

Protocols for making meetings and events more accessible to people with hearing loss

Consultation document [v3]

Deadline for comments: Sunday 15th April 2018



Making meetings and events more accessible to people with hearing loss

Introduction

This document has been put together by people with hearing loss to provide a straightforward outline for how meetings and events should be run, as standard, in order to make them more accessible to people with hearing loss. They have been developed to help overcome widespread poor experiences that people with hearing loss often have.

Please give your feedback

This document sets out:

- A protocol (i.e. a set of suggested rules or practices) that should be followed by those attending, presenting or speaking at meetings and events.
- A separate protocol that should be followed by the organisers of meetings and events.
- Guidance and checklists for organisers, so they have more background information to help them implement the protocols with confidence.

You are invited to give feedback on the protocols and guidance. Do they represent what you want and need and what you think is sensible and appropriate? Your feedback will help us to create a final document that can be shared widely in order to raise awareness and encourage better practices to be adopted.

Hearing and listening

The focus is mainly on hearing and listening so it could feel less relevant to those who fully or predominantly rely on text transcription or sign language. The document should, however, highlight these alternative / additional requirements in an appropriate way.

Thank you for your interest and support.

The review of this document is being led by Ideas for Ears, together with the Scottish Council on Deafness. The review will conclude on **Sunday 15th April 2018**.

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The challenges that exist

Research findings

Ideas for Ears has recently carried out a variety of surveys¹²³ that together incorporate the views of more than 1,000 people. The research revealed:

- Poor experiences are widespread and common. More than 70% of respondents said they 'sometimes', 'regularly' or 'always' experience difficulties hearing at meetings and events.
- There is a need for greatly improved awareness and consideration of people with hearing loss.

Common issues

- People speaking too quietly or not clearly enough
- Poor acoustics and/or background noise
- Poor room layout
- No use or poor use of microphones
- Failure to provide equipment or communication support (e.g. hearing loop, text transcription, etc.)

Why this matters

The research identified that people are consequently:

- Missing out on information
- Not contributing as they could or wish to
- Increasingly reluctant to attend meetings and events
- Facing barriers to learning, involvement and participation

Development of Protocols & additional guidance

With the help of consultees, a clear list of requirements has been created. These set out how meetings and events should ideally be run as standard in order for them to be more accessible:

- Protocol 1 is aimed at those **attending** the meeting or event to listen, participate or present
- Protocol 2 is aimed at those who **organise** meetings or events, including those working with event venues and/or other third parties

Additional guidance has also been generated and is included with this document. Please do not feel you have to read through and review everything – feedback on part of the document is welcome.

- Appendix 1 – Guidance to help Speakers & Presenters
- Appendix 2 – Guidance for Organisers of Meetings/Events
- Appendix 3 – Template forms for Organisers of Meetings/Events

Achieving good practice

The Protocols set out good practice that will improve the likelihood of everyone attending a meeting or event being able to hear and follow things in an appropriate and effective way. This should reduce the chances of people with hearing loss and other hearing conditions being excluded and/or facing stressful, frustrating or embarrassing situations. Those requiring specific forms of assistance (e.g. support from a communication professional) should also have a better chance of this being provided. In addition, it is anticipated that the Protocols will encourage greater uptake of related training in hearing and deafness awareness.

¹ <https://www.ideasforears.org.uk/blog/meetings-miss-the-mark-due-to-hostile-hearing-conditions/>

² <https://www.ideasforears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Full-report-meetings-and-events.pdf>

³ <https://www.ideasforears.org.uk/blog/fears-of-discrimination-adds-to-workplace-woes/>

Protocol 1: For Attendees, Speakers & Presenters

General principles

Everyone has a right to participate and to adequately hear and follow what is being said. It is the responsibility of all attendees to ensure that they do not hinder the experiences of other attendees.

