

A. Including wheelchair users and other people with limited mobility

Limitations of your buildings may mean that it is difficult to accommodate wheelchair users and those with other limited mobility in the way both you and they would prefer. However, you can go a long way to meeting those needs in a way which respects their dignity and values their contribution with some simple effective measures.

Mobility Impairment

Mark out reserved parking spaces for those with mobility difficulties, (especially blue badge holders), as near as possible to the building entrance

Keep a few seats reserved near that entrance as an 'easy-access' section for people who cannot walk far

Make sure you have some seats with arms for people who have difficulty standing - particularly elderly people and others with arthritis. One or two footstools are useful too for people who need to keep their legs elevated

You must provide handrails to assist those using steps or ramps (even single steps)

Wheelchair users

All internal and external access needs to be level or ramped

Don't put all wheelchair users in one area - this highlights their disability

Make sure that at least one seat is alongside each wheelchair position for a friend to be able to sit with a wheelchair user

OHPs can be hidden by people standing, so provide printed copies of any songs for those who remain seated, whether wheelchair users or not

Wheelchair accessible toilets should never be used for storage - the space is needed for wheelchair users to manoeuvre

When talking to a wheelchair user, it is polite to sit down so that you are on the same level, making eye contact easier

Remember that a wheelchair is part of the user's personal space - so don't lean on it or attempt to move it without the user's permission

Don't push a wheelchair user unless they ask you to - however, offers are welcomed

Use the international symbol shown below to indicate that you provide facilities for mobility impaired people on all your literature

Assume nothing - always ask

B. Including people who are Deaf* or hard-of-hearing

Deaf people fall into two groups - those with little or no useable hearing (about 100,000 in the UK) described as Deaf or profoundly deaf; and those who have lost some or much of their hearing (about 8 1/2 million in the UK), described as hard of hearing. Many of this latter group use hearing aids (2.5 million in the UK). Listed below are some points which will help you communicate more easily with Deaf and hard of hearing people.

- Always make sure that the person is aware you want to communicate before speaking; a touch on the arm is an acceptable way to gain their attention
- The wall or area behind you should be plain with no windows, so that those who rely on lip-reading have a clear view of your face with no shadows or reflections
- Look directly at the Deaf or hard of hearing person, speak at a normal pace and be aware that the deaf or hard of hearing person needs to look at your face as you talk
- Keep your hands away from your face. Eating, drinking or chewing gum hinders effective lip reading
- Shouting won't help, as sound will be distorted and your lip patterns hard to read
- Do not worry if you are not immediately understood. Try rephrasing, rather than repeating, your sentence and cut out any long or unusual words
- Be prepared to write things down if necessary
- Always address the Deaf or hard of hearing person directly, not their hearing friend
- Good, clear signposting means that Deaf and hard of hearing people don't have to ask for directions
- Services should be interpreted into British Sign Language (BSL) for people who are sign language users. (Note: Not all Deaf people are sign language users)
- Provide an induction loop for those using hearing aids. Test the loop regularly!
- Deaf and hard of hearing people who lip-read need reserved seating near the speaker
- Background noise can make it very difficult for people who use a hearing aid. It distorts and blurs sound
- You will help a BSL interpreter by providing an outline of any talk or sermon
- Make sure people don't walk between the interpreter and deaf people
- If communication is difficult - don't give up. It is so discouraging when people do!

- Use the international symbol shown below on all your literature and outside your church to indicate that you provide facilities for hard-of-hearing people
- Assume nothing - always ask!

* Members of the Deaf community use capital 'D' to indicate someone who has now usable hearing at all, rather than having some hearing loss

C. Including people with learning disabilities

Learning disability, (once commonly called mental handicap), is a large single disability issue affecting over one million people. Most adults and nearly all children with learning disabilities live with their families; but increasing numbers of adults are living in homes of their own, with whatever staff support they need.

