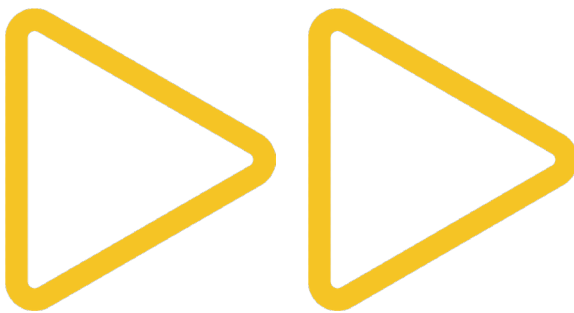


attitude
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Access Guide:

Online Music Events



A guide for artists, venues, festivals, brands and promoters planning to host events online.

Imagine not being able to enjoy a gig online or take part in a Q&A with your favourite artist...

...simply because:

- Promotional artwork containing key details wasn't readable.
- The event didn't include captioning or another way to participate without relying on audio.
- There was no way of knowing what the artist and the venue looked like.
- Graphics displayed on the live stream were not legible.

In this guide, produced with input from music fans and artists, we'll provide you with some quick solutions to break down the barriers that online gigs or events can create for Deaf and disabled audiences.

Whether you are a DIY promoter or large venue planning a video series, this guide contains useful tips on making what you do as accessible as possible.

“In a time where live streams have become one of the most popular ways of experiencing live music, people are getting the chance to experience performances they may not previously have had the chance to see.

However, if barriers are not removed, the lack of physically being present at an event can sometimes feel like yet another lack of connection for Deaf and disabled people at a time when many already feel isolated due to the pandemic. This is why it's so important that live streams are accessible to everyone.”

Sophie, live music fan

Planning The Basics

There are a range of things to consider when planning an online event to be as accessible as possible.

Programme:

- The types of online content you want to programme bring with them different things to think about.
- Live sets are more challenging to make accessible than pre-recordings. Q+As bring with them a range of potential barriers.
- We share how to remove these later in this guide.



The artist Ruth Patterson kicked off Sage Gateshead's new series of online events in June. In order to make the event as accessible as possible, they elected to pre-record a set in order to get it professionally captioned prior to the event, which was made to go live at a promoted time. This was followed up by a live Q+A.


Platform(s):

- Where possible, use multiple platforms – choice for audiences can often provide more access options.
- To reach the biggest audience, use a platform that works well on mobile, tablets and desktop browsers, such as YouTube Live, Facebook Live, or Zoom.
- If you want to speak to your audience and let them ask questions, choose a platform that provides text chat alongside video.

Timings & Breaks:

- Many of the things that make an event more accessible benefit all audiences.
- Provide clear timings for your event and stick to them as far as possible.
- Programme in breaks for events over an hour to allow for toilet breaks, and give people who don't want to miss anything the opportunity to move around and take a screen break.
- Digital fatigue impacts everyone, and can be intensified with certain impairments or health conditions.

**Making
Content
Accessible**



For live events, we talk about access to the content taking place on a physical stage. For online events, this principle remains.

Basics anyone can do

Lyrics and setlists

Any online event featuring performed music can provide a basic access provision for audiences – set lists with lyrics in advance.


If you are a DIY event, providing these as a Word file download is a simple way of making an event that might not have captioning or British Sign Language (BSL) more accessible.

Automated captioning

Automated captioning is a built-in tool on a number of video and webinar platforms that can be turned on by the person watching an event independently, so you don't need to do anything, as long as the platform you are using has this capability.

For spoken word this can be a real benefit for some people, however the captions may not be word for word. The better the sound source used, the better the captions are. Using a head set with a mic or a free-standing mic will provide a better quality of sound over your phone or laptop built-in mic.

For lyrics and singing the auto-captioning will not pick up words over the music. The software may not be able to understand what is being sung and so captions will not be produced or will be very unclear.

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- There are 12 million people with hearing loss in the UK, that's around one in six of us.
 - There are over 7 million people in the UK living with tinnitus.
 - About 2 million people in the UK are hearing aid users.

