

The Disability Discrimination Act

Organising Accessible Events

**Making your conferences, events and exhibitions
accessible for disabled people**

About the Disability Rights Commission and Equality Commission for Northern Ireland

The Disability Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland are independent bodies, established by Acts of Parliament to eliminate the discrimination faced by disabled people and promote equality of opportunity.

Everyone benefits when disabled people participate – as citizens, customers and employees – so we have set ourselves the goal of “a society where all disabled people can participate fully as equal citizens.”

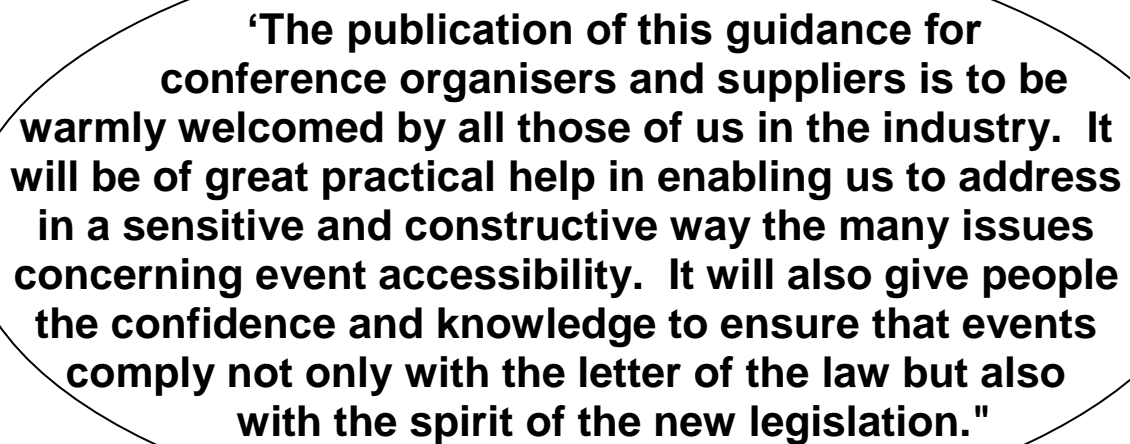
Together we work with disabled people and their organisations, the business community, Government and public sector agencies to achieve practical solutions that are effective for employers, service providers and disabled people alike.

There are approximately 10 million disabled people in the United Kingdom. This includes people with mobility disabilities, sensory impairments, learning disabilities, mental health issues and people with epilepsy and other impairments.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, many legal rights and obligations affecting disabled people’s access to services are already in force. Others become law in 2004.

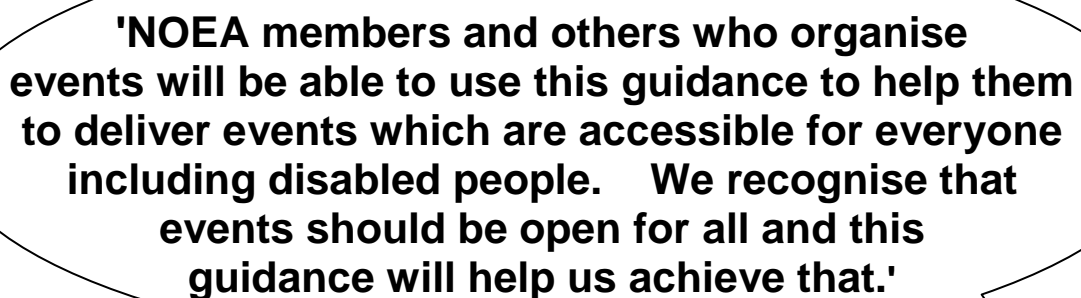
Many disabled people are still unsure of their rights and service providers are often unsure how to implement “best practice” to make it easier for disabled people to use their services or gain employment.

For details of the Disability Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and how we can help you see our details at the end of this publication.



'The publication of this guidance for conference organisers and suppliers is to be warmly welcomed by all those of us in the industry. It will be of great practical help in enabling us to address in a sensitive and constructive way the many issues concerning event accessibility. It will also give people the confidence and knowledge to ensure that events comply not only with the letter of the law but also with the spirit of the new legislation.'

Tony Rogers, CEO British Association of Conference Destinations and Executive Director of the Association of British Professional Conference Organisers



'NOEA members and others who organise events will be able to use this guidance to help them to deliver events which are accessible for everyone including disabled people. We recognise that events should be open for all and this guidance will help us achieve that.'

John Barton, Secretary, National Outdoor Event Association

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FOREWORD

Events are big business and an important part of the lives of very many people. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 has given disabled people equal rights to attend, to participate in and to enjoy these events.

Making events accessible for disabled people is not just a legal requirement. With around 10 million disabled people in the UK and a combined spending power of £50 billion each year it is an important commercial decision too.

Yet organisations wanting to make an event more accessible often have difficulty finding out about the adjustments they can make; these are often simple but important as they open up the event for disabled people. From October 2004 further duties under the DDA come into force, requiring service providers to consider making **reasonable adjustments** to premises and physical features of buildings.

Event organisers could face legal challenges from disabled people unable to access an event. Venues including hotels, conference centres and concert halls that do not have appropriate facilities are likely to find their competitors who have made reasonable adjustments attract the business that was once theirs.

This Guide is designed to help. It is based on the experiences of organisations experiences of creating accessible conferences and seminars. We hope that people will follow the guidance so we can achieve a position where rights become a reality and all disabled people can enjoy, learn from and participate in all events they want to attend.

Bert Massie, Chairman, Disability Rights Commission

Joan Harbison, Chief Commissioner, Northern Ireland Equality Commission

Section 1: About this Guide

What is this Guide about?

This practical Guide aims to help event organisers and other service providers to make events and associated services more accessible and inclusive for disabled people. It gives information and guidance on working towards better practice.

The Guide does not attempt to list everything that will need to be done for every type of event. Instead, it outlines principles which will lead to the development of best practice and increase access for disabled people to a range of conferences and events.

This Guide aims to help you

- understand the implications of Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)
- think about access and inclusion when you plan an event
- identify features which make it impossible or difficult for disabled people to access your conference or event
- understand 'reasonable adjustments' and what you can do
- find further sources of advice and information and other help you might need

Physical adjustments to buildings play an important role in making events accessible for disabled people and this Guide highlights some of the adjustments you could consider. The Guide does not provide technical specifications for adjustments to buildings such as ramp gradients and door widths. You will find details of sources of further information about making reasonable adjustments to buildings in – 'Further Contacts'.

Definition of an Event

This Guide uses the term ‘event(s)’ to cover the broad range of event types such as exhibitions, conferences, outdoor and local events. The Guide uses the ‘event organiser’ to describe the person or organisation hosting the event.

How to use this Guide

The Guide looks at key features that are common to most events. Some of the features covered in the Guide may not be relevant to your event and some features unique to your event may not be covered at all. However you will find contact details of other organisations that may be able to help and advise you in Section 16 – ‘Further Contacts’.

Throughout the guidance you will find:

- **explanation boxes** to explain terms that people might not be familiar with or where there are different meanings
- **examples** to help illustrate the guidance and how it could work in practice.
- **‘Top Tips’** boxes highlighting some of the important issues and changes you could consider making to your event.

The **glossary** provides a brief description of services, aids and other features referred to in the guidance which may be unfamiliar to some readers.

Who should use this Guide?

This Guide will be useful to anybody who is involved in organising events whatever the nature, size or location of the event. You might be a professional organiser of events like conferences or exhibitions, a health board or local authority, a voluntary organisation or chair of a local fundraising group. You will also find this guidance useful if you are a student of event or hospitality management.

You might be organising or supplying events including

- Consultation seminars for example by local authorities and health boards

- Conferences for professional bodies
- Entertainment events
- Agricultural shows
- Exhibitions of products and services for leisure or hobby
- Award ceremonies
- Research conferences
- Annual or Special General Meetings
- Fundraising events

The following questions and answers will help you to determine how you can use this guidance.

‘Will the Guide help me organise an event?’