Adults and children with learning disabilities have more difficulties than others of their age in dealing with complicated issues or new situations. Some are just a little behind their non-disabled peers. Others have more severe learning disabilities -sometimes with other sensory or physical disabilities presenting additional communication problems. Learning disability is not always recognisable from physical appearance.

Where people with learning disabilities are part of a supported group, those who support them should provide personal care as needed. People with learning disabilities can be encouraged to join whatever is going on but, as in any group of people, some will want to opt out.

The term 'learning disabilities' is used in a very general way which is often unhelpful. Some people have conditions which are included in the general description 'learning disabilities' such as dyslexia, Asperger's syndrome and many others where the intellectual capability of the individual often exceeds that of average people in the population. It underlines the importance of making no assumptions about people.

In including people with learning disabilities, normal good practice - summarised below - is the main requirement:

- Treat adults as adults, children as children
- Signpost facilities using pictorial signs as well as words, which also benefits non-English speaking people too
- Offer help if people seem to be experiencing difficulties
- Take extra time to explain if necessary, and don't appear impatient
- Be understanding when people don't immediately pick up on 'normal' activity
- Check whether people would need help in case of a fire or other emergency - people might not know how to respond in such an unfamiliar situation
- Be patient if individuals are noisy or move about when it seems inappropriate
- Provide information which is simple, clear and concise, focusing on a single subject
- Keep all communication in 'bite-size chunks' - speaking in 5 minute segments backed up by dramas or songs with a similar theme to reinforce a point

- Many adults with learning disabilities have limited or no reading ability, so will feel excluded where bibles and songbooks are used. Including songs with repetitive or simple choruses helps people to feel a part of the event
- Assume nothing, always ask!

D. Including people with autistic spectrum disorders

Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that affects the way a person communicates and relates to people around them. Children and adults with autism are unable to relate to others in a conventional way. Their ability to develop friendships is impaired, as is their capacity to understand other people's feelings. Some people with autism have accompanying learning disabilities, but everyone with the condition shares a difficulty in making sense of the world.

There is a wide range of autistic spectrum disorders, ranging from severe autism, where the person will have very little ability to communicate, to high-functioning autism, one specific condition of which is Asperger Syndrome, where the person may have a very high intellectual ability.

All people with autism have difficulty with social interaction, social communication and imagination. They do not obey the unwritten rules of society and do not understand body language. Other common features are repetitive behaviour patterns and resistance (often accompanied by distress) to changes in routine.

It is helpful to remember the following when relating to people with autistic spectrum disorders:

- They can only focus on one thing at a time (they either look or listen, rather than doing both at once). This is one reason they find eye contact difficult.
- They take things literally, so it is very important that you say literally what you mean. For example, don't say 'take a seat', say 'sit down'.
- They are not good at predicting consequences. For example child picks up a stone to throw it and is very upset when it lands upon another's head!
- They do not like change, because of difficulties with predicting outcomes. It is therefore important to give time, whenever possible, to acclimatise to change and don't suddenly 'spring things' on to the person. For example, if you decide to move the chairs in church warn the autistic person in advance.
- Many people with autism dislike loud noises, certain sounds or sights. This can cause problems in worship services, especially if drums and amplification are used.
- People with autism have difficulty making friends because they do not understand feelings and are unable to initiate interaction. It is therefore important to make an extra effort to include them in social activities, and equally important not to feel hurt when they do not respond as would be expected.
- People with autism, including Asperger Syndrome, need plenty of love and acceptance. They are particularly vulnerable to depression.
- It is often the family with an autistic child that needs pastoral care and understanding. Ask the family to write down for you how autism affects the child and the family, and how you can best provide support.
- Assume nothing – always ask!

E. Including people with visual impairment

The term includes people who are partially sighted and people who are blind. Many blind people have some residual sight so there is a wide range in the degree of impairment of people with limited ability to see.

