are required or whether childcare/carer's expenses can be paid as an alternative.
- **Clear routes and exits**: important for some anxious and neurodivergent people
- Can **power** be provided for anyone who needs to charge wheelchairs or other aids.

If you have been unable to get an ideal venue, plan how you will overcome issues to accommodate individuals, e.g. arranging help to get people down slopes.

## Always:

- Check the accessibility of a venue for yourself. Not only can you then be confident with what you are saying, but you can also answer enquiries more accurately.
- Brief the venue staff regarding your needs, including numbers and access requirements.
- Arrange the seating so that wheelchair users have a choice of where they sit.
- Have someone stand by the main entrance to direct people to the meeting room and help those needing assistance. This is a courtesy that everyone will appreciate.

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# 2. Providing Information and Equipment

## Planning

- The date and time for a meeting may influence who is able to come.
- The timing of a meeting may also affect people's availability. Those with caring responsibilities may find early starts difficult and those with childcare may need to be home to collect children.
- You should consider your audience and whether you are able to provide expenses or resources for individuals requiring personal assistants, those with caring responsibilities (children and adult) or those with transport costs. Notice periods should be as far forwards as possible to enable people to make arrangements for transport, personal assistance and replacement care.

## Publicising

- On any notices or publicity used for the event, it is important to ensure you use the phrase: "If you require any specific requirements please inform [state a contact by phone & email]. This allows people to explain any access/dietary needs (dietary needs may be influenced by faith, health or philosophy).
- Individuals find different formats of information easier to manage. These include large type, Braille, computer disc,audio CD. It is important if you are providing information in a particular format for an individual that you ask which is appropriate for them and not

make assumptions.
- Try to use plain English without jargon in all documents including advertising.

## Prior to Meeting

- If using a hearing loop, check when booking, the area that the loop covers. Check before the meeting that the loop is working.
- If Sign language interpreters, lip speakers, speech to text interpreters, or deaf blind interpreters are needed check well in advance for cost and availability.
  - For BSL intepreters who have volunteered to help with XR, contact Marie via **atxr.bs@protonmail.com**
  - For Speech to Text interpreters, contact AVSTTR.
- It is useful to hold a briefing meeting for speakers to remind them to use microphones/talk through slide presentations etc.

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# 3. Conduct - During the meeting

- Ensure those at reception are briefed on the access needs of attendees.  If sighted guides are available they should be dedicated members of staff and should be on hand.
- If using PowerPoint presentations or other visual information, ask if people can read it. Don't assume people will read the slides: talk through the information.  Have printed copies available.
- At the start of the meeting, raise your hand to attract people's attention.  Check access e.g. whether people can hear; if the loop is working; if the people can see and read the powerpoint; if they can see the sign language interpreters.
- Effective facilitation should discourage people from speaking for too long, and from using jargon or acronyms.
- When using a microphone, speakers should generally speak close to the microphone and preferably have an opportunity to practice using microphones prior to the event.
- Encourage everyone to face the group and speak without covering their mouth. This is really important for people who lip-read.
- If using a hearing loop, then all speakers must use the microphone including those responding to questions.  If the questioner is not within the looped area then the question needs to be repeated using the microphone.
- Even when a loop is not being used, it is good practice to employ a roving microphone. This might seem to slow down proceedings however often it enhances the efficacy of the facilitator and aids the discipline of the meeting thus saving time.
- Give people the option of whether or not they want to check in. Check-ins can be very difficult for some neurodiverse people.
- Allow time for breaks in the meeting. This is important for individuals but also for signers and lip speakers. It is extremely important if a meeting is longer then 75 minutes a break of 15 to 20 minutes is required for accessibility needs especially deaf rebels lip reading and BSL interpreters.

- Time keeping is essential. Many groups of people need to know when breaks are and the finishing time. This is an access issue.

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# Making your zoom meetings more accessible

## Top tips

- Offer the opportunity to check in via the chat for those who prefer not to do verbal chaeck-ins
- Enable the closed captions before the start of the meeting. That way, if someone comes in who needs the captions on, they can tell what you are saying when they join. Full instructions for enabling closed captions.

