



Access All Areas Team
Making Events Accessible 2019

Making Pint of Science Events Accessible

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Pint of Science's mission is to make science accessible to everyone. So, to make sure our events really include everyone we have to make sure they are accessible to disabled people. People with disabilities rarely attend events by themselves – they come with family, friends, and carers. So you aren't turning one person away, you are turning away a whole group of people who want to better understand science.

We are striving towards 100% accessible venues throughout Pint of Science. Although we understand that not every team will be able to implement everything in this document straight away, we ask that you push for an event that is as accessible as possible. The following tips in this guide will help you put together a truly inclusive and accessible event.”

Key Impairments to Consider

Twenty percent of the population is disabled, most of which (approx. 75%) are invisible. The four key types of disabilities you need to ensure your event caters for are as follows;

1. Visual impairment
2. Hearing impairment
3. Mobility impairment
4. Cognitive, neurodiversity and mental health issues (e.g. dementia, autism, anxiety)

If you can manage it, consultation with people with expertise by experience of these issues will help ensure your event is as accessible as possible. It is accepted that not all



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accommodations will be possible, but advice from experts will allow the compromises to be the best possible.

Finding an Accessible Venue

There is a checklist at the end of this document with a list of things to consider when selecting a venue to host a Pint of Science event. You can use websites such as Euan's Guide (<https://www.euansguide.com/>) and DisabledGo (<https://www.accessable.co.uk/>) to help identify potential venues in your area. You must visit the venue and check all issues to ensure your event is accessible – do not trust the venue's reports on access – they can be "optimistic". Relay a summary of the information about the accessibility of the venue (good and bad) to your City Coordinator so they can make sure venue guide online is informative.

Wheelchair access

First look at the venue's web page – this will likely save you a lot of time as generally if there is no mention of access then it's likely to be inaccessible for wheelchair users. You could also give them a call to save you travel time when trying to find an accessible venue.

You need to find venues that have step free access to the building and to the specific room you will use to host the Pint of Science event. It also needs to have an accessible toilet (also with step-free access) – see later for more details on toilet access. If your speaker is a wheelchair user, and your venue has a stage, it will need to have step-free access (i.e. a ramp).

Pub owners will often overestimate the capacity of their venues. Please be careful about this, as you need to give a lot of space between tables/chairs/etc. for wheelchair users – if you get a number of wheelchair users in a room, they take up a lot of space – and too much furniture can make them imprisoned in one place. Try to use the lightest furniture the venue has so that wheelchair users can easily move it around. Ask the owner of the



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venue if you can remove some of the chairs and tables if there isn't a clear 1m wide route between the entrance, the bar (or main serving area), and the accessible toilet. A visit to the venue in advance is essential and it may be necessary to arrive early to ensure the venue is set up correctly.

If there are lifts or stair lifts check they are in working order. If they have a weight limit provide this information on the venue guide.

Parking

When you find a great venue find out what accessible parking is available nearby and provide that information to your City Coordinator so they have it when uploading your event to the website.

Lighting

Consider the lighting levels particularly where your speaker will be. Could someone who is visually impaired see the action? Could a person who is deaf read their lips?

Sound

You should let your speakers know that if they are using a video in their presentation it must have sub-titles. You should always ask your speakers to use a microphone where available – irrespective of the volume of their voice – as it is often easier to hear amplified speech. Let your speakers know the reason for this request and they are more likely to comply.

Food and drink

Is the signage clear enough about food content and common allergens? Do the food vendors have information on all of the content of their food in a format that is usable?

How can customers pay for their food? Are the counters low enough for wheelchair users? Do the card readers have extension cables so they can be reached? Check this out by being seated next to the counter and see if you can reach the card reader without



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raising your arms above your shoulders – if not encourage the venue to invest in an extension cord.

Can you provide facilities to warm baby food, or pureed food? (Some disabled people have very restricted dietary options and can only eat pureed food).

Will the venue provide plastic straws for customers on request? Some people with disabilities can only drink using a straw. Paper straws disintegrate in hot drinks, and glass or metal straws can be hazardous. (We realise this isn't completely eco-friendly but there are no acceptable alternatives at present).

Toilets

Toilets can make or break an event for someone with disabilities.

Make sure any accessible toilets at your venue;

- Are well sign posted. (Consider putting up additional signage).
- Are clean, and inspected regularly
- Have no clutter in them e.g. cleaning materials, spare chairs, baby changing tables
- Have bins suitable to accommodate incontinence pads
- Have red alarm cords that reach the floor and test that these work. (Euan's guide can provide free cards to hang on the cord that tell people they need to hang freely which reduces the chance of them being tied up <https://www.euansguide.com/news/red-cord-card/>)
- Let your City Coordinator know if the transfer is to the right or left hand side

Some disabled people need a hoist and bench in order for their pads to be changed.

