Accessible Engagement Guide

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Accessible Engagement Guide

Introduction

At the heart of continuous improvement, something which is vital to quality NHSGGC services is the ability to learn from the experiences of those who require use of those services.[1]

The purpose of engaging with patients/members of the public and involving them in events is, therefore, to ensure representation and recognition of their interests as stakeholders or potential stakeholders of NHS services. It needs to be remembered, however, that experience of inequality impacts upon health and, further, the ability to engage with health services. With this in mind groups with protected characteristics[2] and others experiencing discrimination may well require additional support to have their voices heard during engagement processes and events.

This guide is intended to support NHSGGC staff arrange any support required to organise and deliver events which are accessible.

Barriers to Engagement/ Limited Access

It is, undoubtedly, the duty of every member of NHSGCC staff to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of all those who require to use its services.[3] It follows, therefore,

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[1] Patient Engagement http://www.equalitiesinhealth.org/public_html/patient_involvement.html
[2] Equality Act 2010 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/4
[3] A Fairer NHSGGC 2016-20 - Meeting the requirements of Equality Legislation http://www.equalitiesinhealth.org/public_html/equality_scheme.html

that to create a service which is inclusive for all, it is vital that accessibility is considered whether that be in relation to;

- Transportation & Mobility
- Physical Location / Built Environment
- Community Participation/Engagement
- Communication/Information

It is too often the case that the access difficulties which arise, do so because the potential for them occurring has not been considered as part of the planning of an event. To mitigate accessibility issues, therefore, it is necessary to make their consideration an integral part of the process.

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*".[4]

From the very first stage, consideration needs to be given to access issues. Even if the people to be invited are known it is imperative that they be asked if they have any particular requirements which need to be addressed for example:

- Information in an accessible format e.g. Braille, audio or large print

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[4] Co-Production - Making Events Accessible Social Care Institute for Excellence
https://www.scie.org.uk/publications/accessibleevents/

- 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

After conducting site visits and ensuring any venue to be used is physically suitable (It's helpful for venue staff to be made aware of any specific requirements/issues), the following is a useful checklist of things to take into account when planning an event:

(i)   **Appropriate Publicity/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.
- be available in different formats
- be available in different 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 hard copy may be more useful to some people too (not everyone will have access to a printer).

> "*Do not assume everyone has access to a computer. Include as a minimum address and telephone number for contact – be sure to keep this consistent in all information.*"

> "*Let people know about the event as early as possible – this gives people time to arrange transports, PAs/carers etc.*"[5]

(ii)   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, making sure they know who to contact and how if they have any questions or requests.

(iii)   Who to contact and how?

People who wish to come to the event may use prefer phone and/or email contact. Phone numbers and email addresses, as well as the correct named contact, need to made clearly available to people.

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[5] Co-Production - Making Events Accessible Social Care Institute for Excellence
https://www.scie.org.uk/publications/accessibleevents/planningtheevent/advertising.asp

(iv)   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 assistants/support workers and some people may want support arranged for them – Indeed, for events with large numbers of disabled people/people who use services, it can be useful to have support workers available to provide assistance to anyone who needs it.

Language support professionals can support deaf people and people with hearing impairments. Language support professionals can include:

- translators

- BSL interpreters

- note takers

- lip speakers.

N.B Support staff provide support to the participant with access requirements. They are not there to contribute to the event and this should be clarified from the outset.

(v)   Accessible information

It is important to check with individuals, if possible, in what format they would wish to receive any information about and during the event. For example;

- Easy Read

- Electronic

- High Colour Contrast

- Community Languages

- Audio

- Larger Font

If the event requires papers to be read, send them out two weeks before whenever possible. If it has to be later than this, let participants know when the papers are due to arrive and only table papers at a meeting if it cannot be avoided, after checking 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 so as to make them available to participants in relevant formats.

(vi)   Developing the Agenda/Event Plan

- The agenda and or event plan should build in time for full deliberation of each topic to be discussed, allowing for extra time for people to express themselves by whatever means e.g. via an interpreter.

- Make time for introductions & housekeeping.

- Draft a set of ground rules and go through them at the start to ensure agreement

- Time needs to be allowed for physically moving between rooms, where necessary, taking into account that some people need to be guided etc.

