



Accessible
and Inclusive
Tourism



Checklist – Accessible & Inclusive Tourism

Food & Beverage



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Introduction

Ensure everyone feels welcome when they visit your food and beverage business

To make sure that everyone benefits from a great experience and becomes an ambassador for your food and beverage business, you need to demonstrate a thoughtful, empathetic approach to the varied abilities of your customers and clients.

Best practice can help you win repeat visits and bookings and market your business effectively to the widest possible audience. However, factors like missing information, inaccessible infrastructure and poor customer service can cause frustration for visitors and affect people's enjoyment of their time with you.

This checklist is designed to help you assess how ready your food and beverage business is to provide a welcome for all. It will also be useful for event organisers and other people who manage festivals or venues where food and beverages form part of their offer.

Use the checklist to spot oversights and points of friction in the visitor experience you provide. The information you gather as you work through the list will become an asset you can share with potential visitors to help you win business. It will also help you to identify areas where there is room to improve your offer and its appeal to a wide audience.



Use the checklist to:

- ✓ Guide you through the process of evaluating the accessibility of your communications, infrastructure, and customer service.
- ✓ Identify practical changes you can make (from quick wins to more ambitious changes).
- ✓ Benefit from peace of mind and handy reminders of necessary actions.
- ✓ Maintain standards of excellence.
- ✓ Track your progress as part of a process of continuous improvement.

Please note: This action checklist is part of a wider range of resources provided by Fáilte Ireland, and it is aimed at owners and managers of restaurants, bars and cafés, as well as other people who include food or drink in their tourism offer. Use it together with the toolkit's other resources, including our [Effective Communications Guide](#), to make sure that you provide an authentic and inclusive welcome.

For more information, visit [Accessible and Inclusive Business Support Hub](#).

Inclusion and Accessibility

The terms 'accessible' and 'inclusive' are often used interchangeably, and they should go hand in hand. However, they have quite different meanings, and it is important to keep both in mind when you are running a food and beverage business that offers a genuine welcome for all.

'Inclusion' means including and accommodating people so that everyone can participate in and enjoy the experiences you offer.

The word 'accessible' means 'easy to approach, reach, use, and understand'.



Inclusive

An inclusive food and beverage business goes beyond accessibility to actively welcome and accommodate diverse customers and clients. It provides equal opportunities for all to enjoy a satisfying and memorable food and beverage experience, and it can also help people to enjoy rewarding time with others, respecting the fact that adjustments may be required to deliver these equal opportunities.

Accessible

An accessible food and beverage business is physically, technologically and socially easy to access and approach, as well as relaxing and enjoyable to experience.

Allergens

The Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) maintains the list of allergens which need to be treated appropriately during food and drink preparation, storage and presentation. [Visit FSAI](#) to see the EU list of 14 food allergens which must be labelled clearly on menus.



Improving accessibility and inclusion is a continuous and rewarding process. Some of the actions you identify as you work through the checklist will be quick, simple and affordable fixes. Others – like issues caused by infrastructure or training gaps – may need more time to solve. These more complex actions may also require collaboration with colleagues, managers and other stakeholders, such as tour group organisers or disabled people's organisations.

Revisiting the checklist frequently will help you stay actively engaged in this process. It will also ensure that you are regularly renewing your commitment to continuously improve your welcome for all. Use the checklist and the wider resources available through Fáilte Ireland to spur you on and chart your progress!



Checklist – Accessible & Inclusive Tourism

Food & Beverage

Business Name:

Year:





Visitor Welcome Guide

Each guide should contain practical information and supports available, which might include:

- ✓ Information for people with specific dietary needs.
- ✓ Information about access and emergency exits from the building.
- ✓ Details of communal areas and function rooms (images and measurements). Be sure to include outdoor spaces (e.g. details of paths, terrain, outdoor dining areas).
- ✓ A list of supports available from trained staff (e.g. some staff may have completed Dementia-inclusive, disability awareness and/or Autism awareness training and/or have sign language skills).
- ✓ Do you provide information on accessible transport options to your accommodation, including:
 1. Accessible public transport and car hire options.
 2. Licensed taxis services that can reliably accommodate wheelchair users and people with assistance dogs, including Autism assistance dogs.
 3. Parking and/or drop-off points (include distances if disabled parking options are not immediately outside the venue entrance. Also indicate where roofed or underground parking and drop-off is available).¹ If you don't have easily accessible parking, share details of the nearest accessible parking spaces.
- ✓ Information about accessible facilities (e.g. Changing Places facilities) or where to locate them nearby.²

¹ For guidance on what sufficient parking means, see the guidelines on 'Access to the Built Environment' by the [Irish Wheelchair Association](#).

