



Basics

Technical
Support

Acoustics
& Sound

Non verbal
communication

Video
Conferencing

Taking Part is Possible

Making events accessible
for hard of hearing people

Why?



- The UN's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and EU law stipulate that disabled people have a right to take part in social and cultural life.
- Hard Of Hearing people are often overlooked, even though they are the largest group of disabled people in Europe (about 20% and rising).
- This brochure shows ways to enable hard of hearing people to fully participate and feel welcome.
- An open, accessible event is more welcoming to people without hearing loss as well.

→ → → The QR code will take you to the landing page where you will find further information.



Hearing and Hearing Loss



Basics

→ → → Hard of hearing people don't simply hear less well, they hear distorted.

Imagine working on a jigsaw with pieces missing. If only a few are lost, you can still work out what the picture should be; but the more pieces are missing, the more you have to fill in mentally.

This is how hard of hearing people have to work with speech. They hear some sounds, but others they have to guess and 'work out' through the context.

When planning your event, consider:

- Slow and clear speech helps gives hard of hearing people a chance to work out any context they haven't been able to hear
- Take a breath or brief break between sentences
- Minimise ambient noise
- Always face the audience and do not cover your mouth
- Ensure the speaker's face is well lit, so people can read their lips
- Whenever possible: offer captions or live notes



Technical Support is necessary

→ → → Hard Of Hearing people have difficulty hearing directionally.

Directional hearing enables those without hearing loss to focus on one particular sound among many. With hearing loss, this ability is lost, which means they need technical support to filter out ambient noise.

When planning your event, consider:

- Accessibility and availability: people's own hearing aids must be enough (don't require smartphones, receivers etc.) – at this time, only induction loops offer this.
- Lag: no more than 12 ms all in, otherwise hearing and concentration becomes too strained
- Technical equipment must be turned on automatically along with microphones and speakers (due to risk of forgetting)
- Always (!) speak into the microphone
- Put a hearing accessible logo on your invitations, website and at the venue.



Acoustics and Sound

→ → → Not everywhere does technical support help people with hearing loss.

Where people talk to one another in groups – cafes, table discussions and similar – it is important to consider ways to reduce ambient noise for people with hearing loss.

When planning your event, consider:

- Choose places with minimal to no echo and outside noise
- Reduce the hall size if needed (room dividers)
- Offer ‘quiet zones’ – it’s not just hard of hearing people who will prefer those
- Curtains, carpets, cushioned seating, tablecloths and wall coverings all reduce ambient noise
- Be mindful of noises made by crockery (offer cups without saucers?)
- Ensure lighting is clear but not blinding, so people can lip read well.



Events aren't just talk

→ → → Listening is much more demanding on hard of hearing people than those without hearing loss.

Those who have to fill in missed words while following the content of what is said have to concentrate much harder. The same is true for those whose first language is different.

When planning your event, consider:

- Plan regular, generous breaks
- Offer workshops that require less listening – such as creative and practical options
- Offer a varied programme, including (as appropriate) music, theatre, videos with subtitles.



→ → → **Well thought-out video conferencing can offer great access to hard of hearing people.**

Video conferences often include minimal ambient noise, and in speaker view, lip reading is normally easy.

When planning your event, consider:

- Ask participants to ensure good audio quality and lighting on their face
- Ensure all participants are muted except when they speak
- Offer subtitles, either within the video conference or via an external link
- When using automatic subtitles, all participants must be made aware that data confidentiality is not given (cloud processing)

Partner Organisations

Lutheran Hearing Loss Pastoral Care in Germany e.V.

The Nordic-Catholic Church in Norway

Swedish Church, Stöde Parish

Lutheran-Augsburgian Church in Poland

Friendship of People with Disabilities in France



Svenska kyrkan



Amitié
des Personnes Handicapées



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