

Everyone needs a Warm Welcome

Reminders and checklist

You can use this checklist for one off events or regular activities. It'll help you make your meetings more welcoming, by taking some of the effort out. That means once the session is up and running you can concentrate on the people at the event and not the practicalities of organising it...

This is important in itself as one of Time to Shine's key findings about enabling people to make new friends is the need to build in enough time for chat at the start and end of sessions. This is particularly the case if there are organised activities - like learning a new craft perhaps.

Remember that other people - colleagues, volunteers and members - can do some of the things on this checklist for you. The cards might make it easier for you to share jobs out. In some groups you can share the roles between members as well as volunteers particularly if you break the roles down into a set of smaller tasks. It really helps people feel involved in the group.

You, your colleagues, volunteers and group members could look together at the Warm Welcome Toolkit from AGE UK Camden (www.ageingbetterincamden.org.uk/warm-welcome-approach), and at this checklist, to help you share the responsibility for making the group welcoming and pool your ideas. This is sometimes called co-production and if you want to find out more about involving everyone in decision-making you can look at the Time to Shine Co-production Toolkit (<https://www.opforum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Co-production-toolkit.pdf>).

You can use this pack as it is and just complete the plans, or edit the back of the cards to personalise them for your group.

Not everyone will want or need all parts of these templates, but we hope we've included enough to make things simple, especially for smaller groups. Having things clearly written down can make it much easier when you recruit new volunteers. Keeping it flexible, using their ideas and being able to make changes can help you to keep volunteers and members involved and make them feel welcome and valued.

You could make plans for different sessions and keep them in a folder. If you have a plan then it's easy to ask for help from anyone who comes along early.

Use as much of this checklist as helps you, try things out, ask people and change things as you go along. You might want to laminate some of the forms for instance, but maybe test things first and change them again if you need to.



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Have you got the Activity folder?

Briefing checklist

Share this important information with everyone. Try to do this briefing every time; it is good practice for safety and it helps anyone new, or those with memory problems, without singling them out.



Safety

Go through **key parts** of any risk assessment or safety plan with everyone. Make sure they know where to find the safety plan if they should need it. Make sure they know who the first aiders are.



Programme

What is happening today? Is it all as usual or is something different happening? A quick run through will help everyone.



Who's doing what?

You can ask people to put their name against jobs on the 'Who's Who Today' sheet each time. Some people might do more than one task depending on the size of your group.

You can pre-assign roles if you know some people need to do specific jobs. For instance, you might need someone with food hygiene training to help in the kitchen.

Put the 'who's who' list up at the entrance for everyone to see, so they know who to ask for help.



Who's coming today?

Share an appropriate level of information with people. Who do we expect to attend? Are there any new members who'll be joining for the first time? Are there any issues of note (maybe someone has been poorly lately). Are there any special things to share (like birthdays)?

Give out name badges or lanyards (if you're using them)

Some groups like to use name badges for everyone. This can help people with memory problems. Some groups use coloured name badges or lanyards for organisers so members can easily see who to ask for help



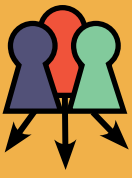
Share out the reminder cards for each of the roles

This helps people to feel confident in the tasks they signed up to do on the 'Who's Who Today' sheet.



Post-session reminder

Remind everyone who is helping that it's useful to have 5 minutes at the end to chat and identify anything that needs to be changed, or has worked really well.



Who's Who Today?

Please complete the list below and then pin it by the door where you are meeting then people know who to approach if they need to.

Role

Name

Host 1	Host 2
First aider 1	First aider 2
Venue - set up 1	Venue - set up 2
Venue - tidy and pack away 1	Venue - tidy and pack away 2
Reception 1	Reception 2
Greeter 1	Greeter 2
Activity helpers 1	Activity helpers 2
Refreshments 1	Refreshments 2



Who's Who Today?

Please complete the list below and then pin it by the door where you are meeting then people know who to approach if they need to.

