TechDis

Accessible Events:
A good practice guide for staff organising events in Higher Education

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Contents

Introduction

This document aims to support staff working in higher education who are involved in the planning, organising, publicising and running of events. The guidance provided highlights how events and their associated documents can be delivered in a manner that is accessible to disabled people.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) requires that disabled people should not be disadvantaged in accessing information or services. The Act requires education and service providers to **anticipate** potential barriers and make **reasonable adjustments** to eliminate them. The act covers all information and services, including those provided during an event.

It is important that those working in higher education do not disadvantage disabled people. Therefore, staff have a responsibility to examine current practices, review where these can be improved, and take action to include disabled people in all their activities.

Access

For many disabled people, access is restricted by more than just physical barriers. Barriers can be cultural, economic, attitudinal or organisational.

To ensure that information and events are as inclusive and accessible as possible, this document contains practical checklists, advice and signposted resources to assist staff involved in all aspects of planning such activities.

Disability and definitions

'Disability' in the UK is defined in several ways. The DDA provides a legal definition, stating that "a person has a disability if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities."

To effectively meet legislative obligations under the DDA it is important to adopt a suitable approach to wider disability issues. The social model of disability encourages society to accept that it is attitude and approach that place barriers upon a disabled person, rather than the person's impairment.

Manchester City Council identifies the following terms associated with the social model of disability:

Impairment

An injury, illness, or congenital condition that causes or is likely to cause a long term effect on physical appearance and (or) limitation of function within the individual that differs from the commonplace.

Disability

The loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in society on an equal level with others due to social and environmental barriers.

In this model, the individual model definitions of impairment and disability are combined as 'impairment'. This means that both the cause of functional limitation and the functional limitation within the individual itself are separated from external factors.

The range of impairments that may be encountered in Higher Education is broad, including sensory, mobility, specific learning or health difficulties. Staff should be aware that many impairments may not be apparent on first meeting a disabled person. An impairment may not be visible or may have intermittent implications for the individual.

The use of appropriate language is important. This guidance uses the term 'disabled people' rather than 'people with disabilities'. The expression 'disabled person' reinforces the fact that the person is disabled not by their impairment, but by society and its inability or reluctance to cater effectively for that person.

Whilst these nuances in language may at times seem subtle or needless the explanations presented here should be used as a guide to affect the appropriate use of language in publications, publicity and at events.

This guide aims to support staff in Higher Education to meet their legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments and anticipate requirements by adopting a social model of disability.

This document is a guide only - it does not seek to offer legal guidance. If staff are concerned that they may not be meeting their obligations under the DDA they should seek independent legal advice.

Using the Guide

This document contains information within two main sections:

1. **Organising accessible events and meetings.**

2. **Producing accessible event information.**

Within these sections you will also find:

Checklists:
Which may be photocopied and used as a quick reference during planning, or incorporated into existing systems, to ensure that you have considered each aspect of access.

Signposting:
These boxes provide further resources for more detailed information.

Feedback from colleagues is welcomed in order that we can improve the guide.

>>>>>> **Signposting**

Introduction

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995. HMSO
See Part I – Disability, Part III – Discrimination in other Areas (Goods, facilities and services)
http://www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/acts/acts1995/1995050.htm

Making Access to Goods and Services Easier for Disabled Customers: A Practical Guide for Small Businesses and Other Service Providers. Disability Rights Commission
http://www.drc-gb.org/publicationsandreports/publicationhtml. asp?id=318&docsect=0&section=0

The Social Model of Disability. Manchester City Council
http://www.manchester.gov.uk/disability/policies/model.htm

Crow, L. (1996) Including all of our lives: renewing the social model of disability. Chapter 4 (in Barnes, C. and Mercer, G. (eds.) 'Exploring the Divide',The Disability Press, Leeds pp. 55 – 72)
http://www.leeds.ac.uk/disability-studies/archiveuk/Crow/exploring%20the%20divide%20ch4.pdf

Section 1:
Organising accessible events and meetings

This section of the guide will examine and explain the factors that should be taken into consideration when planning and running an event.

If the needs of potential delegates are taken into account at the planning stage of an event it is more likely that the event will be genuinely accessible, and as such significantly decrease the potential problems encountered by the planning staff.

Establishing the access requirements for a closed meeting of invited participants should present few problems as the group is usually drawn from a known cohort of people.

Assessing the access requirements for an open meeting requires more forward planning. The earlier that participants' needs are identified, the better the chances of effectively meeting those needs. It is important to take into consideration the extra time some adjustments may take to organise.