No. The Guide does not advise you how to run an event. Instead it takes features common to most conferences and events such as publicity, staff and venue facilities and shows how the management of these can impact on disabled people and how you can address disability access issues.

‘I am a professional conference and events organiser running very large events – how will this help me?’

If you are running a very large specialist event such as an outdoor rock concert or an international research conference you may find that issues such as crowd control or liaison with local authorities and police are not specifically covered in this Guide. However you will be able to use the principles outlined in the guidance to identify where you need to make changes and improvements.

‘We are organising a small local event – can I use this Guide?’

If you are organising a small event you might find that some information in this guidance does not apply to you. The guidance is arranged so you can refer to the features that are applicable to your event.

‘I provide services for conference and events but I don’t run them myself – what does this mean for me?’

Providers of associated services such as venue owners, ticket agencies, regional conference bureaux and catering companies will have duties under the DDA for any services provided to the public. You can find out more about your legal duties in Section 3 - 'What the Law Says.'

Section 2: Why should I think about access?

Access can mean many things. Access for disabled people is not only about physical access to buildings for wheelchair users but also includes things like access to written information for people with visual impairments and access to the same standard of service.

There are many reasons why you should think about access and how you plan to meet the requirements of disabled people.

- £50 billion is the estimated annual spending power of disabled people. Making your event accessible and welcoming to disabled people is an important commercial consideration.
- There are around 10 million disabled people in the UK representing a considerable proportion of your target audience.
- Disabled people can also influence the choices of their families and friends if they choose not to go somewhere inaccessible or where they have had a previous bad experience.
- Everyone benefits when access is better. Adjustments you make for disabled people like providing clear signage will also make your event more accessible for people who are not disabled.
- When events are not accessible disabled people can miss out on opportunities for leisure, learning, entertainment, work and as consumers or business owners.
- As a service provider you have a legal duty to think about access for disabled people. Failing to make reasonable adjustments and taking steps to avoid discriminating against disabled people could result in a court ordering you to pay compensation.

Section 3: What the Law says

This section gives a brief introduction to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995. The DDA aims to ensure that disabled people are not treated less favourably than people who are not disabled. The DDA covers employment, access to goods, services and facilities, education and transport.

This Guide is about access to goods services and facilities at events. This is covered by Part 3 of the DDA.

The Code of Practice

The Code of Practice 'Rights of Access; Goods, Facilities, Services and Premises' gives more detail about the law and how it applies to you.

<http://www.drc-gb.org/publicationsandreports/publicationdetails.asp?id=223§ion=access>

The Code explains the duties that service providers have including:

- not treating disabled people less favourably than non-disabled people, and
- making reasonable adjustments to your services and premises so that disabled people can access them.

There are two versions of the Code; one version for England, Scotland and Wales and a version for Northern Ireland. You can view the Code on the DRC website at

www.drc.org.uk/thelaw/practice.asp

and on the Northern Ireland Equality Commission website at

www.equalityni.org/publications

You can order copies of the Code from

The Stationery Office
PO Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN

Telephone 0870 600 5522
Facsimile 0870 600 5533
Email customerservices@tso.co.uk
Or order online at www.tso.co.uk

Who is disabled?

There are around 10 million disabled people in the United Kingdom. The DDA defines a disabled person as someone who has a physical or mental impairment which has an effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. That effect must be:

- substantial (that is, more than minor or trivial), and
- adverse, and
- long term (that is, it has lasted or is likely to last for at least a year or for the rest of the life of the person affected).

This definition covers;

- people who are blind or visually impaired
- people who are deaf or hard of hearing
- people who have heart conditions
- people with learning disabilities
- people with mobility and manual dexterity problems
- people who have experienced mental health problems
- people who have dyslexia
- people who have epilepsy
- people who have incontinence

You also have a legal duty to **anticipate** that disabled people will want to use your services and you should plan to make changes so that they are able to do so. The DRC advises that you should not wait until a disabled person tells you they want to use your service before you consider making any changes.

What are the duties?

Part 3 of the DDA 'Goods, Services and Facilities', places legal duties on service providers. These are:

- a duty not to treat disabled people less favourably than people who are not disabled
- a duty to make reasonable adjustments
- a duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to physical features of premises

What do these duties mean?

Duty not to treat a disabled person less favourably

Since 1996 it has been unlawful for service providers to provide less favourable treatment to a disabled person than they would to a person who is not disabled.

This might include charging the disabled person more money for the same service, refusing or failing to serve a disabled person, providing a lower standard of service to a disabled person or providing a service in a worse manner because they have failed to make reasonable adjustments.

An example of less favourable treatment would be:

Example

Door stewards at a rock concert refuse entry to a ticket holder because he has cerebral palsy and had difficulty controlling and co-ordinating his movements. No other ticket holder is refused entry. This would amount to less favourable treatment for a reason related to disability and, unless the concert venue can justify its actions, would be an unlawful refusal of service.

Duty to make reasonable adjustments

Since 1999 service providers have had a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. Each situation will be different but will be likely to include identifying and making any changes necessary to policies, practices and procedures, providing auxiliary aids and services and looking at how services are delivered.

Example

A hotel conference suite has a policy of only providing a self-service buffet at lunchtime for delegates. Some disabled people with mobility impairments or visual impairments may find it difficult or impossible to carry or hold food from a buffet selection and to eat without placing their plate on a table.

It would be a reasonable adjustment for the venue to provide staff to serve people at the buffet and to carry food to tables. It would be good practice to reserve some places at the table for disabled people who need this service.

Reasonable adjustments in relation to physical features

Since October 2004 service providers have had a duty to make reasonable adjustments in relation to the physical features of premises to overcome physical barriers to access.

There are 4 ways in which reasonable adjustments to physical features can be achieved;

- remove the feature
- alter the feature
- provide a reasonable alternative means of avoiding it; or
- provide the service by reasonable alternative means.

‘Physical features’ include features arising from the design or construction of a building, any feature of the building including the approach, entrances and exits and any fixtures, fittings, furniture, equipment and materials.

Example

A large hotel hires out its banqueting suite for conferences and social events which is only accessible by a flight of stairs. The hotel commissions an access audit to help them identify reasonable adjustments they can make. The audit recommends that the hotel installs a chair lift at the entrance to the banqueting suite. The hotel also installs a ramp to the stage area so that this is also accessible for people with mobility impairments.

Who is responsible for meeting the duties?

If you provide a service to the public you are the service provider and you will be the person responsible for meeting the duties in the DDA. An event organiser will be the service provider for the event which they are organising.

This is reasonably straightforward where, for example, an event organiser holds an event in their own premises and provides all the services such as information, catering, staff and entertainment themselves, directly to the public. However, in other cases, there will be a number of service providers involved in a single event. The responsible service provider will be the person providing the service to the public.

The following examples help to illustrate this.

Example

A local authority is running a programme of consultation events for people living in the authority area. They are hosting these meetings in community centres and schools that they own and operate. The service provider is the local authority and they would be responsible for ensuring that each event, including the content of the consultation

and any supporting materials are accessible for disabled people.

Example

Food is available to buy from a burger van at an agricultural show. The burger van was asked to attend by the organisers and to provide hot food services at the event. The service provider is the owner of the burger van and he or she will have duties under the DDA to ensure that disabled people can access the fast food service he is providing.

Example

A national exhibition centre is hired for conferences and exhibitions. The exhibition centre includes extensive car parking facilities. The centre management is responsible for accessibility of the car park for disabled people and will need to consider issues such as steps preventing access etc.

Example

An exhibition organiser rents out exhibition stand space to companies wishing to be represented at the exhibition. The exhibition organiser will be responsible for ensuring that the exhibition stand spaces are accessible for disabled people. The exhibitors will be responsible for ensuring that the services provided in the stand space are accessible.

Example

The organiser of an international 2-day conference offers to make hotel bookings for delegates. The organiser is providing a hotel booking service and they will be responsible for ensuring that the booking service itself is accessible to disabled people. However, the hotel is also a service provider and they will be responsible for ensuring that the hotel rooms and services are accessible for all guests, including disabled guests. (A source of information about accommodation with accessible bedrooms is in Section 12 – ‘Additional Services’.)

