AUTISTIC ADVISORY GROUPS

GUIDE AND TOOLKIT

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AUTISTIC ADVISORY GROUPS GUIDE AND TOOLKIT

A practical guide and templates to plan, recruit, onboard, run and review accessible Autistic advisory groups.

WELCOME

Welcome to ASAN AUNZ's Autistic Advisory Groups Guide and Toolkit. We hope this guide and toolkit will help facilitators, support people, staff and organisations create advisory groups in which Autistic people are respected, supported and able to influence decisions.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE AND TOOLKIT

ASAN AUNZ developed this guide from more than three years of work creating and improving board and advisory group templates. More than 30 Autistic people helped shape this work, including decision-makers, facilitators, support people and members.

Autistic advisory groups can help organisations make better decisions. They can help identify risks earlier, improve services and resources, and make decisions more accountable to the communities affected by them.

WHO IS THIS GUIDE AND TOOLKIT FOR?

Use this toolkit when you are responsible for making an Autistic advisory group work well. It helps you set up clear information, accessible processes, support roles, meeting papers, minutes, feedback loops and psychologically safer ways for people to contribute.

This toolkit is mainly for the people doing the advisory group work: facilitators, support people and staff. Decision-makers can use it to understand what resources, authority and decisions are needed. Advisory group members may also use this toolkit to understand what good practice can look like. This can support members to self-advocate for accessible documents, enough preparation time, captions, interpreters, different ways to contribute, clearer documentation and stronger follow-up.

HOW THIS GUIDE AND TOOLKIT WORK

Use PART 1: THE GUIDE to understand the principles, governance model, accessibility approach and design choices behind Autistic advisory groups. Use PART 2: THE TOOLKIT as the practical workflow for planning, recruiting, onboarding, preparing meetings, running meetings and recording outcomes.

Staff and decision-makers can use the guide to understand the resources, authority and accountability needed. Facilitators and support people can use the steps covered in the toolkit as a workflow. Members can use relevant sections from both parts to self-advocate for accessibility, clear meeting papers, safe participation and follow-up.

> *Please note that where templates are provided, these are intended to cover the minimum necessary information that should be provided to or obtained from members to ensure meaningful accessibility and collaboration. Additional information may be required depending on the specific context, but this should not replace the information included in the template.*

ROLES USED IN THIS GUIDE AND TOOLKIT

To keep it easier to read, we use role groups instead of listing every role each time.

> **Facilitators** means the people leading or guiding the advisory group process. This includes chairs, co-chairs, facilitators, workshop leads and people responsible for keeping the group focused, accessible and safe.

> **Support people** means the people who help the meeting or process run smoothly. This includes secretaries, note takers, minutes takers, chat monitors, contribution monitors, helpers, access support workers and communication support workers.

> **Decision-makers** means the people or bodies with authority to make decisions, approve recommendations or allocate resources. This may include board members, executives, senior leaders, governance committees, project sponsors, funders, authorised managers or other people with formal decision-making authority.

> **Members** means advisory group members, including people contributing lived experience, community knowledge, expertise or advice.

> **Staff** means paid staff or project workers. This term is used only to specifically mean staff, not all facilitators or support people.

PARTS AND STEPS

PART 1: THE GUIDE

Read the guide to understand purpose, accessibility, governance, reporting and accountability before using the templates.

PART 2: THE TOOLKIT

Use the toolkit as a set of practical steps and resources to plan and manage advisory group workflow.

STEP 1: PREPARE BEFORE LAUNCH

Confirm purpose, authority, reporting line, access approach, support roles, meeting rhythm, payment and privacy before recruitment starts.

Templates:
Coordination plan
Terms of reference

STEP 2: RECRUIT TRANSPARENTLY

Explain purpose, eligibility, payment, support, access, selection and next steps clearly.

Templates:
Public announcement and expression of interest call
Expression of interest form
Outcome emails

STEP 3: ONBOARD SAFELY

Confirm onboarding steps, access needs, support roles, captions, interpreters, translators, AAC, Easy Read, documents in advance and first meeting details.