Specific points

1. All speakers should do their best to speak to be heard. (Those who do not find this easy should consider learning how.)
2. Speakers should keep their faces visible and should speak to the people not to the presentation screen, notebook or other object. (Where lights have to be switched off, they should be switched on again as soon as possible so faces are adequately lit.)
3. Speakers should speak one at a time, so listeners do not have to decipher multiple voices.
4. Speakers should avoid speaking quickly, especially if speaking with an accent that others may find hard to understand. If speaking for an extended time, speakers should check they are speaking clearly and that their pace of speaking is suitable. (A recap from time-to-time will assist those who may have lost the thread of what's being said.)
5. If microphones have been made available, they should be used. (Microphones differ so guidance should be provided by the organiser as to where best to hold/place the microphone.)
6. Important points should be provided in written form e.g. names, dates and numbers written on a flipchart, name badges or PowerPoint slides. (Listeners can then have confidence they've picked things up correctly.)
7. All attendees should be respectful of everyone's right to participate and, if requested, should be willing to make small adjustments to accommodate the communication needs of others.
8. If an attendee has a communication professional to assist them (e.g. a sign language interpreter), conversation must be directed to the attendee not the communication professional.
9. All attendees should be aware that poor acoustics and background noise (including music and conversational chatter) makes it harder to hear and follow things and can also create discomfort for some people.
10. Feedback about personal experiences should be offered in a collaborative (rather than critical) spirit and should seek to highlight things that have worked well as well as things that have proved challenging.

Feedback questions

- As someone with hearing loss, do you feel the list above cover the essentials that you feel are necessary for an accessible meeting?
- Is it clear and straightforward (including for those with little or no deaf awareness)?
- Please send comments and feedback to: info@ideasforears.org.uk

Protocol 2: For Meeting/Event Organisers

General principles

Everyone has a right to participate and to adequately hear and follow what is being said. Most people with hearing loss have the capability to hear reasonably, or even very, well but can find it difficult or impossible to hear in meetings or events when things are set up poorly. Equally, some people find high levels of noise not just uncomfortable but overwhelming and distressing.

Specific points for meeting/event organisers

1. It is your responsibility to create the right environment so that people can hear and follow things adequately. Sharing details in advance of the event will allow potential attendees to know what they can expect.
2. Offer attendees an opportunity to let you know about their hearing requirements but be aware that many prefer not to disclose that they have hearing loss as they can feel it a sensitive and personal issue.
3. Ask all attendees to follow the 'Protocols for Attendees, Speakers & Presenters'. Highlight them when/if covering 'housekeeping matters'.
4. Provide name badges or find some other way to way to give everyone the chance to see names of presenters and participants written down, including the organisation (if any) they represent.
5. Hearing loss varies so people may have different requirements. When seeking to accommodate any specific needs, take care to extend curtesy to the individual and also to other attendees.
6. Do not assume that you will be able to tell when someone isn't hearing well. People can become very adept at bluffing and can easily appear to hear even when they do not.
7. Assistive listening systems can be essential to hearing aid users so ensure one is available where appropriate – see Appendix below. If an alternative system is being made available (infrared, FM or Wi-Fi digital) then let attendees know in advance as it may affect their access.
8. Be willing to develop more awareness and understanding of the wide range of listening, hearing and communications needs that people have, and to respond to specific requirements in an appropriate way.
9. Be ready to provide appropriate information. Many people with hearing loss are unaware of solutions that can help them to hear better or inexperienced in using them e.g. many hearing aid users have never used a hearing loop and remain uncertain of how it can assist.
10. Ask attendees for feedback on hearing, listening and communication rather than waiting for feedback to emerge unasked for. This will prompt those unused to commenting on these issues and will encourage those who feel sensitive or shy about the issues they experience.

Feedback questions

- As someone with hearing loss, do you feel the list above cover the essentials that you feel are necessary for an accessible meeting?
- Is it clear and straightforward (including for those with little or no deaf awareness)?
- Please send comments and feedback to: info@ideasforears.org.uk

Appendix 1: For Speakers & Presenters

Guidance to help Speakers and Presenters meet the needs of audiences made up of people with differing levels of hearing ability.

1. Expect to speak to an audience that includes people with hearing loss

- a) Most audiences will include people with hearing loss, and should do if they are inclusive and representative of the general population. One sixth of the population has hearing loss and around one tenth of the workforce. The numbers with hearing loss are increasing.
- b) Ability to hear varies from person to person. Most people are able to hear and follow things well if the speaker is speaking clearly in a room/environment that is appropriate and where microphones are used appropriately. By contrast, many people will hear and follow things poorly if the reverse is true.
- c) People can feel sensitive about their hearing ability and can feel shy or embarrassed at discussing it. Many prefer not to disclose that they have hearing loss and avoid letting people know when they are struggling to hear and follow things.
- d) Most people with hearing loss are not sign language users. Some have little or no hearing ability and rely heavily or fully on lipreading and/or text transcription.
- e) For those who use sign language, the differences between sign language and written/spoken language is such that many require/prefer a sign language interpreter rather than text transcription to assist them in accessing meetings and events.
- f) If using PowerPoint or other visual materials, check that those using communication support (e.g. text transcription, sign language interpreter) are able to follow things adequately. It is challenging to keep track of two sources of input at the same time.
- g) Those who have particular communication needs are more likely to make their requirements known to the organiser / speaker. Where their needs are known, due consideration should be given throughout the meeting / event.

