

# Accessibility Matters 2

## Norfolk Guidelines on making **public events** accessible

public events

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>4</b>
Why we need these guidelines	4
Why we must make public events accessible	4
How to get copies of Accessibility Matters 1 - Norfolk Guidelines on making information accessible	5
Checklists	6
<b>1. Deciding on whether to hold a public event</b>	<b>11</b>
Should you be holding an event at all?	11
What is your budget?	11
<b>2. Basic preparation</b>	<b>12</b>
Administration	12
Target Audience	13
Advertising	13
<b>3. Deciding on a venue</b>	<b>14</b>
The venue	14
Transport and parking	15
Access audit	16
Visiting your venue	17
Toilets	17
Lifts	18
What equipment will you need?	18
People to help out on the day	18
<b>4. Deciding on the programme for the event</b>	<b>19</b>
Planning	19
Programme	19

Format	20
Timings and the rhythm of the day	20
Speakers	20
Break-out groups	21
Facilitation	22
After the event - feedback	22
Contingencies	22
<b>5. Media</b>	<b>23</b>
Planning ahead	23
Setting up a photocall	23
On the day	24
After the event	24
Photography	24
<b>6. Meeting the needs of your audience</b>	<b>26</b>
Choosing the time and the day	26
Signs	26
Meeting and greeting	27
Sound	27
Assistive technology / loops etc	28
Speech-to-text	28
The role of the Chair	28
INTRAN	29
Making best use of the INTRAN service	29
Using INTRAN at your meeting	30
Interpretation	30
Using translators wisely	31
Using a signer at your meeting	32

Lipspeaking	33
When to use a lipspeaker	33
How to use a lipspeaker	33
Introductions	34
Jargon	34
Discussions / Plenary sessions	34
Presentations	35
Presentations - flip chart and overhead	36
Chairs and layout	37
Lighting and heating	38
Food	38
Crèche	39
<b>7. After your event</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Appendix 1 - More about loops</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Appendix 2 - Using an interpreter</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>8. Making this Guide accessible</b>	<b>44</b>

# Introduction

## Why we need these guidelines

Accessibility Matters - Norfolk Guidelines on making information accessible was published in March 2001. This practical guide to making sure that information is easy to access and to understand has helped to improve information across Norfolk.

However, these original guidelines focused solely on information and gave only limited advice to people who wanted to make their events and meetings more accessible. Accessibility Matters 2 - making public events accessible is intended to fill this gap.

Accessibility Matters 2 gives practical guidance on arranging meetings and other public events to make them as accessible and inclusive as possible. The guidance can be applied to a range of public events, from small meetings to large conferences. Depending on the event you are planning, you will need to use the guidance in a way that is appropriate to your situation.

The key to getting it right is to do the research at an early stage. If you find out the specific needs that people attending the event will have you will be able to make the appropriate response. For example, if no-one attending the event requires a signer, then you will not have to provide one. Use the guidance sensibly and appropriately. Be aware that you have a duty to anticipate people's needs, but it is a good idea to make sure you know what people need by asking them in advance.

## Why we must make public events accessible

We must recognise that some people have particular needs or requirements that should be met in order to participate in our public involvement initiatives. Understanding how best to meet those needs and requirements will ensure that we promote equality of opportunity, and prevent discrimination.

## **Under the Disability Discrimination Act**

- we should make “reasonable adjustments” such as providing extra help
- we have an “anticipatory” duty, that is, we should be thinking in advance of any public event about what reasonable adjustments we will need to make
- we should not treat people with disabilities less favourably than other people

Under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act we have a duty to promote equality of opportunity, and this means that we should provide translation and interpretation services for people who have little or no English.

If we have these requirements in mind when we plan public events we will be ensuring that we remove barriers that would prevent the full participation of as many people as possible.

## **How to use Accessibility Matters 2**

We have provided a lot of information and guidance in the following pages. It may not be necessary to read the document right through. Use of the contents pages and checklists should enable you to dip into it as you need. For this reason you may find some duplication in the document.

## **How to get copies of Accessibility Matters 1 - Norfolk Guidelines on making information accessible**

You can download a copy from [www.norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk) – just click on the ‘Accessibility’ link.

If you would like a hard copy, please:

E-mail: [anne.tansleythomas@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:anne.tansleythomas@norfolk.gov.uk)

Telephone: (01603) 222844

Write to: Anne Tansley Thomas, Communications Unit, Norfolk County Council, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DH

### Check lists

For a specific checklist about accessibility issues please go to Centre for Accessible Environments website [www.cae.org.uk](http://www.cae.org.uk). There you will find checklists for:

- accessibility issues
- on the day
- accessible venues
- accessible toilets

**The following checklist lists actions and matches these to sections in this guide.**

Organiser	
Co-ordinator	
Support team	

Items to be arranged	Yes	No	Task Allocated to	Deadline
Arrange meeting to discuss seminar. (section 1)				
Type of seminar? (all day, half day) (section 1)				
How many people to attend? (estimate) (section 1)				
What type of venue will be booked? (What facilities will venue have? Will own equipment have to be booked? Room layout, will extra syndicate rooms be needed?) (section 3)				
In what order will events take place? (programme layout) (section 4)				
Will there be presentations? (PowerPoint, flipcharts, laptop, projector, handouts) (section 3)				

## Introduction

Items to be arranged	Yes	No	Task Allocated to	Deadline
Invite opening speaker? Invite special guests? (section 4)				
Will there be workshops? (How many per group? What will their tasks be?) (section 4)				
Will there be lunch? Refreshment breaks? (what type of lunch, working lunch, finger buffet?) (section 6)				
Short list for people to be invited. Guest speakers. (section 4)				
Will there be name badges?				
Re-arrange next meeting to discuss progress.				