Templates:
Onboarding checklist and email
First meeting invitation
First meeting script and agenda
Access and support form

STEP 4: PREPARE FOR MEETINGS

Prepare the agenda, call for papers, confirm roles, send papers early, link documents, use the right paper type for each item, break complex topics into subtopics and plan major topics across separate briefing and workshop meetings.

Templates:
Agenda
Brie ing paper
Workshop paper
Decision paper
For noting paper

STEP 5: RUN THE MEETING

Facilitate access checks, manage pace and breaks, monitor chat or contributions, support different ways to participate, record decisions and share the feedback survey before close-out.

STEP 6: RECORD, REPORT AND CLOSE THE LOOP

Prepare the formal minutes, human-review the record, report advice directly to decision-makers, review survey responses, update the next agenda and plan enough time for briefing, workshopping, ad hoc issues and annual review.

Templates:
Minutes and actions
Feedback form

PART 1 THE GUIDE

This section provides an overview of how to use the toolkit and templates. It's a good idea to understand everything in this section before you begin using the toolkit to plan your advisory group. Getting things right from the outset is much easier than fixing problems once they have occurred. If there are any terms or concepts in this section that you are not familiar with, it's a good opportunity to fill gaps in your understanding. This will better equip you to run a safe, accessible and effective advisory group.

MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE FROM THE START

Do not wait for members to explain their access needs when they have challenges. Ask early. Record requested supports in a confidential manner and make identifying details available only to those who require the information (such as the facilitator and support people). Accessibility requests should never be made available to the broader group unless an individual chooses to self-disclose their support needs. Check supports are in place before each meeting. Make it clear how people can contribute before, during and after meetings.

Spend time explaining access at the first meeting.
ASAN AUNZ has learned that this takes time, but it is worth it. When facilitators clearly explain access options, communication options, recordings, confidentiality, preparation materials and support roles at the start, there are fewer questions and frustrations later. Meetings also run more smoothly because members know what to expect and how to participate.

ASAN AUNZ made the templates included in this toolkit accessible in several ways. We used the Roboto font suite because it is free and dyslexia-friendly. We used tinted backgrounds to reduce visual load and make tables easier to read. We also used plain language, applied predictable meeting structures, provided papers early, offered multiple ways to contribute and shared access needs information.

PREPARE BEFORE YOU START

Make important decisions and prepare key documents before recruitment starts. Complete the coordination plan, terms of reference, selection criteria, access approach, reporting line, support roles, onboarding process and meeting paper process. This reduces uncertainty and helps the group start with a clear purpose and a psychologically safer structure.

Plan the first meeting carefully. For the first meeting of any new advisory group, prepare the presentation, agenda and speaker notes in advance. Do not improvise the access explanation. A prepared script helps the facilitator cover important access, safety and confidentiality information clearly and consistently.

Before each meeting, confirm the support team. Aim for at least one facilitator and at least three support people.

To ensure broad accessibility for all, use closed captions as a minimum and live captioning where possible. Use access information collected to ensure more tailored accessibility as early as possible, such as to book translators, interpreters, live captioners and communication support workers as needed, and arrange augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) access, Easy Read or plain language materials, or other supports as required. Ensure that all meetings include planned breaks and that options are made available for members to contribute before, during and after meetings. Also ensure that physical venues offer appropriate accessibility and that online spaces have monitoring organised for chat functions.

Plan the meeting year realistically. ASAN AUNZ recommends at least two meetings for each major topic: one briefing meeting so members can understand the issue, and one workshop meeting so members can discuss and develop advice. This gives members processing time and supports asynchronous communication for people who need to contribute before or after a meeting. It also means people may still be able to contribute if they can only attend one of the two sessions. Attending one in two meetings may be more realistic for some disabled people whose disability affects meeting attendance. Include at least one induction or team-building session each year, and at least one priorities review each year. For existing groups, these two sessions may be combined if that works for members.

PREPARE BEFORE YOU START CONT.