This section and accompanying checklist covers the following issues:

- **Venue**
- **Event planning and administration.**
- **Pre-event information.**
- **Supply of additional support requirements.**
- **Planning support during the event.**

Venue

Conference venue providers have duties under the DDA and should now be able to provide facilities to ensure access for disabled people.

When planning an event ask the venue provider what facilities are available for disabled delegates, and if there are any potential issues that need to be

addressed (for example, listed buildings may have limited access).

When sourcing a venue for a meeting or an event ask the venue if there have been any accessibility issues in the past. This will help to identify if the venue is suitable or if additional arrangements need to be made. If possible arrange a site visit to ascertain the attitude a venue provider has regarding access and provision of arrangements, the facilities and services for disabled people, and any potential access problems.

Discuss any venue access problems or support issues with the provider during planning for the event, as they may be able to suggest possible amendments or alternative actions.

In addition organisers should consider the following:

Access

◆ Whether the venue is aware of the Disability Discrimination Act and the requirements to provide a venue that is accessible to all.

◆ If the venue has participated in an accessibility audit as this may indicate a positive approach to accessibility.

◆ The accessibility of toilets, lifts, refreshment areas and other venues being used during the event, and their proximity to the meeting or function rooms being used for the event.

◆ Trying to ensure that delegates with mobility difficulties can use the same entrance as other delegates. Wheelchairs users should be able to use ramped access routes independently.

◆ Checking the number and location of accessible bedrooms.

◆ Whether venue staff have been trained in disability and accessibility awareness, and if a designated member of staff can assist with any issues you may have on the day.

Car parking

◆ The availability of accessible car parking, preferably on site and close to the entrances (within 50m) for people with mobility difficulties.

◆ Whether the route and entrance from the car park are accessible with no major obstructions.

>>>>>> **Signposting**

Venue

The National Register of Access Consultants. A register of qualified, experienced consultants and auditors providing advice on the accessiblity of the built environment.
http://www.nrac.org.uk/

The Centre for Accessible Environments (CAE) is an information provider and a forum for collaborative dialogue between providers and users on how the built environment can best be made or modified to achieve inclusion by design. **http://www.cae.org.uk/**

Direct Enquiries - an online register of businesses and service providers throughout the UK which are accessible to disabled people.
http://www.direct-enquiries.com/

Event planning and administration

Budget

◆ Organisers should be aware that some additional support arrangements will have cost implications and plan the event budget accordingly.

Planning the programme

It is important to ensure some degree of flexibility within a proposed event timetable to take into account any alterations or adaptations that may need to be added. For example:

◆ People with mobility issues may need added time to move between rooms and sessions.

◆ Support workers, such as British Sign Language Interpreters, may require regular breaks and changeovers to ensure they do not become fatigued.

◆ Diabetic delegates may require more frequent refreshment breaks.

Speakers, facilitators and exhibitors

◆ Provide guidance for speakers, facilitators and exhibitors outlining expectations prior to the event. For example, ensure the timing of submission deadlines to allow for provision of information in alternative formats, and check use of acceptable terminology.

◆ Make sure speakers are fully informed about event delivery methods and possible needs of participants. For example, the speaker may have to use a microphone connected to a loop system.

◆ Advise speakers to ensure that the content and meaning of slides is communicated to the audience orally, and they follow best practice guidelines for presenting. For example encourage speakers to always face the audience to ensure lip readers can understand their presentation.

◆ Check requirements of speakers and facilitators, they may themselves need additional arrangements to be made. For example, to speak through an interpreter, to use a personal assistant, or to have information provided in alternative formats.

>>>>>> **Signposting**

Event planning and administration

Communication Services - RNID facility for booking sign language interpreters, lipspeakers or any other communication service. The web pages also provide an explanation about the different types of communication support
http://www.rnid.org.uk/html/services/communication/csu.htm

Race, P (2003). Designing Effective Training Workshops, TechDis
http://www.techdis.ac.uk/index.php?p=3_5_1

Accessibility guidelines for presenters - Centre for Accessible Environments   **www.cae.org.uk/pdf/venues/brief1.pdf**

The National Library for the Blind. print2braille: Braille transcription service. Contact Irene Grayson Tel 0161 355 2019 or email info@print2braille.com   **http://www.nlb-online.org/mod.php?mod =userpage&menu=55& page_id=323#content**

JISC TechDis Service. Information about using ICT in workshops email: helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk   **www.techdis.ac.uk**

Pre-event information

Publicity

◆ Make all publicity information as clear as possible; ensure the expected outcomes are stated.

◆ Publicise events in a variety of formats via a range of media (print, web, email forums etc).