Where there is any doubt about whether a particular event is covered by the DDA or concerns about who is the responsible service provider, you should seek further advice.

How can I make sure that services supplied to me as an event organiser are accessible?

If you contract services for an event you are organising, you could ask suppliers for details of how they make their services accessible for disabled people. If they are providing a service to the public then they should already be aware that they have duties under the DDA and know how they plan to meet these duties.

Services supplied to you by others might include things like venues for hire, sound systems and catering services. Other services include those supplied by professional conference, event or exhibition organisers you hire to help you deliver your event. The guidance in Sections 4 to 12 highlights reasonable adjustments that will help to make these services more accessible.

Remember - it is good practice to work beyond the DDA and plan to ensure that disabled people have equal access to all the features of events.

Can I justify not making any changes?

In some circumstances the law allows service providers to justify not making certain changes. Justifications include:

- a health and safety regulation is applicable at that venue which prevents a particular change to the premises from being made
- the cost of making a particular adjustment is unreasonable for the service provider, or
- the adjustment will change the nature of the service or make it impossible for you to provide that service for other people.

You will need to consider carefully any decision you take not to make a particular adjustment and ensure that you have undertaken appropriate research. You can find out more information in the Code of Practice.

Remember – having a justification not to make a reasonable adjustment does not mean you can do nothing. The reasonable adjustment duties in the DDA will still apply and you should concentrate on the changes which you can make including considering alternative ways of making your event accessible.

What happens if I don't meet my duties?

If you discriminate against a disabled person a court can order you to pay compensation to that person. A court can also order you to stop the discrimination and to make changes to avoid discriminating again in the future. As a business, you may also attract unfavourable publicity as a result of this.

If a disabled person tells you they feel they have been discriminated against when they have tried to access your service, you should consider what you can do to put things right. The guidance in Sections 4 to 12 can be used to help find solutions. It will be important that you treat the complaint seriously and undertake to resolve the issue.

Section 4: Planning

This section will help you to start thinking about any changes that you could make and suggests how you can go about getting further information to help you.

Planning for access and inclusion

This guidance is about how to make events more accessible for disabled people. This means increasing access for disabled people to all the features of an event.

What do we mean by 'access'?

Many people only think about access in terms of physical access for people with mobility impairments and about things like ramps, lifts and how people get into buildings.

This Guide uses the broadest definition of access. This takes into account how all disabled people access goods, services and facilities as well as buildings. For example, this definition includes how a visually impaired person might access written information or how someone with learning difficulties can access a ticket booking system.

Thinking about inclusion

Thinking inclusively means thinking about everybody each time you plan a feature of your event such as publicity or the venue. This includes attendees, staff, chairpersons, speakers, performers and exhibitors. Planning inclusively for disabled people will form part of your planning for everyone rather than something you have to find a solution for when you have finished planning everything else.

What do we mean by inclusion?

Inclusion is more than creating access solutions. It means providing access solutions that are suitable for everyone and that disabled people are considered automatically rather than treated as separate or different.

Remember – it will often be more expensive and more difficult to address the requirements of disabled people and meet your legal duties if you treat access as something to 'bolt on' at a later stage.

Example

The main entrance of a conference venue is not accessible for wheelchair users. A separate entrance is provided for wheelchair users at the side of the building. This is an *accessible* entrance but it is not an inclusive entrance.

An *inclusive* entrance is an entrance which is suitable for everyone. This might be a single entrance which is level, close to parking, easy to use and clearly signed.

Thinking inclusively will not just benefit disabled people. In the above example everyone who uses that venue will benefit including other attendees, people making deliveries, people with heavy baggage, young children, those with prams and many older people. First time visitors and non-English speakers will benefit from clear signage.

If you have already booked a venue without thinking about access for disabled people you may find it more difficult to provide an inclusive event. You may have to consider a change of venue, providing temporary solutions which are often less satisfactory or negotiating with the venue owner to make changes in time for your event.

Planning inclusively will help you to create a conference or event that works well for everyone – not just for some people. Aim to be inclusive when you start planning your event. By doing this you will be more likely to provide single solutions rather than making lots of different arrangements for different people.

Where can I get more advice and help?

Do you know how to book a **Speech To Text Reporter (STTR)**, get documents transcribed into **Braille** or onto tape or how to choose a venue which is accessible and meets the criteria for your event? Do you worry about how to ask if someone needs help?

The good news is that most disabled people are quite happy to provide you with information about how to meet their own needs in an appropriate way. By asking someone what works best for them, you can often avoid any un-necessary worry or research.

There are many sources of information and advice available and reading this Guide is a good start. The internet is a good source of information about local or national voluntary organisations, public sector and government bodies who can give information and advice. Section 16 – ‘Further Contacts’ gives details of some organisations which can help you.

You can also find links to sources of advice and information in our website

www.drc-gb.org

www.equalityni.org

A good starting point is to look for information about things like

- access audits
- physical adjustments
- technology designed to assist disabled people that you can buy or hire
- disability awareness training
- services such as **British Sign Language** (BSL) or **Irish Sign Language** (ISL) interpreters.

Involving disabled people

You could look at how you can involve disabled people in the planning your event. If you have a steering group or committee, you could include the views of disabled people by inviting disabled people to join the group. You could speak to local groups or contact voluntary organisations for information and advice. You can find out about organisations of and for disabled people through groups such as;

National Association of Council of Voluntary Services
177 Arundel Street
Sheffield S1 2NU
Telephone 0114 278 6636
Textphone 0114 278 7025
Fax 0114 278 7004
Email nacvs@nacvs.org.uk
Website www.nacvs.org.uk

In Scotland visit www.cvsscotland.org.uk

Staff or members of your own organisation may have personal experience of disability that they are willing to share with you.

Remember – to make sure that all your planning meetings are accessible for members who are disabled.

Getting Better

You can continue to develop better practise by learning from your experiences and asking attendees what worked and what needs to be different. You could consider sharing your experiences and examples of good practice with other people organising events through membership bodies and by telling the DRC about your experiences. Section 13 – ‘Feedback’ has details on how you can give feedback to the DRC and Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

Section 5: The venue

Choosing the venue is likely to be one of the first things you do and one of the most important. You may have your own venue that you want to use or you might be looking for a venue to hire for this event. In both cases there are things you can do to make it easier for disabled people to come to your event and to take part. It is worthwhile remembering that disabled people might come to your event as contributors such as exhibitors, speakers and performers as well as audience members.

If you own a venue which you use or hire out for events you could consider how you can make it more accessible for disabled people. If your venue is accessible then event organisers are more likely to be able to provide the same service for everybody. If the venue is not accessible, event organisers will have to find an alternative way of making the event accessible. Making changes to the physical environment will make your venue more attractive to event organisers. This is good business sense and it will be a good marketing tool.

Hiring a venue

Choosing a venue

Finding an accessible venue can be very difficult. Many venues available for hire are not accessible or only have a few access features.

You might already have criteria to use in your search for a venue such as the location, the number of people it can hold, the cost or whether it has the facilities to suit your event such as a stage area, seminar breakout rooms or outdoor areas.

At this stage you should be thinking inclusively about criteria to help you find a venue that is equally accessible for everyone. A lot of venues are available to hire but not all of them are suitable for events which aim to be accessible for disabled people.

Remember - hiring a venue that is accessible for disabled people is better for everyone. It is easier than making changes later and is a lot

better than failing to include disabled people or being required by a court to pay compensation.

As a starting point you could choose to only consider venues which allow people to enter, exit and to move around the building with ease, that offer adapted toilet facilities and where ideally, the event can take place on one floor only.

It may be possible to make changes to the venue for your event. These could be temporary changes or changes which you bring to the attention of the venue owner.

Example

A community centre is accessed from the street by climbing 5 steps and is regularly used for local events. The venue management get permission from the council to create a ramp at the front of the building. This helps disabled people with a mobility impairment to enter the centre. Before the ramp is completed the venue management provide an auxiliary aid in the form of a temporary ramp.