**Check List for Planning**

Items to be arranged	Yes	No	Task Allocated to	Deadline
Book room for next meeting (how many to attend? tea & coffee).				
Send out invitations. By post, e-mail set deadline for confirmation. Send out general information/maps to the delegates.(section 2)				
Will there be a need for car parking? (section 3)				
Disability access. (section 3)				
Book interpreter / loop. (section 6)				
Book Venue (what facilities will venue have? Will we have to provide own equipment?) (section 3)				
Book laptop, projector, and flipcharts. Check stationery information folders, flip-charts, pens, name-badges. (section 3)				
Book lunch, coffee, & tea for seminar. (section 3)				

**Check List for Planning**

Items to be arranged	Yes	No	Task Allocated to	Deadline
Collect names of delegates and enter into data base (mail merge).				
Produce badges.				
Create registration list.				
Create attendance list.				
Create evaluation form.				
Organise registration table and staffing. (section 6)				
Deadline for presentations (e-mail? post?) (section 6)				
Photocopying to be done for information packages - allow extra time for information to be produced in accessible formats. (section 6)				
Prepare safety talk. For example fire exits. (section 4)				
After services (feedback forms from event / workshops) (section 4)				

# **1. Deciding on whether to hold a public event**

## **Should you be holding an event at all?**

- What is the purpose of your event?
- Who is the target audience?
- Is a meeting / conference / seminar / event the most effective way to achieve your goal?
- Can you use video conferencing, telephone conferencing or e-mail instead?
- Think about people who cannot come to the meeting - how do we involve them?

## **What is your budget?**

- Your budget will affect the rest of your planning.
- There are many costs to meetings and conferences that you need to consider, such as hire of venue, catering, speaker's expenses and materials.

## **2. Basic preparation**

### **Administration**

- Send out papers in good time - especially alternative formats as some people may need longer to read these.
- Plan your meeting in good time, especially if you need to book interpreters. All interpreters should be booked at the same time as the date is set.
- Think about who you are going to invite and how you will register them. Will you do this on a first come first served basis or will you allocate a number of places for certain organisations?
- If you have regular meetings over a period of time - for example, committee meetings - it is a good idea to set all dates and book all interpreters at the same time. This will not only make it easier to plan and book interpreters, but it will also save on administration costs and time.
- Decide if you are going to give expenses for transport or replacement care - you will need to let people know in advance.
- Give delegates the telephone number, and minicom or text number, if they have one, of the venue in case anyone needs to get hold of them in an emergency.
- See “Accessibility Matters - Norfolk Guidelines on making information accessible” for information on how to make your conference papers accessible in all formats.
- Make sure that you send out a clear map of the venue.
- Provide printed materials / copies of slides to help people that have difficulties in taking their own notes.
- Make sure that the invitation or notice or meeting includes information about the accessibility of your event.
- Use pictures to help explain things - this is helpful to some people, especially those with learning difficulties.

## **Target Audience**

- Look at your delegates and try to understand the needs of your target audience. Do you know the needs of the people coming to the meeting? If not, you need to find out.
- Can you mix groups? Young people might not have the same needs as older people - some groups you might need to hold separately - for example, Bangladeshi women with language needs.
- You need to establish people's communication needs before the event. It may not be possible to provide the papers in other formats on the day, but have large print available at least.
- It is not just the needs of your delegates that you have to think about. Delegates might bring along carers, supporters or advocates. You need to include these in your seating arrangements and numbers for refreshments.

## **Advertising**

- Advertise your event / meeting in appropriate places and in different formats. You need to publicise the event in all sorts of ways, both audio and visual, so that everyone gets to hear about it.
- Make it clear how to register for an event - have an easy form or tick box, or let people register on-line or by e-mail.
- Include a telephone number, text-phone number, address and e-mail.
- If you are reimbursing transport or replacement care costs, advertise this. Tell people how to claim and how long it will take for them to get their money back.
- Think about including a photo of the venue on the advertising.

## **3. Deciding on a venue**

### **The venue**

- Start thinking about the venue.
- What is the best location for your event? Is transport available? - try to book venues that are accessible by public transport. Don't forget to then tell people which bus or train they need to take.
- Find out what other groups are using your venue at the same time to avoid a clash of interest for example, you wouldn't want to hold a meeting for asylum seekers at the same time as the local BNP.
- What message will your choice of venue send out to delegates - is it formal / informal / community based?
- What price can you afford?
- When do you want to host the conference or meeting? Is this date flexible?
- Will you need to have exhibition boards / stands? How much room will this take up?
- Match your venue to the needs of your delegates and speakers / workshop leaders. For example, is there a stage? Is it wheelchair accessible and safe? How many people are likely to be using wheelchairs? Is there a loop system?
- Visit the venue before you book to check it meets your needs - check its acoustics - check its blackout if you are having OHP / power-point presentations. Do not rely on what the venue management says about accessibility.
- When booking a room or a venue remember that you will need set-up time - see how early you can get in. Also remember to leave time for clearing up at the end.
- Check out the toilets - how close are they to the meeting room? How many are there? Are there accessible toilets on the same floor as the meeting room? For an accessible toilets checklist please click on <http://www.cae.org.uk/pdf/venues/html-version/checkc.html>
- Is there separate space for a reception desk and refreshments / food?

