

EVENTS – DISABILITY CHECKLIST

When planning an event that involved disabled people there are additional points which are worth considering. The below checklist is designed to assist you in this area:

Pre Event

1. Ensure that all booking material asks for information on any disability or dietary requirements.
2. Before confirming the venue, ensure that there is disability access for people in wheelchairs.
3. If at all possible, visit the venue and literally 'walk the course' of where your wheelchair delegates will have to travel including not only the main conference room, but any syndicate rooms and the actual entrance to the hotel as well as any catering areas.
4. You may find stairs in your way (venues seem to think it is acceptable to pick the chairs up). If there are any steps ensure that ramps are readily available.
5. The route could well lead you to back/freight lifts that are in a poor state. Often the route means going through back corridors and through kitchen areas. This may be fine first thing in the morning, but if the kitchens are being used to prepare lunch then this becomes a health and safety hazard.
6. Ensure that the layout of the corridors into the rooms allows enough room for a wheelchair to manoeuvre.
7. It is also worth checking the width of the lifts. Some lifts will only take 'racing' wheelchairs and not full size electric chairs.
8. Check where the disability toilet is located (some venues have their disabled toilet located in another part of the complex, not even in the same building as the conference).
9. Ensure that hotel staff are familiar with how internal chair lifts work and that someone would be available on the day to assist with their operation. In an ideal world, venues that have chair lifts would not be used, but this is not always possible. Try to advise wheelchair users in advance that

they will have to use a chair lift. This could be included in confirmation letters or emails.

10. Check if there is any specific parking available for anyone with a disability. Notify attendants if there are and ensure you do not over promise parking places.
11. Check the availability of an induction loop for anyone hard of hearing, but this is normally a luxury and is not standard in most venues.
12. Do not rely on the hotel, Intel or any other venue finding service to give you a blanket assurance of disabled facilities.
13. Ensure that space is allocated for wheelchair users in the main body of the hall, not necessarily in the front or back rows.
14. If any of your speakers are in a wheelchair you will need to provide a ramp to the stage area and you will need to organise for them to speak from a modified lectern, from a top table or with a tie clip microphone.
15. If any of your speakers are blind, you may need to walk them through the designated route prior to the conference and provide a guide to ensure they can reach their speaking position easily.
16. You may be required to provide signers. Signers can only work for a maximum of two to three hours before needing a break, so you will need a minimum of two signers for any event. As well as the fee charged you will be expected to pay for transport and accommodation. Signers are hard to come by and often have to travel distances to get to the venues.
17. You will need to provide copies of presentations in large print format for anyone with visual impairments.

On the Day ensure that:

1. Where appropriate, ramps have been put in place.
2. Chairs have been removed in the conference, syndicate and catering areas in order to allow a wheelchair to gain access.
3. Any internal chairs lifts are staffed by the hotel to ensure they work properly and safely.
4. If the route is complicated, a member of staff is available to escort the person with a disability to their intended location and more importantly to escort them back again.
5. Signers will need prominence (i.e. elevation) at the front of the stage so that they can be seen. You will need to reserve seats for those that need to see the signer to ensure they have sight of the signer.