

Accessible Event Guide

2026



How to make your event accessible

When planning an event in the community, it is important that you take into consideration a number of factors to make it accessible to residents, carers and people who use our services. We have co-designed and co-produced this event checklist with residents to make your events more open and welcome to the diverse communities living in Newham.

You do not need to have every single item ticked off, but it is important that you consider your audience and what their needs may be. The main thing to consider is flexibility, remembering that different people have different needs and that all residents are experts by experience.

We welcome any feedback from anyone who runs events and utilises this checklist. We want the document to evolve. Please contact the Co-Production Team for any comments or questions. Details are at the bottom of this document.

Please note that a handy index can be found at the end of this document to help you quickly find the information most relevant to your event.

Section One: Physical Space

A venue being accessible isn't just about wheelchair ramps, but about how residents can get to the venue and how they can comfortably use the space.

1.1 Accessible Environment

Check for ramps, lifts, grab rails, trip hazards, wires. Less accessible buildings may need mobile ramps. It is preferred that ramps are flush with the ground.

1.2 Welcome & volunteer support

Volunteers and helpers should be clearly visible to attendees – and welcoming attendees into the building and directing them to the event.

Have a clearly labelled person / place for residents to check in to and ask for assistance e.g. the registration desk. Have an information point throughout the event.

1.3 Wheelchair access

When laying out the chairs and tables at an event, you need to allow for enough room for wheelchairs of all shapes and sizes to move round the space. Consider the shape and arrangement of tables to support accessibility and the flow of movement around the room.

This includes allowing for spaces for wheelchair users to sit amongst the audience and being flexible.

1.4 Building entrances and exits

Be mindful of how residents enter and exit the building. Not all spaces have automatic doors and you may need to position somebody at the entrance to open/close the door for residents with mobility aids – remember that people will drift in and out.

1.5 Fire Evacuation	Have a fire safety plan in place, including refuge points and evacuation procedures. Remember that lifts cannot be used during a fire alarm, so ground floor events are preferred where possible. Check that the venue provides trained fire marshals and confirm evacuation arrangements before the event. Keep evacuation routes clear and make sure there is enough space for wheelchair users, people using mobility aids and assistance dogs. Some people may feel anxious about evacuations, especially if they have had a difficult experience in the past. Clear information and reassurance can help people feel safe. Complete a risk assessment before the event and consider any accessibility needs. If a number of attendees need additional support, make sure there are enough staff or volunteers available to assist them safely.
1.6 Parking Spaces	Consider whether there is space for Dial a Ride, a Taxi or ComCab (for Taxi-card) to pull up close to the building. If there is limited parking available at the venue, then these should be reserved and 'booked' in advance and, residents notified of this limitation.

1.7 Seating	You should reserve front row seats for BSL users, lip-reading, visual access and space for wheelchair users to sit with their companions. Where possible consider the comfort of the chairs, including arm rests and padding. Some people may need specific types of seating. If this is not possible, make breaks more regular.
1.8 Lighting	Address any flickering or flashing lights (for those with epilepsy or light sensitivity).
1.9 Restrooms	Some venues require a RADAR key to access the restroom (see image at end) or a member of staff to unlock it. Make attendees aware of the arrangements in advance.
1.10 Guide Dog Friendly	The building and staff should be guide and assistance dog friendly – please refer to the resources for more information.
1.11 Refreshments and food	Volunteer support should continue during refreshment breaks. Residents may struggle to lift water jugs, press down on hot water dispensers and carry food / drinks to tables. You should implement a queuing system, so people are standing for as little time as possible and food is fairly distributed. If you have sufficient volunteer support, volunteers could take orders from each table.

Section Two: Other Needs

Meeting the emotional, spiritual and psychological needs of the residents attending the events

2.1 Therapeutic Support	When needed, we recommend having an onsite counsellor or mental health trained support staff who is available to offer comfort to residents experiencing distress. You should consider the gender of the counsellor(s)
2.2 Additional space	Try and have a spare room available for some quiet time or as a prayer room
2.3 Housekeeping	The host of the event should take time at the start of the session to talk about housekeeping, which should cover safety, accessibility and comfort. Include items such as: • Introductions to speakers, staff, volunteers and translators • Location of toilets • The fire safety process, including: fire exits, fire warden, assembly points and visual evacuation aids for deaf or hard of hearing residents.

