

# We are Everyone

We have all agreed upon joining XR to welcome everyone and every part of everyone, therefore there is a duty for us to do as much as we can to ensure everyone has access to our resources and that we are welcoming to a diverse range of people. We cannot be perfect but we must be better.

- [Principles Of Inclusivity](#)
- [Organising Inclusive Meetings & Activities](#)
- [Accessible Documentation & Leaflets](#)
- [Website Accessibility](#)
- [Good Communication](#)
- [Communication Checklist](#)
- [Good Practice in Communicating with Disabled People](#)

# Principles Of Inclusivity

In order to build an inclusive approach towards involving all sections of society in the struggle to highlight the Climate Emergence, it is necessary for XR to pay particular attention to five activity areas:

- Organisation and running of meetings
  - The production of documentation – including leaflets
  - Accessibility of the XR websites
  - Accessibility of demonstrations and other activities
  - Good practices when communicating with disabled people
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## What is inclusivity?

An inclusive product, service or environment does not exclude any section of society. Inclusive solutions consider all users and participants, including disabled people, and is a positive step towards a holistic, universal system.

## The Principles of Inclusivity

- Individuals have unique and particular needs in learning, social and campaigning environments.
  - Respect each individual's right to express and present themselves relative to their religion, culture, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender-identity, identity as disabled people.
  - Promote inclusivity by reasonably adjusting procedures, activities and physical environments.
  - Focus on the learning or support needs of the individual without assumptions or labels.
  - Be inclusive in all forms of communication.
  - Serve all with sensitivity, respect, and within boundaries of social justice.
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## Disabled Rebels Network

For further advice you can reach out to the Disabled Rebels Network either on [Facebook](#) or by Email at **xr.inclusion@protonmail.com**

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For more on power and privilege check out [this page](#) from the Trust the People workshop! It's full of great advice, activities and resources.

# Organising Inclusive Meetings & Activities

**When considering an accessible and inclusive meeting, there are 3 aspects you need to think about:**

1. Planning and preparation
2. The equipment and information
3. The conduct of the meeting.

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**Remember:**

There have always been disabled people engaged in political activities but never to the extent that they are today.

It is not possible or practical for organisers of demonstrations or certain other political activities to consider the access needs of all the disabled individuals who may want to take part.

Disabled people for their part equally need to understand that with Rights come responsibilities and this includes their own safety.

Nevertheless in order to be able to make informed choices as to whether or not they can participate, disabled people require as much information as is possible to give.

Disabled people would find it useful to know for example:

- Details of a meeting place (nearest stations, bus routes, parking, etc)
- Agreed route of the March and its length
- Details of a rallying place (nearest stations, bus routes, parking, etc)
- If disabled people are to form a separate contingent that the lead disabled people are able to liaise with identifiable stewards in case of changes in plans or possible emergencies.

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## 1. Planning - Choosing a venue

When considering whether a venue is accessible, the first obvious thought may be to avoid entrances with steps. There are however, many other things to watch for or that you can provide to make the venue accessible:

- **Is there a barrier-free pathway to the meeting space?** A barrier-free pathway means that a person with a mobility impairment can make it from the street into the meeting room without encountering stairs.
- **Is it easy to reach the meeting space from public transportation?** Many disabled people rely on public transportation to get around.
- **Is there adequate parking, including disabled parking?**
- **Is there an accessible toilet nearby?**

## Consider:

- **Dimensions** - door width, sharp corners, wheelchair ramps, access to parking for anyone with limited mobility, angle of slopes, toilets, background noise levels, lighting, clear signage.
- **Size of the venue** in relation to the number of wheelchair users expected to attend. Space is required for wheelchairs to be manoeuvred. As a general guide allow two spaces for every wheelchair user.
- **Lighting levels** for people with visual impairments, as lowlighting is a barrier.
- **Availability of induction loops** or arrange reserved front seating for attendees who are hard of hearing
- **Crèche facilities** if these are required or whether childcare/carer's expenses can be paid as an alternative.

If you have been unable to get an ideal venue, plan how you will overcome issues to accommodate individuals, e.g. arranging help to get people down slopes.

