



Checklist – Accessible & Inclusive Tourism

Festivals & Events

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Introduction

Ensure everyone feels welcome at your festival or event



When you are running a festival or event, a genuine welcome is always a priority. To make sure that everyone who attends feels included and gains the maximum benefit from their experience, you need to show attention to detail and take a thoughtful, empathetic approach to the varied abilities of all performers and presenters, as well as your event team and your attendees.

Making your festivals and events more accessible and inclusive means more people will be willing and able to attend and participate. It also broadens the range of people who can take part in festival organisation and delivery. However, factors like poor information, inaccessible infrastructure and poor customer service can limit people's ability to participate and strain the loyalty of your team and volunteers.

This checklist is designed to help you assess how ready your festival or event is to provide a welcome for all. You can use it to spot oversights and points of friction in the event experience, as well as identify areas where your welcome is already excellent.



Use the checklist to:

- ✓ Inform your team's decision-making about venue suitability and choices.
- ✓ Guide you through the process of evaluating the accessibility of your event communications, infrastructure and customer service.
- ✓ Identify practical changes you can make (from quick wins to more ambitious changes).
- ✓ Identify features of your festival that will broaden your appeal to a wider audience.
- ✓ Benefit from peace of mind and handy reminders of necessary actions in the run-up to an event.
- ✓ Maintain standards of excellence.
- ✓ Track your progress as part of a process of continuous improvement.

Please note: This action checklist is part of a wider range of resources provided by Fáilte Ireland, and it is aimed at people who manage festivals and events. Use it with other resources, including our [Effective Communications Guide](#) and the food and beverage business access checklist, to make sure that you provide an authentic and inclusive welcome.

For more information, visit the [Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Business Support Hub](#).

Inclusion and Accessibility

The terms 'accessible' and 'inclusive' are often used interchangeably, and they should go hand in hand. However, they have quite different meanings, and it is important to keep both in mind when you are running a festival or event that offers a genuine welcome for all.

'Inclusion' means including and accommodating people so that everyone can participate in and enjoy the experiences you offer.

The word 'accessible' means 'easy to approach, reach, use, and understand'.



Accessible

An accessible festival or event is one that is physically, technologically and socially easy to access, approach, attend, experience and participate in fully.



Inclusive

An inclusive festival or event organiser goes beyond accessibility to actively welcome and accommodate diverse attendees and participants. They provide equal opportunities for all to engage and participate, respecting the fact that adjustments may be required to deliver these equal opportunities.

Improving accessibility and inclusion is a continuous and rewarding process. Some of the actions you identify as you work through the checklist will be quick, simple and affordable fixes. Others – like issues caused by venue features or training gaps – may need more time to solve. These more complex actions may also require collaboration with colleagues, managers, event teams and other stakeholders, such as venue owners or disabled people's organisations.

Revisiting the checklist each time you organise a festival or event will help you stay actively engaged in this process. It will also ensure that you are regularly renewing your commitment to continuously improve your welcome for all. Use the checklist and the wider resources available through Fáilte Ireland to spur you on and chart your progress!



Checklist – Accessible & Inclusive Tourism

Festivals & Events

Business Name:

Year:

Planning & Preparation

To ensure good governance, completion and review of these actions is the responsibility of the person who is the Task Owner.

Use the following options to indicate task status in Completed column: **Y= Yes, N=No, P= Partly or A= Active**

If Action is not completed, use the Notes column to provide more detail.

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Does your website include a dedicated section that outlines your festival or event's accessibility features and supports visitors in understanding how you provide an accessible experience? An Access Welcome Guide is a section on your website that provides clear, reliable information about your business's accessibility features, helping visitors with access needs make informed and confident booking decisions. To support you in developing an Access Welcome Guide section on your website, please visit Fáilte Ireland's Access Welcome Guide Hub			
If all or part of your festival or event is hosted in property you do not manage, have you contacted your venue(s) and asked them to share their Access Welcome Guide, including information about accessibility, with you?¹			
Have you asked your invited guests (artists, performers etc.) and other people involved in delivering your event (e.g. suppliers, production team, volunteers) to identify whether they have any access requirements?			