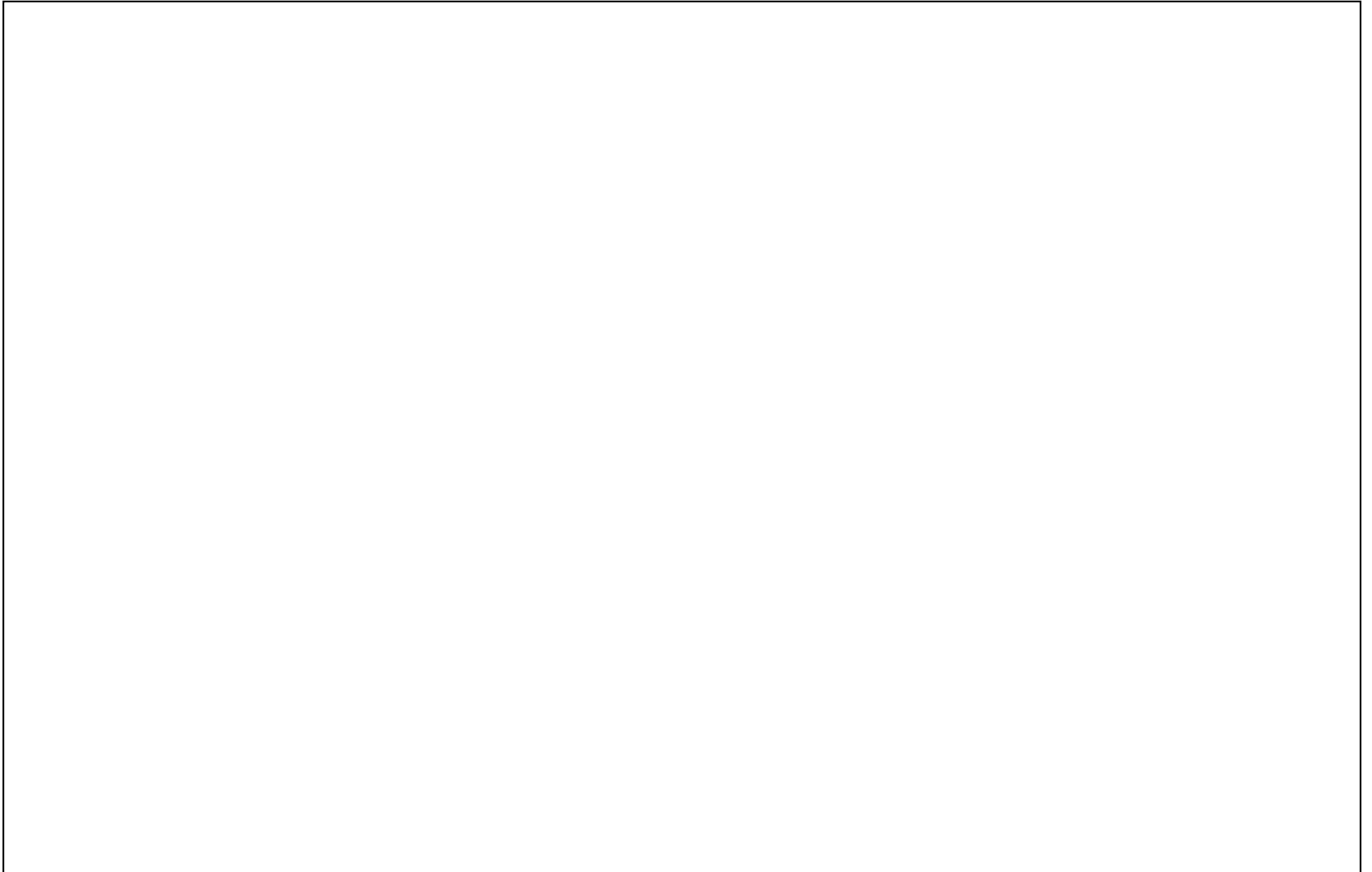
Role

Name

Host 1	Host 2	Host 3
First aider 1	First aider 2	First aider 3
Venue set up 1	Venue set up 2	Venue set up 3
Venue - tidy and pack away 1	Venue - tidy and pack away 2	Venue - tidy and pack away 3
Reception 1	Reception 2	Reception 3
Greeters 1	Greeters 2	Greeters 3
Activity helpers 1	Activity helpers 2	Activity helpers 3
Refreshments 1	Refreshments 2	Refreshments 3

