



VisitEngland™



© VisitBritain/Sean Burns



©Loughborough University



©VisitBritain



©VisitBritain/Getty Images



©National Memorial Arboretum

Business Support Guides

Action checklist for business events organisers

Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Toolkit for Businesses

Contents

- 4 Insight and feedback
- 4 Pre-visit information and booking
- 6 Event schedule
- 6 Arrival
- 7 Customer service points
- 7 Physical environment
- 9 Audio-visual
- 10 Toilets
- 10 Information on site
- 11 Food & beverage
- 12 Virtual events
- 12 Marketing
- 13 You and your team
- 13 Hiring staff
- 15 Action planning

Want to make your business events more welcoming to everyone?

The checklist below is designed to help you understand the practical changes you can make and stay focused when it comes to your inclusivity journey.

You don't have to action everything at once; the checklist has been designed to allow you to tick off tasks that have been completed and add notes relating to further actions you might wish to take, stakeholders you might like to engage with, or reminders on when to revisit an issue.

Whilst every event will have differing priorities and restrictions (such as historic infrastructure), each section of the checklist has some 'quick win' 🟢 actions which are likely to be achievable in a short period of time at little or no cost. At the end of the document, there is an action planning template. You can complete this digitally by downloading the Microsoft Word version of this checklist.


Remember – accessibility is a journey with empathy at its heart. Listen to others, ask for help and don't let a desire for perfectionism halt that all-important progress.

This action checklist is aimed at event organisers who hire third party venues. If you also manage a physical business events venue, please also read the business events venue action checklist.






For actions relating to dedicated catering areas and formal dining, please see the separate food & beverage checklist.

Please note: this action checklist is part of the Accessible & Inclusive Tourism Toolkit for Businesses. It is strongly recommended that it is used in conjunction with the full guidance available in the main toolkit. Top 20 tips and technical guidance for the built environment are also available as downloadable documents.


Insight and feedback

Action	Done	Notes
 Seek feedback from people with accessibility requirements, acting and responding promptly to comments. One way to do this might be via your event evaluation survey.		
If you have an event planning board or committee, invite disabled people and accessibility professionals to join and give insight, feedback and recommendations.		

Pre-visit information and booking






Action	Done	Notes
 Consider providing concessions, for example free essential companion entry and a concessionary rate for disabled attendees.		
 Make it part of your booking/registration process to ask attendees "do you have any accessibility requirements?"		
 Offer your attendees a choice of how to contact you (e.g. telephone, email or text message) and find out about the 'Relay UK' service used by D/deaf people and people with speech impairments.		
 Ensure you inform attendees if any of your accessible facilities and services change or become unavailable between registration and their visit e.g. if a lift will be undergoing maintenance.		
 Offer content to attendees pre-event for those who need more time to digest information.		

Your website




Action	Done	Notes
 Provide detailed and accurate information on the event's accessibility, with measurements and photos of the venue. If the venue has an Accessibility Guide, link to this.		
Provide an 'Accessibility' or 'Access for All' section, which is easy to locate in the main menu.		

Pre-visit information and booking continued





Your website continued

Action	Done	Notes
 Publish the programme, event documents and practical details available in advance, along with a phone number in case someone is lost, late or has accessibility issues on arrival.		
 Provide information on accessible transport options to your/the event venue, including licensed taxis who are reliably known to accommodate wheelchair users and people with assistance dogs. Ensure any event shuttles can accommodate wheelchair users. If you have attendees coming from overseas, provide a link to airport accessibility information.		
 Include hotels that have accessible bedrooms in your accommodation directory. If you direct attendees to destination websites for this information, ensure information on accessible accommodation is available.		
Think about other local businesses that attendees may wish to visit and research their accessible facilities. You can also add information on the accessibility of local businesses to your website, or link to this information on local destination websites, with a particular focus on those that have step-free access and an accessible toilet.		
Provide a floorplan of the event space and layout.		
Allow attendees to book concession tickets online.		
Ensure your website meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) to enable all users to navigate easily.		
Provide a video showcasing the accessibility facilities and services of the venue.		
Ensure all videos are captioned and consider providing audio description.		
 Provide Alternative (Alt) Text for all images.		
 Provide information on times when the event may be quieter and consider providing dedicated quiet sessions.		
Provide a sensory story for the event.		
Consider BSL translation e.g. Signly.		


Event schedule

Action	Done	Notes
 Check the proposed date of your event against major religious holidays.		
 Consider your event start, end and break times. Attendees with accessibility requirements may need longer to travel to and from the venue, as well as moving around on site. Regular breaks will support attendees who may not be able to sit down or have difficulty concentrating for long periods. Breaks should ideally take place every 90 minutes and be at least 20 minutes long.		
 Ensure your event runs to schedule, as some attendees may have pre-planned medication, food or support during scheduled breaks.		



