

Section three

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Employment

When recruiting you can carry out the following actions to increase the number of disabled people who apply to you:

- place advertisements in publications likely to be seen by disabled people (see [Useful contacts](#))
- use positive statements, for example, 'we welcome applications from disabled people'
- seek 'Positive about disabled people' status (contact Jobcentre Plus, see [Useful contacts](#))
- provide information in a variety of formats and be prepared to accept applications in a variety of formats
- give quality feedback to any non-successful disabled applicants

There is no quota for employing disabled people.

In recruitment and selection procedures, the following need to be considered:

- in job descriptions and person specifications, what reasonable adjustments would be needed to enable a disabled person to have access to the job? Are qualifications absolutely essential or can you consider other evidence of knowledge, skills and experience?
- accept applications in various formats. When shortlisting a visually impaired person, telephone them about the interview as well as sending a letter
- when inviting any candidates for interview, ask if they have specific access requirements
- check physical access to the interview room. Have different types of chair available and use sign language interpreters, palantypists and screen readers where necessary
- ensure interviewers have had disability equality training
- on appointment ensure all necessary adjustments are in place before the start date. Plan for induction and ensure all other staff have had disability equality training

Contact the Disability Rights Commission and the Employers' Forum on Disability for more information on how to improve access in this area (see [Useful contacts](#))

To make the workplace more accessible consider the following:

- adjustments to premises
- allocation of some duties to other staff members
- altering the disabled person's working hours
- assigning the person to a more accessible workplace
- allowing absence for assessment/treatment/rehabilitation
- provision of training
- acquiring or modifying equipment
- modifying instructions or reference materials
- providing a reader, interpreter or notetaker
- providing supervision

Under the DDA, an employer can take into account how practicable the adjustment would be, the cost, how much improvement an alteration will make, and financial or other help available.

Access to Work

The Access to Work (AtW) scheme is administered by Jobcentre Plus. AtW may partly cover adaptations to premises and equipment, personal readers, support workers, travel to work and communication support at interviews. For more information contact Jobcentre Plus or The Employers Forum on Disability (see [Useful contacts](#)).

Placements — apprenticeship scheme

Arts organisations are encouraged to offer internships and apprenticeship schemes for disabled people. For advice contact Arts Council England or Showhow (see [Useful contacts](#)).

More information

For comprehensive information on Employment and Access refer to *Disability access: a good practice guide for the arts*, and *Handbook of good practice: employing disabled people* published by Arts Council England (see [Useful contacts](#)).

Working with disabled arts practitioners

(see also [Programming](#))

‘Inclusion of disabled people should not be done only for the reasons of legislation or social responsibility, but because disabled people have a lot to offer, both as practitioners in their fields and as an audience.’ Ben Cove, Visual Artist.

Working with disabled arts practitioners

Employing and working with disabled artists, writers, directors, designers, musicians, workshop leaders and other artistic and creative staff will push forward your boundaries, challenge prejudices and make your organisation more inclusive and accessible.

The access requirements of the practitioner may be:

- access to rehearsal/backstage/meeting/workshop/ staff toilet/cafe areas, as well as all front of house areas, for your venue and any you visit on tour
- a working loop or induction system so deaf and hearing impaired artists can fully participate in all discussions and workshops, both in and out of the arts venue
- an interpreter, describer or notetaker
- accessible parking spaces
- specialist equipment (textphone, screen reader, magnifier, adapted computer/phone) and so on
- that all your staff are informed about disability issues and meeting access requirements
- information/scripts in different formats
- accessible changing/shower facilities for performing artists
- sufficient time — some artists may need more breaks than others and this needs to be agreed, arranged and communicated beforehand

Publicity involving disabled artists needs sensitive handling

Some disabled artists want to be promoted as disabled people in any press and publicity because they are role models and because they are politically active and they promote disability or deaf arts. Others feel that reference to them as disabled people draws unnecessary attention towards their impairments, so you should discuss any campaigns beforehand.

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Activity

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Programming

(see also [Working with disabled practitioners](#))

Programming disabled companies, performers and artists

Disabled people form a large part of society and, as such, should be represented in all sectors of the arts. The arts can help to build outside links for insular communities, changing their perceptions of available opportunities and increasing aspiration. Historically, disabled people have been excluded from the arts and representation of disabled people has often been along the lines of the charity model, often not even using disabled performers to play disabled characters (for example *Rainman*, *My Left Foot* and so on).

Disability related work, which can include work by disabled artists and companies or by integrated companies, or work which presents audiences with issues related to disability, should form a part of your programme.

Programming disability related work provides opportunities to reflect the diversity of society, broaden horizons, celebrate the lives of disabled people, create positive role models and challenge prejudices, both for the audiences who see the work and for the non-disabled people who work in the arts.

Disability related work can bring new exciting and emerging artforms and collaborations into the artistic sphere.

Sometimes disabled companies/artists/performers are programmed as part of a festival of disability culture. Whilst such festivals are welcomed by the disabled communities, it is important that they do not become tokenistic and ghetto-ised, particularly if disabled artists are not programmed for the rest of the year.

Casting

Disabled performers should be cast in a whole range of parts, not just disabled characters as identified by the scriptwriter. Arts organisations should work towards being inclusive organisations employing disabled actors in a variety of roles.

Will there be an audience for disability-related work?

One of the reasons quoted by venues as to why they do not programme disabled companies/artists is that they have a limited appeal. Whilst the shows may be targeted to disabled people, they should also be sold widely to other potential audiences. Research from the 2003 Xposure festival, a London-wide disability arts showcase, highlighted that 80 per cent of the audiences did not consider themselves to be disabled.

Access

If disability arts companies/artists are programmed then the accessibility of their shows needs consideration. Is the venue accessible front of house, are the shows/talks being sign language interpreted or captioned, is the work being audio described?

If you have disabled artists coming into your venue to work then they obviously need access to all areas of your building (see [Working with disabled practitioners/employment](#)).

You should ask all artists or groups if they have any access requirements as a standard question when booking them.

Performing arts

There are performing arts companies which use only disabled performers and those that have integrated casts. Some companies prefer to work locally or regionally, while others regularly tour on a national basis (see *On the move: a directory of disability-related touring companies from the UK* which is available on the Arts Council England website). Some companies' stance on disability is one of their marketing tools and is central to their philosophy; others do not particularly advertise the fact that their performers are disabled. When marketing the work of these companies ensure that there is agreement on how they should be promoted with respect to their disabled artists.

Check out the companies' websites and see what connections they have in the area. Be clear about who they perceive their target audience to be and whether they offer any audience development and outreach initiatives. Also discuss access for

audiences early in the planning stages, the companies may have an interpreter touring with them for example, or have already produced synopses or educational packs.

Companies generally welcome feedback on their work and will be interested in building an ongoing relationship with venues and audiences.

Visual arts

In the visual arts, it is usually the work, not the artist, which is on display. The artist's impairment may inform their work and present access requirements to the venue. Some artists' work is informed directly by their own culture and experience as a disabled person – it is Disability Art – whereas others may be producing art which is informed by other factors in which case it is art produced by a disabled person. A gallery may not be aware of the fact that an artist is disabled and it is the choice of the artist whether or not they feel they need to pass on this information. However, venues should always check if an artist has any access requirements.

For more information on contacting disabled visual artists contact your local disability arts organisations (see [Useful contacts](#)).

Education and outreach

Participatory events, along with effective audience development programmes, have been shown to be highly successful ways of interacting with disabled people. They work particularly well in removing intellectual barriers as well as physical barriers when the initiative involves bringing the art to the people in their own community.

There are many examples of such initiatives available from Arts Council England, The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA, formerly Re:source) and the audience development agencies (see [Useful contacts](#)). For example, a visit to a local social club for blind people where the principles and techniques of audio description are explained along with the opportunity to handle the equipment, props and costumes may be popular. Equally a pre-performance visit for a learning disabled group to familiarise them with the nature of the

venue and experience, might include a chance to meet members of the company and listen to some of the music from the show. Other initiatives have included the setting up of a local deaf youth theatre or other disabled young people's group where the participants can establish links with the organisation and develop a sense of ownership.

When programming education and outreach activities not designed specifically or exclusively for disabled people, ensure that disabled people are not excluded because of the lack of access.

[Use this check list for participatory events, including children's workshops:](#) (see also [Contacting potential audiences](#), [Customer care](#) and [Meeting a range of access requirements](#))

- ask all participants about their access requirements
- physical access throughout the building
- parking and drop-off points
- circulation space within the rooms for wheelchair users
- space and facilities for support workers/facilitators
- accessible toilets
- variety of seating types
- suitable light levels
- interpreters/audio describers/palantypists/notetakers
- induction loops and microphones
- health and safety issues including evacuation procedures
- variety of formats for the hand-outs
- provide a range of basic accessible equipment including a variety of scissors, pen holders, brush holders, clipboards for wheelchair users, additional lights, magnifiers and so on
- look into a range of specifically accessible equipment (for example, harnesses, stands, frames and so on)

Read *Keeping arts safe* on the Arts Council's website and produce your own policy on working with children and vulnerable adults.