- Make sure that you have enough rooms for your needs, and depending on the subject matter, think about providing a 'chill-out' room in case the conference subject matter gets overwhelming.
- Think about providing a crèche. Is there a room suitable for this? Will the venue provide and staff a crèche?
- For a venue checklist please click on <http://www.cae.org.uk/pdf/venues/html-version/checkb.html>

### **Transport and parking**

- Is there parking?
- Is there parking for people with disabilities? Is the surface suitable for people with mobility problems? For example, gravel can be a problem for wheelchair users.
- How far away is the parking from the venue? What kind of parking? Barrier systems requiring a card and on foot payment may be difficult for some if pay machines are not accessible.
- Think about offering to pay people's parking fees.
- Send out delegate lists beforehand so that people can see who else is going so that they can work out lift shares. Alternatively, offer contact to help with transport / lift shares. Ask people if they would be willing to provide lifts on reply forms.
- Think about the practicalities of people sharing lifts.
- Ask people beforehand if they want parking.
- Don't assume that people drive - try to make sure that your venue has links to bus routes and trains.
- In winter, make sure that you remove any snow on routes from the parking area to the venue.
- Try to arrange for there to be a drop-off area available in front of the building.
- Keeping your venue local reduces travelling costs and helps sustainability.
- Ensure that there is adequate car-parking and secure cycle parking.

- Think about providing transport for people with specific transport needs.

### **Access audit**

Compile a short list of preferred venues and conduct an access audit to ensure that all areas can be reached by people with a disability or limited mobility, and that other access needs can be catered for. Check that:

- Transport options for getting to the venue are realistic for people with disabilities.
- There are enough disabled parking spaces and that these are close to the venue.
- Wheelchair access to the venue is via the main entrance, or entrance being used by other delegates for example, ramp, automatic doors, and lift from car park. Avoid venues where wheelchair users have to use different entrances from other delegates.
- All conference areas listed on the programme can be reached independently by disabled people, for example, registration/helpdesk, auditorium, breakaway rooms, stage, displays, catering areas, crèche.
- Doorways are wide enough to get all sizes of wheelchair through.
- There are accessible toilets - these have wide doors, unobstructed sinks at the right height, large cubicles, grab bar and enough space to manoeuvre a wheelchair. For an accessible toilets checklist please click on <http://www.cae.org.uk/pdf/venues/html-version/checkc.html>
- Lectern height and audio-visual controls can be easily adjusted to meet the needs of different speakers.
- Audio loops are available and working (see the section on Loops).
- There are well-lit areas with adjustable lighting.
- There are obstacle free environments, for example, rooms free of furniture and other objects that cannot be easily seen.
- There are large, tactile directions from rooms, lifts, toilets - written in Braille or raised print.
- There is an exercise area for Guide dogs.

- Note that shingle driveways are an obstacle for wheelchair users.
- For a full venue checklist please click here <http://www.cae.org.uk/pdf/venues/html-version/checkb.html>

### **Visiting your venue**

- Check your venue beforehand.
- Talk to other people that have used your venue.
- The venue management may say that their venue is 'accessible' but might mean something different by this - you need to check.
- Where are the electrical power points? Will you need to take extension leads with you? If you need extension leads can you ensure they will not be a health and safety hazard?
- Check fire exits and procedures - this is especially important if you have delegates with mobility problems.

### **Toilets**

- Check for yourself that the toilets are accessible, don't rely on what that venue management tells you.
- Check which floor the toilets are on - if on a different floor, is there a lift large enough for a wheelchair? If the accessible toilets are a long way away, or there are not many of them, you will need to add extra time for breaks into your programme.
- For an accessible toilets checklist please click on <http://www.cae.org.uk/pdf/venues/html-version/checkc.html>

## Deciding on a venue

### Lifts

- Make sure that any lifts are close to the meeting rooms and that they are large enough to hold power wheelchair and / or scooter users.
- Make sure that there are enough lifts for the number of wheelchair users that you have at your meeting.

### What equipment will you need?

- What equipment will you need? Will the venue provide it or will you bring your own? For example, do you need to bring your own tea towels if you are using a kitchen?
- Always plan what you will do if your equipment fails - for example, make sure you have OHP slides of your PowerPoint presentation.

### People to help out on the day

- Plan who is going to do what on the day. You might need people to help out at the reception desk, meet and greet speakers, guide people into focus groups.
- Choose several helpers to be responsible for making sure that the needs of delegates with disabilities are met. Ensure helpers are briefed on equality issues and do not offend delegates.
- For an 'on the day' checklist please click here <http://www.cae.org.uk/pdf/venues/html-version/checkd.html>

## **4. Deciding on the programme for the event**

### **Planning**

- Think about how you are going to follow-up the meeting or conference when you are planning it.

### **Programme**

- Be clear about what you want to achieve - don't try to cram too much in or draw it out.
- Remember to give health and safety and other housekeeping information at the start - for example where the fire escapes are, where the toilets are.
- Ask people to switch off their mobile phones.
- Start the programme by setting the scene.
- Plan plenty of breaks - especially if your event is with the general public - but remember that breaks always take longer than you think. If you are using British Sign Language Interpreters, ask them how many breaks they need.
- Consider having flexible breaks where tea and coffee are available all day and people are free to get a drink or go to the loo when they want to.
- Make sure that there are plenty of opportunities to network - some good methods of doing this are by providing delegate lists, contact lists and badges. Have spare badges for unexpected delegates.
- Think about extending the booking so that people can hold their own meetings afterwards. Maybe organise a social event to coincide.
- Share your programme with the venue staff so that they know when people are coming, when the breaks are and when the food and refreshments are due.

## Deciding on the programme for the event

### Format

- Choose the right style of activity for your event by making it appropriate for the people attending.
- You don't have to stick to a formula - be a bit creative.
- Active learning is more memorable than listening to speakers.
- Make it fun!

