



Production Access Guide

A guide for producers on meeting access requirements for disabled contributors and audiences.





“At the BBC we recognise the value and unique perspectives that disabled contributors bring to our content, helping us better reflect the audiences that we serve. I want everyone involved in production to read this guide, so we can make sure we are best in class when it comes to the access and welcome we provide for our disabled audiences and contributors.”

Pat Younge, Chief Creative Officer, BBC Productions



“We have updated this guide for production teams to bring it up to date with the BBC’s overall commitment to access for disabled people”

Amanda Rice, Head of BBC Diversity

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Introduction

This best practice guide is for producers and production teams working on programmes within and for the BBC. This includes outside broadcasts and studio productions made for the BBC in house and by independent production teams.

It is a practical set of guidelines and suggestions to help make your programme accessible and inclusive for disabled audiences and contributors.

Why this guide is important

For the BBC to meet its Charter requirements to licence fee payers we aim to be inclusive for disabled people and to work towards BBC programming reflecting the UK population. Through our Diversity Strategy the BBC aims to be inclusive and accessible to all disabled people with the specific objective of building in accessibility from the start.

Disabled people are a diverse group with differing requirements, some of which aren't always apparent. This includes people with mobility impairments, visual or hearing impairments, mental health and learning disabilities. Creating a welcoming and accessible environment for disabled contributors, contestants and audience members is a key part of ensuring creativity, representation and enabling participation.

For our disabled audiences, accessibility can be central to receiving a quality service and therefore it is essential that all our services take this into account. We must consider ways to make sure that disabled people can use our services at a standard as close as reasonable to that usually offered to non-disabled people. The information box on the next page gives more information about what we mean by reasonable in this context.

In this context, 'should' means that you are expected to ensure that your production is accessible, unless it would be unreasonable to do so. This guide provides practical help and things to look out for when removing barriers and facilitating inclusion.

How to use this guide

This guide is intended to be used in a practical way to ensure that production teams consider accessibility throughout the entire production process. The guide incorporates flowcharts and checklists that take you through different contexts and phases of the production process. It is broken into four sections:

- **Studio Productions: Audiences – page 6**
- **Outside Broadcasts: Audiences – page 12**
- **Contributors – page 18**
- **Further sources of information – page 20**

To start, go to either the studio productions or the outside broadcast section, whichever is relevant, and follow the flowchart from there.

This guide is not an exhaustive list of everything you might need to consider when making a production accessible because every situation will be slightly different and disabled people's access needs may vary. The flowcharts and checklists in the guide do provide a basis for the areas which need to be considered when planning a production and it's vital that you think about these at the earliest stage.

Planning ahead and asking questions of your contributors to establish the nature of their access requirements will be key to successfully making your production accessible. The case studies in this guide help illustrate how establishing contributor's needs and planning to overcome the barriers resulted in productions which were inclusive and ultimately made good television.

And remember accessibility is not just about removing barriers, it's about aiming to make our productions inclusive to everyone, so we portray disabled people positively and make them feel their contributions are valued.

Reasonable?

In determining what is reasonable, you will need to take into account a range of factors. As a minimum, you weigh up and record in writing your assessment of the following factors:

- Whether taking any particular steps would be effective in overcoming the substantial disadvantage that disabled people face in accessing the services
- The extent to which it is practicable for you to take the steps
- Financial and other costs of making the services accessible
- Extent of any disruption which taking the steps would cause
- Extent of the financial and other resources available.
- The amount of any resources that the BBC has already spent on making its services accessible
- Availability of financial or other assistance from any other means.



Section 1: Studio Productions - Audiences

This section is for studio productions where an **audience is present**, if there is no audience present at recording then you can go to section 3 or if you are recording at an OB you can go to section 2.

1a) Venue

Will BBC Studio Audiences be providing the stewarding service at the studio?

This service is only available at TVC, Maida Vale and Radio Theatre.