² Changing Places facilities are designed to accommodate people with complex disabilities, and they are different from mainstream accessible toilets. For example, they include both a hoist and a height-adjustable changing bench. See the 'Universal Design Guidelines for Changing Places Toilets' developed by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design and the National Disability Authority, available at [Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](#).

Planning & Food/Drink Preparation

To ensure good governance, completion and review of these actions is the responsibility of the person who is the Task Owner.

Use the following options to indicate task status in Completed column: **Y = Yes, N = No, P = Partly or A = Active**

If Action is not completed, use the Notes column to provide more detail.

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Are all staff who are involved in menu planning and food preparation, as well as food service, trained in food safety, including the safe management of allergens?			
Does everyone in your kitchen and front-of-house teams understand each other's accessibility requirements?			
Do you plan your menu with universal accessibility in mind, designing allergens out of dishes wherever possible, and including options to adapt items where possible?			
Have you checked that your menu includes options for people affected by the 14 allergens (e.g. do you provide options for vegetarian, vegan, nut-, lactose- and gluten-free diets)? Bear in mind that some visitors will need to navigate around multiple allergens.			
Have you made your drinks offering inclusive by providing non-alcoholic, as well as allergen-free, choices?			
Do you include local and Irish-made options when you replace items on your food and drinks menu to boost your menu's sustainability and interest for visitors?			

Menus & Service

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you ensured that your main menu has strong colour contrast, uses a sans serif font and has a large font size (16pt)? Use bold for headings and emphasis, and choose standard-size font and/or icons for allergen numbers rather than super-script.			
Do you provide a large-print version of your menu (e.g. 28pt font, sans serif font), along with a braille version? It may also be helpful to share an accessible online version of your menu with customers using a QR code.			
Is there adequate lighting in areas where people need to read menus, or can guests choose to sit in more brightly lit areas to aid lip reading, for example?			
Do you provide your 'specials' menu in a range of formats, with allergens clearly marked? If you use a board for this information, is it easy to read and access?			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you provide print and digital versions of allergen information for your main menu? Avoid having staff recite options from memory (a process that is time-consuming, can lead to mistakes and is unhelpful for people with auditory processing difficulties).			
Do waiting staff have a good working knowledge of the menu, allergens and the accessible features of your premises, including toilet facilities and equipment (e.g. high-chairs, ear defenders)?			
Are you consistent in the use of numbering on your menu in line with the FSAI's numbering system? Consistency across food and drink establishments will help to improve the overall quality of the visitor experience, especially for international visitors, who may visit multiple food and drink premises during a short stay in Ireland.			
For buffets and where you offer cafeteria service, do you ensure that food at risk of cross-contamination is served separately and/or wrapped safely, and that serving staff understand the risks throughout the chain from delivery to consumption? (e.g. they do not put gluten-free food in places where crumbs from other food can fall on it).			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Where counter ordering is generally used, do you offer the option for people to place their orders at their table?			
Do visitors have the option to pay at their table?			
At service areas, bars or shops within or around the establishment, are there lower counter tops for wheelchair users or people of short stature?			
Do you provide storage, when requested, for mobility devices, care equipment, medication, or other essential items? For example, staff may be asked to store crutches or a walker or to refrigerate certain medication. • Do staff have training, as well as facilities, so they can respond appropriately to related requests? • Do you provide clear signage to public areas and clear instructions and/or support so a person can retrieve stored items when needed? • Are there any issues or procedures around the storage of expensive items or equipment?			

Pre-Visit Information & Booking

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you gathered or updated your accessibility information in a single document to create a handy Visitor Welcome Guide for your staff and people who are planning to visit you? For more information, view our guidance page on page 6 .			
Do you offer your guests a few different ways to contact you (e.g. telephone, email, text message, and the Irish Text Relay Service which is available for use by D/deaf people and people with speech impairments)? ³			
When people are making a booking, are they asked, 'Do you, or people who are travelling with you, have any accessibility requirements?' Offer to share your Visitor Welcome Guide and menu, and share the contact details of your Accessibility Champion if that will be helpful. An Accessibility Champion is someone who acts as the voice for access and inclusion in your business – they have oversight of all of your accessibility actions and policies (training for Accessibility Champions is available through Fáilte Ireland's Business Hub and learniFI).			
Do you share your Visitor Welcome Guide with group bookers to inform their decision about the best place(s) to host their events?			

