

✓ **Checklist**

Accessibility and environment

Physical environments

- Ensure spaces are accessible and easy to navigate.
- Staff teams could walk through the space and imagine themselves having a hidden vulnerability or disability and coming to or contacting the business for the first time. You could then discuss what that would be like and make any reasonable adjustments.
- Think about the design of spaces, to make them open and welcoming.
- Respect personal space and use welcoming body language and a warm tone of voice.
- Offer a quiet, comfortable waiting area and private areas to talk whenever possible.
- Staff should be trained to support and accommodate a wide range of customer needs, including visible and invisible disabilities, cultural practices, religion, neurodivergence, gender and language barriers.
- Create a culture of compassion and wellbeing for staff and customers.

Trauma-informed communication

- Do not ask intrusive or unnecessary personal questions.
- Allow customers to share only what they are comfortable with.
- Validate concerns and acknowledge their experiences without judgement.
- Ensure that staff are trained to avoid discussing personal matters publicly and that personal information is handled discreetly to maintain privacy.

- Offer alternative communication methods, such as written information for those who may struggle with verbal communication.
- Provide transparency and clear explanations of procedures, waiting times and next steps to reduce anxiety.
- Be understanding if someone needs to leave suddenly due to anxiety or distress.

Telephone communication

- Ensure that call centre staff are trained to use trauma-informed, patient, and inclusive communication methods, and can provide or direct towards appropriate support when needed.
- Implement a clear process for connecting customers with a member of staff if automated systems are confusing or take a long time to connect to the right department, to minimise stress, anxiety and disengagement.

Digital inclusion

- Businesses should recognise that not everyone has access to digital communication and alternative methods of contact are always available.
- Have a procedure in place to support customers experiencing digital exclusion or difficulty, including assistance with filling out forms and navigating systems.
- Ensure that online information is presented in clear, plain and jargon free language.
- Design digital self-service tools, including bots, so that they are user-friendly, not overwhelming, and accommodating to various communication preferences.

Specialist staff or teams

- If you do not have the capacity within your business to establish a dedicated support team, you should appoint and train one or two people who have a passion for accessibility and inclusivity, who can act as a champion and key point of contact for the rest of the team.