1 If the venue does not have an Access Welcome Guide yet, refer its team to Fáilte Ireland's Business Events Checklist and [Fáilte Ireland's Access Welcome Guide Hub](#).

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you used the Access Welcome Guides and other information shared by potential venues to inform your decision about the best place(s) to host your event(s)?			
Are the values of accessibility and inclusion reflected in your programming choices? Strategies for inclusive programming could include: • A diverse selection of performers, presenters and themes. • Quiet/relaxed event settings or periods for people with Dementia. • Accessible and inclusive activities (e.g. a craft workshop with clearly stated accommodations for people with limited dexterity; food stalls run by people from across your local community). • Event options and play areas suitable for children. • Have you also briefed your photographer or videographer about accessibility considerations e.g. reduce or remove flash or click noise?			
Have you briefed your event photographer or videographer to capture images of accessibility, inclusion and representation at your festivals and events? Do you include these images in selections you share with festival sponsors (e.g. your Local Authority) and Ireland's Content Pool, and do you use them in your marketing materials? Have you also briefed your photographer or videographer about accessibility considerations e.g. reduce or remove flash or click noise?			

Pre-Event Information & Booking

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you offer your attendees a few different ways to book with you and a variety of contact options (e.g. telephone, email, text message, and the Irish Text Relay Service which is available for use by D/deaf people and people with speech impairments). ²			
Are relevant staff or volunteers trained in and comfortable using the Irish Text Relay Service?			
Do you provide concessions that support accessibility? They could take the form of free entry for essential companions and discounts for carers, and/or a concessionary rate for disabled attendees and Public Services Card holders on the Free Travel Scheme. ³			

² The Irish Text Relay Service enables people who are D/deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-impaired, to make and receive calls independently through type and read, type, and speak and type and listen supports. To find out more, visit the [Irish Text Relay Service](#).

³ Travelling to an event often takes more time and may involve greater costs for people with disabilities, who are already likely to have higher living costs than your other attendees. According to the Disability Federation of Ireland, 'The average annual extra cost of living with a disability is between €8,700 and €12,300 [...]'. These figures were calculated based on data from 2020 and earlier years, so predate the current cost of living crisis'. Find out more at [Disability Federation of Ireland](#).

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you ask attendees 'Do you have any accessibility or inclusion requirements?' during the booking process?			
Does promotional material specify the name and details of the person who can take enquiries about the accessibility of your festival or event? You can incorporate learnings from the enquiries they receive into your general information for attendees and event participants.			
Does your promotional material include information about the accessible facilities at the venue(s) you are using (e.g. hearing loops, location of accessible parking and/or nearest set down area)? ⁴			
Have you informed attendees, pre-event, of any special effects such as flashing lights or photography, strobe lighting or sound effects, as they may affect people with epilepsy and tinnitus?			
Do you allow attendees to reserve seats if they wish to lipread or be close to an ISL interpreter (in front row/rows), near the toilet or exit?			

4 For guidance on what sufficient parking means, see the guidelines on 'Access to the Built Environment' by the [Irish Wheelchair Association](#).

Your Website

To ensure good governance, completion and review of these actions is the responsibility of the person who is the Task Owner.

Use the following options to indicate task status in Completed column: **Y= Yes**, **N=No**, **P= Partly** or **A= Active**

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Does your website meet the standards set out in the international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG2)?⁵ You may need to seek advice from your site designer here, but simple steps towards compliance include providing alternative text for all images. Training in web accessibility is also available via Fáilte Ireland's Business Hub and learniFI (Fáilte Ireland's learning platform), where live learning and self-paced courses are available.⁶			
Are the values of accessibility and inclusion clearly reflected in your website's content (text, imagery) and in material which appears on third-party websites? How are you making this judgement call (e.g. are you seeking feedback from users)?			

⁵ WCAG 2 Overview | Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) | W3C.