3 The Irish Text Relay Service enables people who are D/deaf, hard-of-hearing or speech-impaired, to make and receive calls independently through type and read, type, and speak and type and listen supports. Find out more at [Irish Text Relay Service](#).

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
In any follow-up communication, do you provide peace of mind by repeating the information the customer has provided so that they know it has been received and understood? Also, do you provide any details about how you can or can't meet the guest's needs (e.g. lift access to upstairs dining areas)?			
Does promotional material specify the name and details of the person who can take enquiries about the accessibility of your food and beverage offer? Do you incorporate learnings from the enquiries they receive into your general information for visitors?			
Do you allow groups to pre-order before arrival, a strategy that can help you reduce stress on staff during a busy service and reduce food waste as well as cater for individual needs?			
Do you allow people to reserve seating near toilet facilities or exits?			
If there is a speaker or a presentation at an event, do you allow attendees to reserve seats so they can lipread or be close to an ISL interpreter (in front row/rows), and are any hearing loop arrangements made clear in advance?			
Is information about your accessible facilities on third-party websites and booking channels, as well as local destination sites, accurate?			
Have you provided your local tourist information office and accommodation providers with details about your accessible menu and facilities and updated them about any recent changes?			

Your Website

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Does your website meet the standards set out in the international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG2)?⁴ You may need to seek advice from your site designer here, but simple steps towards compliance include providing alternative text for all images.⁵ Training in web accessibility is also available via Fáilte Ireland's Business Hub and learniFI (Fáilte Ireland's learning platform), where live learning and self-paced courses are available.⁶			
Are the values of accessibility and inclusion clearly reflected in your website's content (text, imagery) and in information you share via third-party websites? How are you making this judgement call (e.g. are you seeking feedback from users)?			

⁴ IA Labs, 'What's New in WCAG 2.2?', available from [IA Labs](#).

⁵ Review services are available (e.g. [Vision Ireland Lab's accessibility review service](#)).

⁶ Find resources at: [Live Learning](#) and Fáilte Ireland's learning platform, [learniFI](#).

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you provide detailed and accurate information on the accessibility of all areas in your business property, along with useful measurements and photos? If you use a Visitor Welcome Guide section for this information, ensure that information provided elsewhere on the site is also clear about accessibility, as not all visitors will regard their requirements (e.g. low noise levels) as accessibility needs.			
If you share menus with allergen information and details of available accommodations on your website, are these documents accessible (see marketing section below)?			
Do you provide information on and links to accessible transport options to your accommodation, using the information you have gathered for your Visitor Welcome Guide? Is this information regularly updated (e.g. when timetables change)?			
Is the information you provide about the destination in general equally useful to all guests? For example, in a list of accommodation or attractions, do you indicate their levels of accessibility, including their suitability for wheelchair users?			

Wayfinding & Navigation

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Is clear external signage provided, including to an accessible entrance if the main one does not provide step-free access? Where possible, the main entrance should be accessible.			
Is signage installed at a height visible to wheelchair users?			
Is signage easy to interpret (adequate font size, strong colour contrast, clear symbols)? ⁷			
Do you offer to guide attendees with disabilities to food and dining spaces and do you offer an orientation tour?			
Where people have requested additional support in advance, are details, directions or equipment shared discreetly (e.g. table blocks to raise table height for a wheelchair user)?			
Have you developed a set of standard Emergency Evacuation Plans (EEPs) for the safe evacuation of people with disabilities? Are they reviewed at regular intervals (e.g. twice a year).			
Do you ask people if they require any assistance with evacuation in an emergency? Discuss the standard options available and agree and record any specific arrangements made with individual people.			

7 Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, 'Signage Design', available from [Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](#).

Arrival and External Areas

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you welcome guests with trained assistance dogs? This is a legal requirement even if you have a 'no dogs/pets' policy. ⁸			
Are water bowls available for use by assistance dogs?			
Are staff trained in assistance animal etiquette (e.g. don't touch, talk to, feed or distract)? ⁹			
Have you designated an assistance animal relief area, and exercise area, ideally within the grounds of the venue or nearby, along with a handwash station for owners? Have you also provided a biowaste bin and some dog-poop bags or a pooper scooper?			
Where step-free access at the entrance is provided via a portable ramp, do you provide signage with details of how to request deployment of the ramp (e.g. a call bell)?			
Are external paths kept clear of obstacles, debris, moss, ice and fallen leaves, and do they have firm well-maintained surfaces? Are any permanent features (e.g. statues) securely fixed?			

⁸ In Ireland, there are four organisations that have accreditation with Assistance Dogs International, Inc. (ADI). These are: Autism Assistance Dogs Ireland, Irish Dogs for the Disabled, Irish Guide Dogs for the Blind, and My Canine Companion – Autism Service Dogs. For more information, visit [Assistance Dogs International](#).

