

# How to Hold Inclusive Meetings

This guide is to help you make your meetings, presentations and conferences more inclusive for all speakers and attendees. By making our meetings inclusive it means attendees can fully participate, share ideas and everyone gets the most out of the event.

Remember, not all disabilities are visible and not everyone is comfortable disclosing their disability.

There's always more we can do, so if you've got something else you'd like us to add send us your ideas to [disability@rnli.org.uk](mailto:disability@rnli.org.uk)

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# All Meeting Types

## Before

### All types of meeting:

- Ask attendees if they have any accommodations to take into account – give the context of what will happen – will it be hybrid? Will there be paperwork or slides? - this means attendees can request suitable accommodations for the context.
- Provide materials in advance – electronically if possible – this allows attendees to process information in advance, change document colours to make it easier to read and electronic documents are easier to manage on one device than multiple pieces of paper.
- Consider if there are any topics that could be triggering for attendees and provide a trigger warning for materials and on the agenda. This gives attendees the opportunity to decide if they will stay for that part of the discussion or leave the room.
- Consider the timing of the meeting – have you considered attendees who are part time or who have caring responsibilities?
- If there will be an interpreter or live captioner, ask if they need any reference materials in advance. This can be helpful if there is specific terminology so they can prepare in advance.

### In Person:

- Book an accessible room so that everyone can attend.
- Check there enough room for every one to move around, including people using wheelchairs and mobility aids.
- If you are providing food and drinks remember to ask for dietary requirements and remember not everyone drinks alcohol. It can be helpful for neurodivergent attendees and attendees with allergies to know what food will be provided so that they can make alternative arrangements if necessary.
- Be aware of any religious festivals, such as Ramadan and fasting during Easter, and ask whether attendees would prefer food/drink to be in a separate room or served before or after the main meeting.
- Consider asking people to be considerate of bringing foods into meetings and the types of food as other attendees may have allergies – some of which can be airborne.

## During

### All types of meeting:

- If there is an interpreter present, speak to the attendee not the interpreter (the interpreter won't be offended – it's standard practise!)
- Make sure only one person at a time is talking and avoid speaking over each other – use hands up features on video calls, or similar in person tactics, to indicate who would like to speak next – especially during group discussions. This is to make it easier for d/Deaf,

hard of hearing and neurodiverse attendees to lipread. It also helps to reduce sensory overload.

- Warn attendees of potential loud/sharp sounds or surprise sounds as this can be stressful for neurodiverse attendees.
- Read out any text or describe any charts or images that give meaning so that attendees with visual disabilities and neurodiverse attendees have access to all the information you are sharing.
- Consider if there are any topics that could be triggering for attendees and provide a trigger warning before any discussion points to allow people to leave the meeting.

## In Person:

- Make sure the room stays at a reasonable temperature and doesn't get too hot – neurodiverse attendees might find it hard to regulate their temperature.
- Make sure lights do not flicker – this can cause headaches, trigger seizures and cause visual stress.
- Make sure there are no cables on the floor or trailing across walkways – it's a trip hazard but also means people using mobility aids can't get past.
- Reserve spaces for people near the exit, or near the front, depending on their preferences, for example, if they need to leave the room quickly/discreetly.
- Avoid speakers being backlit/make sure speakers' faces can be seen clearly for lipreading.

## Virtual & Hybrid:

- Some users might find that Teams backgrounds or blurred backgrounds interfere with their assistive technology. If someone has highlighted this, let other attendees know not to use a background or blur for accessibility reasons.
- For hybrid meetings, all users in the room should join the call with their own laptop and headset to make them easier to hear and lipread. You can still have the main room camera on too if you want (but turn off the sound)

## After

### All types of meeting:

- Share actions and/or key discussion points electronically – this allows attendees to change document colours to make it easier to read and electronic documents are easier to manage on one device than multiple pieces of paper. Sharing actions and discussion points also helps attendees to refresh their memory and check they processed the information correctly.

## Resources

<https://business.scope.org.uk/article/7-tips-for-more-inclusive-meetings>

<https://www.york.ac.uk/about/equality/inclusive-meetings/>

[https://odib.fas.harvard.edu/files/fasodib/files/tips\\_for\\_facilitating\\_inclusive\\_meetings.pdf](https://odib.fas.harvard.edu/files/fasodib/files/tips_for_facilitating_inclusive_meetings.pdf)

<https://www.iop.org/sites/default/files/2023-05/iop-Inclusive-Meeting-Guidance-2023.pdf>