

Transform Your Training



Creating Accessible Training

A practical guide to creating training sessions that are accessible to all your delegates



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Updates

This document will be updated on a regular basis. To download the most up to date version of this document, please join our Transform Your Training community at [Mighty Networks](#). It's free to join. From there, you will be able to download the most recent version of the document.

Our Mighty Networks group is a collective of like-minded trainers and facilitators across multiple sectors. We share resources, run regular CPD sessions, and much more. Access to some resources may become available on a subscription basis in the future, however, the Creating Accessible Training guide will always be free to access.

We welcome feedback on the guide, including highlighting of errors, or suggestions for what else you would like to see included. Please do contact us with your feedback:

- Within our Transform Your Training community on Mighty Networks
- By emailing Transform Your Training at admin@transformyourtraining.org
- On social media @TayeTraining

Version	Date of Update
2.1	September 2024

About Transform Your Training

Our Mission

We are passionate about the transformative power of training, promoting equity of learning through expert, tailored, engaging and values-led training solutions.

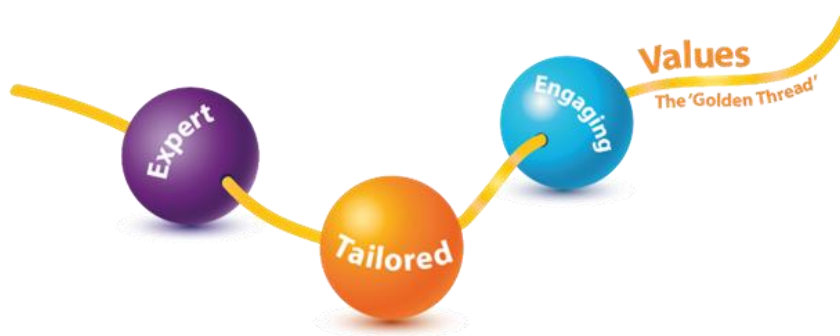
Our Vision

Our vision is to revolutionise frontline services, through collaboration and community, to create a national standard of high-quality values-led training.

Our Methodology

We know our methodology is special. On their own, each step makes a difference; but collectively, they are game changers. Find out more at our website

www.transformyourtraining.org



Creating Accessible Training

At Transform Your Training, we believe that everyone deserves high-quality training. That means that we are committed to ensuring that all our training is developed with accessibility in mind for our delegates and facilitators.

We are committed to implementing the social model of disability across all our work. This concept moves us towards understanding disability not as an individual problem, but as a social one.

This pack is aimed at anyone who provides training, in person or live online.

What Are Access Needs?

In the context of training, access needs refer to the specific things that individuals require to take a full and equal part in the training. Accessibility is a broader term that refers to making training accessible to people who have access needs.

Accessibility is most often used to refer to the access needs of disabled people, but it's much more than that.

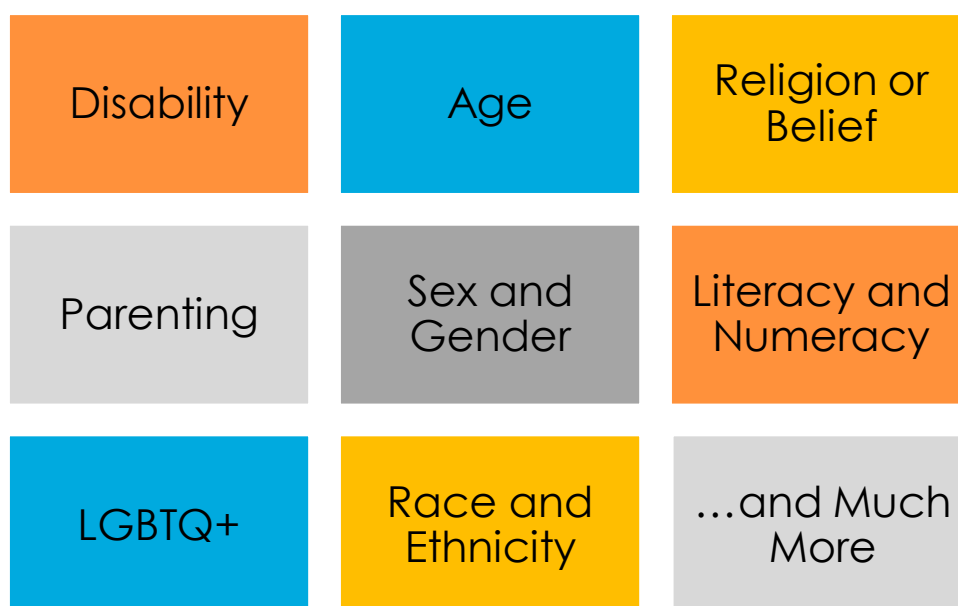
Access needs are sometimes called 'special needs' or 'additional needs'. This suggests that these are an added extra, but access should be viewed as a fundamental human right.

We all have access needs, and we all deserve to have our needs respected. Remember, these are **needs** not wants; they are not optional.

Accessibility must be an active choice – something we work towards as individuals, as organisations, and as a wider society. When it comes to accessibility, there is no neutral position – if we choose to do nothing, we are in effect choosing to deny access.

The good news is that accessibility doesn't have to be difficult. There are lots of simple ways that you can make your training accessible, without additional cost or significant additional work.