2. Speak so you can be heard

- a) Whilst variation in pitch, rhythm and timbre of the voice is important – volume should be maintained at a good level. Guard against starting sentences at a good level and then letting the volume fall away so some words or whole sentences drop below audibility.
- b) Be aware that many people who use hearing aids and other devices have to manually adjust them to respond to different volumes of sound being heard. The time required to make that adjustment inevitably means that some of what's being said gets missed, which can make following things difficult.
- c) If a comment or question is put forward by someone not using a microphone or not easily heard, the speaker should summarise or repeat the comment/question so the answer can then be understood in context.

3. Speak so you can be understood

- a) People do not just need to *hear* the words, they need the words to be *intelligible*. Guard against starting a sentence at a steady pace with clear diction and then lapsing into a faster pace where the words meld into each other.

- b) Speakers who have an accent that may be unfamiliar to listeners should take extra care with pace and clarity. An unfamiliar accent requires the brain to work harder to decipher words and this adds an extra layer of difficulty for those with hearing loss.
- c) Check periodically that you are speaking clearly enough and at an appropriate pace. If anyone has made you aware that they have hearing loss, try to particularly seek their feedback (be aware this may need to be done discreetly to protect their dignity).
- d) Pause and recap from time to time so people can be confident they are following things effectively. The cognitive effort involved in listening is greater for those with hearing loss because they hear things less easily so their brain has to fill in missing bits of words. This takes a bit more time so pauses and recaps help greatly.
- e) If any audience members are using a text transcription service then check that the communication professional is comfortable with the pace. Also, be aware that text can lag behind the spoken word so you may need to pause periodically for the text to catch up.

4. **Make sure your face can be seen**

- a) Make sure your face is visible. Many people with hearing loss watch people's lip shape to aid them in understanding what is said. Some people entirely rely on lipreading.
- b) Avoid covering your face with hands, notebooks, coffee cups etc. Beards / moustaches are much easier if they are trimmed so the lips can be seen.
- c) Room lighting should be set up so the light falls on the speaker's face. If the light (e.g. a window) is behind you then your face will be in shadow and therefore difficult to see.
- d) If it is known that someone is relying heavily on lipreading, try to restrict movement of your head and body. A podium can help keep you anchored to one spot.

5. **Written information and hand-outs**

- a) Write down names, dates, numbers, acronyms, unusual words and other important information. This will help those unsure if they're hearing it correctly.
- b) Providing hand-outs to cover main points and important information helps people feel confident they have picked things up accurately. Check in advance if any audience members will require easy read materials.

6. **Common barriers that speakers unwittingly create**

- a) Dipping the volume mid-way through words or sentences, or using hushed tones to add drama or emphasis, all of which can create inaudible gaps for the listener.
- b) The pace of speaking becoming increasingly fast as the speaker becomes more passionate and involved in what they are saying.
- c) A range of subjects or complex points being talked through without occasional recapping to assist those who may have missed or misheard some parts.
- d) Not enough time being provided to allow listeners to absorb the information given.
- e) People not hearing the questions or comments made by other attendees.
- f) Extended periods of presentations or discussions without break or pause to allow a rest from intensive and strenuous listening and/or lipreading effort.
- g) Not giving out hand-outs to help fill in missed information and recap on what was said.

Appendix 2: For Meeting/Event Organisers

Guidance to help Organisers get things right before, during and after the meeting or event.