2.4 Attitudes	Remember not all disabilities are visible – so remember to take this into account. Be proactive when hosting residents, enquire into what support they may need.
2.5 Training	The more comprehensive and inclusive training for staff / volunteers can be, the better. There are resources at the end and opportunities for further reading.
2.6 Fire Safety	The fire safety plan should be checked in advance during a site visit. Be aware that fire exit doors should not be obstructed The fire alarm may be just audio so you also need a visual evacuation aid (image at end)

Section Three: Digital events

Digital events aren't accessible for everyone, but they can be a useful tool for residents who have busy schedules, caring responsibilities or are unable to leave the home

3.1 Microsoft Teams

Check with residents which platform they are most comfortable with. It is often best to advise that residents do a 'test run' when using Microsoft Teams; they may need to set up or log in to an account, which takes a bit of time.

3.2 Zoom

The alternative is to use Zoom, which seems to be more accessible.

3.3 Enable Transcript

You can 'enable transcript' for residents who have hearing loss on both Teams and Zoom. Have a play around with a 'guest' log in, rather than an account holder, because the functions differ.
Disable closed captions when presenting videos that have subtitles because they will overlap on the screen.

3.4 Dialling into Zoom

Residents can dial into Zoom meetings on their mobile or landline using the details included in the invitation. Residents can mute and unmute using #6 however this can be unreliable, so we recommend not muting residents who dial in by phone. This may lead to background noise, so advise the resident to be mindful of this.

3.5 Dialling into Zoom on behalf of another person

Residents who need additional support can be dialled in by a third person – you will need access to the ‘call forwarding’ function (found on Skype, Teams and some landline or mobile phones).

- **Step one:** Call the resident – then put them on hold (advise them to wait on the other end)
- **Step two:** Dial into Zoom on Skype/Team using the details in the invitation, enter the Meeting ID, skip participant ID and then enter the passcode. You will need to have the details to hand because Zoom is quick to end the call if you’re not ready. Put this call on hold
- **Step three:** Go back to the residents’ call and transfer to the Zoom call

3.6 Using Video	The host should encourage everyone joining online to turn their cameras on, including staff members, because it creates a more welcoming environment. Residents should be given the option to leave their cameras off, if it makes them feel more comfortable: if the subject is sensitive, a more anonymous approach may encourage people to open up.
3.7 Sharing Screen	Be aware that using the 'screen share' function can interrupt the audience's ability to see the British Sign Language translator. Speak to the d/Deaf person to find out their preferences and be ready to be flexible
3.8 Pin / Spotlight / Allow multi pin (Zoom, Microsoft Teams)	You can 'spotlight' or 'pin' the presenter and the British Sign Language translator which will enable everyone to focus on those key people in an online meeting. If you have more than one BSL interpreter, they will take turns interpreting, turning their cameras off when they have ended their turn. You will need to watch out for this switch, and modify the pin. A Deaf participant may want to control their own pin.
If this is your first meeting, allow as much time as possible for set up and complete technical runs to test equipment, especially if it is a hybrid meeting. It is advised that you test the sound equipment with somebody joining online, in different parts of the room.	

Section Four: Communication Needs

Accessible communication, with enough time and support to understand and process it, is important to ensuring everyone can meaningfully participate in an event. This needs careful consideration, so that the right support is in place on the day.

4.1 Translators	Attendees should be made aware what language support will be available on the day – this can include British Sign Language (BSL) and community languages
4.2 British Sign Language (BSL)	Multiple BSL translators are needed to ensure that they can alternate and take breaks. If the event has stalls or there are networking opportunities, then there should be BSL translators on hand to work with BSL users one to one (or in small groups)
4.3 Communication Cards	These can support a positive interactive session. Our communication cards are colour coded with a red side with 'I don't understand' and green side 'I want to say something' and 'yes' and 'no' (see photo below), designed by the Learning Disability Resident Advisory Group.

4.4 Communication badges	Communication badges can be great to support people with learning disabilities and Autism feel more comfortable at meetings and events. They express how a person would like to be communicated with. For example, “I can manage interactions and do not need help at the moment” and “Only speak to me if I have already given you permission.”
4.5 Introductions	Speakers should introduce themselves at the beginning of the event – especially for those who are visually impaired or blind to know who is talking, you should be especially mindful of this during interactive sessions.
4.6 Audio System	All audio systems should be tested in advance, especially if technical support is not available on the day. Poor audio can lead to those who are hard of hearing to be excluded. Provide roving microphones or repeat questions from audience members so they are heard by all.

Section Five: Information accessibility

Information should be clear and free from jargons and acronyms. You should also adapt to your audiences' needs and consider translation, Easy Read and Dyslexia friendly backgrounds.

