



# CREATING ACCESSIBLE EVENTS

Top Tips for making your  
event more inclusive for  
visually impaired people

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There are almost 2 million people in the UK alone with a visual impairment – That's 1 in 30 of your audiences and this figure is set to rise with our ageing population.

What can you do to ensure they have a positive experience, feel included and will want to come back?

Here are a few things you might consider.

## Good Inclusive Planning

### 1. Take advice

- ... Contact access advisers such as [Shape Training](#).
- ... Consider setting up an Access Group to regularly advise on best practice and to help market your organisation and events to other visually impaired people.

### 2. Communicate

- ... Talk with disabled performers/artists and organisations of visually impaired people to help select events that would work well as assisted performances such as Audio Description and Touch Tours.

### 3. Talk to other events organisers

- ... Share best practice, set up a clash diary, co-commission disabled performance companies.

### 4. Feedback

- ... Gather feedback from visually impaired audiences, describers and performers, positive or otherwise, as this can help shape and improve future events.
- ... Be prepared to make mistakes. We are all constantly learning by them!

## PR and Marketing

### 5. Set up a data-base of disabled people to tailor your marketing towards

- ... Or better still...

6. **Introduce an Access Card scheme**
  - ... Securely record access requirements so customers don't need to repeat this every time they book.
  - ... Consider offering prioritised bookings and discounts to encourage disabled audiences.
7. **Offer concessions to visually impaired people**
  - ... and free admission for personal assistants. Visually impaired people may need to book transport or an assistant well in advance. They may not be able to take advantage of last minute offers such as stand-by tickets.
8. **Promote assisted events**
  - ... Advertise alongside mainstream events on your web, in media articles, on social media and in formats accessible to visually impaired people (large print, audio, Braille). Include features and quotations from visually impaired people who have enjoyed your events in the past.
9. **Provide accurate and detailed access information**
  - ... via ticket sales staff and in promotional information, to include parking, transport links, where within the venue the event is being held, who will be on hand to assist, access provision and equipment, and for outdoor events, terrain, and nearest toilets and refreshments.
10. **Provide details of the content of events to encourage take-up**
  - ... Give details of describers (who is giving the tour), whether live description or pre-recorded, what people will be able to touch, equipment available, duration.
11. **Have a flexible policy**
  - ... Enable visually impaired people to attend touch tours and access events with their families and friends as a shared experience can be more rewarding.
12. **Provide a dedicated access booking line and webpage**
  - ... where access information can easily be found in one place.
13. **Mail out pre-programme notes with tickets**
  - ... in the format of choice (e.g. audio, large print) offering details of the set, venue, company/cast and synopsis.

## Developing an accessible programme

### 14. Programme events by visually impaired performers

- ... Their involvement and life experiences will make your programme more diverse and attract visually impaired people to your events.

### 15. Rehearsal time

- ... Allow sufficient lead in time for audio describers to familiarise themselves with the venue and scripts, and for a dry run of events such as tours.

### 16. Programme regular assisted performances

- ... Ask all production companies you book to provide, or agree to assisted performances.

### 17. Conduct a risk assessment

- ... to identify potential barriers such as low ceilings, steps, low light levels, and plan how to remove or reduce such hazards.

### 18. Ensure staff are trained in visual awareness as part of wider Disability Equality Training

- ... to assist at the event. It is helpful if staff can be easily identified by their uniforms, badges or lanyards.

### 19. Allow time before the start of events

- ... to assist people to their seats if required, to enable assistance dogs to settle, to test equipment such as headsets and to provide pre-programme introductions.

### 20. Be patient

- ... Don't expect a sudden surge of interest and take-up of assisted events – it can often take a few seasons to build a new audience

The important thing is to get started!