◆ Decide if you wish to ensure that disabled people are targeted to attend the event. If so, circulate publicity where it is likely to find this target audience. For example, use disability organisations and networks.

◆ Include an equalities statement in event information (See Appendix 1).

◆ Provide venue details early to inform participants of accessibility arrangements.

For further information on producing accessible event publicity visit Section 2 - 'Producing accessible event information'.

Registration arrangements

◆ When producing a registration form it is imperative to ensure delegates have an opportunity to note down any specific individual requirements. For example, personal support, access or dietary requirements.

◆ Provide a range of alternative registering options. For example online, telephone, text phone and email.

◆ Once a delegate has informed organisers about their requirements, it is appropriate to contact that delegate to clarify their specific requirements for the event. For example, it may not be appropriate for event documentation to be produced in Braille for a blind delegate; they may prefer information to be provided in electronic format.

◆ Inform participants in good time if difficulties are encountered making individual arrangements.

◆ If appropriate elicit workshop preferences on the booking form to facilitate forward planning of adjustments.

◆ Offer information in alternative formats (be sure to know where you can get this service first).

Venue details

Provide specific information about the venue (including in alternative formats) to delegates, where possible, regarding:

◆ Details of reserved, accessible parking.

◆ Maps and directions which are clear and include access routes into and, where relevant, between buildings.

◆ Local transport and access details. For example: accessible local taxi companies, accessible public transport, accessible entrances, reserved parking bays, residential accommodation and social facilities.

◆ Assistance dog toileting arrangements.

Booking confirmation

◆ Send to delegates in appropriate alternative formats.

◆ Offer an opportunity to add additional individual requirements which may have arisen after booking. In order to ensure all requirements are met it is appropriate to give delegates a deadline by which they have to inform you of all requirements (for example one week prior to the event). Even if notified after this deadline do your best to meet the delegate's requirements.

◆ Confirm details about the arrangements made to meet individual requirements without prompting, for example, accessible rooms, sign language interpreter support or reserved car parking.

>>>>>> **Signposting**

Pre-event information

DRC Good Practice Guide on Admissions and Marketing:
http://www.drc- gb.org/publicationsandreports/publicationhtml. asp?id=197& docsect =0&section=0

Wilson, C, Marketing. A checklist to support inclusion. National Disability Team   **http://www.natdisteam.ac.uk/resources_briefings_ndtc hecklists.html**

Images of Disability. Briefing Notes for people responsible for the commissioning, writing and production of advertising in the UK. Issued by the Minister for Disabled People and COI Communications **http://www.disability.gov.uk/images_of_disability/notes.html**

Disabled People and Terminology: Manchester City Council **http://www.manchester.gov.uk/disability/language/index.htm**

Finding Out About People's Disabilities: a good practice guide for further and higher education institutions. Available from DfES Publications, PO Box 5050, Annesley, Nottingham, NG15 0DJ. Email: dfes@prolog.uk.com Or at: **http://www.lifelonglearning.co.uk/findingout/**

Booking form example – the types of information to include. Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations **http://www.scvo.org.uk/equalities/resource_base/disability/accessible_events/booking_examples.html**

Supply of additional support requirements

Depending on the delegates you attract to an event, and any additional requirements they have, it may be necessary to provide additional support. For example: a personal assistant, note taker or British Sign Language interpreter may need to be employed; or documents may need to be produced in alternative formats such as large print, Braille, or provided in electronic form. This activity should always be done in full consultation with the appropriate delegate, as they will be fully aware of their own requirements.

Personal assistance and support workers

- Identify suppliers of professional support worker services.

- Book support workers as far in advance as possible.

- Consider event timings and session options when planning the number of staff to engage. For example, more than one interpreter will be needed for events longer than two hours, and sufficient numbers of support workers will be required to allow delegates a full choice of workshop sessions.

- Provide copies of presentations in advance to allow support workers to contextualise the content of, and prepare for, each session.

- Prepare event badges for support workers, including their names where possible.

- Plan timings to allow for support workers to carry out their role effectively including allowing time for staff changeover and rest breaks.

- Reserve seating in a suitable location for support workers.

Specific support worker issues

a) Interpreting and Communication Support Workers (CSW)

◆ Identify the type of communication support required by participants. For example Sign Language Interpreters, Lip speakers or Palantypists.

◆ Ensure delegates are consulted on the best position to place an Interpreter and CSW. For example a lip speaker will require suitable lighting.

◆ Ensure power sockets and a table are provided for Palantypists. Place the screen to allow all delegates to view the output.

b) Note Takers

◆ Identify the type of note takers required. For example, a manual or electronic note taker. Ensure they know whether they will be required to produce a summary of the document or a verbatim output.