## Always:

- Check the accessibility of a venue for yourself. Not only can you then be confident with what you are saying, but you can also answer enquiries more accurately.
- Brief the Venue staff regarding your needs, including numbers and access requirements.
- Arrange the seating so that wheelchair users have a choice of where they sit.
- Have someone stand by the main entrance to direct people to the meeting room and help those needing assistance. This is a courtesy that everyone will appreciate.

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## 2. Providing Information and Equipment

### Planning

- The date and time for a meeting may influence who is able to come.
- The timing of a meeting may also affect people's availability. Those with caring responsibilities may find early starts difficult and those with childcare may need to be home to collect children.

- You should consider your audience and whether you are able to provide expenses or resources for individuals requiring personal assistants, those with caring responsibilities (children and adult) or those with transport costs. Notice periods should be as far forwards as possible to enable people to make arrangements for transport, personal assistance and replacement care.

## Publicising

- On any notices or publicity used for the event, it is important to ensure you use the phrase: "If you require any specific requirements please inform [state a contact by phone, email and preferably address too]. This allows people to explain any access/dietary needs (dietary needs may be influenced by faith, health or philosophy).
- Individuals find different formats of information easier to manage. These include large type, Braille, computer disc, audio CD. It is important if you are providing information in a particular format for an individual that you ask which is appropriate for them and not make assumptions.
- Try to use plain English without jargon in all documents including advertising.

## Prior to Meeting

If using a loop, check when booking, the area that the loop covers. Check before the meeting that the loop is working.

If Sign language interpreters, lip speakers and deaf blind interpreters are needed check well in advance for cost and availability.

It is useful to hold a briefing meeting for speakers to remind them to use microphones/talk through slide presentations etc.

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## 3. Conduct - During the meeting

Ensure those at reception are briefed on issues. If sighted guides are available they should be dedicated members of staff and should be on hand.

If using PowerPoint presentations or other visual information, ask if people can read it. Don't assume people will read the slides: talk through the information. Have printed copies available.

At the start of the meeting, raise your hand to attract people's attention. Check access e.g. whether people can hear; if the loop is working; if the people can see and read the OHP; if they can see the sign language interpreters.

When using a microphone, speakers should generally speak close to the microphone and preferably have an opportunity to practice using microphones prior to the event.

If using a loop, then all speakers must use the microphone including those responding to questions. If the questioner is not within the looped area then the question needs to be repeated using the microphone.

Even when a loop is not being used, it is good practice to employ a roving microphone. This might seem to slow down proceedings however often it enhances the authority of the Chair and aids the discipline of the meeting thus saving time.

Allow time for breaks in the meeting. This is important for individuals but also for signers and lip speakers. It is extremely important if a meeting is longer than 75 minutes a break of 15 to 20

minutes is required for accessibility needs especially deaf rebels lip reading and BSL interpreters. Time keeping is essential. Many groups of people need to know when breaks are and the finishing time. This is an access issue.

# Accessible Documentation & Leaflets

Here are some tips on good practice:

- Offer a good contrast between print and background (e.g. black/blue on white/yellow)
- Avoid glossy or thin paper
- Avoid light type weights and unusual typefaces
- Keep information as concise as possible with short sentences and paragraphs
- Avoid printing text in capitals
- Provide even word spacing and justify text to the left
- Provide 'navigational' aids for the reader (e.g. content lists, clear headings, titled illustrations in appropriate places.)
- Ensure text documents have been generously spaced
- Leave enough space between columns to make sure that text flows easily from column to column

When considering lay-out and design for posters and leaflets (as well as the points above):

- Avoid over-elaborate layouts, especially, placing words on top of photographs or drawings
- Highlight where the focus of the information can be found
- Insure large and clear fonts are used such as Ariel
- Insure the numbering and symbol protocols are kept simple and understand that some characters are difficult to tell apart for those with visual impairments, e.g., 3 and 8, 6 and 9, O and 0, S and 5, iv and vi?

Take care to avoid, where possible:

- words split over lines
- italics
- underlining
- the capitalisation of whole sentences
- narrow line spacing, narrow margins and dense text
- faint print

# Website Accessibility

## Accessible website design

### 1. Text

Use a sans serif typeface, like Arial as it is easier to read for visually impaired people. A large font equivalent to Arial 14 is a good size – the alternative is to have a Large Print button at the top of the home page.