Get things right before the meeting / event

7. Check the noise and acoustics

- c) Pick a venue that has good acoustics. A clap test in the room when it is empty should reveal no echo. Rooms with carpets, soft furnishings and absorbent ceiling panels are likely to be fine. Those with lots of hard reflective surfaces are not.
- d) Pick a room that will be quiet. Check use of adjacent rooms and find out what the noise levels are like if a window is opened. Also, be mindful that the hum of air condition units or heaters could be unsettling to some.
- e) Echo and noise make listening more tiring and difficult.
 - Even slight echo can significantly increase listening stress for hearing aid users (and other hearing device users) and will reduce accuracy in hearing conversation.
 - Noise creates discomfort for those with sound sensitivity and makes listening a struggle for others who find it hard to decipher the words they want to hear from rest of the background noise.
 - Hearing aids (and other hearing devices) typically amplify background noise and speech equally, creating a cacophony that is uncomfortable, tiring and difficult for the listener.
- f) Ask the venue to provide a quiet space (e.g. a separate room or a 'sheltered' area created by 2 or 3 free-standing noise-absorbent panels) so people can chat with less background noise during breaks and networking sessions.

8. Decide if a hearing loop is required

- a) As a rule of thumb, a hearing loop should be available in **any meeting space that has poor acoustics (or any echo) or where there is background noise**. E.g. if you want to meet in a lobby area or workplace café then a fixed localised hearing loop (of the sort provided at reception desks or ticket offices) should be provided to make this a suitable meeting place for hearing aid users.
- b) In a quiet location, as a rule of thumb a fixed induction hearing loop should be made available where there are **more than 8 people** in the room and/or attendees are to be **spread across a distance of more than 3m** and/or the room has **echo/poor acoustics**.
- c) The 'rule of thumb' is guidance only. A hearing loop should also be made available in **instance where it is specifically requested**. It may be required e.g. because the individual uses a hearing aid or other device that does not have the power or sophistication to adequately pick up sound from a distance of more than 1m.
- d) **Note:** The hearing loop should be on and working at the start of the meeting. Signage should be displayed in the room to alert people to the availability of a hearing loop.

9. Check the hearing loop

- a) Check that the venue offers a hearing loop (also known as 'induction loop') in the room/s being used. Hearing loops require no equipment beyond the user having hearing aids with a Telecoil (also known as a T-setting or loop programme). In some venues, fixed hearing loops will be available in meeting rooms.
- b) The hearing loop should have been recently tested to ensure it is working effectively. Ideally, a panel of four plus hearing aid users should have scored it at least 7 out of 10 for sound quality, including speech clarity, listening comfort or tone purity, and volume. (Handheld loop testing equipment does not provide the same assurance of efficacy, even if it is carried out by a trained engineer.)
- c) A common alternative to an induction loop is an infra-red system. Unlike hearing loops, these require the use of additional equipment (headsets or neck loops). Infrared systems are helpful in specific settings but are less desirable for practical, effectiveness and dignity reasons.
- d) As an organiser, it is ESSENTIAL that you know whether a hearing loop, infrared or other system is in place prior to advertising an event/meeting. Often, infra-red systems are wrongly described by venue staff as 'hearing loops', but they are not the same thing. A misunderstanding at the point of advertising the event/meeting can lead to negative issues on the day as expectations may have been raised, which then cannot be met.

10. Things to watch out for with hearing loops

- a) Check on the number and type of microphones made available with the hearing loop. The number should be adequate to pick up the voices of all speakers, including those who offer comments/questions from the floor/audience.
- b) Microphones should be as close as possible to the speakers/presenters. If a ceiling microphone is being used, try to position the speaker/presenter as close beneath it as possible. See also point 1.6 below.
- c) Let people know if a hearing loop will/will not be provided. If a portable hearing loop, infrared system or some alternative is to be offered instead then you should also make this clear. It may affect whether someone wishes to attend or not.
- d) Hearing loops are not all the same. Check what is being made available:
 - Fixed hearing loop that is permanently in place in the room and easily switched on. This is the preferred solution.
 - Temporary room loop, whereby the cables have to be laid and stuck down to the floor in advance of the meeting. The sound quality of these can become degraded because of the manual handling and there is a hassle factor for the organiser in ensuring everything is set up as it needs to be.
 - A hand-held portable box-shaped hearing loop, which has much more limited effectiveness and which can impact on dignity.

11. Decide if a PA system is required

- a) People's voices typically reach between 1 and 4 metres when speaking conversationally. Quality of listening will depend on how clearly and loudly the speaker speaks, the distance they are from the listener, and the hearing ability of the listener.