### Timings and the rhythm of the day

- Time your programme to fit in with public transport if possible - when are the last buses / trains?
- As a guide, presentations should last no longer than 20 minutes; working groups should last about one hour.
- Think about the end of your event - don't leave the finish time too late. Very often you will find delegates will miss out on the plenary session at the end, as they want to leave early. Try to avoid this with your programming and make sure that you don't leave really important things for the end of your meeting.
- Daylong meetings and conferences have their own rhythms that you need to be aware of. There is usually a dip in concentration before food and a slump after eating. The session directly after lunch is often referred to as the 'graveyard slot' - energy levels are low after eating and speakers find it hard to keep the attention of their audience. Try to put something active or interactive in this slot to get people going again. If you are going to put on a speaker they will need to be very good.
- As a guide, if there are more than 40 people you need to allow 30 minutes for coffee.
- If people have travelled any distance they will need a drink when they arrive and an early lunch, if your event lasts all day.

### Speakers

- Make sure that your speakers can arrive in good time - they might want to try out the equipment / check out the room.

- Where you can, check out your speakers beforehand - make sure they are up to the job!
- Ask people to recommend good speakers that they have heard.
- Keynote speakers need to be relevant and add value to the day - brief them well beforehand so that they know who the audience is.
- Speakers may not be used to having an interpreter / lipspeaker present. Remind your speakers to speak clearly and normally but not too slowly.
- Avoid getting speakers who are just plugging their books!
- Check for the access needs of speakers with disabilities - you might need ramping, a reverse interpreter (someone who will interpret from sign language to the spoken word) or a guide for someone with a visual impairment.
- Tell speakers to make sure that their presentation meets our accessibility guidelines, for example, sans serif typeface etc. See Accessibility Matters 1 for further information.

### **Break-out groups**

- As a general rule, groups of 8 - 10 people are good for group working - this is the usual size of a focus group. Groups over 12 rarely come to a decision.
- Break-out groups should be held in separate rooms - this is particularly important for certain groups, such as older people, people with hearing and visual impairments and people with learning difficulties.
- Break-out groups need a genuine purpose - plan exactly what you want from the groups and make this clear so that groups don't get caught up in discussing what the task means.
- Depending on the nature of your event, it is sometimes a good idea to identify facilitators and scribes beforehand. They can then be briefed on the outcomes that you want from your work groups.
- How will people sign up for groups, or will groups be allocated?
- Be specific about what feedback you want and the time given to feeding back.

## Deciding on the programme for the event

- Summarise key feedback points so that these don't repeat.
- Use colour coding to make break-out groups easy to find. Alternatively, use pictures of the facilitators for each group so that delegates can identify them or have a map showing where each group is meeting.

### Facilitation

- If you want to capture specific information it is a good idea to pre-format flipcharts - this visual reminder can keep discussions on track.
- Brief facilitators - give them a clear briefing note and a short session at the start of the event or meeting - facilitators need to know the objectives of the event.
- It can be useful for groups to agree rules before they start their work.
- Everyone should introduce themselves - this is especially important for visually impaired people. Check that the induction loop is working and hearing impaired people are happy.
- People First have developed communications cards to help run a meeting. These coloured cards stand for 'yes', 'no' or 'stop' and 'go slower / please explain'. These can help facilitate all meetings, not just ones that involve people with learning difficulties.
- Ensure that only one person speaks at a time - this is especially important when using an interpreter and for people who are lip reading and trying to follow the conversation.

### After the event - feedback

- Think about recording the meeting and sending a tape round to delegates - this will be especially helpful to people with learning difficulties and visual impairments.

### Contingencies

- Have a plan up your sleeve for emergencies - for example, what will you do if your speaker does not turn up, or your delegates get trapped in a traffic jam?

## 5. Media

### Planning ahead

- Arrange a photocall - this is where you set up something that would make an interesting picture and invite photographers from your local paper to attend.
- Send out a news release about your event - this should be clear, concise and easy to read. Try to keep to one side of A4. Use double line spacing and large margins to make it easier to read. The most important information should be in the first paragraph with further information following in decreasing order of importance.
- Remember to include the Five Ws - Who, When, Why, What and Where.
- Agree who will be the contact for the media and put their contact details on the news release and photocall notice. That person must be able to take calls from the media once the press release has been sent out.

### Setting up a photocall

- Decide what you want to publicise and why.
- Work out the exact nature of the photocall (who will do what and when).
- Recruit the people to be in the photograph as soon as you can. Ensure that any access needs are met at the photocall otherwise you could be in the paper for a different reason!
- Find any props or other things you'll need for the photograph ( for example cake or banners).
- Include your organisation or groups branding, for example your logo.
- Set a time and exact location, 10.00 or 11.00 am will work well for both morning and evening papers. Make sure the participants get there well before you have invited photographers.
- Tell your communications unit or public relations officer about your event and ask them to write a photocall notice to send to picture editors and news desks. This must include Who, What, Where, When and Why and give full details of the location where the photocall will happen.

- Follow up the notice with a phone call to check they received it or would like to send a photographer. You will be surprised how often you are told the original release has been lost!
- On the day, have written details of the event with names and titles of anyone appearing in the photograph ready to hand out.

### On the day

- Set aside a quiet room for radio interviews if appropriate.

### After the event

- Don't be despondent if your local media don't turn up to your event - they are all under time pressure. It is always worth sending out a press release on the same day / following day with your own picture.

### Photography

- There are several reasons why you might want to take photos at your event:
  - As a record of the occasion for a post-conference report.
  - To send to the media after your event to get some publicity.
  - To provide delegates with a record if, for example, they have won an award.
  - For general publicity purposes.
- Book a photographer to take a picture of your event if appropriate.
- Always check with people that they are happy for you to take photographs and use them for publicity.
- If you are going to take your own photographs, remember to get some film for your camera / make sure that it is charged and has memory.
- If you are using your digital photos for publication, they will need to be 200 pixels or better.
- Avoid flash photography if possible, or warn people that it will be used so they can get out of the area if they need to.
- There are extra things that you need to bear in mind if you are taking pictures of children at your event. Follow your agency's policy on safe use of images.

