# **Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion**

# **Marketing and Communications Guidance for Event Managers**

## **Summary**

* Consideration of under-represented groups will not only enable a wider reach for your event but also improves the quality of marketing and comms for all.
* By making your commitment and your event’s action plan publicly available, it will demonstrate your commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.
* Knowing who is missing from your event is an important first step to be able to create plans to reach new audiences.
* Audiences and communities like to be communicated to in different ways, try speaking to them via their preferred method, rather than getting them to come to you.
* When it comes to designing a website for your event, it is not only about ensuring its usability, but also ensuring that it is regarded well for its accessibility.
* Social media channels are introducing features regularly to help you create accessible content, effectively and even quicker.
* New ambassadors have the potential to bring new voices and ideas to your programme, campaigns, and event.
* If your workforce clearly knows what equality, diversity and inclusion means for the event, feels proud and feels inspired by the aims, they will as a result want to contribute through their own role.

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## **Introduction**

Ensuring that anyone can engage with and be part of your event is a key cornerstone to making your event inclusive.

Events of different sizes and scale can all endeavour to be inclusive in their marketing and communications – it isn’t about creating things new, rather, it is ensuring all your planned activity is as inclusive as possible.

Consideration of under-represented groups will not only enable a wider reach for your event but also improves the quality of marketing and comms for all.

It can often be seen that some equality, diversity, and inclusion work is 'extra work' whereas if this is incorporated and considered from the start it only helps improve the overall output.

Your marketing and communications strategy will play a big part in the promotion of your event, and therefore should be following some basic dos and don’ts when developing your plans ensuring it supports to your equality, diversity, and inclusion commitments.

## **Your commitment to inclusive marketing**

It cannot be stressed enough, the importance of needing to plan in equality, diversity and inclusion from the outset and you shouldn't attempt to retrofit it into an event.

**Creation of inclusive communications**

Inclusive communication ensures that information is accessible to all and should not discriminate by using inclusive language and imagery.

The aim is to ensure that your marketing, promotional materials, website, social media activity and on-venue information is appealing and accessible to the widest audience possible.

**Promotion of your equality, diversity, and inclusion action plan**

Communicating your equality, diversity and inclusion journey from the beginning is a good way of showing your commitment and how you are working towards being inclusive and ensuring that everyone will have the best possible experience at your event.

Being open, honest, and creating an open dialogue between your customers and yourselves around equality, diversity, and inclusion, will go a long way to both engaging people and providing reassurance that they will be welcome.

By making your commitment and your event’s equality, diversity, and inclusion action plan publicly available, it will demonstrate your commitment to inclusivity and help promote accountability for delivery.

Having a dedicated, accessible, and up-to-date section of your website will be a useful place to hold this information. Your inclusive communications policy would also sit alongside your action plan.

## **Research – who is attending your events?**

Having access to accurate figures and information about who normally engages with your sport and who is attending your event can help assess whether you’re attracting a diverse mixture of spectators and fans.

Knowing who is missing is an important first step to be able to create plans to reach new audiences. This will be specific to your event’s location, and localised data could help you see what you are potentially missing.

Taking the time to establish a picture of where you are currently at is a vital step to making future progress. You may even be surprised at how well you are doing in some areas already.

Before diving into developing your inclusive communications, take time to establish a baseline of where you are at currently.

Establishing a baseline will support you to:

* Track the progress you are making
* Decide where you want to be in the future
* Identify areas of potential improvement
* Reflect on the progress you have already made

Alongside this, understanding the demographic of your host location(s) will help understand who you could be reaching to be part of your event.

Research options could include:

* Surveying your membership or previous ticket purchasers
* Use of venue data on who normally attends similar events
* Use of Census/Government/freely available data
* Use of YouGov paid services
* Use of host location data to understand the diversity of their residents
* Use of data held by organisations such as Sport England or organisations with a specific focus such as the Activity Alliance or British Blind Sport
* Speak to local community leaders

## **Reaching diverse audiences**

It would be a grand ambition for an event to reach all underrepresented audiences, therefore when setting your goals, you should be conscious of what is realistic and achievable.

Events are prone to budget, resource, and other pressures, it’s ok to identify and target underrepresented audiences by yourself or through partnerships in a way that resonates with your sport or event.

Once you understand who you would like to reach through your marketing activity, there are two key considerations; how to make your marketing more inclusive and how to reach the targeted groups.

It’s worth noting that this section can extend to all types of marketing and communications such as ticketing and recruitment (staff members and volunteers).

**Making your marketing and communications more inclusive**

To begin, make sure that different perspectives have been actively sought out and included in the creation of your marketing and communications planning, and give thought as to who is missing from the conversation and how you could best address this.