- b) As a rule of thumb, a PA system should be provided where there are **more than 12 people** in the room and/or attendees will be **spread across a distance of more than 4m**.
- c) The 'rule of thumb' is guidance only. A PA system should also be made available in **instance where it is specifically requested** for a relevant reason e.g. a hearing loop is not available or not of a sufficient quality to be effective.

12. Check the microphone arrangements

- a) An appropriate number of microphones should be provided, and they should be located where they will pick up voices in a suitable and effective way.
- b) Instructions should be made available with the microphones because they differ in the distance they should be from the mouth in order to get best results.
- c) The microphone should be appropriate for the activity of the speaker e.g. if someone is moving around the room to demonstrate things then a fixed microphone is not suitable.
- d) Microphone options include:
 - Headset microphones – tend to give the best results because voices don't get lost when the speaker's head moves.
 - Lapel microphones – also good but check clothing doesn't catch on it when the speaker moves.
 - Fixed or handheld microphones – the speaker should be asked (and reminded) to speak directly into it.
 - Multiple microphones – should be used in larger meetings/attendance to ensure everyone can be heard.
 - Roving microphones – should be available (and used) in events where questions or comments from the floor or audience are taken.

13. Check the audio visual equipment

- a) If audio equipment is to be used (e.g. video conferencing unit or conference room phone) then the quality should allow people to hear and follow things effectively.
- b) Check if the sound can be broadcast through the PA sound system and if it can (and assuming it enhances the sound quality) use this option.
- c) Check that the sound can be linked to the induction hearing loop system so it can be heard more effectively by hearing aid users.
- d) Check if the venue makes headsets available to enhance listening over a distance. If so, make this information available to attendees.
- e) Use text transcription (subtitles or a speech-to-text service) to supplement the video material, especially if the audio quality is poor.

14. Provide information to attendees

- a) Provide information to advise potential attendees of what they can expect on the day as this will encourage attendance (and demonstrate inclusive principles) e.g.

- “Hearing and listening protocols will be followed, a PA system and/or hearing loop will be available and venue has good acoustics. Attendees can also bring their own wireless technologies to assist their listening experiences.”
 - This can be included with other access information e.g. disabled parking, wheelchair access, disabled toilets, location to public transport routes etc.
 - Aim to retain a neutral tone so those who might benefit from the information do not miss it because they do not identify as ‘disabled’ or ‘in need of special assistance’.
- b) Invite attendees to let you know if they have any additional access requirements that you should be aware of.
 - c) Have a policy and procedures in place to respond to requests for support from a communications professional (e.g. BSL translator) and to accommodate assistance dogs.

Get things right during the meeting / event

1. **Layout / seating**

- a) Allow people to select where they sit so they can position themselves as effectively as possible for hearing and lipreading.
- b) Position the presenters and main speakers so light falls onto their face rather than it being behind them (e.g. avoid placing them in front of a brightly lit window). This is visually more comfortable for those looking at them, especially those who use lipreading to assist them in following what is being said.

2. **Lighting**

- a) Check for glare or gloom, both of which can create uncomfortable and difficult conditions for people who use lipreading to assist them (as well as for those with visual impairment).
- b) Turn on lights and adjust blinds/curtains.
- c) If the lights are turned off for a visual presentation, turn them back on as soon as possible so those who use lipreading to assist them can see people’s faces (and to aid those with visual impairment).

3. **Highlight the Protocols**

- a) Advise/remind attendees that the Protocols are being followed.
- b) Adopt a standard statement that can be used at the beginning of meetings or during ‘housekeeping matters’ to advise attendees that the Protocols are being followed.

4. **Microphones and hearing loops**

- a) If a microphone is in use, it should be used by EVERYONE, irrespective of whether they wish to use it or not. This reduces the possibility of people being excluded from hearing, especially those who are using the hearing loop (which the microphone feeds into).
- b) Check all the microphones are working and that they are feeding correctly into the PA system and/or hearing loop. (Use Loop Tester equipment to check)

- c) Check the positioning of the microphones so that they suit the layout of the room and the location of the speakers.
- d) If a hearing loop is being used, check it is on and working and that signage can be seen to alert people to the availability of a hearing loop. (This should be done as standard in any case but make an extra effort if someone has advised you they require to use it.)