◆ Identify facilities required for note takers. For example, a table, power socket or additional lighting, and whether they should be located adjacent to the delegate they are supporting.

c) Enablers

◆ If event organisers are employing enablers, brief them on their expected duties. For example, providing assistance with mobility around the venue, access to catering, and getting into and out of taxis.

◆ If using event staff as enablers ensure they are trained or briefed for the task and are available for the times they are needed during the event.

◆ Ensure enablers are easily identifiable. Do not expect other delegates to act as enablers; disabled people should not have to wait until other participants are free to assist them.

Assistance dog provision

◆ Plan toileting arrangements for assistance dogs for longer events.

◆ Ensure fresh water is available.

◆ If in doubt about arranging suitable facilities, check with the dog's owner.

Alternative formats

◆ Obtain electronic copies of presentations and workshop papers to ensure these can be sent to delegates in advance if required.

◆ Ensure copies of presentations and handouts are available in alternative formats, and are provided in advance if required.

◆ After the event, make event papers available electronically, preferably via the web. For this you will need to seek the permission of the author or presenter. If the author is reluctant, ask permission for a rapporteur to be used to provide a précis on their presentation.

For more information about alternative formats and accessible web information see the 'Producing accessible event information' section.

Hire of extra equipment

◆ Once you have identified presenter and delegate requirements in advance, it may be necessary to book some of the following equipment:

– Loop systems.

– Roving microphones.

– Portable ramps. For example, for accessing entrances and staging.

– Accessible Information and Computer Technologies (see below).

– Height adjustable lecterns.

Induction loop and public address systems

◆ Check availability of induction loop(s) or arrange hire and installation. Check that induction loops work.

◆ At the event make sure that appropriate signs indicate availability of induction loop systems and that someone present knows how they work.

◆ If using other electronic equipment make sure it does not cause interference.

◆ Check the public address system is functioning properly, volume is appropriate and that acoustics do not distort sound quality.

◆ Make sure all microphones work.

◆ Plan to use roving microphones where possible for audience questions.

◆ Use height adjustable, easy to locate microphones for presenters.

Information and computer technologies (ICT)

◆ Make explicit in publicity if event or workshops intend to focus on using ICT. List the kinds of activities that will occur, state what programs will be used. This will allow disabled delegates to judge how they can best access the workshop and what requirements they may have, for example there may be compatibility issues with some specialist assistive technology.

◆ Where possible, invite disabled delegates to bring their own equipment. Many disabled people prefer this as they are familiar with their own

equipment and software. For example, a blind user may have screen reader software installed on a computer, or someone with a repetitive strain injury may have an adapted keyboard or special wrist rests.

◆ If using particular software in workshops provide copies to disabled delegates in advance, if required, to enable checks on the compatibility of the software with any assistive technology. This also allows the delegate to familiarise themselves with the new software.

>>>>>>> **Signposting**

Supply of additional support requirements

Communication Services. RNID facility for booking sign language interpreters, lipspeakers or any other communication service. The web pages also provide an explanation about the different types of communication support
http://www.rnid.org.uk/html/services/communication/csu.htm

The National Library for the Blind. print2braille: Braille transcription service Contact Irene Grayson Tel 0161 355 2019 or
e-mail info@print2braille.com
http://www.nlb-online.org/mod.php?mod=userpage&menu=55&page_id=323#content

If you are organising an event within a higher education institution consider contacting the institutional disability service. Contact details can usually be found from the institutional web site. Alternatively contact:

1. The National Association of Disability Officers NADO - a professional association for anyone who works in the post-16 education sector involved in the management or delivery of services for disabled students
http://www.nado.ac.uk
or
2. Skill the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities - search their database of institutional disability offices
http://www.skill.org.uk/into_he/search_he.asp

JISC TechDis Service. Further information about using ICT in workshops and disability issues. Contact helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk
www.techdis.ac.uk

Planning support during the event

Signage

If you are providing (or asking the venue to provide) signage on the day, then ensure it is:

◆ Clear and printed in dark lettering on light background. Use large print, sans serif font with initial capitals and lower-case text, avoid block capitals.

◆ Displayed at a height at which can be read by wheelchair users (1400-1700mm or 55-67inches).

Registration

◆ Ensure staff are aware of disability equality issues, and how to meet and greet disabled participants.

◆ If you are aware of delegates', or speakers', specific requirements then fully brief all registration staff as to what additional services they will have to perform. For example, ensuring Interpreters are introduced to delegates who require sign language interpretation.

◆ It may be necessary to produce information and delegate packs in alternative formats. If these are required to be distributed at registration then ensure you have an adequate system in place to identify the recipients of the alternative packs.

