What were the strengths of sharing research online?

+ Participants noted a preference for online sessions in terms of scheduling, travel, and cost.

+ They appreciated being able to hear from speakers internationally.

+ The length of papers (c.10 minutes) was well received.

+ Early-career attendees welcomed the opportunity to engage with a range of speakers remotely.

+ Online meetings, especially when supported by sign language interpreting, were more accessible to some participants than in-person events.

+ Attendees found the network’s booking and registering system (EventBrite) easy to use.

What were some of the barriers?

+ The more formally structured nature of communication in online events can be a barrier. Feedback suggested that more organic networking opportunities were missed.

+ Some attendees wanted to vocalise questions rather than writing them in the chat.

+ Attendees recommended more time for questions and answers.

+ Respondents suggested sharing more background information and links in advance (including bios for speakers, access links, further resources).

+ Online events can also create new barriers. Auto-captions are better than nothing but are not enough to make events truly inclusive for participants with limited hearing.

Top tips:

+ Facilitate opportunities for more spontaneous, organic communication as far as possible. These may include breakout rooms, debrief sessions, or greater use of other platforms to promote engagement between participants.

+ Think carefully about the duration of presentations versus questions. Even with shorter sessions from speakers (c.10 minutes), allocate generous time for questions from attendees.

+ Test-drive different settings on your platform ahead of time to maximise accessibility. If you have sign-language interpreters, be sure to record in gallery view, and ask event participants to turn off their cameras when they are not speaking in order to improve visual accessibility.

+ Consider a wide range of participants when planning and designing sessions – how might you factor in opportunities which will enrich the experience of ECRs, practitioners, educators, etc.?

+ Embrace the opportunity offered by online networks to hear from international speakers.

+ Integrating online network events with in-person ones can enrich participants’ feelings of engagement and inclusion.