

# Accessibility Action Plan



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**ARTS COUNCIL  
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# Introduction

As an organisation we aim to grow and evolve as we strive to deliver our best for the artists we work with and the audiences we serve.

This recently led us to developing an Accessibility Action Plan and a process that has given us a deeper understanding of the needs of artists, audiences and the people we work with.

The plan aims to support artists to deliver their best work, to create the best possible experiences for our audiences and to support the people who make up our team. To achieve this we have focused our access work on how we can better support d/Deaf, blind/visually impaired, disabled and/or neurodivergent people as we realise this is an area we can strengthen and by doing so better serve artists, audiences and members of our team.

Last year we worked through the 'I'm In' framework which guided our conversations and assisted us to develop our access commitments. We were also joined by artist and inclusivity practitioner Daisy Hvnter who helped facilitate conversations and shared her lived experiences, along with talking to other artists and professionals about the barriers they have faced around accessing the arts. As a team we undertook a holistic review of our work to consider where we can improve and how we can create a more accessible organisation.

Together we have created a list of commitments that act as a set of next steps on our journey to becoming a more accessible organisation. These inaugural commitments reflect our conversations and outline our desire to better support those who we engage with; artist, audience or team member. They cover a range of subjects with the common goals of supporting people to deliver their best work, or enhancing the enjoyment they receive from the cultural experiences we offer.

We recognise it is not an exhaustive list, that the commitments are intentionally broad, but collectively they strengthen our organisation, giving artists, audiences and team members greater opportunities to access and participate in our work.

We are implementing commitments with immediate effect. Our 'Access and Support Riders' are being used across our programmes to create conditions in which people can deliver their best. We are looking at the earliest opportunities within our programmes to directly support and commission more d/Deaf, disabled, blind/visually impaired and/or neurodivergent artists. As we move through the inaugural year of this plan we will hold ourselves accountable and periodically review progress, further consult with artists who face barriers and update our commitments with knowledge gained across this journey.

Our intention is for the outcomes of this work to be felt by the artists we work with, the audiences who visit our venues and our team, from volunteer to trustee. As an organisation we will continue our journey to become more accessible and welcome your views on how we can improve and continue this conversation.

All the following commitments relate to the organisation as a whole.

# Accessibility Action Plan

## Commitments

### Employment and Recruitment

#### We will:

- Aim to diversify our workforce and increase levels of representation of d/Deaf, blind/visually impaired, disabled and/or neurodivergent people
- Understand and implement ways to support people to do their best work by using Access & Support Riders, accommodating all reasonable requests
- Provide a clear context for why we use Access & Support Riders and why they are important to us as an organisation
- Ensure our recruitment processes are accessible and transparent by:
  - Advertising all roles beyond our current networks and partner with disability-led organisations to share recruitment opportunities
  - Adding word counts to all application forms to offer clarity on expectations
  - Providing information and accept job applications in alternative formats e.g. large print, audio and/or video recording

# Employment and Recruitment

- Providing clear closing and interview dates along with offering pre-application support, including phone calls and meetings
- Providing extended time frames and deadlines upon request when appropriate
- Anonymising job applications to remove any unconscious bias
- Providing interview question themes in advance
- Provide accessibility training for all team members and to periodically review areas individuals can strengthen and develop
- Practice and promote an accessible culture by making this action plan available to our whole team and ensuring they uphold all commitments

# Artists and Commissions

Throughout all of our projects and events we will:

- Increase levels of representation of d/Deaf, blind/visually impaired, disabled and/or neurodivergent people through our artistic programmes and bring a wider diversity of views, perspectives and voices to our audiences
- Develop existing relationships along with building new programming partnerships with disability-led organisations, for example exploring options to join the Unlimited Allies Network - [weareunlimited.org.uk/allies](https://weareunlimited.org.uk/allies)
- Ensure our commissioning processes are accessible, inclusive and transparent by:
  - Advertising all commissioning opportunities beyond our current networks and partner with disability-led organisations to advertise commissioning opportunities and reach artists
  - Adding word counts to all exhibition proposal forms to offer clarity on expectations
  - Providing information on commissions and accept artist proposals in alternative formats e.g. large print, audio and/or video recording
  - Providing clear closing, selection meeting and/or interview dates along with offering pre-proposal support, including phone calls and meetings

# Artists and Commissions

- Providing extended time frames and deadlines upon request when appropriate
- Providing interview question themes in advance of the interview
- Providing examples of commissioned proposals ahead of the final stages of the application process
- Offer flexible payment structures for freelance work and commissions
- Continue to provide an access fund for artists and signpost to other funding support streams through our Artist Resources Handbook including:
  - Access to Work - [gov.uk/access-to-work](https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work) - and support artists to make applications to access funding.
  - Advocate and signpost artist to the Access Team and support available at Arts Council England - [access@artscouncil.org.uk](mailto:access@artscouncil.org.uk)

# Audiences

With all our public facing exhibitions and events we will:

- Ensure our exhibitions and events are as accessible as possible by:
  - Following industry recognised guidance e.g. the Shape Arts Accessible Exhibition Guide
  - Providing captions and/or transcriptions wherever possible when exhibiting moving image work
  - Providing comfortable seating in gallery spaces whenever possible
  - Providing audio descriptions of exhibitions wherever possible
- Ensure our events are as accessible as possible by providing:
  - Pre-event information including locations of quiet spaces, notes on sensory expectations and event timings
  - Visual stories around regular events and for all venues
  - Clear signage/signposting in house to assist people navigate each of our venues
  - Free carers tickets
  - Digital access for online audiences whenever possible
  - Designated chill out rooms/safe spaces whenever possible
- Support national schemes for d/Deaf, blind/visually impaired, disabled and/or neurodivergent people including the Sunflower Scheme and raise awareness across the team of its significance

# Digital Engagement - Online Audiences

To engage with online audiences we will:

- Offer digital experiences across all of our projects whenever possible e.g. live streaming to ensure more people have access to our cultural programmes
- Develop activities and events exclusively for online audiences and aim to create content that actively involves and engages people not just offering a passive audience experience

# Marketing and Communications

We will:

- Consistently highlight the resources and facilities available at 'a space' arts to d/Deaf, blind, visually impaired, disabled and neurodivergent people
- Ensure our communications are as accessible as possible and refer to industry standard resources and use of accessible marketing guides
- Regularly review external communications and seek feedback to improve clarity
- Ensure training is provided across our staff team in accessible communications

# Review and Accountability

To implement an effective plan and hold ourselves accountable we will:

- Regularly check the progress we are making against the commitments in our Accessibility Action Plan and annually update the plan through feedback and focus groups
- Review audience data gathered through Illuminate surveys on an annual basis to assess progress in increasing levels of representation of d/Deaf, blind/visually impaired, disabled and/or neurodivergent people'
- Provide accessible ways for audiences and participants to give feedback through:
  - Written feedback
  - Voice notes
  - In-person meetings
  - Phone calls
  - Anonymous surveys
  - Established review sites e.g. Trip Advisor and Google Reviews with in-built and tested accessibility tools