- Liaise with BBC Studio Audiences on 020 8576 1514 or studioaudience@bbc.co.uk
- Studios at TVC, Maida Vale and The Radio Theatre are fully accessible to wheelchair users with accessible toilets and parking.

Go to section 1c) – page 8: Recruiting an audience.



Studios should be accessible for disabled people and cover the following - check the following with the studio management:

- Step free route from entrance to seating.
- Corridor widths on the route from entrance to seating and to toilets at least 800mm.
- Accessible toilets for disabled people.
- Disabled parking available on site or nearby.
- Hearing enhancement system (loop) available and in working order.
- Signage including exits, toilets, route to the studio and automatic doors are clearly signed in a large font.
- Refer to Health and Safety procedures for emergency egress of disabled people and consider this in set design.

Go to section 1b) – page 7: What to do if the studio doesn't have one or more of these features.

Go to section 1c) – page 8: Recruiting an audience.

1b) What to do if the studio doesn't cover all the standard accessibility features required

- Step free route from entrance to seating.**
If there is not a step-free route from an entrance to the seating, discuss with the studio manager the provision of a hired ramp or platform lift at the entrance or where steps present a barrier. Remember if the main entrance or route to the studio is not step-free investigate a different entrance or route. If this is still not possible, an alternative studio should be sought.
- Accessible toilets for disabled people.**
If an accessible toilet is not available at the studio identify a place outside, which is close to the studio where a hired accessible portaloos could be placed. If this is not possible, an alternative studio should be sought.
- Disabled parking available on site or nearby.**
You should aim to ensure well signed disabled parking is available nearby and its availability communicated to audiences in advance. Staff on the day should be aware of the location of parking and the associated policies on its allocation. At TVC disabled parking can be pre-booked, elsewhere the location of on-street parking should be established ahead of recording day.
- Corridor widths on the route from entrance to seating and to toilets should be at least 800mm (approx 2.5 feet).**
Investigate a route to the studio from the entrance which does have corridor widths at least 800mm to allow a wheelchair user access. This should be a clear 800mm and be free of obstructions such as fire extinguishers or chairs against a wall. Ideally much wider corridors should be used to allow for turning and passing – 1200mm-1400mm would be the optimum width. If the 800mm minimum is not available, an alternative studio should be sought.
- Hearing enhancement system (loop) available and in working order.**
If a hearing enhancement system (loop) is not available at the studio one should be hired – see reference 4a – page 8) in the information sources section of this guide. Ensure that any system in place is in working order prior to recording commencing.

Go to section 1c) – page 8: Recruiting an audience.



Ic) Recruiting an audience

BBC Studio Audiences can provide audience recruitment for any BBC production globally, this includes indie productions for the BBC. Producers or indies may choose to recruit their own audiences however. The following checklist is followed by BBC Studio Audiences and should also be followed if you are recruiting your own audience.

- Websites should be in-line with BBC web accessibility standards.
- A telephone number, including a text phone should be available in case people do not have access to the internet.
- Ask audiences if they have any access requirements for attending a recording. These could include different arrangements for queuing, accessible parking, sign language interpreter, personal support or to bring an assistance dog. Being flexible is really important so leave these questions quite open to allow for people to give you as much information about their specific needs as possible.
- If an audience member has requested a sign language interpreter and tickets are still available, update the website and the ticketing service to advertise the filming as having sign language support available.
- Be aware that many disabled people use a personal assistant to support them – a ticket should be made available for them to accompany the disabled person to the recording. Consideration should be given to providing this extra ticket free of charge for a paid-ticket event.
- Information that is sent out with the tickets should be in at least size 14 font to make it clear for people to read. Information in large print (size 18 font) should also be offered to help visually impaired people.
- When sending out the tickets ask again for any access requirements and detail what features will be available at the studio (such as a hearing loop) – the more information you get before the day of recording the better. Be aware that not everyone will make their needs known and some things may be taken for granted such as wheelchair accessibility and hearing loops being available.