- Breaks need to be built in approximately every 45 minutes to an hour and both presentations and feedback sessions should be kept relatively short.

> "*Do not plan too many things in one meeting and put the most important things at the top of the agenda.*"[6]

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[6] Co-Production - Making Events Accessible Social Care Institute for Excellence
https://www.scie.org.uk/publications/accessibleevents/planningtheevent/agenda.asp

(vii)   Choosing a Date/Timing of Event

When picking a date for the event;

- Avoid significant dates that might affect whether people can attend the event. This could be for religious reasons, major sporting events, cultural anniversaries, etc.
- Avoid assumptions around when people are and are not available to attend the event
- It's also best to avoid starting your event too early especially if people need to travel long distances.

Accessibility Planning For Specific Groups

Black & Minority Ethnic People

- Before the event;

Translation/interpreting should be provided if required. To book an interpreter contact NHSGGC Interpreting Services on 0141 347 8811 or email interpretingservices@ggc.scot.nhs.uk

- At the event;

If someone comes along to your meeting unplanned and needs an interpreter, you can use telephone interpreting. Call Language Line on 0800 028 0073, make sure you have a note of your authorisation code when you call. You can get this from the Interpreting Service or from Staffnet, also ensure that interpreters are identifiable on the day.

Consider setting up a prayer room that could also be used as a quiet room. If possible put an arrow in the room pointing south east for prayer direction.

People with Visual Impairments

- **Before the event**

(i)   Try to send papers in patients' chosen format such as Braille, large print, audiotape or on CD before the event.

(ii)   Organise staff to meet and greet patients at the front door and help them to their seats if required (do not assume help will be needed – ask the person).

(iii) Signs (showing rooms and toilets) menus etc should use large simple fonts, contrasting ink/paper (e.g. blue on yellow) colours and **not be** produced on glossy paper.

(iv) 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**

(i) When greeting someone with a visual Impairment, make sure that you introduce yourself to them. Ask the individual 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.

(ii) 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'.

(iii) Guide dogs are working dogs and should not be petted. [7] Provide water bowls for them.

(iv) 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.

(v) 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.

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[7] NHSGGC Assistance Dog Policy -
http://www.staffnet.ggc.scot.nhs.uk/Corporate%20Services/Health%20Information%20Technology/Intranet/Human%20Resources/Learning%20and%20Education/Pages/Communications.aspx

(vi)   Large signs should show rooms and toilets and/or ensure there are enough members of staff to guide patients throughout the venue.

(vii)   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.

(viii)   When dimming the lights for a presentation, please make sure patients 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**

(i)   Booking forms and papers should be in Easy Read format (See "Clear to All" accessible information policy[8]). Also, make information available on audiotape or CD (containing documents in different formats).

(ii)   Papers can be colour coded (keep colours the same each meeting) and sent out at least two weeks in advance.

(iii)   Avoid using recorded information if possible. People may find it easier to use a service where they can talk directly to someone.

(iv)   Some people with learning disabilities use Makaton to communicate. Makaton is a basic signing and symbol system. If they use it, they may ask for papers in Makaton and their support worker will use it to communicate with them.

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[8] Clear to All – Clear Information for Everyone
http://www.staffnet.ggc.scot.nhs.uk/Info%20Centre/AIP/AIP%20Refresh/AIPStartPage.html

(v)   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**

(i)   Speak to the person as you would to anyone else but do avoid using jargon. Ask their permission before talking to their carer/support worker.

(ii)   People with learning disabilities often need support to understand reports and papers before and during the meeting.

(iii)   If you find people are finding it hard to take part in a large meeting you could do some small group work.

(iv)   If possible give people different ways of saying what they think. You can use props and objects to support you (a ballot box for voting for example).To help follow the agenda, you could 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**

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

(ii)   Events should have Mincom's or text numbers available, or confirm through Type–talk.

(iii)   Some buildings have loop systems built in. They may also have portable loop systems available for small to medium events.

(iv)   Some patients may require a British Sign Language (BSL) Interpreter or other Language Support professional.

It is the responsibility of NHS staff to book a BSL interpreter. (Patients should not book interpreter directly). Contact the NHSGGC interpreting service. Tel: 0141 347 8811 Email: interpretingservices@ggc.scot.nhs.uk Book four to six weeks in advance if possible and try to give Language Support professionals an idea of what the meeting is about beforehand.

