



Foundation Inclusive Communication Toolkit

Quick inclusive communication good practice guide

Inclusive communication benefits everyone. It is the kind and right thing to do. It enables more people to understand others and express themselves easily. An expert organisation estimates 250,000 people in Scotland need it to access services¹. Every member of staff is encouraged to communicate in an inclusive way as often as they can. You can -



1. Recognise people need or prefer to communicate in different ways

- Show a positive attitude towards people who communicate in different ways. For example, people who use sign language, an electronic aid or who speak in a language other than English.
- Do not assume everyone can understand others, express themselves or use a computer or phone easily. Communication difficulties can be hidden.
- Take different communication needs seriously. Do not wait to be asked to adapt your communication. Set your service up so it caters for different needs as a matter of course. See point 3 “Act” below.



2. Find out how people need or prefer to communicate

- Ask people two questions -

¹ For example, Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists – see [unc-rights-of-persons-disabilities-submission-1.pdf](#)

1. “How do you need or prefer to communicate?”
2. “What can I do to support your communication?”



3. Act on people’s communication needs and preferences

- Help people to understand you. Use inclusive speaking and writing as much as you can. See the quick guides below. Use pictures, gestures and demonstration to show people what you mean.
- Help people to express themselves in ways they prefer. For example, using speech, writing, signing, pictures, body language, a “talking aid” or through a personal helper.
- Give people the time they need to understand you and express themselves.
- Respond to what people communicate, regardless of the way they communicate.
- Offer specialist communication supports. Arrange supports if people ask you to. For example, translations, interpreting, large print, Braille or Easy Read.
- Offer people a choice of communicating with you in person, by video call, phone, text, email or letter. Offer more than one choice. Offer choices at every step of your service.
- Give people a choice of days and times to communicate with you.
- Provide services in places people can travel to easily, with wheelchair access, inclusive signs, good lighting, working hearing loops and quiet spaces.
- Provide inclusive information before, during and after face-to-face meetings. Let people know what you will do and what you expect them to do.

- Look out for communication breakdown. For example, people not turning up, or not responding to information. Adapt your communication to overcome breakdowns.



4. Keep checking and trying to improve your communication

- Ask people about their communication experience when they use your service. Be open to feedback. Improve your communication if people ask you to.



Find more information and practical resources in the [Foundation Inclusive Communication Toolkit](#)



Short inclusive speaking guide

Speak in an inclusive way as often as you can when -

- you speak to service users, colleagues and people outside your organisation,
- for face to face in person or video call interactions,
- for phone messages and conversations.

It will get easier with practice.

1. Work out your key points.
2. Work out a logical order to say your key points.
3. Make sure people can easily see and hear you. Do not shout.
4. Use short, simple sentences for each key point.
 - Avoid lots of ifs, buts, and maybes.
 - Use “active” sentences. For example, say “We do this” not “This is done by us.”
 - Use local, everyday words whenever you can. No jargon. No abbreviations.
5. Back up what you are saying by showing people what you mean with pictures, gestures and demonstration.
6. Give people time to understand what you say. Let them respond at their own pace in the way they prefer.
7. Offer people a note or recording of important information to use as a reminder after your conversation.



Short inclusive writing guide

Write in an inclusive way as often as you can when -

- you write to service users, colleagues and people outside your organisation,
- for emails, letters, text messages, meeting agendas, notes, forms, websites etc.

It will get easier with practice.

1. Work out your key points.
2. Group key points in sections. Add a heading to each section.
3. Organise sections in a logical order. For example, in the order you want people to act.
4. Within each section write short, simple sentences for each key point.
 - Be politely direct. Avoid lots of ifs, buts, and maybes.
 - Use “active” sentences. For example, “We can help you” not “You can be helped by us”.
 - Use local, everyday words whenever you can. No jargon. No abbreviations.
5. Follow any rules your organisation has about how written documents should look. If they do not have rules, do the following.
6. Use simple lettering “without tails” such as Arial. Use at least size 12 font. Space text out with at least 1.5 spacing.
7. Add pictures to the left of writing to highlight information like a phone number or address. Add pictures to show what your writing means. Never put text over pictures.

8. Contrast the text and the background or paper colour. Black text on a white or a light cream background can work well.
9. Use the “Check Accessibility” function on your computer to check the reading order. This also helps you to add “Alt Text” which describes images to people with sight loss. Use the “Read Aloud” function to review and check screen readability.
10. Offer written information in alternative formats such as Easy Read, large print or Braille.
11. When you ask a service user to write anything, such as filling in a form –
 - Minimise the amount people need to write.
 - Provide plenty of space to write by hand.
 - Give people a choice. Offer a phone call or a face-to-face conversation instead.



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