- If you are taking pictures of people receiving an award, for example, arrange an attractive backdrop that is branded up with your logo.
- Try and arrange your event so that any photography does not take up too much time in your programme. For example, you might think of taking awards photos of winners during a presentation, but the runners-up at the end.
- Try and make your picture as interesting as possible - avoid boring line-up presentation pictures. Look for the human angle to interest the reader.

## **6. Meeting the needs of your audience**

### **Choosing the time and the day**

- Is your meeting at the right time of day for your delegates? For example, older people may not like being out in the dark. People with mental health problems may prefer meetings that do not start too early in the morning. Carers may find it easier to come to meetings between 10.00am and 3.00pm when alternative care arrangements can be made.
- Check out what else is happening on the day - there might be a clash. For example, don't hold a meeting for parents at the same time as the village school's play.
- In general, avoid meetings on Mondays and Fridays if possible.
- Make sure that your start and finish times give enough travelling time for your delegates.
- If you are planning a half-day conference, either morning or afternoon, think about whether your delegates will expect a lunch.
- Be very aware of who your delegates are and what their needs are in deciding how much time you should allow for meetings. Ensure that enough time is allowed so that they will not feel rushed.

### **Signs**

- Make sure that the venue is well sign-posted.
- Make sure that the signs are easy to read and meet accessibility standards.
- Make sure that the reception staff at your venue know that your meeting is taking place and that there are signs up in the reception area.
- Badge your staff so that delegates who need help can immediately spot someone to ask.
- Provide signs indicating where the meeting is taking place within the building.

- Make sure that the signs are large enough and clear enough to be read by people with visual impairments and that they are mounted at a comfortable height for people who use wheelchairs.
- You may need to provide tactile signs for visually impaired people, for example raised text or Braille signs.

### **Meeting and greeting**

- Arrange for someone to meet delegates with a visual impairment to make sure that they can find their way about. Explain the lay-out, identify the location of the exits and the toilets and ask them if you would like you to walk through to the meeting area with them.
- Ask people with visual impairments if they would like help in finding a seat in the meeting room.
- Have someone sit with the delegate with a visual impairment and describe the presentation to them, if this is what they would like.
- Many deafblind people will need to be guided (escorted) as an integral part of your meeting. Make sure that you check the deafblind person's needs, in consultation with them, for each meeting and make sure this is clear in the booking.
- Do not assume that all interpreters will act as escorts as well. Any guiding role needs to be agreed with the interpreter and booked in advance.

### **Sound**

- Check the acoustics of the room - will you need a PA system?
- With group-work it is ideal to have separate rooms for separate groups.
- You will need to have loops for each of your work groups.
- If you are using microphones you need to instruct your speakers in how to use them - this will make them more comfortable.
- If you are using roving microphones then you will need to have people to take them round.
- Always use the amplification system if one is provided.

### **Assistive technology / loops etc**

- Think 'loop' - a loop is useful for people who use hearing aids.
- Use a venue with a loop - check it when you arrive. If possible, also get the venue management to check it is working properly a couple of days before your public event.
- If your venue does not have a loop - borrow one.
- Allow at least 15 minutes to put up a portable loop and check it is working - ask a delegate with a hearing aid to check it for you.
- Some types of lights can interfere with a portable loop system - check this out well before your meeting.
- A big problem for understanding speech is background noise. Since many hearing aids amplify all sound, speech is often distorted or drowned out. The use of induction loops in public places reduces this background noise and lets hard of hearing people with a hearing aid hear the amplified speech.

See **Appendix 1 - More about Loops** for more information.

### **Speech-to-text**

- Speech-to-text is an important technological communication tool for people who are hard of hearing. Speech-to-text is the transcription of the spoken word onto a screen, for example, computer screen or large screen. Speech-to-text is especially useful for conferences, meetings or seminars.

### **The role of the Chair**

- The Chair should introduce themselves at the very start.
- Your Chair needs to be visible, but not necessarily formal.
- If you are having a big or controversial meeting, think about having a chairperson that is independent.
- Have cardboard name badges in front of people that are speaking.
- The importance of good manners can never be over stressed!
- The person who chairs the meeting must be patient and have a good understanding of the needs of the people and their interpreters / supporters.

## **INTRAN - Interpretation and Translation Services for Norfolk.**

- In Norfolk, more than 70 languages other than English are spoken. In addition, some 15,000 deaf people are living in the area. As part of our commitment and responsibility to provide equal services to all the people of Norfolk, the County Council has created INTRAN in partnership with the majority of other statutory agencies in the county.
- INTRAN is a multi-agency organisation that provides interpreters for those residents of Norfolk who depend on interpreters. If you have ever had to work with someone who has difficulty expressing themselves in spoken English, you will know that the experience can be confusing, stressful, and professionally inappropriate for both you and that person. Through INTRAN, you will be able to access the kind of interpreter you need quickly and efficiently.

There are three agencies working under INTRAN:

- Deaf ConneXions provides services for working with deaf people.
- Language Line provides telephone interpreting and translations services.
- CINTRA provides face-to-face interpreting and translations services.

These three agencies work under the INTRAN umbrella to ensure that you are able to communicate with anyone who cannot express themselves effectively in spoken English.

### **Making best use of the INTRAN service**

- We have a responsibility to make sure that all our clients and customers are given equal access to our services, whether or not they speak and understand the same language as us - and that is the aim behind the INTRAN project.
- The service is provided free to our clients and customers, but there is a subsidised cost per hour for us to use foreign language interpreters. BSL (British Sign Language) and lip speak interpreters are free to us when booked through the INTRAN project.

See the INTRAN website [www.lisupport.com/intran](http://www.lisupport.com/intran) for more information.