⁶ Find resources at: [Live Learning](#)

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you provide detailed and accurate information on venues, including photos and measurements, both as part of an Access Welcome Guide and within the 'Planning your visit' section of your website? Ensure that information provided throughout your site is clear about accessibility, as not all guests will regard their requirements (e.g. pushchair access to garden events) as accessibility needs.			
Does your website provide information on accessible transport options to your festival and event venues including: • Accessible public transport and car hire options. • Licensed taxis services that can reliably accommodate wheelchair users and people with assistance dogs, including autism assistance dogs. • Parking and/or drop-off points (include distances if disabled parking options are not immediately outside the venue entrance. Also indicate where roofed or underground parking and drop-off is available).			
Is the information you provide about the destination in general equally useful to all attendees (e.g. in a list of restaurants or attractions, do you note their levels of accessibility, including factors such as suitability for wheelchair users and accessible menus)?			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you provide a list of available accessibility equipment and details of reputable suppliers should visitors need to hire specific equipment you do not have? Examples of assistive equipment include ear defenders, walkers, and wheelchairs. Details of reputable care providers will also be helpful.			
Do you allow a 30-minute booking window and incorporate an option for people to share information on their accessibility requirements?			
Is there an option to book, or contact you about booking, a free companion ticket to support the visitor's ability to participate in your event?			

Marketing

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you ensured that the marketing channels you use are reaching people with accessibility requirements? For example: • Have you ensured your marketing materials are accessible to people with disabilities, such as those who are blind or have low vision, by including alt text and captions? • Have you mentioned your Access Welcome Guide, or used information about the accessibility and inclusivity of your event, in your online listings?			
Is information provided online in forms that can be read by screen readers (i.e. you do not rely on people being able to read text on images, and you ensure adequate levels of contrast between text and background).			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Are all print materials designed to meet high standards of accessibility?⁷ • Prepare print materials with care, ensuring colour contrast and legibility. • Avoid using small font for details, such as allergens and consider providing a QR code to link to an online, accessible version of the same information.			
Do you regularly promote your accessible facilities and services through your communication channels, including social media?			
Have you let local disabled people's organisations and groups (e.g. Autism support groups) know about any recent improvements in your offer?			
Do you integrate representation of all disabilities naturally in the imagery and text used in your marketing communications? Avoid representing people with disabilities as heroic when they are taking part in everyday tasks or regular visitor experiences.			

7 Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, 'Customer Communications Toolkit', available from the [Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](#).

Wayfinding & Navigation

To ensure good governance, completion and review of these actions is the responsibility of the person who is the Task Owner.

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Is clear external signage provided, including to an accessible entrance if the main one does not provide step-free access? Where possible, the main entrance should be accessible.			
Is signage installed at a height visible to wheelchair users?			
Is signage easy to interpret (adequate font size, strong colour contrast, clear symbols)? ⁸			
Do you offer to provide an orientation tour to visitors with disabilities?			
Have you developed a set of standard Emergency Evacuation Plans (EEPs) for the safe evacuation of people with disabilities? Are they reviewed by your venue team at regular intervals (e.g. twice a year)?			
Do you ask all guests if they require any assistance with evacuation in an emergency? Discuss the standard options available and agree and record any specific arrangements made with individual people.			

⁸ Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, 'Signage Design', available from [Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](#).

Access at the Main Entrance

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Does the main outdoor/indoor pathway leading to your event provide clear and level entry?			
Is there a well-lit route to the event which is clear of obstructions?			
Is the main entrance/s accessible (clear, level access)?			
Does the type and width of gate/door dimensions enable access for wheelchairs?			
Is the entrance door easy to open?			
If an alternative entrance is accessible, has this been stated in information provided to attendees before the festival or event? (e.g. through a link in the ticket email to a 'Frequently Asked Questions' web page).			
Are there physical barriers (such as steps), in public areas? If so, is there a ramp or an alternative accessible route?			
Is there a kerb ramp available if a pavement or walkway needs to be crossed? Ensure this remains accessible during busy periods (e.g. when parking is at capacity).			

Access Around the Festival

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Is there a continuous accessible path of travel around all areas of the festival?			
Are there resting spots at regular intervals along entrance and exit paths?			
Have you provided adequate space for people using mobility aids to move in between areas, stands and displays? ⁹			
At reception areas, customer service points, bars or shops on site, are there lower counter tops for wheelchair users and people of short stature?			

