

Organising a ‘Patients Included’ conference

The ‘Patients Included’ conference Charter provides organisers with a way to show that their events respectfully include patients as experts in living with their condition. This has a number of advantages¹.

Five declarations

The Charter is made up of five declarations, as follows:

1. Patients or caregivers with experience relevant to the conference’s central theme actively participate in the design and planning of the event, including the selection of themes, topics and speakers.
2. Patients or caregivers with experience of the issues addressed by the event participate in its delivery and appear in its physical audience.
3. Travel and accommodation expenses for patients or carers participating in the advertised programme are paid in full, in advance. Scholarships are provided by the conference organisers to allow patients or carers affected by the relevant issues to attend as delegates.
4. The disability requirements of participants are accommodated. All applicable sessions, breakouts, ancillary meetings, and other programme elements are open to patient delegates.
5. Access for virtual participants is facilitated, with free streaming video online wherever possible.

Conference organisers make their own assessment against these declarations and should be able to provide supportive evidence. Those who meet all five may display the Patients Included logo².



Things to consider

Conference organisers may wish to consider:

1. Events taking place on University premises that are open to members of the public are covered by the Equality Act 2010 which insists on equal access for disabled people and those with mental health issues. Have you made any reasonable adjustments in anticipation of any specific bookings?
2. Is the venue accessible by people who rely on public transport and welfare benefits?
3. Are advertising materials clear for people with poor vision or low levels of literacy?
4. Does the booking form invite people to tell you about any access requirements they may have? This might include disabled car parking bays, step-free access, signage, helpers available to guide people to their seat, wheelchair space, accessible toilet facilities and a functioning hearing loop. Some individuals may need reserved seats.
5. Does your budget enable you to reimburse expenses to delegates who do not have full time employment, and offer participation payments to experts by experience who give presentations?
6. Is a quiet room or relaxation space available for people who need to take a break from the conference proceedings?

¹ One benefit is that it improves information flow via Twitter – see <http://www.jmir.org/2017/8/e280/>.

² Some of the accredited conferences are listed at <https://patientsincluded.org/conferences/accredited-conferences/>

7. How will you create a 'wellbeing culture' that is rich in kindness³, appreciation and friendly laughter?

³ <https://richardsonphd.wordpress.com/2017/08/16/mental-health-and-conferences-a-practical-guide/>