



# ACCESSIBILITY & INCLUSION GUIDE FOR SOCIETIES

University of Stirling Students' Union





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# WELCOME

The University of Stirling Students' Union, hereinafter referred to as 'the Union', is committed to equality for all. We will demonstrate this by taking a proactive and inclusive approach to equality, supporting and encouraging all under-represented groups, and promoting an inclusive culture which values and celebrates diversity."

~ Stirling Union Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy

Stirling Student Union is dedicated to ensuring that every member is welcomed and accepted and feels part of an inclusive community. Societies play an essential role in this being one of the key contacts for many members of our community. This Accessibility Pack is designed to support and improve our societies by helping them become more accessible and inclusive to all students. For the purposes of this pack and to ensure complete clarity, the definitions of accessible and inclusive are include on the next page, Important Definitions.

This pack is designed to put forward considerations and recommendations for societies to implement in all areas of their framework to ensure equitability alongside equality. Within these recommendations, we have tried to keep all needs in mind, including but not limited to:

- Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD)
- Mental Health Conditions
- Hearing impairments
- Visual impairments
- Physical and mobility conditions
- Chronic Illnesses
- Autism & ADHD

It should also be noted that the Stirling Students' Union and Communities Zone follow the principle that all students have the right to have their needs met without having their needs or disability disclosed without their consent to any society. We hope this pack helps all societies operate more inclusively. If you think we've missed anything, feel free to email the Vice President Communities ([communities.union@stir.ac.uk](mailto:communities.union@stir.ac.uk)), or our Disabilities Officer.





# IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

## **Accessible**

This means something can be easily used, or accessed by people with disabilities or additional needs. To make something accessible means to adapt meetings, events, and any other activities for people with disabilities or additional needs to be involved.

## **Inclusive**

Including everyone, especially: allowing and accommodating people who have historically been excluded (because of their race, gender, sexuality, or ability).

## **Equality**

The right of different groups of people to have a similar social position and receive the same treatment. However remember, at times, equality and treating everyone 'the same' does not address inherent barriers to members' involvement, therefore it is important to remember equity.

## **Equity**

The state or quality of being just and fair, in the context of societies where equality does not go far enough to ensure equity allows for everyone's needs to be met.

## **Trigger/Content Warnings**

A statement at the start of a piece of writing, video, etc. alerting the reader or viewer to the fact that it contains potentially distressing material (often used to introduce a description of such content).

## **GIAG (Give It A Go)**

The first society meeting of a year or semester is called a Give It A Go and quite literally this is a meeting where potential members can come and give the society 'a go' or a try.

# Planning and Preparation

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At every stage of organising an event or meeting, societies should consider if they are fully considering the equality implications of the event. Making sure you prepare to be accessible is an important part of ensuring your society is inclusive for all. Below we have numerous considerations for societies to operate more inclusively than ever. Societies should familiarise themselves with the Accessibility Pack and promote accessibility and inclusion within all society activity.

## Accessibility Officer for Societies

Firstly, having a committee member responsible for accessibility and inclusion is a vital step in making your society more equal. For smaller societies, this could be a committee member who has been assigned the responsibility of ensuring all events and meetings are accessible and inclusive. Alternatively, for bigger societies, it could also be useful to have an elected Accessibility Officer as a separate committee position.

Accessibility Officers (or committee members assigned with this role) would be responsible for supporting students with disabilities whether diagnosed or undiagnosed. Supporting their club or society by making an active effort to remain informed and up-to-date regarding policy within the student union around inclusivity, disabilities and additional needs. It is also important that the Accessibility Officer (or committee member responsible for this area) should follow the wishes of the student, unless it risks the health and wellbeing of the student. If the student chooses not to disclose details of their additional needs or disability to any committee members or society members, these wishes should be respected unless, once again, it risks the health and wellbeing of the student. Accessibility Officers are also able to share this guide to any interested members.

Officers and committee members can get support and advice from our Union President ([president.union@stir.ac.uk](mailto:president.union@stir.ac.uk)), Vice President Communities ([communities.union@stir.ac.uk](mailto:communities.union@stir.ac.uk)) or our Disabilities Officer (information available on the Union website). The Student Support Service Accessibility and Inclusion team are also happy to advice sports clubs and societies, please contact [ask@stir.ac.uk](mailto:ask@stir.ac.uk) or they can be found on the ground floor of Campus Central.

# Planning and Preparation

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## Planning Rooms and Location

Once you begin the planning portion of your semester and meetings, it's important to consider what room you're choosing to use for meetings and whether this fits the needs of your members. We've created a checklist of considerations for clubs and societies when booking rooms.

## Accessibility Checklist for Booking Rooms

- Clear signage to rooms - ensuring that the room you pick is as easy to find as possible is an important part of allowing your members to feel comfortable. Where possible we encourage societies to share information on meeting spaces beforehand.
- Sensory issues, lighting, sound - it's important to consider the overall atmosphere of a room, harsh lighting or a noisy space can impede the quality of any event or meeting significantly.
- Are there any accessibility issues with getting to the room i.e. is it accessible for wheelchair users? Is there an elevator nearby for wheelchair users or people with mobility issues? For example; selecting a room on the upper floors of Cottrell would be difficult as accessing these floors can be a struggle for students with wheelchairs or mobility difficulties.
- Is the room layout accessible? Can everyone access the space in a comfortable and easy manner? For example; the lecture theatre A4 might seem like a good idea but you can't enter the main part of the lecture theatre if you're in a wheelchair, meaning your member could be isolated from the main parts of the meeting discussions. Similarly, depending on the layout of other lecture theatres it could be a difficult layout for people with hearing aids or any kind of hearing impairment.
- Seating for lipreading - it's important to think about whether some members could be lipreading during meetings, therefore, booking a room where the speaker is easily visible from the front of the room is important.
- Providing a quiet space - Depending on the content or delivery of the meeting (i.e. is it likely to be a loud or busy environment) it's important to consider whether a separate quiet room is booked close by or attached to the main meeting room could be useful for your members.

