

Reaching more disabled people through accessible and inclusive communications

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.

Disabled people are a large proportion of our population, so are an important audience to consider when communicating. Accessible communication should be a priority for everybody in your organisation. From using social media to promote activities and sending out attachments in emails, simple changes can have a large influence on your impact.

A number of different factors 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.

We have created a number of engagement resources that encourage you to think about the ways you include disabled people. This sheet provides top tips on how to be more inclusive and accessible in communications.





Being welcoming and contactable

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?

Asking people in advance, what their communications preferences are, and consulting with the disabled people you are trying to attract, 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 or perhaps a 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 san serifs fonts, testing your colour contrasts and making sure your images portray positive pictures of disabled people in your activity.

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 users, including the design layout, 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 leaflet is available in Word format and audio file then promote this information. It may spark someone to ask you for a copy.

Top tips

Use the Accessibility Checker on Word.

Send your information in a range of accessible formats, including accessible PDF and Word.

Are your messages clear and in plain English?

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



Top tips

Tools such as Drivel Defence will check your documents for you.

Find it here:

www.plainenglish.co.uk/drivel-defence

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. E.g. a member, who is deaf and uses British Sign Language, may be able to interpret for your club's promotional video.

Monitoring 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.



Top tips to increase the accessibility and inclusivity of your communications



Have a clear message.



Know your audience and their barriers to communication.



Think about delivery - what channels will you use?



What formats do you need to ensure more people can read your information?

More on inclusive communications

Activity Alliance'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.

There are [10 factsheets available on our website](#) that provide clear guidance and practical tips on effective planning, design and delivery of accessible and inclusive marketing communications. They cover a range of subjects:

- 1 Social media
- 2 Promoting your events
- 3 Digital communications
- 4 Language and terminology
- 5 Accessible communications on a budget
- 6 Marketing campaigns
- 7 Accessible design
- 8 Photography
- 9 Writing new stories
- 10 Inclusive communications checklist

Find all our research on our website, this sheet is part of our engagement resource.

Read all the sheets here activityalliance.org.uk/engagement

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This document is available in Word format. Please contact us if you need support. Activity Alliance is the operating name for the English Federation of Disability Sport. Registered Charity no. 1075180