



Reaching more disabled people through accessible and inclusive communications

Disabled people are a large proportion of our population, so an important audience to consider when communicating. Accessible and inclusive communications is about reaching more people, not just disabled people.

Your words, images, designs and websites all play a part in encouraging more people to be active.

There are still a number of different factors that can prevent groups of people or individuals from receiving communications. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to communicating with disabled people. The way in which some disabled people access communications may be different to non-disabled people. People with different impairments have different needs and experience different barriers to accessing information.

Are you open to conversations?

Communication is two-way. Providing contact points (email and phone number at least) means you are open to further questions and requests. Some disabled people may have additional support queries related to your opportunities. Providing this extra information could be the make or break for a person wanting to be more active.

How do you anticipate the needs of disabled people and diverse groups?

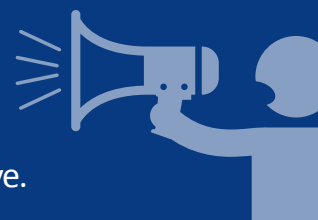
Often asking people in advance what their communications preferences are, will help you in the long term. Market research and extra questions on membership forms help to find out more. Knowing what formats and channels people prefer in advance can save you time and money. It can help you to plan future communications too.

Do you provide your communications in a range of formats?

Everyone has a personal communication preference - not just disabled people. Some people prefer e-newsletters rather than direct mail; text message rather than a phone call. Some people may want it in large print or even in a different language.

Fonts, colour and images can often cause issues for many people. Think about using sans serif fonts, testing your colour contrasts and making sure your images portray positive pictures of disabled people in your activity.

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When it comes to digital and online communications, code and content matter. Websites are the starting point for many audiences. You will need to make sure your website is accessible for various groups, including the design layout, clear content, links and alternative text for your images.

You may rely on social media to do your promotion, but remember there are certain groups of people who may use it less, if not at all. Mixing up channels and formats helps everyone.

Finally, remember to tell people what formats you provide your communications in. For example, if your newsletter is available in Word format and audio file then promote this information as it may spark someone to ask you for a copy.

Are your messages clear and do you use plain English?

The national average reading age is nine! Are your communications jargon-free? Sometimes, those of us in sport and physical activity get lost in our environment. We believe everyone understands the technical words and all the acronyms. Shorter, easier sentences to read help everyone to learn more about your activity. EasyRead format can often be a good way to communicate to a range of audiences as it provides visual symbols and clear sentences.

Who is responsible for and who pays for alternative formats?

You may be asked for alternative formats and you should always be prepared for requests. Providing every format is not always essential. Digital communications and technology means often people ask for easy-to-arrange alternative formats. Some formats do cost, so have suppliers to hand and know rough costs in advance. Remember that your disabled members may be able to assist you with alternative formats too. Eg. A member, who is deaf and uses British Sign Language, may be able to interpret for your club's promotional video etc.

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How do you monitor the impact of your communications with disabled people?

It is a good move to get disabled people involved in all your communications, from design to implementation. Users can help you to decide what works and what does not in advance. Having a range of people, with different impairments, from different age groups, BAME groups or religions etc. can really support your work to be more inclusive and accessible.



Read more about inclusive communications:

EFD's Inclusive Communications Guide is an ideal starting point to learn how to reach a wider audience, especially disabled people. As well as providing essential better practice guidance on planning, terminology and language, the guide explains the purpose of accessible formats and shows how providers can get the best from their communications.

Download it free at www.efds.co.uk