# Creating Accessible Actions

> Quote from a disabled rebel: "Making actions accessible is the simple act of asking, What do you need?"

Extinction Rebellion is committed to equality and to enabling people who have been marginalised by systemic oppression to act now and give their message in solidarity. See XR's Principles of Inclusivity.

This page contains a checklist to help action planners consider possible barriers to marginalised groups. These guidelines are designed to be practical and manageable, whilst ensuring diversity, inclusivity and accessibility are embedded in action planning and design.

Diversity and inclusivity is important all the time. This page focusses on actions, but remember that diversity, accessibility and inclusivity is just as important for the planning meetings as it is for the action itself.

Actions need to be designed to be as inclusive as possible. While total inclusivity is impossible, actions should aim to be inclusive for the widest range of people possible.

Where an action may exclude people, for example climbing Big Ben to drop a banner, there are additional considerations such as necessity and proportionality. However, try not to make assumptions about individuals' limitations. Think of paralympian James Brown on top of a jet at City Airport.

The larger the action is, the greater the issue of diversity and inclusivity will be. With smaller actions, resources may be limited but the same issues must be considered and those affected should be consulted. If action planners receive requests from representatives of marginalised groups, they should be treated as a priority.

# Inclusive Actions

**Actions that aim to be inclusive for all marginalised groups**

# Disability

There is a significant probability that disabled people have experienced discrimination and oppressive behaviour by the police and others. The process of being arrested can be particularly harrowing for those with disabilities who may have to rely on the police for greater support and care whilst in custody. Many, with good reason, will feel excluded if the action is designed to have a high risk of arrest.

# Mobility/Accessibility

- Is the action accessible for those with limitations in mobility?
- Are meeting venues prior to the action accessible?
- Consider the location of the action, how do rebels get there if they use mobility aids, vehicles, wheelchairs and pushchairs for example. Can we offer support to transport people?
- What is the geography/accessibility of the action site?
- Can those with mobility issues move freely around the site?
- Can we provide ramps and people to support movement?
- Can you provide buddies who can dedicate themselves to supporting those with mobility issues?
- Are toilets for those with mobility aids available?
- Are toilets with hoists available?
- Zoom meetings of 75 minutes or more should have a scheduled break and a group agreement reached on the length of the break (15 minutes is the recommended length).

# Hearing impaired

- If there are speeches/meetings/training, have you provided a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter? (Additional sign language (not BSL) interpreters may be needed)
- Are there any rebels skilled in BSL that can assist with communication during meetings and at the action? Consider for all online meetings and training sessions.
- Interpreters and lip readers need a break every 20 minutes

- Zoom has a Live Transcript functionality that you can switch on and it subtitles the meeting
- Have seats been reserved at the front to enable lip-reading and better acoustics?
- Are captions included on films?
- Create audio files for (non-spicy) mass action briefings

Contact **xr.bsl@protonmail** to request interpreters

# Vision Impaired

- Are there any issues for vision impaired rebels travelling to meetings or the action site?
- Have you assessed the action site for hazards for the vision impaired, can we make them safe?
- Are venues accessible for guide dogs?
- Can you provide rebels in support of the partially sighted?
- Have quality contrasting colours been used in written material for those with colour blindness?

# Neurodiversity

There is a wide range of considerations for neurodivergent people. **Offer help and be directed rather than asking about needs.**

- Noise can affect people negatively, waving hands instead of clapping for example may help. Has this been considered?
- Strobe lights can trigger epileptic episodes, will warnings be issued?
- Have colour schemes for signage and literature been considered for dyslexic rebels (avoid italics, underlining and use a sans serif font)?

- Can you allocate a buddy that is available to support neurodivergent people?

- Do you have any Mental Health professionals amongst your protest group that are willing to be available if needed?
- Are there quiet places for neurodivergent people to access if they get overwhelmed?

# Ethnicity

There is a significant probability that people of colour have experienced discrimination and oppressive behaviour by the police and others. Many, with good reason, have no confidence in the justice system. If the action is designed to have a high risk of arrest then this will tend to exclude people of colour, LGBTQ+ and disabled rebels.

