



Volume 3:
**Access and
Equality**

Introduction

Equality, diversity, and accessibility can sometimes seem like meaningless buzzwords, but they are key to successful public engagement - especially when, as is with health and care, people with social and health disadvantages may be disproportionately affected.

This Guide aims to make sure that you have the tools to welcome voices from all walks of life, to make everyone comfortable and included, and by doing so, to gain a more complete view of the use of health and social care services.

Among other advantages, this:

- lets us tailor our services to be accessible to everyone, especially vulnerable people who may need them most.
- means that our services can better suit the needs of the people using them in general.
- helps us to comply with equalities legislation.
- promotes social justice, inclusiveness, and human rights.
- helps to tackle the health inequalities common in Scotland and throughout the world.
- meets our legal requirements (see next page for details).

Besides the characteristics outlined in the Equalities Act (right), you should consider other difficulties people might face.

For example, people living in remote areas, people facing poverty or homelessness, or full-time carers are all likely to require help to access services or activities.

Impact assessments should be carried out to reduce inequalities. The HSCP uses the **Equality and Socioeconomic Impact Assessment (EqSEIA)**

It is illegal to treat someone differently based on any **protected characteristics**:

gender identity	sex
disability	marriage
sexuality	age
ethnicity	religion
pregnancy or maternity	

Key Legislation

Equalities Act (2010)

- UK-wide law merging previous equal pay, equal treatment, and anti-discrimination laws into one place.
- Outlines the nine "protected characteristics"
- Makes it illegal for employers, organisations, or workers to discriminate based on these characteristics.
- Requires employers and service providers to make any reasonable changes to include people.

Find out more at:
www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act

Fairer Scotland Duty (2018)

- Requires public bodies in Scotland to consider how they can reduce inequalities caused by social and economic differences.
- Requires organisations to submit a written assessment of how they have considered this.
- Covers anyone whose income is below the Scottish average, and areas (including Argyll & Bute) where this is common.

Find out more at:
www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-duty-interim-guidance-public-bodies/

Islands (Scotland) Bill (2017)

- Requires the HSCP to consider island communities and how to include them.
- Requires impact assessments of work including island communities.

Read the Bill at:
www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/Bills/105168.aspx

Making Things Readable

Some groups to consider in terms of accessibility when writing pamphlets, leaflets, posters, and so on might include:

- People with dyslexia. Many people with dyslexia find it easier to read short words, with clear spacing, and some fonts (right) are better than others for dyslexia sufferers.

Arial	Cagliostro
Comic Sans	Clear Sans
Century Gothic	Crusoe Text
Verdana	Glacial Indifference
Trebuchet	PT Sans
Calibri	<i>Tillana</i>

- People with poor eyesight. Very small writing or pictures can be off-putting and hard to read. Official guidance recommends a text size of 14pt or above where possible.
- People with limited English. These may be people for whom English is not their native language, or people who struggle with literacy. To make life easier for these people, try to use simple language, and where possible illustrate your leaflets and posters in a way which helps to clarify the text.
- People who are colour-blind. Around 5% of people in the UK are colour-blind to some degree. Consider this when choosing colour schemes for your work.

To see if your document is readable for people with colourblindness, you could try a “simulator” tool like:

www.color-blindness.com/coblis-color-blindness-simulator/

Accessible Webpages

- A very simple way to make webpages more accessible to people with visual impairments is to add captions to images. Many blind or partially-sighted people use screen readers, which can read text aloud, so providing a text description of the image means that they can have a fuller experience of the website.
- Many people struggle with poor contrast on websites. Try to ensure that your colour scheme has high contrast even when your screen's brightness is turned down.
- Do not include videos or audio which play automatically when the page is opened. This can provoke anxiety, and even trigger epilepsy.
- If you make your own website, make sure it is legible on all devices - phones and tablets, as well as more traditional computers.
- Remember that many of your audience may be unfamiliar with the Internet. Try to make site navigation as simple and intuitive as possible. The fewer clicks needed to get to something, the better!