Id) Set design

When sending out tickets – you or BBC Studio Audiences will have asked if any audience members require a sign language interpreter.

- Ensure a space is made available for a sign language interpreter with a light on them, near the users who have requested one. To book a sign language interpreter, see reference 4a – page 8) in the information sources section of this guide.
- Ensure that the set design allows for seats to be removed for a wheelchair user or a space for at least two wheelchair users is incorporated in the design. Remember that they may want to sit with someone who is not a wheelchair user.
- Ensure that the set design facilitates a step-free and obstacle free route to the seats from the studio entrance.

Will any audience members contribute or participate in the production?

Yes

- Ensure route to the stage is step-free and free from obstacles.

Go to section 3 on contributors – page 18: for more information about making adjustments to the set design.

No

Go to section 3 on contributors – page 18: For more information about making adjustments to the set design.



le) Day of recording

Will BBC Studio Audiences be providing the stewarding service at the studio?

*This service is only available at **TVC, Maida Vale** and **Radio Theatre**.*



Yes

- BBC Studio Audiences provide stewards who are trained in disability awareness and etiquette.
- BBC Studio Audiences follow the checklist to the right. At Maida Vale 3 and 4, a security officer will need to be booked in advance to operate the evacuation stair lift.

Go to section 3 on contributors – page 18.