Break complex topics into smaller subtopics. Some topics may need an initial briefing that explains how the topic will be broken down across future sessions. Keep that briefing available during later sessions so facilitators can remind the group which subtopic is being discussed and what is out of scope for that session.

Allow time for ad hoc issues. These may be requested by decision-makers, be raised by members or emerge during the year. Even with monthly meetings, this usually means a maximum of five major topics can be covered per year. Three or four major topics is often more realistic, especially when the group is providing lived experience input.

Good advisory work that uses lived experience can be messy and may be triggering for those involved. Facilitators should plan for this. For physical venues, have tissues, fidgets and regulation spaces available where possible. For all formats, use neuroaffirming, trauma-informed and culturally safe facilitation. Where possible, provide access to neuroaffirming, trauma-informed and culturally safe wellbeing supports.

USE MEETING PAPERS

Use meeting papers for every item that needs discussion, advice or a decision. Send papers early. Link relevant papers from the agenda so people can find them in one place.

PART 2 THE TOOLKIT

This section contains the templates developed by ASAN AUNZ for running Autistic advisory groups, as well as guidance for using them. The templates are designed to make starting and running an advisory group easier, and to ensure important information is collected and shared in a consistent and comprehensive way. They can be personalised and adapted to your specific context.

USING THE TEMPLATES

> Use each step with the guidance and templates that follow it.
> Read the relevant section guide before adapting a template so the purpose, accessibility approach and governance intent are not lost.
> Read the guidance preceding each template before you use or adapt it.
> Keep current versions in one shared location and use the agenda as the navigation point for meeting papers.
> Before sharing documents with participants, remove the instructions, replace the placeholder text in box brackets *[ ]*, and check that requests align with local privacy, safeguarding and other legal requirements.

Reminder: These templates are intended to cover the minimum necessary information that should be provided to or obtained from members to ensure meaningful accessibility and collaboration. Additional information may be required depending on the specific context, but this should not replace the information included in the template.

STEP 1: PREPARE BEFORE LAUNCH

Complete the coordination plan and terms of reference before issuing EOIs or inviting people to express interest. This gives members clear expectations and helps the group start safely.

> Complete the coordination plan first.
> Use the plan to draft the terms of reference.
> Confirm the reporting line before recruitment starts.
> Check that access, payment, privacy and support roles are clear.

COORDINATION PLAN

The coordination plan helps make the design, authority, support roles and meeting rhythm of the advisory group clear.

ASAN AUNZ strongly recommends that advisory groups used for governance have a direct line of reporting to the board, executive or equivalent governing body. Recommendations should not be filtered or gatekept through management channels before they reach that level. Where possible, board or executive members should participate in the advisory group so they understand the context, access needs, discussion and reasoning behind recommendations.

Please see template: *Coordination plan*

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference should define the advisory group's role, limits, membership, authority, reporting line and accountability so people understand what they are expressing interest in.

Please see template: *Terms of reference*

STEP 2: RECRUIT TRANSPARENTLY

Use public announcement and EOI call, EOI form and outcome emails when you are ready to invite people to express interest. Make the process clear, respectful and accessible before anyone applies.

Before sharing any recruitment material, remove placeholder text shown in box brackets [ ] and check the local privacy, safeguarding, payment and legal requirements that apply to your organisation.

> Explain what the group will influence and what it will not influence.
> Say who is eligible, how people will be selected and when they will hear back.
> Be clear about payment, access support and time commitments.
> Offer another way to express interest if the form is not accessible.
> Let every person know the outcome respectfully.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT AND EOI CALL

Use the template to invite people to express interest in joining the advisory group. The announcement should be plain, respectful and clear about purpose, eligibility, support, payment and next steps.

Please see template: *Public announcement and EOI call*

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM

Use this form to collect the minimum information needed to consider membership, plan access and communicate respectfully. Only ask for information you need and can store safely.

Please see template: *Expression of interest form*

OUTCOME EMAILS

Use these email templates to communicate outcomes respectfully and clearly. Every person who expresses interest should know what happened, why, and whether there are other ways to be involved.