The text should be colour-contrasted with its surroundings – like black/white, yellow/blue, green/white. Many visually impaired people find it easier to read reverse coloured text – e.g. white characters (#FFFFFF), on racing green (#006600) background

The visited links colour should be a different colour and shade, so that people with colour-blindness or other visual impairments can distinguish it.

### 2. Images

Pictures/pictograms/icons help many people with learning disabilities, but can be a hindrance to people using voice software like Hal/Supernova (text-reader software). Where pictures are included, make sure the alt tags say what they are or what they do (e.g.: click here for Toyota cars)

### 3. Frames

Frames are about the most unhelpful thing for blind and visually impaired people, firstly because it is not easy to see what is going on, secondly, because most Text Reader software works from left to right (in the West), so someone using, for example, Supernova or a screen reader may be jumping from frame to frame and what they hear wont make sense.

### 4. Tables

Tables are inaccessible for many with visual impairments and some screen readers

### 5. Forms

Web-based forms can usually be read by text readers, but it's worthwhile including a "print" button, for people who can't use the online version.

### 6. Document downloads

If written in Adobe Acrobat 7 or above, pdf.files can be read by text readers like Jaws, but not all screen readers, therefore it is best practice to offer documents in Word and in Pdf

## 7. Structure

A logical and easy-to-follow structure may be the most important thing in making a website accessible:

avoid clutter

keep the homepage as simple as possible

pay particular attention to how you map out the site – the fewer clicks for a person to get to the information they want, the better – it is a resource not a Treasure Hunt

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## Check Out

**Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.** Available at: [www.w3.org/WAI/](http://www.w3.org/WAI/)

**Accessibility Guidelines for Web Authors.** Available at: [www.demon.ac.uk/access](http://www.demon.ac.uk/access)

# Good Communication

## Written Communication

### Do

- ensure that the letterhead and contact details are in clear, large, lowercase print
- use appropriate font size and script
- ensure that the subject of the poster/leaflet is clear, and that the header makes sense
- make the purpose of the letter/leaflet/booklet clear in the first sentence
- write short sentences with subject and object
- use the present tense as much as possible
- at the end of the letter summarize what action you will take and what action the recipient must take
- ensure that the contact person and their 'phone number are clear, and in large print
- where a mixture of graphics and text is used, make sure the layout is clean and avoids confusion
- ensure that the graphics do not encroach upon the text, ensure that the graphics add to the understanding
- make sure there is a large print footer saying where and in what other formats you can get the information

### Don't

- use jargon or in-house speak
- use acronyms - where they are necessary, state them fully first
- use adverbs and adjectives, they make sentences harder to follow
- use passive expressions: "We offer 2 services" is easier to understand than "2 services are offered"

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## Audio information

Audio information is especially important for people with a visual impairment, dyslexia, learning difficulties, non-English speakers and people who struggle to understand maps; non-disabled people may also find it reassuring and helpful.

Etiquette for producing your own audio CD: use people with clear speaking voices. Give an introduction and a summary e.g. this is an annual report of 20 pages. Have gaps between sections; state page number at appropriate points so that people can retrieve information; give contact details at the end; if pictures are important to the text describe them. Allow time for taping to be done in stages so that the reader does not sound bored.

# Communication Checklist

## Written communication

- Is text colour contrasted with background
- Is typeface sans serif
- Is text large enough for most people to see (Are community languages in large print)
- Is layout clear and easy to follow – avoiding columns and box inserts – (although some people with dyslexia prefer columns)
- Do the graphics help to explain what it is about
- Is the title/subject easy to gauge/understand
- Is there an audio tape version
- Is there a signed video version
- Is there a large print version
- Is it in the present tense
- Are there any unnecessary adverbs or adjectives
- Are there any acronyms, are they explained
- Is there any jargon/in-house language which could be avoided
- Is there a named or titled person to contact, and a variety of ways to contact him/her

## Verbal Communication

- Are you aware of how and where to get a sign language interpreter
- Ensure you look at people when talking to them
- Try speaking as clearly as possible
- Keep your hands away from your lips when speaking
- Ensure you are easy to understand (Plain English)
- Explain things until person understands
- Offer to help
- Being friendly aids communication
- If a person has a problem, can you offer alternatives

## Signage

- Is it easy to notice
- Is signage logically placed and used
- Is signage unified
- Do the signs make sense to a stranger
- Have you considered the height, typeface and use of pictures
- Have you also considered colour contrasting, colour coding, tactile/Braille information

# Good Practice in Communicating with Disabled People

The following information is a guide to issues which affect different groups of people with impairments in terms of communication. It is important to remember each individual has their own needs and strategies – ask them what their particular needs or issues are where possible.