- If a mass arrest action or physically close action is deemed necessary and proportionate, will there be alternative supportive actions that allow people of increased risk of Covid 19 or people that are unwilling to be arrested, to share in the protest?

- **Good protest (police) liaison** can pacify police response and prevent escalation which could be uncomfortable for marginalised groups. However, police liaison rebels should not be overtly 'chummy' with police no matter how reasonable they are. This could be very uncomfortable for groups that have experienced police oppression to witness. In addition, police liaison should remind the police of their duty to behave without discrimination and facilitate protest.

- Is the action being protest (police) liaised?

- Will protest liaison be briefed regarding their behaviour at the action?
- Take care with banners and action messaging. Any reference to police, even in jest, is indicative of a privileged relationship with an institutionally racist organisation.
- Have action designers/artists been made aware of the issues with police and messaging?

# LGBTQ+

There are parallel issues with ethnicity and disability in that there is a significant probability that LGBTQ+ people have experienced discrimination and oppressive behaviour by the police and others. Actions with a high risk of arrest may exclude LGBTQ+ people. Participating in Direct Action: A Guide for Transgender People.

- It goes without saying that XR does not tolerate any discrimination or LGBTQ+ abuse but if it is not said and reinforced, then it is not positively challenged within our culture. Has this been spelt out within the action messaging?
- Are gender neutral toilets provided?
- Are there safe spaces for sleep outs?

# Families

Families can be marginalised with children and be members of other marginalised groups. The exclusionary issues listed in this process can have a heightened effect on young rebels.

- Has the action considered the mobility of families with children and buggies? (Please see mobility above, consider meetings as well as the action itself)?
- Children can go missing temporarily. Has the action a site for lost children?
- What is the action policy for communicating details of lost children to the masses? (broadcast on Public Anouncement, use Protest Liaison)?
- Do you have DBS checked adults to supervise children? (this is advisable not a legal obligation)?
- Do you have activities to educate children of all ages?
- Climate anxiety is a serious issue for young people, is wellbeing prepared to work with children?
- Has the content of speeches been considered for the suitability of children?
- Has the action site been assessed for traffic and hazards to child safety?

# Faiths

Protection of the planet is important to all faiths and it is important to ensure that all feel welcome.

- Have you considered the day of the action clashing with days of worship/religious holidays?
- Has the action design included a multi-faith space for prayer?
- Will the action include vegan food (acceptable to most faiths)?
- A single muslim woman or orthodox jewish woman alone amongst men may feel excluded on religious grounds. Are female buddies available to chaperone?
- Are your meeting venues alcohol-free?

# Exclusionary Actions

**Actions that may exclude marginalised groups**

It is accepted that the nature and requirements of some actions will exclude some rebels from taking part. It is important that this is recognised at the design stage and assessed to ensure that the exclusionary aspect is necessary, has been minimised and is deemed proportionate to the purpose of the action.

- **Are exclusionary elements necessary? (Are there other more inclusive ways to achieve the aim of the protest?)**
- Who may find the action exclusionary?
- Has the element that is exclusionary been examined to ensure that adjustments cannot be made to address this and make it more inclusive?
- Are exclusionary elements proportionate?
- How is it proportionate to the aim of the action to have people excluded from it by design?
- Is the exclusionary action supported by other inclusive actions that allow everyone to share, feel valued and contribute towards the aim of the action?
- Have you discussed this with those rebels that may be excluded?

# Accessible Documents

## Readable fonts

- Use sans serif fonts, such as Karla as letters can appear less crowded. Alternatives include Ariel, Verdana, Tahoma, Century Gothic, Trebuchet, Calibri, Open Sans.
- Font size should be 12-14 point or equivalent (e.g. 1-1.2em / 16-19 px). Some dyslexic readers may request a larger font.
- Avoid underlining and italics as this can make the text appear to run together and cause crowding. Use bold for emphasis.
- Avoid text in uppercase/capital letters and small caps, which can be less familiar to the reader and harder to read.
- Ensure that the title and contact details are in clear, large, lowercase print
- Larger inter-letter / character spacing (sometimes called tracking) improves readability, ideally around 35% of the average letter width. If letter spacing is excessive it can reduce readability.
- Inter-word spacing should be at least 3.5 times the inter-letter spacing.
- Larger line spacing improves readability and should be proportional to inter-word spacing; 1.5/150% is preferable.