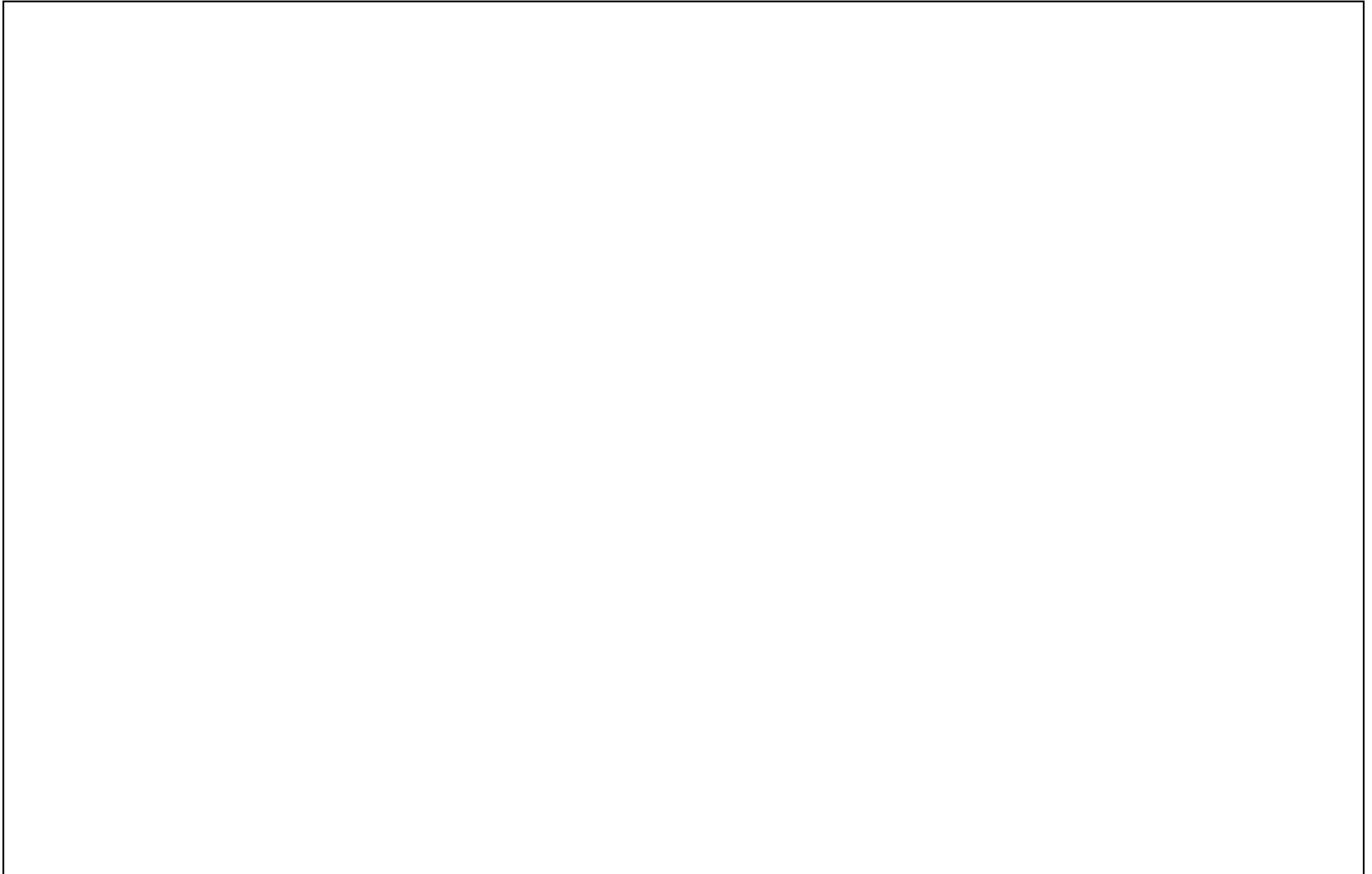


Seating plan



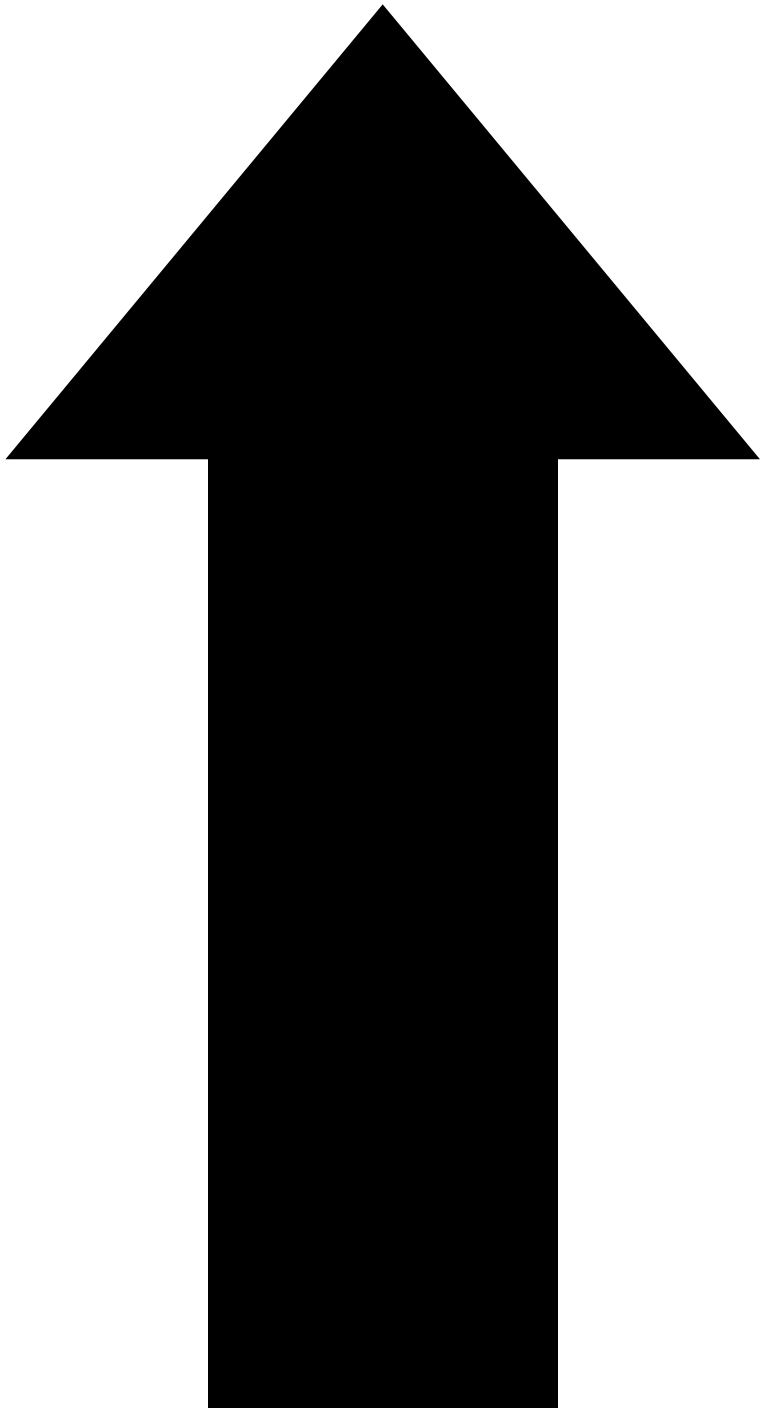


What signs where - building plan