



Guide to Inclusive Design and Communications

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1.What do we mean by Inclusive Design?

The aim of inclusion is to involve all, whoever they are. Inclusive design aims to remove the barriers that create undue effort and separation, enabling everyone to participate equally, confidently and independently.

To further understand what we mean let's have a look at this cartoon:



Image 1

Image 1 shows three people standing on the same size box looking over a solid fence at a baseball field. The first person is tall and can see over the fence. The second person is shorter but can still see over the fence. The third person is the shortest and cannot see over the fence.



Image 2

Image 2 is the same image as image 1, except the first person no longer has a box, the second person has one box and the third has two boxes. All three people can now see over the solid fence.



Image 3

Image 3 is the same image as 1 and 2, except this time the solid fence is now a mesh fence you can see-through. All three people no longer have boxes and can see the baseball field.

- The baseball field represents an activity or service, this can include access to education, employment, healthcare, activities, services and products.
- The fence represents barriers, these could be systemic, societal attitudes, outdated policies, or even self-limiting beliefs.
- The boxes represent support and access provision.
- For the purpose of this cartoon the diversity of people is represented by height.

Image 1 shows what happens when we treat people the same. Some people are simply not able to access services and are disadvantaged as a result. This is a form of discrimination and goes against the Council's Public Sector Equality Duty.

Image 2 shows how we might adapt an activity or service to suit people with different needs. This is one way we could achieve 'equality' – by making adaptations to existing provision.

However, Image 3 shows what happens when we embed equality into the design process – we can achieve equality without the need for special adaptations and with

minimum inconvenience. Remember that inclusion is about how people feel and how easy it is to participate as well as what they are able to do.

Image 3 sums up inclusive design; it's about working to break down and remove the barriers to progression and opportunity, so life is an even playing field for everyone, **based on their own merit and abilities**. There is still a chain link fence in this image; perhaps that's in recognition that we may never live in a perfect world. But we keep on making progress and working towards creating inclusive environments at work and in the service we provide.

Example: While some transgender (trans) people identify on a binary scale – as either male or female – some do not and may instead refer to themselves as genderqueer, gender fluid, non-binary or other terms. Those that do not identify as male or female may opt to use pronouns such as 'they, them and theirs' instead of the gendered 'he, him and his' or 'she, her and hers'. In addition, gendered honorifics such as 'Ms' or 'Mr' may change to the more inclusive 'Mx'. Nothing may be more personal than the way in which people refer to us through our name and pronouns. Using a person's chosen name and pronouns is a form of mutual respect and basic courtesy. The experience of being misgendered can be hurtful, angering, and even distracting, even more so for people who are experiencing gender dysphoria. The experience of accidentally misgendering someone can be embarrassing for both parties, creating tension and leading to communication breakdowns and a lack of trust across teams and with customers.

To support trans and non-binary people, a healthcare provider updated their registration forms and other relevant documents to include a system to give patients the option of articulating their correct name, gender identity, and pronouns. This allowed all staff to see the patients' preferences, and to use them consistently to enable patients who are transgender or non-binary to feel valued and included. They also provided front line staff with Trans Inclusion training to equip them with the skills to deliver a fully inclusive service.

If you would like to understand more about Trans you can access our eLearning course (WFW DP158 Trans Awareness) via Your HR.

How to achieve Inclusive Design: An [Equality Impact Assessment](#) (EIA) will help you to analyse how your activity might impact on those with different characteristics. It can support you in achieving inclusive design and meeting our legal duties under the Equality Act 2010 and Public Sector Equality Duty. It might be that your proposed activity doesn't require a full EIA, in this case it's still important to '**Think Inclusion**' at all times, find our top tips [here](#).



**be the
best we
can be.**

2. Inclusive Communications

Inclusive communication covers all forms of communications, including;

- Verbal / non-verbal communications
- Written communications
- Signage and information
- Electronic communications

If we consider how inclusive our communications are, it will help us ensure that more people can access and understand our activities, services and products.

Inclusive communications aren't just about people with disabilities; it is about our opportunity to communicate clearly with everyone.

All communications should have a clear objective. By making your communications inclusive – considering different access needs – you will improve both uptake and engagement.

Example: Though closed captioning and transcription features were designed with deaf or hard of hearing users in mind, it was discovered that everyone can benefit from this solution. Video captions can be used in loud or quite environments and can be used to promote literacy and language learning.