- Make sure that all corridors, approaches and circulating areas are free from obstructions and there are no projecting signs or overhanging branches or plants
- Provide publicity and information in alternative formats to ordinary print. These could include large print, audio cassette, braille, or on floppy disk
- Braille is the preferred reading mode of a relatively small number of people. If it's needed, Torch Trust on 01858 555301 will help
- Large print versions as an alternative to songbooks and overhead projector (OHP) acetates are essential
- All print for partially sighted people should be in a Sans Serif typeface (like this document). Normally 16 point type is adequate, although some people find up to 30 point necessary. If possible, ask what point size the person needs.
- Never hand-write OHP acetates or use all capital letters - it's much harder to read
- OHPs should be in 30 point type; photocopied acetates make excellent large-print songsheets which are also useful for people unable to see the OHP screen when others are standing
- Printing should be on contrasting colour paper (black on white or black on pale yellow is best) and on matt (non-glossy) paper. This also helps people with dyslexia. Don't use pale coloured type on dark colours or print over photographs
- Remove a chair at a convenient point to allow guide dogs to sit with their owners and to avoid people tripping over or treading on the guide dog
- Provide a drinking bowl (old ice-cream container is ideal) for guide dogs
- For safety reasons, good lighting is essential for partially-sighted people. (Deaf people benefit too, as lip-reading is only possible in good lighting)
- Some reserved front row seats will be needed for partially sighted people to maximise their ability to follow events
- Use colour contrast as much as possible to designate entrances/exits
- Use the international symbol shown to indicate that you provide facilities for blind and partially sighted people on all your literature, advertisements and notice boards
- Assume nothing - always ask!

F. Including people with dyslexia

Dyslexia describes a range of difficulties with processing the written word. People who are severely affected may not be able to read or write, whilst some may have isolated problems with spelling, sequencing, punctuation, or short term memory.

- Ensure that all written material is clearly printed in a clear font - such as this font, Arial
- People with dyslexia often prefer a layout of bullet points, with the information itemised as a list rather than appearing in sentences and paragraphs.
- Never obscure print by the 'artistic' use of background graphics. Good colour contrast is important.
- Do not use glossy paper or coloured paper other than pastel tints.
- If you want someone to read aloud, ask them privately first. It is embarrassing to have to make an excuse in public, whatever the reason.
- Back up written notices / announcements with the spoken word, but be aware that poor short term memory affects some people. Repetition helps! It can be beneficial to check privately with the individual and go over dates, times etc.
- Dyslexia can also affect the memory of sequences, so make dates, hymn numbers and other sequence-dependent material as clear and short as possible.
- Remember that a service that is heavily dependent on written material is not inclusive for many people groups.
- When holding any meeting, circulate any written support material before, not on arrival or during the meeting.
- Be aware that at times of stress a dyslexic person may not be able to function, and previously readable print may become impossible to read.
- Some dyslexic people may find books and written material threatening, so give them the opportunity to 'escape' without losing face.
- Some people are very uncomfortable about their disability and may not be prepared to discuss it, so be sensitive and discrete.
- Some people with dyslexia prefer a cassette tape containing information rather than the written word.
- Some dyslexic people process information more slowly and/or differently to others. This can often be misunderstood in meetings, house groups etc. Take time to understand where a person with dyslexia is coming from.
- People with dyslexia may find note-taking from sermons etc difficult. It is helpful to provide notes or copies of acetates.
- Many people with dyslexia enjoy learning better when it includes discussion and hands on experience.

- Dyslexic people are often good at covering up problems with processing the written word, so make no assumptions about their abilities.
- Assume nothing - always ask!

G. Including people with mental illness

Mental illness includes a vast range of different conditions, but invariably the result for the person experiencing almost any mental illness is rejection and enforced loneliness. One person in three in the UK will experience mental illness at some time in their lives, with conditions like clinical depression or breakdown resulting from extreme stress, bereavement, redundancy, divorce, violence, abuse, childbirth or following a traumatic event.