5.1 Clear Text	You should use a high contrast between text/background, large print and a clear font
5.2 Large Print	We advise using Arial or Verdana 14 as a standard. And larger if necessary
5.3 Dyslexia	Some residents with Dyslexia may need a certain coloured background to support their understanding. Printing materials on coloured paper or the provision of different coloured acetates will support understanding
5.4 Translations	Translating materials into different community languages may be invaluable. There are many languages spoken in Newham, so this will change depending on the audience.
5.5 Easy Read	This can be translated by somebody trained to write Easy Read. Easy Read uses simplified text, alongside picture within a table. Residents have advised that pictures, rather than drawn images, are preferable for Easy Read documents.

5.6 Readers	Digital documents can be read aloud using different software (screen readers). Speak to the participants about what is the best format for them. We often use Plain Text, which is shared on a Microsoft Word document. You should avoid tables, multiple columns and images.
5.7 PowerPoint	PowerPoint presentation should have only necessary text and information on them. 6x6x6 rule per slide: no more than 6 ideas, no more than 6 bullet points, no more than 6 words per bullet point Diagrams should be spaced out and in large font. Slides should be used as a prompt for the presenter, rather than a source of information. For in person meetings, accessible hard copies should be provided to all participants
5.8 General Pointers	Avoid jargon, acronyms and technical language – plain, simple English works best all around!

Section Six: Pre event information

6.1 Sign Up form	To give residents the opportunity to express their accessibility needs
6.2 Transport	Consider how residents will get to the venue and share the transport options with any communication that is published
6.3 Parking	Provide options for parking near to the venue
6.4 Accessible information	You can provide further accessible information to provide some support and information before the event. You can provide the AccessAble webpage (see below)

Section Seven: Useful resources

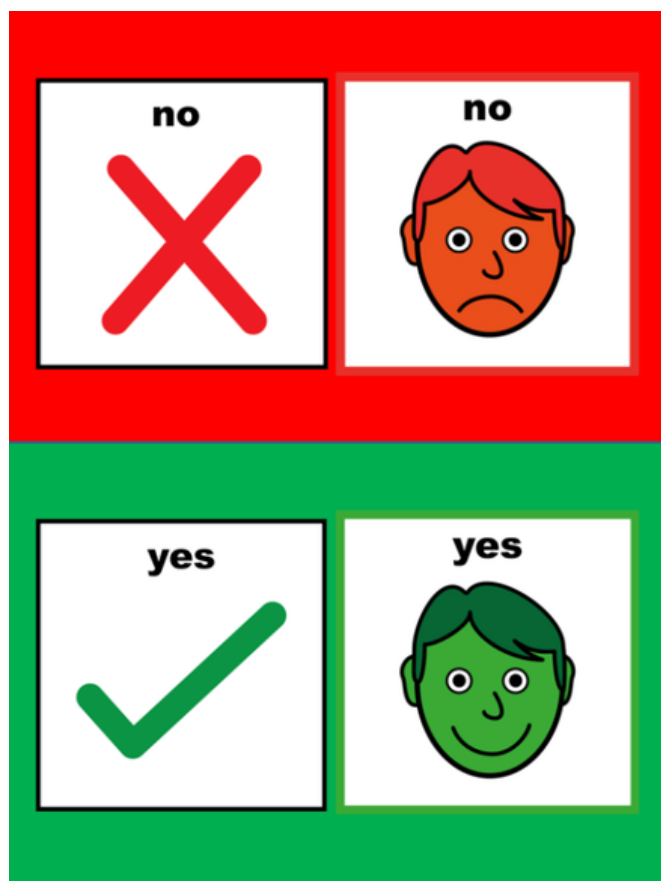
This handy guide is just the start of the conversation! There are lots of resources out there to learn from and evolve your accessibility practice

7.1 Newham Co-Production Team (Adults)	Contact the Newham Co-Production Team (Adults) at: Co-productionteam@newham.gov.uk • Sue Maynard – Transformation and Co-Production Manager (Adults) • Latifat Honey Sarfo - Co-Production and Resident Insight Officer • Sophie Ibotson – Co-Production and Resident Insight Officer • Rachel Lukose – Co-Production and Resident Insight Support Officer
7.2 Enabled Living	Enabled Living to do great work on accessibility and are a useful resource to learn from
7.3 Easy on the I	For Easy Read images You need to consider copywrite and licensing rules
7.4 Readability website	Hemingway Editor