There are many sources of information about venues that you can hire for events including local authorities, Convention Bureau at local tourist offices and direct from venue owners. Section 16 – ‘Further Contacts’ provides details about other sources.

Contacting prospective venues

When you contact prospective venues for the first time you could ask them about access for disabled people. If they welcome the question and have information ready to give to you, it is likely that the venue has thought about access and will be willing to help you make sure that your event is inclusive for disabled people.

What do we mean by an Access Audit?

An access audit is ideally an independent, professional survey of your conference or event venue and may include an assessment of procedures and practices. The audit results in a report outlining existing access provision and recommending improvements. (You can find details of the National Register of Access Consultants in the next part of this Section.)

There are also audit toolkits available if you are not able to arrange for a professional access auditor but these are less likely to provide you with everything you need to know.

Visiting the venue

It is good practice to check the venue in person before confirming a booking as well as asking the venue for information.

When you visit a venue you should assess the premises and facilities which will be available for the people who will be at your event. This will include things like car parks, toilets, corridors, lifts, catering areas, theatres, workshop rooms, entrance lobbies and so on. You should also look at areas for performers, speakers and exhibitors as they may be disabled people.

Further practical advice and guidance is widely available including checklists and toolkits which can help you to review venues. You can use this guidance to help you to highlight features which might make it difficult or impossible for disabled people to access your event.

When you audit a venue think about what it will be like during the event when there are people there. If there are going to be exhibition stands and display cases, will there be ample room for safe and easy manoeuvre between the stands for everybody, including people using wheelchairs or assistance dogs? Will you be installing portable toilet facilities, marquees or first aid cabins? You will need to think about accessibility to these services and facilities too.

If you are organising an outdoor event you will need to consider access too. This could be things like supplying seating and ground cover for grassy areas so that people with mobility impairments can move around.

Guidance about venues

There are several sources of guidance specifically about event and conference venues.

The Centre for Accessible Environments website provides a venue checklist which helps you assess whether venues are accessible.

www.cae.org.uk

Tourism For All can supply an Access Solutions Pack with a self audit toolkit.

www.tourismforall.org.uk

Another example is 'Conference and Exhibition Venues: A guide to facilities for disabled people' from RADAR.

www.radar.org.uk

You may have to pay for some information.

Other guidance is available which looks at buildings or outdoor spaces generally. Section 16 – 'Further Contacts' gives details of some organisations where you can find guidance on access to buildings and land.

More technical guidance is available in British Standards Institute document BS8300 'The design of buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people – Code of Practice'. If the venue was designed from 2002 onwards you could ask how the guidance in the Code was applied to the design of the building.

www.bsi-global.com

The following Top Tips highlight some of the issues you could look out for when you visit a venue to carry out an access audit.

Top Tips for finding a venue

- If you plan to undertake an access audit yourself, using the guidance and toolkits available, you will need to plan to set aside enough time. Remember to look at external approaches, ante-rooms and any facilities at the venue such as public telephones or vending machines.
- Check that access features are maintained and managed. For example disabled toilets are sometimes used as storage space and **loop** and **infrared systems** for people with hearing impairments may not be properly operated or maintained by staff.

- Find out about awareness training for staff at the venue. Does the venue regularly use agency staff or casual staff – will they have had disability awareness training? Will you or someone with an understanding of disability access issues be able to brief them before the event?
- What policies and procedures does the venue have? Do they have a policy not to admit animals? In this case you must ensure that the policy does not extend to assistance dogs as this is likely to be unlawful.
- Find out about evacuation procedures. Do they take account of disabled people including people with sensory impairments and mobility impairments? Is information about evacuation and emergency procedures accessible in different formats such as **Braille** or large print or will you have to provide this information at the start of your event?

- Think about the venue when it is full and your delegates and customers are moving around. Will the venue still be accessible? Will you need to think about leaving more space for people to manoeuvre or changing the timetable to allow more time for people to move around?
- Carry out a risk assessment. This will help you to identify and remove or reduce any health and safety risks such as slippery surfaces, hazardous materials and risks from vehicles. Risk assessment should not lead to excluding certain groups of people - they are about keeping everyone safe. The Health and Safety Executive have a short publication called 'Five Steps to Risk Assessment' which you can download at

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns.indg163.pdf

Making changes

Once you have identified changes that need to be made you should discuss with the venue who is responsible for making the changes. (See Section 3 – 'What the Law Says')

Changes might be permanent and take some time to put into place like levelling external paving or they can be something simple like supplying a choice of mugs and cups and saucers or the layout of chairs in seminar rooms.

You can find out more about products that are easy for everybody to use in the DRC publication, Inclusive Design

www.drc-gb.org/publicationsandreports

You will need to be sure that the venue can implement the changes they are responsible for before your event takes place. Alternatively, you could consider finding another venue.

Using your own venue or hiring your venue to others

Access audit

If you are using your own venue or if you own a venue which other people use for events, you should consider commissioning an access audit for the premises. As well as looking at physical features an access audit could include the policies and practices associated with the operation of the premises. The audit report will identify any changes you need to make.

The National Register of Access Consultants will be able to supply you with details of registered access auditors and access consultants. You can contact the NRAC at

National Register of Access Consultants (NRAC)
70 South Lambeth Road
London SW8 1RL

Telephone 020 7735 7845
Textphone 020 7840 0125
Fax 020 7840 5811
Email info@nrac.org.uk
Website www.nrac.org.uk

The audit report might recommend changes such as installing accessible toilets, door opening mechanisms or simpler things like changing door handles and suggestions for colour contrast on door and window surrounds to assist people with visual impairments. You may need to get permission from your local authority building control or planning department for some changes.

Remember - making changes will improve your premises and make them more inclusive for all users and more attractive to future event organisers who will be looking for accessibility features.

Section 6: Transport - Getting there and getting away

Getting there and getting away is just as important as what you do there! If you plan to give out information about how to reach the venue and about public transport then you should think inclusively about disabled people who want to attend and about their transport requirements.

Public transport

If you plan to provide details of public transport such as bus services running near the venue you should also find out about how accessible they are for disabled people and pass this information onto your attendees. You could ask transport operating companies about accessibility of bus and train stations and whether buses on the route are 'low floor' buses and think about alternatives.

You could also provide contact telephone numbers for taxis and minicabs. You could find out about local companies who provide taxis which have been adapted for wheelchair users. Some disabled people prefer to travel in saloon style cars or minicabs. You could source details of companies providing this service even where 'black cab' taxis are available locally.

If you know that there are only a small number of accessible vehicles available for hire in the area you could let taxi and minicab companies know about your event and that there will be disabled people attending who may require their services.

Remember - to ask transport providers for information about other forms of assistance they offer such as **text telephone** numbers for deaf and hard of hearing people contacting their company.

Setting down

You should consider putting in place arrangements for cars, taxis and coaches to set down passengers as close as possible to the entrance of the building. Find out if this is possible at your venue when you visit and remember to let people know about it.

Car parking

Does your venue have a car park? If so, some of the car parking spaces should be reserved as parking for disabled people.

There are standards applicable to car parks for provision of disabled car parking bays but these are not always rigorously applied. This could make it very difficult or impossible for some disabled people to attend your event even though they may have already travelled a long way or paid to do so.

The following list highlights some of the things you should look out for in the car park.

Top Tips for car parking

- Check that the car park is clearly signed and disabled car parking bays are clearly identified.
 - Are disabled car parking bays on firm level ground? For example, the car parking facilities should not be covered in gravel or be on a hill.
 - Are disabled car parking bays close to the entrance? Forty five metres is the maximum recommended distance from the main entrance.
-
- Disabled car parking bays should ideally have 1.2 metres between car bays and have a 1.2 metre safety zone at the end of the bay to allow people to access car boots or to operate hoists.
 - Is there a dropped kerb if a pavement or walkway needs to be accessed?
 - Check that venue management are monitoring the use of disabled car parking bays. It is not uncommon for disabled car parking bays to be used by people who do

not need them. Ask what the policy is when people abuse the system.