People may have access needs due to:



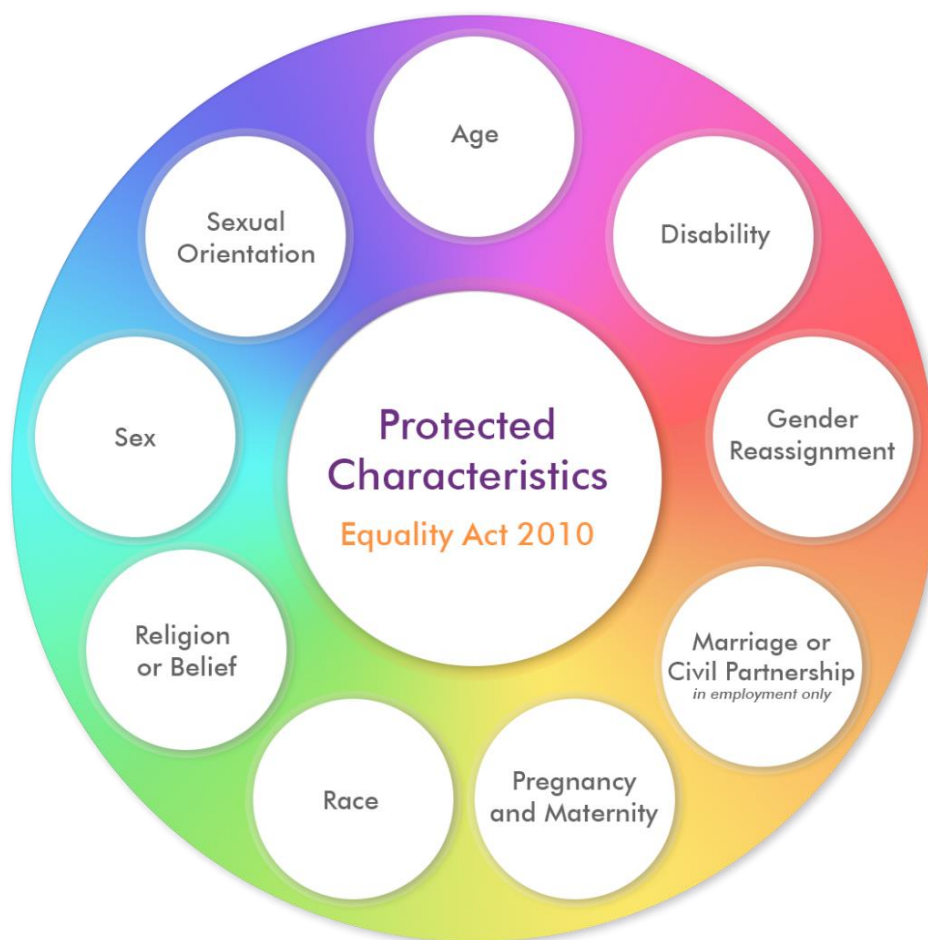
Some of these factors might look familiar. That's because they reflect the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.

In this guide, we are focussing on disability access. We hope that we will be able to produce additional resources in the future to address other areas of accessibility.

Accessibility and the Law

Accessibility means ensuring that everyone can take part in training, that everyone receives the same high-quality experience and learning, and ensuring that no one is treated as an afterthought.

The Equality Act 2010 protects people from discrimination, based on nine protected characteristics.



Would you say, "my training is not for disabled people"? We are sure you would not! Yet, if we choose not to make changes to ensure that everyone can access our training, we are saying loud and clear, "this is not for you".

If we do not make our training accessible – and, therefore, exclude some people from attending or from getting the same high-quality experience – we are discriminating and may be breaking the law.

Accessibility is important. It's the right thing to do, and it's also the law.

The Social Model of Disability

There are two main ways of thinking about and understanding disability:

The Medical Model of Disability:

This way of understanding disability says that people are disabled because of their impairments. In other words, there is something 'wrong' with the person's body, and this is the reason that they struggle to participate fully in society.

The model is widely condemned by disability rights groups because of the negative impact it has on disabled people.

It is important to understand that the Medical Model is not about the way that healthcare is delivered, but rather it is a way of understanding disability. The Medical Model is widely used, but it is not the *only* way of understanding disability.

The Social Model of Disability:

This way of understanding disability says that people are disabled by society, not their impairments.

It is a tool for building a more accessible and equitable society that values disabled people, that was developed in the 70s and 80s by disabled people.

The core of the Social Model is the separation of 'impairments' and 'disability'.

Impairment = the individual problems that might prevent a person doing something

Disability = the additional disadvantage bestowed by society

Impairments are still important under the Social Model. They should not be ignored, and equally, should not be viewed as something to 'fix' or 'overcome'.



(NDACA, 2019)

Taye is committed to implementing the Social Model throughout our organisation and in all our training. We believe that this is most effective way of ensuring that the needs of disabled people are met.

When we develop training, and especially when we are thinking about adaptations to meet access needs, it's important to keep the Social Model in mind. This model helps us to take a collaborative approach to meeting needs, focussing on ensuring access, rather than seeing impairments as a problem to be fixed.

Accessibility Starts Before Training

Everyone has different access needs. It means that creating a training session that is universally accessible is impossible, since Person A might have needs that create a barrier for Person B. We may also have limitations that are outside of our control – including our own access needs – which mean we are not able to meet the needs of every delegate.

Because of this, we need to ensure that we are starting from a position of understanding what good accessibility means, so that we can be flexible, responsive, and willing to do the work required to meet the needs of delegates.

As trainers and facilitators, we can build flexible sessions that consider the most common access needs, in order to adapt to the needs of individual delegates.

We can also work to educate ourselves, keep up to date, and listen to those groups of people whose access needs tend to be overlooked. This gives us a solid foundation for building accessible training.