Arrival

Action	Done	Notes
 Welcome attendees with trained assistance dogs. This is a legal requirement even if you have a 'no dogs/pets' policy (see main toolkit for certain exceptions).		
Provide sufficient accessible parking spaces, and a drop-off point. If you don't have easily accessible parking, locate your nearest Blue Badge parking and share this information with attendees.		
Provide a well-lit and uncluttered area allowing ease of access to your entrance area, with seating for attendees.		
Ensure clear signage is provided at all key points, including to an accessible entrance if the main one does not provide step-free access.		
 Make adjustments for those unable to stand in a queue for long periods, such as fast-track or remote queuing.		
 Ensure name badges have a large, clear font and there is an option for them to be worn without requiring attendees to operate a clip or pin e.g. using a lanyard or sticker.		
 Offer to guide disabled attendees to the event space and possibly provide an orientation tour.		

Arrival continued

Action	Done	Notes
 Provide a variety of sensory equipment on arrival, such as weighted blankets, ear defenders and fidget spinners.		
Provide wheelchairs, mobility scooters and Trampers for loan, where appropriate.		






Customer service points

Action	Done	Notes
 Consider the impact of background music and refrain from playing music in areas where staff interact with attendees.		
 Provide a means of written communication at key service points to assist D/deaf attendees, if required.		
Provide hearing loops at registration and help desks, test they are working properly and provide signage where the loop is effective.		
Provide a service for D/deaf attendees to communicate with you through a remote BSL interpreter e.g. SignVideo, Sign Solutions, TranslateLive.		
Provide a lowered section to any registration or help desk and ensure it is kept clutter-free.		
Provide portable payment options, such as a hand-held card machine that can be brought to an attendee if required.		



Physical environment

Action	Done	Notes
Ensure the venue you select for your event provides step-free access throughout and has accessible toilet facilities. If the venue does not have fixed hearing loops or an infrared loop system in event rooms, provide portable loops.		


Physical environment continued

Action	Done	Notes
Consider attendees with accessibility requirements when walking-through potential venues. Check whether there are any hazards that need to be addressed prior to your event. Refer to the built environment technical guidance for more information on requirements for door widths, ramp gradients etc.		
Ensure evacuation routes are available for attendees with accessibility requirements and that these are clearly signed.		
 Ensure water bowls are available to use, should assistance dog owners require them.		
 Identify a toilet and exercise area for assistance dogs, ideally within the grounds of the event venue or nearby, and provide a waste bin.		
Provide consistent levels of lighting throughout, especially at the entrance, in eating areas and toilets. Consider lighting levels at night for outdoor events.		
 Ensure paths are kept clear of obstacles, debris, moss, ice and fallen leaves and have firm, well-maintained surfaces.		
 Ensure there are no tripping hazards such as loose cables or personal belongings in aisles. Ensure any temporary threshold ramps are suitable for wheelchair users to pass over.		
Provide ramp access to stages and speaker platforms.		
Avoid dark rugs and mats, as they can be perceived by attendees with dementia as black holes, and avoid shiny or reflective flooring, bold patterns and stripes, as they can cause confusion.		
Avoid deep-pile carpets that may cause trips or make it difficult to manoeuvre for a wheelchair user.		
 Provide adequate space to move in between areas, stands and displays.		




Physical environment continued

Action	Done	Notes
Provide networking/drinks tables at different heights during breaks, so they can be used by those of shorter stature, standing and seated attendees. Remember to leave space for wheelchair users to access tables.		
Provide a selection of seating at regular intervals internally and externally. Whilst backrests are always recommended to provide support, a variety of seating types and materiality should be available, e.g. with and without armrests, low, high, firm, soft.		
If your event/venue has allocated seating, allow attendees to select their preferred location when booking.		
 Reserve spaces in advance, even if your event does not have allocated seating, for attendees who may be accompanied by an assistance dog or support worker. Allow attendees to reserve seats if they wish to lipread or be close to a BSL interpreter (in front row/rows), near the toilet or exit.		
Provide designated quiet spaces, situated away from the main bustle of the event, and possibly a sensory room. Both should be easily accessible from public areas.		
 If some aspects of your event involve queuing, make adjustments for those unable to stand in a queue for long periods, such as fast-track or remote queuing.		


Audio-visual

Action	Done	Notes
 Inform attendees pre-event of any special effects such as flashing lights or photography, strobe lighting or sound effects, as they may affect people with epilepsy and tinnitus.		
Ensure that any audio is at a suitable sound level, with little echo.		
Ensure that microphones and lecterns are height-adjustable for those of shorter stature, seated and standing speakers.		