Note: When people use the hearing loop, their hearing aid is switched to a 't-setting', which restricts its ability to pick up sound that is not coming through the loop. This means that if people do not speak into a microphone (e.g. questions from the floor, someone who says they can speak loudly enough without it) then loop users have to switch their hearing aid away from the t-setting to receive sound. At a practical level, by the time they have done that, they've missed what was said, if indeed their hearing aid has the power and capability to catch things without the hearing loop.

5. **Noise**

- a) Be continually aware of background noise and avoid, prevent or reduce this where possible e.g. noise through open windows, adjacent rooms, air conditioning units, use of music.
- b) Be aware that many hearing aid users prefer not to sit close to projectors (as the fans can be quite noisy and distracting).
- c) Avoid generating noise during meetings or presentations from the setting out cups and saucers, plates and cutlery.
- d) During breaks and networking sessions, make people aware that a quiet space/zone is offered for those preferring to chat in more peaceful surroundings.

6. **Audio-visual equipment and text transcription**

- a) If video material is used, add subtitles and, if doing so, make sure they are a font size that can be seen at the back of the room.
- b) If the audience is large and positioned at a distance from the speaker, consider whether you should provide a live video feed of the speaker on a large screen so those who use lipreading to assist them can see the speaker's face more easily.
- c) If providing a text transcription service (via a Speech to Text Reporter, Electronic Notetaker Professional, or possibly a digital App) then think about the position of the screen and the audience members who need to see it. Ensure that the PowerPoint screen (or other screen being used) can also be seen comfortably by those individuals.
- d) For events with large numbers of people with hearing loss, more than one screen may be required to display the text.
- e) Use of a digital App to provide a text transcription service should not be a replacement for a trained professional but could be offered to assist people who have hearing loss but who do not require support from a communications professional.

7. **Additional requirements**

- a) Make it easy for people to use their own wireless technologies e.g. if they have a remote microphone that streams sound directly into their hearing aids, assist them to find the best place to position it.

- b) If specialist communication professionals are to be used, work with them and take their advice as to where they should be located. Likewise, work with the user to ensure they are located where they need to be.
- c) When speaking with someone who is using a communication professional, ALWAYS speak directly to the individual not to the professional who is providing the interpreting, lip-speaking or text transcription service.

8. **Check things are as you hope and expect**

Check during the first break in proceedings that those using the communication support are finding it adequate and be willing to make slight adjustments if need be (and possible).

Be confident in supporting those who advise you they have hearing loss (most people with hearing loss will not disclose their needs but some will).

Get things right after the meeting / event

Add questions to feedback forms to invite specific information about hearing, listening and communication experiences.

Questions to ask could include:

1. How well could you hear and follow the main speakers at this event/meeting?
2. How well could you hear and follow questions or comments made to the group by other attendees?
3. Was the pace suitable for allowing you to hear and follow things?
4. How effective were the visual aids and could you follow them whilst also following what was being said?
5. How well could you hear and follow informal chat and networking conversation during breaks and unstructured sessions?
6. What issues, if any, affected your experiences?
7. Did you find the meeting room uncomfortably noisy at any time?
8. If you used the hearing loop, score it out of 10 (1 = terrible and 10 = excellent) for: speech clarity; listening comfort or tone purity (i.e. interference or noise); volume level.
9. Overall, how would you score your experience of being able to hear, listen and follow things at this event/meeting? 1 = terrible and 10 = excellent.

Appendix 3: Template forms for Meeting/Event Organisers

Before the meeting / event checklist

Pre-event checks	✓
1. Room acoustics	
2. Use of nearby rooms (to minimise background noise disrupting your event)	
3. Quiet space/breakout room available	
4. Background noise (air conditioning unit, from open window, etc) checked for minimal disruption	
5. Room layout If the room is for a meeting, can everyone see everyone else? Are microphones needed? For an event – Placing of PA system speakers, lighting, can everyone see the podium? Is there space for a screen for speech-to-text (if being used at the event)?	
6. Need for PA system/microphones Does the PA system link to a fixed room hearing induction loop system?	
7. Need for a hearing loop. Which system is provided? (Hearing loop, infrared or other system?) Has the working status been checked? Has the microphone position been checked?	
8. Need for audio visual equipment If using audio visual equipment, can the sound from the AV equipment be broadcast through the PA sound system? If not, does the venue make headsets available to enhance listening over a distance?	
9. Communication support. What is required? (Speech-to-text, lipspeaker, etc.) Has the communication professional been booked? (Ensure this is done well in advance to ensure availability) Has advice been sought as to where they should be located during the event (and any furniture/equipment they will need)?	
10. Speakers/presenters notified that all videos must be subtitled (with a font size appropriate to size of screen and venue)	
11. Booking information for delegates includes access information (availability of hearing loop, PA system, speech-to-text, etc) and invitation to contact the organiser about specific access needs	
12. Emergency evacuation procedures for people with hearing loss	
13. Name badges for all attendees or alternative system for easily identifying people	
14. Agenda, programme or other handout giving details of all presenters/speakers	