7.5 Newham Volunteer Team	For <u>volunteer support</u> at events in Newham, contact the Volunteer Team! However, volunteers should not be used to replace paid staff (e.g. support workers) and the volunteer experience should be a worthwhile and valuable opportunity. <u>volunteers@newham.gov.uk</u>
7.6 Dementia Friendly Spaces	<u>Dementia-friendly environment checklist</u> (Alzheimer's Society)
7.7 The Social Model of Disability	Do some reading on the <u>Social Model of Disability</u> (as opposed to the Medical Model of Disability)

7.8 Guide dog and assistance dog information	<u>About guide dogs</u> <u>Information and advice</u>
7.9 Deaf / hard of hearing communication	<u>Communication support for someone who is deaf or has hearing loss</u>
7.10 Hidden disabilities	<u>The Sunflower icons</u> People might have a disability but you might see them e.g. badge, wrist band, lanyard, cap, t-shirt. Might need your support but might not be aware of them. Include picture of allies (white) and the person (green) - might have a lanyard, badge.
7.11 Access Card	<u>Access Card: Making access easy</u>
7.12 UK Disabled ID Card	<u>Disabled Identification (DID) Card</u> Scan for details on card – include address etc. in case of emergencies
7.13 AccessAble	<u>AccessAble (London Borough of Newham)</u>

Images



Communication cards



Hidden disabilities



Key



Deaf alerter sign

Index

Section	Before	During	After
<u>1. Physical Space</u>			
1.1 Accessible Environment	✓	✓	
1.2 Welcome & Volunteer Support	✓	✓	✓
1.3 Wheelchair Access	✓	✓	
1.4 Building Entrances and Exits	✓	✓	
1.5 Fire Evacuation	✓	✓	
1.6 Parking Spaces	✓	✓	
1.7 Seating	✓	✓	
1.8 Lighting	✓	✓	
1.9 Restrooms	✓	✓	
1.10 Guide Dog Friendly	✓	✓	
1.11 Refreshments and Food	✓	✓	
<u>2. Other Needs</u>			
2.1 Therapeutic Support	✓	✓	
2.2 Additional Space	✓	✓	
2.3 Housekeeping		✓	
2.4 Attitudes	✓	✓	✓
2.5 Training	✓		✓
2.6 Fire Safety	✓	✓	
<u>3. Digital Events</u>			
3.1 Microsoft Teams	✓	✓	
3.2 Zoom	✓	✓	
3.3 Enable Transcript	✓	✓	
3.4 Dialling into Zoom	✓	✓	
3.5 Dialling into Zoom on Behalf of Another Person	✓	✓	
3.6 Using Video		✓	
3.7 Sharing Screen	✓	✓	
3.8 Pin / Spotlight / Allow Multi-Pin	✓	✓	

Index

Section	Before	During	After
<u>4. Communication Needs</u>			
4.1 Translators	✓	✓	
4.2 British Sign Language (BSL)	✓	✓	
4.3 Communication Cards	✓	✓	
4.4 Communication Badges	✓	✓	
4.5 Introductions		✓	
4.6 Audio System	✓	✓	
<u>5. Information Accessibility</u>			
5.1 Clear Text	✓	✓	✓
5.2 Large Print	✓	✓	✓
5.3 Dyslexia	✓	✓	✓
5.4 Translations	✓	✓	✓
5.5 Easy Read	✓	✓	✓
5.6 Readers	✓	✓	✓
5.7 PowerPoint	✓	✓	
5.8 General Pointers	✓	✓	✓

Index

Section	Before	During	After
<u>6. Pre-Event Information</u>			
6.1 Sign Up Form	✓		
6.2 Transport	✓		
6.3 Parking	✓		
6.4 Accessible Information	✓		
<u>7. Useful Resources</u>			
7.1 Newham Co-Production Team	✓	✓	✓
7.2 Enabled Living	✓	✓	✓
7.3 Easy on the I	✓		
7.4 Readability Website	✓	✓	✓
7.5 Newham Volunteer Team	✓	✓	✓
7.6 Dementia Friendly Spaces	✓	✓	✓
7.7 Social Model of Disability	✓	✓	✓
7.8 Guide Dog and Assistance Dog Information	✓	✓	✓
7.9 Deaf / Hard of Hearing Communication	✓	✓	✓
7.10 Hidden Disabilities	✓	✓	✓
7.11 Access Card	✓	✓	✓
7.12 UK Disabled ID Card	✓	✓	
7.13 AccessAble	✓	✓	✓