- If there are no parking facilities at your venue find out about local on-street and car park facilities. It may be possible to reserve spaces for disabled people attending your event. You will need to let people know about the distance from the car park to the venue and the conditions en-route such as ground cover, gradients and road crossings.
- If there is an intercom system at the entrance of the car park, think about how this will impact on people with hearing impairments and how this can be overcome. Accessing the intercom button may also be hard for people with reduced limb function.

Transport provided by you

If you are providing transport as part of your event you should aim to provide transport for everyone. You could find out what disabled people's transport needs are and plan to meet these requirements.

You could find out about coach hire companies who can provide accessible coaches and any local services such as dial a ride services. The local Council for Voluntary Services may be able to help you find suppliers in your area.

Remember - to ask suppliers about what disability awareness training their staff may have had and what their policies are.

Getting Away

Don't forget going home. Think about arrangements for leaving especially if there are likely to be crowds and long queues. It might not be possible for some disabled people to stand for long periods of time or to call for a taxi if there are no **text telephones** available. There may be arrangements you could put in place such as seating or using stewards to let people know when their transport is at the front door.

Section 7: Promoting your event

You will want to market your event, sell tickets and fill places. This section looks at how you promote your event.

Telling people about access at your event

You will have a lot of information about your event which you can share with disabled people. If you tell disabled people about accessibility at your event they will know that you have planned for this.

The language you use will send out a strong message to disabled people about how accessible and inclusive your event is likely to be. This could have an impact on their decision to attend.

Making your promotion accessible

How you promote your event needs to be accessible too. Disabled people including people who are blind or visually impaired, deaf or hard of hearing or who have learning disabilities will benefit from accessible information.

Top tips for promoting your event

- If you promote your event on a website check it is accessible and compatible with the range of specialist hardware and software which disabled people use to access computers. RNIB have an online Web Access Centre where you can find out more about this.

Webaccess@rnib.org.uk

- If you do not already have a contact point, consider providing one. It is unlikely you will be able to give all the information you have in your promotional material.

- If you give a telephone number as your contact point you could also give an email address, fax number and a postal address as well. Some disabled people have a preference for one or another of these. Offering more than one choice as a reasonable adjustment for disabled people will mean more choice for everyone.
- Make sure that staff at the contact point can answer questions about access.
- Use a large font size in a clear style such as Arial and use a good contrast for text and background on all your printed material. You can find out more about this in Section 9 – ‘Making information accessible’.

Section 8: Tickets, booking and reservations

Different types of events will have different ticket or booking systems in place. Some events sell out very quickly months in advance whereas others are marketed only to a particular group of people who may need to apply for a limited number of places.

This section looks at some of the features of ticketing and booking and makes suggestions on how to make these more accessible for disabled people.

Selling tickets

If you sell tickets for your event you will need to look at how disabled people can buy them. It will be important for disabled people to know what adjustments have already been made so that they can acquire tickets. You can let them know this in your promotional information. This is especially important for events such as music concerts which may sell out quickly.

Box offices and the services of any ticket agencies you use should be accessible for disabled people. The DDA duties explained in Section 3 - 'What the Law says' will apply to these services. You can use this guidance to check that these services are accessible or you can ask independent ticket agencies you use to review their services to ensure that they are accessible.

If you use a ticket agency which is not accessible to some disabled people you could consider requesting that the ticket agency makes changes, use another ticket agency or provide an alternative such as postal tickets and website box offices.

Seat allocation

If seats are allocated at the time of booking you will need to consider how to make sure that disabled people are not discriminated against in this service.

Concert venues and stadiums may have allocated seating for wheelchair users. This might be in an area designed specifically for wheelchair users or it might be an adaptable area where seating is removed as necessary. It will be important to ensure that audience members who are wheelchair users are still able to leave the area and return, for example for toilet breaks.

If you are issuing seats on a first come, first served basis you could allocate these seats last if they have not been requested by a disabled person who needs them.

Deaf and hard of hearing people are likely to prefer seats where they have a good view of what is happening on stage, and where any communication support such as **lipspeakers** are not obscured.

Application and reply forms

Asking people to complete and return application or reply forms is a common feature of events such as conferences and seminars.

You can use the form to let people know what adjustments are already in place such as sign language interpreters, deaf-blind communicators and large font text and give a description of any physical features. For example, if a chair lift is in place but requires people to transfer from a wheelchair you should let people know about this. You should offer to speak to them about alternatives if it is not possible for them to transfer to a chairlift. You can also use the form to ask disabled people about any further requirements they have. A suggested wording for this is:

‘To help us ensure that all delegates attending the conference are able to participate fully please let us know about any requirements you have.’

You could aim to welcome contact from attendees who are disabled and aim to find solutions for requests which you have not planned for. You could ask for a contact telephone number, email or address so that you can discuss any requests.

Remember – treat all information you receive confidentially and take into account the requirements of the Data Protection Act. You can find out more information from:

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Accessible forms

It will be important to give people a choice of how to complete forms. Some disabled people may prefer to do this on computer and return it to you by email and others will prefer to complete the form by hand.

Some disabled people may welcome the opportunity to pass on information over the telephone for you to register their interest and other details. If you require people to sign a form to acknowledge any legal responsibilities, for example, you could consider making alternative arrangements for this when attendees register on the day of the event. This would be a reasonable adjustment to make for disabled people who cannot complete the form by hand. You can find more guidance at Section 9 – ‘Making information accessible’.

Support workers

Some disabled people are accompanied by support workers who are also sometimes called carers or personal assistants. Support workers are there to enable a disabled person to fulfil their own choices and will only attend to the requirements of the person they are there to support.

You will need to think in advance how you will accommodate support workers. Each situation will be different but you could consider not charging admission, charging a reduced ticket rate for support workers or just charging to cover basic costs such as catering. You should also consider the capacity of the venue you will use for the event if you expect a number of disabled people to be accompanied by their support workers.

Section 9: Making information accessible

This section looks at making information accessible for disabled people. It looks at information that is written down and information that is spoken. It also looks at things like videos you might use at your event.

Written Information

When you produce written information for your event such as website pages, programmes, promotional material, hand outs, agendas, tickets, posters and application forms you will need to think how you will make these accessible for disabled people by considering producing information in alternative formats.

There are a number of different formats which people may have a preference for. For people who are visually impaired these include large print, **Braille** and **audio tape**. Braille is used by over 20,000 people in UK. You can get more information about how to arrange transcription services from several organisations including

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)

Telephone transcription service 01733 37 53 70

Fax 01733 37 53 79

Email busdev@rnid.org.uk

Website www.rnib.org.uk

Deafblind UK

Telephone number 01733 358 100

Email jan@deafblind.uk

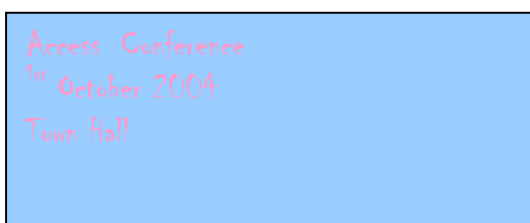
What do we mean by Large Print?

Use a larger font (14 point size minimum) and sans serif typeface for your printed information. This is more legible for people with a visual impairment; Arial is a good font to use. People who need reading glasses also benefit from large print text.

Example

As well as using large text and clear fonts you could use contrasting colours for the background and text. Look at the examples below. This will make the information more accessible for everyone.

You do not have to compromise on eye catching design; you could leave part of the page free of colourful design so that the text is clearer.



If you are running a conference or seminar you may be planning to give attendees reading material which has not been produced by your own organisation. This could be material produced by sponsors or exhibitors and inserted into delegate packs. You could ask these organisations to ensure they provide you with accessible information including information in alternative formats. If they are service providers they are likely to have duties under the DDA and should be prepared to meet any requests or to offer an alternative means of making the information accessible.

Many visually impaired people will welcome receiving copies of papers before the event as this gives them an opportunity to read them and to be able to concentrate on what is being said once they are at the event.

