YOR|SENSORY
Providing support for sight and hearing loss

Advice on making your service accessible for individuals with sensory impairments

Often only simple adjustments are needed to make a big difference for someone with a visual and/or hearing impairment and encourage them to have confidence to access your services.

Here are some tips for engaging with people who have a visual and/or hearing impairment and how to make your service/venue more accessible.

Information

Use a consistent font size (at least 14pt but preferably 16 or 18) in a clear 'sans-serif' font without too many flourishes, such as Arial.

Think about the positioning of any signage (eye level is best), think big, bold and bright. Use signs with a matt finish to avoid glare.

Use sentence case, don't capitalize text continuously.

Keep terminology simple and information relevant.

Use bold for highlighting text as italics and underlining can be more difficult to read.

Justify text to the left, this makes it easier for an individual with a visual impairment to know where a line starts and means there is an even gap between words.

Consider providing an audio format.

Make use of colour contrast so that information stands out from its background.

Environment

Make customers aware of changes to layout.

Keep walkways clear.

Provide audio information from staff and describe surroundings to people with a visual impairment if this would help them.

Don’t make the area too busy with signage, images, pictures, or obstacles.

Communication

Use both audio and visual announcements if possible.

Customers with a visual impairment require more information verbally.

If you recognise someone has a sensory impairment, offer help (note that it may not be required) and introduce yourself.

Announce yourself and where you are.

Take time and rephrase if the individual does not understand what you are saying.

Speak clearly and accurately when communicating, do not shout at people who have a hearing impairment.

Consider the impact of background noise when communicating with people with a hearing impairment.

Use an interpreter if one is required.

Be descriptive in your explanations and check understanding.

For further information, support, advice or queries about sensory awareness training please contact the Yorsensory team in York.

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