### **Using INTRAN at your meeting**

Ask Deaf ConneXions or CINTRA for a Norfolk based interpreter wherever possible. More local interpreters are being trained every year, and this will significantly cut the travelling expenses you will need to pay. However if you work in the west or extreme south of the county, Interpreters coming from Cambridge or Suffolk might be more cost effective for you.

### **Interpretation**

- Most interpreting for interviews or short meetings is consecutive interpreting. This means that each party speaks in short sections and waits for the interpretation and then for the reply and the interpretation of the reply. This means that the session will take longer than a direct one-language interaction. Plan ahead for a longer meeting.
- Use the professional interpretation service provided - INTRAN.
- Break your speeches up into short sections. If you deliver four or five sentences at a time the risk is high that parts of the message will be lost. (Remember that while you have thinking time during the interpreting sessions, the interpreter has to concentrate all of the time.)
- Remember that using interpreters will make your meeting longer, so allow extra time.
- Keep your meetings short as interpreting is hard work.
- With deaf signing, think about whether you want one or two signers - for long meetings you need two breaks every hour.
- For foreign language interpreting, remind speakers to speak slowly with gaps - here you need a break every hour.
- If you are having break-out groups, think about how many interpreters you will need to cover them.
- Interpreters are paid by the hour and could have other appointments to keep. This will be a problem if your event overruns - therefore book your interpreters for the morning / afternoon / all day instead.
- Set up the room with the interpreter in mind.
- Your deaf signer should be in front / next to the person chairing.

- Your foreign-language interpreter may need to sit next to person they are interpreting for - if this is the speaker, they will then sit at the front.
- Your lip speaker sits next to the person they are speaking to.
- Position your interpreter so that people will not be walking in front of them.
- Give interpreters presentations in advance.
- Explain technical terms and abbreviations to the interpreter beforehand.

For more information about interpretation see **Appendix 2 - Using an Interpreter**

### **Using translators wisely**

- Both Language Line and CINTRA offer text translation services which you might need if your meeting is to be attended by a delegate who speaks a language other than English and you need to provide agendas or written reports.
- Book translators directly through the agencies concerned. Don't ask an interpreter to translate written materials, the skills are not necessarily the same.
- Use the Text-to-Speech service when you have a short piece of information in another language you need translated. Just fax or e-mail the text and an interpreter will call you and translate it over the phone. This is cheaper than a written translation.
- When asked for document translations, check to see if this is the most appropriate provision. If the document is very long, which part of it does the client need most? Could just one section be translated?
- Would it be better to have an interpreter reading the information onto an audio tape for older people or those who have more difficulties understanding written text?
- If you are undertaking a translation, carefully check the language you need. If Chinese, do you need Mandarin or Cantonese Chinese?
- If you are producing a translation to be bound into documents, check which way the copy should read, left to right or right to left.

## Meeting the needs of your audience

- If you are translating a standard piece of information - such as a form or leaflet, keep a photocopy in case you are asked for the same document in the same language again. Date it, to make sure that it remains current.
- Mark any Braille copies with the name of your document / publication to make sure that you know what they are.

### Using a signer at your meeting

- Arrange your signer through Deaf ConneXions. Book early.
- Ensure the signer has access to information before undertaking the interpretation. These include the agenda, notes for meetings or the transcript for presentations. This is to make sure that the interpretation of unfamiliar words or technical jargon is correct.
- Due to the physical nature of signing for long periods signers will sign for approximately 30 to 60 minutes continuously. They then require a break or another signer to take over. This depends on the signer.
- Position of signer is important. The signer must be positioned as close to the audience as possible, or in a position where as many members of the audience can see them. The signer may need to be filmed and displayed on a large screen.
- Please do not position bright lights behind the signer. This will reduce visibility due to glare from the lighting.
- Make sure there is enough lighting on the signer so the audience or attendance members can see the signer's movements.
- It would be a good idea to have a contrasting background behind the signer. Contrast between the background and the skin tone of the signer may need to be increased to make sure they are visible.
- In some cases female signers or signers from the same cultural background as the hearing impaired person may need to be provided.
- If signers are booked to sign at a conference more than one may need to be booked. How about having a signer at each side of the stage?
- Also at conferences consider having a signer at the reception desk. People attending will be able to communicate and be received politely and positively.

- There is small delay between people speaking at the meeting and the signer signing. Make sure that you allow time for the signer to catch up before you ask for questions. If you don't do this, people who need the signer will always be at the end of queue for questions.

### **Lipspeaking**

- Lipspeakers convey a speaker's message to lipreaders accurately, without using their voice. They produce clearly the shape of words, the flow, rhythm and phrasing of natural speech and repeat the stress as used by the speaker. The lipspeaker also uses facial expression, natural gesture and fingerspelling (if requested) to aid the lipreader's understanding.
- Lipspeakers are used by deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people whose main means of communication with other people is through lip-reading and speech. These lipreaders usually have a good command of English. Hearing people may use a lipspeaker in order to communicate with deaf people.

### **When to use a lipspeaker**

Lipspeakers are needed in the following situations:

- when speakers themselves are difficult to lip-read
- if there is more than one speaker
- if speakers are not visible
- when the pace of delivery is too fast
- where speakers do not face the lipreader, for example, in Courts of Law
- if the speaker is not present, for example, in a telephone conversation or audio or video programme
- where the lighting is bad or there are other visual distractions such as a speaker who is moving

### **How to use a lipspeaker**

- Arrange your lipspeaker through Deaf ConneXions. Book early. See the "Translation and Interpretation" section of this guide.