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Contacting potential audiences

Marketing planning

When planning your general marketing campaigns:

- produce informative accessible clear print in other readily available formats
- send your direct mail to targeted groups with details of access facilities
- use telephone marketing for blind and visually impaired audiences
- use text messaging for deaf audiences
- send emails to both your blind and deaf customers
- make sure your posters communicate the style of the piece
- check your website for accessibility
- place advertisements in publications target groups are likely to see (see [Useful contacts](#))
- send the press details of access facilities
- when you have open days make them accessible and talk about the access you offer
- include access in talks to groups and schools
- make tours accessible
- open up your outreach and education programmes to disabled people
- give as much information as you can in the synopses, including an indication of how quiet or loud a show is likely to be
- undertake audience development campaigns with targeted groups
- develop an ambassadors scheme with specific communities (see *A practical guide to working with arts ambassadors* on Arts Council England's website)

When planning your campaign to disabled audiences:

- list the selling points of your products
- list your access services and facilities
- match these against potential target groups
- identify the best way of reaching them (for example, text messaging to deaf audiences, audio brochures for blind audiences and so on)
- work out the timescales and budget implications

As with many areas of audience development, building contacts and developing the trust of disabled audiences takes time and effort. Simply listing a sign interpreted performance in your brochure will not result in deaf audiences flocking to your door. You need to be pro-active in reaching disabled people and make it as easy as possible for them to find out what's on and to come. As in all marketing, word of mouth will help get your message across but it will take time.

It is anticipated that Arts Council England will publish a guide to developing disabled audiences by the end of 2004.

Publicising your access provision

Ensure that publicity material includes access information but be honest about your access (see [Formats and accessible print](#), [Building an accessible website](#), [Meeting a range of access requirements](#) and [Questions, questions, questions](#)).

While separate access guides can go into greater detail than there is space for on your usual leaflet, you should include basic access information on the general leaflet. This is for those who might benefit from the service or facilities without thinking that they would need an access guide.

Think creatively about what can be provided to make the product more accessible. Synopses, background information, talks to groups, workshops all help. Make sure the information you provide is easily understood without being patronising.

Look at the profile of the access services within your publicity. What does this say about the importance accorded to them?

Think about how you can reach new audiences. How would people who have never experienced your product before know that it is accessible?

The National Disability Arts Forum (NDAF) is currently working with a number of other agencies to develop Arts Access UK, a national online database which gives venue access details (see [Useful contacts](#)). A number of other organisations currently provide regional access information.

Mailing and distribution

Ensure the relevant organisations are contacted and that publicity is distributed to groups and venues where potential audiences might receive it. Always send relevant information to Talking Newspapers. Adapt what is sent accordingly – for example an attractive poster with the BSL performance clearly indicated together with a synopsis might appeal to a deaf group. Recent research has shown young deaf and hearing impaired people are keen to attend concerts and dance music events. A group of blind people would find an audio brochure helpful. Including the name of the sign language interpreter or describer can help to attract an audience. Contact your local disability arts organisation for suggestions of whom to mail.

Press coverage

Facilities for disabled attenders should be included in all press releases and often merit their own stories. Be aware that the press and media are not always politically correct or sensitive. Never be talked into setting up a photo which involves someone pretending to be disabled. Always use appropriate language in your own press releases (see [Language](#)) Build up your database of specialist publications which may include features or listings on your facilities. They often have early deadlines. Some publications are included in [Useful contacts](#).

Data capture – tracking your attenders

If someone has been to an arts venue and enjoyed the experience then they are a potential audience for another time. Make sure their details are captured along with their access needs, such as a wheelchair user or a BSL user. If they are just categorised on a computer system as using a 'disabled concession' you might not know what information would be relevant for them. If you have a preference box where you keep a record of your visitors' access needs, this avoids them being asked the same questions every time they book. You need to ensure you have their permission to keep their details for your marketing purposes — this is in accordance with the Data Protection Act (see [Useful contacts](#)). Build up your attenders lists in order to increase your marketing potential.

Programming (see [Programming](#))

Look at what is being programmed and whether it has any relevance for the target group you are trying to attract.

If there are only occasional sign language/captioned/audio described events then consider carefully which shows are most likely to appeal to that target market. For example, a mime event may not appeal to a visually impaired audience but may well attract a deaf audience.

Pricing (see [Pricing](#))

You may want to offer a reduced price, or even a free visit as an introductory offer. If you do not charge for your events then you might want to include an offer at the cafe or shop.

Outreach (see [Education and outreach](#))

Outreach, partnership working and education programmes can often be the most effective way of reaching new audiences, especially for people who may traditionally have felt excluded from the arts and who may find coming into your buildings intimidating. Traditionally excluded people may be unfamiliar with the language used and the products offered. Intelligent and accessible outreach programmes can help overcome many of these barriers, providing ways in for new audiences.

To summarise:

What can marketing and audience development staff do to get people to come?

- make sure they can find out what is on easily
- use language which is easily understood and responded to
- be honest about facilities and services
- encourage a varied programme which includes disability related work
- make sure that price is not a barrier
- investigate creative solutions to problems like transport
- make the venue as accessible as possible
- make customers feel welcome

Formats and accessible print

Ensure information is available in a variety of formats; these could include:

- computer disk
- cd-rom
- websites
- email
- large print (16 points minimum)
- Braille
- photograph trails/pathways
- picture-text
- tape/audio CD
- signed videos/DVDs

SMS texting is a valuable marketing tool and is widely used by deaf and hearing impaired people, as is faxing, whilst email is also increasingly used by blind and visually impaired people. Get a textphone and make sure staff know how to use it. Textphones will not receive text messages from mobile phones.

When preparing alternative formats consider the following:

- what needs to be produced in other formats?
(information leaflets, gallery guides, programmes, menus, safety information and so on)
- can it be done in-house or should it be contracted out?
- how quickly can the alternative formats be prepared and when will they be available?
- will the variety of formats be available only on request, if not what quantities should be prepared?
- how is the quality of the alternative formats ensured?
- how will people know that there are a variety of formats available?
- do staff know where to find the alternative formats?
- what is the budget for producing these formats?
- how will the take-up of the various formats be monitored?

Accessible print is print which is easy to read in a clear typeface such as Arial or Helvetica, minimum point size of 12; it is easy to find your way around; easy to understand and uses clear type with a sharp contrast (use dark colours for the text); it does not have text over images and is not set entirely in upper-case.

Accessible print has all the information needed — venue, times, directions, telephone numbers, prices and access information with icons.

Print is easier to read if text is aligned to the left, not justified and printed on matt rather than glossy paper.

Large print is usually a minimum of 16 points. Offer other large print sizes on request. Use a plain type face which does not get too light when it is enlarged and print black on white. Large print is relatively easy to produce — change the point size on your computer. Produce large print on A4 paper, not A3.

Braille is used by a small percentage of blind people. Provide a disk for the brailist to save time when they convert the document into Braille. Ask the brailist to note on the front which document it is otherwise the staff will not know if they are handing someone a menu or a cast list!

Recording information on tape or audio CD can be done in-house by anyone who has a clear and pleasant speaking voice (no mumbling or mangling of words). The recorded information will need editing. Check through information first to ensure that it will translate onto tape or CD. Use sound effects or music to indicate different 'chapters' of information; CDs are easier in this respect as the information can be divided up on a number of tracks, and CDs are now cheap to reproduce. If there is more time and money available these tapes or CDs can be developed into a magazine style format with interviews, excerpts from shows, music and a variety of voices. Audio information can be useful for people with learning difficulties as well as visually impaired listeners. Quality control is of utmost importance.

Picture-text can be helpful for people with learning difficulties or who are not fluent in English. The Change Picture Bank has been designed for people with learning disabilities. You can use the pictures to help make your information easier to understand. You can copy the pictures and stick them to your information or you can download the pictures from the cd-rom (see [Useful contacts](#)).

If a visually impaired person has a computer they may prefer the information on disk or cd-rom. In addition information can be emailed or downloaded. Check that the information will be clear if read by a screen-reader which reads across the page. Technology can also be used in outreach situations and can enable people to access services in a virtual way if they are not able to physically access your buildings.

If you are preparing print for braille or screen-readers, create information in unformatted text versions using single spacing between the lines, keep punctuation to a minimum, avoid abbreviations and symbols, tabs and indents.
(see also [Accessible websites](#)).

Building an accessible website

Your website offers the opportunity to open up access to information and to interact with your customers. It already forms part of your service provision and as such is covered by the DDA.

The World Wide Web Consortium (WC3) provides clear and helpful guidelines through the Web Accessibility Initiative. Also see *A practical guide to developing and managing websites* by Roger Tomlinson and Vicki Allpress (see [Useful contacts](#)).

Clear branding, obvious consistent navigation, tonal contrast, defined links and legible text are all basic essentials.

