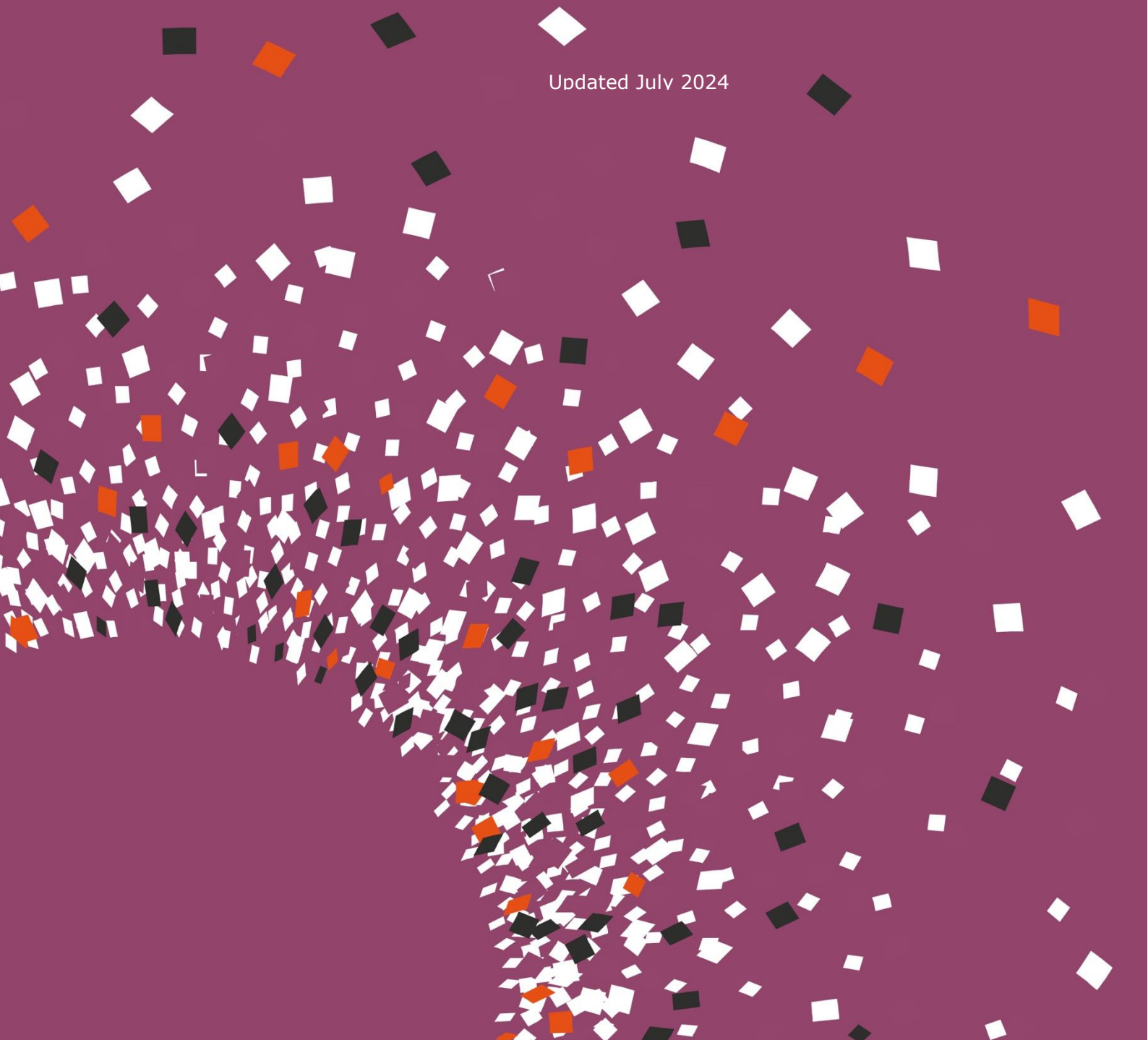




MRS Senior Client Council

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION BEST PRACTICE GUIDES ACCESSIBILITY BY DESIGN GUIDANCE FOR CLIENTS

Updated July 2024



Introduction

This guidance provides a client perspective on inclusion and has been prepared by members of the MRS Senior Client Council and client colleagues.