⁹ Note that the Government of Ireland advises that a 1800mm turning circle is required for wheelchair users and 1200mm minimum circulation space, as per building regulations. See 'Technical Guidance Document M: Access & Use', available from [Government of Ireland](#).

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
If a beach location is being used, are floating wheelchair Mobi-chairs available, and do you use non-slip roll out walkway mats or Mobi-mats to create pathways for wheelchair strollers?			
Do any grassy or loose gravel areas need to be covered with flooring materials to make mobility easier?			
Is there casual seating where people can rest throughout the event venue?			
Is there an accessibility map/plan that marks all access features (i.e. accessible toilets and Changing Places facilities in venues or nearby)? If this is in a hard-copy format, is it accessible? Is it added to your website?			
Is there clear signage for assistance, toilets, lifts, help and information?			
Do you have alternative signage options (e.g. braille, audio)?			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Will visitors have access to quiet spaces or a sensory room and are these clearly signposted?			
Is there a designated accessible viewing area/platform?			
Have staff been briefed on their obligation to provide a welcome to assistance dogs? ¹⁰			
Are staff trained in assistance animal etiquette (e.g. don't touch, talk to, feed or distract)? ¹¹			
Are water bowls available for use by assistance dogs?			
Have you designated an assistance animal relief area, and exercise area, ideally within the grounds of the event venue or nearby, along with a handwash station for owners? Have you also provided a biowaste bin and some dog-poop bags or a pooper scooper?			

10 In Ireland, there are four organisations that have accreditation with Assistance Dogs International, Inc. (ADI). These are: Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland, Irish Dogs for the Disabled, Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind, and My Canine Companion – Autism Service Dogs. For more information, visit [Assistance Dogs International](#).

11 For more information, see [Guide Dog Foundation](#).

Toilets & Comfort Facilities

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you clearly indicated the availability of accessible and unisex facilities using signage that uses easily understood symbols and Braille as well as words?			
Is equipment such as a track hoist or a height-adjusted changing table available?			
Where an accessible toilet requires a key or code to gain access (e.g. RADAR key), do you provide clear guidance on the door as to where a key or code can be obtained?			
Do you clearly indicate the availability of baby changing facilities?			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you shared information about Changing Places facilities available at your venues or nearby?			
Do you designate a quiet space with an electrical outlet that can be used by attendees who need to rest, express breastmilk, or take medication?			
Do you provide storage, when requested, for mobility devices, care equipment, medication, or other essential items? For example, staff may be asked to store crutches or a walker or to refrigerate certain medication. • Do staff have training, as well as facilities, so they can respond appropriately to related requests? • Do you provide clear signage to public areas and clear instructions and/or support so a person can retrieve stored items when needed? • Are there any issues or procedures around the storage of expensive items or equipment?			

Customer Care & Support

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Are all staff aware of, and using the inclusive communication strategies set out in Fáilte Ireland's Effective Communications Guide? Helpful strategies include: • Providing a clear welcome. • Using plain language and non-discriminatory terms. • Adjusting pace and tone to suit the people you are addressing. • Actively listening to and focusing on the people you are communicating with.			
Do event staff remind participants and attendees about sources of information and support available throughout the event? Steps might include introducing attendees to your event's Accessibility Champion. An Accessibility Champion is someone who acts as the voice for access and inclusion in your organisation – they have oversight of all of your accessibility actions and policies (training for Accessibility Champions is available through Fáilte Ireland's Business Hub and learniFI).			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Are your volunteers/staff clearly distinguishable from event attendees so people can identify them easily (e.g. wearing name badges and/or upper-body clothing such as distinctive polo shirts or gilets in bright colours, with a clear title on the back and front indicating any specific assistance they can provide, such as seating assistance, technical support, Dementia-inclusive customer service, Irish Sign Language skills)?			
Do name badges have a large, clear font and there is an option for them to be worn without the wearer having to operate a clip or pin (e.g. do you use lanyards and/or stickers)?			
Do you consider the impact of background music and refrain from playing music in areas where staff interact with customers?			
Are quiet areas available and clearly identified, and are staff and volunteers trained to lower music on request? Where this is not possible due to the nature of the event, you may decide to offer ear plugs, ear defenders or similar.			
Do you provide written information in alternative formats (e.g. digital, large print and easy-to-read versions, QR code) on request? Is information provided in visual format for guests who cannot read or who may have limited fluency in English?			