Fortunately, most people recover fully from situations like these. However, some conditions such as schizophrenia, manic depression and personality disorders are more long term, but can nonetheless usually be contained with treatment. Other conditions which may be experienced by people with mental illness are obsessions, phobias, and hysteria. One of the largest groups of people with mental illness is the mainly elderly group of people experiencing dementia (including Alzheimer's disease).

Many people with mental illness find attendance at church meetings difficult and need encouragement as often their condition causes a lack of motivation and self confidence or simply anxiety about being in a large group of people.

- Groups meeting in people's homes are an ideal place of contact for someone with mental illness. Newcomers should be introduced to a group as soon as possible.
- A 'drop-in' centre staffed by experienced counsellors and those who have recovered from mental illness will be a non-threatening environment for people with mental illness, which will help overcome loneliness and isolation.
- A willingness to take telephone calls from people with mental illness is very helpful. You may find it necessary to introduce some boundaries and agree a contract on frequency and duration of calls.
- Establish a team of people from the church willing to visit people with mental illness in their own homes on a regular basis.
- Accept that many people with mental illness may have mood swings, so be prepared for inconsistent responses. Don't be discouraged.
- People with mental illness find life hard and people give up on them frequently - be there for the long haul.
- Show acceptance, affirm these people as special to God as are we all. Encourage and work with them to find strength in God to carry them in their situation. Assist the depressed person to praise God even in their low time and help the elated 'high' person to keep a sense of perspective.

- Think of people with mental illness as a potential resource in the church. This will help them to feel included. Fit tasks to their capacity and confidence level.
- Remember mental illness is not weakness or failure, but a severe illness or disability.
- If you're not sure what to do that will help - always ask the person.

H. Including people with facial difference or other disfigurement

A person may be born with a disfiguring condition or may acquire a disfigurement through accident, injury or disease. This guide refers to facial disfigurement, but the same principles apply for people who appear different in other ways, for example without arms. Often people are scared of disfigurement and unsure how to act towards people with facial or other difference. Research suggests that social situations can be very stressful for people with facial difference. They may have had unpleasant experiences in childhood, such as name-calling and bullying. It would not be surprising therefore if that person lacked confidence or felt anxious about meeting new people or being in new situations.

When meeting someone who has a facial or other difference, it is important to remember that both you and they may be feeling self-conscious and unsure how to behave or what to say.

- Don't be afraid to make eye contact, without staring.
- Take the initiative, shake hands, smile and be welcoming.
- If you are unsure of yourself, keep calm; speak slowly to calm yourself.
- Ask. If the person you are speaking to has a speech difficulty due to their condition, ask them what they have said. Don't speak for them or pretend you have understood. (See Roofbreaker Guide on including people with difficult speech).
- Focus on the person, not their face.
- Don't pry or ask personal and probing questions but do ask open questions to allow the other person to share what they would like to.
- Humour can be a great icebreaker, use it sensitively.
- Don't patronise people with clichés, such as 'they can do wonderful things with surgery these days'.
- Do help children to meet people who have a facial difference. Sometimes all children need is a simple, accurate explanation, such as 'Michael had an accident and hurt his face' or 'Susan was born with a mark on her face, doctors at the County hospital are helping her'. They will also be helped by your example and encouragement to reach out to other people.

I. Including people with speech difficulty

People with speech difficulties are sometimes isolated as a result of other people's fears that they will not be able to understand what is being said to them. However, the person with a speech difficulty will be used to the potential problems in communication and will be patient. Once the first step is made, things usually get easier from there on.

