

NIHR Exeter BRC and CRF Research Inclusion Event Toolkit

The NIHR Exeter BRC and CRF have co-created this Research Inclusion Event Toolkit to ensure best practices are embedded in all our Centre's events, from planning to delivery to collating feedback. Furthermore, this will serve as a resource to equip our BRC and CRF community members with the tools necessary to identify opportunities and unique challenges in thinking about research inclusion when planning events and ensuring inclusive practices are embedded. Co-creating events with representatives from the communities your event is targeted at, in addition to ensuring diverse representation of those involved in planning as well as those delivering the event, will benefit and provide a richer experience for all delegates – this is referred to as systemic inclusion.

In creating this event toolkit, we have drawn upon best practices from the University of Exeter, partner NHS Trusts, alongside other organisations where appropriate, in addition to consultation with our Centre's workforce. In doing so, we aim to remove barriers and exclusions when engaging with and participating in our events. This toolkit can be utilised when planning a variety of event types, including but not limited to seminars, workshops, writing retreats, work experience placements, research taster sessions and larger scale conferences.

Please note that this checklist is by no means exhaustive, and we acknowledge that more specialised inclusive event considerations will be required when, for example, delivering events targeting select groups. The development of this toolkit will be an iterative process, updated as and when new information becomes available. It should also be highlighted that this is not an obligatory checklist and should be used as a resource to aid our Centres and their members in delivering more successful and inclusive events – we appreciate that it is not always possible to cover all of these, but being aware and thinking about them is important.

Resources to support the creation of inclusive events can be found at the end of this document.

This resource has been reviewed and approved by the NIHR Exeter BRC/CRF working group but should you have any feedback, please do get in touch by contacting Lucy Hodges at L.Hodges@exeter.ac.uk.

What should you consider when planning an event to ensure inclusive best practices are embedded?

Considering research inclusion when designing and planning events

- ☐ Does your event organising committee include representation of diverse perspectives?
- ☐ Are you co-creating your event with the audience to which it will serve, including individuals from diverse and underserved communities?
- ☐ Are individuals contributing to the delivery of the event e.g. speakers and panellists, representative of diverse and underserved communities? Seeking out speakers from various backgrounds, experience, and perspectives not only enriches the content but also makes attendees feel represented and heard.
- ☐ Can you implement strategies to attract a more diverse range of delegates?
- ☐ Are you incorporating meaningful patient and public representation and involvement?
- ☐ Have you and/ or those contributing to the delivery of the event designed promotional materials, agendas, programmes, hand-outs, presentation slides and all other relevant content/materials for both in-person and virtual delivery to ensure readability and accessibility for all delegates?
- ☐ Can the event contribute to educating delegates on diversity and inclusion topics?

Considering the date, time and location of your event

- ☐ Have you considered the timing (time of day, day of the week) of the event? It will not be possible to meet all conflicting needs with one event, however, it is important to consider how scheduling may enhance existing inequalities. For example, holding events in the evening may prevent people with caring responsibilities from attending. Due to gendered inequalities in the distribution of care, this may disproportionately impact women.
- ☐ Have you consulted the [Universities Inclusive Calendar](#) to avoid dates of importance to select groups i.e. religious holidays, that may prevent people from attending?
- ☐ Have you considered how the location and type of venue (university or non-university based) and the format of the event (in-person, online or hybrid) may impact access for attendees?

Designing events with access and inclusion in mind

- ☐ Have you allocated a budget to accommodate accessibility requirements?
- ☐ Have you incorporated sufficient time for breaks in the agenda?

- ☐ If you are including opportunities for Q&A, have you introduced a code of conduct if you anticipate any issues around some of the conversations and ensured the moderator is happy with the process ahead of time?

Providing clear information prior to the event

- ☐ Have you published accessibility details on the event advertisement platform(s)? The more information provided in the first instance the better, as this negates the need for delegates to reach out and make enquiries about accessibility needs. It is important to ensure the event is inclusive from the offset.
- ☐ Have you asked attendees if they require reasonable accommodations on an individual basis? It is helpful to provide examples so delegates can understand the types of provisions that can be put in place. Here, accessibility requirements for each delegate should be logged confidentially and key staff involved in implementing the accessibility requirements informed.
- ☐ In all promotional material, have you ensured that both the language and visuals used are inclusive for the target audience? E.g. are images accompanied by alt text or image descriptions?
- ☐ Have you invited delegates and speakers to share their preferred name(s), title and gender pronouns with an option to have this shared in an event programme, printed on name badges or on their video (if a virtual event)?
- ☐ Have you provided standardised guidance on payment/reimbursement for individuals contributing to the delivery of the event?

Specific considerations for virtual events

- ☐ Is someone on-hand to monitor a function that enables delegates to input in real-time to ensure enquiries are not overlooked and contributions are heard and valued?
- ☐ Will you utilise closed captioning?
- ☐ Will you be providing recordings and transcriptions of event material after the event?
- ☐ Have you trialled the virtual platform chosen for your event and is it accessible for all delegates?
- ☐ Have you provided instructions on how to access and navigate the virtual platform?
- ☐ Are you able to provide access to the virtual platform in advance of the event to ensure delegate familiarity on the day?