## Headings and structure

Use headings and styles to create consistent structure to help people navigate through your content. In Word, you'll find these tools in the 'Home' tab. In Google Docs, they are in the standard top toolbar.

Ensure that contact details for the group organising the action or sending out the document are clear and easy to find.

### Headings

- Use a font size that is at least 20% larger than the normal text. If further emphasis is required, then use bold.

- Use formatting tools for text alignment, justification, indents, lists, line and paragraph spacing to support assistive technology users. In Word, you'll find these tools in the 'Layout' tab:

- Add extra space around headings and between paragraphs.

- Ensure hyperlinks look different from headings and normal text

# Colour

- Use single colour backgrounds. Avoid background patterns or pictures and distracting surrounds.

- Use sufficient contrast levels between background and text.

- Use dark coloured text on a light (not white) background.

- Avoid green and red/pink, as these colours are difficult for those who have colour vision deficiencies (colour blindness).

- Consider alternatives to white backgrounds for paper, computer and visual aids such as whiteboards. White can appear too dazzling. Use cream or a soft pastel colour. Some dyslexic people will have their own colour preference.

- When printing, use matt paper rather than gloss. Paper should be thick enough to prevent the other side showing through.
- Ensure that the graphics do not encroach upon the text & that they add to the understanding.



Color Contrast Guide

THIS WORKS, THIS DOESN'T

THIS WORKS, THIS DOESN'T

THIS WORKS, THIS DOESN'T

THIS WORKS, THIS DOESN'T

THIS WORKS, THIS DOESN'T

THIS WORKS, THIS DOESN'T

THIS WORKS, THIS DOESN'T

# Layout

- Left align text, without justification.

- Avoid multiple columns (as used in newspapers).

- Lines should not be too long: 60 to 70 characters.

- Use white space to remove clutter near text and group related content.

- Break up the text with regular section headings in long documents and include a table of contents.

# Writing Style

- Ensure that the subject of the poster/leaflet is clear

- Make the purpose of the letter/leaflet/booklet clear in the first sentence

- Use active rather than passive voice.

- Be concise; avoid using long, dense paragraphs.

- Use short, simple sentences in a direct style.

- Use the present tense as much as possible.

- Use images to support text. Flow charts are ideal for explaining procedures. Pictograms and graphics can help to locate and support information in the text.

- Consider using bullet points and numbering rather than continuous prose.

- Give instructions clearly.

- Avoid double negatives.

- Avoid abbreviations where possible; always provide the expanded form when first used.

- Provide a glossary of abbreviations and jargon.

# Audio information

Audio information is especially important for people with a visual impairment, dyslexia, learning difficulties, non-English speakers and people who struggle to understand maps; non-disabled

people may also find it reassuring and helpful.

Etiquette for producing your own audio CD: use people with clear speaking voices.  Give an introduction and a summary e.g. this is an annual report of 20 pages.  Have gaps between sections; state page number at appropriate points so that people can retrieve information; give contact details at the end; if pictures are important to the text describe them.  Allow time for taping to be done in stages so that the reader does not sound bored.

# Website Accessibility

## Text

Use a sans serif typeface, like Arial or Karla as it is easier to read for visually impaired people. A large font equivalent to Arial 14 is a good size – the alternative is to have a Large Print button at the top of the home page.

The text should be colour-contrasted with its surroundings– like black/white, yellow/blue, green/white. Many visually impaired people find it easier to read reverse coloured text – e.g. white characters (#FFFFFF), on racing green (#006600) background. See this page for examples.

The visited links colour should be a different colour and shade, so that people with colour-blindness or other visual impairments can distinguish it.