Remember, it can take time to build relationships with new audiences and build potential partnerships with trusted organisations of the target audiences you have chosen. Make sure you allow time for them to support delivery of your communications.

Audiences and communities like to be communicated to in different ways, try speaking to them via their preferred method, rather than trying to get them to come to you.

The list below may help give you some ideas on ways you can make your communications more inclusive:

* Use of an external control group - through a/your chosen marketing agency, this may be an available service to you, or one they can facilitate. This will help to gather insights on how you are performing on your inclusive communications regarding your campaigns and marketing plans.
* Factor in time to reflect on the use of language on all promotional materials - Are you writing in plain and simple English? - 20% of adults are functionally illiterate or innumerate according to the Office for National Statistics, 2011, could they engage with your materials?
* Is your imagery, video, and social media content diverse and inclusive? If you want to reach a new audience, seeing people to relate with on promotional materials can be a way of making your audience feel welcome and included at your event.
* Are you trying to access new channels and exploring non-traditional routes to marketing where different people will see your activity? - Paid, targeted digital marketing activity will be a useful tool here, or perhaps you may want to seek a partnership with a local community group or organisation.
* Have you spoken to your local community leaders and understand what type of communications activity would relate to their communities?
* Can you celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion through your long-term campaign activity, and stories from across the event? – This may come organically as part of following the above points.

Your marketing channels are your shop window to the world and could apply to out-of-home advertising, to your own channels, such as your website and social media channels. Accessibility across all your channels is key.

Below you will find a list of resources that may help you make your marketing and communications more inclusive:

* [Activity Alliance – Disability Inclusion Sport – Resources](https://www.activityalliance.org.uk/how-we-help/resources)
* [Activity Alliance – Resources – Inclusive Communications](https://www.activityalliance.org.uk/how-we-help/resources/7067-inclusive-communications-factsheets)
* [Activity Alliance – Disability Inclusion Sport – Engagement and Partnerships](https://www.activityalliance.org.uk/how-we-help/programmes/1746-engagement-and-partnerships)
* [BCOMS – A Guide to Diversity in Sports Media](https://bcoms.co/conferences/)
* [Content Marketing Institute – How Brands Can Be More Inclusive](https://contentmarketinginstitute.com/articles/diverse-inclusive-content-marketing/)
* [Deloitte Insights – Authentically Inclusive Marketing](https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/marketing-and-sales-operations/global-marketing-trends/2022/diversity-and-inclusion-in-marketing.html)
* [Digital Marketing Institute – Diversity and Inclusion in Digital Marketing](https://digitalmarketinginstitute.com/blog/diversity-and-inclusion-in-digital-marketing)
* [Google – Inclusive Marketing](https://all-in.withgoogle.com/)
* [Inclusive communication - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication)
* [Inclusive language: Writing about disability - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/inclusive-language-words-to-use-and-avoid-when-writing-about-disability)
* [Inclusive language: Writing about ethnicity - GOV.UK](https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/style-guide/writing-about-ethnicity)
* [IPC Guide to Para and IPC Terminology.pdf (paralympic.org)](https://www.paralympic.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/IPC%20Guide%20to%20Para%20and%20IPC%20Terminology.pdf)
* [Pride House Media Guide](https://sportsmedialgbt.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/PHBMediaGuide.pdf)

**Tell stories from across the event**

Are you aware of what makes your event unique when it comes to equality, diversity, and inclusion?

By researching and uncovering the diverse and inclusive stories from athletes, staff, volunteers, and spectators, this can open a new avenue for you when it comes to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion at your event.

Go beyond the field of play coverage, to capture rich content that is entertaining and accessible to all, showing your equality, diversity, and inclusion success in action.

To build trust, regular communications in the run-up, during and ideally after your event will sustain any relationships with new audiences.

## **Practical insights for website and social media activity**

We have already discussed making sure that all your event marketing materials, such as imagery or video (that may appear on your social media and website) are diverse and inclusive.

However, how accessible is your website and the social media content you are producing?

**Website**

When it comes to designing a website for your event, it is not only about ensuring its usability, but also ensuring that it is regarded well for its accessibility, “the extent to which an interactive system enables users to interact with it effectively - regardless of their level of vision, hearing, dexterity, cognition, physical mobility. (Accessibility CPUX-F Curriculum)”.

The UK Home Office has created this handy visual guide, with dos and don’ts on how to design your website for accessibility.

Scoring your website

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) international standard, including WCAG 2.0, WCAG 2.1, and WCAG 2.2 score your website in terms of conformance level,looking at how your web pages satisfy all success criteria at a specific level – A, AA, or AAA.