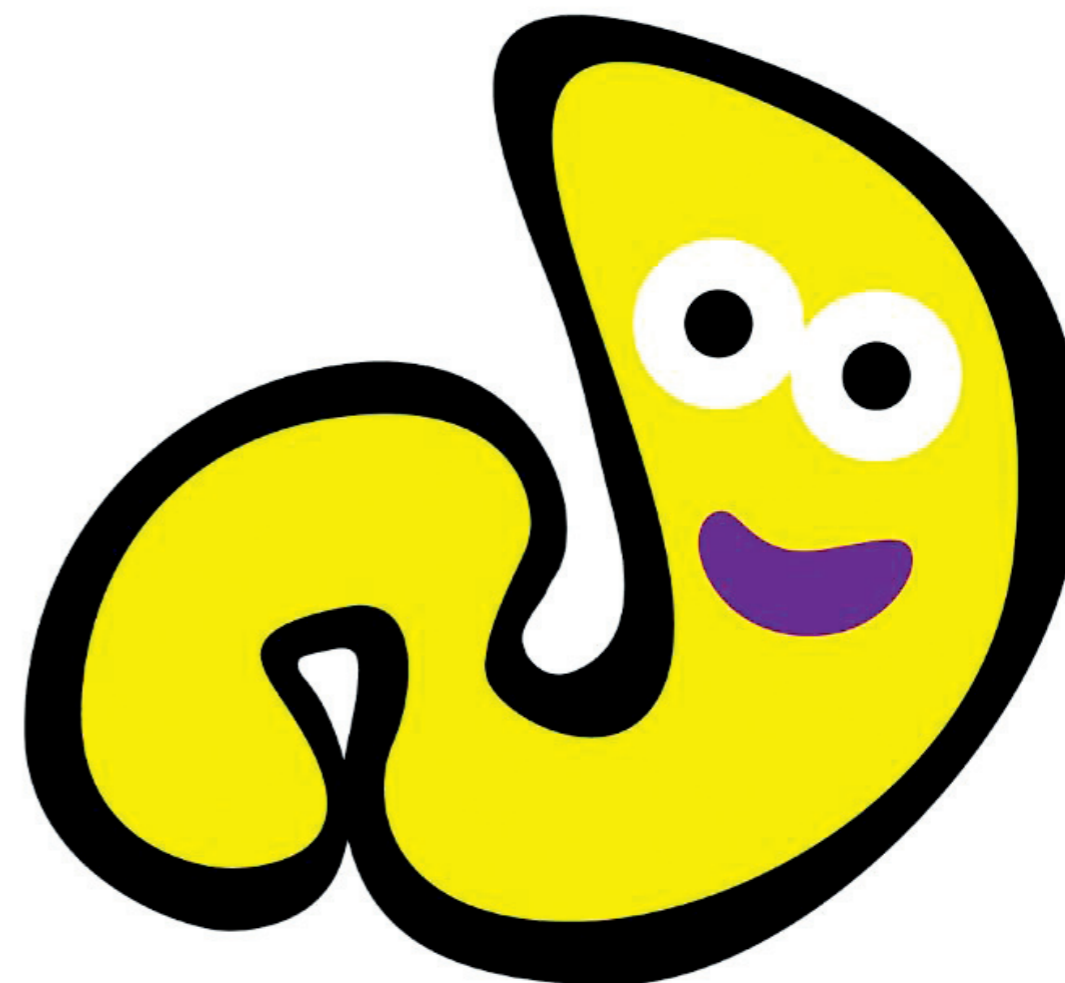


No

The following should all be met at BBC studios outside London and at third party studios:

- Stewards should have disability awareness training including how to guide blind or partially sighted people.
- Different queuing arrangements to be made for disabled people or those less able to stand as required. Advertise this facility in advance.
- If doors are not automatic ensure they are opened for disabled people where required. Signs should make this feature clear.
- Consider a shorter route to the studio from the entrance for audience members with mobility impairments.
- Clearly mark route to and from the entrance to the studio and to toilets.
- Hearing enhancement system (loop) available and in working order.
- Assistance dogs – a toileting space and drinking water facilities should be made available.
- Allow audience members to leave the studio when necessary.

Go to section 3 on contributors – page 18.



Section 2: Outside Broadcasts (OBs) - Audiences

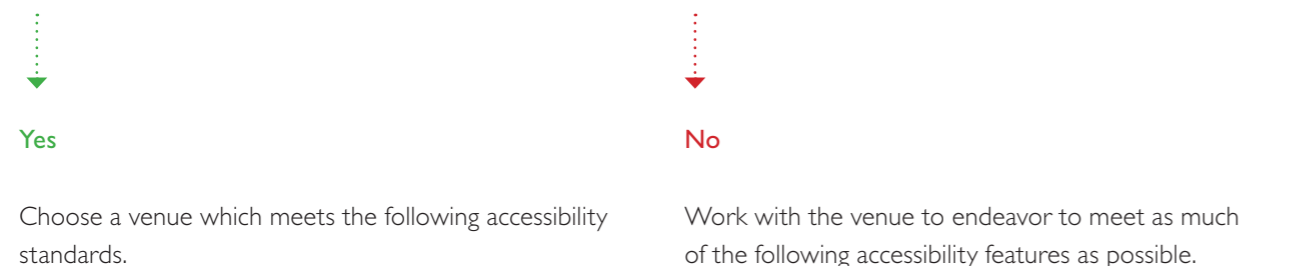
This section is for any production taking place anywhere other than a studio. Section 2d) on set design will also be relevant where a set has been built for the OB, such as an interviewing space.

2a) Venue

Is this a BBC organised event (where the BBC is responsible for ticketing) with a live audience?



Does the BBC have control over the choice of venue?



- Step free route from entrance.
- Corridor widths from entrance to seating and to toilets at least 800mm (2.5').
- Accessible toilets for disabled people.
- Disabled parking available on site/nearby.
- Assistance dogs – a toileting space and drinking water facilities should be made available.
- Hearing enhancement system (loop) available and in working order.
- Signage including exits, toilets, route to the studio and automatic doors are clearly signed in a large font.
- Refer to Health and Safety procedures for emergency egress of disabled people and consider this in set design.

Go to section 2b) – page 13: What to do if the studio doesn't have one or more of these features or go to 2c) – page 14: Recruiting an audience.