and instructions









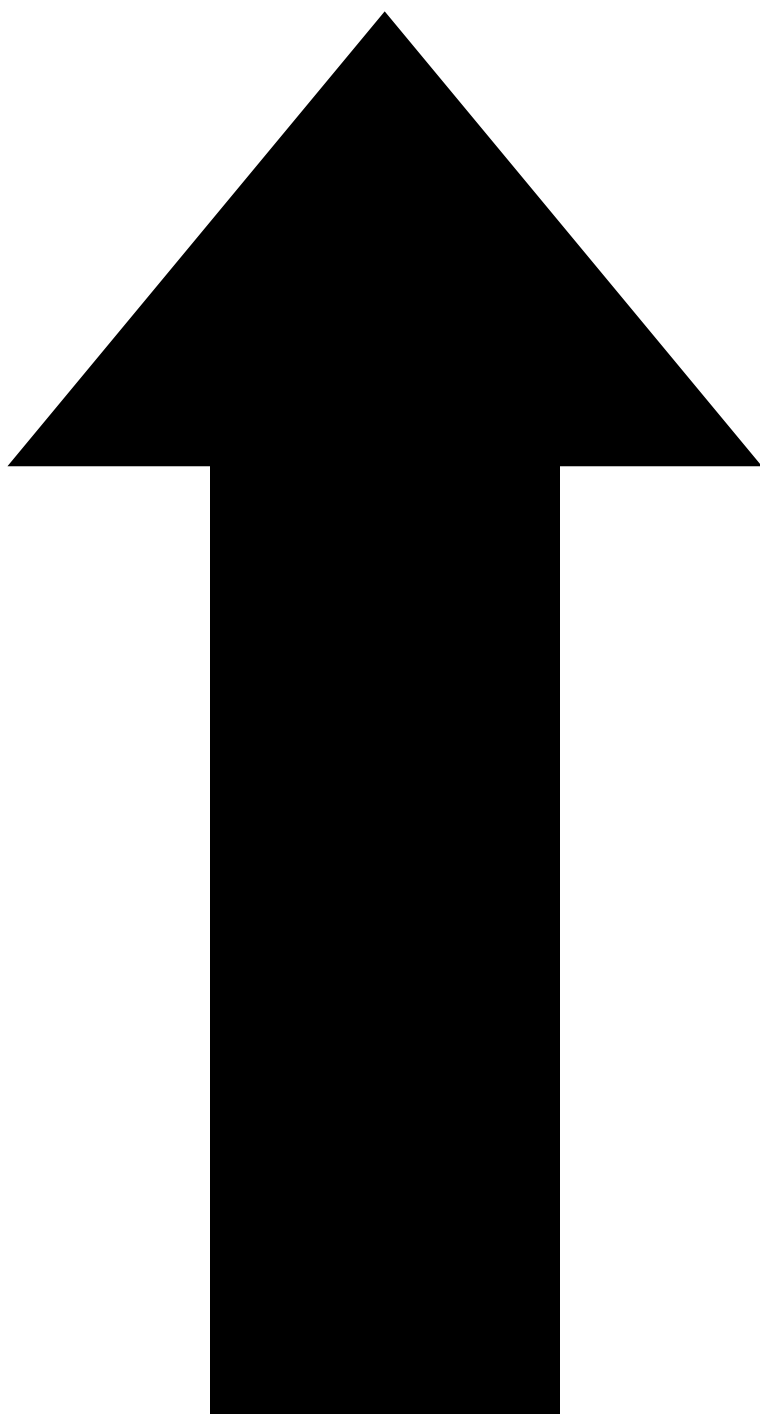
Toilets

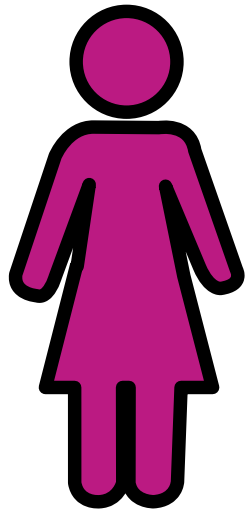


Toilets



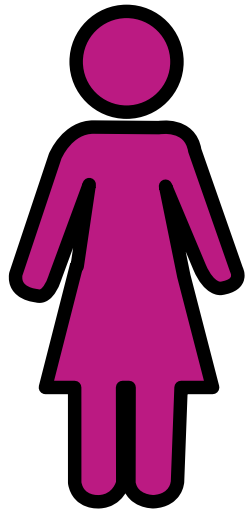
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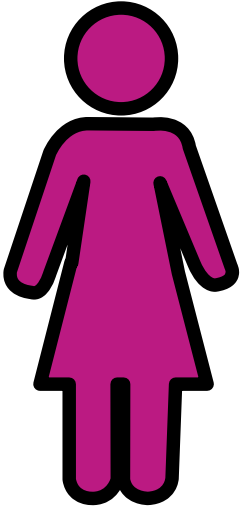
Ladies



