



Accessible Engagement Events Guide

April 2023

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1. Introduction

NHS Greater Glasgow & Clyde is committed to upholding equality legislation by addressing discrimination and delivering services that are fair and equitable to all.

Engaging with our patients and communities is vital to ensure that the needs of individuals are being met and that people's experiences are informing and directing our work.

Experience of inequality impacts upon both health and the ability to engage with health services. People with protected characteristics and who are experiencing discrimination may therefore require additional support to have their voices heard during engagement processes.

This guide is intended to support NHSGGC staff to organise and deliver accessible events.

2. Barriers to Engagement

It is the duty of every member of NHSGCC staff to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all those who require to use its services. To create a service which is inclusive for all, it is vital to consider accessibility. In terms of events, access difficulties often arise because the potential for them occurring has not been considered as an integral part of the planning process.

3. General Planning Tips

“Access is the same for non-disabled people as disabled people. You wouldn’t hold a meeting on the 10th floor with no lifts, or where there was nowhere to sit, or in pitch blackness or even where all documents were given out in Braille”

“Making Events & Meetings Accessible” – Social Care Institute for Excellence

Consider access issues from the first planning stages. Even if the people being invited are known, always ask if they have any particular requirements which need to be met, for example:

- Information in an accessible format e.g. community languages, audio, words and pictures or large print
- Induction loop
- Wheelchair access
- An interpreter – community languages or British Sign Language
- Parking for disabled patient / transport issues
- Access to a quiet area
- Specific dietary requirements

Accessible information

Check with the individuals attending in what format they would like to receive any information relating to the event. For example;

- Easy Read
- High Colour Contrast
- Community Languages
- Audio
- Larger Font
- BSL Video

If the event requires information to be read beforehand, send it out two weeks before the event, whenever possible. If it has to be later than this, let participants know when the papers are due to arrive. If papers are to be tabled or information discussed at a meeting, check how this can be made accessible for all participants. Any presentations to be given at an event should also be made available to organisers in advance to allow the time to convert to relevant formats.

Booking Forms

One of the best ways to ensure access issues are addressed is to give people information about the event as early as possible. You can use booking forms to ask people what they require. These are also useful as a means to log required facilities for the attendees.

Phone numbers and email addresses, as well as the correct named contact, need to be made clearly available to people. Include the statement that Deaf BSL users can contact you using the [Contact](#)

[Scotland BSL website](#). If you are sending information in a language other than English, include the corresponding leaflet which provides instructions for [direct access to telephone interpreting](#).

Appropriate Event Information

Advertising should be:

- Clear and simple, avoiding jargon
- Displayed where the target audience will see it - partnership working with community organisations can be extremely useful, both in terms of supporting individuals with particular needs and in promoting the event
- Available in different formats
- Available in community languages

Any information should include:

- Clear contact details
- Whether or not transport can be arranged
- Clear details regarding expenses payable & receipts required
- Full details of how to get to the venue by public transport or by car. Directions should include details of stations and bus routes with information about accessibility where available. Information for drivers should include any specific details about where to park – for example if a car park is accessed from a road that is not part of the venue address.

Bearing in mind that directions will need to be available in the formats most relevant to the needs of those attending, links to an internet map

as well as internet based details of the venue may be useful. A printed copy may be useful to some people too - do not assume everyone has access to a computer. Always include as a minimum an address and telephone number as contact details.

Support staff

People may require support staff for a variety of reasons e.g. those with physical or sensory impairments may require guides or note takers or people with a learning disability may require someone to help them in understanding any papers for the event before or during it.

Some people will bring their own personal assistant / support worker and some may want support arranged for them. For events with large numbers of disabled people it can be useful to have support workers available to provide assistance to anyone who needs it.

Language support professionals can support people whose first language is not English, Deaf people and people with hearing loss.

These include:

- Spoken Language Interpreters
- British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters
- Guide Communicators
- Note takers

These staff are there solely to provide support to the individual. They are not there to contribute to the event and this should be clarified from the outset.

Choosing a Date & Time of the Event

When picking a date for the event, avoid -

- assumptions about what may or may not be suitable times or dates
- significant dates that might affect whether people can attend the event. This could be for religious reasons, major sporting events, cultural anniversaries, etc.
- starting your event too early, especially if people need to travel long distances or require more time to get ready in the mornings.