[Here are a few basic pointers:](#)

- **Be clear, concise and consistent**

Avoid complicated sentence structures and lengthy paragraphs. Create meaningful section titles so readers can see what they're getting from a brief scan of your page. Navigation should be consistently placed and used on every page of your site. Please be aware that many text-only users rely on key commands and do not use a mouse

- **Use frames with care**

If you use frames, make sure your site is navigable with and without them, and make sure that if a user clicks on a link you have provided to another site that the link takes them to a new window of that site

- **Be bright, be clear, be bold, be big**
Make buttons big and clear. If you use icons make sure they are not obscure and they have a clear written label underneath. Do not use impossibly small font sizes (12 point minimum) and use a clear type face
- **Create usable links**
If your navigation includes a horizontal line of links, place a line break between them (for example: Home | About us). The break helps screen-reading programs understand where one link ends and the next begins. If you include links in your text, link phrases rather than single words. Make sure the highlighted text is descriptive, so users can understand where you're taking them (no more 'Click here' links, please)
- **Do not use complicated background GIFs (graphic interchange format)**
- **Do not use the <TABLE> tag to create multiple columns of text**
- **Create contrast between background, text and links**
The more stark the contrast between your text and your page background, the easier it will be to read
- **ALT-er your perspective**
Use <ALT> tags to tell the story behind your images. A screen reader will translate the <ALT> text to speech. <ALT> should be used for every image on your site, including ASCII art, image maps, logos, buttons graphics, and so on
- **Bad <ALT> text is almost as bad as no <ALT> text**
When you use <ALT>, write descriptions that you would find helpful if you could not see the image. Keep it short but clear. Choose text that describes what the image or icon does or stands for rather than what it looks like (for instance, <alt = 'home button'> will tell a reader more than <alt = 'graphic of a house'>)
- **Use captioning and description when appropriate**
If you plan to include an audio file on your site, include a text-only transcript for hearing-impaired users. Provide captioning and description for video files. If access to any

important item on your site requires hearing or sight, provide a text or audio alternative

- **Use headline tags (<H1>, <H2> and so on) correctly and in order**
These tags help blind users understand the structure of your page
- **Use HTML to structure your pages and style sheets for layout**
The Web Accessibility Initiative's new guidelines separate a page's structure from its presentation (in other words, its meaning from its appearance). This allows designers to increase a page's accessibility without sacrificing the integrity of its design
- **Validate your pages with Bobby**
Bobby is a web-based tool from the Centre for Applied Technology (CAST); it will let you know if there are accessibility errors for visually impaired users in your pages (see [Useful contacts](#)). If you find Bobby's results difficult to interpret, try browsing without graphics*
- **Check your site with multiple browsers**
Try browsing your site with Lynx, a text-only browser, or turn your graphics off. Does your content still make sense?

* To turn off graphical browsing, go to the navigation bar at the top of your browser. If you're using Netscape, go to Edit/Preferences/Advanced, then un-check the 'Automatically load images' checkbox. If you're using Explorer, go to View/Options/General, then uncheck the 'Show pictures' checkbox. For other browsers, check your help menu.

- **Accessible design does not mean designing text-only pages**
Designing so everybody can use your pages only takes a little extra time and understanding
- **Seek feed-back on the accessibility of your site from your users**
Arrange for usability and accessibility tests and encourage users to send in comments

For more information see website section in [Useful contacts](#).

Pricing

There are many arguments around the issues of concessionary tickets for disabled people. It is essential that organisations have a clear policy which is communicated to the staff. Below we have summarised the main areas of debate.

The argument that disabled people should pay full price

Assuming that the service they are being offered is of equal quality, disabled people should not be offered discounts as it belittles and patronises them. It also marks them out as being different from others and therefore does not treat them equally.

If disabled people are unemployed or senior citizens then they can claim these discounts. If they are employed, then they should pay the same prices as anyone else.

How do arts organisations decide if someone is disabled? Should a person who has difficulty getting up the steps get the same generous discount as a full-time wheelchair user or someone with multiple impairments?

Please note that people are no longer registered as disabled and so have no 'proof of status'.

The argument for discounts for disabled people

Two out of three disabled people are unemployed, many as a result of society's prejudices and the inaccessibility of employers' premises. Generally, disabled people have lower disposable incomes than most non-disabled people.

Disabled people often have higher living costs than others owing to extra expenditure on interpreters, personal assistants, taxis and so on.

Disabled people are often obliged to come to a venue with a companion and may pay for that person's ticket themselves as a thank you for coming. From the venue's point of view it is easier on staffing levels if disabled people who need assistance in getting in and out of the building, to the toilets and so on do come with a companion. Learning disabled people and

survivors of the mental health system will appreciate the reassurance of a companion in a noisy or unfamiliar environment and thus may need to buy this person's ticket. Disabled people usually attend with family and friends who may buy full price tickets and who might not come if the venue is not accessible. They also buy ice creams, drinks, programmes, merchandise and so on.

Disabled people have traditionally been excluded from the arts. Discounts can be used as part of a marketing strategy to overcome barriers and as a means of identifying customers on a database for targeting and profiling.

Signage

Signs should denote accessible entrances, manageable routes through buildings or open spaces, accessible lifts and toilets, parking spaces and so on.

Signage is needed:

- to the venue from roads, train and bus stations; lobby the local authority
- from the nearest car park; lobby the local authority
- on the building; this may involve the planning department of the local authority
- around the building; seek input from front of house, marketing and senior management staff and disabled users

The booking office, toilets, bar/cafe, information point, shop, seat locations, galleries, lifts and so on all need signposting as often as necessary.

Remember to:

- use clear easy to read typefaces (such as Helvetica or Arial)
- use good colour contrast
- put signs at a height that is readable
- look carefully at the language you use — use 'adapted' or 'accessible toilet' not 'disabled'; 'Gods' and 'stalls' may be meaningless to some visitors
- use raised/embossed letters
- include Braille signs and talking signs in lifts
- ensure signs are well lit
- do not set text entirely in upper-case
- use large clear print with recognised access symbols alongside. For access symbols see NDAF in [Useful contacts](#)
- as part of your thinking about signage and orientation around the building it is helpful to use different colours for different floors of your building and to reflect the colours in the signage and any floor plans you produce

Language

Language empowers and belittles. Please take the time to get it right.

In addition to the terms which are used to describe disabled people, examine the language used generally within your print/websites/press releases. Ensure it is appropriate for the product and for the target market.

Also examine your copy for examples of 'alien' terms, jargon and convoluted phrasing. People may be put off an event they would enjoy because they do not understand the descriptions or instructions. 'Tickets must be paid for 24 hours before the performance or within three working days of the booking, whichever is the sooner' is a common one. Terms like 'grand circle' and 'stalls', even 'box office' can also sound intimidating without any explanation or diagram. This is one of the reasons why a separate piece of print, an access guide, can be useful, as there is more space for explanation, photographs and diagrams.

Sometimes you will come across the words Deaf people and Disabled people written with capitals. This indicates the politicisation of these communities, their recognition that they share a common history and culture, and that they regard themselves as a collective body, or force for change.

Written and spoken language affect how people feel towards arts organisations. Remember for your front-line staff, a positive equal opportunities and welcoming attitude are just as important as using the right terms. Rather than getting worried about which words to use, a simple 'how can I help you?' question will avoid getting into discussions about the person's impairment.

Following are two lists of currently acceptable and non-acceptable terminology. Terminology does change and there are vogues as with everything, but we believe the lists are useful.

The terms we list are understandable when you approach disability from the social model view (see [Social model](#)).

More acceptable terminology

Non-acceptable terminology

Disabled person/people

Handicapped, invalid

Non-disabled person/people

Able-bodied, normal

Blind person/people

The blind

Visually impaired person

Partially sighted person

Mobility impaired person

Spastic, cripple

Deaf person/people

The deaf

Hearing impaired person/
person who is hard of hearing

Deaf without speech

Deaf and dumb

Speech impaired/person with
a speech impairment or
differing speech pattern

Speech impediment

Wheelchair user

Wheelchair bound/confined

Person of restricted growth/
short person

Dwarf

Mental health survivor/someone
with mental health issues/
mental health service userDerogatory terms such as
lunatic, schizo and so onPerson with learning disabilities
or learning difficulties or
learning disabled personDerogatory terms such as
idiot, moron, backward,
retarded, mongol and so onPerson with cerebral palsy,
muscular dystrophy and so onPerson suffering from,
afflicted with cerebral palsy
and so on

Companion or personal assistant

Preferable to carer

Access requirements

Preferable to special needs

Customer care

Challenge assumptions and prejudices

Always:

- ask if people have any access requirements
- ask how best to assist
- wait to see if your offer of help is accepted
- treat everyone with equal respect
- be sensitive and diplomatic
- communicate directly with a disabled person, not their companion, personal assistant or interpreter
- greet the person, not the dog
- establish eye contact but do not stare
- introduce yourself to a blind or visually impaired person
- speak clearly without over emphasising

Use:

- your common sense
- your initiative – be creative – if the booking office counter is too high, then come round the other side; if someone might struggle with a tray, then offer to carry it; if you are having difficulty understanding, use a notepad

Never:

- make assumptions about people's requirements
- lean on someone's wheelchair
- finish sentences for people
- pretend to understand if you have not
- cover your mouth with your hand when speaking or turn away
- walk away from a blind or visually impaired person without telling them you are going
- assume that as someone is blind or visually impaired then they cannot see you or they would not want to come to a gallery
- assume that a deaf person will not be able to lip-read what you are saying
- assume that someone who slurs their words is drunk
- ask what has happened to, or what is wrong with you?

Issues for front of house and box office staff

First impressions and customer care

As well as providing the crucial first impression to visitors, either face to face or over the telephone, you have a role as information gatherers — taking people's contact details for future marketing; tracking how customers heard about events; compiling attendance records and information on access requirements and keeping records of comments on visits and experiences.

Your role is also to provide accurate and up to date information. You need to be knowledgeable about services on offer, for example what the difference is between an audio described performance and a BSL interpreted performance, where the best seats are if you have a stiff leg, if guide dogs can be looked after, times of pre-show introductions, touch tours and so on.

Issues for managers

How do you ensure that your box office and front of house staff create the best impression for all your customers? Ensure that at the very least everybody reads [Section one](#) of this guide, understands the guidelines on page 61 and uses non-offensive language.