Resources with more information on WCAG can be found below:

* BBC – Mobile Accessibility Guidelines
* W3 – WCAG Overview
* Web AIM – WCAG 2 Checklist
* WUHCAG – WCAG Checklists

If your website has/or is being designed by a third party, have you questioned them on the accessibility of your new website?

Principles for designing and evaluating for accessibility

* Make sure all web elements are accessible by keyboard alone, and that the focus is clearly visible when hovering over a selection
* Include a ‘skip to content’ link before your menu, in your HTML web design
* Plan the page structure using headings and lists in your HTML code
* Provide appropriate, descriptive ALT text for images
* Use good text to background contrast and text size when choosing fonts and colours for your web text – consider when preparing your brand.
* Avoid using images on webpages for text content and information
* Provide alternatives for audio and video, written transcripts alongside the audio and visual equivalent are a good place to start.
* Make sure all links are prominent and meaningful – don’t use ‘click here’, state the name of where the link will lead you to
* Present content in a clear, concise, and non-distracting way

Resources with more information on the above principles can be found below:

* W3 Schools – HTML Accessibility
* Jake Archibald - Writing great alt text: Emotion matters
* Microsoft - Everything you need to know to write effective alt text
* Shopify - The case for describing race in alternative text attributes
* Web AIM – Keyboard Accessibility
* Web AIM – Text Contrast Checker

You may also be suggested to use a Web Accessibility overlay, such as Recite ME or Accessible, however, they cannot solve all your problems. You can find out more information at, Overlay Fact Sheet.

**Social Media**

Social media channels are regularly introducing new features to ensure your content is accessible.

See below for some tips on how you can make your content more accessible:

* Ensure that writing is concise and in plain English
* Limited use of emojis, only use to begin or end sentences
* Don’t write posts/tweets in all Uppercase
* ALT text on images
* Good colour contrast when placing text on imagery
* Subtitles/captions on video
* Audio Description versions of video
* Ensure Hashtags start with an uppercase letter for every new word, e.g., #IsYourContentAccessible

Explore the social media channels you have accounts on. Social media channels are introducing features regularly to help you create accessible content, effectively and even quicker.

For example, TikTok has a direct ‘Text-to-speech’ feature when creating content in their application, Twitter and Instagram have built in ALT text settings/areas to add your descriptions and Facebook/YouTube will now auto-generate subtitles for you, however clear captions on video is preferred.

There are some useful resources below, to help you ensure your social media is accessible going forward:

* GOV.UK – Planning, creating, and publishing accessible social media campaigns
* GOV.UK – Social Media Playbook
* Media Cause – Accessibility on social media
* ONS - Making social media accessible
* RNIB – Guide to accessible social media

## **Event time activity**

Equality, diversity, and inclusion doesn’t stop with the promotion of your event and should also be planned into your event time communications and reportage.

**Social media content**

Ensure that your on-event, live and daily coverage on social media, showcases the diverse groups of people who are at your event.

This could include imagery and video of people, including, but not limited to: athletes taking part, coaches and support staff, your workforce and volunteers and your audience of spectators.

Equal coverage across all your disciplines and events if relevant, be it men’s and women’s, or para-sport – an inclusive event should translate easily to be able to cover this on social media.

For practical tips on making social media accessible, see ‘[Practical insights for website and social media activity’](#_Practical_insights_for).

**Photography and video**

Ensuring you have a catalogue of diverse imagery and video content will not only help with your event time coverage, but it will also be incredibly helpful for all event stakeholders to use now and in the future.

All imagery around the event (on screens, programmes) as well as surrounding the event (on websites, social media) should be diverse and inclusive.

If you’re unsure on whether you have managed to capture a diverse range of people in your presentation or marketing materials, don’t be afraid to ask for feedback from people from inside or outside your organisation. Do they see themselves in images or video, do they feel represented?

Go beyond the field of play coverage, to capture rich content that is entertaining and accessible to all, showing your equality, diversity, and inclusion success in action.

See Appendix for a photography and video shot list to brief into any photographers or videographers with whom you are working.

## **Ambassador programme**

Having a wide range of ambassadors linked to your event will not only bring their own diversity, but they can also focus on the different values and themes of your event when it comes to promotional activity.

New ambassadors have the potential to bring new voices and ideas to your programme, campaigns, and event.

An ambassador can be anyone, it could be an official or unofficial ambassador consisting of a current or retired athlete, a notable figure in the sport, event and national governing body staff members, leaders, and members of the local community, etc.