The MRS Code of Conduct requires transparent information about which sampling characteristics and parameters have been used when defining samples as representative of segments of the population, such as when reporting Nationally Representative samples. For detailed guidance on the ethical and legal issues, including MRS Code of Conduct requirements, please refer to the following:

- [MRS Best Practice Guide on Collecting Sample Data on Sexual Orientation](#)
- [MRS Best Practice Guide on Collecting Data on Sex and Gender](#)
- [MRS Best Practice Guide on Collecting Sample Data on Physical disabilities and/or mental health conditions](#)
- [MRS Best Practice Guide on Collecting Ethnicity Sample Data](#)

For accessibility issues it is recommended that the [MRS Best Practice Guide on Collecting Sample Data on Physical disabilities and/or mental health conditions](#) is referred to in conjunction with this document.

For further advice about client-side inclusion issues, it is recommended that the following MRS Senior Client Council guidelines are referred to in conjunction with this document:

- [Diversity & Inclusion Best Practice Guides: Working with Research Agencies and Suppliers to Ensure Inclusive Samples](#)
- [Diversity & Inclusion Best Practice Guides: Use of Language](#)
- [Diversity & Inclusion Best Practice Guides: Use of Different Methods](#)
- [Diversity & Inclusion Best Practice Guides: Sampling Methods](#)

Why Accessibility is Important

Representation is about more than just quotas; it's about ensuring participants can respond. An important step in preparing for research is understanding who is in the sample and their needs and requirements for reasonable adjustments. As clients look to make samples more diverse and inclusive, clients need to consider issues around accessibility.

ALL methodologies come with compromises: clearly recognise the limitations, and declare them as part of the research process.

Good design principles are applicable to everyone and not just those with access needs, and clients should be building accessibility into the design of research rather than retrofitting after build is complete.

There are many different types of disabilities or difficulties that may restrict participants access to research:

- When client content is accessible, clients can connect with a larger audience
- If individuals cannot access client materials such as questionnaires, they will abandon it, causing clients to lose their participation and feedback

Remember, even if clients are sampling on certain characteristics, clients will never truly know what each participant is dealing with. Therefore, it's important to design research projects as accessible as possible, for all.

Whilst one of the benefits of online research is that participants can take their time and read, and re-read, content as often as required, clients should also be making sure the content is as easy to understand as possible from the start.

There are several things to consider for our research to be easier to understand:

- Use clear, concise language
- Avoid jargon and idioms
- Identify and explain abbreviations
- Keep reading level at, or below, secondary education level where possible
- Use labels or instructions when content requires input

- Phrase questions so they can be answered with short responses
- Provide text alternatives for any non-text content (controls, images etc.)
- Ensure videos are appropriately captioned
- Headings, labels, and titles should be used to describe topics and the purpose of the content
- Use descriptions if an input error occurs
- Consider providing a glossary of key terms within the questionnaire
- Provide context-sensitive help

It is important to remember that participants may be utilising their own tools which help them (such as screen readers). Clients need to ensure that any research outputs, such as surveys and questionnaires, are properly compatible and programmed to function appropriately with assistive technology.

- Content should be simply navigated with a range of input devices
- Content should be operable with a keyboard interface

As well as ways to make the content easier to understand, practitioners need to ensure they are presenting client surveys in the most accessible manner possible. Clients should be considering with their suppliers different ways of presenting information, balancing what is appropriate to the content of the research with what is going to be most universally understandable

Some examples include:

For Quantitative research:

- Using visual stimuli and images to illustrate ideas or concepts
- Using faces (rather than a number scale) can be more inclusive for those who English isn't first language, as well as those with specific learning difficulties
- Ensure adequate contrast between text, background, and images
- Do not use colour as the only means of conveying information

For Qualitative research:

- Consider any materials being shown (colour of text etc.)
- Consider how you set up the room – and allow people to choose where they sit
- Allow participants to complete tasks in their own time/at their own speed

- Have the technology to support virtual groups, such as closed captioning
- Allow participants extra time if needed

Remember to consider the compromise between amount of content covered and the length of any data collection: Staring at a screen is exhausting which can have an underlying effect upon participants' cognitive abilities and focus – especially for participants with specific learning difficulties but is an important consideration for all participants.