

Inclusive Meetings and Events

We aim to create an inclusive, diverse and accessible environment where it is everyone's responsibility to ensure all members of our university community are treated with fairness, dignity, respect and have a sense of belonging.

It is therefore everyone's responsibility, when organising meetings, events, and celebrations to consider the needs of our diverse community to ensure everyone feels welcome and able to attend if they wish.

To help you consider inclusivity when organising your meeting or event we have developed an [Inclusive Events Assessment](#) which will guide you through all the things you need to consider. You can also contact your Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Partner who will be able to advise you.

Accessibility and Inclusion Considerations

When selecting a venue for a meeting or event, it is essential to carefully consider the diverse requirements of attendees to ensure an inclusive and welcoming environment for all. Below are key factors to address:

- Assess whether a person with a mobility disability would be able to access the building comfortably. Accessible entrances, ramps, and lifts should be available and clearly signposted in case of an emergency. Consider the availability of accessible and gender-neutral toilets along with single sex spaces.
- Ensure that you are aware of any planned fire alarm tests and the evacuation procedures.
- Ensure there are suitable places for individuals with mobility challenges to sit down. Consider the availability of seating areas that are both accessible and comfortable.
- Confirm whether there is available disabled parking either at or near the venue to facilitate easy arrival and departure for those who require it. Does this need to be reserved?
- Consider if someone with hearing difficulties would be able to participate fully in conversations. For example, some individuals may find it helpful to sit with their back against a wall to improve their ability to hear and engage.
- Reflect on whether an Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans or Queer (LGBTQ+) colleague would feel comfortable attending an event at the chosen location. Create an atmosphere that is welcoming and respectful of all identities.

- Think about whether a colleague would feel able to attend, especially if the location or event is based around alcohol. This consideration extends to anyone who may choose not to drink for any reason.
- Consider if all colleagues would feel safe and welcome to attend. The venue should foster a sense of safety and belonging for everyone.
- Provide a quiet room where colleagues may pray, meditate, or have some personal time away from the event if they feel overwhelmed. This space supports wellbeing and respects individual needs for reflection or solitude.

Selecting Accessible Venues If an event is off campus organisers should endeavour to select an accessible venue. While it may not always be possible to have complete control over the venues available for consideration, it remains important to recognise that there are a wide range of accessible venues from which to choose. For those who require support in identifying suitable locations, there are helpful resources such as [AccessAble](#), which can assist in making informed decisions about accessibility.

Identifying Attendees' Requirements

It is recommended to ask attendees directly if they have any specific requirements, rather than making assumptions. The most reliable source of guidance is always the person who has the protected characteristic, as they are best placed to advise on their own needs. Organisers can also consult the [Diversity Calendar](#) to take into account term time, special events or religious observances.

Timing Considerations

It is important to carefully consider the timing of your event or meeting. Reflect on whether the scheduled time may affect colleagues who have caring responsibilities, such as childcare or eldercare, as well as those who work from home or would the timing of your event mean that people may leave the event in darkness, it is important to consider people's safety.

By taking these factors into account, you can help ensure that as many people as possible are able to participate and feel included.

Catering and Social Events

- Check with catering providers (internal or external) that ingredients are clearly labelled or that your venue has considerations around cross-contamination or isn't focused on alcohol to help people feel comfortable, avoid any allergic reactions etc.

- Ask in advance for any specific requirements or allergens.
- Consider that not all colleagues may live in the city centre or may not be able to socialise outside of working hours. We have many colleagues who travel from Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire and further afield. Consider a work-time social e.g. lunch over Teams with music, quizzes, and have fun without being exclusionary. Socials can also be done in a hybrid way with a little thought.

Financial Considerations

Be mindful of any expenses that guests may incur and how this may affect their participation.

When organising events, it is important to consider any costs that attendees might face, such as contributions towards drinks, festive (celebration?) attire, or participation in activities like “Secret Santa”. These expenses can impact the ability or willingness of individuals to attend, particularly those from varied socio-economic backgrounds. By being aware of these factors, organisers can help create a more inclusive atmosphere, where financial considerations do not become a barrier to involvement.

Invites

Begin by consulting with those you wish to invite regarding their preferences for activities and locations. While it may be challenging to accommodate everyone’s wishes, gathering input ensures you have a sense of what most people would enjoy and helps to identify a time that suits the majority. Additionally, team members may offer fresh suggestions that you might not have considered.

Ensure the invitation is extended to everyone, including new starters, temporary staff, and those who are working remotely or are currently on parental leave.

Not everyone will be able to attend, but being invited is often just as meaningful as being present at the event itself. Even those who are unable to participate may appreciate the gesture and have valuable input into the choice of venue or activity.

If you haven’t been able to be as inclusive as you wish you could make a commitment to ensure that your next event is inclusive by sending an email

Eg: 'on this occasion we have not been able to XYZ, but we will ensure that next time we will have an event that is XYZ'

Alcohol and Dietary Requirements

Alcohol is often a feature of many celebrations; however, it is important to acknowledge that some individuals may choose not to consume alcohol. Reasons for this may include religious beliefs, health or medical conditions, or personal preference. In order to be considerate of everyone's choices, it is essential to provide a selection of soft drinks. This not only respects those who abstain but also supports colleagues who may need to drive.

Drinks should be clearly marked and separated.

Dietary requirements should always be taken into consideration when organising any event. Increasing numbers of people are adopting vegetarian or vegan diets, and certain religions specify particular dietary practices. In addition, food allergies must be accounted for to ensure the safety and comfort of all attendees.

Any specially requested food should be clearly marked and separate from other food.

Wellbeing

Times of celebration can present challenges for some individuals. The sense of loneliness may feel more acute when surrounded by festivities and others who are celebrating. It is important to recognise that such occasions can affect people in different ways and, for some, may not always bring joy or connection.

For those experiencing difficulty, support is available, including resources such as the Employee Assistance Programme. You can find further information and access these services via our [wellbeing pages](#).

Celebrating Religious and Cultural Diversity

Our community is made up of staff and students from a variety of backgrounds, who observe a broad spectrum of religious and cultural celebrations throughout the year. During the winter period in particular, events such as Christmas and Hanukkah are marked, among others. Colleagues, irrespective of their beliefs, may choose to exchange greetings like 'Merry Christmas' or 'Happy Holidays' according to their personal preference. It is important to note that end-of-year social gatherings are inclusive and open to all, without being based on any particular faith tradition.

We acknowledge and celebrate the wide range of festivals observed by our community throughout the year, including occasions such as Christmas, Diwali, Easter, Eid, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa Lunar New Year, Samhain, and many others. Demonstrating awareness of and respect for the diverse celebrations observed by colleagues of all faiths and none is central to fostering an inclusive environment in which everyone feels welcomed and valued.