Information and Accessibility

One of the most powerful tools we have for access is information. Because we can't make every session accessible to every individual, we need to provide information so that people can choose for themselves whether the session is right for them and feel confident reaching out to training providers for support.

Ensure that accessibility information is provided at the time of booking, and that you provide more than one way of contacting you or your organisation to discuss access needs.

You should aim to provide information about:

- Transport to the venue
 - Public transport links
 - Parking
- The venue
 - How to get from public transport stops or car parks to the venue
 - Accessing the venue – do they need to report to the reception?
 - Getting around the venue
 - Are there lifts?
 - What's the route from the reception to the training room?
 - Access inside the venue
 - Are there accessible toilets? How close are they to the training room? What facilities do they have?
 - Is there a kitchen delegates can use?
 - Are there any barriers to access like uneven floors or bright lights?
 - Inside the training room
 - What kind of seating is available?
 - Can lights be dimmed?
 - Is there plenty of space to move around and for social distancing?
- The online platform
 - What platform will you be using?
 - Do delegates need a laptop? Will a smartphone or tablet do?
 - Do delegates need to download anything?
- The structure of the session

- Is the session lecture-based or discussion-based?
- What kinds of activities will you be doing?
- Will there be audio and visual components?
- How many breaks will there be, and how long are they?
- What accessibility tools do you use as standard?
 - Do your videos and online platform have closed captions?
 - Do you provide handouts and other written materials in advance?
 - Do you have coloured overlays available?
 - Can you provide large-print handouts?
 - Do you provide transcripts of audio and visual components?

How Should Information Be Provided?

It's good practice to provide information in a range of formats to meet a range of needs. When you are developing materials, consider the potential needs of delegates and aim to meet the most common access needs. This will vary depending on who you deliver training to.

Consider including:

- Maps and building layouts
- Videos
- Audio
- Written information
- Diagrams and images

You can combine many of these. For example, a video with a voiceover and audio description, subtitles, and a transcript will cover the needs of people who prefer visual or audio information, and those who would rather read information.

It is also good practice to consider how you will give this information to delegates. Try to keep things simple and avoid overloading people with too much information.

That might sound like a lot. In practice, it is something that can typically be done once and re-used as needed.

Checklist – Information

Have you provided information about:

Face-To-Face

- Travel to and from the venue
- Getting into the venue
- The venue layout and how to get around
- Any barriers to access in the venue
- Details of access features, like accessible toilets, lifts, and hearing induction loops

Live Online

- The online platform you will be using
- Tech requirements

All Training

- The general structure of the session – is it lecture style or discussion-based?
What kind of exercises will you be doing?
- What information you will provide in advance, such as transcripts and handouts
- What specific accessibility tools you use as standard, e.g. closed captions
- How to contact you to discuss access needs

Language

Using clear language is an important part of building accessible training.

Avoid using jargon, abbreviations, figures of speech, and jokes; instead, use simple, clear language. Say what you mean and mean what you say.

This is helpful for everyone, but especially for people with limited literacy, learning difficulties, and English as a second language, as well as neurodivergent people.

It's also important to be aware of the language we use to talk about disability. Avoid using euphemisms like 'differently abled' or 'special needs'. These are widely considered patronising or offensive by disabled people. Just say 'disabled'!

Remember, though, that individuals may have a wider range of preferences; so, if you're unsure, ask the individual what they prefer.

The language of inclusion changes as we find new ways to express our understanding of disability. To keep up to date you can:

- Read books, blogs, and articles by disabled people
- Consume media, like film and TV made by disabled people
- Follow disabled activists and educators on social media
- Cultivate diverse networks of friends and colleagues that include disabled people

This will allow you to learn naturally, hearing new language used in context by disabled people.

Checklist – Language

- Have you ensured your session and materials use plain English?
- Have you defined any unfamiliar language, jargon, and abbreviations?
- Have you checked with the individual what language they prefer when you are referring to them?

Finding Out Delegates' Needs

The best way to find out what your delegates' access needs are is to ask them. However, for many people the fear of getting a bad reaction prevents them from even asking about access needs. Setting out your commitments clearly can help people to feel safe reaching out to you.

- Make a clear commitment to accessibility, and publicise it on your website, social media, and internally in your organisation
- Explain how you will work with individuals to meet their needs. Be clear that you will ask delegates what they need
- Publish your Equality Diversity and Inclusion and Accessibility Policies
- Include people from affected groups in shaping your policies and practice
- Give information in the course description about the venue, course structure, and anything you include as standard, such as closed captions or notes.
- If you have access needs or relevant lived experience yourself, consider sharing this if you feel safe doing so

Once you have created a safe and supportive space for delegates to talk about their access needs, your next step should be to initiate the conversation.

- **Ask delegates to contact you to discuss how you can meet their needs.** Repeat this on booking, with joining instructions, and on the day. Offer multiple methods for delegates to contact you, such as email, phone, or video call, and if possible, in-person meetings. You should work with the individual delegate to find the best way to meet their needs. This might require some creative thinking!
- **Listen carefully and let the delegate lead the conversation.** Remember that many people will have had previous poor experiences when asking for adjustments and may find the process upsetting. Take your time and offer encouragement and empathy.
- **Avoid making assumptions about what someone needs based on their impairments.** Remember that delegates are the experts in their own experiences and needs.
- **Be aware** of your own limitations as well as any limitations that are outside your control. Be open and honest about these, and do not promise something you cannot provide.
- **Be flexible and open to exploring creative solutions.** Even if you are not able to make the requested adjustments, you may be able to meet the delegate's needs in other ways.