## Images

Pictures/pictograms/icons help many people with learning disabilities, but can be a hindrance to people using voice software like Hal/Supernova (text-reader software). Where pictures are included, make sure the alt tags say what they are or what they do (e.g.: click here for Toyota cars)

## Frames

Frames are about the most unhelpful thing for blind and visually impaired people, firstly because it is not easy to see what is going on, secondly, because most Text Reader software works from left to right (in the West), so someone using, for example, Supernova or a screen reader may be jumping from frame to frame and what they hear wont make sense.

## Tables

Tables are inaccessible for many with visual impairments and some screen readers.

## Forms

Web-based forms can usually be read by text readers, but it's worthwhile including a "print" button, for people who can't use the online version.

# Document downloads

If written in Adobe Acrobat 7 or above, .pdf files can be read by text readers like Jaws, but not all screen readers, therefore it is best practice to offer documents in Word and in pdf

# Structure

A logical and easy-to-follow structure may be the most important thing in making a website accessible:

avoid clutter
keep the homepage as simple as possible
pay particular attention to how you map out the site – the fewer clicks for a person to get to the information they want, the better – it is a resource not a Treasure Hunt

## Check Out

**Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.** Available at: www.w3.org/WAI/

# Good practises when communicating with Disabled and neurodiverse people

# Communication Checklist

## Written communication

- Is text colour contrasted with background?
- Is typeface sans serif?
- Is text large enough for most people to see (Are community languages in large print)?
- Is layout clear and easy to follow – avoiding columns and box inserts – (although some people with dyslexia prefer columns)?
- Do the graphics help to explain what it is about?
- Is the title/subject easy to gauge/understand?
- Is there an audio tape version?
- Is there a signed video version?
- Is there a large print version?
- Is it in the present tense?
- Are there any unnecessary adverbs or adjectives?
- Are there any acronyms, are they explained?
- Is there any jargon/in-house language which could be avoided?
- Is there a named or titled person to contact, and a variety of ways to contact them?

## Verbal Communication

- Are you aware of how and where to get a sign language interpreter?
- Ensure you look at people when talking to them
- Try speaking as clearly as possible
- Keep your hands away from your lips when speaking
- Ensure you are easy to understand (Plain English)
- Explain things until person understands
- Offer to help
- Being friendly aids communication
- If a person has a problem, can you offer alternatives?

## Signage

- Is it easy to notice?
- Is signage logically placed and used?
- Is signage unified?
- Do the signs make sense to a stranger?
- Have you considered the height, typeface and use of pictures?
- Have you also considered colour contrasting, colour coding, tactile/Braille information?

# Good Practice in Communicating with Disabled People

The following information is a guide to issues which affect different groups of people with impairments in terms of communication. It is important to remember each individual has their own needs and strategies – ask them what their particular needs or issues are where possible.

## Who have visual impairments

- Prior to a meeting the organiser should clarify with the individual their access requirements are and ascertain whether they will be escorted to the meeting or be accompanied by a guide dog.
- Letters and information to support a meeting should be available in an appropriate form, depending upon the individual's preferred communication mode (i.e. Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.).
- People with little or no vision are likely to require information in non-visual formats – remember, do not assume, ask – this could range from audio tape, Braille or computer disk (e.g. people using screen readers).
- Decreasing numbers of people are using Braille these days, however, there are still some visually impaired people who prefer this format and find it easier to use.
- At reception the individual should be met and escorted to the meeting room as required.
- Be hazard aware. If asked to guide a blind person to a destination, take the person's arm above the elbow, describe the route to be taken and detail any potential hazards, e.g., steps, corners and doorways. They may need to be guided to a suitable chair.
- Lighting levels need to be discussed with the individual and seating should be arranged with daylight behind the individual.
- Contrasting colours are helpful for those with low vision.
- Introductions should be made in a way that ensures that the individual is able to put a voice to a name.
- Verbal indications are necessary if any of the participants leaves or re-enters the room, or if joined by a third-party.
- A guide dog is highly disciplined and should not be distracted or petted when working. Only approach a guide dog with the owner's permission.