Top Tips:

- Use simple colours with good contrast and plain background
- Write in plain English
- Use a simple font (Arial, Calibri etc.) and a good font size (12+)
- Use simple sentences and bullet points
- Make buttons descriptive - for example, Attach files
- Build simple and consistent layouts
- Don't use figures of speech
- Use images to support text
- Describe images and provide transcripts for video
- Write descriptive links and headings - for example, Contact us
- Design for keyboard use only (limit mouse movement)



**help people and
communities to
find their own
solutions.**

Example: In 2010 the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) reviewed their standards for pre-registration nursing training. They consulted on a set of draft standards covering the knowledge, skills and attitudes required of qualified nurses. It was important that people with learning disabilities could contribute to this document because they often use the services that nurses provide and nurses need to be able to communicate with people of differing abilities

The NMC worked with Mencap to tailor their approach. Mencap produced a short, Easy Read questionnaire, which focused on people's own healthcare experiences rather than on complex questions about the draft standards themselves.

As well as the Easy Read questionnaire, a focus group was carried out in order to consult face to face with people with learning disabilities. The focus group made use of scenarios and role-plays so participants could act out and talk about the experiences they'd had in hospital.

The consultation generated rich data that gave a good insight into the experiences and needs of people with learning disabilities as well as reinforcing some of the key messages from the standard consultation. This helped inform NMC's decisions about the new standards and enabled them to place sufficient emphasis on the priority nursing skills identified.

To find out more about Inclusive Communications, see this full guide from Inclusive Employers [here](#).

Top Tips:

- Involve relevant experts from the earliest planning stages
- Consider the needs of your audience in advance – assess which, if any, accessible format versions are likely to be required (this can form part of your [Equality Impact Assessment](#))
- Plan ahead – make sure any accessible formats you produce are available at the same time as the standard print
- If you intend to supply accessible formats on demand, procedures should be in place to produce these within a few days of the request
- Make sure you are in contact with a range of suppliers who can produce good quality materials in accessible formats (see list of suppliers below)
- Make sure any consultation period is not reduced for people due to accessible formats not being available at the launch, or running out during the consultation period

3.A model for developing Inclusive Communications



build strong
working
relationships.

Inclusive Communications Charter

| | |
|----------|---|
| C | Clarity – Be clear on your objectives / goals – what you are trying to achieve through your communication. |
| H | Human – Most people respond to communications that are not overly corporate or rigid. Ensure that your voice is warm, respectful and has integrity. Avoid any jargon. |
| A | <p>Audience –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know who you are trying to communicate with? • Have you considered your audiences and how they like to receive information? • Have you thought about all the differences within your audience? • Do your images reflect the diversity of the audience? • Does your use of language or image perpetuate unhelpful stereotypes? <p>An Equality Impact Assessment can support you in systematically analysing your proposed activity against its impact on groups with different characteristics and identify actions to achieve inclusive design.</p> |
| R | Receive – We often fall into the trap of thinking that communication is a one way process. It is vital that when developing inclusive communications, we are considering how we transmit our information / message and how we will encourage and receive responses to it. |
| T | <p>Track – Inclusive communications will constantly evolve, therefore it's important to recognise that you may need to do things differently as people and messages change. You need to track what is working, or who, and what you could do differently to engage with a wider audience.</p> <p>This is especially important for any consultation and engagement activities; are you reaching and engaging a diverse audience that is reflective of the population? If not, what can you do to reach these groups of people? This can also form part of your Equality Impact Assessment.</p> |
| E | Everyone – If you are focused on inclusive communications you are thinking about ensuring your communications will not exclude anyone. |
| R | Reality Check – Most of us set out to be inclusive but sometimes we make mistakes or get things wrong. Remember that you have good intentions and don't take feedback personally or defensively. Stay true to the fact that you are trying to be as inclusive as possible. |

4. Further Guidance and Advice

- [Accessible Communication Formats Guide \(Gov.uk\)](#) – Includes information on Audio, Braille and Moon, British Sign Language, Easy read and Makaton, Accessible print publications, Subtitling, Telephone and Textphone.
- [Consultation, Engagement and Survey Resources](#)
- [Dos and Don'ts on Designing for Accessibility \(Gov.uk\)](#) - Dos and don'ts approaching accessibility from a design perspective.
- [EDI Policies, Guides and Information](#) – this includes a practical guide on Dyslexia and our 'Think Inclusion' Top Tips
- [Equality Impact Assessments](#) – includes our form, guidance and eLearning.
- [Making written information easier to understand for people with learning disabilities \(Department of Health\)](#)
- [Publishing Accessible Documents](#) - Documents published on GOV.UK or other [public sector websites must meet accessibility standards](#). This is so they can be used by as many people as possible, including those with disabilities. This link provides simple steps to follow when you write a document.
- [Top tips for accessible communications \(Business Disability Forum\)](#)
- [WCC Interpreting and Translation Service](#) – provides interpreters and translation of documents into alternative languages.
- [Writing for Web Accessibility](#)
- [UK Association for Accessible Formats](#)

Please contact the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) team on 01926 412370 or equalities@warwickshire.gov.uk if you require any specific guidance or advice.