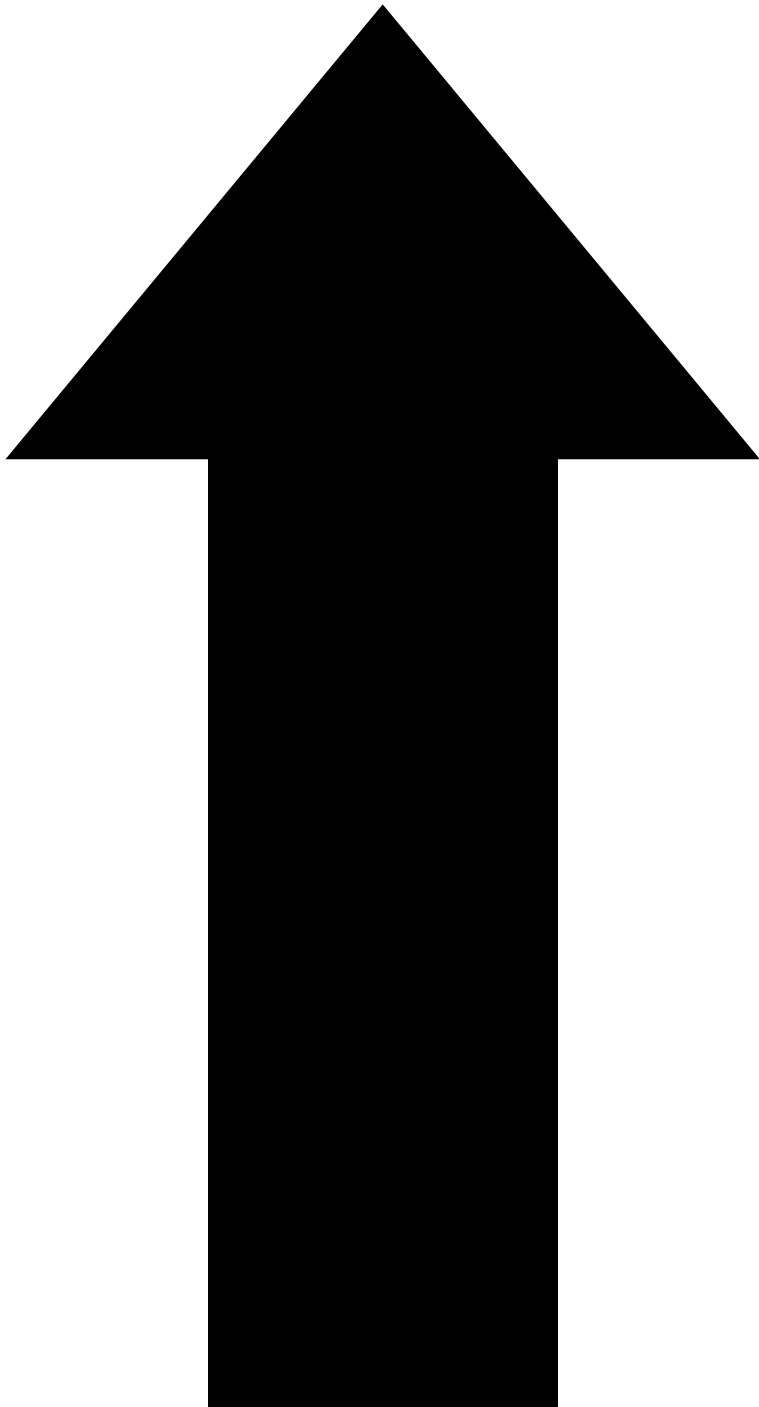


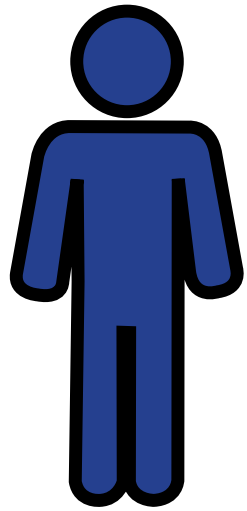
Ladies





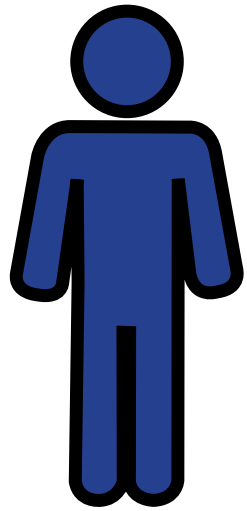
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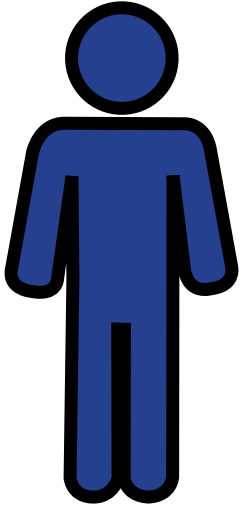
Gents



