

## ENGAGING WITH SPECIFIC GROUPS

### DISABILITY



#### Hearing Impairments

There are many ways in which you can make it easier for people with hearing impairments to engage.

- Don't speak too fast, and speak clearly.
- Make the topic of conversation clear; if lip-reading, knowing the topic of conversation can help greatly in understanding words.
- You may need to speak slightly louder, but be sure not to shout.
- Make sure that your whole face is visible and that you don't turn away when addressing someone with a hearing impairment.
- Pause at the end of each sentence, and repeat yourself if asked to. When using sign interpreters or lip-readers, this can help give them a break.
- You may need to write down things if they are particularly difficult to communicate.
- Maintaining good eye contact is important.

At meetings:

- Provision of a hearing loop at meetings. Many meeting rooms at City of York Council, West Offices have hearing loops available for personal use or installed in the room.
- Using British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters. For meetings longer than 2 hours, you may need 2x interpreters. Remember, the BSL interpreter will need to sit facing the person receiving the interpretation.
- Speech to text reporters.
- Lipspeakers.

#### Visual Impairments

It is important to prepare if you know you will be engaging with someone who has a visual impairment. There are varying degrees of visual impairment, so the requirements of individuals with visual impairments will vary. There are various things you will need to consider:

- Is the venue easily accessible?
- Is the entrance well lit?
- Will the person need a guide/a member of staff with them at all times?

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- Will the person have a guide dog? If so, you need to think about the dog's basic needs as well (water, ease of access to outside).
- Ensure all information you wish to communicate is in either audio form, in Braille or larger font size depending on the person.

## Mobility

Planning and preparation is vital when engaging with people with mobility needs.

Things you will need to consider:

- Transport to and from the venue.
- Car-parking/drop off points near the entrance of the building.
- Is the venue easily accessible? Are ramps or lifts available?
- Are the doors wide enough for wheelchair access?
- Will the individual have easy access to toilet facilities for disabled people?
- The comfort of the individual – seating arrangements etc.
- Will all planned exercises and activities be inclusive?
- The frequency of comfort breaks.
- They may have a Personal Assistant or carer with them.



## Learning Difficulties

Things to consider:

- People with learning disabilities will often be accompanied by a carer, such as a family member or support worker. It is very important to make them both aware that during a consultation activity, it is the views and opinions of the disabled person that you would like.
- People with learning difficulties may have a range of disabilities.
- Make sure you address the disabled person when communicating, and not the support worker.
- Speak clearly and prepare to be interrupted, or to be asked to go over things again.
- Have your information available in Easy Read eg use large print, pictures or symbols.
- Offer assistance where needed and always try to ensure the disabled person understands the consultation activity.

**Mental Illness**

Things to consider:

- It may not be obvious that someone has a mental health issue, and as mental health issues are often stigmatised, people may not want to share this information.
- Mental health needs are variable, so try as best as possible to accommodate specific needs, e.g. ask the person what makes them feel comfortable.
- You can get advice from York MIND on consulting with people with mental health issues.

**You can ask people on the invitation if they have any special requirements or support to attend your consultation or event. However it is essential to ensure that the venue is accessible, that there is a hearing loop and PA installed and that information is clear and easy to read. It may be helpful to establish some ground rules at the start of the event so everyone feels that their views will be respected.**

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