You can find more information on accessible websites in the Top Tips at Section 7 – ‘Promoting your event’.

Information for deaf, hard of hearing and deaf blind people

Deaf and hard of hearing people can be supported by Language Support Professionals (LSP). LSPs are professional services and include:

- British or Irish Sign Language interpreters
- Deaf blind communicators and guides
- Lipspeakers
- Note takers
- Speech To Text Operators
- Speed Text operators

You can find a description of each of these LSP services in Section 15 – ‘Glossary’.

One of the most important things to know about LSPs is that there are not enough of them in the UK. This means forward planning. You could consider making a provisional booking for communication support workers as soon as you have a date and a venue. The more notice you give the more likely you are to get the support you need for your attendees.

You can find out about agencies and sources of freelance LSPs from the Council for Advancement of Communication for Deaf People (CACDP) Handbook.

Durham University Science Park
Block 4, Stockton Road
Durham DH1 3UZ

Telephone 0191 383 1155
Fax 0191 383 7914
Email Durham@cacdp.org.uk

In some areas you will find a local deaf society or organisation which will be in the telephone book or on the internet. They may be able to supply LSP services or details of local agencies.

LSPs can help at all kinds of events. Some sign language interpreters specialise in signing lyrics to songs but they will need to work with the performers beforehand.

LSPs will be able to help you to determine the best position for them to work in relation to the speaker and the audience. They will also be able to advise you on environmental features like lighting which can affect the service they give to deaf people. They will welcome being briefed on the content of the event including if videos are to be shown or unusual words such as medical or legal jargon is expected to be used.

Remember – to ask LSPs what their needs are and to let them know about the content of the event beforehand.

In some cases it may be unreasonable for the service provider to pay for communication support, for example a local fundraising group, or there may be no support available on the day of your conference. There are other steps you can take to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing people can access your event.

Example

A local boutique is staging a fashion show at a local hotel and tickets are on sale. A local celebrity has accepted a request to compere the event, however no communication support is available for that date and a deaf couple have purchased tickets.

The boutique owner hired a sound and lighting company for the event and they will supply a **loop system** for people who wear hearing aids. However one of the deaf people does not benefit from a loop system.

The compere provides a copy of his speaker notes with the outfit number and a description of each outfit. The

deaf couple are given seats facing the compere with a good view of the stage.

The above example is unlikely to be suitable for conferences or seminars where delegates engage with speakers in question and answer sessions. In this case you should discuss with disabled people what alternative steps can be taken if no communication support is available on that day. It will be important that the deaf or hard of hearing person is able to contribute their views to the debate.

Videos

Videos and clips of films can make interesting additions to presentations at conferences and exhibitions. It is possible to arrange for videos to be **audio described** for people who are visually impaired and to be **subtitled** and overlaid with **British** or **Irish Sign Language interpretation** for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. You should check availability of these facilities on any videos that you are going to show.

Remember – to think inclusively if you commission any video or film to be shown at your event and plan for this to be **audio described** and **subtitled**. If this is not possible you could arrange for hearing impaired people to receive a script of the video before it is shown.

Easy Read is an alternative format for people with learning disabilities. This is a way of writing things down clearly using short sentences and avoiding difficult words and acronyms. Easy Read publications also use pictures to illustrate points.

Section 10: The Team

Everybody in the team including venue staff, performers, exhibitors, conference chairpersons, booking staff, suppliers and speakers can contribute to making your event more accessible for disabled people.

This section looks at the different people involved in delivering your event as it will be important to make sure that everyone knows about changes you have made and about any changes they will be responsible for.

Your team

Your own team will know that making your event accessible is a priority and they can help you put in place all the changes you have made. If they are well prepared and trained they will be able to deal with any problems and to make further changes on the day as the need arises.

You should think about training for you and your staff. Disability awareness training is available and can be tailored to meet your needs. You can expect disability awareness training to include an introduction to the DDA, an awareness of disability and how to meet some of the requirements of disabled people. Some organisations who can supply disability awareness training or signpost you to other suppliers are listed in Section 16 – ‘Further Contacts.’

If you are a small organisation with few resources you could consider one of the training packs available which can be completed on the internet or as distance learning, for example. Other training to consider is training on operating auxiliary aids such as **evacuation chairs** and **loop systems** and **infrared systems** which may be provided by the product manufacturer or distributor.

Housekeeping is important. Remind staff to be on the look out for things going wrong; this might be double swing doors where one door is locked, bags on floors, open cupboard doors and portable display stands creating hazards for visually impaired people. It could be that groups of people are gathering in areas and preventing access for wheelchair users.

Venue staff

If you are using a hired venue for your conference or event you may find that the venue will supply staff. Their duties may cover roles such as management, security, catering, reception, operating car park facilities or setting up exhibition areas. They may also be responsible for technical roles such as operating lighting and PA systems where these are available.

You could ask the venue if you can brief all staff including any temporary and contract staff, before the event, or ask the venue to do so. This might take the form of a briefing session on the day of the event or information in writing.

You will need to tell venue staff about any adjustments you have made and changes that you want them to make. Changes you might highlight in your briefing could be that you want the furniture laid out in a certain way to accommodate wheelchair users and to allow more room for everyone to move around. It will be important that venue staff do not rearrange your changes. You will also need to make sure staff are aware of any roles they have been given specifically to assist disabled people such as serving food at the self-service buffet and carrying trays to tables.

Chairpersons, speakers and presenters

Conference Chairpersons, speakers and presenters need to be aware of the requirements of disabled people in the audience before the event. For example they will need to supply copies of power point slides so that you can produce them in alternative formats for visually impaired people.

You could set aside time for a briefing session to explain to them how to work with Language Service Professionals who are supporting deaf people in the audience and any other arrangements in place. It is also important for speakers to describe any slides or visual material they use during a presentation for audience members who are visually impaired.

Chairs may have additional responsibilities like explaining evacuation procedures and need to be aware that they should describe exits in terms of left, right and north south rather than pointing or saying 'over there'.

Attitude

In a recent survey for the Disability Rights Commission 41% of disabled people valued a positive attitude above value for money. A positive attitude by staff can make all the difference on the day. How your team respond to requests for assistance and how they put things right if they go wrong will count for a lot.

Section 11: Sound, lighting and other technology

Many events use technology and special effects to add to impact or to overcome issues such as the large size of the venue. This section shows how you can consider the impact for disabled people of any technology you use. You may find that some of the technology you use will provide a reasonable adjustment for some disabled people.

Flash lighting, strobes and other special effects

Some special effects can have a detrimental effect for disabled people such as those with epilepsy or tinnitus. If part of your event involves flash lighting, strobes and other special effects you will need to consider how you let people know about this.

You should let people know about the special effects before they buy a ticket as well as at the event before the effect takes place. Remember to give enough notice for people to leave the area if they wish to and to let them know when the special effect stops so that they can return to the audience. Your crowd control staff should allow them to do so.

Dimming lights

Dimming the lights in a venue can prevent some disabled people accessing events. At some events the lights are dimmed as part of the entertainment value of the event. At conferences and seminars lights are sometimes dimmed when speakers are using visual aids such as slides or videos.

It may be necessary to dim the lights in these circumstances because any glare on the screen prevents many people in the audience from being able to see the text on the screen. This is something you could check when you audit the venue. It may be possible to overcome this by closing curtains and blinds and keeping suitable lights on in the room.

If dimming lights is absolutely necessary to allow delegates to see the slides then you will have to ensure that speakers and any LSPs are suitably spotlighted and there is good light for reading. It is also a good idea to give a copy of the slides to visually impaired people

before they come to the event in their chosen format such as large print or **Braille**.

Public Address systems

Public Address (PA) systems play an important role at many events helping to ensure that people can hear what is being said in larger venues. At conferences and seminars it is common for only the Chairperson and presenters to have a microphone. If you expect to let members of the audience ask questions from the floor it will be important to have staff equipped with portable microphones for the audience to use. This will help deaf and hard of hearing people to follow what is being said by helping LSPs and those using the **loop** or **infrared systems**. You should check the quality and the volume of the PA system for clarity and comfort.