Developing the Agenda

- The agenda or event plan should build in time for full deliberation of each topic to be discussed - allowing extra time for people to express themselves by whatever means e.g. via an interpreter.
- Time should be made for introductions & housekeeping and a set of ground rules should be drafted and gone through at the start to ensure agreement
- Time needs to be allowed for any movement between rooms, if necessary, taking into account that some people need to be guided etc.
- Regular breaks need to be built in approximately every 45-60 minutes
- Presentations and feedback sessions should be kept relatively short.

4. Accessibility Planning for Specific Groups

Black & Minority Ethnic People

Before the event;

- Translation / interpreting should be provided if required.
Contact the [Interpreting Service](#) for all interpreting services.
Contact [Clear to All](#) to request translations.

At the event;

- If someone comes along to your meeting unplanned and needs an interpreter, you can use [telephone interpreting](#)

People with Visual Impairments

Before the event;

- Send information out in relevant formats such as Braille, large print, audiotape or on CD
- Organise staff to meet and greet people at the front door and help them to their seats if required (do not assume help will be needed – ask the person)
- Be aware when booking the venue that glass doors can be very dangerous for people with visual impairments. A strong contrast between the door and the door frame is really important - stickers or bright signs can be put on the glass to aid this. Also note that vastly different lighting levels between rooms can make it difficult for people with visual impairment.

At the event;

- When greeting someone with a visual Impairment, make sure that you introduce yourself to them. Ask the person how you may help them and if you guide them, make sure that you describe where you are going and if there are any stairs, be sure to say whether the stairs are going down or up.
- If there are other people in the room, make sure that you introduce them and say a bit about them e.g. 'This is Tom who is a member of the Patient Focus Public Involvement Group'.
- Guide dogs are working dogs and should not be petted. Provide water bowls for them.
- If you offer someone a seat, guide their hand to the back of the chair, telling them that there is a chair to sit on.
- If you leave the person, let them know that you are going and if they are sitting with other people, be sure to introduce them.
- Large signs should show rooms and toilets and/or ensure there are enough members of staff to guide patients throughout the venue.
- Check any videos to be used have an audio described version. This provides extra narration to tell people about facial expressions, body language, actions and costumes.
- When dimming the lights for a presentation, please make sure people can still see their supporter. You could try closing the curtains to reduce glare but keep the light on. Covering bright surfaces with a tablecloth can also help reduce glare.

People with learning disabilities

Before the event;

- Booking forms and papers should be in Easy Read format or any other formats necessary
- Do not plan too many things in one meeting and put the most important things at the top of the agenda. Stick to the agenda and try not to introduce anything new on the day.

At the event;

- Speak to the person as you would to anyone else but avoid using jargon. Ask their permission before talking to their carer/support worker.
- People with learning disabilities often need support to understand reports and papers before and during the meeting.
- If you find people are finding it hard to take part in a large meeting you could arrange small group work.
- If possible give people different ways of saying what they think. You can use props and objects to support them (a ballot box for voting for example). To help follow the agenda, put a picture up for each agenda item and take it down when it has been covered.

Deaf People and People with Hearing Loss

Before the event;

- Deaf People and People with Hearing Loss may require various kinds of support in order to participate in meetings.

- Some buildings have loop systems built in. They may also have portable loop systems available for small to medium events.
- Some patients may require a British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreter or other language support professional such as a Note taker or lip speaker.
- It is the responsibility of NHS staff to book a BSL interpreter, Note takers or lip speakers as necessary. [Contact the Interpreting Service.](#)
- If you are using videos, they can be subtitled or overlaid with British Sign Language interpretation. If this is not possible, send out the transcript to Deaf people and people with hearing loss, or arrange a BSL interpreter to sign on the day.

At the event;

- Clarify how a person likes to communicate. Do not assume that because they are Deaf, they cannot hear anything. There are many different types of Deafness and individuals will have their own ways of communicating.
- During the event, try not to have your back to a light source as Deaf people or people with hearing loss will not be able to see you properly. Speak clearly and don't cover your mouth. During discussion, make sure that people speak one at a time.

- Deaf people and people with hearing loss are likely to prefer seats where they have a good view of what is going on and where they can see any communication support they are using.
- Language support professionals will advise you on where they need to sit or stand in relation to the speaker and the audience.
- Ensure language support professionals have regular breaks.

People who are Deaf Blind

- If approaching a Deaf Blind person, let them know that you are there by lightly touching them on the arm. If they have a guide with them, speak to the individual, not the guide.
- Deaf Blind communicators and guides work with people on a one-to-one basis and can be booked through Deafblind Scotland on Tel: 0141 777 6111. The guides use different ways of communicating such as the manual alphabet, block alphabet, Braille keyboard and hands-on signing. Please bear in mind that Deaf Blind communication often requires more time than other kinds of communication support.