Specific considerations for hybrid events

Hosting hybrid meetings can present unique challenges as we try to bring groups together from both remote and in-person locations; however, hybrid event formats enable reach to a wider audience by opening up attendance to those that may have been unable to attend in-person. Careful considerations are required to ensure that an in-person event also works for an online audience.

- ☐ Can the online delegates clearly see and hear the content being delivered in-person?
- ☐ Will the online audience be able to contribute to discussions similarly to the in-person delegates? Have you assigned a moderator to facilitate online conversations?
- ☐ Have you provided details pertaining to the accessibility of the event targeted at both in-person and virtual delegates?

Specific considerations for in-person events:

The accessibility of the venue

- ☐ Have you done a walk-through of the venue in advance of the event to check that accessibility features are in place and are functioning, including agreed modifications?
- ☐ Is the venue accessible for people with mobility impairment? Things to consider include, is there a level entrance to the building; if ramps are in place, would a wheelchair be able to enter the building independently; are there handrails next to stairs and ramps; is there a lift large enough to accommodate a wheelchair user; is there sufficient space in aisles and between tables for delegates to navigate safely.
- ☐ Have you considered the emergency evacuation arrangements in place to ensure all delegates are safe?
- ☐ Is the speaker area accessible i.e. is the lectern or microphone adjustable?
- ☐ Have you assigned a private room to be used as a 'quiet space' for delegates to use? For example, to take a sensory break, take medication or breastfeed.
- ☐ Have you been transparent with attendees in highlighting any accessibility provisions that are not available due to limitations of the event venue? For example, the absence of a quiet space.

The sensory environment

- ☐ Have you considered the lighting in the venue to accommodate people with visual impairments or individuals that may rely on lip reading?

- ☐ Have you considered the acoustics of the room, e.g. echoes, to accommodate delegates that may be hard of hearing?

The venue facilities

- ☐ Have you considered the locality of the bathrooms in relation to the event room, alongside the accessibility of these for all delegates?
- ☐ Are there gender-neutral bathrooms available at the venue?

Travel to and from the venue

- ☐ Is there accessible parking at the venue? If so, can you reserve spaces in advance of your event?
- ☐ Have you considered the provision of transport to and from the event, particularly for those unable to access public transport?
- ☐ Have you identified volunteers who will be available to meet delegates with accessibility requirements before the event and be their contact point throughout?

Catering

- ☐ Have you outlined the catering provision and provided delegates the opportunity to indicate any specific dietary requirements? In alignment with the Universities sustainability goals, we will cater all our events as vegetarian unless requested otherwise.
- ☐ If specific dietary requirements have been requested by delegates, have you considered how the delegate will locate these i.e. clearly identifiable and separate from other food or delivered directly to the individual?
- ☐ If serving a buffet, have you considered how delegates with accessibility needs will acquire their food and where they will be able to eat?

Other considerations

- ☐ Will you be taking photographs on the day? If so, who is responsible for ascertaining consent? University guidance on the use of photography and film can be found [here](#).
- ☐ Have you allowed sufficient changeover time between sessions to ensure all delegates can relocate in the allotted time?
- ☐ Have you allocated reserved seating for delegates that may require this?

Empowering delegates to provide feedback:

It is vital that delegates are afforded the opportunity to provide honest feedback as this helps identify areas for improvement, as well as fostering a sense of trust and loyalty among the community when they see their feedback has led to positive change.

- ☐ What feedback methods are you planning to use? Do you need to provide a range of formats?
- ☐ When will you collect feedback i.e. during and/or after the event?
- ☐ Have you requested feedback on the inclusion and accessibility of the event in addition to the content?

Examples of information to include in an accessibility guide

It is important to detail as much information pertaining to accessibility in pre-event guidance as possible to ensure all delegates feel comfortable navigating the venue, enabling them to focus on the event content on the day.

- Pictures of the venue and event space
- Accessible route map
- Wheelchair access
- Bathroom provision, including whether there are gender neutral toilets and their location in proximity to the event space
- Provision of a hearing loop
- Provision of a sign-language interpreter
- Provision of material in advance and/ or in an alternate format e.g. Braille or large print
- Information on accessible parking

Useful resources

- [Patient & Public Involvement Resources](#) gathered by NIHR Applied Research Collaboration South West Peninsula.
- [PPIE Support](#) via the NIHR Exeter Biomedical Research Centre. Please contact involvement@exeter.ac.uk for specific queries.
- [Dyslexia Style Guide](#) produced by the British Dyslexia Association.
- [A guide to producing written information in easy read](#) produced by North Yorkshire County Council.
- [EDI Calendar](#) produced by the University of Exeter.
- [A digital world accessible to all](#) produced by AbilityNet.
- [Venue accessibility checklist](#) produced by Shaping Our Lives