During the event checklist

Checks for events	Checked
1. Seating allows attendees to self-select where they sit	
2. Lighting on the stage/at the podium suitable to aid lipreading	
3. Speakers/presenters briefed as to the requirement to remain at the podium (not move about the stage), and remain in the light (to aid lipreading)	
4. All speakers/presenters briefed about the necessity to use the PA system	
5. Hearing loop/infra-red system tested before the start of the event by venue staff	
6. Microphones tested (with PA system and loop/infra-red) – including roving mic and lapel mics	
7. Someone in place to turn lights back on after any audio-visual presentation	
8. Someone responsible for minimising any noise interruptions (air conditioning, etc) during the event	
9. Awareness raised of the provision of a quiet space or quiet breakout room	
10. Procedure in place for discreetly checking with delegates with hearing loss as to the accessibility of the presentations at the event	

During the meeting checklist

Checks for meetings	Checked
1. Seating allows attendees to self-select where they sit	
2. Lighting suitable to aid lipreading. Curtains or blinds at windows.	
3. Hearing loop/infra-red system tested before the start of the event by venue staff	
4. Microphones tested – including roving mic and lapel mics	
5. Someone in place to turn lights back on after any audio-visual presentation	
6. Someone responsible for minimising any noise interruptions (air conditioning, etc) during the meeting	
7. Procedure in place for discreetly checking with delegates with hearing loss as to the accessibility of the meeting	

Feedback template for Attendees after the meeting / event

How well could you hear & follow things during this meeting/event?

Your name [if required]: _____

Meeting/event attended: _____

Venue: _____ Date of meeting/event: _____

1. How well could you hear & follow the main speakers at this event / meeting?



very easily



quite easily



neutral



quite poorly



very poorly

Other (please explain) _____

2. How well could you hear & follow questions & comments made by other attendees?



very easily



quite easily



neutral



quite poorly



very poorly

Other (please explain) _____

3. Did any of the following issues affect your experiences? Tick all that apply.

<input type="checkbox"/> microphone was not good enough quality or not used effectively or at all	<input type="checkbox"/> rapid changes in discussion topics made it hard to follow what was being said
<input type="checkbox"/> people did not speak clearly or loudly enough	<input type="checkbox"/> I couldn't always see the faces of speakers so it was hard to use lipreading to help me
<input type="checkbox"/> acoustics in the room were poor so noise reverberated and spread	<input type="checkbox"/> lighting in the room wasn't good for lipreading
<input type="checkbox"/> noise from passing traffic or other external source	<input type="checkbox"/> hearing loop wasn't available or didn't provide clear sound, or wasn't set at the right volume
<input type="checkbox"/> noise from elsewhere in the building	<input type="checkbox"/> people lacked hearing and deafness awareness
<input type="checkbox"/> noise from conversational chatter	<input type="checkbox"/> Other – please state
<input type="checkbox"/> noise from a ventilation system or similar	
Comments:	

4. How well could you hear & follow people when chatting informally during breaks or networking opportunities?



very easily



quite easily



neutral



quite poorly



very poorly

Other (please explain) _____

Further information

To discuss or find out more, please contact Sally Shaw, director of Ideas for Ears at sally.shaw@ideasforears.org.uk or tel/SMS: 07739 581059.

This document is being shared by Ideas for Ears & the Scottish Council on Deafness.

Ideas for Ears is a not-for-profit social enterprise led by people with hearing loss. It gathers data on the experiences people with hearing loss have when using products and services and uses this to help organisations more effectively meet the needs of customers, staff and other stakeholders.

The Scottish Council on Deafness (SCoD) is the lead organisation for deaf issues in Scotland. It aims to ensure that deaf, deafened, deafblind and hard of hearing people in Scotland can have equality, access services and information across all sectors of society, including education, and be active citizens.