Ensure that there is always someone in your foyer/reception area to greet people and make them welcome, to help them with the door if they are carrying heavy shopping, or pushing a pram, or struggling in any way.

Get an induction loop for your reception desk and make sure it is advertised.

Check the following:

- do you have anyone who can use BSL or Sign Supported English even to a small degree? (Colleges usually offer courses)
- do you have a Minicom or textphone for deaf callers or a mobile number which can receive SMS messages?
- are your staff familiar with Typetalk?
- do your staff check email regularly?

- do you have staff trained in guiding? Offer an elbow, never push or pull someone along (Contact local disability organisations, or Guide Dogs for the Blind)
- if your venue is dimly lit, perhaps a music venue, training staff to guide people is especially helpful
- are your staff trained in disability equality and deaf awareness? How recently? (Contact local disability organisations)
- do your staff know where to find your alternative formats documents?
- how far does your service go? Will staff take people to the toilet, the cafe or bar, outside for a cigarette and so on? (see [Questions, questions, questions](#))
- make sure staff do not pet guide dogs. When they have their harness on this means they are working
- do not let staff feed guide dogs, they are often on a strict diet
- keep a record of how many customers use particular access services and any comments from them

Emergencies

Have a clear evacuation and emergency procedure. Train staff to sign enough to tell people to get out and why. Staff need training to know the waiting places for wheelchair users in an evacuation and if the lifts can be used. Check that there is two-way communication between the refuge and evacuating authority. Allocate staff to members of the audience who have particular access requirements in the event of an evacuation.

In non-regular venues, such as places used for site specific works, staff may not be familiar with the site. Make doubly sure that all staff and artists are briefed fully about evacuation and emergency procedures, and that clear emergency exit signage is provided.

Disruptions

It is a good idea to formulate a disruptions policy which is communicated to all staff and which distinguishes between people who make a noise because of their impairments and those who are being rowdy. Clarify who should decide if a customer is distracting others; two people may be better able to assess the situation than one. Decide in advance what the procedure should be, for example who should go to talk to the disabled person and what responses you might make to any audience members who are complaining about the disturbance.

Managing access services

Audio description, sign language and caption check-list

Copy this check-list for each event and each service required:

Name of event

Date of event

Who is the main point of contact for the describers/
interpreters/captioners? (especially regarding booking seats,
lighting and sound and other technical requirements, getting
hold of scripts, catalogues and so on)

Name

Has the audio describer/signer/captioner been booked
and a contract signed?

Booked

Contract

Has the audio describer/signer/captioner been sent a script?

Date script sent

Has the audio describer/signer/captioner been sent a video,
if relevant?

Date video sent

Has the audio describer/signer/captioner been sent
show/exhibition publicity with dates and times?

Date publicity sent

Has the describer/signer/captioner been sent a programme/
catalogue?

Date programme sent or being collected

Have arrangements been made for the audio describer/signer/captioner to attend the show/exhibition?

Date of visit

Have arrangements been made for the describer to do a dry run? (Not usually necessary for a sign language interpreter or captioner)

Date of dry run

Where will the describer/signer/captioner work from?

What equipment do they need?

Whose responsibility is this?

Have the audio description and touch tour/BSL/captioned performance dates been included on the season print?

Has information about the audio description/BSL/captioned performances been included on your website?

Have the audio description/BSL/captioned performance dates been included on the show print?

Have the audio description/BSL/captioned performance dates been trailed in the previous show's programme?

Has the season print been produced in alternative formats? Which formats? When are they ready? Where are they?

Has a mailing about audio described/BSL/captioned shows gone to your attenders' database?

Date of mailing

Has an email reminder gone to those visually impaired/deaf customers whose email addresses you have?

Date of email

Has a mailing about audio described/BSL/captioned shows gone to specialist databases?

Date of mailing

Has a press release about audio described/BSL/captioned shows gone to selected press?

Date of release

Are there any particular press angles to pursue on the access for this show?

Any details

Is there a telesales campaign to visually impaired audiences?

Date

Has the audio describer/sign language interpreter/captioner got a credit in the programme?

Is the company aware that the show is being described/interpreted/captioned, and what this means?

Are the box office and front of house staff aware that the show is being described/interpreted/captioned and what this means?

Are there enough head-sets for the performance? If not where will the extras come from?

Audio description check-list on the day

How many people are expected for the described performance?

How many dogs are expected?

Are the dogs staying out or going in?

Are the batteries charged?

Has the system been checked?

Have the head-sets been cleaned?

Which channel is the audio description on?

Do all staff know how to operate the head-sets?

Who is responsible for giving out and collecting head-sets?

Do all staff know the basics of guiding?

Are there any Braille or large print programmes available?

Where are they?

Are there enough staff to help with guiding, particularly for the touch-tour?

Details

What time is the touch tour?

Where does the touch-tour depart from?

What time does the introduction to the audio described performance start?

Who will check the customers' headsets at the interval?

Who will ring for taxis if necessary?

Who will keep a record of how many customers actually used the audio description and any comments?

What can I do straightaway with little or no money?

Contacting potential audiences

- Look at what you already do within existing budgets and make it accessible
- Do some research to build up your database of targeted attenders
- Start building an email list of contacts
- Provide synopses in a variety of formats

Formats

- Start producing large print
- Put together an audio brochure
- Check how clear and accessible your print is

Website

- Check how accessible your current site is and what could be done to improve accessibility
Contact <http://bobby.watchfire.com/bobby/html/en/index.jsp>
the check is easy, automatic and free

Pricing

- Revisit your current policies and discuss with your colleagues
- Take the time to train box office staff in the use of concessions

Signage

- Walk around the building as if you did not know it. How easy is it to find your way around? Check through the points in this section and see what improvements could be made

Language

- Photocopy or print out the information on appropriate language (page 59–60) for all staff
- Examine the language used in print, press releases and on your website
- Develop a Plain English policy

Customer Care

- Paint white or yellow lines across the front of your steps (Check with your licensing authority)

Section six

Monitoring

Monitoring and research

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Monitoring and research

Always be clear why you are collecting data, who is going to analyse it and what you are going to do with the results. Also inform your visitors why you are asking them questions and what you plan to do with the responses.

Monitoring forms an essential part of any disability action plan. Monitoring the services, facilities and participatory activities we provide and the take up and satisfaction levels with these will contribute towards future provision and planning.

What do we want to monitor?

- Numbers of disabled people as audiences, participants, consultation groups or individuals, partners, employees, contract staff, volunteers, board members
- How visitors heard about our services
- How satisfied they have been with their visits

Why monitor?

- To produce statistics (to know who we reach)
- To check practices and procedures and to identify barriers
- To be able to respond to requests for access improvements (see also [Self audit](#) and [Consultation](#))

Recording visitor numbers:

- Recording visitor numbers of disabled people will tell you if you are reaching more members of this community, and if your marketing strategies are working
- It will also help in planning future facilities and accessible events and enable you to tailor services to your attenders. It may help in funding arguments
- If you do not keep a record then you simply will not know if anyone from the disabled communities is using your services

How do you record visitor numbers?

- 'Counting' disabled people is not simple. The largest disabled communities are those with hidden impairments such as survivors of the mental health system and hearing impairments. Asking people if they are disabled is complex. Not all people who might be described as disabled people would choose to identify with the term. Some who are covered by the DDA do not see themselves as disabled people. Some people may be happier to respond if surveys are anonymous or confidential
- If you offer bookable events and you need to know of wheelchair user numbers in advance then you can track these. (Ensure you are registered with the Data Protection Agency, see [Useful contacts](#))
- If you offer discounts to disabled people then you can monitor these, although some people do not wish to claim a discount
- If you offer audio described events you can monitor the numbers through head-sets or observation
- It is not considered acceptable to ask people if they have any impairments but you could ask if they consider themselves to be a disabled person. It is appropriate to ask people if they have any access requirements and this can be monitored

Monitoring your marketing and your customers' satisfaction with the service:

- Monitoring satisfaction with your staff and services provides information on what has appealed/entertained and what has not, on what works and what does not, and on the effectiveness of services which staff do not necessarily monitor — for example sign language interpretation and audio description. It gives you a benchmark to move forward from and provides you with opportunities for improvement
- Recording how people found out about your services and monitoring their response to your marketing will indicate the best means of reaching this audience and give you feedback on how accessible your marketing is

- Front of house and box office staff are well placed to receive and pass on comments. Ensure that there is a system in place to record these and act upon them. A comments book which is regularly checked is one way of doing this and these comments can then be fed into departmental meetings. However, if people keep making the same comments, especially about defective equipment (for example induction loops) and nothing is done about them, they are certain to feel that you do not value their custom

Other ways of monitoring your services include surveys, questionnaires and focus groups:

- Self-completion questionnaires will attract a certain section of the audience to respond. They are not accessible for those with a visual impairment and, depending on the language used, may be off-putting to BSL users. Look at creating questionnaires in accessible formats (see [Formats](#)) for people with learning difficulties or people whose first language is not English. Be creative — use dictaphones or video cameras and graffiti walls for people to record their impressions and opinions
- Face to face surveys can be done in the foyer or bar after events, but often this is not the best time to catch people and these are not accessible for BSL users unless the person asking the questions can also sign. Ensure that permission is sought for the interviews prior to the performance
- Telephone surveys if handled courteously can elicit useful information, but would not be appropriate for BSL users
- Surveys by email may work well but can only be used by those who have computer access
- Focus groups, perhaps one per season, or two per year, give people the opportunity to express their opinions about the services they have received and about wider issues, such as programming and marketing. It may not be appropriate to hold one focus group which covers all access areas — discussions on audio description may be boring for sign language users for example. Listen to a range of views as one disabled person's view may not be shared by

everyone in the community. Be clear what your aims and objectives for the session are; be honest about what you can achieve. If there is no way that the induction loop is going to be replaced for another two years, then explain this to your users; do not raise false hopes. It is good practice to pay travelling expenses and offer free tickets or other rewards

- Research with non-arts-attenders from the disabled community will give you some clues as to why people do not come and what might encourage them to come; it will also give you information about how your venue is perceived. This is best done in a focus group or discussion situation with experienced facilitators

Section seven

Finance

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Funding

Funding for access should be considered very early in the planning stage. Providing access to your venue and service is a duty and is anticipatory, which means that you should not wait until someone asks for it. This duty extends to your non-core activities too, so it covers education and outreach. Remember, if people are not able to access buildings and services in the usual way then you need to provide alternative arrangements or reasonable adjustments and these should be budgeted as core costs.