Example:

Jane wants to attend a course, but upon contacting the provider she finds that it will be held in a venue that is a 15-minute walk from the nearest bus stop. Jane has an energy-limiting impairment that causes intense pain and fatigue, and while she can walk this distance, she cannot do the walk, attend a day's training, and then get home safely.

The provider suggests that they pay for a taxi to and from the venue and asks Jane whether a comfy chair would make the day easier for her. She loves this idea, and the provider brings an armchair from reception into the training room for Jane to sit in.

Although the day is still tiring, Jane is able to take full part in the session.

(Based on a real experience)

Checklist – Finding Out Delegates' Needs

Have you:

- Made a clear, public commitment to accessibility
- Explained clearly how you will work with delegates to meet their needs
- Made it clear that you are flexible and value creative solutions
- Provided a range of options for delegates to discuss access needs (phone, video call, email, etc)

What if I Cannot Meet a Delegate's Needs?

You will not always be able to meet a person's access needs. This may be due to cost, your own limitations, conflicting needs with another delegate, or things outside of your control, like a client having an inaccessible venue.

If this happens:

- **Be flexible** and work with them. There may be a creative or unusual way of meeting their needs
- **Be transparent and honest.** Tell the person why you are not able to meet their needs
- **Be empathetic.** A person with significant access needs likely experiences barriers on a regular basis. They might get upset or angry
- **Offer alternatives** where possible
- Have a **clear accessibility policy** and make it easily available

Checklist – What if I Cannot Meet a Delegate's Needs?

Have you:

- Spoken to the delegate and discussed the problem
- Considered creative solutions, including addressing any barriers that could reasonably be removed
- Been transparent and honest about why you are not able to meet their needs
- Offered an alternative
- Made your policy available to them

Your Venue

It is not always easy to find an accessible venue, and this may not always be within your control as an individual trainer. However, where you have control over your choice of venue, prioritising accessibility should be a key part of your selection.

Regardless of your choice of venue, you should provide clear information to delegates at the time of booking, so that they can make an informed decision about whether they can attend.

Getting to the Venue

Think about how delegates will get to the venue. If they will be using public transport, consider how far away transport links are, and what the route from the station or bus stop is like. Tell delegates about any obstacles like roadworks, uneven ground, blocked pavements, and steps.

If delegates will be driving, is there parking available? How close is it to the venue? Is there a charge, and how is it payable? Remember that not everyone has a smart phone or card for payment.

Provide: Information about any barriers, a map, photos of the outside of the building and the entrances, a video showing the route from the bus stop and car park.

“The building is 300 metres from a bus stop served by the number 23 and 56 routes. The route from the bus stop is up a steep hill. There is one road to cross, with a dropped curb on both sides. The car park is 40 metres from the venue. 3 spaces are reserved for blue badge holders. Parking is free.”

Checklist – Getting to the Venue

- Provide a map showing venue location, and public transport and parking locations
- The venue is on the _____ bus/tram routes. The bus/tram stop is around [distance] from the venue
- The route from the bus/tram stop has the following potential obstacles:
- The nearest station is _____. The station is [distance] from the venue
- If you are taking a taxi from the station, _____ and _____ are the local taxi firms we recommend
- The car park is [distance] from the venue, and there the charge is X, payable using cash/card/app

- Brief descriptions of routes from bus/tram/station/car park, including any obstacles

Accessing the Venue

Think about how delegates will get into the venue. Does everyone enter through the same door or is there a separate accessible entrance? Are there steps, uneven floors, or fiddly door systems? Is everything signposted?

Do delegates need to report to reception or sign in? Tell them about the process. Is there a hearing induction loop at the reception?

What does the route from the entrance to the training room, and spaces such as the toilets and kitchen look like?

Are there lifts? If so, how close are they to the entrance and training room? How large are they? Do they have audio cues, such as announcing the floor?

Provide: A map of the route from the entrance to the training room, photos, and a video.

Example:

On arrival, please follow the signs to reception where you will be asked to sign in. Tell the receptionist the name of the course you are attending. There is no hearing induction loop. The building is accessed via a ramp, or four (4) steps. The door is automatic and opens inwards. There is a lift to the second floor, where the course will take place. The lift has audio cues to announce arrival, doors opening, and floor number. The route to the training room is signposted.

Checklist – Accessing the Venue

- Provide photo of entrance
- Provide map of route from entrance to reception, reception to training room, and location of kitchen, toilets, and other amenities
- Describe the entrance, including any special instructions for how to access the building
- Tell delegates what to do when they arrive
- Tell delegates their options for access, e.g. where the stairs and lifts are
- Give information about any access features
- Give information about any possible obstacles

Inside the Venue

Consider the training space itself. How large is the training room? Is there space for someone using mobility aids to move around freely? Can tables and chairs be moved easily? Is there a variety of seating available? What about lighting and audio – are there speakers, a TV screen, or a projector?

How will you make yourself heard? Will you be using a microphone? If the room is large or you are soft-spoken, it may be beneficial to use a microphone to ensure that everyone can hear you. Additionally, some software allows you to generate live subtitles and display them on your projector screen along with your slides.

Are toilets accessible? How close is the toilet to the training room? Check that the accessible toilet is not being used as a storage room!

Is the kitchen accessible? Is there a fridge and microwave available?

Provide: Photos and video of each space.

