

REACHING OUT: ACCESS & INCLUSION

Planning Communication Policy Participation

HOW DO YOU TALK ABOUT DISABILITY?

- Don't refer to disabled people as "the disabled". Impairments do not define people. Use the term "disabled people".
- Some people do not consider themselves as disabled e.g. some Deaf people consider themselves as a cultural minority with language barriers. We should all learn BSL!
- Disability is not just about mobility impairments, it covers a wide spectrum and many disabilities are not visible. There are about 12 million people in the UK with disabilities, that's about 1 in 5 people.

WHAT SHOULD AN ACCESSIBLE EXPERIENCE BE?

- An accessible experience should remove all social, behavioural, organisational and environmental barriers so that Deaf and Disabled people can participate fully.
- It should promote equality and maximise independence, and empower people to participate equally. This is called the Social Model of disability.
- It should never "fix a disability".
- Disability isn't a deficit, it's a difference.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ACCESSIBLE?

- Are you talking to disabled people when planning something?
- How can you design, write, organise things so that they reach out to a wide variety of people?
- Access means gaining entry to a room, meeting, event, information and any other type of interaction.
- The more thought put into different audience needs when planning, the less barriers they are going to have and it will be more enjoyable.
- Inclusive thinking can save headaches for everyone!

HOW CAN WE REACH OUT BETTER?

- Communicate messages in a variety of ways.
- Allow participation in multiple ways: in person, online, through social media and newsletters, video..
- Think of live streaming events so people at home can feel part of a live experience
- Ask everyone how they would like to participate and receive information.
- Don't assume, ask!
- Reach out and facilitate a conversation.
- Gather feedback and learn from it.

MOMENTUM
access checklist

**open
door
policy
everyone
welcome**

People

meaningful engagement,
informed, empowered, motivated

Organisation

productive, inclusive thinking, positive
behaviour, better planning

email: disabilityenquiries@peoplesmomentum.com

ADVERTISING MEETING OR EVENT

- ☐ Is there a single point of contact so people can ask questions about access via text, phone or email?
- ☐ Is the purpose of the event clear?
- ☐ Use separate lines to communicate:
 - the date (including day)
 - the start to finish times
 - the venue address, including street address and postcode
 - the room name/number and floor level
- ☐ Use a sans-serif font e.g. Arial on white backgrounds for a high contrast for written information, point 14 is best.
- ☐ Are you using Plain English, avoiding jargon and explaining acronyms?
- ☐ Some people require information in audio format, Braille, large print or in a specific document format e.g. not a PDF.
- ☐ Visual information such as images, maps and videos need transcribing to describe the information they contain.
- ☐ Give people as much notice as possible. Get publicity out early. People may need to book support or transport, plan childcare, transport routes etc. Again this is just best practice and not just limited to Deaf and Disabled people.
- ☐ Advertise amongst the Deaf community.
- ☐ Have you included access details:
 - Transport – nearest step-free station, bus information, parking facilities, vehicle height restrictions
 - Whether the venue is step free, has an accessible lift and toilets
 - Whether there will be BSL interpreters

PLANNING A MEETING OR EVENT

- ☐ Are you involving a diverse range of people in the planning process so a variety of needs are considered?
- ☐ Is there step free access to all areas where participants will be gathering including toilets and eating areas?
- ☐ Are ramps and corridors obstacle free?
- ☐ Is there space to navigate various sized scooters and wheelchairs into and around a venue, including lifts, toilets, eating areas, meeting rooms and around tables and chairs in spaces provided?
- ☐ Steps should have handrails at both sides.
- ☐ Entrance doors must be easy to open and handles and accessible.
- ☐ Doors (including lifts) need to be 800mm wide if there is no turn immediately before the door, otherwise 1000mm.
- ☐ Glass doors and steps must be highlighted
- ☐ If you have an open meeting/ event you should encourage anyone requiring an interpreter get in touch beforehand.
- ☐ Some people may wish to bring along their own interpreters. Others may need a hearing loop or lip speakers.
- ☐ Book interpreters early where they are needed. There is a shortage of interpreters, especially during evenings and weekends.
- ☐ It's always good organizational practice to circulate handout information as far in advance as possible so people have time to absorb information at their own pace.
- ☐ Don't think of disability as just about wheelchair access. Some people do not use a wheelchair but can't walk far. Many people have invisible disabilities such as epilepsy or dyslexia.
- ☐ Quiet spaces are useful for a range of disabilities and health conditions.

AT A MEETING OR EVENT

- ☐ Is there clear signage at the venue?
- ☐ Help should be at hand and visible. If someone looks like they need help, ask how you can help, don't assume.
- ☐ Everyone communicates differently and not always as we expect. Be patient and polite if someone is stressed.
- ☐ Use appropriate language.
- ☐ Have you briefed the speakers/ participants about how to work with any interpreters or those attending who are using alternative formats such as Braille, lip speakers, palantypists?
- ☐ Are handouts available in different formats and do you know how to do this?
- ☐ Are there enough seats and have any been reserved for interpreters?
- ☐ Is there an inclusive space for wheelchair users so they can fully participate? (not be stuck at the back of a room or at the end of a row). This includes any platform.
- ☐ Has technology been tested?
- ☐ Has there been an announcement on how to get to accessible toilets and exit the building if there is a fire?
- ☐ Have comfort breaks been scheduled?
- ☐ Is there a quiet space in case someone needs to take time out?
- ☐ Background noise may make it difficult for some people to join in - try to limit it.
- ☐ Prevent flickering lights.
- ☐ Are tables, notice boards, flip charts, whiteboards, other furniture and equipment also accessible to wheelchair users?
- ☐ Be clear as to what decisions are being made – repeat them before moving on to the next agenda item.
- ☐ Is there a feedback process so you can improve the experience for disabled participants at future events?