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is everything

ACCESS
STARTS
ONLINE

Festival Access Info Guide

About the campaign

The purpose of the Access Starts Online campaign is to enable venues and festivals to provide comprehensive and clear access information for potential Deaf and disabled customers.

The publication of our third State of Access Report in February 2016 heralded the launch of the campaign to encompass all UK venues and festivals, with the initiative having previously been soft-launched with the Association of Independent Festivals in November 2015 and Independent Venue Week in January 2016.

The State of Access Report includes the results from a survey of online access information for 386 venues and festivals. This study found that whilst 65% offered some access information, of these 250, only 26% provided content rated as 'good'. A total of 52% of all the venues and festivals surveyed provided poor information or none at all.

To read the State of Access Report 2016, visit:

www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk/soar

Through engaging with the campaign, festivals can create best practice information and gain an Attitude is Everything-endorsed digital 'stamp of approval'.

The benefits of gaining the Access Starts Online 'stamp of approval' include:

- Publicly demonstrating your commitment to welcoming Deaf and disabled people to your festival.
- Phone / email consultation with Attitude is Everything to sign-off your access information.
- An Access Starts Online web banner and social media stamp to use as you wish.
- Inclusion in press releases and social media campaigns linked to the initiative.
- Preparatory work that can lead to your festival gaining the Bronze level of Attitude is Everything's Charter of Best Practice.

What to include in your access information

1. Introduction

- 1-2 lines on behalf of the festival to welcome Deaf and disabled customers.

The introduction text is a chance to communicate your festival's ethos when it comes to being inclusive. If you have been awarded the Access Starts Online stamp of approval or have achieved a level on our Charter of Best Practice you could mention this here.

2. Contact Details

- A named person as a point of contact + their job role i.e. 'Access Officer'
- Email
- Phone
- Postal
- Give estimate of response time

Aim to provide a named person and have that person be responsible for all access-related communications. This greatly reassures customers and assists in providing continuity of customer service if specific access requirements are being discussed. We recommend a dedicated access@ email address rather than generic info@ address where possible. If not able to provide a phone number, inform customers to provide a number for you to ring. A postal address might be useful for sending any access facility booking evidence required. We think customers with access-related queries should be responded to within 5 working days..

3. Download link for all access info

- Provide a link to a downloadable word file.

This is really useful, especially for people who use screen readers because of a vision impairment, as they can download this and not have to navigate back to the access info page.

4. Site Description

- General description of site including terrain and potential impact of weather
- Describe if any hard-standing pathways (or lack of)
- Describe number of stages / performance locations.
- Distances from accessible campsite to all major stages
- Distances from day customer parking if applicable
- Max distance from a point A to B across site for customers i.e. two stages at opposite ends of site.

This information is essential to enable potential customers to make informed decisions about buying tickets and planning their attendance – for example, regarding any mobility-related equipment they might require. Getting this right can cut down the number of direct customer enquiries ahead of the festival.

5. Bookable Access Facilities

- Free tickets for personal assistants.
 - › Describe scheme.

Providing free tickets in order to enable a disabled person to bring a personal assistant / support worker is a form of reasonable adjustment that enables people who require support linked to an impairment or long-term medical condition to attend your festival. It is reasonable for you to request evidence to support a request. We can provide further guidance on this topic.

- Access to viewing platforms / areas (if applicable)
 - › Describe locations of all viewing platforms
 - › Describe accreditation system
 - › Describe the stewarding system
 - › Inform customers if toilets will be at viewing platforms
 - › If you will not have accredited viewing platforms or areas, but will have them on site, describe them in a separate section following the bookable facilities.

We recommend implementing a 1 + 1 system via an accreditation system that provides the disabled person with a viewing platform wristband and a Personal Assistant lanyard to enable them to swap the person who joins them on the platform. We can provide further guidance on the design, placement, accreditation and stewarding of viewing platforms and areas.

- Accessible campsite (if applicable)
 - › Describe campsite location
 - › Describe facilities and assistance available
 - › Describe campervan policy
 - › If there is no need to book onto the accessible campsite, describe the facilities you can offer in this regard in a separate section following the bookable facilities.

We recommend having a dedicated accessible section of public camping that is in the most accessible location for both arrival/departure and access to the performance areas. We can provide a best practice guide to setting up an accessible campsite.

- Accessible parking (if applicable)
 - › Describe location
 - › Distance to wristband collection / day entrance
 - › Distance to accessible campsite (if applicable)
 - › Inform customers with they can drop-off baggage if the parking is away from camping
 - › If there is no need to book accessible parking, describe distances and how it will function in a separate section following the bookable facilities.