# Planning and Preparation

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## Pre-GIAG Meeting

For many students, University is their first time living by themselves and going out on their own, clubs and societies are such an important part of welcoming our new and returning students into the University and the Student Union.

Therefore we recommend that societies have the option for members to arrange a pre-first meeting catch-up.

This pre-first meeting catch-up would allow committees to show new members how to get to the room, where they can meet people before the meeting starts and give an idea of what the meeting will entail so people feel informed. The committee member who conducts the pre-first meeting catch-up should be approachable, offering a friendly face and give people someone they know before attending the first meeting.

## Pre-GIAG Checklist for a Committee Member

- Approachable
- Informs people where they can meet to be taken to the meeting, this is usually in the Atrium or an accessible agreed location every week/ when necessary for bigger collaborations or socials
- Able to provide detailed instructions for where the meeting is being held and what the meeting will entail
- The committee member who conducts the pre-first meeting should offer a friendly face and give people someone they know before attending the first meeting
- Ensure student members know that they can bring a communication support worker or interpreter with them.

# Publicising Your Event/Meeting

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## Social Media

Having now planned your event and having an idea of all the finer details it's time to start publicising it and engaging with your members and other students. The majority of this work takes place on social media, which means there are different considerations for making information on your event as accessible as possible.

Taking the time to design posts and publicity which is both accessible and creative is an important part of the planning process and we encourage this to be delegated to a specific committee member. It is also important to publicise both on and off social media the work you're putting in to make meetings and events accessible. Below you can see a checklist of considerations for sharing your event on social media:

- Accessible font and colour schemes for people with dyslexia, who are colour blind, or other disabilities and additional needs.
- Image description for any posts being included on social media
- Closed captions for videos on any social media platform
- Using a multitude of formats (i.e. posts, videos, etc) adds to how accessible information on your event is.

## Off Social Media Publicising

Finally, when it comes to planning an event or meeting it is equally as important to publicise your society offline. This can be done by having your members on an email chain, which shares details about events, meetings, and socials that your society is organising.

It is also important to keep your society page on our website up-to-date with information on days that you're meeting, events you have planned, and committee members that people can contact. To get more support for using our website effectively, check out our [Website Guide for Clubs, Societies, and Sports Clubs Updated May 2022.pdf](#)



# Content and Delivery

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## Social Media

So you've planned the meeting following the guidelines for accessibility and you've had pre-meeting catch-ups for students now you're on to your main event or meeting; how do you ensure it is as inclusive as possible.

One important thing is for members to feel informed and prepared for attending your meeting. Therefore, we encourage clubs and societies that members should be made aware of the option to request information regarding meeting content prior to the day of the meeting. Allowing them to process and prepare for attending the meeting and for the content to be delivered. Additionally, this could be important for a student with a screen reader who may benefit more from receiving any presentations for a meeting or event beforehand.

On top of this all information delivered and content plan should be clear and consistent, therefore making it more accessible for neurodivergent students. Below we have other considerations for committees when planning an event/activity which is accessible and inclusive. You can also find further information and advice in the following link on producing accessible materials: <https://designingfordiverselearners.info>

## Presentations and Digital Content

As discussed above it's important that students are able to access meeting information before the meeting so that they can feel prepared and comfortable. This is particularly important when it comes to meeting presentations and digital content. Content should be as accessible as possible to all, considering the needs of others when creating meeting content is vital.

For example; if a video is being used or a piece of footage is being shown, committees should ensure closed captions are included.

# Content and Delivery Continued

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## Presentations and Digital Content Continued

Additionally when using Teams or Zoom ensure that live captions have been turned on prior to the start of the meeting to allow people to read and process if they wish. It is important as well, during meetings, to use a range of formats and media for people to enjoy and be part of the meeting, for example providing handouts of meeting content to those want to follow the presentation in this way. Clubs & societies are also encouraged to video or audio record their meetings and events to later post and share to members later.

Similarly, it's important to consider what content you're actually delivering and whether you need to consider including trigger warnings and make your members aware of what they're going to be presented. This fits with what was previously discussed about considering whether you need a quiet room available for students who may need support or time for themselves.

## Support Available

Zoe Crosher - Vice President Communities

Email: [communities.union@stir.ac.uk](mailto:communities.union@stir.ac.uk)

Jordyn Austin - Activities and Volunteer Coordinator

Email: [jordyn.austin@stir.ac.uk](mailto:jordyn.austin@stir.ac.uk)

Leen Ali - Union President

Email: [president.union@stir.ac.uk](mailto:president.union@stir.ac.uk)

Disabilities Officer

Contact Details Available Upon Request

Accessibility & Inclusion Team - Student Services Hub: [ask@stir.ac.uk](mailto:ask@stir.ac.uk)