

The Professional Speaking Association

Inclusion Statement

Introduction

The Professional Speaking Association (PSA) recognise that, despite changes in legislation, inequality and prejudice can still exist for many disabled people. More than 10m people in the United Kingdom are disabled; this includes people with invisible impairments. This Inclusion Statement sets out how the PSA aims to remove barriers and provide reasonable adjustments to all its disabled members.

Disability equality is something that affects all areas of the PSA's work, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) requires service providers to make reasonable changes to the way services are delivered.¹ The DDA requires service providers to make reasonable changes to the way services are delivered. There is also a compelling business reasons for considering disability in all of the PSA's work, failing to consider disability could mean that people are excluded and could miss the opportunity of working in the rich and rewarding public speaking industry.

Our Approach

The PSA has a positive approach to making reasonable adjustments for disabled people; if you or someone you know requires reasonable adjustments to take part in the life of the PSA please contact PSA Secretariat.

This Statement is not a complete list of adjustments that can be provided, each and every individual requiring adjustments will be judged on a case by case situation. When discussing adjustments be sure to explain the barriers you're experiencing and let the PSA know about things that have assisted you in the past.

The PSA has a guide "Hosting Inclusive Events", this is appendix 1. Here is a summary of a range of things that can be provided.

Access to events and meetings

Our events and meetings will be held in venues where there are facilities for disabled members; as a baseline this will include:

1. Step free or ramped access to meetings spaces and an accessible WC.
2. Hearing loops are not always provided by our venues. If a hearing loop is required please let the event organiser know in advance. A loop may already be available but if not a portable loop may need to be located and brought to the meeting.

¹ Updating the law: The Equality Act 2010 has brought existing equality legislation together, to simplify the law and make it easier to understand. From October 2010 this will replace the Disability Discrimination Act but the requirements described remain the same.

3. Let the PSA organiser know about access considerations before your event. For example if you will need to voice any slides or presentations they use and provide copies in advance to people with visual impairments or dyslexia.
4. The PSA organiser can with notice adjust the timetable for members with assistance dogs, so if extra time is needed between sessions this can be planned into the event.
5. Sometimes the lighting may be dimmed during a presentation, it is important that the event organiser know in advance if this is a concern.
6. Some special effects such as flash or strobe lighting can be a health concern for some; it is important that the event organiser know in advance if this is a concern for any delegates.

Planning other reasonable adjustments

There are some reasonable adjustments that need to be planned in advance, please contact the PSA to discuss any of the following.

Sign Language Interpreters and Alternative Formats

Sign Language Interpreters need to be booked through an agency, there is also a shortage of interpreters so it might not be possible to guarantee an interpreter without sufficient notice. 4-6 weeks is usually needed. Similarly alternative formats such as Braille, large print and audio need to be supplied through an agency so extra time may be needed to get the documents needed.

Support Workers ²

If a member needs to attend meetings with a support worker then there are practical things that can be done to make sure things run smoothly. The PSA needs to know in advance about support workers, this is important because they will need appropriate seating and space for their belongings.

Paying and Financing Reasonable Adjustments

The PSA will assess requests for reasonable adjustments by disabled members on a case by case situation. Reasonable measures will be taken to remove barriers and put in place actions to ensure that disabled people are not disadvantaged in using PSA services.

Access to Work, a government scheme can help disabled people and their employers with advice and support concerning the extra costs which may arise because of disability. Access to Work might pay towards the costs of specialist equipment, adapting a workplace or a support worker. It can also pay towards the cost of getting to work if because of disability someone cannot use public transport.

The PSA would encourage disabled members attending meetings in the course of their employment, professional development or business to use Access to Work. Please remember that Access to Work must approve all costs in advance, a claim cannot usually be made for purchases without Access to Work approval.

Find out more about Access to Work through the Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) at the local Jobcentre.

² A Support Worker or personal assistant is someone that assists a disabled person live independently. They can be unpaid (a carer) or employed through an agency, provided by social services or directly employed by the disabled person who requires support.

Support Workers

There are no attendance fees charged by the PSA for Support Workers at meetings to assist a disabled member. If a Support Worker attending a conference/meeting requires food it may be purchased through the organiser. Most of the venues have a bar/bistro for private purchases, where there is a formal dinner tickets may be purchased at cost price.

It is not usual for PSA to supply meals for Support Workers however please check, for example from time to time a free buffet may be available because the event has a sponsor.