You might also want to consider using **Speech To Text Report** or **palantype** for public address. This is generally viewed on a laptop screen when only a few deaf people are using the service but it is possible to present the text on a large screen placed on the stage area for everyone to see. This helps everyone to keep up with what is being said.

Multi-lingual translation

At some events such as international conferences or events in Wales, infrared or radio systems may be used to provide translation services. It will be important to check that this does not affect the radio or infrared system in use for hearing aid wearers. You could ask the suppliers of both services to liaise with each other to make sure this does not happen.

Section 12: Additional Services

There are many other services which might form part of your event and it will be important for them to be accessible too. This section gives guidance on a few of the most common services.

Catering

Catering at events can range from a cup of tea and a biscuit, to fast food outlets or a sit down banquet. It is useful to provide different catering choices for people and to ensure that catering staff are briefed on helping disabled people with their selection and service.

Top Tips for Catering

- If self-service is the only option available, ensure that staff are available to assist disabled people including people with mobility impairments and those with visual impairments with their choice of food and carrying trays to the eating area.
 - Make sure that there are seats and tables available. Some disabled people need to sit down or cannot hold a plate for a long period. Seating also helps those who are talking to a wheelchair user. You could reserve seating for disabled people who need this.
 - Make menus more accessible by printing them in large fonts using contrasting paper and ink covers and avoid presenting them in shiny covers. See Section 9 – 'Making information accessible' for more advice on alternative formats. Be prepared to talk through the menu on offer.
-
- Deaf and hard of hearing people may appreciate having clear sight of the checkout screen so they know how much they have to pay. Things like credit card signs,

confectionary stands or sugar containers sometimes obscure this.

- Provide a choice of cutlery and crockery. A mug may be easier for some disabled people to use than cups and saucers or plastic cups that do not have handles. Offer drinking straws as standard.
- Don't overlook the small things. Sachets of condiments and milk in very small containers can be difficult to open. You could consider offering these in jugs and dishes too or ensure help is on hand for people experiencing difficulty.
- Make sure there is room for everybody to manoeuvre safely between tables. When you audit the venue think about what it will be like when lots of people are moving around and sitting at tables.
- Consider having a number of food and beverage service areas spread around the venue. This is helpful for disabled people as there is likely to be a service point closer to where they are. Everyone will benefit from the shorter queues if you only have a short period for a break before continuing the event programme.
- When you draft your event programme include enough refreshment breaks and ensure that they are long enough. Some disabled people may need more time to eat a meal and visit the toilet. You may also need to allow time for assistance dogs to be exercised. Once you have published the programme try to stick to the timings given.

Accommodation

Some events may include accommodation or the event organiser may offer a service to book accommodation on behalf of people attending or working at the event. This information or booking services should be accessible for disabled people and it will be good practice to ensure that you are able to provide information about hotels that are accessible.

A source of information about accommodation with accessible bedrooms is

Tourism For All
The Hawkins Suite
Enham Place
Enham Alamein
Andover, Hampshire
SP11 6JS

Advisory services telephone number 0845 124 9971
Enquiries telephone number 01278 671863

www.tourismforall.org.uk

Accommodation providers who are members of TFA are kept up to date with developments and may use the TFA logo on their literature.

The Disability Rights Commission has good practice guidance 'What do guest accommodation owners need to know.'
<http://www.drc.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publicationhtml.asp?id=283&docsect=0§ion=0>

Quiet Room

It is a good idea to provide a quiet room for rest especially if your event is going to be long and crowded. Some people with mental health issues or fatigue will particularly welcome this.

A quiet room may also be particularly welcomed by others who are attending your event such as those wishing to pray during the day. A calendar of religious festivals is available from

www.interfaithcalendar.org

Evening entertainment

Some events, such as 2-day conferences or local shows may include a supplementary evening event like prize giving's, barbeques or dinner dances. It is important to continue thinking inclusively when planning associated events like evening entertainment as this is part of the service you are giving and is likely to be covered by the DDA. The guidance above will apply and you can find further sources of advice and information in Section 16 – 'Further Contacts'.

Section 13: Feedback

Readers are invited to submit their ideas and suggestions for making events more accessible to disabled people. Please also let us know how useful you found this Guide.

Please forward comments to:

Practice Development
Disability Rights Commission
1st Floor, Riverside House
502 Gorgie Road
Edinburgh EH11 3AF

Telephone: 0131 527 4000

Fax: 0131 527 4001

Textphone: 0131 527 4002

Email: good.practice@drc-gb.org

Section 14: Acknowledgements

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- Derek Hunter, Scottish Football Association
- David Lloyd, EventScotland
- Shona McLean, Holyrood Conferences and Events
- Tony Rogers, British Association Professional Conference Organisers and British Association Conference Destinations
- Lynn Samson, Meeting Makers Ltd
- Jenny Stephenson, Tourism For All
- Kim Wilson, Scottish Federation Housing Associations

Section 15: Glossary

Audio Description – Audio description is available on some videos, DVDs, digital TV and cinema films. Digital access equipment enables visually impaired people to listen to a narrator describe what is happening on the screen through personal headphones.

Audio Cassette or Tape – information can be recorded verbally on audio cassette tape and played on a tape machine.

Braille – embossed text created from symbols formed by patterns of 6 dots. Another system of embossed printing is Moon which relies on curves and lines. Braille and Moon is used by visually impaired people.

British Sign Language (BSL) – BSL is the first or preferred language of 50-70,000 Deaf people in the UK. It is a language which uses visual gestures and space by using the hands, body, face and head. It has its own principles of grammar through the use of hands, body, face and head. BSL interpreters translate the spoken language to BSL for the Deaf person. They can also translate BSL into spoken language if the Deaf person wishes.

Deafblind Interpreter – a deafblind interpreter will communicate with a deafblind person if they are not able to use other forms of communication support. There are different methods of communication used by deafblind people including the Deafblind manual alphabet and the block alphabet. A deafblind interpreter will use the Manual alphabet to give the deafblind person access to what is being said. The interpreter will also describe non-verbal information such as people's reactions.

Easy Read – an alternative format for people with learning difficulties which means writing things down clearly, using short sentences and avoiding difficult words and acronyms. Easy Read publications also use pictures to illustrate points.

Evacuation chair – In an emergency an evacuation chair may be necessary to ensure that people with mobility impairments can be safely evacuated. An evacuation chair is specially designed equipment and requires people to be trained to operate it.

Irish Sign Language (ISL) – Irish Sign Language (ISL) is the preferred language of some Deaf people in Northern Ireland as well as in Ireland. It is a language which uses visual gestures and space by using the hands, body, face and head. It has its own principles of grammar through the use of hands, body, face and head. ISL interpreters translate the spoken language to ISL for the Deaf person. They can also translate ISL into spoken language if the Deaf person wishes.

Lipspeaker – a lipspeaker conveys the speaker's message to a deaf or hard of hearing person using unvoiced speech supported by gesture and facial expressions. If the deaf or hard of hearing person who is lipreading requests it, the lipspeaker can also support the message using finger spelling. This method of communication is preferred by people who use English.

Loop system and infrared system – helps hearing aid wears to hear more clearly by cutting out background noise. A loop system can be set up with a microphone and a transmitter to send sound via a loop system to be picked up by hearing aids which are switched to 'T' setting. In larger event situations, infra-red systems will be more practical. Infra-red allows for stereo sound.

Speech To Text Reporter (STTR) or Palantypist – The STTR uses a palantype or stenograph machine to produce verbatim report of what is said and any other environmental sounds such as applause. This will appear instantly on a screen for the deaf or hard of hearing person to read.

Subtitles – subtitles are available on DVDs, videos, television and in some cinemas. A television with teletext facility is required to view subtitles on TV and it is necessary. The subtitles describe what is being said and appear at the bottom of the screen. They can be viewed by everybody who is watching.