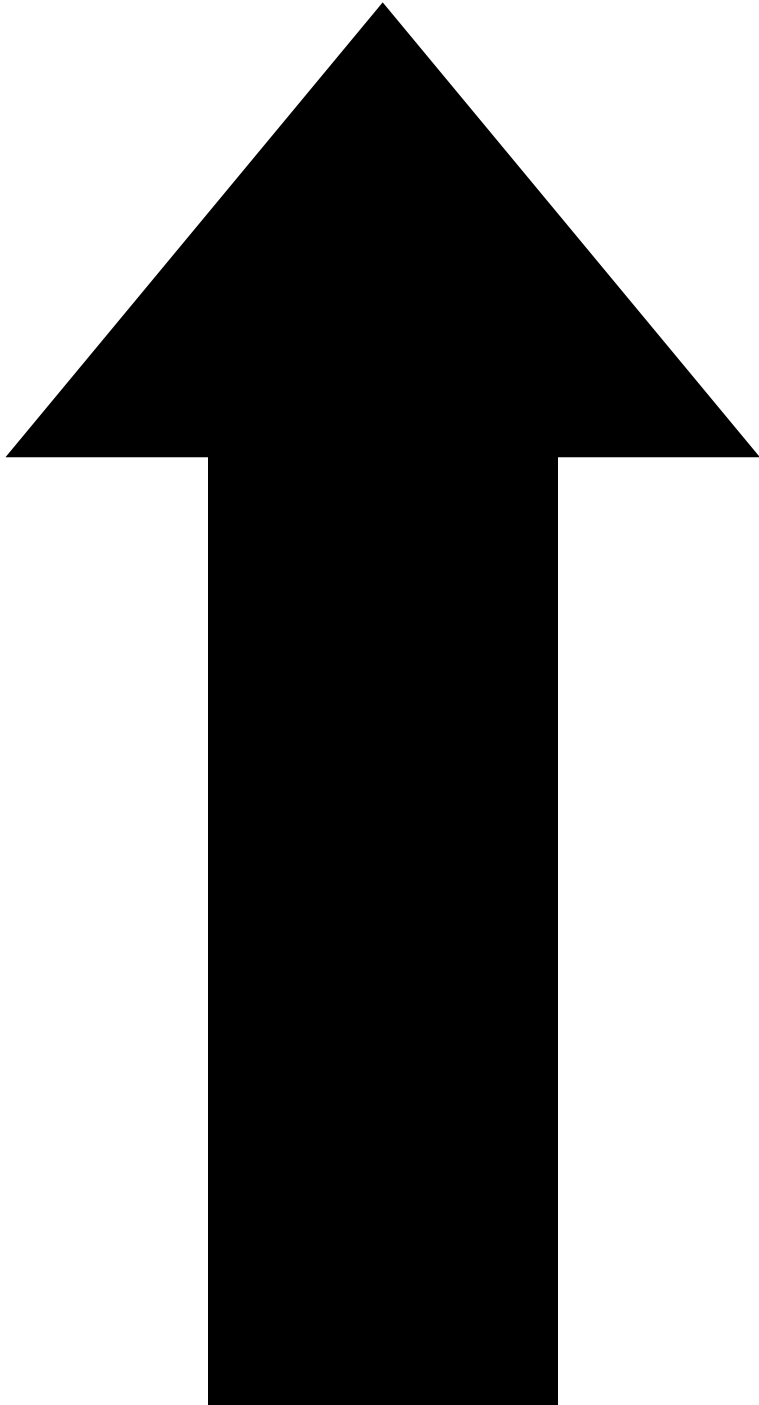


Gents





Gents





Venue Team



Having a well-organised, well-stocked, clean and thoughtfully set out venue helps people to feel welcomed and safe. Communicating well with the building's receptionist means they are much more likely to be in a position to welcome your members.



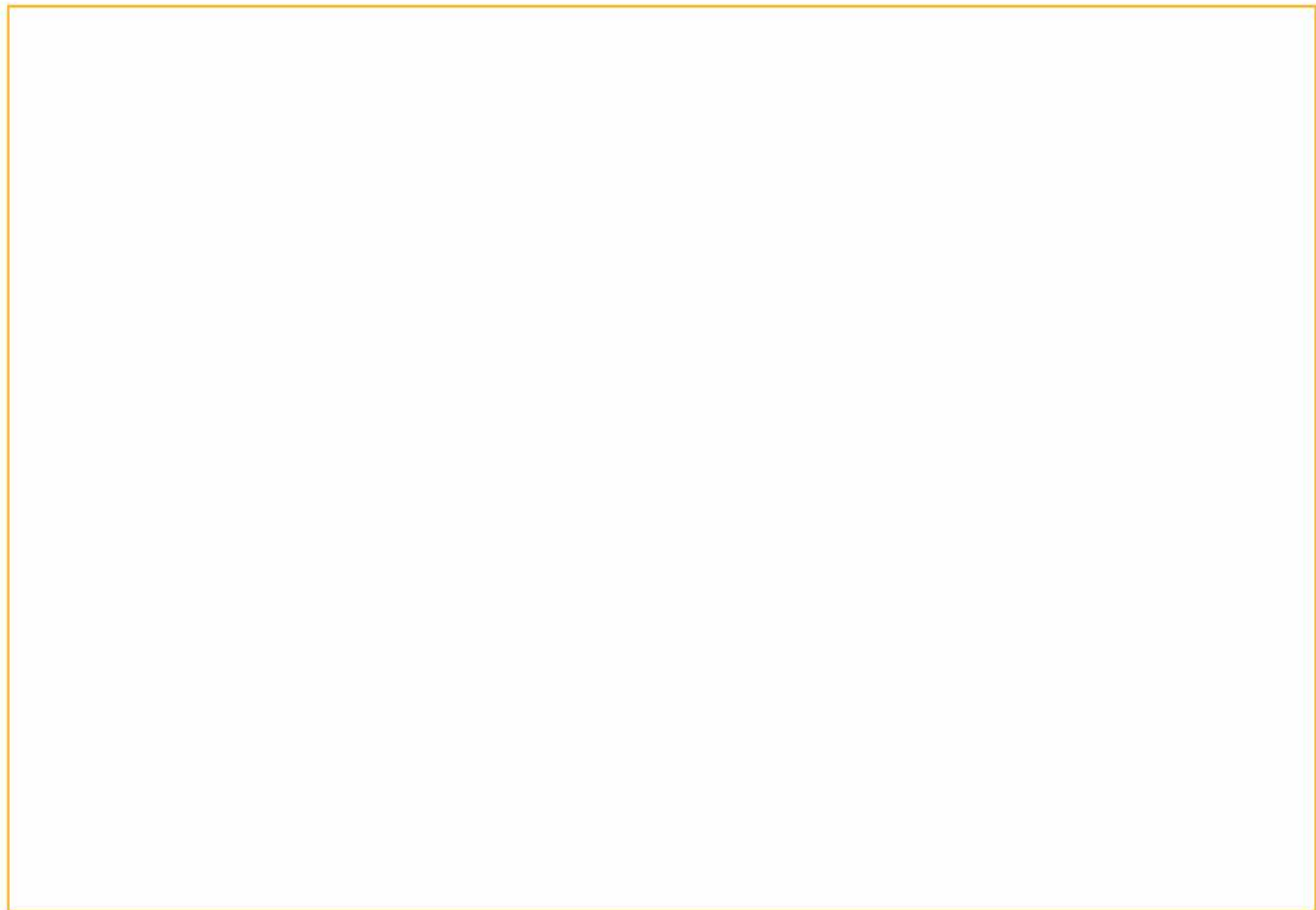
Putting a few signs out helps people unobtrusively. Think back to the first time you attended a new activity and how you felt about getting to the right room and knowing where the toilets were.