Example:

The training room has fluorescent lighting which cannot be dimmed. There is no hearing induction loop in this room. The venue is near a busy road, and road noise can be heard.

Chairs and tables can be moved to accommodate the needs of delegates. Chairs are hard plastic with no armrests. An alternative chair can be provided upon request.

There is an accessible toilet 20 metres from the training room, which includes a large room with turning space for wheelchair users, and a toilet with moveable grab rails on both sides. Non-accessible toilets are gender-neutral, with each cubicle having a toilet, sink, and hand dryer. Menstrual products are available in all toilets.

Delegates will not have access to a kitchen; however, tea and coffee-making facilities are available in the training room.

Checklist – Inside the Venue

- Describe the size of the room and how much space there is for moving around

- Describe the available seating
- Describe lighting and whether it can be dimmed
- Describe the options for audio and video
- Tell delegates if the facilitator will be using a microphone
- Tell delegates if live subtitles will be used
- Describe any potential obstacles or sensory impacts
- The toilets are [distance] from the training room
 - o An accessible toilet is available at the same location. The accessible toilet is [size] with [describe amenities]
 - o Provide photo
 - o Non-accessible toilets are male/female/neutral with [describe amenities]
- The kitchen is [distance] from the training room and contains [describe amenities]
 - o Provide photo or description of how much space there is
- Tea and coffee making facilities will be available. These include a kettle/coffee machine/hot water urn [describe]

Refreshments

If refreshments will be provided, consider dietary needs. Ensure you ask delegates about their needs and take these seriously. Ensure all delegates will have something they can safely eat and drink.

If you are not providing refreshments, ensure delegates are aware of this. Are there any places to buy food nearby and are they accessible? How long will the lunch break be?

Provide: Information about what will be provided, where food can be accessed, and what delegates should bring with them.

Light refreshments will be provided and will include tea, coffee, orange juice, biscuits, and crisps. Soy milk and decaffeinated coffee are provided. Lunch is not provided. The lunch break will be 30 minutes. We recommend bringing a packed lunch, as local options for buying food are limited.

Checklist – Refreshments

Are refreshments provided? If so:

- List available drinks

- List available food
- List which dietary restrictions are catered for

Will lunch be provided? If so:

- State how long lunch break will be
- List what will be supplied
- List which dietary restrictions are catered for
- Provide information for where delegates can buy food nearby, including a map

Emergencies

What are the evacuation arrangements for the space in the event of an emergency? Consider how disabled delegates will evacuate, and whether any assistance will be required. Ensure you know the evacuation plans for the building.

Provide: Information about the building layout and evacuation plans.

Example:

We are not expecting a fire drill on the day of training. The fire alarm has a red flashing light alongside the audio cue. Delegates who cannot use the stairs unassisted must wait in the designated refuge area for evacuation.

Checklist – Emergencies

- Are you aware of the emergency evacuation procedure for the space?
- Is there a fire drill due on the day of training?
- Do you know what arrangements are for delegates who cannot use the stairs unassisted?
 - Have you communicated this to delegates?

Your Training Space

For Face-To-Face Training

- Select a venue with suitable space for the size of the group
- Provide a variety of chairs, e.g. some with armrest and some without, some padded, some not
- Ensure toilets are accessible
- Provide refreshments that are suitable for everyone
- Provide fidget toys, colouring sheets, etc
- Tell delegates that they are welcome to move around, stretch, take toilet breaks, etc as needed
- Ensure that you can be seen and heard clearly, and, where possible, that live subtitles are available
- Ensure that delegates can easily see any screens or other tools such as flip charts

For Live Online Training

- Familiarise yourself with how the platform you use supports and integrates with assistive technologies
- Familiarise yourself with built-in access support for your chosen platform, such as auto-generated captions. Test it to see how good it is
- Provide clear information about the platform you will be using
- Avoid using third-party apps and plugins. If you do use these, ensure you provide clear, step-by-step information on how to use the program
- Talk delegates through using features like breakout rooms
- Encourage delegates to move around, stretch, take toilet breaks, use fidget toys, or anything else they need
- Ensure you are in a suitable, quiet space, with no interruptions
- Ensure that you have good lighting, and that you can be seen and heard clearly. A ring light and a separate webcam can make a huge difference
- Check that delegates are in a suitable space, and, where appropriate, that no children are present

Accessible Documents

Writing accessible documents does not need to be complicated. When providing documents to delegates electronically, ensure that delegates can change the font type and size, as well as the page and text colour. This will allow users to modify the document to suit their needs.

If you are printing documents, it is good practice to ask delegates if they require a large print version, and what size print they prefer. You should supply overlays in a range of colours for those who require them.

Some simple guidelines for accessible documents:

Headings

Use the headings function in your word processing app rather than just enlarging text. This allows assistive technologies to recognise the text as a heading. It also allows readers to navigate the document more easily and gives a consistent look to your document.

Lists

Use the lists function in your word processing app rather than just typing a number for your list. This allows assistive technologies to recognise that there is a list.

Links

If you put a link in your document, avoid writing something like 'click here'. Instead, type a description of what the link points to. For example, 'click here for pricing'. Assistive technologies can then tell the user what the link is for. It is also much easier to follow for all users and looks more professional.

Alternative Text

This is often called 'alt-text' and you might be familiar with it from social media apps. Alt text is a description of a visual element. You should describe all images, including those that are purely decorative. This is because users of assistive technology deserve to have all the same information as everyone else.

Alt text should convey the same information that someone would get by looking at the visual element.

Let's use this photo of a cat as an example:



Inadequate alt text: A cute kitten being adorable!