- Show that you are willing to take time to listen. If you are in a hurry, be honest and arrange another time to talk.
- Be relaxed - nervous body language creates tension. Try to put the person with speech difficulty at ease so that speech will come more easily - have a sense of humour!
- Give the person good eye contact - and even though you are concentrating, try not to frown or appear tense
- If talking to someone with a stammer, ensure you look at their eyes, not at their lips - this makes the stammerer self-conscious and their stammer will become worse.
- Don't try and finish sentences for anyone with a stammer or other speech difficulty unless they ask you to do so
- Do not shout back or use over-simple language - limited speech does not mean limited intelligence
- Never pretend you have understood what has been said unless you really do. This is very frustrating or even insulting to the person communicating with you
- If there is loud surrounding noise, try and find a quieter place to talk
- When the person starts talking, do not be too quick to stop them. If you are not understanding all of it, listen out for some words and you may get the gist
- If you think you have got a few words, repeat them to the person to check you are on the same wavelength, then ask them to confirm you are on course
- If you can't get a word which is clearly important, ask them to try another word or phrase which you may be able to pick up
- If things prove to be difficult and you do not understand anything, say so with a smile, and ask the person for one key word. This will give a context and help you tune in
- If you are completely stuck, try to enlist the help of someone who is 'tuned-in' to that person's speech to help you
- Ask the speech-impaired person to write down their point unless they have a physical impairment that would make writing difficult or impossible
- If things continue to prove too difficult, give it a break and try later - but make sure it's not urgent!

- At the end of a distinct section of the conversation and you think you have understood, it is often a good idea to summarise. This will reassure both of you.
- It takes practice, but you will find the more you talk to that person the easier it gets
- Assume nothing, always ask!

J. Including people with epilepsy

Epilepsy is normally a hidden disability except when a person with epilepsy is having a seizure (sometimes called a fit). Many people with epilepsy do not want others to know of their condition because of society's negative attitude. There are 410,000 people in the UK with epilepsy, almost as many people as there are wheelchair users. However, if there is a basic understanding of the condition and how it can be managed, people with epilepsy can take a full part in the life of the church.

By following these principles, you will help a person with epilepsy to be included fully.

- Remember, the person with epilepsy knows his or her needs best.
- Avoid the situation where people with epilepsy are told they cannot take part in certain activities because of their condition. Allow people with epilepsy to decide what to do and to dictate the pace themselves.
- If someone in the congregation has epilepsy and may be subject to seizures, make sure that a few people in the congregation know what to do in the event of a seizure, but handle the issue discreetly.
- If someone has a seizure in church, make sure that appropriate action is taken to prevent them harming themselves.
- When the person has regained consciousness, ask them what they would wish to do next. People recover from seizures at different rates.
- After someone has had a seizure in church, make sure they are reassured that they are still accepted at church but do not fuss over him/her the next time he or she comes.
- Always ask the person's permission before telling others of their condition. People with epilepsy may be sensitive about their condition because of past experience of misunderstanding.
- If someone with epilepsy needs to avoid certain activities they will tell you. Make sure that this is managed with the minimum of fuss.
- Some people have photosensitive epilepsy which means they react to flashing or flickering light. Ensure that if an activity will involve flashing or flickering lights, clear prior warning is given of this.
- For this reason, make sure that all fluorescent lighting is working properly and has good quality diffusers.
- Assume nothing, always ask!

K. Including children with disabilities

Parents of a disabled child will give you advice and help on including their child. Do make time to talk to the parents, who will know what their child's needs are and how best to meet those needs.