Please see template: *Outcome emails*

STEP 3: ONBOARD SAFELY

Use the *onboarding checklist and email*, *first meeting invitation*, *first meeting script* and *agenda*, and *access and support form* after shortlisting and before confirming membership. Send onboarding information to new members early. Collect access and support needs with enough time to book interpreters, translators, live captioners, communication support workers or other supports before the first meeting.

Before sending onboarding material, remove placeholder text shown in box brackets [ ] and check that the access, privacy, safeguarding, payment and consent information is accurate.

Use the first meeting to make expectations clear. Explain what the group is for, what members have been asked to complete, who the facilitators are, how honorariums or reimbursements work, and where to ask for help. If people have not received a document or cannot access it, give them a clear way to ask for it after the meeting.

> Give people enough time to read and ask questions.
> Collect only the information you need and can store safely.
> Ask about access needs before the first meeting.
> Explain who can see access information and how it can be updated or withdrawn.
> Make the first meeting predictable and relational.

ONBOARDING CHECKLIST AND EMAIL

Use the template after shortlisting and before finalising membership. It helps people understand what is required, why it is required and where to get help.

Please see template: *Onboarding checklist and email*

FIRST MEETING INVITATION

Use the template to make contact in writing prior to the first meeting to welcome members, reduce uncertainty and make the first meeting relational, predictable and accessible.

Please see template: *First meeting invitation*

ACCESS AND SUPPORT FORM

Use this form before the first meeting and update it whenever it needs change. It helps you know how each member wants to participate, what supports to arrange and who can see access information.

Ask early. This gives you time to book translators, interpreters, live captioners, communication support workers and other access supports. Use closed captions as a minimum for online sessions and live captioning where possible.

Please see template: *Access and support form*

FIRST MEETING AGENDA AND TALKING POINTS

Use the example agenda and following talking points to build your own agenda and script prompts for the first meeting. Adapt as needed but remember that it is better to explain processes and agreements clearly at the start than to assume people already know how the meeting will work. Following the example agenda, you will find additional talking points for a number of the agenda items.

Please see template: *Example first meeting agenda*

WELCOME

Welcome everyone to the meeting and thank them for joining. Introduce key people involved in the advisory group, such as the facilitator and support people.

STEP 3: ONBOARD SAFELY CONT.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Include an Acknowledgement of Country at the beginning of the first meeting and all subsequent meetings.

The best Acknowledgement of Country is one that is meaningful to the speaker, but an example Acknowledgement of Country for online meetings is as follows:

I acknowledge that we are all joining today from different lands. I welcome you to share the land you are joining from in the chat if you would like to do so. I am joining from [Traditional Lands where you join from] land, and I acknowledge the [Traditional Custodian Group] as the Traditional Custodians of this land and pay my respects to their Elders past and present. I acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded. I acknowledge the ongoing strength of First Nations people in upholding the world's oldest living culture and their continuing fight for justice against marginalisation, discrimination and dispossession.

RECORDING AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Tell members whether the meeting is being recorded. If it is being recorded, explain:

> Why it is being recorded
> Who can access the recording
> Whether a transcript will be created
> Whether the recording or transcript is the formal record
> When the recording or transcript will be shared
> What members need to do before they can access it

Remind members, where relevant, that recordings do not replace formal minutes when formal minutes are required.

Discuss meeting confidentiality, for example, that members are asked to not share the recording, transcript or what people say in the meeting with people outside the group, unless the terms of reference or agreed process says otherwise. This helps create a safer space and respects people's stories and processes.

ACCESSIBILITY AND SUPPORT

Explain accessibility intentions for this and future meetings. For example, you may explain that the intention is to make meetings as accessible as possible, and that while this may not always be 100% successful, that the organisers are committed to learning and improving. You may encourage all members to do the same.

