Leeds for Change - access and inclusion guide

Accessibility means ensuring people who are disabled or partially-abled, either visibly or invisibly, should have no barriers in their way to access events and activist spaces. This guide also focuses on inclusion: no one should ever be excluded due to their gender, race, class, immigration status, age or trouble with the law.

Whilst we may not consciously mean to exclude, these resources are intended to give us the knowledge to embed access and inclusion as default in our organising practices.

This guide is by no means definitive, and if you would like to add your own contribution or show us a link you think is useful email info@leedstidal.org.

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How to make your workshops and events accessible and inclusive…

1. **Provide contact details:** When organising events or campaigns, the best thing you can do is make sure people are able to contact you directly with their accessibility needs. This means including your email and phone number on an event description and encouraging attendees to get in touch with any requests to make the event easier for them.

2. **Check what's needed beforehand:** Check the accessibility of the activities with all the participants and make adjustments if needs be. This in turn will create an inclusive and sensitive culture (not all disabilities or impairments are visible).

3. **Step free access:** Always check that the venues you use have step free access and wheelchair accessible loos. Make sure this is communicated on your event promotion.

4. **Gender neutral toilets:** Always check that the venue you use has a gender neutral loo. Make sure this is communicated on your event promotion.

5. **Children:** Where possible provide a children's creche to make the event accessible to parents.

6. **Travel and childcare bursaries:** Where possible factor in travel and childcare bursaries in your budgeting to reimburse people who otherwise wouldn't be able to come to the event.

7. **Sliding scale / Pay As You Feel (PAYF) entry fees:** Having a suggested donation based on income facilitates wealth redistribution and means that income should never be a barrier for someone coming to your event.

8. **Safer Spaces/ Anti-oppression policy:** Having a policy that is displayed on the event page, read out at the start of your event, and displayed on the wall of the

venue, makes it clear to everyone what they as participants and organisers must commit to, in order to be part of the space. Sisters Uncut have a good example.

9. **Pre-circulate handouts and presentations:** If you're planning to use a Powerpoint with text on it, or give printed handouts in your sessions, circulating them in advance will mean that people with visual impairments are able to read them with screen readers ahead of the event.

10. **Hearing loops:** Always check that the venue you use has hearing loops that can be set up. Make sure this is communicated on your event promotion.

11. **Sign Language interpreting:** Especially for public events, factor in the cost of sign language interpreting when budgeting for your event, and advertise this on your event promotion.

12. **Type font and colour:** When selecting fonts for printed handouts or for visual presentations, please consider the readability of your text for dyslexic readers. This guide is helpful for building accessible presentations. Be mindful of your colour choices, e.g. avoid pale green and pale red mixtures for people in your session who may be colour blind. This guide provides practical tips.

13. **Caption images:** If you're using images in a presentation or handout, please provide a caption for the image, and a source if necessary.

14. **Read text aloud:** It is good practice to read any text on the screen / hand-out aloud for the benefit of VIPs, participants with dyslexia and anyone else having difficulty seeing / reading the screen.

15. **Describe Pictures:** If there are any pictures on your slide presentations or in any handouts, you should describe them to allow people with visual impairments to have an equal experience of your presentation.

16. **Gender pronouns:** If you are starting your session with an introductory go-around of names, invite everyone to say their preferred pronouns, if this is something they feel comfortable and able to do. This is to avoid misgendering anyone in the room (e.g. my name is Maia, and my pronouns are she/her)

17. **Keep doorways clear:** Ensure that doorways are clear (i.e. no chairs, people, tables blocking the exit) so that if needed all attendees, including those with mobility aids, have the option to leave the room discreetly without interrupting the session.

18. **Introduce yourself when speaking:** Encourage everyone in the room to introduce themselves before making a point (e.g. 'Maia speaking. blah blah blah...') so anyone with a visual impairment is included in the discussion.

19. **Speak slow:** Remember to speak slowly and clearly, as some people in the room might not have English as their first language.

20. **Be mindful of speaking distribution:** If your event entails lots of contributions from people in the room, and there are dominant voices taking up a lot of space, explicitly

invite 'those who haven't yet spoken' to contribute to the next part of the discussion, if they would like to. People with speech impairments may need longer time to make their points understood, so please practice and encourage an understanding of this.

21. **Offer quiet Spaces:** It may be worth considering to offer quiet spaces for individuals who may need time out during workshops or presentations.

22. **Ask about allergies and intolerances:** When catering for an event, it is important to make sure you ask participants of any allergies, intolerances or dietary requirements before you select refreshments or a caterer.

How to make your Online Content accessible and inclusive...

1. **Text description for all images and videos:** If using images or videos on social media posts & emails then include a text description for users who rely on screen-reading software.

2. **Alt Text for images:** Alt text tells website users or search engines the nature or contents of an image. If you're creating a website then add 'alt text' to your image. Twitter has a built-in option to add alt text to images - they refer to it as 'compose image descriptions'. This function is not visible by default - see this guide on how to activate it.

3. **Subtitles / audio-descriptives for videos:** When producing videos include subtitles. Try to create an audio-descriptive version for VIPs if possible.

4. **Colours and fonts:** Consider font styles and colour combinations when creating graphics and designing websites for people with dyslexia or people with visual impairments. Consider adding an high-contrast colour scheme option to your website if you're able to do so.

5. **Free translation widget:** Many social media platforms automatically translate posts for users who don't have English as their first language. If you're creating a website, you can add this free translation widget by Google.

6. **Mobile Compatibility:** If possible, make sure your website has a mobile-compatible layout option.

Other resources…

- **Trans-inclusive language:** [The Radical Copyeditor's Style Guide for Writing About Transgender People](#)

- **Inclusive language:** [A Progressive's Style Guide](#) - Includes information for writing about age, disability, economy, environment, gender, housing, race, amongst others.

- **Anti-Racist practice for organisations/groups:** [Dismantling Racism Workbook for Social Change Groups](#), and [White Supremacy Culture in our Organisations](#)

- **Making live music accessible:** [DIY Access Guide](#) a guide to improving deaf and disabled people's access to live music. It is aimed at bands and artists but also useful for general event planning!