- Look for ways to offer specific help to meet those needs, both in church and at home. General offers to help are rarely taken up.
- Make sure support is practical and consistent.
- Include disabled children in the group appropriate to their age wherever possible. Although a child's intellectual attainment may be below his or her age, emotional and social development is at an age-appropriate level. It is difficult if teenagers who are becoming sexually aware are in a group with younger children.
- Many disabled children need a one-to-one helper. This will reassure parents that their child's needs will be met by one person with whom they can discuss issues of concern, and also takes pressure off the group leader who can rely on the helper to meet the needs of the child.
- Find members of the church who would be prepared to act as a one-to-one helper but would not feel able to teach in a children's group.
- If necessary, the one-to-one helper can simplify or repeat a story, use a worksheet adapted to include a drawing rather than text, or write in the child's ideas rather than expecting them to do it themselves.
- Remember that for a child with severe difficulties, their inclusion in your church group may be their first experience of being in a mixed group - this can be a little daunting but also a very positive experience for the child and the others in the group.
- Allow disabled children to dictate the pace. They are often realistic that it is not always possible to include them in everything, but are always happy to feel part of the group.
- Try to include disabled children by giving them tasks appropriate to their abilities; for example, giving out books, keeping score in a game etc. This will help them to feel less frustrated.
- Be creative! To keep their attention, use plenty of variety, different visual stimuli (unless their problem is visual impairment!), lots of description, action songs and games.
- Work at helping others in the group to feel comfortable and safe with the disabled child or children and so demonstrate acceptance.
- Use biblical teaching to emphasise that everyone is different and that everyone is special to God. Jesus' ministry with disabled people will give you plenty of material to use.
- If the child is confident enough, encourage them to talk to the others about their disability and how they feel about it. Give them the opportunity to say the things they find difficult, which will probably be the attitudes and misunderstandings of others.

L. Including people unable to attend church meetings

All churches have members who are too disabled or unwell to attend meetings. It is essential to keep them in everyone's mind and keep them in touch with church life.

- Include them in membership and mailing lists.
- Mention them at public meetings, prayer meetings, home or cell groups and church magazines, make others aware of them. Include stories, quotations, testimony etc from them. These people can often bring special insights.
- Send tapes of ministry, including worship, prayers and notices without the person or their carer having to keep remembering to make arrangements.
- Visit or phone sensitively at times suitable to their ability to cope. This should ideally be overseen by a church leader so that no one is left out or over-visited. The person or carer should not have to ask for this contact to be maintained.
- Be prepared to be reliable and consistent in visiting. People are easily upset, disappointed and disillusioned if they are let down and promises unfulfilled.
- Encourage cell groups and individuals to send regular cards, notes, gifts etc. and to be friends to these people who miss out on the personal touch.
- Visitors/friends need to learn about the special needs of each individual and remember that their friendship is a long-term commitment and a really valuable one! These friends may be the life-line between an individual and their church.
- Introduce prayer and worship to the home in an appropriate way for that individual and their family. Sometimes people are too ill to pray for themselves and need others to identify with them and pray for them. They may have much to give spiritually and can greatly encourage the visitor.
- Take music and singing (live or tapes/videos) into the home - one-to-one or in small groups as appropriate. Be creative!
- Include in the church's teaching programme, the sensitive subjects of sickness and suffering and how to cope if people are not healed. Whilst they have a great hope for the future, many of these people could do with some encouragement now!
- Remember the needs of carers and families who often miss out and suffer as much as their loved ones, or feel guilty for leaving them while they go to meetings or other church activities. It is helpful when other church members miss meetings occasionally to 'be the church' for someone at home.
- Avoid, even unintentionally, making people feel guilty for being ill or disabled.

- Encourage the person's strong points. Sick people often teach the rest of us lessons about faith, grace, perseverance, endurance and victory, even if they cannot keep up with the church in other areas.
- Assume nothing, always ask!