Good alt text: A tabby and white kitten with a pink nose is chasing after an orange butterfly. The kitten is leaping towards the butterfly with all four paws off the ground. In the background is out of focus bright green grass.

Images

Think carefully about the images that you include in your document. Images like infographics for example can be engaging and help convey lots of information effectively but can be difficult to describe adequately in the alt text.

If you have an image of a table, convert it into an actual table in your word processing app. This will allow assistive technologies to read the information.

If an image shows a process that is described elsewhere in your document, you can just label it as 'a diagram showing process X'.

Colour

A significant percentage of people have some form of colour blindness, sensory impairment, neurodivergence, or learning difficulty that is impacted by colour. Avoid using colour alone to convey information.

For most people, white background with black text is the most familiar and easy to read. However, for many people, a lower contrast combination may be preferable. This can vary considerably, so ask delegates what their preferences are.

Tables

Ensure that your row and column headings are formatted as headings. This allows assistive technologies to tell the reader where they are in the table.

Captioning

Captions should be provided for all video elements. Avoid using automatically generated captions as these are not accurate enough. If you are unable to provide captions, a transcript is an acceptable alternative and may be better for some delegates.

Closed captions are essential for d/Deaf and hard of hearing delegates and can be very useful for delegates with sensory processing impairments, those who are unfamiliar with the vocabulary, or for whom English is not their first language.

Captioning for people with visual impairments is called '**audio description**'. This provides an audio description of what is being shown on screen and allows the user to access all the information, not just the dialogue.

Bionic Text

This is a way of supporting reading by highlighting the first few letters of a word. A web app and browser extension are available at www.bionic-reading.com, which automatically convert your text.

Here is an example of bionic reading. As you can see, highlighting the first few letters makes it much easier for the reader to follow the text.

Maths

Maths equations are not supported by assistive technologies unless they are written in MathML or MathType in Microsoft Word.

Fonts

Use a **sans serif font**, in a minimum 12pt text. Although Comic Sans is much maligned, it was developed as an accessible font and is a good option if you are unsure of what to use. Alternatives include Calibri and Arial. Avoid using decorative fonts.

PDF files

PDFs can be difficult to use for assistive technology users. This article from Adobe covers [how to make PDFs accessible](#).

Slides and Presentations

Slides and presentations can be powerful tools for engagement, and it can be tempting to make complex presentations crammed with information and visual elements. The problem is that this can often create barriers for delegates.

The simpler you can keep your presentation, the more accessible it will be and the easier it will be for you to make adaptations to suit the needs of delegates on the day.

Refer to the information on writing accessible documents, as this applies to slides, too.

- Use slides as prompts rather than as a way of conveying lots of information
- Ensure everything on the slide is communicated verbally
- Keep slides simple and uncluttered
- Minimum 20pt text
- Aim for no more than 15 slides for every hour of your session. Fewer slides allow more flexibility, and flexibility is great for accessibility
- If you need more notes to keep you on track, use a lesson plan and keep a copy on a tablet or second screen, or have a printed version

Checklist – Documents and Slides

- Am I making use of built-in accessibility tools in my word processing software?
- Do I know how assistive technology will work with the platform and apps I am using?
- Have all my videos got accurate subtitles or closed captions?
- Have I considered the use of colour in my documents and slides?
- Have I considered my use of images carefully?
- Have I included accurate and useful alternative text for all images and diagrams?
- Have I labelled any links appropriately for use with assistive technologies?
- Have all my audio elements got accurate transcripts?
- Am I using text that is at least 20pt on all my slides?
- Are the documents I have produced useable by all the delegates?

Accessible Training Activities

Every activity in your session should be accessible to every delegate. It is important to always have an alternative available so that you can adapt your session to the needs of the delegates in the room.

Alternatives should be just as high quality as your first-choice activity and should be done by the whole group, not just the delegate with access needs.

Activities That Involve Reading

Activities that involve reading can be inaccessible for lots of people, including those with learning difficulties, limited literacy, or visual impairments.

As a rule, you should read out all the information on your slides so that delegates do not miss out on anything if they cannot read the slide.

If reading or writing is required for an activity, for example, discussing a scenario, you should:

- Ask a member of each group to volunteer to read the material out loud to the rest of the group
- Ask a member of each group to volunteer to take notes
- Provide an audio or video recording of the material
- Provide a copy of the material in advance

Try to avoid activities that involve reading large amounts of material. Where this is unavoidable, ensure that the material is provided in advance, ideally along with an audio recording.

Delegates may be especially unwilling to disclose access needs relating to literacy and numeracy, due to the stigma associated with having limited literacy – yet millions of adults in the UK struggle with reading and writing.

Activities Involving Movement

Activities that include movement can be fun and engaging but may not be accessible for delegates with limited mobility.

If you want to use activities that include movement:

- Carefully consider the aims of the activity. Can the learning outcomes be met differently?

- Ensure your training space has enough room for all delegates to move around freely, without obstructing each other
- Keep activities short, and leave plenty of rest time in between
- Be aware of delegates who may be struggling and take a flexible approach in making changes as the session develops

Activities Involving Audio or Visual Components

For people with sensory impairments, autistic people who are hypersensitive to sensory stimuli, and many others, activities with audio or visual components may not be accessible.