2b) What to do if the venue doesn't cover all the accessibility features required

- Step free route from entrance to seating.**
If there is not a step-free route from an entrance to the seating, consider a hired ramp or platform lift at the entrance or where steps present a barrier.
- Corridor widths on the route from entrance to seating and to toilets should be at least 800mm (approx 2.5 feet).**
Investigate a route to the from the entrance which does have corridor widths at least 800mm to allow a wheelchair user access. This should be a clear 800mm and be free of obstructions such as fire extinguishers or chairs against a wall. Ideally much wider corridors should be used to allow for turning and passing – 1200mm-1400mm would be the optimum width.
- Accessible toilets for disabled people.**
If an accessible toilet is not available at the studio identify a place outside, where a hired accessible portaloo could be placed.
- Disabled parking available on site or nearby.**
Every effort should be made to ensure well signed disabled parking is available nearby and its availability communicated to audiences. Staff on the day should be aware of the location of parking and the associated policies on its allocation.
- Hearing enhancement system (loop) available and in working order.**
If this is an indoor recording, a hearing enhancement system (loop) should be made available and hired if the venue does not have one already. Ensure that any system in place is in working order prior to recording commencing.

Go to section 2c) – page 14: Recruiting an audience.



2c) Recruiting an audience

BBC Studio Audiences can provide audience recruitment for any BBC production globally, this includes indie productions for the BBC. Producers or indies may choose to recruit their own audiences however. The following checklist is followed by BBC Studio Audiences and should also be followed if you are recruiting your own audience.

- Websites should be in-line with BBC web accessibility standards.
- A telephone number, including a text phone should be available in case people do not have access to the internet.
- Ask audiences if they have any access requirements for attending a recording. These could include different arrangements for queuing, accessible parking, sign language interpreter, personal support or to bring an assistance dog. Being flexible is really important so leave these questions quite open to allow for people to give you as much information about their specific needs as possible.
- If an audience member has requested a sign language interpreter and tickets are still available, update the website and the ticketing service to advertise the filming as having sign language support available.
- Be aware that many disabled people use a personal assistant to support them – a ticket should be made available for them to accompany the disabled person to the recording. Consideration should be given to providing this extra ticket free of charge for a paid-ticket event.
- Information that is sent out with the tickets should be in at least size 14 font to make it clear for people to read. Information in large print (size 18 font) should also be offered to help visually impaired people.
- When sending out the tickets ask again for any access requirements and detail what features will be available at the studio (such as a hearing loop) – the more information you get before the day of recording the better. Be aware that not everyone will make their needs known and some things may be taken for granted such as wheelchair accessibility and hearing loops being available.



2d) Set design

When sending out tickets – you or BBC Studio Audiences will have asked if any audience members require a sign language interpreter.

- Ensure a space is made available for a sign language interpreter with a light on them (where applicable), near the users who have requested one. To book a sign language interpreter, see reference 4a) in the information sources section of this guide.
- Ensure that the filming area design allows for seats to be removed for a wheelchair user or a space for at least two wheelchair users is incorporated in the design. Remember that they may want to sit with someone who is not a wheelchair user.
- Ensure that the route to stage/filming area facilitates a step-free and obstacle free route from the entrance.

Will any audience members contribute or participate in the production?

Yes

No

- Ensure route to the stage is step-free and free from obstacles.

Go to section 3 on contributors – page 18:
For more information about making adjustments to the set design.

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for more information about making adjustments to the set design.

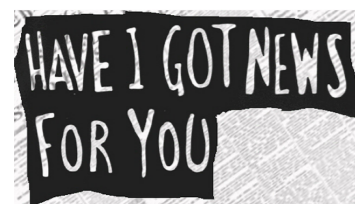


2e) Day of recording

The following should all be met at BBC studios outside London and at third party studios:

- Stewards should have disability awareness training including how to guide blind or partially sighted people.
- Different queuing arrangements to be made for disabled people or those less able to stand as required. Advertise this facility in advance.
- If doors are not automatic ensure they are opened for disabled people where required. Signs should make this feature clear.
- Consider a shorter route from the entrance for audiences with mobility impairments.
- Clearly mark route to and from the entrance to the studio and to toilets.
- Hearing enhancement system (loop) available and in working order.
- Assistance dogs – a toileting space and drinking water facilities should be made available.
- Allow audience members to leave the studio when necessary.