Some considerations for accessibility include the following:

> Indicate whether it is okay for members to have their camera on or off.
> Request that members keep their microphone off when they are not speaking.
> Explain the 'raise hand' function and encourage its use before speaking.
> Explain how the chat can be used as well as who will monitor it and how.
> Explain the use of captions, AAC, written input, preprepared words and support people.
> Encourage members to ask for breaks and feel free to step away and come back as needed.
> Explain to members how they can contribute after the meeting if that works better for them.
> If there is a presentation, explain how members can zoom in if they need to.
> Explain how members can utilise the speaker focus function if they find the presentation is distracting.
> Invite members to reach out if they need help using or turning off any visual feature, and explain how (e.g. via chat).

COMMUNICATION

Explain to members that all ways of communicating are valid. Explain that members do not have to speak out loud to participate and that the chat will be monitored and messages read aloud where appropriate. Explain if there are periods during meetings when messages are not being read or responded to straight away and the reasons for this.

Invite members to notify the facilitator or support team if they need another way to contribute.

STEP 3: ONBOARD SAFELY CONT.

OTHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Separately, you may wish to make other acknowledgements that are appropriate for the group. ASAN AUNZ also acknowledges the LGBTQIASB+ community and its significant intersection with Autistic and neurodivergent communities, and the lived experience of disabled people and allies who challenge discrimination, coercion and neglect.

MEETING DOCUMENTATION

Explain what was sent before the meeting. Remind members whether the material was required reading or provided for preparation only. If something was recommended prereading, say that clearly. Documentation to explain may include:

> The agenda
> The presentation
> Plain language or readable versions
> Terms of reference
> Onboarding documents
> Code of conduct or ways of working
> Confidentiality or nondisclosure documents
> Conflicts of interest forms
> Honorarium or reimbursement information
> Access and support needs forms

Check that all members received all relevant documentation. If someone did not receive a document or cannot access it, tell them who to contact and how to resolve the issue.

MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

Invite introductions from group members. Give people choices about how to introduce themselves. Make introductions optional where possible. People may introduce themselves by speaking, using chat, having someone read for them, using AAC or sharing prepared words, or they may choose not to introduce themselves. Introductions could include:

> Preferred name
> Pronouns, if they want to share them
> Why they wanted to be part of the group
> Anything else they want the group to know

If the group is large, use a clear time limit and explain it kindly

FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE

Explain the proposed future meeting schedule. For major topics, explain that there will usually be a briefing session and this will be followed by a later workshop session. The briefing helps everyone understand the topic, objectives, context and limits and then offers time for people to think the topic and their feedback through. The workshop gives people space to bring back their ideas and develop advice together.

Explain ways to contribute outside of scheduled meetings.

QUESTIONS AND FEEDBACK

Leave time for questions. Put the feedback survey link in the chat and on screen before the close-out section. Give people time to complete it during the meeting if that helps them. Explain that feedback helps improve future sessions and helps the project learn what is working.

STEP 4: PREPARE FOR ONGOING MEETINGS

Once you have completed the initial welcome meeting, use this section before each advisory group meeting. It helps you prepare the agenda, choose the right paper type, send papers early, confirm access supports and keep members informed.

Before sending meeting papers, remove internal instructions, update links and confirm that the agenda, papers, access notes and support roles are current.

For major topics, plan a briefing meeting first and a workshop meeting later. Do not expect members to receive complex information, process it, discuss it and produce advice in one session. Separate briefing and workshop sessions give people time to process, use asynchronous communication and contribute before or after meetings. This approach also makes it easier for members to contribute even if they cannot attend every session. Attending one in two topic meetings may be more realistic for some disabled people whose disability affects meeting attendance. Lived experience work needs time, care and space.

If a topic is complex, break it into smaller subtopics and plan multiple sessions. Start with a briefing that explains the whole topic, why it has been broken down, the proposed session sequence and what each session will focus on. Keep this breakdown on hand during later sessions to help the group stay focused on the relevant subtopic.

When you plan the annual meeting calendar, include induction or team-building, priorities review, topic briefings, topic workshops and time for ad hoc issues. If the group meets monthly, do not plan more than five major topics in a year. Three or four may be better if the topics are complex, personal, systemic or likely to draw on lived experience.