If you choose to use audio and visual components:

- Ensure images have full image descriptions and alt text
- Ensure videos have accurate closed captions (not auto generated)
- Provide an accurate transcript of audio and video. If your resource does not have subtitles, you can generate a rough transcript using an app, such as [Otter.ai](#), then edit it to ensure accuracy
- Have an alternative available. For example, if you cannot show a video, but have a transcript available, you could read out key information instead

Checklist – Training Activities

- Have I got good quality back-ups or adaptations for all my exercises?
- Have I considered the needs of the delegates who will be attending this session?
- Have I provided slides, handouts, and any written materials like transcripts and materials for activities in advance?
- Have I provided basic access tools like closed captions, transcripts, and alternative text?
- Am I prepared to make adaptations on the spot if a delegate discloses their needs on the day?

Using Technology

Technology can be a useful tool for accessibility and engagement, but while some delegates will find that technology opens up access, many others will find that it causes significant problems. For people with sensory impairments and learning difficulties, elderly people, and people in poverty, technology can be a huge barrier.

If you choose to incorporate technology into your sessions:

- Tell delegates in advance what you will be using, and provide guidance on how to use it
- Avoid anything that involves downloading or installing an app
- Make sure you are familiar with the resources so that you can explain how to use it, and ensure that you can perform basic troubleshooting
- Be aware that not all delegates will have access to smartphones or computers
- Be aware that not all delegates will be comfortable using technology
- Be aware that many apps are not compatible with screen reading software
- Have an alternative available. This is good practice not just for accessibility, as technology can fail!

Checklist – Using Technology

- Have I told delegates what platform we will be using?
- Have I told delegates what additional apps we will be using?
- Have I provided instructions for downloading and using any necessary software?
- Have I considered whether delegates have access to appropriate technology?
- Have I considered whether delegates will know how to use the platform, apps, and technology?
- Am I familiar with the technology, and able to troubleshoot common problems?
- Do I know how the platform and other technology I have chosen work with assistive technologies?
- Do I have good alternatives available for all technology-based activities?

Assistive Technology

Some delegates may use assistive technology such as screen readers or speech-to-text. While integration for these types of technology is improving, integration may be limited, prone to failure, or just not exist.

If a delegate uses assistive technology, it is important to discuss with them how this will (or will not!) work with your session, and that you make appropriate changes.

You can avoid problems by:

- Limiting your use of external apps and plugins
- Having robust alternatives for all exercises
- Being aware of how your chosen platform works with the most common assistive technology
- Ensure sessions are designed with access in mind, so that delegates do not need to rely on assistive technology to take part

Structuring Your Session

How you structure your session is a very personal choice and will depend on the type of training you deliver, the sector, and your own preferences. However, the following will help you to build an accessible session:

- **Allow for regular breaks**, with at least one 10–15 minute break every 1.5 hours. Lunch breaks should be at least 30 minutes, and ideally 45-60 minutes. If you have delegates who may need more breaks or longer to use the toilet, need special diets, or have mobility impairments that mean it takes longer to get to and from kitchens and toilets, you should take this into account and allow more frequent or longer breaks.
- **Allow plenty of time for delegates to arrive and get settled in.** This is especially important for live online training, as technical problems are common, and you will need time to help delegates troubleshoot. Having a relaxed start allows you to welcome each delegate, check that access needs are being met, and make any last-minute changes to your session if a delegate discloses a need on the day.
- **Be clear that delegates are welcome to do what they need to do to be comfortable.** You should spell out that delegates do not need to ask to go to the toilet, get a drink or snack, or attend to any personal needs. Invite delegates to use fidget toys, doodle, move around the room, and anything else that helps them to focus.
- **Create a learning agreement with the group.** This helps to give group ownership over rules and boundaries like respect, support, and inclusion and makes it more likely that delegates will be supportive of the access needs of all delegates.
- **Make time for introductions.** This helps delegates feel connected to one another and helps facilitate learning in group activities.
- **Use a range of activities**, including group and pair activities, audio-visual elements, and quizzes. This helps ensure that all delegates have their learning needs met.
- **Define your terms at the start of the session**, so that delegates know what each term means. Ideally, provide a glossary of terms for delegates to refer to, especially if the group is unfamiliar with the subject. Avoid using jargon and abbreviations, but if these are necessary, ensure you define the term in full at least once during the session.
- **Tell delegates what you will be covering during the session** and ensure the order matches how topics will be introduced during the session. This helps delegates understand how each topic builds on the next.

- **Do not ask delegates to answer questions until you have introduced a topic.** This includes commonly used activities like quizzes to see what delegates already know. This can be really confusing and alienating for many delegates.
- **Introduce topics in a logical order**, ensuring you have provided any necessary background knowledge.
- **Create a consistent approach to introducing topics and activities.** This helps delegates understand what is expected of them, so they can focus on the activity and their learning. Use consistent language and terminology, and a consistent 'visual language' for how your slides and materials are constructed.
- **Once you have covered a topic, summarise the main learning points**, then pause and ask the group for questions or if they need anything clarifying before moving on.
- **Cover emotional resilience** at the end of every session.
- If you offer a range of subjects, **maintain a consistent approach** between all your sessions.

Checklist – Structuring Your Session

- Have I provided adequate breaks, and have I considered how long it will take to get to and from the toilets, obtain food, or deal with needs like breastfeeding or pumping?
- Am I providing a range of exercises and content that meet delegates' learning needs?
- Is my session consistent throughout in its structure, use of language, the structure of exercises, and use of visual cues?
- Am I looking after delegates' emotional needs?