Other forms of language support can be booked via the Interpreting Service if requested. These include:

- Relay interpreters – who put BSL into a different form for those with less developed BSL skills.

- Lip speakers – who repeat what is being said for easy lip reading

- Note takers – who note the main points on a computer for the patient to read

- Speech to Text – who type out everything being said

If you are using videos, they can be subtitled or overlaid with British Sign Language interpretation. If none of these are possible, you could send out the transcript to Deaf people and people with hearing loss, or there can be a signer on the day.

- **At the event**

(i)   Clarify how a person likes to communicate. Do not assume that because they are Deaf, that they cannot hear anything. There are many different types of Deafness and individuals will have their own ways of communicating.

(ii)   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.

(iii)   Deaf and hard-of-hearing patients 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.

(iv)   Language Support Professionals will advise you on where they need to sit or stand in relation to the speaker and the audience.

(v)   Ensure interpreters and language support professionals have regular breaks.

(vi)   Remember, people can't sign and eat and so need to keep hands free and will require a place to put plates down.

People who are Deaf Blind

(i)   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.

(ii)   Deaf Blind communicators and guides work with people on a one-to-one basis and can be booked through Deafblind Scotland. They use different ways of communicating such as the manual alphabet, block alphabet, Braille keyboard and hands-on signing (the person places their hands on the communicators to follow the shape of the signs). Please bear in mind that Deaf Blind communication often requires more time (often 50 – 70 per cent more time).

People with Mental Health problems

(i)   Do not start meetings too early in the morning.

(ii)   Keep presentation segments short as some people find it difficult to concentrate for long periods.

(iii)   A quiet room may be really useful for patients with mental health problems and also people experiencing fatigue.

People with Speech Difficulties

- **Before the Event**

(i)   If you have difficulty understanding a person on the telephone, ask if they would prefer to use email, post or continue on the telephone.

(ii)   Clarify what people want using questions that need 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.

(iii)   Never agree to something when 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 (email or letter).

- **At the Event**

(i)   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.

(ii) If the person needs to write something down, ask them if they are able to do it. They might want a personal assistant, carer or friend to write it down for them.

(iii) Clarify what people want 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**

(i) Any information should be clear and include all relevant details e.g. expenses, transport, timings.

(ii) Provide information about who to contact to clarify any queries someone may have.

(iii) Understand that an Autistic Person may feel it necessary to "double check" and clarify information several times.

- **During the Event**

(i) Large groups can be difficult for an Autistic person, if possible, keep events on the smaller side and, if not provide a quiet space for regular breaks if they are required.

(ii) 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, perhaps a section of a larger room can be less brightly lit or a quiet space for regular breaks may be beneficial.

Summary

It would not be possible to contain the support needs of all the people who may attend any events and/or meetings organised by NHSGGC, however, this document is intended as a guide to facilitate participation by as broad a range of people as possible.

It is also true that people do not come in neatly labelled categories and may require support which is not listed here or they may require a combination of different supports because their needs relate to several different aspects of their lives. This underlines the importance of not making assumptions about people. 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.

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 Publicity/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 the date and time of the event is appropriate and/or convenient

- Ensure the Agenda is arranged with adequate time for discussion of all items and for breaks.

APPENDIX TWO

SAMPLE BOOKING FORM

NAME OF EVENT
LOCATION
DATE AND TIME

NAME

JOB TITLE/DEPT or ORGANISATION
[if applicable]

PHONE	**MOBILE**

EMAIL	**ANY OTHER CONTACT METHODS**

REQUIREMENTS?

Documents in other formats, including large print?	
Sign Language Interpreter?	
Community Language Interpreter?	
Transport Assistance?	
Dietary Needs?	

DO YOU HAVE ANY OTHER REQUIREMENTS?
e.g. The need for quiet space, bright or dim lighting?

Will you be bringing a personal assistant?

☐ Yes.   What is their name?

☐ No

Is there anything else we should know to enable you to attend this meeting/event?

What is your preferred method of contact?

☐ By telephone
☐ By email
☐ By post
☐ By text

Can we use your details to invite you to other events and/or send you further information?

To book your place, please return your completed form to;

    (i) Postal Address
    (ii) Email Address

For further information please contact (Telephone & Email)