Text Telephone – a textphone is a machine which has a keyboard and a screen. It may be built into a telephone or be connected to one. A deaf person can use the machine to communicate with another person who also has a textphone by typing the message and reading the reply. Typetalk is a national relay operation which allows the deaf person to communicate with somebody who does not have a textphone by relaying the messages via an operator.

Section 16: Further contacts

The contact details for the **Disability Rights Commission** and the **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland** are on the back page of this publication.

The organisations listed below are some of those in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales who may be able to help you further. Inclusion in this list does not imply endorsement by DRC and ECNI.

Information about access

The Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE)

70 South Lambeth Road
London SW8 1RL
Telephone/Textphone: 020 7840 0125
Fax: 020 7840 5811
Email: info@cae.org.uk
Website: www.cae.org.uk

Provides technical information and other services in relation to access to buildings and the environment. Covers all England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Centre for Universal Accessibility

School of the Built Environment
University of Ulster at Jordanstown
Newtownabbey
BT37 0QB
Telephone: 028 90 368 505
Fax: 028 90 366 875

Education and training on the principles of accessibility and offers services in relation to access to buildings and the environment in Northern Ireland.

The Joint Mobility Unit (JMU)

105 Judd Street
London WC1H 9NE
Telephone: 020 7391 2002
Fax: 020 7387 7109
Email: info@jmuaccess.org.uk

Website: www.jmuaccess.org.uk

Provides technical information and other services in relation to access to buildings and the environment. Covers England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The National Register of Access Consultants

70 South Lambeth Road,
London SW8 1RL
Telephone: 020 7735 7845,
Textphone: 020 7840 0125
Fax: 020 7840 5811
Email: info@nrac.org.uk
Website: www.nrac.org.uk

NRAC is a UK wide register of approved consultants who undertake access auditing and access consultancy.

Venues Live

Thames Chambers
2 Clarence Street
Kingston upon Thames
KT1 1NG
Telephone: 020 8481 2000
Fax: 020 8481 2020
Email: find_it@venueslive.co.uk
Website: www.venueslive.co.uk

Provides a free service to help find venues which are accessible.

Tourism for All

Tourism for All
The Hawkins Suite
Enham Place
Enham Alamein
Andover, Hampshire
SP11 6JS
Telephone: 0845 124 9971
Fax: 0845 124 9972
Textphone: 0845 124 9976
Email: info@holidaycare.org
Website: www.tourismforall.org.uk

Tourism for All provides information about accessible accommodation in the UK and other tourism services and supports the tourism and hospitality sector to provide accessible services for all.

Information about disability and services for disabled people

The following list includes just some of the organisations which can help you find out more about disability.

Anabledd Cymru/Disability Wales

Wernddu Court
Caerphilly Business Park
Van Road
Caerphilly
CF83 3ED
Telephone: 029 2088 7325
Fax: 029 2088 8702
info@dwac.demon.co.uk
Website: www.dwac.demon.co.uk

Anabledd Cymru/Disability Wales is the national association of disability groups in Wales.

Capability Scotland

ASCS - Advice Service Capability Scotland
11 Ellersly Road
Edinburgh EH12 6HY
Telephone: 0131 313 5510
Fax: 0131 346 1681
Textphone: 0131 346 2529
e-mail: ascs@capability-scotland.org.uk
Website: www.capability-scotland.org.uk

Provides an advice service about disability and disability services in Scotland plus specialist advice on cerebral palsy.

The Council for the Advancement of Communication with Deaf People (CACDP)

Durham University Science Park
Block 4, Stockton Road,
Durham DH1 3UZ
Telephone: 0191 383 1155
Fax: 0191 383 7914

Textphone: 0191 383 7915
Email: general@cacdp.org.uk
Website: www.cacdp.org.uk

UK accreditation body for qualifications in communication methods. Provides a directory of registered Interpreters and other Language Support Professionals.

DIAL UK

St Catherine's
Tickhill Road
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN14 8QN
Telephone: 01302 310 123
Textphone: 01302 310 123
Fax: 01302 310 404
Email: enquiries@DIALuk.org.uk
Website: www.dialuk.org.uk

Dial UK can put you in touch with local disability information and advice centres and services providers.

Enable

Enable
6th Floor, 7 Buchanan Street
Glasgow G1 3HL.
Telephone: 0141 226 4541
Fax: 0141 204 4398
Email: enable@enable.org.uk
Website: www.enable.org.uk

Enable provides support and advice for people with learning disabilities in Scotland.

MENCAP

123 Golden Lane
London EC1Y 0RT
Telephone: 020 7454 0454
Fax: 020 7696 5540
Email: information@mencap.org.uk
Website: www.mencap.org.uk

MENCAP provides services and advice on the needs of people with learning disabilities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service (NACVS)

NACVS
177 Arundel Street
Sheffield S1 2NU
Telephone: 0114 278 6636
Fax: 0114 278 7004
Textphone: 0114 278 7025
Email: nacvs@nacvs.org.uk
Website: www.nacvs.org.uk

NAVCS is a network of over 300 local Councils for Voluntary Services (CVS). In Scotland visit www.cvsscotland.org.uk

Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB)

105 Judd Street
London WC1H 9NE
Telephone: 020 7388 1266
Fax: 020 7388 2034
Helpline: 0845 766 9999
Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk
Website: www.rnib.org.uk

Provides help, advice and support for people with visual impairments across the UK.

RNIB Transcription Service Business Liaison Team
PO Box 173
Peterborough
PE2 6WS
Telephone: 01733 37 53 70
Fax: 01733 37 53 79
Email: busdev@rnib.org.uk

Royal National Institute of the Deaf (RNID)

19-23 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8SL
Telephone: 0808 808 0123

Textphone: 0808 808 9000
Fax: 020 7296 8199
E-mail: informationline@rnid.org.uk
Website: www.rnid.org.uk

Provides information, advice and services for disabled people who are deaf, Deaf or hard of hearing throughout UK.

Scope

PO Box 833
Milton Keynes
MK12 5NY
Freephone: 0808 800 33 33
Email: cphelpline@scope.org.uk
Website: www.scope.org.uk

Scope is a disability organisation covering England and Wales and focusing on cerebral palsy.

Information about transport and disabled people

Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC)

Zone 1/14
Great Minister House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR
Telephone: 020 7944 8011
Textphone: 020 7944 3277
Fax: 020 7944 6998
Email: dptac@df.t.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.dptac.gov.uk

DPTAC advise UK Government on access for disabled people to transport and on the built environment.

Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland (MACS)

Evans Business Centre
15 Pitreavie Court
Pitreavie Business Park
Dunfermline
KY11 8UU
Telephone: 01383 749548
Fax: 01383 749501

Email: macs@ednet.co.uk
Website: www.macs-mobility.org

MACS advise Scottish Executive Ministers on access for disabled people to transport in Scotland.

Other useful contacts

Health and Safety Executive

HSE Infoline
Caerphilly Business Park
Caerphilly CF83 3GG
Telephone: 08701 545500
Textphone: 02920 808537
Fax: 02920 859260
Email: hseinformationservices@natbrit.com
Website: www.hse.gov.uk

The Health and Safety Executive are responsible for the regulation of almost all the risks to health and safety arising from work activity in Britain.

Data Protection Act

Data Protection Help Line
Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire SK9 5AF
Telephone: 01625 545 745
Fax: 01625 524 510
Email: mail@ico.gsi.gov.uk
Website: www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

The government Information Commissioner is a source of information for the Data Protection Act.

You can contact the **Disability Rights Commission** Helpline at

Telephone 08457 622 633
Textphone 08457 622 644
Fax 08457 778 878
Email enquiry@drc-gb.org

Post DRC Helpline
FREEPOST
MID 02164
Stratford upon Avon
CV37 9BR

Website www.drc-gb.org

You can contact the **Equality Commission for Northern Ireland**
Information and Advice Department at

Telephone 028 90 500 600
Textphone 028 90 500 589
Fax 028 90 248 687
Email information@equalityni.org

Post Information and Advice Department
Equality Commission for Northern Ireland
Equality House
7-9 Shaftesbury House
Belfast
BT2 7DP

Website www.equalityni.org