



Improving access for people with mental health issues

Achieving access for all





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About one in four people will have some form of mental illness in their lifetime. Mental illness can impact on a person's ability to access information and even physical mobility. Mental illness covers a wide range of conditions including depression, anxiety, bipolar, obsessive compulsive disorder, schizophrenia and post natal depression.

Most of the time people with a mental health issue will have the same requirements as anyone else. However if you think that someone may be unwell at the time the following may be helpful.

- Break up information into bullet points or “bite size” chunks. This is more likely to encourage someone to read the text. A whole page of text maybe off putting.
- Suggest a meeting: it may be more effective to speak to the person than send them a letter or leaflet. Ask them if they would like to bring a friend or advocate to the meeting.
- Meetings in the early morning can be difficult for some people, so ask what time would be suitable for them.
- Arrange meetings with a named person and confirm in writing.
- Allow the person time to compose him or herself.
- Do not rush them or become impatient.
- Do not be judgmental about behaviour which may appear inappropriate to you. Remember that anxiety can make the impact of their illness greater.
- Don't assume challenging behaviour will lead to violence. The person may not be able to control their feelings. Remain calm and patient, do not become angry.
- Write down information or if you are handing over a letter or leaflet, go through it with them.
- Write a summary of the meeting and send it to them.