Whilst it is acknowledged that few venues will have this level of facility (known as a Changing Place) it would be great if you could identify if there is one nearby open at the



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time of your talk (<http://www.changing-places.org/>) and provide this information for your venue guide to your City Coordinator.

Signage

Have you considered providing extra Pint of Science signage for where the toilets are? If a wheelchair user needs to go round to the back door to access a ramp to get in, have you made sure this route is well sign-posted? If you are providing a portable hearing loop do you have signs up informing your audience of this.

Quiet Rooms

A quiet room for people to have a chill out break can be really helpful. Ask your venue if this could be possible.



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Relaxed Pint of Science Events

Have you considered providing a “relaxed” performance – where it is expected that the audience may be talking, stimming, moving around etc. This is particularly useful for events with a subject matter that is relevant to communities for whom a relaxed performance is beneficial e.g. those with autism, learning disability, or Tourette’s.

Fire Evacuation

Have you had a conversation with the venue’s fire safety officer about the accessible evacuation routes and plans. There may be a maximum number of wheelchair users or mobility impaired people in a given space. If your venue is accessed via a lift, is the lift fire safe (unlikely) or does the venue have evacuation chairs? Have you considered how to let someone with hearing loss know a fire alarm is going off? Again, you need to put this information on the website’s venue description.

Training of Volunteers and Event Managers

Train your team to be confident asking people with visible disabilities if they need assistance – and to listen to the answer. The team need to know where the accessible toilet is, the best place to sit to have good lines of sight for lip readers or wheelchair users, the fire evacuation routes, how to work the lift etc. Your team should know that assistance dogs have a legal right to access all venues. Your team should not pet or feed an assistance dog as this can distract them, which could lead to problems. But offering a bowl of water is helpful. It would be lovely if your team knew a few British Sign Language signs e.g. hello, welcome, thank you, sorry and (of course) drink? Your team should be confident in prioritising the needs of those with disabilities i.e. asking audience members to move seats to allow better access for someone in a wheelchair or who needs to be close to the presenter to lip read or use the portable hearing loop.



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Do your team know how to respond to first aid issues when associated with disability?

E.g. responding appropriately to an epileptic fit

(<https://www.epilepsy.org.uk/info/firstaid>).

Speaker Preparation

You also need to prepare your speakers. Let them know that you expect a diverse audience. Speakers should be asked to use a microphone (if available) for all of their talk – irrespective of their vocal volume – as amplified speech is easier for hearing aids to pick up. They should consider this when asking for audience participation e.g. a Deaf person invited to participate may need a friend to do BSL interpretation for them; not everyone may be able to “stand up and take part” in an activity. Also, audience members may be more “distracting” than usual, e.g. vocal outbursts from someone with Tourette’s, or stimming (e.g. flapping hands, or rocking back and forth) for people with autism. Obviously, you need to ask your speaker to be accommodating of these differences.

Fundraising and sponsorship

There are a few access options that cost money, but are worth considering particularly if the talk has particular relevance to a certain community. Please note you should contact your City Coordinator and Chapter Manager before asking for sponsorship unless it’s from the university. But, if you get permission to do so you should be creative in who you approach for sponsorship – any organisation that claims to want to serve the whole community and are likely to have an interest in science are good bets.

Portable hearing loops are not that expensive (approx. £120). However, they have quite a short range so make sure people who need to use it get preferential seating up front.

British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters (approx. £150-250), particularly if the discussion is of relevance to the Deaf community (e.g. the science of sound, or advances in hearing technologies). We can recommend Ensign Interpreting, a BSL interpreting



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service run by deaf professionals; <http://www.ensigninterpreting.co.uk>.
info@ensigninterpreting.co.uk

A Mobiloo Changing Place (<https://www.mobiloo.org.uk>) is an accessible toilet with a hoist and bench in the back of a van that can be parked next to your venue (approx. £400). Makes the event hugely more accessible to those with more severe disabilities.

Letting venues know you won't be coming

Pint of Science brings a good crowd to venues, and so is usually a profitable activity for these venues. If you decide you are unlikely to use a venue because of its poor access do have a word with the management so they understand your concerns. It is quite common that they would be unaware that a simple folding ramp (approx. cost £200) would solve access over one or two steps. If Pint of Science (and society) is to increase the number of accessible venues its essential that venues understand that they are losing money by not being accessible.