Captioning can be of use to so many people, not only people with hearing impairments and tinnitus. With on screen events it can be so easy to miss a moment.

Having a conversation captioned means your audience can pick up on those missed seconds and feel connected.

Post event captioning

If your live stream becomes an on demand video after your event has finished, you will be able to edit the captions retrospectively if they were not accurate during the event itself.

DIY audio description

Any online event can feature basic DIY audio description to improve the experience for blind and partially-sighted people.

This can be done by having someone verbally explaining the environment in shot, and getting each speaker / performer to explain:

- What they look like
- What they are wearing
- Their location in relation to anyone else
- The sensory landscape for what's going to happen, for example any very loud or visually stimulating parts of the performance.

If you're an artist, here's how you might do an audio description for your viewers:

"I'm Bob, I'm male , medium height, black with short cropped hair. I'm wearing a tight orange t-shirt and black jeans. I'm at The Boileroom, it's a small venue, I'm the only person on stage and there is a room with some seating and a bar on my right. My name is on a banner behind me. For this gig I'll be playing a guitar which I'm holding and a kick drum that's to my left, I've also got a kazoo hidden in my back pocket which will make an appearance later! This set is going to be quite low key, there won't be any sudden or very loud noises."

**Taking
Things
Further**



Professional audio description

Where your event or performance has a lot of visual content professional audio description might be a valuable addition for people with visual impairments.

You can find lots more on Audio Description from Vocaleyes:

- www.vocaleyes.co.uk

>> StageTEXT

Professional captioning

If you have the budget and wish to deliver the best possible captioning experience for audiences including lyrics, the best solution is to use a professional service or a qualified freelancer to partner on your event.

Two key contacts for this are:

- www.stagetext.org
- www.avstr.org.uk (The Professional Association Representing Speech-To-Text Reporters)



PERFORMANCE
INTERPRETING

Professional BSL

For performance work, British Sign Language should be provided by a registered qualified and experienced Interpreter or Translator. As with captioning, providing a quality service is dependent upon professionals being given lyrics and set lists well in advance. Be aware that default contracts may not allow for recording and later sharing – this should be discussed in advance. Some live streaming platforms will allow you to have the Interpreter/Translator provided In-vision (picture in picture), for other platforms the audience member can select to keep the interpreter on the main screen.

A contact for this is:

- www.performanceinterpreting.co.uk

**Making
Q&As
Accessible**

Are you planning on taking requests from your audience or hosting a Q&A as part of your live stream?

Think about different ways the audience can communicate while the live event is going on. What will your platform allow you to do? Some methods of communication are not accessible to everyone:



Wave in video

Asking people to wave in their video can be really hard to see and easy to miss. We'd suggest not using this method.



Use the wave button

If you're using Zoom then we suggest those watching use the wave reaction button. Other platforms allow users to share reactions or emojis which you could designate as a signal that an audience member would like to ask a question or comment.



Use the chat box or comment section

If you wish to invite people to ask questions in a chat box, remember to read out any question before answering it for others who might not have seen the chat box text or who might not use the chat box due to an impairment.



Email in advance

Allowing people to email you with questions or requests for songs in advance can assist people who may wish to avoid a chat box due to an access requirement.

Monitoring chat and Q+As:

Trolling in chats or Q+As has been an issue for some events. One way to stop this can be to use a chat monitoring system that allows you to monitor chats across multiple platforms and delay what is seen, enabling you to remove abusive language and block users.

**Providing
Information
Before a
Livestream**

76% of people who completed our 2018 Access Booking Survey had been put off booking tickets for events due to lack of access information.

Access information is crucial for Deaf and disabled audiences, and this remains the case when it comes to online events.

The more info you can provide the more reassured your audience will be, and the more likely it is for people to engage with your content. Consider that any online event might have people wishing to attend for whom an online event is a totally new experience.

Provide clear instructions (or links) on how to use platforms in advance. Work on the assumption that every event will include people using platforms for the first time.