We recommend planning a dedicated section of parking that is as close as possible to the campsite / wristband collection point.

6. How To Apply

- Describe process
- Describe the forms of evidence accepted (if required)

We can provide further guidance on the subject of bookable access facilities and evidence collection, as well as a template access booking form.

7. Travel Guide

- Provide any relevant information regarding:
 - Accessible parking (if not included under bookable access facilities)
 - Taxi drop-off for customers going to any access wristband exchange / accessible campsite
 - Public transport
 - Shuttle transfers from transport hubs

If your festival features shuttle buses, check if any of them are accessible. Consider how you can provide an alternative accessible service if required. Drop-off locations should be planned to be as accessible as possible for customers needing to pick up access accreditation.

8. Arrival Guide

- Site opening times
 - Provide all relevant info including anything relating to early bird tickets and people wishing to gain access to the accessible campsite
- Arriving on site
 - Describe what customers should expect upon arrival – who will direct them, who they should approach if they have any questions etc.
- Wristband collection
 - Describe location in relation to parking / drop-off
 - Describe what customers will need with them in order to collect wristbands

Customers can be particularly anxious about arrival, particularly if they have accreditation to collect. Describing the process in advance alleviates this and cuts down on direct customer enquiries. If offering a paid upgrade early bird option, this should include anyone wishing to camp in accessible camping.

9. Toilets

- Describe toilet block / campsite / viewing platform provision (If not at viewing platforms, provide distance to nearest unit)

We recommend aiming to have accessible units in the accessible section of the campsite, in any family campsite, at every toilet block around the performance areas, one at a central first aid/welfare location that is kept clean at all times, and if possible at viewing platforms. All internal fittings should be fitted at no more than 1m from the floor. We advocate liaising with toilet companies in advance to ensure this is the case.

10. Medical and Welfare Services

- Describe services on site
- Describe distance from accessible campsite to medical and welfare services
- Describe fridge storage policy
- Invite people to contact you if they have any specific questions relating to a medical need

We recommend planning to enable people to store medication somewhere on site, ideally as close as possible to any accessible camping and within a step-free and 24-hour-accessible structure.

11. Access to Performance

- Describe any services offered – British Sign Language / Captioning / Audio Description
- If not offered, state that this is the case at the present time.

We ask festivals working on the Silver and Gold levels of our Charter of Best Practice to work towards providing access to the performance for Deaf and hard of people and people with vision impairments.

12. Assistance Dogs

- Describe policy

It is a legal requirement to accommodate an assistance dog on site. We recommend asking for proof that any dog is registered with an organisation that is a member of Assistance Dogs UK.

13. Strobe Lighting

- Describe festival policy

We urge all festival organisers to implement a strobe-free policy, as the presence of strobing, with or without warnings, poses a significant risk to people prone to strobe-related seizures. At the very least, prior and on-site warnings should be provided.

14. Other Info

- Mention any other services or facilities on site that might be relevant, for example the presence of any respite or sensory space

If you have questions about anything in this guide, contact:

Email: paul@attitudeiseverything.org.uk

Phone: 020 7383 7979 (Paul Hawkins, Festival Project Manager)

Next Steps


1. Contact us to request best practice guides including:

- Bookable Access Facilities
- Festival Viewing Platforms and Areas
- Accessible Campsites
- Festival Accessible Toilets
- Festival Accessible Parking

2. Schedule a team meeting

- Arrange some dedicated time to consider access and your festival
- Include people responsible for the website, customer service and on-site production
- Use this document as an agenda for discussion

5. Make a dedicated access info page on your website

- We recommend calling this page 'Access Info' alongside a suitable image such as a version of the internationally recognised wheelchair-user symbol: 
- Make this a standalone webpage rather than a section of a long FAQ

4. Gain the Access Starts Online stamp of approval

- Getting your online information sorted is the first step towards comprehensively tackling the subject of accessibility and your festival.
- Once signed-off, we will provide an Access Starts Online web banner and social media stamp.

5. Consider joining the Charter of Best Practice

- Once we have got the conversation started, the next step would be to consider signing up to work towards a Charter of Best Practice award.
- Meeting the requirements of the Access Starts Online campaign goes a long way towards the targets set out for the Bronze level of the Charter.

6. Arrange for your festival to be mystery shopped

- If you wish to provide a ticket (plus PA ticket if required), we can seek to recruit someone to attend and complete a detailed mystery shopping feedback form.

7. Invest in Disability Equality Training

- We offer industry-specific disability equality training, and have trained over 5,000 people.
- This is a chance to learn about your legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

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Attitude is Everything

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