Before each meeting, check whether the topic may be difficult, personal or triggering. Build in warnings, choice, breaks, regulation options and follow-up support. For in-person meetings, prepare tissues, fidgets and regulation spaces where possible. For online meetings, explain how members can step away, contribute later or ask for support.

> Use the *agenda* as the navigation point for all relevant papers.
> Use a *briefing paper* when members need information or context.
> Use a *workshop paper* when members are co-creating, testing ideas or developing advice together.
> Use a *decision paper* when the group is being asked to recommend, approve or choose between options.
> Use a *for noting paper* when information is to be shared but no decision is needed.
> Use *minutes and actions* to record what happened and what was decided during the meeting and to plan what happens next.

MEETING PAPERS PROCESS AND TIMELINE

1 Call for meeting papers:
[timing, e.g. one week after the last meeting]
2 Meeting papers due:
[timing, e.g. seven days before the meeting]
3 Agenda approved:
[timing, e.g. five days before the meeting]
4 Agenda and papers sent:
[timing, e.g. three days beforethe meeting]
5 Easy summary or plain language version sent:
[timing and responsibility]
6 Members can provide input before, during or after the meeting by [options]

TWO CORE RULES

If an item needs discussion, advice or a decision, write it down before the meeting. If the paper misses the deadline, defer it unless it is genuinely urgent.

STEP 4: PREPARE FOR ONGOING MEETINGS CONT.

FOR FACILITATORS AND SUPPORT PEOPLE: MEETING PAPERS

> Confirm the meeting's purpose, topic and required outcome.

> Decide whether the item needs a *briefing paper*, *workshop paper*, *decision paper* or *for noting paper*.

> Allocate responsibility for preparing each paper.

> Make sure papers include background, scope, access notes, key questions and next steps.

> Check whether the item has cost, time, commitment, access, reputational or governance impacts.

> Write any proposed recommendation or motion clearly and make sure it matches the wording in the *agenda*.

> Send papers early enough for members to process and respond.

> Provide alternate formats or plain language summaries where needed.

> For complex topics, keep the topic breakdown available during the meeting so you can bring the group back to the current subtopic if discussion expands too far.

> Where possible, use one shared source for current papers (e.g. a shared cloud drive) and link to the papers from the *agenda*.

Do not overfill the agenda. If the topic relies on lived experience, allow time for people to process, pause, regulate and contribute in different ways. If the meeting becomes too full, defer lower-priority items or move them out of session.

AGENDA

Use the *agenda* to run a predictable and accessible meeting. Keep it realistic, link each paper from the agenda, and write motions and actions clearly before the meeting where possible.

Use the *agenda* template with the *meeting papers process and timeline*. Link to current *briefing*, *workshop*, *decision*, *for noting* and *minutes* documents from the agenda wherever possible. The agenda should act as the meeting's navigation point so people can open the right document from one place.

The *agenda* should be designed to enable group members to understand what is expected of them and be prepared in a consistent manner for each meeting.

Please see template: *Agenda*

> Prepare the agenda from the previous minutes and action list.
> Review survey responses and address feedback before drafting the next agenda.
> Confirm meeting details, attendees, apologies, support roles and access supports as early as possible.
> Link briefing, workshop, decision and for noting papers from the agenda.
> Add the feedback survey link before the close-out section.
> Prepare the agenda so it can be copied into the minutes template with minimal extra data entry.
> If there are matters to be decided (voting) during the session, then the proposed wording of what is being voted on should be provided in the minutes wherever possible, and a decision paper provided to explain the background to the issue.

STEP 4: PREPARE FOR ONGOING MEETINGS CONT.

BRIEFING PAPER

Use a *briefing paper* when members need context before they can discuss a topic. Keep it short. Say why the topic matters, what members are being asked to do, what is in scope and what will happen next.

For complex topics, use the first briefing paper to explain how the topic is being broken down. Include the proposed session sequence, the subtopic for this meeting, what is out of scope, and how members can contribute between sessions.