Whatever the scale of your online event, let people know the following in advance:

- Which platform(s) you are using.
- If people need to have accounts in order to access any of the content.
- Event programme including timings and any breaks.
- Will the content be live only, or recorded for later viewing?
- Any access provision that will be available i.e. audio description, captioning, British Sign Language (BSL).
- Contact details if people can get in touch with any questions

Ideally, this information should be within the copy of any event page and replicated if promoted across different platforms i.e. a website and a Facebook event page.

It's important to be very clear about the exact nature of any service. For example, does 'audio description' mean a DIY description at the start of a performance, or a professional service for the whole event?

Promoting an Online Event: **5 barriers**

1

Online posters and promotional graphics can't be read by screen reading software.

- If you're posting a graphic that includes your event details, include these details in the text of your post too. Some people with visual impairments use screen reading software that doesn't cover text included in social media images.
- On your website, Twitter and Instagram you can input Alt Text to provide a description of an image you've included. Use this text to include any information in your image, along with describing the visual look of the image.

2

If you don't tell people about access, it may as well not be there.

- If you're planning to have closed captions or open captions, then tell people! Share your plan for how everyone can access your event, just like you'll share other details about it in advance.

3

Unanswered questions can stop people from attending or buying tickets.

- Provide an email address or direct message inbox for accessibility questions in advance of the event. For example, you could always comment under your an event post saying "if anyone has a question or query about the accessibility of this live stream, please contact me/us here _____"

4

Video can be very inaccessible.

- If you are making any sort of promo video, ensure you subtitle it so that everyone can access it. There are plenty of online tools to enable this, such as Kapwing.
- Graphics layered over video will not be accessible through screen reading software.
 - Avoid putting calls to action in graphics.
 - Repeat any calls to action in graphics within the video
 - description or comments.

5

Uncapitalised hashtags are less accessible for some readers.

- If using #'s then use 'camel text' such as #AttitudeIsEverything - capitalising the first letter of each word.

Final word:

Online events are here to stay. If they are accessible, they can open-up new opportunities for people to access something they love, in some cases for the first time. As live music returns in the months ahead, it would be a backwards step if streaming was removed as an option where possible.

However, streaming events cannot ever replace the need to ensure that the physical experience is as accessible as possible. As with making venues and events accessible, consulting with Deaf and disabled people is essential.

Speak to your audiences, and speak to us!

Further Support:

Attitude is Everything offer a number of services and resources alongside this guide including:

Free resources

Access Starts Online + DIY Access Guide

Charter of Best Practice

A project tool for venues and festivals to build access across their business.

Disability Equality Training

We have a range of in person and webinar options for training including:

- Disability Equality and Customer Care.
- FLASH training - Fluctuating Impairment, Learning Disability, Autism, Sensory Impairment, Hearing Impairment.
- Accessible Creative Environments.

Consultancy services

We can offer live events access consultancy for any and all events.

Further reading:

- www.goodnightoutcampaign.org/saferonlineparties
- www.musiciansunion.org.uk/Home/News/2020/Apr/10-Tips-on-Recording-and-Streaming-Your-Live-Show
- www.drakemusic.org/blog/becky-morris-knight/accessibility-in-video-conferencing-and-remote-meetings/
- www.blog.ai-media.tv/blog/the-best-free-captioning-tools

About us:

Attitude is Everything is a disability-led charity and Arts Council England Sector Support Organisation that connects Deaf and disabled people with music and event industries to improve access together.

We are working for a future where music and event industries include Deaf and disabled people as audience members, performers, employees and volunteers. This includes online music events, which we are seeing far more of as a result of Covid-19.

Find out more at www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk

Email us at info@attitudeiseverything.org.uk

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@attitudeiseverythinghq



Attitude Is Everything



<http://bit.ly/AIEnewsletter>

About this guide:

This is version 1.0 of this guide published August 2020.

We will be updating this document periodically so please look for the most up to date version here:

- www.AttitudeIsEverything.org.uk/AccessGuideOnlineMusicEvents