## Face-to-face Communication:

- ensure the person is aware of your presence, when you are talking directly to them, handing them over to another person, or you are leaving them.
- when reading to a person who is visually impaired, make sure they know when you have stopped reading and have begun talking to them. Similarly, denote any difference between formal and informal conversations.
- The environment can be as disabling to some people with visual impairments as it is for deaf people. Light, reasonably quiet settings could assist communication.

## Who have physical impairments

Ascertain the degree of personal independence of the individual in advance, for example, will they:

- need special parking arrangements
- walk unaided
- manage steps or stairs
- require specialist seating
- use and require access for a wheelchair
- benefit from a meeting room on the ground floor with proximity to an accessible toilet.

Some individuals with physical impairments may have communication aids, or use speech that may be difficult to follow, or attend the meeting in a wheelchair and/or come with a personal assistant. Be prepared for these eventualities.

- Enquire about the best format for organising the face-to-face aspects of the meeting, taking into account the role of the communication aid, the position of the wheelchair and the presence of the personal assistant.
- Speak clearly and naturally to avoid exaggerated, slow or loud<peech.
- If a disabled person has a communication aid it is important to let them use this as a matter of course and not interrupt. Avoid making the piece of equipment the centre of attention or treating it as if it was a novelty. Address the person with the speech impairment directly.

## Who have communication related impairments

What implications are there for face to face communication?

Having a speech impairment can be very tiring especially when in a new environment. Also consider that some speech impairments are affected by a person's emotional state. Patience and respect for what they have to say is very important. When talking with someone with a speech impairment:

- Make eye contact and be especially attentive and patient with a person who has difficulty speaking or who uses a communicator. Wait quietly and listen whilst the person talks.

- Do not rush the person as this is likely to cause additional stress and impact negatively on a person's speech.
- Resist the temptation to speak for the person, or to finish their sentences.
- Some people may prefer to be asked questions which require either a short answer, or a nod or shake of the head.
- Be sure you understand fully what the person is meaning before making any assumptions. It may help to say what you have understood and ask the person to repeat the rest.
- Ask simpler/shorter questions rather than ones which rely on a long answer if meeting a person for the first time (if this is appropriate).
- If you don't understand what is being said, don't be afraid or too embarrassed to ask the person to repeat it, and this may need to be done several times. People are usually used to repeating themselves.
- Don't make assumptions about the person's hearing or intellect just because he or she has difficulty speaking.
- If noisy, take account of this and, if possible, move to a quieter area.
- Be aware that the person's first language might not be English.

There may be other communication barriers to consider:

- People with speech impairments are likely to find telephone calls difficult. Email may be a more useful method of communication.
- The length of time it takes to communicate with someone with a speech impairment or non-verbal communication is likely to be longer than usually expected. Allow more time and include frequent breaks if a long meeting is anticipated.
- Allow the individual to take a little longer to contribute to the meeting.

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## Who have a history of mental ill health

"Mental ill health" is an all encompassing term used to cover people who experience a range of conditions that are grouped together. These conditions may include: mood related disorders (depression), anxiety-related disorders (phobias, panic, post-traumatic stress, compulsive behaviour), psychosis (schizophrenia), eating disorders (bulimia, anorexia nervosa) and personality disorders.

For some people with a history of mental ill health the following issues may need additional thought when organising a meeting:

- providing in advance a very clear resume of the purpose of the meeting, the names of all those attending and their roles
- previous experience of stigma and discrimination in their life
- the anxiety of self disclosure may be especially acute
- past medical history and the frequency of mental health episodes may  indicate the possibility of cancellation
- fluctuations in concentration or mood, confusion or disorientated thinking
- self-perception may not be the same as that of others

- the day-to-day effects of medication may be detrimental
- additional fatigue is likely to be caused by the meeting process
- offering to be flexible and making alternative meeting times may be required
- providing quality written information at the meeting
- post-meeting notes could prove useful where follow up action is required

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# Who have dyslexia or some types of neurodiversity

People with dyslexia are not a homogenous group. They are all individuals and the impact of their dyslexia will vary according to their degree of difficulty, the timing of their diagnosis, their particular strengths, and their coping strategies.