## Meeting the needs of your audience

- Lipspeakers should be given background, in advance if possible, so that they can familiarise themselves with the subject matter and any specialist terminology that may be used.
- You should meet your lipspeaker some time before the assignment begins to discuss your communication needs and get used to their lip patterns. Discuss use of fingerspelling, how to interrupt the lipspeaker if you need to, seating arrangements, the best distance between lipreader and lipspeaker, and lighting. Confirm rest breaks and meal times.
- If more than one lipreader is using the lipspeaker, flexibility may be required so that everyone's needs are met.

### Introductions

- Explain the communication rules at the start - for example, that only one person at a time should be speaking.
- Explain what communications facilities are available.
- Check that everyone can hear you.
- In a small meeting, introduce your interpreter.

### Jargon

- Don't use abbreviations - if you must, explain what they mean.
- Test your presentation out on someone who doesn't know much about the subject.
- Say what you mean.
- Provide a glossary of terms for new members of a group.
- It is the role of the Chair to make sure that things are kept simple.

### Discussions / Plenary sessions

- Ask delegates to say who they are before they speak / ask a question. This is especially helpful for people with visual impairment.
- Repeat all questions asked by the audience before answering if a microphone is not available to the audience.

## **Presentations**

- Tailor your presentation to your audience - avoid using 'off the shelf' presentations.
- Think about whether you want people to have notes whilst you are speaking or whether you will hand them out afterwards.
- PowerPoint presentations need to have a good contrast between words and background.
- Presentations should not have words on patterned backgrounds.
- Less is more - don't use a lot of words on your slides - use simple bullet points.
- Remember that the larger the room the larger the font size you will need on your presentation. For advice on font styles see Accessibility Matters 1.
- Do not have too many slides.
- Allow enough time for the audience to read the overheads / PowerPoint slides.
- Do not just read out the content on the slides - however, always make sure that you refer to everything on your slides as you will be discriminating against people with visual impairments if you do not provide them with the same information as your other delegates.
- Ask speakers to provide you with a copy of their presentation well in advance so that you have time to put these into other formats if needed.
- At the beginning of the presentation, tell participants with disabilities that notes will be available in appropriate formats.
- Don't get carried away with animations on PowerPoint presentations.
- Provide written materials (handouts, overheads) disseminated at the meeting in a variety of formats - such as large print, audio cassette and computer disks.
- Discuss with each speaker the importance of developing a presentation that will be accessible to all participants.

## Meeting the needs of your audience

- Make sure that any films, slide shows or videos have captions / sub-titles.
- Remind speakers to face delegates when speaking, for example, do not speak whilst writing on a flipchart.

### **Presentations - flip chart and overhead**

- Presentations are a good way to get a lot of information across to a large number of people.
- Use pens that contrast well where possible.
- Avoid using different coloured pens on overheads.
- Avoid poor contrast on overheads.
- Use white wall or white board to project on to.
- The text should be well spaced. Do not cram text onto overheads or flip charts.
- Copy visual or verbal information onto handouts in various formats. Ask your audience / participants beforehand what format they may like the handouts in.
- Do not write something during a presentation and forget to read it out loud. Everything presented must be read out loud.
- Responses and questions from the audience need to be repeated by the presenter. This is to make sure that if members of the audience have a hearing impairment and are following the proceedings by lip reading or watching a signer they will not miss any comments or questions from audience members behind or to the side of them.
- Make sure curtains are closed during an overhead presentation.
- During an overhead presentation turn off the lights directly over the overhead projector and the screen. Keep the rest on over the audience. This will give the best lighting conditions. It will also let the audience follow the presentation by referring to their handouts.
- Remember good lighting for flip chart presentations.

- Flexibility is the key. There may be a member of the audience who does not know there is going to be a presentation. They may wish to move closer to see. It would be an idea to tell the audience at the beginning that there will be a presentation. If anyone wishes to move they are more than welcome to do so before or during the presentation.
- Please use plain language.
- Keep lights bright in the area where the presenter and the interpreter stand.

### **Chairs and layout**

- Make sure that your layout is appropriate for what you want to do.
- Check how comfortable the chairs are - especially if it is going to be a long meeting.
- Position chairs so that there is enough legroom.
- Theatre-style seating is good for presentations but not good for participation.
- Arrange tables and chairs so those people using wheelchairs can move around easily.
- Don't block walkways or doorways with things like coat racks or litterbins.
- A helpful rule to follow when determining room size is to plan for 20 - 30% additional space to make room for people with disabilities.
- Make sure that the aisles are wide enough for wheelchair access.
- Do not provide disability seating only in one area, as people should be able to sit where they choose and with whom they choose.
- If people who use wheelchairs are speaking, avoid using podiums. Have all the speakers sit at a table instead.
- Make sure that cables, wires and microphones are well secured and do not block traffic.
- The best seating for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing is in front of the speaker / interpreter.
- Seating should be away from heating and air-conditioning units, hallways and other noisy areas.

## Meeting the needs of your audience

- Arrange seats in a circle for smaller discussion groups.
- Arrange loop systems and interpreters for discussion groups. If you can't provide these for all groups, try to provide them for at least two groups so that people have some choice.
- For manual interpreting for a deafblind person, such as finger-spelling and hands-on sign language the interpreter and deafblind person should both be sitting on chairs of the same height.
- Keyboard interpreters should be provided with a proper typing chair - the table on which the interpreter and deafblind person's equipment is to be placed must be the correct height for typing and large enough to accommodate all equipment and papers.

### Lighting and heating

- Don't position your speakers in front of the window.
- Can you open windows / adjust the heating? If so, will this affect sound levels?
- If you need to darken the room check that the curtains fit
- If you are using a projector, can you project onto a neutral wall?
- Is it too dark to make notes?

### Food

- Check out your outside caterer with your local Environmental Health department.
- Tell caterers not to set out food and drinks whilst talks are going on in the same room.
- Think about using local produce and Fairtrade.
- Do not carry on your meeting over lunch or refreshment breaks. Neither interpreters nor people with sensory disabilities can work whilst eating or drinking.
- Don't leave food uncovered or in a warm room.
- If your meeting runs over or close to a mealtime, such as lunch, either provide food or make sure that food is available.