There are organisations and trusts you can apply to for particular projects but many of these have long lead-in times. Funding organisations will not receive last minute requests for help with access support favourably.

Much can be done on a shoestring:

- cast lists and synopses printed out in a large font
- more accessible colour schemes when re-painting
- developing an email newsletter
- having a notebook available at the cafe
- white strips on the edges of steps (check with your licensing authority)

Other visitors' needs may require structural changes to make the venue accessible.

Touring companies and producers need to include discussions about access from their first planning meetings with the venues they tour to and be clear about who is going to fund which aspect of access and who is applying for what. It may be more effective for a touring company to apply for funds for a sign language interpreter for instance than for the venue, but the venue would be expected to ensure wheelchair access.

There are many places to try for support for your improvements; these include:

- trusts and foundations
- rotary clubs
- legacies
- charities

- individual giving, including asking individuals to give under the Gift Aid scheme
- local authorities
- business sponsorship and donations
- friends groups

However, access should be paid for from your organisation's core budgets and should have been included in your budgets since 1999.

For further advice and support please contact your regional Arts Council England office, the access officer from your local authority, and your local Council for Voluntary Service which may have a funding advisor (see [Useful contacts](#))

Budgeting

There needs to be an allocation for meeting access requirements in any budget heading.

Be clear in your planning about when you are going to achieve any changes and what sources of income you are going to be able to draw on.

A good starting point is to go through the access audit sheets ([Self-audit](#), section two) and compile the budget implications from the columns there. If your organisation has a full access audit carried out by access consultants then this too will give indications of the areas of major and less significant necessary expenditures.

Physical premises

The physical features of the building will cover a whole range of areas, from signage, to lighting, to floor surfaces, to lifts and structural changes. The physical features should include those in staff areas as well as any public areas. Your funding body may be looking for evidence of how you have made your building and services more accessible.

Equipment

You will need a budget for equipment such as textphones, infra-red systems, induction loops, captioning equipment, screen readers, an in-house wheelchair and so on. In addition to the costs of purchasing the equipment a budget is needed for maintenance, repair and renewal costs.

Access services

The costs of providing services such as sign language interpretation, captioning and audio description need to be included in the planning for the event.

Marketing

You should take a broader look at all your publicity materials to see whether they could be made accessible within the existing budget that you have available. Your marketing budget should include an access allocation so that money is available for a variety of formats. You may also want to buy into specialist databases or advertise in disability media.

Audience development

If you decide to set up focus groups with existing or potential disabled audiences, you will need to have a budget for covering out of pocket expenses and refreshments. Initiatives such as arts ambassadors schemes will also need to be properly funded.

Outreach

Your education and outreach budgets should also allow for any additional expenditure that may be incurred for any access requirements that disabled participants may have.

Monitoring and evaluation

You may need to be accountable to funders and other bodies and provide information about the number of disabled people using your services. Ensure that you have included a budget to evaluate numbers in this way.

You may wish to consider working with a market research consultant or your local marketing agency to survey your audiences. Activities such as printing questionnaires, hiring facilitators to lead focus groups, or getting a specialist agency to analyse your results will all incur costs.

Employment

As an employer you have certain obligations as identified in section one. Work towards becoming a good equal opportunities employer by having a continuous rolling programme of access improvements and include disability equality training for all new employees and board members.

Training

Your organisation should make a commitment to offer disability equality training to all staff on a regular basis. It will be especially important to keep up the regular provision of training for departments where staff turnover is high, such as box office, front of house and bar staff, as it is usually these staff members that have the most contact with your customers.

Consultation

If you are asking disabled people to give their feedback on their experiences at your venue or advice on programming or arts activity, then you should recompense them for their time and out of pocket expenses. You will also incur professional fees if you use an access consultant.

Section eight

Frequently asked questions

Questions, questions, questions

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Questions, questions, questions

These are some of the questions that people might ask in relation to access to your building or to your work.

Accessing the venue...

How do I book?

If you have a separate booking number for disabled people to use, then this line should be open the same hours as your other booking office. Is your box office counter a convenient height for wheelchair users?

How will I find you?

Do you provide easy to follow directions, or a clear map with diagrams, local references and information about bus/train routes? How close is your nearest drop-off point? Be honest in advising people how long it will take to walk from bus stops and so on and give them the distance in metres with information about whether this is uphill or downhill. Including a photograph of your building on your publicity will help people to recognise it when they get near. Including audio directions on your website is useful for visually impaired people, particularly if you include non-visual information, for example, 'pass the chip shop on your left' or 'walk 20 steps down this busy street'. Make sure your building is well lit at night; cut back overhanging shrubs or bushes and keep dustbins tidy.

Where will I park?

Visitors need to know how far away the nearest parking is, how much it will cost and whether there is level access from there to your venue. They need to know if people with 'orange' or 'blue' badges need to pay the standard parking fees. If parking is not easy then a drop-off point needs to be indicated and your staff need to watch out for people who are dropped off while the driver then goes to park the car. Visitors will also need to know about dropped kerbs.

Are there steps?

How many, how steep? Are they edged in white? Do they have a tactile edge? Is there a railing? Is it on both sides of the steps?

Do you have a ramp?

Is it always there, or only on request? Is it at the front of the building or round the back somewhere? Does it have a non-slip surface? Is it level with the door entrance at the top, with a flat platform? Is there a bell to ring at a convenient height at the top? Does it have a steep gradient? Have you had it checked out by a wheelchair user?

What are the doors like?

Which way do they open, how wide are they? (minimum size 900mm for single doors, 750mm wide each leaf for double doors) Can a wheelchair user open them independently? Are they made of glass? Is it clear where the doors are if the front of the building is also made of glass? Do you have strips across the glass to prevent people walking into it?

What is the floor surface like?

Does the floor surface give any indication of where you are in the building? Is it easy to propel a wheelchair along the surface? What is the colour contrast like?

Do you have an accessible toilet?

An accessible (do not use 'disabled') toilet is one in which the user has room to manoeuvre their wheelchair. The height and angle of the washbasin are also an issue. Do not allow the accessible toilet to become a storage room. Other disabled people may prefer to use the accessible toilet too. Is there an alarm system in the toilet if someone needs to call for help? What would happen if someone pressed it? Does the toilet have a Radar lock and if so who has the key? Does it have a mirror? (*Adapt guide* and Arts Council England publication *Disability access: a good practice guide for the arts* have further information on accessible toilets. See [Useful contacts](#)).

Do you have a telephone I could use?

Check that the height of the telephone is convenient for wheelchair users and that it is fitted with an inductive coupler for people with hearing impairments.

Do you have an accessible bar/cafe?

Can customers get in without negotiating steps? Does it have a low level counter? Are there menus in Braille or large print? Have your staff had disability equality training? Do you

provide straws for use by people who have difficulty holding cups? Does the cafe have a loop system?

Have your staff had disability equality training?

This training is provided by a recognised trainer or organisation who presents the social model of disability. The training ensures that the staff understand their legal obligations and how they can improve access for disabled visitors. Staff who have had disability equality training are likely to offer the best sort of welcome and service — helpful and informative without being patronising.

Have your staff had deaf awareness training?

This training is carried out by a deaf or hearing impaired person who will make staff aware of how to offer the best service to deaf and hearing impaired customers.

Do you have a wheelchair I can borrow?

For some people who have difficulty walking, the opportunity to borrow a wheelchair whilst they visit your venue may make all the difference as to whether or not they come. This is particularly so in a large gallery or a heritage centre. If you have a wheelchair for borrowing ensure that it is checked and maintained regularly. It is also good practice to have a smaller wheelchair for disabled children to borrow.

Do you have a lift?

Is your lift accessible for wheelchair users? Is it a speaking lift and/or does it have Braille buttons? How quickly is it mended when it stops working?

Do you have any chairs we can sit on whilst we are looking at the exhibition/waiting in the foyer for the performance to start?

Seats are essential for everyone who needs to sit down for a few minutes!

Does anyone use sign language?

Front of house and catering/bar staff should be taught the basics and at the very least have a notepad and pencil available. It is a good idea to have a BSL user to meet and greet people on sign language interpreted show nights.

How much notice do you need for any of your additional access services?