## Who have visual impairments

- Prior to a meeting the organiser should clarify with the individual their access requirements are and ascertain whether they will be escorted to the meeting or be accompanied by a guide dog.
- Letters and information to support a meeting should be available in an appropriate form, depending upon the individual's preferred communication mode (i.e. Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.).
- People with little or no vision are likely to require information in non-visual formats – remember, do not assume, ask – this could range from audio tape, Braille or computer disk (e.g. people using screen readers).
- Decreasing numbers of people are using Braille these days, however, there are still some visually impaired people who prefer this format and find it easier to use.
- At reception the individual should be met and escorted to the meeting room as required.
- Be hazard aware. If asked to guide a blind person to a destination, take the person's arm above the elbow, describe the route to be taken and detail any potential hazards, e.g., steps, corners and doorways. They may need to be guided to a suitable chair.
- Lighting levels need to be discussed with the individual and seating should be arranged with daylight behind the individual.
- Contrasting colours are helpful for those with low vision.
- Introductions should be made in a way that ensures that the individual is able to put a voice to a name.
- Verbal indications are necessary if any of the participants leaves or re-enters the room, or if joined by a third-party.
- A guide dog is highly disciplined and should not be distracted or petted when working. Only approach a guide dog with the owner's permission.

## Face-to-face Communication:

- ensure the person is aware of your presence, when you are talking directly to them, handing them over to another person, or you are leaving them
  - when reading to a person who is visually impaired, make sure they know when you have stopped reading and have begun talking to them. Similarly, denote any difference between formal and informal conversations
  - The environment can be as disabling to some people with visual impairments as it is for deaf people. Light, reasonably quiet settings could assist communication.
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## Who have physical impairments

Ascertain the degree of personal independence of the individual in advance, for example, will they:

- need special parking arrangements
- walk unaided
- manage steps or stairs
- require specialist seating
- use and require access for a wheelchair
- benefit from a meeting room on the ground floor with proximity to an accessible toilet.

Some individuals with physical impairments may have communication aids, or use speech that may be difficult to follow, or attend the meeting in a wheelchair and/or come with a personal assistant. Be prepared for these eventualities.

- Enquire about the best format for organising the face-to-face aspects of the meeting, taking into account the role of the communication aid, the position of the wheelchair and the presence of the personal assistant.
  - Speak clearly and naturally to avoid exaggerated, slow or loud speech.
  - If a disabled person has a communication aid it is important to let them use this as a matter of course and not interrupt. Avoid making the piece of equipment the centre of attention or treating it as if it was a novelty. Address the person with the speech impairment directly.
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## Who have communication related impairments

What implications are there for face to face communication?

Having a speech impairment can be very tiring especially when in a new environment. Also consider that some speech impairments are affected by a person's emotional state. Patience and respect for what they have to say is very important. When talking with someone with a speech impairment:

- Make eye contact and be especially attentive and patient with a person who has difficulty speaking or who uses a communicator. Wait quietly and listen whilst the person talks

- Do not rush the person as this is likely to cause additional stress and impact negatively on a person's speech
- Resist the temptation to speak for the person, or to finish their sentences
- Some people may prefer to be asked questions which require either a short answer, or a nod or shake of the head
- Be sure you understand fully what the person is meaning before making any assumptions. It may help to say what you have understood and ask the person to repeat the rest
- Ask simpler/shorter questions rather than ones which rely on a long answer if meeting a person for the first time (if this is appropriate)
- If you don't understand what is being said, don't be afraid or too embarrassed to ask the person to repeat it, and this may need to be done several times. People are usually used to repeating themselves
- Don't make assumptions about the person's hearing or intellect just because he or she has difficulty speaking
- If noisy, take account of this and, if possible, move to a quieter area
- Be aware that the person's first language might not be English

