

## Guide for Autism Friendly University Events at Strathclyde

### **Provide Information Prior to the Event**

In the invitation, provide a clear idea of the venue, structure, and available support of the event. This should include:

- A detailed description or map of the venue. This should include the location of the entry and exit points, the toilets, the designated quiet spaces, fire exits, stairs and lifts, places to sit, and areas that may be extra crowded.
- In the invitation, use clear language and refrain from using similes and metaphors.
- Avoid bright graphics in the invitation, as these may be overstimulating.
- Inform potential attendees that the event will be accessible for those with sensory or social difficulties. This may help to put people at ease.
- Inform potential attendees that they may use fidget toys at the event.
- Explain what people should do when they arrive.
- Explain any rules about unacceptable behaviour.

### **Create a Sensory Friendly Environment**

- Avoid bright or intense fluorescent lighting. Try to have dim areas if possible.
- Turn down any background music.
- Limit attendance or stagger start times to avoid crowded spaces.
- Leave a door open in the room and inform attendees that they can leave or enter whenever they wish.
- Designate a quiet area in the venue, and make sure that everyone knows where it is.
- If food will be offered, make sure that there is a lot of variety. Allow people to notify you in advance about dietary restrictions. Avoid foods with a strong odour.
- Ask staff to refrain from wearing perfume or cologne. Turn off or remove air fresheners from the venue.
- Avoid balloons or other loud objects.
- Use signs to highlight any particularly bright or noisy areas.
- Avoid clapping at the end of the event. Instead, use a quieter alternative.

### **Create an Accessible and Comfortable Social Environment**

#### **Staff and Volunteers**

- Encourage staff and volunteers to learn about autism so that they can better support all attendees.
- Assign someone as a key contact for people on the autism spectrum, so that they know who to talk to if they need assistance or support throughout the event. Make sure that all attendees are informed of who this person is.

#### **Follow up After Events**

- Follow up and ask for feedback about the event. Use this knowledge to find more ways to make events more accessible.

### **Online Events**

- Avoid flashing or intense lights on PowerPoint presentations.
- Inform all attendees that they can switch off their camera or microphone whenever they wish.
- Do not ask a specific person to talk or answer a question. Instead, keep questions open to everyone.
- Do not have multiple people talking at the same time. This can be overstimulating.
- Offer breaks during the event, and inform attendees of when these breaks will occur.
- Prior to the event, inform participants of the event structure and what they can expect.
- Include a guide to the technology.
- Avoid clapping at the end of the event. Instead, use a quieter alternative.