Go to section 3 on contributors – page 18.



Good practice case study

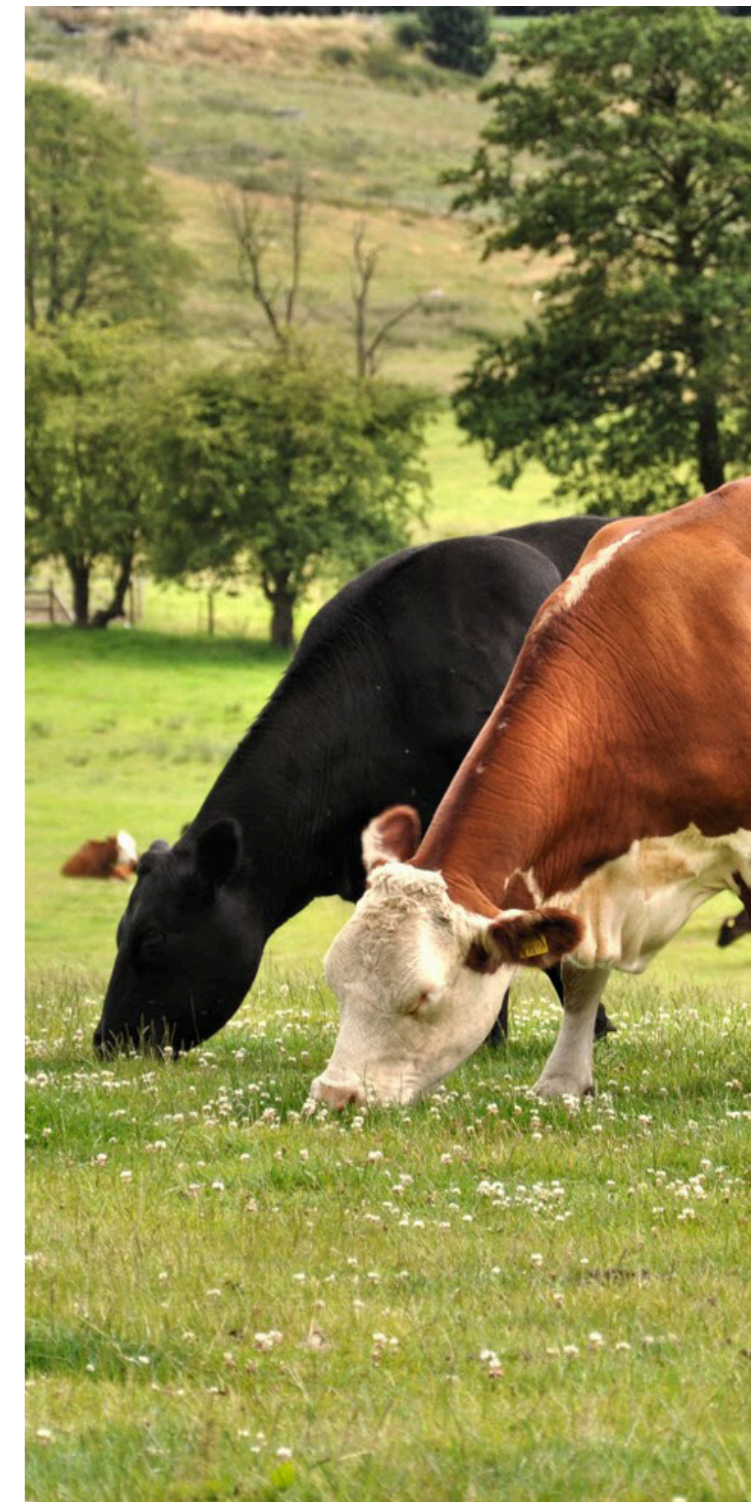
Escape to the Country - BBC production.