6 Tips for Improving Website Accessibility

If you set up your own website or blog page, this guidance may help to make sure it is suitable for all users.

webdesign.tutsplus.com/articles/6-tips-for-improving-website-accessibility--webdesign-1660

Language

Generally, it's advised that you use "Plain English" when speaking to people, or when writing engagement documents. This means:

- Avoiding specialist vocabulary (like scientific or medical terms) where you can.
- Using simple words and sentence structures.
- Use lists where appropriate.
- Use terms like "you" and "we" rather than impersonal terms like "the service user" or "the Partnership"

More information and tools to help with this can be found at www.plainenglish.co.uk

Accessible Venues

Finding a venue that's accessible is about more than whether a wheelchair user can get in! Things to consider include:

- Is there a hearing loop? How are the acoustics?
- Is there a disabled toilet?
- Can people park nearby?
- Are there flickering lights or anything else that might trigger epilepsy?
- How much background noise is there?
- Are the surroundings likely to be distracting to people who have trouble with focus?
- Can people leave easily without disturbing others?

Reaching People

It isn't always enough just to make your work accessible to people with particular needs or concerns. It can also be important to reach out to them specifically.

This makes sure that their interests are reflected in how services are shaped, right from the beginning, and hopefully means that services will be appropriate to the needs of as many people as possible.

Who you need to reach out to will vary based on what you're asking, but some key groups to consider might be:

people with low literacy

parents and carers

children and young people

Deaf people

people who don't use services much

people living in remote areas

lgbtq+ people

people with health conditions

people in care

people in financial difficulty

blind and visually-impaired people

neurodiverse people and people with learning disorders

people with mobility problems

people with poor transport access

people with mental disorders

When you're developing an engagement project, try to consider who will be affected, and whether you can reach out to them specifically. Some ideas for how you can reach seldom heard groups are on the next page.

Ways to Reach Out

Patient Records

If you're working on a specific service, such as a change to a GP clinic or a review of a hospital ward, you can ask the administrator or practice manager to forward an email or letter to everyone who has accessed that service, based on their patient records (in compliance with GDPR).

Support Groups

Groups to support people with particular conditions, or in particular life stages, are common. By reaching out through these groups you can be sure of reaching people who meet the criteria for support.

Through Front-Line Staff

If you know someone who works regularly with the people you're trying to reach - for example, a specialist nurse or a housing advisor - you can speak to them and ask them to refer their clients or patients to your engagement project. You could also give them copies of any documents or surveys, to display to service users.

Schools and Nurseries

Working with teachers and childcare organisations can not only help to reach children, but also their parents and families.

Posters in schools and daycare centres are likely to be seen by a lot of people, and will quickly spread information.

Public Spaces

Setting up an event in a cafe, supermarket, or community space can reach people who aren't actively looking to engage, or who don't regularly use health and care services.

Getting Out There

Because there are so many remote farms, villages, and islands in Argyll and Bute, it's important that you think about who you want to reach when planning your venues. If all your events and documents are in large towns, this prevents you from reaching people elsewhere. Consider how many small events you can hold in remote areas, and where you might put posters and leaflets in villages without a central hall or doctor's office.

Including LGBTQ+ People

Most communities include people who are gay, transgender, bisexual, asexual, or otherwise LGBTQ+. These people may not be "out", or may be uncomfortable identifying themselves in certain situations. This means it's best to assume that in any group you're addressing, there are people who fall under the LGBTQ+ umbrella.

The most important way to make LGBTQ+ people feel included is **not to assume people are straight and cisgender**. Use terms like "partner" instead of "husband" or "wife", unless you know the gender of everyone involved. When asking people their gender, include an option for "Other/Would rather not say".

If someone tells you their gender, it is crucial that you respect this and try to remember it, even if you think they don't look like their gender. Use the name they give you, even if it isn't their legal or birth name.

Find out more at www.stonewall.org.uk

Who is LGBTQ+?

LGBTQ+ is a very broad term, and covers a huge range of identities. Some common identities you may encounter are:

Lesbian/Gay - People who are attracted only to people of the same gender as themselves.

Bisexual - People who are attracted to people of their own gender, and of other genders.

Transgender - People whose gender does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. They may have treatment to align their physical bodies to their gender, like hormone therapy, voice training, or surgery.

Non-binary - People who identify as neither male nor female.

Asexual - People who are not sexually attracted to anyone.

Intersex - People who, at birth, did not meet the physical criteria for "male" or "female". They may have had surgery to correct this.



Engagement Guides

1: What Is Engagement?

2: Planning Engagement

3: Access and Equality

4: Reviewing Engagement

If you need large print or another format, let us know:
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