Some venues ask visitors for advance notice to provide additional services, such as a guide on a gallery visit. Give clear directions on publicity material as to whether services are always available or only on request, and how much notice is needed to arrange these.

Do you have a Minicom/textphone?

A Minicom will enable you to receive calls from deaf people. Make sure staff know how to switch it on and use it!

Accessing the art...

Do you have wheelchair access in the venue?

Wheelchairs are not all the same size so check that any spaces you have, or you can provide, are actually large enough. Is there any way the number of wheelchair spaces can be increased? Be clear what the access route is for wheelchair users, if they have to go round the back of the building then you are not providing the same access as for non wheelchair-users. What are your venue's rules about whether or not wheelchair users need to be accompanied? When were they drawn up? Is it time to revisit them? Are there enough staff to provide any help for people getting into and out of the gallery/theatre? If the venue is accessible for wheelchair users then ensure that there is an accessible toilet too. If the bar or cafe is not accessible then staff will need to offer an alternative service of bringing customers food and drinks.

Where are the wheelchair spaces?

Where will any friends/companions of the wheelchair user sit? Most wheelchair users will not attend if they have to sit separately from their companion(s). This is offering a less favourable service so it may be against the law under the Disability Discrimination Act. Some wheelchair users have visual impairments so will prefer to sit near the front. A choice of wheelchair spaces should be offered.

Can wheelchair users transfer if they prefer?

Some people arrive in wheelchairs but would prefer to transfer to another seat once they get there. Moveable armrests help here. A seat on the end of a row is easier to transfer into than

one in the middle in a narrow row. If you remove the wheelchair make sure that all staff know the answers to the following questions: Who will take the wheelchair away and bring it back? Where will it be stored? Who has responsibility for getting a wheelchair to that person in the event of an emergency?

Do you have a cushion I could borrow?

Have a range of booster cushions, seat wedges and lumbar support rolls for use by children, short people and anyone who is getting back ache! Booster cushions are not an alternative to relocating the viewing platform for disabled people.

Do you provide audio described performances/events?

Audio description is a means of increasing access to the arts for blind and visually impaired people. A trained describer will give a description of the visual elements of the exhibition or presentation. In the theatre this is usually preceded by a touch tour of the set and costumes, then by an introduction which gives information about set, costumes, characters and conventions. The describer will then weave their description around the dialogue and songs of the play, or in the cinema, of the film. In the visual arts a describer may accompany a curator who is giving a talk about particular exhibits, filling in on the visual aspects, or they may lead a tour given over to description of the art involved. Alternatively they may record this description onto an audio guide.

In the theatre the describer needs access to the show to prepare for the description and a video too. They need to describe from a good vantage point or CCTV. They need to be able to hear the show and have control over the microphone which relays their description. Audio description usually works through an infra-red system or a radio system and the customers need to have head-sets to receive the description. These need to be checked regularly.

In some venues it is the education/outreach/interpretation staff who select the events to be described and the describer, in others it is the responsibility of the marketing department.

Audio description is available in the cinema through infra-red

transmission too. An audio described sound-track is recorded and played in synchronisation with the film.

Audio described events should be planned and advertised well in advance.

Do you do touch/handling tours?

Touch tours are often offered by theatres prior to an audio described performance. They involve taking people onto the stage and letting them discover the sets and sometimes costumes and actors close-hand. They are usually led by the describer with the assistance of front of house and/or backstage staff.

Touch/tactile/handling tours are offered by galleries and museums to allow visitors to get a hands-on experience of particular pieces of art or objects in a collection. The works of art are selected carefully and permission sought from the artist if necessary. The tours can be led by an audio describer or a curator and need to include a description of the works being examined and intelligent careful guiding of the visitors' hands.

For these tours to work successfully they need the cooperation of and input from all departments — technical, marketing and front of house.

Issues of health and safety need to be considered — sharp and delicate objects do need careful handling. Watch out for people falling off the stage, tripping over things and so on. Please note that the responsibility for the health and safety of the visitors rests with the venue and not the describer.

Check the following:

- do people need to wear gloves — if so who provides these and where and when?
- how many people can you realistically cope with?
- how many objects can you offer?
- touch tours take time — do not rush your visitors
- start with the whole picture then focus in on the detail
- do not force people's hands, let them discover for themselves while you guide and supervise
- know your subject, or have people around who do

Do you provide audio guides?

Tapes and CDs are useful for people with visual impairments and for people who have difficulty reading. These can provide an introduction to your venue with access information; they can work as a marketing tool, and they can be used as alternatives to printed catalogues, hand-outs and programmes. Audio guides in galleries and museums are of interest to sighted and non-sighted visitors and can feature many different voices and interviews, rather like a radio programme. They can be relatively simply produced in-house (as long as professional quality is ensured) or undertaken by professional describers, or companies such as Accoustiguide (see [Useful contacts](#)). Check whether the equipment used by visitors to listen to the guides is user-friendly and accessible to people with a visual impairment and that the actual content includes a description of what is seen. Also ensure that you have a clear policy on whose responsibility it is to maintain and clean equipment and on whether or not to charge a deposit. If headphones are fixed to the wall or a listening post ensure they can be reached by wheelchair users and children who are wheelchair users.

How do I know the equipment will work?

Maintenance and testing are major issues. Responsibility for checking and maintaining equipment for access services needs to be allocated and a budget set aside for this (see [Finance](#)). If several venues need to buy captioning/audio description equipment they could club together. Be sure a clear record is kept of where the equipment is, when and who used it last and who is responsible for checking and maintaining it.

What other facilities do you have for visually impaired visitors to your gallery/museum?

In addition to audio-described tours, audio guides and Braille/disk/large print information, access to the visual arts can be increased by providing tactile interpretive panels (often made from the same materials as the works of art which can not be touched), thermoforms (like photocopies with raised areas which indicate blocks of colour), models of the works and other handling materials relating to works of art on display. Using a point size of 14 plus on labels helps a large percentage of visitors to read the text. When hanging glazed pictures check whether the angle of light is going to produce glare for

wheelchair users and visually impaired visitors. Provide screen-readers in any study rooms where computers are used and have magnifiers and extra lights available.

Do you provide captioned performances?

Captioned performances are a relatively new arrival on the access scene. They increase access for people who are hearing impaired by relaying what the actors/presenters are saying onto a caption box using LED, a moving neon light signal. The captioners input the script beforehand and scroll it up on screen as the words are spoken. In most cases the caption company provides the equipment used to relay the signal to the screens, although some venues have now purchased their own equipment. Technological developments have also affected captioning in the cinema with it becoming increasingly simple to run sub-titles for films.

Do you provide palantype?

Palantype uses the same sort of technology that is used for captioned performances but is typed in live and is used for conferences and discussion groups.

Do you provide sign language interpreted performances/talks?

Interpreters translate the spoken word into British Sign Language. They may be positioned to the side of the stage or on a raised platform on an upper level or integrated into the performance. They need sufficient light for the deaf audience to be able to see their bodies, arms, hands and faces. In some cases a producing company will tour with an interpreter. In other cases it is the venue education/outreach staff who select the events to be interpreted or captioned and the interpreter/captioner, or it is the responsibility of the marketing department, front of house or box office. Signed Performances In Theatre (SPIT) recommend that sign language interpreters are booked three to four months in advance of the event.

Do you have an induction loop/infra-red system?

An induction loop is a means of providing amplification for people with hearing impairments who usually wear hearing aids. The hearing aids are set to the T setting to pick up the sound signal. The hearing aid users will know this! The sound travels along a metal loop to reach the listener. Other listeners

can pick up the signal by wearing induction loop head-sets. Infra-red systems are also available for people with hearing impairments. The infra-red signal is beamed from a number of black boxes (radiators) to the listeners who wear head-sets. If there is more than one channel on the head-sets they can also be used for audio description. A portable induction loop can be used in other parts of the building, for example, for use in a workshop or taken out with your outreach work. Get your system regularly checked by users and make sure staff know the best places to seat customers for the system to work.

Do you provide synopses?

Synopses can help break down intellectual barriers for people who are unfamiliar with your product. Provide clear, accessible information in easy to read language. Also provide picture-text (see [Accessible print](#)).

Section nine

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Glossary

Access audit

An examination of the current provision of all services and facilities which affect access for attenders. The audit is presented in written form to the client highlighting areas which need addressing.

Advisory group

A group of people with specialist knowledge who meet regularly to advise on policies, programming, marketing, practices and information.

Arts and disabled people

As distinct from Disability Arts (see below) this can be art produced by disabled people but is not linked directly to their own unique culture or identity as a disabled person.

Assistance dogs

Guide dogs are used by blind and visually impaired people to help them find their way around. Hearing dogs are used by hearing impaired and deaf people to alert them to sounds.

Audio description

A means of increasing access for blind or visually impaired people. A trained describer provides a live description of the event or work of art face to face, or through head-sets, or via a recorded description.

Box office

The place where people buy their tickets for an arts event, sometimes called the booking office or the ticket office.

British Sign Language (BSL)

A language used by deaf people. A sign language interpreter interprets what is being said at the same time, or just after the speaker has spoken.

Captioning

Used by people who are hearing impaired, the captions (which have been prepared in advance) appear on a small screen at the same time as the words are spoken.

Data capture

Keeping the details of your attenders, usually on a computer. The Data Protection Act states that you must have your customers' permission to keep that information and for you to mail them in the future. You must not pass this information on to anyone else without their permission.