When planning and undertaking a meeting it is vital to:

- provide clear directions and instructions on the place and time of the meeting. People with dyslexia will often forget dates and times of appointments and therefore need a written and/or verbal reminder.
- use a quiet space to help maintain concentration for the individual
- keep the carrier language simple so that additional energy is not wasted on unnecessary decoding
- invite questions to monitor full comprehension
- write down important information for the individual to take away
- allow additional time for the processing of information
- encourage the use of a tape recorder if the individual would like to use one.

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# Communication with a deaf person

## with a sign language interpreter

- the interpreter: the role of the interpreter is to facilitate communication only and not to participate.
- off task conversations: never engage an interpreter in a conversation when they are communicating for the individual.
- speed of speech: use a normal rate of speaking, with natural breaks for pauses. A 10-15 minute break is necessary when giving large amounts of information.
- allow time: the process of translating requires time - the deaf person must be able to receive the information and to respond.
- advance information: provide information in advance of the meeting to the interpreter and if possible to the deaf person. Prior access to names and specific terminology will save time during the meeting.

### Who is a lip reader

The individual may require technical support in the form of a radio hearing aid or a portable loop system in the room, to facilitate the use of the hearing aid.
Lip reading requires a high level of concentration and can be extremely exhausting, as much as three-quarters of lip reading is intelligent guesswork and intuition, relying to some extent on contextual clues.

- speak clearly at a reasonable pace without shouting or over enunciating as this distorts sound and lip patterns
- rephrase if necessary rather than simply repeating words
- check position and room lighting as lips cannot be read at a distance or in a dim light
- avoid nodding too much, turning of the head or moving about the room
- use facial expression and try to maintain eye-contact if you know the person is a lip reader
- gain the individual's attention before speaking
- give a clear view of lips: avoid covering the mouth with hands
- make time adjustments to allow the individual to adjust to unfamiliar lip patterns
- remember that many sounds and words look alike on the lips - e.g., t,d,n have the same configuration of the lips as do p,b,m.

## Who is hard of hearing.

The individual may require technical support in the form of a radio hearing aid or a portable loop system in the room, to facilitate the use of the hearing aid.

## Who have limited dexterity

People with limited dexterity might find intercom systems, door bells and security buttons difficult to operate if gripping, holding, pressing, or turning, is required. Providing alternative methods of entry or offering additional support might reduce barriers.
Leaflets may present problems where they have more than one fold – ideally, having no fold at all would be most people's preference.
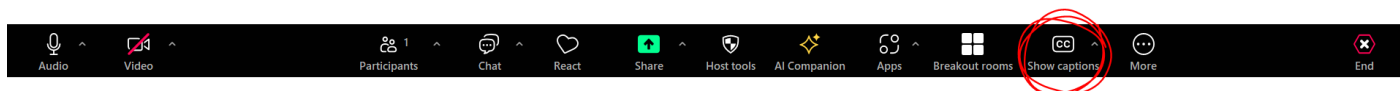
# Closed Captioning

## Zoom

1. Ensure Enhanced Encryption is enabled and NOT End-to-End Encryption otherwise some features won't be available - Here's the list
2. Ensure you have updated your Zoom account to the latest version. Then enable Automated CC before the event in Zoom Account settings
3. When you are in the meeting- at the bottom of your screen, select closed CC/Live Transcript. This must be done by the host of the meeting.

You or participants can always Hide Subtitles if you don't want to see them. Alternatively, once everyone has arrived, ask participants whether anyone wants them running. If they are not required, they can be turned off.



## Youtube

YouTube Closed Captions setting must be activated when streaming. This is found in Create Stream > Settings > Setup > Turn on Closed Captions

## Facebook

Turn on Closed Captions for Facebook Live broadcasts and Live Streaming- Instructions here

## Big Blue Button

Big Blue Button: closed captions are available via a browser. However, be aware that CCs aren't available if accessing a BBB meeting on a phone. BBB FAQ