M. Guidelines for stewards

DO	DON'T
<p><u>General</u></p> <p>Treat disabled people as you would anyone else.</p> <p>Always speak directly to the person who has a disability.</p> <p>Always ask the person who has a disability if you can help him or her in any way.</p> <p>Whenever possible, seat disabled people with their friends or family.</p> <p>Try to be aware of people's hidden disabilities such as epilepsy or Alzheimer's disease, which may require assistance.</p> <p>Assume nothing - always ask!</p>	<p>Don't use negative terms such as "crippled" or "victim".</p> <p>Do not consider a companion or carer to be a conversational go-between.</p>
<p><u>Visual Impairment</u></p> <p>Identify yourself by name and as a steward.</p> <p>Show a blind person to his or her seat.</p> <p>Ensure they know large print songsheets are available.</p> <p>Explain to a visually impaired person where things are located.</p> <p>Provide space for a guide-dog to lie down by removing a chair.</p>	<p>Don't push a visually impaired person - always allow them to take your arm.</p>
<p><u>Hearing Impairment</u></p> <p>Ensure your face and mouth can be seen clearly.</p> <p>Look directly at the person and speak at normal speed with clear (not exaggerated) lip patterns.</p>	<p>Don't exaggerate or shout.</p> <p>Don't speak directly into the person's ear.</p> <p>Don't obscure your face</p>
<p><u>Speech Impairment</u></p> <p>Give your whole, unhurried attention with good eye contact.</p> <p>Remember the person with a speech impairment may use another method of communication, such as writing.</p>	<p>Don't finish a sentence or word for the person.</p> <p>Don't get agitated or impatient</p>
<p><u>Mobility Impairment</u></p> <p>Always ask a wheelchair user if she or he would like assistance before you help.</p> <p>Try to sit or crouch down to talk to wheelchair users so that eye contact is easier.</p> <p>Provide seats near the entrance for people with mobility difficulties to minimise walking.</p>	<p>Don't push a wheelchair user unless they ask you to.</p> <p>Don't hold on to or lean on a person's wheelchair.</p>
<p><u>Learning Disabilities</u></p> <p>Be patient, give someone with learning disabilities plenty of time.</p>	<p>Don't assume the person cannot understand you.</p>

N. Inclusive language in disability ministry

Many non-disabled people worry about using language that may be unacceptable to disabled people, aware that the issue can be a sensitive one. The appropriate use of language is less to do with 'political correctness' than a desire not to reinforce negative images, incorrect assumptions and stereotypes associated with disabled people. Disabled people generally don't worry a bit about the words you use - but are concerned about the attitudes people express towards them.

People with disabilities have identified a vocabulary that they feel is appropriate to use and it is a matter of simple courtesy to use terms which they prefer. All language is constantly evolving, and, in this case, the simplest way is to ask the disabled person themselves. This guideline runs through all contact with disabled people - ask the disabled person.

- Use 'disabled person' or 'person with a disability' rather than 'handicapped' which has its origins in 'cap in hand', with implications of charity and begging
- Remember that we are talking about people; the term 'the disabled' is impersonal and implies a group separate from the rest of society
- Avoid attaching labels to people with disabilities. Labels are for jars - not people!
- Don't describe people by the condition they have. An 'arthritic' is a person with arthritis, a 'spastic' or 'epileptic' is a person who has cerebral palsy or epilepsy
- Don't use negative images; 'suffering from...', 'a victim of...', 'crippled by...', 'afflicted by...' is better expressed as 'a person with (condition)'
- Use accurate descriptions. Terms like 'wheelchair bound', 'confined to a wheelchair' are best expressed as 'a wheelchair user' or 'person who uses a wheelchair'
- Terms which are said to be 'politically correct' often don't communicate widely. Phrases such as 'physically challenged', 'intellectually challenged', 'differently abled' etc. often confuse people. As long as you use terms that are accurate, positive and in common use you shouldn't encounter problems
- Some words or phrases are not helpful; better and more acceptable alternatives are shown in brackets:
 - cripple, invalid, handicapped (disabled, disabled person)
 - mentally retarded, mentally handicapped (person with a learning disability)
 - deaf aid (hearing aid)
 - confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound (wheelchair user)
 - deaf and dumb (deaf, profoundly deaf)
 - disabled toilet (accessible toilet, wheelchair accessible toilet)

- special needs (too vague, be more specific when talking about disabled people)
- If you are in any doubt about what language to use, ask the disabled person you are addressing. They will respond helpfully to a positive attitude