Ambassadors can help promote an inclusive culture by role modelling behaviours; by being curious, compassionate, and actively listening to colleagues and amplifying event messaging.

## **Internal communications**

It is important that staff, volunteers, and contractors are aware of what the event is striving for in relation to equality, diversity, and inclusion, and by extension, feel part of it.

Share with staff your journey, and why the subject matters to your event, including how you have developed your commitment and action plan and how they can contribute going forward.

If your workforce clearly knows what equality, diversity and inclusion means for the event, feels proud of the actions of the event, and is inspired by the event’s aims, they will as a result want to contribute through their own role.

Embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion from the outset when recruiting is crucial, therefore ensure your job descriptions use inclusive language and include a question or section of your hiring process and inductions relating to equality, diversity, and inclusion. This will ensure that staff inductions or volunteer briefings continue to raise awareness of the event’s focus as your workforce evolves.

As mentioned at the beginning, continue to talk openly about your journey, providing regular updates on successes, challenges and general information relating to your plans.

Awareness days linked to charities and potential partners are a good starter to be part of the conversation and share the stories that are also being posted as part of your external communications plans.

This can be done in numerous ways depending what information you want to share:

* Staff meetings
* Zoom/Teams calls
* Newsletters/Email Marketing
* Document sharing
* Intranet noticeboard
* Facebook group
* Bespoke Volunteer area/website

You may want to make use of some of the resources below to ensure accessibility regarding the above ways of interaction:

* [H&H - Are your internal communications engaging – and accessible?](https://handhcomms.co.uk/are-your-internal-communications-accessible-and-engaging/#:~:text=Accessible%20internal%20communications%20start%20with%20simplicity%20Accessible%20communications,text%20and%20never-ending%20sentences%20are%20harder%20to%20read.)
* [PC Mag – 15 Tips to Make Meetings More Accessible for Everyone](https://uksport-my.sharepoint.com/personal/james_gaukroger_uksport_gov_uk/Documents/•%09https:/uk.pcmag.com/video-conferencing-software/141537/15-tips-to-make-meetings-more-accessible-for-everyone)
* [GOV.UK – Publishing Accessible Documents](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/publishing-accessible-documents)

## Appendix

**Photography and Videography shot list**

Spectators

The last mile / host city landmarks *showcasing major events taking place across the UK.*

*Areas of focus:*

* Photos of spectators / event crowds where the name of the host city / host location is obvious / event branding in frame
* Photos of spectators / event crowds by any host city landmarks

*In-venue crowd shots showcasing the diversity of the British population. With inclusion of fans with Union flags. Areas of focus:*

* People from ethnically diverse communities
* Mix of gender
* Mix of ages
* People with disabilities / accessibility needs
* People from a variety of faiths / religions
* Use of other types of flags, e.g., LGBTQ+ community
* People who are pregnant / attending the event with babies / very young children

*Fan zone / activations / sport presentation / mascot engagement / meeting athletes and ambassadors / buying merchandise – spectators (both ticketed and non-ticketed) having fun and enjoying wider event activities. Areas of focus:*

* People from ethnically diverse communities
* Mix of gender
* Mix of ages
* People with disabilities / accessibility needs
* People from a variety of faiths / religions
* Family units that also reflect an above point
* A good mix of people enjoying the fan zone / have a go activity at the same time

*Venue facilities*

* Spaces / areas created for different groups of people – e.g., for people with a disability / pregnancy / families
* Broader / more subtle considerations such as subtitles on screens, interpreters, stewards engaging with supporters, signage

Event Operations

*Volunteers and workforce* *showcasing the diversity of the British population and use of local workforce/suppliers. Areas of focus across individuals delivering their role, engaging with spectators and athletes, engaging with each other while working and during their downtime in the volunteer areas:*

* People from ethnically diverse communities
* Mix of gender
* Mix of ages
* People with disabilities / accessibility needs
* People from a variety of faiths / religions
* People who are pregnant
* Wearing pin badges or items which highlights any other protected characteristic, e.g., wearing a LGBTQ+ flag pin
* Showcase the flexibility of the event uniform which is reflected of all people / sizes / beliefs
* Use of local suppliers – catering / fan activations / information stalls

*Facilities*

* Catering provision created for all members of the workforce and volunteers
* Facilities for all members of the workforce and volunteers:
  + Volunteer check in
  + Volunteer/staff rest zones
  + Volunteer/staff training materials/guides
  + Volunteer/staff catering
  + Volunteer/staff reward and recognition
  + Volunteer/staff social activities

*Merchandise*

* Showcase that merchandise is reflected of all people / sizes / beliefs
* Showcase that merchandise is reflected of different financial means

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