You can keep plans for room layouts and things like signs to direct people to the room you are using, and the toilets, in the activity folder. Reusing these saves time and it's easier for new helpers to get the hang of things.



This job is just as important to a warm welcome as saying hello or getting someone a cup of tea.





Host's welcome (whether it is you as the organiser, or one of the team)



Your role as host is very important. You can make people feel comfortable and welcome in the group.



Having a proper start and finish every time, including introducing helpers, removes any stigma for new members. Using checklist overleaf can help you share the tasks with others. Telling people what will happen will help both newcomers and members with memory problems.



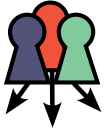
It's also helpful for everyone to know who they can speak to if they have any concerns.



Reception / Greeter



This is a good opportunity to check in on regular members, as well as greeting new people.



For many groups of course the Reception role may be just the same as Greeter - but in larger groups it helps to have two or more different people doing these jobs as members often arrive at once.



Newcomers and some regulars may benefit from a little more attention. You will need to do things like ask everyone to sign in, give out name badges if you use them and so on.



If you don't have a formal reception then greeting is twice as important. Try to spot anyone looking a bit lost, even if you think they might have been before. Speak to them, find out their name, find them somewhere to sit, show them how to get tea and introduce them to someone else.



It's worth knowing if there are new people coming along as it is lovely to make them a name badge or to be able to greet them by name.



Greeter / Activity helper



Offering a Warm Welcome doesn't stop after you have sat them down. It's a good idea to check in on them during the event, and if you have asked them to fill in membership paperwork you could collect it and help them with sections, they are unsure of.



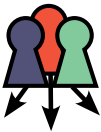
It is also an opportunity to give new people a little pack of information about other opportunities - if your organisation runs them - which they can take away with them to read later.



Don't just talk to newer members, this might be a good time to check in on regulars you are concerned about or haven't talked to in some time.



Activity helpers are just a continuation of greeters really - it's about making sure people know what they are doing but also trying to make sure they are enjoying themselves.



If there are two or three people doing this role try to make sure you share people out before you start.



Refreshments (these tips are not specific for cooking)



Tea and coffee, sharing food, all these things make people feel comfortable together.



It can be a good conversation starter with people you've met for the first time.



You have a good chance to open a conversation with someone as you serve them - a new member or a regular - "How are you doing this week?" or "Nice to see a new face - I'm _____, what's your name?" can go a long way to make people feel at ease and to find out if there are problems.



It's also a help to have a sign about prices (whether it's free, or donation, or a formal price list). People feel less anxious or embarrassed if they know what they are expected to pay.