⁹ For more information, see [Guide Dog Foundation](#).

Customer Service Points

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Are all staff aware of and using the inclusive communication strategies set out in Fáilte Ireland's Effective Communications Guide? Helpful strategies include: • Providing a clear welcome. • Using plain language and non-discriminatory terms. • Adjusting pace and tone to suit the people you are addressing. • Actively listening to and focusing on the people you are communicating with.			
Where there is a reception or waiting point where a queue for access may develop, do you provide some rest seating in this space for people to use as they queue/wait?			
Do you facilitate people with Autism and/or mobility challenges to be excused from queueing?			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you offer a warm welcome to all guests and remind them about sources of information and support available throughout their visit? (e.g. accessible equipment, such as highchairs, and accessible menus, the opportunity to talk to your Accessibility Champion)?			
Have you considered ways to make staff clearly distinguishable from guests so that guests can identify them easily?			
Do you consider the impact of background music and refrain from playing music in areas where staff interact with customers? Are quiet areas available and clearly identified, and are staff trained to lower music on request?			
Do you provide a means of written communication at key service points to assist D/deaf attendees, if required. A simple pen and paper or handheld white board and wipeable marker pen will be useful.			
Do you provide written information in alternative formats (e.g. digital, large print and easy-to-read versions, QR code) on request? Is information provided in visual format for guests who cannot read or who may have limited fluency in English?			

Dining & Bar Areas

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you provide adequate space for people, including those using mobility aids, to move in between areas, and have the flexibility to move tables around? ¹⁰			
Are table blocks available to increase the height of tables to accommodate a wheelchair user?			
Are tables stable, and do you have chair options with arm rests to provide support for people rising from their chairs?			

¹⁰ Note that the Government of Ireland advises that a 1800mm turning circle is required for wheelchair users and 1200mm minimum circulation space, as per building regulations. See 'Technical Guidance Document M: Access & Use', available from [Government of Ireland](#).

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Are visitors able to reserve tables in specific areas or choose their seating location, where possible (e.g. downstairs, in well-lit or quiet areas, or close to the toilet facilities)? Have you ensured that all staff are trained to accommodate these requests?			
Do you provide easy-grip cutlery, beakers, and straws on request?			
Do you provide menus and other written information in alternative formats, such as digital, large-print, and easy-to-read versions, on request?			
Do you offer table service and/or assistance with reading menus, where required?			

Toilets & Comfort Facilities

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you ensured that emergency pull-cords hang to the floor, and have they been tested as part of a regular schedule?			
Are support rails provided at urinals, toilets, washbasins, and on the back of toilet doors, in line with the government's current technical guidance on access and use of the built environment? ¹¹			
To assist blind or partially sighted visitors, do any support rails contrast in colour to the wall and do toilet seats have colour contrast with the toilet and floor?			
Is equipment such as a track hoist or a height-adjusted changing table available?			

¹¹ See 'Technical Guidance Document M: Access & Use', available from [Government of Ireland](#).

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Where an accessible toilet requires a key or code to gain access (e.g. RADAR key), do you provide clear guidance on the door as to where a key or code can be obtained?			
Have you clearly indicated the availability of accessible and unisex facilities using signage that uses easily understood symbols and Braille as well as words?			
Have you clearly indicated the availability of baby changing facilities?			
Have you shared information about Changing Places facilities that are available at your premises or nearby?			
If possible, do you designate a quiet space with an electrical outlet that can be used by visitors who need to rest, express breastmilk or take medication?			
Do you provide storage, where requested, for care equipment, medication or other essential items?			

Marketing

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you ensured that the marketing channels you use are reaching people with accessibility requirements? For example: • Have you ensured your marketing materials are accessible to people with disabilities, such as those who are blind or have low vision, by including alt text and captions? • Have you mentioned your Visitor Welcome Guide, or used information about the accessibility and inclusivity of your establishment, in your online listings to attract business from visitors who research suitable places to eat and drink in advance?			
Are all print materials designed to meet high standards of accessibility?¹² • Prepare print materials with care, ensuring colour contrast and legibility. • Avoid using small font for details, such as allergens and consider providing a QR code to link to an online, accessible version of the same information. • Ensure all information (e.g. your Visitor Welcome Guide and menu PDF) is accessible before sharing it with others.¹³			

¹² Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, 'Customer Communications Toolkit', available from the [Centre for Excellence in Universal Design](#).