Use this template when the *agenda* includes a briefing item. Link the *briefing paper* from the agenda. If the group will co-create or develop advice during the meeting, also use the workshop paper template.

The briefing paper provides a structured explanation of what is expected during the meeting regarding this topic. It should include references, definitions, pre-work, action prompts and details of what members need to understand.

The objective and scope should be the same as the agenda.

Please see template: *Briefing paper*

WORKSHOP PAPER

Use a *workshop paper* when members will co-create, test ideas, prioritise issues or develop advice together. Explain the activity, ways to contribute, access plan, output and next steps before the session.

Use workshop papers after members have had enough time to understand the topic. For major topics, hold a briefing meeting first, then a later workshop meeting. This gives members time to process the issue, use asynchronous communication, ask extra questions and contribute even if they could not attend the briefing. It also reduces pressure to provide lived experience advice too quickly.

At the start of the workshop, remind members of the topic breakdown from the briefing. Explain the subtopic for this session and what will be covered later. This helps the group stay focused without shutting down important ideas.

Use this template when the *agenda* includes a workshop item. If the workshop follows a briefing, link back to the relevant *briefing paper*. If the workshop produces a recommendation, use the *decision paper* template. Use the *workshop paper* when the session should provide a full activity plan, pre-work, background, scope, contribution methods, access plan, outputs and action prompts.

The objective and scope should be the same as in the agenda.

Please see template: *Workshop paper*

STEP 4: PREPARE FOR ONGOING MEETINGS CONT.

DECISION PAPER

Use a *decision paper* template when the advisory group is being asked to recommend, approve or choose between options. Write the proposed motion clearly and make sure it matches the *agenda*. Record the outcome in the *minutes and actions*.

Do not rush decisions. If members need more time, more information or support to process a topic, defer the decision or use another workshop before asking for a recommendation.

Please see template: *Decision paper*

FOR NOTING PAPER

Use a for *noting paper* template when the advisory group is being asked to be informed about an issue or an update or report is provided.

This template is intended for when a recommendation, decision or motion is not needed. The matter should appear consistently in both this paper and the *agenda*. Record that the matter was noted in the *minutes and actions*.

Please see template: *For noting paper*

STEP 5: RUN THE MEETING

Use the approved agenda to run the meeting. Confirm access supports, keep the group focused on the agreed topic or subtopic, monitor chat or contributions, support different ways to participate, record decisions and share the feedback survey before close-out.

> Start with access, communication and confidentiality reminders.
> Confirm the purpose, scope and paper type for each item.
> Keep the group focused on the agreed topic or subtopic.
> Monitor chat or contribution channels.
> Watch pace, breaks and regulation needs.
> Confirm decisions, actions and next steps before moving on.
> Share the feedback survey before close-out.

STEP 6: RECORD, REPORT AND CLOSE THE LOOP

TAKING MEETING NOTES

Use this guidance to prepare *minutes and actions*. This is the formal meeting record. A facilitator, support person or authorised reviewer must check the minutes before they are shared or approved. If using AI, do not rely only on it to confirm what happened.

> Before the meeting starts, copy the agenda table into the minutes and actions template where possible.

> Check that meeting details, attendees, apologies, agenda items, proposed motions and links have carried across correctly.

> Add any known access arrangements that are appropriate to record. Do not record private access details unless there is a clear reason and consent.

> During the meeting, capture key discussion points, decisions, recommendations, voting outcomes and actions without trying to write every word.

> Record actions with who, what, by when and what support is needed. Use standard wording, such as: Action: [Name] is to [action] by [date].

> Record what will happen with the group's advice, including whether it will go to decision-makers.

> After the meeting, prepare the minutes and actions for human review and approval.

> Share minutes within the agreed timeframe and allow members to correct factual errors.

If AI is used to help draft summaries, Easy Read versions or action summaries, use the full agenda, minutes and actions, and agreed action list as inputs. A facilitator, support person or authorised reviewer must check the AI-assisted output before it is shared.

STEP 6: RECORD, REPORT AND CLOSE THE LOOP CONT.