Audio-visual continued

Action	Done	Notes
 Provide a roving microphone for questions. If this is not possible, ensure that presenters are briefed to repeat questions before answering.		
 Ensure presentation slides follow accessibility guidelines, including colour contrast and font sizes.		
Ensure captions are available on all multimedia with sound. Where these cannot be provided, transcripts should be available.		
 Brief speakers to consider attendees with different requirements, such as describing what a graph is showing rather than relying on attendees to interpret it visually. They should also talk directly into the microphone and speak as slowly and clearly as possible to facilitate the work of any interpreters and palantypists.		

Toilets

Action	Done	Notes
Provide accessible toilets and ideally a Changing Places facility; consider hiring a RevoLOO where a permanent Changing Places is not available. If providing a Changing Places is not possible, know where your nearest one is and share this information with your attendees.		
 Where an accessible toilet requires a key or code to gain access e.g. RADAR key, brief event staff on where a key or code can be readily obtained.		

Information on site



Action	Done	Notes
Provide clear signage at key decision points to and from facilities, including main entrances, toilets and customer service points. Consider large print, contrasting, pictorial and tactile signs.		
Make sure video screens, exhibits and stages can be viewed by all, including those of shorter stature and wheelchair users.		

Information on site continued


Action	Done	Notes
Provide written information and interpretation in alternative formats, such as digital, large print, easy-read and BSL, on request.		
Create maps of your event to identify areas of sensory activity, or offer alternative routes – ‘quiet trails’ – through the event venue, avoiding potential triggers for neurodivergent visitors.		
Consider using wayfinding and interpretation apps that support an inclusive experience for all attendees.		
Include accessibility information on any general maps e.g. accessible routes, accessible toilets, lifts, accessible drop off and parking.		
If requested by attendees on registration, provide communication support such as BSL interpreters and palantypists. Interpreters need regular breaks, so you may need to hire more than one.		
Provide a sighted guiding service.		

Food & beverage



The following actions are specific to informal business event catering. For information on actions related to dedicated catering spaces or formal dining, such as gala dinners, see the separate Food & beverage business action checklist.

Action	Done	Notes
Provide for more common dietary requirements as standard e.g. gluten-free or lactose-free. Request dietary information on registration to provide for other requirements. Clearly label ingredients and state whether there is a risk of cross-contamination.		
 Ensure waiting staff are briefed on the food being served and can accurately describe them to attendees.		
 Offer table service and/or assistance with reading dietary information, where required.		
Ensure all food and beverage options, including drink stations, can be accessed by wheelchair users and those of shorter stature. If this is not possible, ensure staff are able to assist at all times.		



Food & beverage continued

Action	Done	Notes
Ensure crockery contrasts with the table linen or surface e.g. avoid using white crockery, white linen and clear glasses all together.		
 Provide easy-grip cutlery, beakers and straws on request.		

Virtual events

Action	Done	Notes
Ensure your virtual meeting software has built-in accessibility features, including live captions that can be turned on or off by attendees and compatibility with keyboard-only use.		
 Ensure presentation slides follow accessibility guidelines, including colour contrast and font sizes.		
 Allow attendees for virtual events to have early access to your online platform so they can familiarise themselves with its features. Consider producing a user guide and send this in advance to all attendees.		
Provide live captions for online events.		


Marketing

Action	Done	Notes
 Review your marketing channels to ensure you are reaching people with accessibility requirements.		
 Regularly promote your accessible facilities and services through your communication channels, including social media.		
Undertake a photoshoot featuring people with accessibility requirements and use the images in your marketing. Pay them for their time.		
Consider inviting disabled social media influencers to your business.		
Apply for accessibility awards.		




You and your team

Action	Done	Notes
Train all staff in disability awareness and ensure they are familiar with all accessible facilities, services, equipment and evacuation procedures.		
 Give all staff a copy of your Accessibility Guide so they can see at a glance the facilities and services available.		
 Ensure staff wear name badges and make it clear if they can support people affected by dementia – e.g. by wearing the Dementia Friend badge.		
Provide BSL Level 1 training to customer service staff members.		
 Provide staff with tips and guidance on inclusive language use.		
 Ensure relevant staff are trained in the use of the Relay UK telephone service and are confident to use it.		
 Identify a member of staff to be an Accessibility Champion and encourage others to be ambassadors for accessibility.		
 Regularly discuss workplace adjustments with your team.		
 Ensure disabled staff members have a personal evacuation plan.		
Arrange for people with lived experience of disability to provide awareness sessions with staff. Pay them for their time and expertise.		
Provide an accessible staff room and quiet space for employees.		
Become a Disability Confident Employer.		

Hiring staff

Action	Done	Notes
 Post job adverts on inclusive websites, such as EvenBreak.		

Hiring staff continued

Action	Done	Notes
 Check that your job adverts and job descriptions are accessible and inclusive.		
 Encourage applications from disabled people.		
Provide job application documents in alternative formats.		
 Provide several ways in which applicants can contact you.		
Ensure interview venues and/or software is accessible; ask candidates what provisions they require.		
Ensure roles within your business are accessible to disabled people; this includes leadership roles.		