General Tips for Accessible Training

- Provide copies of slides and any accompanying materials to all delegates ahead of time. This is especially helpful for delegates with sensory impairments, learning difficulties, who are neurodivergent, who have limited literacy, who are unfamiliar with the vocabulary, and for whom English is a second language.
- Provide accurate transcripts for all audio and visual components. If you produced the material yourself, ensure that you add accurate subtitles and audio descriptions.
- Commit to improving your own understanding of accessibility – staying up to date and doing the necessary work to make your training as accessible as possible. It can be difficult at first, but like any skill it gets easy the more you practice it. Soon it will be second nature!
- Share information and empower delegates to make informed choices about whether the session is right for them.
- Be open to new ways of working and challenge yourself and others to find creative solutions rather than saying, 'but that is how we do things'. Ask yourself why things are done a certain way and seek to remove barriers to access.
- Challenge discrimination wherever you see it. Have a clear policy on how you challenge discriminatory or offensive behaviour and language, and ensure you feel confident in enforcing that policy.
- If you find that disabled and marginalised people are not accessing your training, ask yourself why. It's often the case that people do not even try to access training because they have had so many poor experiences in the past. Do not assume that people will ask you about access, and instead make a clear statement that you are an inclusive training provider who values all people.
- Take accessibility seriously. It is common for delegates to arrive at a session only to find that their promised adjustments have not been put in place. This can be deeply frustrating and upsetting for the delegate and reflects poorly on the training provider.

Appendix – Overall Checklist

General Information

Have I provided information about:

Face-To-Face

- Travel to and from the venue
- Getting into the venue
- The venue layout and how to get around
- Any barriers to access in the venue
- Details of access features, like accessible toilets, lifts, and hearing induction loops

Live Online

- The online platform I will be using
- Technology requirements

All Training

- The general structure of the session – is it lecture style or discussion-based? What kind of exercises will the delegates be doing?
- What information I will provide in advance, such as transcripts and handouts
- What specific accessibility tools I use as standard, such as closed captions
- How to contact me to discuss access needs

Language

- Have I ensured my session and materials use plain English?
- Have I defined any unfamiliar language, jargon, or abbreviations?
- Have I ensured that I am up to date with language surrounding disability?

Finding Out Delegates' Needs

- Have I made a clear, public commitment to accessibility?
- Have I explained clearly how I will work with delegates to meet their needs?
- Have I made it clear that I am flexible and value creative solutions?
- Have I provided a range of options for delegates to discuss access needs (phone, video call, email, etc)?

Checklist – What if I Cannot Meet a Delegate's Needs?

- Have I spoken to the delegate and discussed the problem?

- Have I considered creative solutions, including addressing any barriers that could reasonably be removed?
- Have I been transparent and honest about why I am not able to meet their needs?
- Have I offered an alternative?
- Have I made my policy available to them?

Getting to The Venue

- Provide a map showing venue location, and public transport and parking locations
- The venue is on the _____ bus/tram routes. The bus/tram stop is around [distance] from the venue.
- The route from the bus/tram stop has the following potential obstacles:
- The nearest station is _____. The station is [distance] from the venue.
- If you are taking a taxi from the station _____ and _____ are the local taxi firms we recommend.
- The car park is [distance] from the venue, and there the charge is X, payable using cash/card/app.
- Brief descriptions of routes from bus/tram/station/car park, including any obstacles

Accessing the Venue

- Have I provided a photo of the entrance?
- Have I provided a map of the route from the entrance to reception, reception to the training room, and location of the kitchen, toilets, and other amenities?
- Have I described the entrance, including any special instructions for how to access the building?
- Have I told delegates what to do when they arrive?
- Have I told delegates their options for access, e.g. where the stairs and lifts are?
- Have I given information about any access features?
- Have I given information about any possible obstacles?

Inside the Venue

- Have I described the size of the room, and how much space there is for moving around?
- Have I described the available seating?
- Have I described the lighting and whether it can be dimmed?
- Have I described the options for audio and video, including whether I will be using a microphone and live subtitles?

- Have I described any potential obstacles or sensory impacts?
- Have I described the location of the toilets?
- Have I described the location of the kitchen?

Checklist - Refreshments

Are refreshments provided? If so:

- Have I listed available drinks?
- Have I listed available food?
- Have I listed which dietary restrictions are catered for?

Will lunch be provided? If so:

- Have I stated how long the lunch break will be?
- Have I listed what will be supplied?
- Have I listed which dietary restrictions are catered for?
- Have I provided information on where delegates can buy food nearby?
- Have I stated if it is recommended to bring a packed lunch?

Checklist – Emergencies

- Am I aware of the emergency evacuation procedure for the space?
- Is there a fire drill due on the day of training?
- Do I know what arrangements are for delegates who cannot use the stairs unassisted?
- Have I communicated this to delegates?

Checklist – Documents and Slides

- Am I making use of built-in accessibility tools in my word processing software?
- Do I know how assistive technology will work with the platform and apps I am using?
- Have all my videos got accurate subtitles or closed captions?
- Have I considered the use of colour in my documents and slides?
- Have I considered my use of images carefully?
- Have I included accurate and useful alternative text for all images and diagrams?
- Have I labelled any links appropriately for use with assistive technologies?
- Have all my audio elements got accurate transcripts?
- Am I using text that is at least 20pt on all my slides?
- Are the documents I have produced useable by all the delegates?

Checklist – Training Activities

- Have I got good quality back-ups or adaptations for all my exercises?
- Have I considered the needs of the delegates who will be attending this session?
- Have I provided slides, handouts, and any written materials like transcripts and materials for activities in advance?
- Have I provided basic access tools like closed captions, transcripts, and alternative text?
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Checklist – Using Technology

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