In Series 11 Escape to the Country filmed with Nick and Julie Packham who were moving from Kent to South Wales. Nick was an ex-firefighter who was paralysed in a car accident in 2002 and now uses a wheelchair. Having been dissatisfied by inaccessible facilities in previous holidays, they wanted to buy a property with adjoining accessible holiday lets.

In the first two properties a ramp was used to allow Nick to enter and exit the properties. After an initial tour of the downstairs of the house, the presenter and the contributors watched a pre-shot video guided tour of the upstairs on a laptop.

For the third house, again a ramp was used for the contributors to access the property but was generally much more wheelchair accessible which became a feature of the discussions about the property. The windows were all set at a low level so Nick could easily enjoy the views and there were plenty of wide doors so they could move freely through the property. The open plan set up of the main reception areas and freestanding nature of the kitchen also meant that Nick and Julie could have a large degree of flexibility in their living arrangements.

This case study illustrates how making a production accessible to disabled contributors can require just a few adjustments to the way you do things, with minimal extra expense or time. This will mean asking the contributors what their access needs are well in advance and planning the episode around that. Including disabled people in a programme like this can make it more inclusive of all audiences and demonstrate our commitment to positive portrayal. It makes an interesting and different angle on finding a property which is likely to appeal to all audiences.



Section 3: Contributors

This section provides guidance on how to ensure accessibility for disabled contributors be they in a studio or on an OB. This includes physical adjustments to set designs but also the way in which hosts and interviewers interact with contributors. We should always do as much as reasonably possible to make adjustments for contributors and endeavour to make those which are practicable. The following should be considered at the earliest stage of planning to ensure disabled people are able to contribute or participate as fully as reasonably possible in the production and that any potential barriers are avoided.

- ☑ Set design – design the set to be as flexible as possible to allow for alterations to meet the needs of a disabled person. Where possible ensure the stage and environs are free from obstacles and step-free. There should also be a space available for a personal assistant for the disabled person and/or a sign-language interpreter.
- ☑ Consider different methods the host or interviewer could use to interact with the contributor and the possibility of allowing extra time should it be practicable to do so – particularly when pre-recording the production.
- ☑ Consider that people might have communication needs due to a sensory (visual or hearing) impairment or because of a learning disability/difficulty. For example some people with learning disabilities may need to have very direct questions asked to them.
- ☑ If you are running a story about disability then it is likely that the contributors will have access needs. Plan for this and enquire at the earliest possible stage as to what these access needs might be.

And remember – everyone’s needs are going to be different so ask for any access needs at the earliest point possible!

There are some differences in the way you may need to approach accessibility depending on the nature of the contribution:

Panellists, interviewees and contestants.

Panellists, interviewees and contestants will usually be arranged before recording or broadcasting begins, albeit at short notice on occasions, therefore you should always ask contributors if they have any access requirements and what their requirements are. You should aim to do this as early as possible to allow for any adjustments to be made.

Audience contributors

You may not have any notice of who the audience contributors will be so it’s essential that the way in which the host or interviewer is interacting with the audience contributor does so in as flexible way as possible to allow for adjustments to be made where practicable. Where possible, before broadcasting or recording begins, potential contributors should be asked if they have any access requirements and what those are. You should aim to do this as early as possible to allow for any adjustments to be made – asking questions about audience access requirements at the recruitment stage will help with this.

Remote contributions

Audience contributions can be made remotely through a range of means, increasingly through social media, text or email, rather than via phone lines. However, not everyone has access to the internet or a mobile phone and some disabled people may not find them accessible, therefore a phone line including a text phone option should be considered when seeking remote contributions to a live broadcast.

Good practice case study

The gameshow Pointless – Endemol production.

Pointless, a gameshow on BBC One recently featured a contestant who had a visual impairment. The production team liaised closely with the contestant to ensure they were fully prepared before their day in the studio. The team asked questions in advance about what adjustments could be made which they would be comfortable with. This helped overcome assumptions and perceived barriers and helped understand what could be done to make the show accessible to the contestant.

