

## **Event Planning – Access Checklist**

### **Issues which may impact on people with disabilities.**

The following is a brief checklist for use when planning an event. Whilst some points may not apply to every event, it provides a general brief as a starting point. From assessing the physical accessibility of an event, to producing accessible information for the event, it is important to include accessibility costs within the initial budget.

Remember that access requirements are not solely for wheelchair users and should be audited for people with hearing and visual impairments and people with learning disabilities.

If you are uncertain or require further guidance, contact the Disability Unit, OFMDFM on (02890 5) 20086.

### **Venue – general points**

- Disabled access should be made from the front entrance of the venue via a ramp or wheelchair-accessible lift. Access from a rear door is unacceptable.
- Ensure the venue has a loop hearing system. This increases the volume and clarity of speakers for people with hearing impairments who use a hearing device. It is possible to hire loop systems where they might not be available for example in older buildings.
- Ensure the room is laid out to include capacity for wheelchair users.
- The layout of the room should accommodate people with physical, visual and hearing disabilities.
- Ensure the venue has an appropriate number of parking spaces for people with disabilities; and check the route from these parking spaces to the front door is free from obstacles.
- The venue should have lift access for all floors or mezzanines.

- Check whether the venue staff have received disability awareness training. If not, it may be worth involving hotel staff in briefings before the event.
- Check there are accessible toilets on the same level as the event.

## **Sign language**

Interpreters should be booked well in advance of the event and should include both British Sign Language (BSL) and Irish Sign Language (ISL). This can be arranged through RNID.

## **Speedtext**

A Speedtext operator provides support for people who are deaf or hearing impaired, but who are unable to communicate through sign language. The operator will type information onto a computer screen and again this can be arranged via RNID.

## **Publicity**

When issuing publicity for events, in addition to asking invitees to state any particular requirements on the RSVP, consideration should be given to the information being produced in the appropriate accessible format (Braille, large print etc).

## **Public transport/car parking**

Avoid a 9am start and allow a later start for people travelling on public transport. This allows some people with disabilities to have greater flexibility in relation to travel arrangements.

Check the availability and distance to the nearest car parking. Also ensure the venue makes provision for multiple 'set-downs' at the front entrance.

## **Catering / dietary requirements**

In addition to special dietary requirements, some people may require assistance when eating and drinking.

## **Delegate packs / materials**

Whenever possible, information should be available in accessible formats. At design stage, identify the potential audience for the publication and thus make allowances so the appropriate design costs are included in the budget. Various organisations (RNID, RNIB) have produced clear guidance on font size, contrasting colours, background tints etc. to assist with this process. It is recommended that you consult the branch normally responsible for publications in your department who will generally have this guidance available.

## **Communication with people who are deaf or hearing impaired**

Various communication methods exist to assist with communication with people who have sensory impairments. For example email; Textphone, where text is typed on a dedicated machine and sent/received via telephone line; and BT's Textdirect or RNID's Typetalk, in which a BT operator liaises between you and the person who has a sensory impairment.

## **Health and safety / risk assessment**

All emergency evacuation routes and procedures should be vetted for use by people with disabilities.

## **Pre-event**

- Give speakers notes and running order to the sign language interpreters before the event.
- Set up presentations the night before and ensure all displays are clearly visible from the rear of the venue.

- Confirm final numbers for catering and any special dietary requirements.

### **Event checklist- further detail**

- Ensure the induction loop system is working.
- Ensure trailing leads are taped to the floor.
- Brand room/venue with accessible signage.
- Check room layout for navigation by people with physical and sensory disabilities.
- Make staff available for assistance during meal and break times.
- Include accessible facilities in the initial 'housekeeping' announcement.
- Monitor air conditioning and heating levels.
- Allow regular 'comfort' breaks during the event.
- Ensure sign language interpreters are not positioned in front of a direct light source.
- Brief all hotel/venue staff to ensure all attendees are treated with dignity and respect.