You and Your Team

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you ensured that your team (e.g. Board, planning committee) is diverse? Wider representation of groups in your community, including youth and people with disabilities, can give you access to a wealth of insights and ideas. Your festival team should also reach beyond this core group to gain knowledge and perspectives that ensure your event is accessible and inclusive to all.			
Does the communication in your team reflect best practice (e.g. do you ask a person what is the best way to help, treat each person with dignity, use respectful language, and use the communication channels and strategies that suit each person best)?			
Have you given all staff and volunteers a copy of your Access Welcome Guide so they can see immediately the facilities and services that are available at your festival or event?			
Do staff and volunteers wear name badges that make it clear if they can provide specific types of support (e.g. wearing a Dementia-inclusive badge to show that they have trained in customer service for people with Dementia)?			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you regularly check that all staff, including part-time and seasonal team members, have been provided with tips and guidance on inclusive customer service practices, such as inclusive language use?			
It is important to ensure that everyone receives a copy of Fáilte Ireland's Effective Communications Guide.			
Are relevant people trained in the use of the Irish Text Relay Service, and are they confident about using it?			
Do you regularly discuss necessary adjustments with your team?			
Do disabled staff and volunteers have a personal evacuation plan? Are they reviewed at regular intervals (e.g. twice a year)?			
Have you identified knowledge gaps and training needs in your team?			
Do you regularly review opportunities for upskilling available through the Fáilte Ireland Business Hub and learniFI? Your Accessibility Champion can track training levels and opportunities for your team.			

Recruiting Staff and Volunteers

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you ensure that roles at every level of your business are accessible to people with disabilities?			
Are your job adverts and job descriptions accessible and inclusive?			
Do you encourage applications from people with disabilities?			
Are job adverts posted via inclusive websites such as the <u>Open Doors Initiative</u> site?			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you provide several ways in which applicants can contact you?			
Do you ensure that evaluation procedures for applicants (e.g. interviews) are fair and inclusive?			
Do you provide an onboarding service so you can learn about employees/volunteers' needs and identify ways to help them thrive in their roles? Is an onboarding manual used to streamline the sharing of basic information that is useful to all.			
If you hire seasonal/temporary staff or receive help from occasional volunteers, do you have a strategy and procedures in place so that they understand the importance of, and how to deliver, accessible and inclusive services?			

Feedback & Continuous Improvement

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you use a festival or event evaluation survey, and a suggestion box, to gather feedback from the presenters, performers, and attendees? Both positive and negative feedback give you opportunities to improve your offer for future events.			
Do you ask your staff and volunteers to make note of questions or issues they encounter in relation to accessibility? You can use the data you gather to: • Improve pre-visit information. • Identify practical changes that need to be made (e.g. improved event signage). • Identify training needs and information gaps. • Inform inclusive policies and procedures.			
Is 'accessibility and inclusion' a standing item in your planning and post-event review meetings and reports?			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you use your findings to update your event's plans and practices and inform things like training and development plans for staff and volunteers?			
Do you share relevant feedback with any stakeholders to support their improvement processes (e.g. venue teams, caterers)?			
Where requested, do you provide feedback to performers, presenters, and attendees about how you have responded to their feedback? Improving accessibility and inclusion is a process that depends on ongoing dialogue with users and showing that you are willing to listen and learn is a great way to demonstrate a real commitment to providing a welcome for all.			
Ensure that accessibility and inclusion are embedded in your governance practices, through inclusive policies and procedures, and monitor standards and progress.			

This action checklist is aimed at owners and managers of festivals and events. If you serve food, please also read the 'food and beverage' business access checklist. If you host events at your venue, you may also find the 'business events' business access checklists helpful.

Consider sharing the Access Welcome Guide and information you have gathered with your local destination organisation, and agencies or groups. For training opportunities and further information, visit the [Accessible and Inclusive Tourism Business Support Hub](#), and visit [learnIFI](#) for resources, Live Learning and self-paced courses.