◆ Ensure all name badges are printed in minimum size 18 font, preferably in bold type.

Seating

◆ Irrespective of the styles of seating you are providing, ensure there is a choice of seating location and sufficient space in gangways and between rows for wheelchair navigation, guiding blind delegates etc. This should be taken into consideration for all workshops, breakout rooms and catering facilities.

Stewards and technical support

◆ Identify if stewards are needed, for example to pass round roving microphones.

◆ If stewards are required ensure they are trained or briefed for the task and are available for the times they are needed during the event.

◆ Ensure technicians are available or on call at the event to remedy problems experienced with audio visual or enabling technology.

First aid and medical support

◆ Make sure you know how to access first aid support.

◆ If someone has specific medical needs, make sure you know about these and take the appropriate actions. For example, provide storage facilities for prescription drugs such as insulin, or provide trained staff who can respond appropriately to someone who has an epileptic seizure.

Refreshment areas

◆ Check layout is wheelchair navigable and sufficient accessible venues are available to provide parity of service.

◆ Where possible use moveable tables and chairs or ensure there is sufficient space between seating areas. Be aware that fixed seating attached to tables can present substantial difficulties to a lot of people.

◆ Ensure adequate room under dining tables to accommodate wheelchairs.

◆ Ensure some seating and tables are made available for participant use if refreshments are to be served buffet style.

◆ Ensure the full range of refreshments is available to all delegates, situated at accessible locations, and served on counters of a suitable height.

◆ Check menus are available in alternative formats or that assistance is available to outline options.

Food and drink

◆ Make sure food is "accessible". For example, a finger buffet with 'mouth sized' pieces will enable people to eat without having to use utensils or hold a plate.

◆ Ensure specific dietary dishes are placed on separate platters and that they are well labelled.

◆ Provide a range of alternative beverage options including water.

◆ Ensure a variety of cup types are available as well as straws.

◆ For longer events consider providing biscuits and cakes at refreshment breaks to boost delegates' blood sugar levels.

◆ Provide personal assistance for those who require it. This is particularly important for buffet and self-service catered refreshments.

Emergency evacuation

- Clarify responsibilities for implementing emergency evacuation procedures with the venue provider. Event staff should be fully briefed regarding their roles. Notify all delegates of their responsibilities in an evacuation.

Travel

- Consider providing an end-of-event accessible taxi booking service.

>>>>>> **Signposting**

Planning support during the event

RNIB See it Right pack - Signs
Guidance on providing accessible signage
http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/Public Website/public_seeitright.hcsp#P166_10915

DRC. Fire Evacuation Briefing. An outline of the current standards relating to the evacuation of disabled people
http://www.drc-gb.org/publicationsandreports/campaigndetails. asp?section=oth&id=115

Elliott, T. Catering: A checklist to support inclusion.
National Disability Team
http://www.natdisteam.ac.uk/resources_briefings_ndtchecklis ts. html

Checklist: Organising accessible events and meetings

Venue	Comments
☐ **Access**	
○ DDA awareness.	
○ Accessibility audit.	
○ Entrances, toilets, lifts, catering and other areas.	
○ Proximity of facilities to event rooms.	
○ Disability awareness of venue staff.	
☐ **Car parking**	
○ Accessible designated spaces.	
○ Car park to venue route accessible.	

Event planning and administration	Comments
☐ **Planning the programme**	
○ Time to move between sessions.	
○ Rest breaks for interpreters and CSW.	
○ Regular refreshment breaks.	
☐ **Speakers, facilitators & exhibitors**	
○ Guidance provided regarding expectations.	
○ Fully briefed regarding venue and delegates.	
○ Presentation techniques advised.	
○ Speaker requirements checked.	
☐ **Budget**	
○ Allowances considered for support arrangements.	

Pre-event information	Comments
☐ **Publicity**	
○ Clear event description including outcomes.	
○ Range of formats used.	

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	Comments
○ Disabled people a specifically targeted group. ○ Equalities statement included. ○ Early information provided about the venue.	
☐ **Registration arrangements** ○ Individual requirement information requested. ○ Alternative registration options. ○ Individual requirements clarified. ○ Difficulties with arrangements communicated. ○ Advance requests for workshops choices. ○ Alternative format information.	
☐ **Venue details** ○ Reserved accessible parking. ○ Clear maps, directions and building plans or access routes. ○ Local transport information. ○ Assistance dog toileting.	
☐ **Booking confirmation** ○ Confirmation in advance in appropriate format. ○ Opportunity to request further additional requirements. ○ Confirm additional arrangements made.	
Supply of additional support requirements	**Comments**
☐ **Personal assistants and support workers** ○ Suppliers of specialist services identified. ○ Support workers booked. ○ Copies of presentations provided to support workers.	