¹³ You can easily make sure a PDF is accessible by running Microsoft's Accessibility Checker before you generate or save your document as a PDF. After you've addressed any issues found by the Accessibility Checker, Microsoft 365 will use that information to create accessibility tags in the PDF. For more information, see [Microsoft Support](#).

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you regularly promote your accessible facilities and services through your communication channels, including social media?			
Is information shared on social media designed to support accessibility? (i.e. you do not rely on people being able to read text on images, and you ensure adequate levels of contrast between text and background when you create graphics).			
Is your allergen information included wherever you share your menus? Do you include your allergen key as well as allergen numbers?			
Have you let local disabled people's organisations and groups (e.g. Autism support groups) know about recent improvements in your offer?			
Do you integrate representation of all disabilities naturally in the imagery and text used in your marketing communications? Avoid representing people with disabilities as heroic when they are simply taking part in everyday activities your other visitors enjoy.			

You and Your Team

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you given all staff and on-site representatives a copy of your Visitor Welcome Guide so they can see immediately the facilities and services that are available?			
Are staff clearly distinguishable from guests so people can identify them easily (e.g. wearing name badges and/or upper-body clothing such as distinctive polo shirts or gilets in bright colours)?			
Do name badges have a large, clear font and there is an option for them to be worn without the wearer having to operate a clip or pin (e.g. do you use lanyards and/or stickers)?			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Do you regularly check that all staff, including part-time and seasonal team members, have been provided with tips and guidance on inclusive customer service practices, such as inclusive language use? It is important to ensure that everyone receives a copy of Fáilte Ireland's Effective Communications Guide.			
Does the communication in your team reflect best practice (e.g. do you ask a person what is the best way to help, treat each person with dignity, use respectful language, and use the communication channels and strategies that suit each person best)?			
Are relevant staff trained to use the Irish Text Relay Service and are they confident about using it?			
Do your staff make note of questions or issues they encounter in relation to accessibility? You can use the data you gather to: • Improve pre-visit information. • Identify practical changes that need to be made (e.g. improved interior signage). • Identify training needs and information gaps. • Inform inclusive policies and procedures.			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Have you identified a member of staff to be an Accessibility Champion, and do you encourage others to be ambassadors for accessibility?			
Do disabled staff members have a personal evacuation plan? Are they reviewed at regular intervals (e.g. twice a year)?			
Do you regularly discuss workplace adjustments with your team to ensure you are all responding to each other's needs and identify issues that need to be addressed through more accessible and inclusive policies and procedures?			
Have you identified knowledge gaps and training needs in your team?			
Do you regularly review opportunities for upskilling available through the Fáilte Ireland Business Hub and learniFI? Your Accessibility Champion can track training levels and opportunities for your team.			

Hiring Staff

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Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
If you hire staff, do you ensure that roles at every level of your business, including leadership roles, are accessible to people with disabilities?			
Are your job adverts and job descriptions accessible and inclusive?			
Do you encourage applications from people with disabilities?			
Do you post job adverts via inclusive websites such as the Open Doors Initiative site?			
Do you provide several ways for applicants to contact you?			
Do you provide an onboarding service so you can learn about employees' needs and identify ways to help them thrive in their roles? Is an onboarding manual used to streamline the sharing of basic information that is useful for all?			
If you hire seasonal or temporary staff, do you have a strategy and procedures in place to ensure that they understand the importance of, and know how to deliver, accessible and inclusive services?			

Feedback & Continuous Improvement

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Do you gather feedback from customers (e.g. by inviting and noting comments to waiting staff, recording complaints and praise shared in person and via reviews, and sending follow-up questionnaires to group booking organisers)? Both positive and negative feedback give you opportunities to improve your offer.			
Do you use your findings to update your policies and practices and inform things like training and staff development plans?			
Where requested, do you provide feedback to your customers about how you have responded to their queries? Showing that you are willing to listen and learn is a great way to demonstrate a real commitment to providing a welcome for all.			

Action	Task Owner	Completed (Y/N/P/A)	Notes
Is 'accessibility and inclusion' a standing item on team meeting agendas and in your end-of-year reviews and reports?			
Are accessibility and inclusion embedded in your venue's governance practices, through inclusive policies and procedures, and do you monitor progress so you can ensure standards and identify areas for improvement?			

Consider sharing the Visitor Welcome Guide you have created and information you have gathered with your local tourism office, destination group and accommodation providers to encourage referrals and improve the accessibility and inclusivity of your area. For training opportunities and further information, visit the [Accessible and Inclusive Business Support Hub](#), and visit [learniFI](#) for resources, Live Learning and self-paced courses.