Deaf awareness training

This training is carried out by a deaf or hearing impaired person who will make staff aware of how to offer the best service to deaf and hearing impaired customers.

Disability Arts

Any artistic expression shaped by the experiences and culture of a disabled person or group of disabled people. Disability Arts is part of Disability Culture which has developed over the last 30 years along with the struggle for rights and equality. Very strong and culturally diverse, Disability Art is found predominantly in Britain, the USA, Australia and many European countries.

Disability awareness training

A training opportunity which increases awareness about the impairments of disabled people. Awareness training is usually based on raising understanding through simulation exercises. Disability groups feel strongly that this training is not the best approach to dealing with issues which are in the main, societal barriers.

Disability equality (or action) training

Provided by a disabled trainer on the issues depicted by the social model of disability. Please note that disability equality training should always be delivered by a disabled person.

Focus group

A representative group of users usually called together on a one-off basis to discuss a particular issue. If the issue regards access, they may be referred to as an access group.

Formats

The way in which information is provided, such as print, disk, tape and so on.

Front of house

The area of a venue which is open to the public. Front of house staff are the people who work in those areas.

Induction loop

Used by hearing impaired people to enhance the sound they receive. It can either be used in conjunction with the customer's own hearing aid or with a theatre's own equipment – a head-set which is like a small pair of headphones, or a 'necklace', a piece of equipment to pick up the sound which is worn around the neck.

Infra-red system

A means of communicating a sound signal to a hearing impaired listener. It is transmitted like a beam of light and needs a head-set to be picked up by the listener.

Lip speaker

Translates what is being said into 'lip speak', a recognised pattern of lip shapes, for hearing impaired and deaf people.

Minicom (or textphone)

A type of telephone into which the person telephoning and the person receiving the phone call type messages. Minicom is the brand name of one of these types of telephone – please note that it is not the same as a mobile text telephone and cannot receive text messages from mobiles. It is used by deaf people and people with hearing impairments.

Outreach

A programme of work which provides educational opportunities for the people taking part. Often outreach programmes take place out of the arts venue.

Palantype

Palantype is used by people who are deaf or with hearing impairments, usually in a conference or seminar situation. The words being spoken are typed into a computer by the Palantypist and projected onto a screen.

Peripheral vision

A person with peripheral vision has some side vision but no central vision.

Personal assistant

A paid support worker who assists with toileting, eating, lifting and so on.

Plain English

Plain English is language that the intended audience can understand and act upon from a single reading (see [Useful contacts](#) for more information).

Refuge space

A designated place of safety for wheelchair users and mobility impaired people to wait to be evacuated in the event of an emergency.

Screen reader

A piece of equipment used by visually impaired people which speaks the text on a computer screen.

Social model

A definition and analysis of disability initiated by the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation in the 1970s and later developed by Vic Finkelstein and Mike Oliver. A crucial philosophy that underpins and informs the direction of the disability movement in Britain and adopted by Disabled Peoples' International. The social model recognises that disabled people are only prevented from playing a full role in society by the barriers created by that society.

SMS text

Text messaging via mobile phones.

Synopsis

A short summary of your event with details about the story, the characters and the style.

Target market

The people you are trying to attract to your event. Target groups are usually broken down in some way – your categories may be children, or senior citizens, or deaf people and so on.

Thermoform

A raised image used by blind and visually impaired people. Heavy black lines become a raised line on the thermoform

giving an idea of the shape of the image. Thermoforms are produced by machines a little like photocopiers. For more information contact Henshaws or the Visual Impairment section at your local library.

Touch/tactile tours

An opportunity for audience members/visitors to have a close examination of works of art or theatre sets and costumes.

Tunnel vision

A person with tunnel vision has only central sight. It is as if they were looking down a small tube.

Typetalk

Typetalk is the UK's National Telephone Relay Service run by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People and funded by British Telecom. The Typetalk operator reads the text from a textphone user and relays the conversation to the voice user and vice versa. This service may be used by deaf people and people with speech or hearing impairments. For details and to register, dial freefone 0800 7311888 or visit www.rnid-typetalk.org.uk

Acronyms used in this publication

BSL – British Sign Language

CVS – Council for Voluntary Services

CCTV – Close circuit television

DDA – Disability Discrimination Act

DRC – Disability Rights Commission

FACT – The Foundation for Art and Creative Technology

NDAF – The National Disability Arts Forum

RNIB – The Royal National Institute of the Blind

RNID – Royal National Institute for Deaf People

SPIT – Signed Performance in Theatre

TEAM – The Entertainment and Arts Marketers (Merseyside) Ltd

Useful contacts and further information

Key National organisations

Arts Council England

14 Great Peter Street

London SW1P 3NQ

Phone: 0845 300 6200

Fax: 020 7973 6590

Textphone: 020 7973 6564

www.artscouncil.org.uk

For details of your regional office please ring the national number or visit the website

Artsline

54 Chalton Street

London NW1 1HS

Phone: 020 7388 2227

Fax: 020 7383 2653

Minicom: 020 7388 2227

www.artsline.org.uk

We are the primary provider of disability access information services to the arts, leisure and entertainment. Our aim is to promote equal access and participation for all disabled people within society

Attitude is Everything

Phone: 020 7388 2227

www.attitude-is-everything.co.uk

Attitude is Everything improves disabled people's access to live music by implementing a Charter of Best Practice in grassroots music venues, clubs, festivals and tours across the UK

British Council of Disabled People

Freepost BCODP

Litchurch Plaza

Litchurch Lane

Derby DE24 8AA

Phone: 01332 295551

www.bcodp.org.uk

The British Council of Disabled People is the UK's national organisation of the worldwide Disabled People's Movement. We are run entirely by disabled people of all impairments and

therefore we accurately represent the interests of disabled people

British Deaf Association

1-3 Worship Street

London EC2A 2AB

Phone: 01925 652520

Textphone: 01925 652629

Videophone: 01925 630169

www.bda.org.uk

The BDA is the UK's largest national organisation run by deaf people, for deaf people. We represent the deaf community, a community united by shared experiences, history and, above all, by a common language: British Sign Language

Disability Rights Commission

DRC Helpline

Freepost MID 02164

Stratford Upon Avon CV37 9BR

Phone: 08457 622633

Textphone: 08457 622644

www.drc-gb.org

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is an independent body established in April 2000 by Act of Parliament to stop discrimination and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. We have set ourselves the goal of 'a society where all disabled people can participate fully as equal citizens'

Engage

108 Old Brompton Road

London SW7 3RA

Phone: 020 7244 0110

Fax: 020 7373 7223

www.engage.org

Email: info@engage.org

Engage is a leading international association for gallery educators, artist educators and other arts and education professionals

Museums and Galleries Disability Association (MAGDA)

Abigail Thomas

Hove Museum & Art Gallery

19 New Church Road

Hove

East Sussex BN3 4AB

Phone: 01273 292828

www.magda.org.uk

Museums and Galleries Disability Association is dedicated to improving access to UK museums and galleries for people with disabilities, disseminating current best practice, and providing a forum for museum and gallery professionals to discuss areas of interest

Mencap

123 Golden Lane

London EC1Y 0RT

Phone: 020 7454 0454

Fax: 020 7696 5540

www.mencap.org.uk

We work with people with a learning disability, and their families and carers. We provide services for things like education, housing, jobs and leisure time

Mind

Freepost WD 2336

London E15 4BR

Phone: 08457 660163

www.mind.org.uk

Mind is the leading mental health charity in England and Wales. We work to create a better life for everyone with experience of mental distress. In all our work we promote our values: autonomy, equality, knowledge, participation and respect

National Disability Arts Forum (NDAF)

Mea House

Ellison Place

Newcastle-Upon-Tyne NE1 8XS

Phone: 0191 261 1628

Textphone: 0191 261 2237

www.ndaf.org

For details of your regional disability arts organisation please ring NDAF or visit the website

People First
Central England People First Limited
PO Box 5200
Northampton NN1 1ZB
Phone: 01604 721 666
Fax: 01604 721 611
www.peoplefirst.org.uk

Email: northants@peoplefirst.org.uk

An organisation of people with learning difficulties speaking up for ourselves! We are run and controlled by people with learning difficulties

Phab Ltd
Summit House
Wandle Road
Croydon CR0 1DF
Phone: 020 8667 9443
Fax: 020 8681 1399
www.phabengland.org.uk

Phab is a national charity dedicated to promoting and encouraging the coming together, on equal terms, of disabled and non-disabled people to achieve an integrated and inclusive society

Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB)
105 Judd Street
London WC1H 9NE
Phone: 020 7388 1266
Fax: 020 7388 2034
www.rnib.org.uk

We are the UK's leading charity offering information, support and advice to over 2 million people with sight problems. Our pioneering work helps anyone with a sight problem

Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID)
19–23 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8SL
Phone: 0808 808 0123
Textphone: 0808 808 9000
www.rnid.org.uk

RNID's vision is of a world where deafness and hearing loss are not barriers to opportunity and fulfilment. We work to be a powerful force for change with government, and public and private sector organisations

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council

(MLA, formerly Re:source)

16 Queen Anne's Gate

London SW1H 9AA

Phone: 020 7273 1444

www.mla.gov.uk

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is the national development agency working for and on behalf of museums, libraries and archives and advising government on policy and priorities for the sector

SANE

1st Floor

Cityside House

40 Adler Street

London E1 1EE

Phone: 08457 7678000

www.sane.org.uk

SANE exists to raise awareness and respect for people with mental illness and their families, improve education and training, provide information and emotional support to those experiencing mental health problems and secure better services

