



How to Put On a Neuroinclusive Event

A practical guide to welcoming every kind of mind, from planning to follow-up

A neuroinclusive event is simply one where neurodivergent people, autistic, ADHD, dyslexic, dyspraxic, and others, can take part comfortably and as themselves. The good news is that doing this well rarely costs much. Most of it comes down to clarity, choice, and a bit of forethought, and the same adjustments that help neurodivergent guests tend to make the day better for everyone.

"We know what we need to do to take care of ourselves. We don't need you to fix us. It's just putting those elements in place so we can connect, participate, and network."

— Helen Moon, Founder of EventWell

This guide walks through the whole journey: before, during, and after the event, with a ready-to-use checklist at the end.

The core principles

Every decision in this guide flows from a few simple ideas. Keep these in mind and the specifics fall into place.

- **Reduce the unknown.** Unpredictability is the single biggest barrier. Tell people what to expect, in advance and on the day.
- **Offer choice, not a single "right" way.** Different brains need different things. Flexibility lets each person shape their own experience.
- **Lower the sensory load.** Manage light, sound, and crowding, and always provide somewhere to retreat.
- **Never require disclosure.** Every adjustment should be available to anyone, with no need to explain or prove a diagnosis.

Before the event



1. Ask, don't guess

Start by inviting access needs. Put an open question on your registration form, such as “Is there anything we can do to make this event work better for you?”, and offer a named contact for accessibility queries. For speakers and panellists, invite an “access rider” where they can set out sensory, communication, or scheduling preferences. Don't try to anticipate every need; just ask.

2. Publish a sensory and access guide

This is one of the highest-impact things you can do. Share it when tickets are confirmed, so people can plan and self-regulate before they arrive. A good guide includes:

- **A venue map** marking entrances, toilets, the quiet space, food, exits, and help points.
- **Photos or a short walk-through video** so people can picture the space.
- **Honest sensory information:** which areas get loud or bright, when peak times are, and where the calm spots are.
- **Practical logistics:** queuing, parking, travel, timings, and the quieter times to arrive.

Provide it as a **downloadable PDF and a plain-text version**, in clear language with short paragraphs and bullet points.

3. Share a clear schedule in advance

A predictable, detailed agenda lets people prepare mentally. Flag anything sensory, live music, applause, amplified announcements, flashing visuals, so no one is caught off guard. If sessions will be recorded, say so; knowing they can step out without missing content removes a real source of pressure.

4. Choose and set up the venue thoughtfully

- **Prioritise a designated quiet / sensory space** away from the main activity, softly lit, with comfortable seating and minimal decoration.
- **Check lighting:** avoid flickering or strobe lighting; favour dimmable or natural light where you can.
- **Plan for sound:** manage volume, avoid sudden loud announcements, and offer a lower-volume viewing area for any performances.



- **Ease movement and queues:** clear signage, wide routes, and the option of early or staggered entry to avoid crowding.

5. Brief and train your team

Your staff and volunteers make or break the day. Make sure everyone knows where the quiet space is, understands that no one needs to explain why they're using it, and knows how to respond calmly if someone becomes overwhelmed, usually by offering space and a route to a calmer area rather than crowding them. Appoint a named accessibility or wellbeing lead for the day.

On the day

Run the quiet space properly

A quiet room only works if it's genuinely protected. Signpost it clearly, with a simple no-talking, no-phone-calls, no-eating policy, and make explicit that no reason is needed to use it and that no one will be approached unless they ask. Have a discreet protocol for welfare concerns that doesn't undermine the room's purpose.

Offer a sensory kit

A small box of tools goes a long way. Consider ear defenders or earplugs, sunglasses, fidget items, and weighted lap pads or cushions. Make clear these are free for anyone to use. Sponsorship can easily offset the cost.

Make content accessible

- **Provide live captioning** and ask speakers to deliver content clearly and at a steady pace.
- **Offer materials in advance and in accessible formats** — large print, plain text, audio.
- **Describe key locations aloud** at the start (exits, toilets, quiet space, help points).

Lower the social pressure

Networking can be one of the hardest parts. Create structured, low-pressure ways to connect, smaller groups, one-to-one corners, quieter conversation areas, rather than relying on a single loud, crowded reception. Build in regular breaks so people can rest and reset.



After the event

Inclusion improves through feedback. Gather it well:

- **Ask specific access questions**, e.g. “Were the quiet zones clearly marked?” and “Was the pace easy to follow?”
- **Offer multiple formats** — rating scales, open text, and voice or video options for those who find typing a barrier.
- **Allow anonymous responses**, which removes any pressure to mask or be polite.
- **Respect the processing gap**: wait 24–48 hours before sending surveys, allowing time to recover and reflect.

Most importantly, act on what you hear, and tell people what you changed. Showing you listened is what moves an event from awareness to genuine inclusion.

Quick-start checklist

Before

- Access-needs question on the registration form
- Named accessibility contact provided
- Sensory & access guide published (PDF + plain text)
- Detailed schedule shared, with sensory warnings flagged
- Quiet / sensory space identified and set up
- Lighting and sound checked; strobe/flicker avoided
- Staff and volunteers briefed; wellbeing lead appointed

On the day

- Quiet space open, signposted, no-disclosure policy clear
- Sensory kit available to all



- Live captioning and clear delivery in place
- Key locations described aloud at the start
- Low-pressure networking options and regular breaks
- Early / staggered entry offered to avoid crowding

After

- Feedback gathered with specific access questions
- Multiple, anonymous feedback formats offered
- Surveys sent after a 24–48 hour gap
- Learnings documented and acted on for next time

The takeaway

Neuroinclusion isn't about getting everything perfect or building a separate event for a separate group. It's about removing avoidable barriers so that every mind can take part fully and comfortably. Start with clarity, choice, and a calm space to retreat to, and you'll have already done most of the work, for your neurodivergent guests, and for everyone else too.

NeuroEmpower offers consultancy, training, and workplace needs assessments to help organisations design neuroinclusive events and environments across the UK. For tailored support, get in touch at info@neuroempower.org.