MINUTES AND ACTIONS

Use the template as the formal meeting record for each meeting. It records what happened, what was decided, what advice was given and what actions happen next.

The *minutes and actions* should reflect the *agenda* and any *briefing paper*, *workshop paper*, *decision paper* or *for noting paper* attached. It should be checked by a human reviewer before sharing or approval. Include the *feedback survey link* before the meeting close-out section so people can complete it after the meeting if they did not do so at the end of the meeting.

The full agenda, minutes and actions, and agreed action list may be used as inputs to draft plain language, Easy Read or summary versions using AI. Human review is still required before sharing.

Please see template: *Minutes and actions*

FEEDBACK FORM

Use the template after meetings and at regular review points. Keep it low-demand so members can give useful feedback quickly and so facilitators and support people can identify what needs to change before the next meeting.

This form should be as easy as possible to complete. Include instructions at the beginning of the form to tell people what topics are covered. Make all fields optional and let users know they can stop after any topic and submit their feedback.

Use the survey responses when preparing the next meeting. Look for repeated access issues, safety concerns, unclear outcomes, facilitation issues and practical changes that can be made before the next session.

AREAS TO COVER WHEN SEEKING FEEDBACK

- Accessibility, including documents, meeting formats and timing, access to interpreters, AAC, Easy Read, chat functions, ease of making contributions and venues
- Safety, including cultural safety, psychological safety, trauma-informed practice and neuroaffirming practice
- Outcomes
- Facilitation
- Anything else you need to know

Put the survey link in the agenda before the meeting close-out section. Tell members they can complete it during the meeting, straight after the meeting or later. The first time you provide it, open the survey online during the meeting and walk through the topics, rating scale and free text boxes so that members understand how to access, use and submit it.

Facilitators will also need to consider anonymity considerations for surveys. Some platforms allow responders to remain anonymous, while other platforms do not. Even though organisers may not intend to use identification functions, it is important to be conscious of the impact embedded identification options will have on people's willingness to be honest. Wherever possible, anonymous platform options will likely result in the best and most honest data.

Please see template: *Feedback form*

The feedback form template is intentionally designed to be low-demand. It starts with a general comment box, then uses consistent 1–5 rating statements with short comment prompts. It asks about accessibility, safety, outcomes and facilitation so facilitators and support people can quickly see where changes are needed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guide and toolkit were designed and created by Autistic people, for Autistic people and for organisations that work with our communities. We thank everyone who contributed ideas, templates, lived experience, feedback, testing and care to this work.

We especially acknowledge ASAN AUNZ board members, advisory group co-chairs, advisory group members, staff, contractors, volunteers and community members who helped shape the approach over time.

We, ASAN AUNZ, respectfully acknowledge First Nations Peoples as Traditional Custodians of the lands, skies and waters where we live, learn, create and work. We acknowledge First Nations Peoples as the original and ongoing custodians and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

We, ASAN AUNZ, acknowledge the LGBTQIASB+ community and its significant intersection with Autistic and neurodivergent communities. We affirm everyone's right to freely identify and acknowledge their sexual or romantic orientation, gender identity and neuroqueer expressions.

JOIN US AND SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

Thank you for using ASAN AUNZ's Autistic Advisory Groups Guide and Toolkit. We encourage you to participate in the Australian and New Zealand Autistic community, and keep improving how Autistic people are included in decisions that affect us.

CONNECT

We'd love to welcome you to our community. *Join ASAN AUNZ for free*, follow our work on *Instagram*, *Facebook* or *LinkedIn*, and share this resource with people who may find it useful.

SYSTEMIC ADVOCACY

If you would like to contact us regarding systemic advocacy, please email *operations@asan-aunz.org* and *secretary@asan-aunz.org*.

CONTRIBUTE

If you are an Autistic writer or content creator who would like to contribute to ASAN AUNZ by sharing your story with our community, we would love to hear from you!

If you would like to pitch a blog post, specifically around your advocacy experiences, with tips and hints you would love to share with our community, please email *operations@asan-aunz.org* and *comms@asan-aunz.org*.

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