# Top tips for accessible meetings, workshops and events

## Virtual

* Provide any materials for the session at least 48 hours in advance to allow participants time to read and prepare. Some participants may prefer Word documents to PowerPoint presentations, as the former works better with access technologies. Consider offering both options.
* Ask participants to introduce themselves on the call with the chair indicating the person’s name as a cue for the introduction.
* During the session, individuals should introduce themselves before speaking. This is especially important if the participants do not know each other well and cannot recognise their voices.
* Ask participants to avoid using the chat function as this can be distracting for screen reader users.
* Some participants may be unable to use the raise the hand function. Ask participants to raise their hand on camera or use the hand function. At the end go round the group and check there is nothing to add.
* If a participant has shared that they have access requirements ahead of the session that you are unsure about, don’t be afraid to contact them prior to the session for clarification.
* When there is background noise or interference, ask all participants to mute themselves when they are not speaking.
* When providing a presentation / sharing a document on the screen, ensure all the information is read out and that you describe any visual information such as diagrams or graphics.
* Ensure documents and presentations being shared are fully accessible.
* If you set up break out rooms, alert participants that they are going into a breakout room and that they will be automatically moved in the next 10 seconds etc. Ensure the person facilitating the breakout session introduces everyone within the breakout room.

## Face to face

### Planning before:

* Provide any materials for the session at least 48 hours in advance to allow participants time to read and prepare. Some participants may prefer Word documents to PowerPoint presentations, as the former works better with access technologies. Consider offering both options.
* Where participants have to travel to a meeting location via public transport consider the timings of the meeting and whether participants may need to make special arrangements.
* Ensure that the venue location is shared in a format that is accessible over and above a google map location.  Include an address as well as a description of how to access the building / location and whether someone will be at the entrance to meet them.

A clear description of the route and verbal cues such as next door to a cafe or a zebra crossing is helpful as well as whether there are steps up the building, automated doors, code entry systems etc.

* Include the attendance of support workers etc. when considering meeting / event / workshop numbers.
* If any participants have a Guide dog, ensure there is adequate space and spend facilities etc. available and make these known to participants prior to the meeting.
* Participants may wish to bring assistive technology with them e.g., portable video magnifiers, laptops, sensory aids, hearing aids – to name a few. Ensure there is access to power for laptops etc. and participants are informed of their location on the day.
* If a participant has shared that they have access requirements ahead of the meeting that you are unsure about, don’t be afraid to contact them prior to the session for clarification.
* Ensure any facilities are fully accessible, including venue access, bathroom, and kitchen facilities.

### On the day:

* Make sure someone is outside the building at all entrances to greet participants.
* Make sure someone is available to guide participants to their place, explaining surroundings. Anyone supporting on the day and providing specific functions e.g., sight guiding, supporting with IT etc. should be introduced.
* Inform participants of key facilities including the number of accessible toilets, kitchen facilities, fire exits as well as what to do in case of a fire and whether there is planned fire bell during the session.
* Inform participants how the session will run and any ground rules e.g., confidentiality.
* Make participants aware of assistive technology that is available at a set location e.g., hearing loops and other technical/communication aids.
* When planning an activity such as an icebreaker, consider how much participants really need to move around the room, avoid the reliance on pens and paper, allow for those who might prefer to take notes using laptops, tablets, voice memos.

Consider that some participants might be present with a support worker etc. to help with note taking or sighted guiding.

* Ensure participants know where the catering is located, what it is and if they can help themselves or if they need assistance.  Offer guiding assistance and ensure any food labels are accessible e.g., at least 14pt Arial.
* Ensure there are sufficient breaks to enable participants to use the facilities, and where appropriate offer guiding. Give participants a 15 minute warning before starting a session again after lunch.
* Guide dogs need to spend too. If the participant is unfamiliar with the location, the participant and the guide dog will need to be guided to the location.
* There may be participants who need to leave the session suddenly due to disability related reasons. Ensure a clear, safe and known exit is available at all times.
* If you are planning to use evaluation forms, ensure these are in an accessible format. Either provide a copy before the session, provide assistance to complete during the session or provide an option for participants to return the evaluation form later.
* Document ends.