- ◯ Event badges and information for support workers.
- ◯ Timings take working practices and support worker role into account.
- ◯ Seating reserved, and power sockets and tables provided.
- ◯ Support workers briefed.

☐ **Assistance dog provision**
- ◯ Toileting arrangements confirmed.
- ◯ Drinking water provided.

☐ **Alternative formats**
- ◯ Electronic copies of presentations.
- ◯ Alternative format provided.
- ◯ After event information provided accessibly.

☐ **Hire of extra equipment**
- ◯ Booked in advance and costed.

☐ **Induction loop system and Public Address**
- ◯ Availability checked or hire arranged.
- ◯ Signage indicates induction loop availability.
- ◯ Loop system checked for electronic interference.
- ◯ Public address and loop system functioning checked.
- ◯ Microphones work.
- ◯ Roving microphone booked and staff allocated to role.
- ◯ Height adjustable microphone for presenters.

☐ **Information and Computer Technologies**
- ◯ Publicity clearly states expected usage of ICT.
- ◯ Delegates invited to bring own equipment.
- ◯ Copies of workshop software provided if required.

Planning support during the event	Comments
☐ **Signage you provide** ○ Clearly printed in appropriate size, font and colour. ○ Display height appropriate.	
☐ **Registration staff** ○ Staff aware of disability equality issues. ○ Staff briefed about their duties in relation to disabled delegates. ○ System in place to hand out alternative format delegate packs.	
☐ **Seating** ○ Choice of seating location and space in gangways etc.	
☐ **Stewards and Technical Support** ○ Stewards and technicians arranged. ○ Stewards are trained and briefed.	
☐ **First Aid or medical support** ○ First aid contact details. ○ Medical requirements of delegates checked.	
☐ **Refreshment areas** ○ Layouts are wheelchair navigable. ○ Furniture moveable. ○ Table heights appropriate. ○ Seating available for buffet style refreshments. ○ Serving points accessible. ○ Menu information accessible.	
☐ **Food and drink** ○ Food choices accessible. ○ Dietary dishes labelled and presented separately. ○ Range of beverage options and cup types. ○ Assistance available if required.	
☐ **Emergency evacuation** ○ Arrangements clarified.	
☐ **Travel** ○ Post event taxi booking.	

Section 2:
Producing accessible event information

This section of the guide examines and explains the factors that should be taken into account when producing materials and information for an event.

Almost all higher education services are fundamentally engaged with the provision of information in some format. This guidance aims to support the production of information which is accessible to disabled people using higher education services. For example information may be web-based, electronic or in print, it may be intended for publicity, publications, information, or as a resource.

This section and accompanying checklist cover the following issues:

◆ **Printed material.**

◆ **Alternative formats.**

◆ **Using Web technologies to support an event.**

Printed material

There are a number of measures that can be taken to ensure that material is accessible to as wide an audience as possible.

It is recommended that as much information as possible be available in electronic format. This will allow disabled users to adapt the information to a format which is suitable for them to access.

The following guidance aims to help event organisers provide accessible print documents:

Text style and format

◆ The chosen font should be easily readable with clearly defined letters and clear spacing between the letters. Sans Serif fonts, for example Verdana, Arial and Helvetica, allow for maximum readability of the text.

◆ Text should, as a rule, be no smaller than 12 point.

- Underlining of large volumes of text should be avoided as the readability is significantly decreased.
- Text written in all capitals is difficult to read and it may be distracting to the reader.
- Avoid the use of italics; consider making the text bold instead.

Colour and contrast

No recommendations here will be universal to all people; individual requirements must still be taken into consideration.

- There should be a good contrast between the font colour and background colour.
- Using cream paper rather than white can increase the readability of a printed document as the glare is reduced.
- If the document is to have a coloured background, use a single solid colour rather than textured or patterned.
- White text on a black background will appear thinner than the same weight of font in black on a lighter background. Designers may wish to use a heavier font to compensate for this. White text on a dark blue background is particularly legible for many people.
- Use of pink, red or green paper should be avoided. If coloured paper is required, use pastel blue or yellow. For example, a dyslexic user may prefer black or dark blue print on a pale blue or yellow background.