People with Mental Health issues

- Keep presentation segments short as some people find it difficult to concentrate for long periods.
- A quiet room may be really useful for patients with mental health issues to take a break.

People with Speech Difficulties

Before the Event;

- If you have difficulty understanding a person on the telephone, ask if they would prefer to use email, post or continue on the telephone.
- Use questions that require simple answers. Repeat back what they say and wait for confirmation. You may wish to ask another member of staff to listen and help you but always ask the person on the telephone if this is OK.
- Never agree to something if you are not clear what the caller has said. If there are difficulties in understanding, make sure the caller is aware and check if they would be happy to write their request instead.

At the Event;

- Listen to patients carefully and if you do not understand, ask them to repeat it. Do not attempt to finish sentences or assume what they are going to say.

- If the person needs to write something down, ask them if they are able to do it. They might wish a personal assistant, carer or friend to write it down for them.
- Clarify what people require using questions that need simple answers. Repeat back what they say and wait for them to confirm. You could ask another member of staff to listen and help you. Always ask the person if this is OK.

Autistic People

Before the Event;

- Any information should be clear and include all relevant details e.g. expenses, transport, timings.
- Provide information about who to contact to clarify any queries someone may have.
- Understand that an Autistic Person may find it necessary to “double check” and clarify information several times.

At the Event;

- Large groups can be difficult for an Autistic person. If possible, keep events on the smaller side. If not provide a quiet space for regular breaks if they are required.
- If possible, keep lighting and noise levels low. Many Autistic people experience sensory overload and can be prevented from properly contributing if they are focussed on coping with too much light and noise. Where this is not possible, a section of a larger room can be less brightly lit or provide a quiet space for regular breaks.

5. Summary

This document is intended as a guide to facilitate participation in events by as broad a range of people as possible. However, each person has individual needs and may therefore require a combination of support or support which is not listed here. It is vital not to presume to know what a person needs; always ask. Remember too that some people may have a disability that is not visible.

6. Further information and resources

Websites

[Clear to All](#) – for information on producing accessible information and translation requests

[NHSGGC Interpreting Service](#) – for information on how to book face to face interpreters, use telephone interpreting and access other forms of interpreting support

[Making Meeting & Events Accessible](#)

[Equalities in Health](#) – for information on how we are addressing equality issues in NHSGGC including meeting the requirements of equality legislation

Resources

[NHSGGC Clear to All Accessible Information Policy](#)

[How to Access Interpreting Support Flowchart](#) – quick guide to accessing all forms of interpreting support.

[Tip Cards](#) – for communicating & supporting our diverse communities.

For hard copies of the any of the above, or for further information, please contact the Equality and Human Rights Team at equality@ggc.scot.nhs.uk Tel: 07970 006 631

**Equality & Human Rights Team
West House
Gartnavel Royal Hospital
1055 Great Western Road
Glasgow G12 0XH**

APPENDIX 1

Event Planning Checklist

- ✓ From the very first stage, consideration needs to be given to access issues.
- ✓ Ensure any venue to be used is fully accessible. It's helpful for venue staff to be made aware of any specific requirements/issues.
- ✓ Consider appropriate information for the event.
- ✓ Any information should be clear and without jargon – it should also be available in a range of formats.
- ✓ Give people information about the event as early as possible. You can use booking forms to gauge what needs they may have.
- ✓ Consider whether people will bring their own support workers with them or require this to be arranged.
- ✓ Consider if the date and time of the event is appropriate or convenient
- ✓ Ensure the agenda is arranged with adequate time for discussion of all items and for breaks.

APPENDIX 2

Sample Booking Form

Name of Event:

Location:

Date & Time:

Name of Attendee:

Phone:

Email:

Any Other Contact Details/Preferences:

Please tell us if you require any of the following for this event -

Information in another format, such as large print or in a community language.

Spoken language interpreting (please state language)

British Sign Language Interpreter

Assistance to get to and from the event

Dietary Needs

Any other requirements, e.g quiet space, bright or dim lighting

Will You Be Bringing A Personal Assistant?

If yes, what is their name? -

Please tell us any additional information which will help you attend this event.

Please tick this box if you are happy for us to send you further information or details of other events.

Thank you for completing this form.

If you have any questions regarding the event, please contact us at...

Please return your completed form to...