The team contacted RNIB and paid for them to visit the studio in advance. They provided practical advice on how best to make the set and studio accessible for someone with a visual impairment including how to guide them and explain the environment to them. RNIB also wrote a detailed report on their recommendations, which included some set modifications which gave the production team time to make prior to the contestant’s studio day. These adjustments included a handrail and back rail made to ensure that if the contestants were to have stood at the upper level on set (not something which could have been predicted before the show, as it is done randomly on the day), there would have been no risk of them falling down the steps.

Planning well in advance was the key to the success in this example of making adjustments for a contributor. Close liaison with the contributor in advance, engaging with RNIB to help with access auditing and making adjustments allowed the contestant to participate fully in the production. Disabled contestants being included in game shows contributes to positive portrayal and widens the appeal of the programme.



Section 4: Sources of information

This section provides sources of further information which might be useful when providing adjustments for disabled people. The list is not exhaustive and the Diversity Centre could provide additional information and guidance where needed. Remember that we should make adjustments which are reasonable, and the box on page 4 of this guide should help you in making that balanced decision on how to act on the advice given from these organisations and others you may contact.

4a) Services for people with hearing impairments

Action on Hearing Loss (formerly RNID)

Tel: 020 7296 8000
Text phone: 020 7296 8001
www.actiononhearingloss.org.uk

Sign language interpretation and speech to text services:

Project Able, Sign Language Bureau

Phone: 020 8292 1091
Fax: 020 8362 5360
Minicom: 020 8292 1501

Sellers

020 7405 4512
www.sellers.co.uk

Ubiquis UK

020 7269 0370
www.ubiquis.co.uk

Hearing enhancement systems – suppliers of paging systems, induction loop and radio aid sound systems improving access for deaf people to many types of public places.

BioAcoustics Ltd

Tel: 01582 431000
Fax: 01582 488227
Txt: 01582 481411
www.bioacoustics.com

Connevans

01737 247571
www.connevans.com

4b) Services for people with visual impairments

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB)

Tel: 020 7388 1266
Helpline: 0845 766 9999
Email: helpline@rnib.org.uk
www.rnib.org.uk

Transcription services Braille services

RNIB Transcription Centre

Tel: 01752 690 092
www.rnib.org.uk

Calibre Audio Library

Tel: 01296 432339
Email: enquiries@calibre.org.uk
www.calibre.org.uk



4c) Services for people with mobility impairments

Steps, ramps and lifts

The Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)

Tel: 020 7289 6111 Helpline: 0845 1309177
Email: info@dlf.org.uk
www.dlf.org.uk

Enable Access

Tel: 020 8275 0375

Toilets

Wessington Cabins Ltd

Tel: 01249 812153
www.wessingtoncabins.co.uk

4d) Services for people with learning disabilities or acquired brain injury

Learning Disability Coalition

www.learningdisabilitycoalition.org.uk
Tel: 020 7696 5574

Headway – The brain injury association

www.headway.org.uk
Tel: 0808 800 2244
helpline@headway.org.uk

4e) General information on accessibility and disability

BBC Access Team

BBC HR Direct (Capita)
0800 082 8080
access.team@bbchrdirect.co.uk
Access Team Manager - Richard Southorn - 07921 648723

BBC Diversity Centre

www.bbc.co.uk/diversity
diversitycentre@bbc.co.uk

BBC Policy on Accessibility and Usability for Technology

www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/dq/contents/diversity.shtml

Equality and Human Rights Commission

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/>

England

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline
0845 604 6610

Wales

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline Wales
0845 604 8810

Scotland

Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline Scotland
0845 604 5510

4f) BBC Studio Audiences

020 8576 1514
studioaudiencemanagers@bbc.co.uk
www.bbc.co.uk/showsandtours



Disability Adviser BBC, Andrew Young
andrew.young@bbc.co.uk



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andrew.young@bbc.co.uk