Layout and structure

- Text should be left-aligned on the page. Paragraphs should not be centralised or justified as uneven inter-word spacing could lead to 'rivers of white space' being formed in the text reducing legibility.
- Avoid using long blocks of continuous text; break it up with smaller paragraphs and headings. This will also help the reader navigate the text.
- Where appropriate use bullet points and lists instead of large volumes of text.
- URLs in a printed document should not be hyperlinked, as this will result in them being underlined and reduce readability.
- Short, concise sentences of less than 20 words are more readable.
- Single idea sentences improve clarity.
- Where applicable, include the main idea in the first sentence of the paragraph. Use the following sentences to expand the main point.

Language

◆ Use clear language, and keep text as concise and straightforward as possible.

◆ Avoid using too many words and overly long or complex words.

◆ Use concepts and terminology consistently throughout the document.

◆ Avoid using slashed constructions such as 'a and/or b', instead, use 'a or b or both'.

>>>>>> **Signposting**

Printed material

Copyright and IPR Issues, JISC Legal
http://www.jisclegal.ac.uk/ipr/IntellectualProperty.htm

Plain English Campaign: on line free guidance to writing plain English
http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/guides.html

Alternative formats

Some disabled people need to have information provided in an alternative format. Such formats may include large print, audio, electronic or tactile documents. However, this may vary from person to person even if you think they have the same or similar disability, for example one blind person may require Braille, but another may prefer audio transcription.

Electronic format materials

◆ Obtain documents relating to all stages of event planning and delivery electronically to enable easy, speedy conversion of text to the most appropriate format.

◆ Schedule collation of electronic copies of materials required in alternative forms within the overall event organisation plan.

Other alternative formats

◆ To allow disabled people to make an informed judgement about the suitability of the event ensure you have the capacity to provide all pre-event information in alternative formats, and that you have advertised this.

- In pre-event publicity state that you can provide event materials in alternative formats.

- In the event registration information always ensure there is a space where any requirements for alternative formats can be specified.

- Ensure that suppliers of alternative format services are identified along with anticipated turn around times for production.

>>>>>> **Signposting**

Alternative formats

See it right: A series of guides from the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) advising on alternative format production of materials and signs
RNIB Customer Services Tel 0845 702 3153 or minicom 0845 758 5691
http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/Public Website/public_seeitright.hcsp

The National Library for the Blind offer an alternative format service
http://www.nlb-online.org/

Scottish Formats Resource – a guide to producing accessible formats published by UPDATE, Scotland's Accessible Information Forum
http://www.saifscotland.org.uk/publications/formats_resource/ formats_resource.pdf

Using web technologies to support an event

Web technologies are used in many ways, including for advertising, publishing, and discussion. The web is also used for some conferences as a venue. Organisers of events must bear in mind that when using the web it is difficult to predict the type of user who will access material.

Adherence to guidelines

- In order to ensure that the material presented on the web is as inclusive as possible it is advisable to use well established guidelines as a benchmark.

◆ TechDis (www.techdis.ac.uk) can provide advice on selecting specific guidelines, but as a guide it is suggested that websites used to support an event conform to the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative's guidelines. These can be found at www.w3c.org/wai. As a starting point web developers should aim to achieve a conformance level of "Double-A" of the WCAG 1.0 guidelines. However developers should also monitor the status of new guidelines to be found on the same website.

◆ Ensure that any online forms that delegates are required to complete are accessible.

◆ Be aware that 'text only' alternatives are not universally accessible. A well designed site utilising guidelines from W3C will in most cases negate the need for 'text only' versions. Developers should consider that providing a 'text only' version of a website as the 'accessible alternative' may create accessibility barriers for some users. Large pages of text can create navigation difficulties for users of screen readers, people who have difficulties processing large pieces of text and those whose first language is not that used on the site (including British Sign Language Users). Automated text-only generators are also becoming common. However, automated generators may create browsing problems on some pages for users of speaking software and people with dyslexia and other cognitive processing difficulties.

Accessibility statements and user testing

When utilising web technologies to support events and activities it is essential that disabled users know how you are considering their needs.

◆ It is recommended that a web accessibility statement or policy is developed. This may contain the level of conformance aimed for, any additional measures that have been taken toward accessibility (such as using access keys, for example) and the willingness to satisfy the needs of users.

◆ Invite disabled users to test out elements of the website and give feedback about whether it worked for them. In addition, be willing to make changes to the site in order to get information to appropriate users and offer material in different formats.

Contact details

◆ A contact point should be prominent on the event website for anyone having difficulty accessing information.