- Label vegetarian / vegan / gluten free food so that people can find it. Ensure that you provide food that is suitable for the delegates by considering any dietary requirements they have expressed, and by helpful and informative labelling.
- Have tables available so that wheelchair users and others can rest their plates.
- Plan catering support around the meeting based on the delegates attending. For example, for a meeting of people with visual impairments you will need to have someone there to describe food to delegates.
- Don't serve hot drinks in plastic cups as these are difficult for some people to hold. Provide straws and mugs as alternatives.
- Plan your buffet so that people can access it from both ends - this stops a long queue forming.
- Make sure that the layout for any buffet is accessible to wheelchair users.
- Remember that some people do not drink tea or coffee - always make water available throughout your meeting.

### **Crèche**

- Think about providing a crèche.

## **7. After your event**

- Contact your speakers to thank them for their contribution.
- Write up your report / feedback and circulate to all delegates and speakers. Remember that this might need to be produced in alternative formats.
- Sometimes you will need to feedback more than once to your delegates to keep them informed of the progress of your project.
- Evaluate your event. Evaluation forms should have been circulated on the day to see how successful your event was at meeting its aims.
- Send photos / news release about your event to the media, if appropriate.

## Appendix 1 - More about Loops

### Loops are helpful for people who use hearing aids:

- The loop uses a magnetic field, which is generated within a wire. The loop area can be a complete room; part of it such as a table or it can be small enough to wear around the neck.
- The hearing-impaired person will hear the voice of the person speaking into the microphone, which is attached to the loop via an amplifier. The positioning of the microphone is important. The microphone can pick up magnetic fields coming from computer monitors and background noise if the microphone is in the wrong place. The microphone should be in a position where it will pick up the speaker's voice while they are sitting in their normal position. Try not to place it where it will pick up magnetic or background noise. If the speaker has to move to be closer to the microphone this is defeating the idea of having the loop.
- Also available are mobile or personal loops. These hang around a person's neck. These loops have a microphone, which is plugged into an amplifier such as an induction loop amplifier or personal stereo. It is then connected to the personal loop which can be used during private or confidential meetings or for face to face conversation between a hearing impaired person and someone who is not.
- A hearing aid usually has a 3 position switch marked 'O', 'T' and 'M'.
  - 'O' stands for Off.
  - 'T' stands for Telecoil - that's the setting to use with an induction loop.
  - 'M' stands for Microphone - which is the normal user setting.
- When an induction room loop has been set up properly the user should be able to switch to the "T" position and get a good sound level without changing their volume setting too much.
- If the hearing aid user is able to hear a hum or other background noise in a room without an induction room loop, when their hearing aid is switched to the "T" position, this will not be eliminated after the fitting of the induction room loop. This background noise is caused by magnetic fields coming from things like fluorescent lighting, computers and televisions.

## Appendix 1

- You can hire a magnetic field strength tester, which will let you measure with a meter the strength of background noise and listen to what it sounds like on a headset. It is important to have all electrical equipment switched on when checking for background magnetic noise.
- Hearing aid users arriving at a venue where they are expecting to use an induction loop have a justifiable expectation that the system should work properly.
- Care should be taken when choosing a loop. The area inside the wire is the area in which a person with a hearing aid with a “T” switch is able to hear.
- This magnetic area may extend outwards of the wire up to 50% of the width of the room. This may be considered as an overspill area. Also loops which are placed in rooms on one floor may overspill into those on the floor above or below, which have a loop fitted.
- If two room loops are placed in rooms next door to each other it is possible for the signals to get crossed. The person in one room may be able to hear the conversation in the next room. In private interview situations this is not acceptable. As a rule of thumb you should have at least one room of similar size between loops.
- It is important to consider the structure of the room. The magnetic field can be affected and dramatically weakened by things like steel girders and metal structural supports within floors, ceilings and walls.
- Also depending on the situation one loop may be of better use than another.
- Deaf awareness training is advisable for all staff who are in contact with deaf or hard of hearing people.

## Appendix 2 - Using an interpreter

- A professional interpreter is neutral and is not expected to take the part of the interviewer or the interviewee. Do not expect the interpreter to do the job for you. (Example: “Try to find out what he thinks he has come here for.”). Use words like ‘I’ and ‘you’ as if you were talking directly to the person.
- Because the interpreter is neutral it is important for him or her to be placed between the two parties. This can pose a problem if an interview room is in fact a counter with a seat on each side. Consider planning the interview for a room where it is possible for the interpreter to sit in a ‘neutral’ position (for example on the third side of a table).
- Consider the sensitivities of the subject matter before asking for an interpreter. For example, it may be that a male or female interpreter is needed. Remember that where you may have no particular sensitivity about a subject, someone else might.
- Do not assume that you know which language to ask for. If at all possible ask the person who will be involved or someone close to them. You may need to take advice. The English name for a language is not always the name which people use for their language. (For example Albanian is called ‘Shqip’ in Albanian; Bengali is often called ‘Bangla’.)
- Before you start the interview or meeting allow the interpreter a few minutes to explain to both parties who they are and how they will proceed. Make it clear to the interpreter that you are happy for him or her to intervene if the communication is becoming inefficient (for example if either party is trying to say too much at a time).

## **8. Making this Guide accessible**

If you need this Guide in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact:

Communications Unit  
Chief Executive's Department  
Norfolk County Council  
County Hall  
Martineau Lane  
Norwich  
NR1 2DH  
Telephone: 01603 222844

and we will do our best to help.

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**Norfolk Guidelines**  
**on making public events accessible**