Scope

6 Market Road

London N7 9PW

Phone: 0808 800 3333

www.scope.org.uk

Scope is the disability organisation in England and Wales whose focus is people with cerebral palsy. Our aim is that disabled people achieve equality: a society in which they are as valued and have the same human and civil rights as everyone else

Shape

LVS Resource Centre

356 Holloway Road

London N7 6PA

Phone: 020 7619 6160

Minicom: 020 7619 6161

www.shapearts.org.uk

Shape is a charity opening up access to the arts, enabling greater participation by disabled and older people

Disability arts agencies and organisations

DASh

Disability Arts in Shropshire (DASh)

Pimley Barns

Sundorne Road

Shrewsbury SY4 4SA

Phone: 01743 272625

Fax: 01743 271516

Textphone: 07732 614 592

www.dasharts.org

Disability Arts Development Agency

DADA South

PO Box 606

Maidstone

Kent ME17 4WQ

Phone/Fax: 01622 840101

www.dada-south.org.uk

Equata

22 Lower Town

Sampford Peverell

Devon EX16 7BJ

Phone: 01884 829265

Textphone: 01884 829267

Fax: 01884 829267

www.equata.co.uk

Full Circle Arts

Greenheys Business Centre

10 Pencroft Way

Manchester M15 6JJ

Voice/Minicom: 0161 279 7878

Fax: 0161 279 7879

www.full-circle-arts.co.uk

London Disability Arts Forum (LDAF)

Diorama Arts Centre

34 Osnaburgh Street

London NW1 3ND

Voice: 020 7916 5484

Fax: 020 7916 5396

www.ldaf.org

Northern Disability Arts Forum

MEA House

Ellison Place

Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 8XS

or telephone

Voice: 0191 222 0708

Minicom: 0191 261 2238

www.nordaf.org

North West Disability Arts Forum (NWDAF)

1-27 Bridport Street

Liverpool L3 5QF

Voice: 0151 707 1733

Minicom: 0151 706 0365

Fax: 0151 708 9355

www.nwdaf.co.uk

West Midlands Disability Arts Forum (WMDAF)

116 Greenhouse

Gibb Street

Birmingham B9 4AA

Phone: 0121 224 7881

www.wmdaf.org

Organisations which provide services or information relating to:

Access audits

Centre for Accessible Environments
www.cae.org.uk

National Register of Access Consultants
www.nrac.org.uk

Disability Arts organisations – see NDAF

Accessible design

Centre for Accessible Environments
www.cae.org.uk

BSI
www.bsi-global.com

Disability Rights Commission
www.drc-gb.org

JMU Access Partnership
www.jmuaccess.org.uk

Accessible print

Plain English Campaign
www.plainenglish.co.uk

Mencap
www.mencap.org.uk

RNIB
www.rnib.org.uk

Accessible websites

AbilityNet
www.abilitynet.org.uk

Disability Rights Commission
www.drc-gb.org

eAccess Bulletin
www.e-accessibility.com

Bobby web-check
www.cast.org/bobby

A practical guide to developing and managing websites by
Roger Tomlinson and Vicki Allpress
www.artscouncil.org.uk

RNIB web accessibility team
Email: webaccess@rnib.org.uk
www.rnib.org.uk/digital

WAI webchick
www.w3.org/TR/WAI-WEBCONTENT

Audio description

Audio Description Association
Email: adrienne.pye@hants.gov.uk

The Dog Rose Trust
www.dogrose-trust.org.uk

Fieldsman Trails
Email: colin@adams-consulting.co.uk

Mind's Eye Professional Description Service
Email: Anne.Hornsby@btinternet.com

Vocaleyes
www.vocaleyes.co.uk

Audio guides

Acoustiguide
www.acoustiguide.co.uk

Advanced Thinking Systems
www.advanced-thinking.co.uk

Antenna Audio
www.antennaaudio.com

Audio Visual Consultants
www.avc-edinburgh.co.uk

Black Box AV Ltd
www.blackboxav.co.uk

The Dog Rose Trust
www.dogrose-trust.org.uk

Flexleigh Audio Guides
www.flexleigh.co.uk

Living Paintings Trust
www.livingpaintings.org

Mind's Eye
Email: Anne.Hornsby@btinternet.com

Vocaleyes
www.vocaleyes.co.uk

Braille

RNIB
www.rnib.org.uk

Henshaws Society for Blind People
www.hsbp.org.uk

Your local library may well offer this service

Captioning

Stagetext
www.stagetext.co.uk

Signed Performances in Theatre

www.spit.org.uk

Data protection

Data protection agency

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Disability arts

Arts Council England has an online register of disabled artists

www.disabilityarts.com

Also contact your local disability arts organisation

Disability equality training

British Council of Disabled People

www.bcodp.org.uk

NDAF

www.ndaf.org

Employers' Forum on Disability

www.employers-forum.co.uk

SPIT

www.spit.org.uk

Also contact your local disability arts organisation

Employment

Disability Rights Commission

www.drc-gb.org

Employers' Forum on Disability

www.employers-forum.co.uk

Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisers

www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Showhow

www.showhow.org.uk

Funding

Adapt

Phone: 01383 623166

Arts Council England

www.artscouncil.org.uk

The National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service
(NACVS)

www.nacvs.org.uk

Guiding

Guide Dogs for the Blind

www.guidedogs.co.uk

Henshaws Society for Blind People (HSBP)

www.henshaws.org.uk

RNIB

www.rnib.org.uk

Induction loops

Search induction loops on the internet – there are many companies who provide these

Infra-red

Sennheiser UL Ltd

www.sennheiser.co.uk

Marketing

Online register of consultants and trainers:

www.arts-consultants.org.uk

Network will give you details of the audience development agencies, the marketing agencies and consultants in your area

www.audiencedevelopment.org

Minicom/textphone suppliers/hirers

Search the internet using Minicom or textphone

Palantype

Verbatim reporting service

www.verbatimreporting.co.uk

RNID

www.rnid.org.uk

Signage

www.signdesignsociety.uk

Sign language interpretation

RNID

www.rnid.org.uk

SPIT

www.spit.org.uk

Tactile diagrams

The Dog Rose Trust

www.dogrose-trust.org.uk

Living Paintings Trust

www.livingpaintings.org

National Centre for Tactile Diagrams

www.nctd.org.uk

Sensory Design Services

www.sds-uk.org

Transcription

Confederation of Transcribed Information Services (COTIS)

www.cotis.org.uk

Henshaws Society for Blind People
www.hsbp.org.uk

Mind's Eye
Email: Anne.Hornsby@btinternet.com

RNIB
www.rnib.org.uk

Useful publications:

A model for consultation with disabled people
www.resource.gov.uk

A practical guide to working with arts ambassadors
www.artscouncil.org.uk

Access Prohibited?
www.tiresias.org

Adapt Pocket Guide – Open Sesame, The Magic of Access
Phone: 01383 623166

Am I Making Myself Clear?
www.mencap.org.uk

Building Regulations Approved Document M
www.odpm.gov.uk

Design of Buildings and their approaches to meet the needs of disabled people (BSI)
www.bsi-global.com

Disability access: a good practice guide for the arts
www.artscouncil.org.uk

Disability Rights Commission Codes of Practice
www.drc-gb.org

Employers' Forum on Disability publications
www.employers-forum.co.uk

Employment service information booklets
from Jobcentre Plus Disability Employment Advisers
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Equal opportunities policy into practice: disability
www.itc-arts.org

Handbook of good practice: Employing disabled people
www.artscouncil.org.uk

Keeping arts safe
www.artscouncil.org.uk

Never again – a guide to welcoming people with learning
disabilities to your venue
cd-rom available from Mind The Gap
www.mind-the-gap.org.uk

On the move: a directory of disability-related touring
companies from the UK
www.artscouncil.org.uk

See it right
Email: cservices@rnib.org.uk

Sign design guide
Phone: 0845 702 3153

SPIT information on BSL performances and deaf awareness
www.spit.org.uk

Talking Images Research available from the RNIB
Phone: 0845 7023153

The arts and disabled people
www.artscouncil.org.uk

The Disability Discrimination Act – Employment Law Handbook
Email: ids@incomesdata.co.uk

The Disability Portfolio
www.resource.gov.uk

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London NW10 1RN
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6 Market Road
London N7 9PW
Phone: 020 7619 7323
Fax: 020 7619 7331
www.disabilitynow.org.uk

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Disability View
Craven Publishing Ltd
15–39 Durham Street
Kinning Park
Glasgow G41 1BS
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Email: edit@disabilityview.co.uk

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1-3 Worship Street
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Fax: 020 7588 3527
Email: editor@signmatters.org.uk

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Disability Times
84 Claverton Street
London SW1V 3AX
Phone and Fax: 020 7233 7970
www.square-sun.co.uk/bamsawt/dtimes.htm

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One in Seven magazine (RNID)
19-23 Featherstone Street
London EC1Y 8SL
Phone: 0808 808 0123
Fax: 020 7296 8199
Email: oneinseven@rnid.org.uk

Editor
Talking Newspapers Association of the UK
National Recording Centre
Heathfield
East Sussex TN21 8DB
Phone: 01435 866102
Fax: 01435 865422
www.tnauk.org.uk

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London SW1P 3NQ
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enquiries@artscouncil.org.uk

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