There may be other communication barriers to consider:

- People with speech impairments are likely to find telephone calls difficult. Email may be a more useful method of communication
- The length of time it takes to communicate with someone with a speech impairment or non-verbal communication is likely to be longer than usually expected. Allow more time and include frequent breaks if a long meeting is anticipated.
- Allow the individual to take a little longer to contribute to the meeting

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## Who have a history of mental ill health

"Mental ill health" is an all encompassing term used to cover people who experience a range of conditions that are grouped together. These conditions may include: mood related disorders (depression), anxiety-related disorders (phobias, panic, post-traumatic stress, compulsive behaviour), psychosis (schizophrenia), eating disorders (bulimia, anorexia nervosa) and personality disorders.

For some people with a history of mental ill health the following issues may need additional thought when organising a meeting:

- providing in advance a very clear resume of the purpose of the meeting, the names of all those attending and their roles
- previous experience of stigma and discrimination in their life
- the anxiety of self disclosure may be especially acute
- past medical history and the frequency of mental health episodes may indicate the possibility of cancellation
- fluctuations in concentration or mood, confusion or disorientated thinking
- self-perception may not be the same as that of others

- the day-to-day effects of medication may be detrimental
  - additional fatigue is likely to be caused by the meeting process
  - offering to be flexible and making alternative meeting times may be required
  - providing quality written information at the meeting
  - post-meeting notes could prove useful where follow up action is required
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## Who have dyslexia

People with dyslexia are not a homogenous group. They are all individuals and the impact of their dyslexia will vary according to their degree of difficulty, the timing of their diagnosis, their particular strengths, and their coping strategies.

When planning and undertaking a meeting it is vital to:

- provide clear directions and instructions on the place and time of the meeting. People with dyslexia will often forget dates and times of appointments and therefore need a written and/or verbal reminder.
  - use a quiet space to help maintain concentration for the individual
  - keep the carrier language simple so that additional energy is not wasted on unnecessary decoding
  - invite questions to monitor full comprehension
  - write down important information for the individual to take away
  - allow additional time for the processing of information
  - encourage the use of a tape recorder if the individual would like to use one.
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## Communication with a deaf person

### with a sign language interpreter

- the interpreter: the role of the interpreter is to facilitate communication only and not to participate.
- off task conversations: never engage an interpreter in a conversation when they are communicating for the individual.
- speed of speech: use a normal rate of speaking, with natural breaks for pauses. A 10-15 minute break is necessary when giving large amounts of information.
- allow time: the process of translating requires time - the deaf person must be able to receive the information and to respond.
- advance information: provide information in advance of the meeting to the interpreter and if possible to the deaf person. Prior access to names and specific terminology will save time during the meeting.

### who is a lip reader

The individual may require technical support in the form of a radio hearing aid or a portable loop system in the room, to facilitate the use of the hearing aid.

Lip reading requires a high level of concentration and can be extremely exhausting, as much as three-quarters of lip reading is intelligent guesswork and intuition, relying to some extent on contextual clues.

- speak clearly at a reasonable pace without shouting or over enunciating as this distorts sound and lip patterns
  - rephrase if necessary rather than simply repeating words
  - check position and room lighting as lips cannot be read at a distance or in a dim light
  - avoid nodding too much, turning of the head or moving about the room
  - use facial expression and try to maintain eye-contact if you know the person is a lip reader
  - gain the individual's attention before speaking
  - give a clear view of lips: avoid covering the mouth with hands
  - make time adjustments to allow the individual to adjust to unfamiliar lip patterns
  - remember that many sounds and words look alike on the lips - e.g., t,d,n have the same configuration of the lips as do p,b,m.
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## Who is hard of hearing.

The individual may require technical support in the form of a radio hearing aid or a portable loop system in the room, to facilitate the use of the hearing aid.

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## Who have limited dexterity

People with limited dexterity might find intercom systems, door bells and security buttons difficult to operate if gripping, holding, pressing, or turning, is required. Providing alternative methods of entry or offering additional support might reduce barriers. Leaflets may present problems where they have more than one fold – ideally, having no fold at all would be most people's preference.