>>>>>>> **Signposting**

Using web technologies to support an event

For all staff working in Higher Education TechDis offer a support service in all areas of disability and technology. More information can be found on using the web and disabled users at www.techdis.ac.uk or by emailing the TechDis helpdesk **helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk.**

World Wide Web Consortium Web Accessibility Initiative
www.w3c.org/wai

UKOLN, a centre of expertise in digital information management
www.ukoln.ac.uk

Checklist: Producing accessible event information

Print Material	Comments
☐ **Text style and format** ○ Font should be easily readable, use Sans Serif fonts. ○ Text no smaller than 12 point. ○ Avoid underlining text. ○ Avoid writing in capitals. ○ Avoid italics; consider using bold instead.	
☐ **Colour and contrast** ○ Ensure contrast between font colour and background. ○ Cream paper increases readability ○ Coloured backgrounds should be a single solid colour. ○ For white text on dark background increase font depth. ○ Avoid red, green or pink coloured paper.	
☐ **Layout and structure** ○ Ensure left aligned text. ○ Use sub headings and short paragraphs. ○ Use bullet points and lists. ○ Do not underline URLs. ○ Use short, concise single idea sentences. ○ Structure paragraphs coherently.	
☐ **Language** ○ Use clear, straightforward language. ○ Avoid unnecessary or complex words. ○ Ensure consistency of terminology. ○ Avoid slashed constructions eg a and/or b.	

Alternative formats	Comments
☐ **Electronic format materials** 　○ Obtain all relevant documents electronically. 　○ Schedule time for production of alternative formats in organisational plan. ☐ **Other alternative formats** 　○ Ensure capacity to provide pre-event information in alternative formats. 　○ State availability of alternative formats. 　○ Ensure opportunity during registration to request alternative requirements. 　○ Know alternative format suppliers and their production timescale.	

Using Web technologies to support an event	Comments
☐ **Adherence to Guidelines** 　○ For example, W3C (www.w3c.org/wai). 　○ Ensure online forms are accessible. 　○ 'Text only' is not accessible to all users. ☐ **Accessibility Statement and user testing** 　○ Inform users of the level of accessibility you are aiming for in an accessibility statement (linked from the home page). 　○ Test the appropriate event pages with disabled users. 　○ Ask disabled users to continually give feedback on the accessibility of the site. **Contact details** 　○ Provide a prominent contact point (eg e-mail, telephone or textphone) for users unable to access information.	

Appendix 1:
Example statements

An example of an equality and diversity statement

"We are working towards being fully inclusive. We endeavour to arrange events in fully accessible locations. However, we would appreciate your co-operation in meeting specific requirements and ask that you inform us immediately if you require additional facilities (for example a loop system, BSL interpretation) or any other personal requirements."

<div align="right">The Aimhigher West Area Partnership</div>

Data protection statement to assist with providing support at events

If a booking form is included with a request for disclosure of individual disability or support arrangements then it may be useful to add a statement, for example:

"To make the event as inclusive as possible we may need to pass on information to a third party about your support requirements. If we are not able to reveal these details this may affect the accessibility arrangements we are able to provide. If you do not want us to pass on this information please tick this box ☐"

Appendix 2:
Further resources

>>>>>> **Signposting**

National Disability Team (NDT)
- national co-ordination team for disability
- web based directory of resources
- summary information about disability legislation
http://www.natdisteam.ac.uk

JISC **TechDis Service** - information on making websites and other electronic materials accessible　**http://www.techdis.ac.uk**

Disability Rights Commission (DRC) - advice on measures to prevent disability discrimination　**http://www.drc-gb.org**

National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (SKILL)
- information and advice on good practice for disabled students
http://www.skill.org.uk

National Association of Disability Officers (NADO) - professional association for anyone who works in the post-16 education sector involved in the management or delivery of services for disabled students
http://www.nado.ac.uk

Organising Accessible Events.　Disability Rights Commission
Guide to help event organisers and other service providers to make events and associated services more accessible and inclusive for disabled people
http://www.drc.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publicationdetails.asp?id=322&section=access

Aimhigher Western Area Partnership Disability Task Group.
A Good Practice Checklist for people planning and putting on events or producing and publishing information.　Contact Mike Bell: m.t.bell@bath.ac.uk

Planning and arranging events - Accessibility checklist Anglia Polytechnic University
www.apu.ac.uk/equalops/accessibility_checklist.doc

Notes:

National Disability Team

Anglia Polytechnic University
Ashby House
Bishop Hall Lane
Chelmsford
Essex
CM1 1SQ

Telephone: 01245 607508
Minicom: 01245 607510
Fax: 01245 607509
Website:www.natdisteam.ac.uk
Email: natdisteam@apu.ac.uk

JISC TechDis Service

The Higher Education
Academy Building
Innovation Way
York Science Park
Heslington
York
YO10 5BR
Telephone: 01904 717580
Fax: 01904 717505

Website: www.techdis.ac.uk
Email:**helpdesk@techdis.ac.uk**