

attitude
is everything

ACCESSIBLE EMPLOYMENT GUIDE



Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund

Beyond 
The Music

 **COMMUNITY
FUND**

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**WHAT YOU
SHOULD
KNOW ABOUT
THIS GUIDE**

10 things you should know about this guide

- 1** Attitude is Everything works in partnership with audiences, artists, volunteers and professionals to improve Deaf and disabled people's access to music and live events industries.

- 2** We aim to increase the number of Deaf and disabled people participating in music and to raise awareness of the barriers that Deaf and disabled people face, and to demonstrate how to overcome them.

- 3** We aim to celebrate and highlight best practice and give clear, practical guidance on what works and why.

- 4** This Accessible Employment Guide is part of our Beyond the Music Programme, a three year programme funded by the National Lottery Community Fund to improve accessibility to the music and live events industries for Deaf and disabled professionals, employees and volunteers.

- 5** The guide was created by a combination of our 21 years of experience working in the music and live events industry, plus a survey of 91 existing and aspiring Deaf and disabled professionals and a number of focus groups and conversations with both employers and Deaf and disabled people.



6 We provide a range of advice, training and consultancy to industry organisations about how to improve access to staff. For more information contact Paul Hawkins, Head of Volunteering and Skills Development at paul@attitudeiseverything.org.uk

7 We recognise that many music organisations do not have extensive HR departments. We've attempted to break this guidance down into simple lists and bitesize chunks so you can take individual areas one at a time. We recognise changes to organisational culture can be frightening and we encourage organisations not to be overwhelmed. It is okay if you cannot do everything at once and gradual positive change is still change.

8 This guidance is intended for employers but we have also created a Beyond the Music Professionals' Network, which is open to anyone who works in the music industry or who would like to do so and who identifies as Deaf, disabled, neurodiverse or has a long term physical or mental health condition. You can find out more at www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk/professionals

9 If you would like to support our professionals network with training, experience or mentorship please email Phoebe Roberts, Skills Development Manager at phoebe@attitudeiseverything.org.uk

10 Attitude is Everything are experts on accessibility, rather than HR or Employment Law, and you should always consult with an HR or Legal Specialist if you want specific information about your legal rights and responsibilities as an employer.

10

key concepts underpinning this guide

- 1** Anyone should be able to forge a career in the music and live events industries if they have the talent and drive to succeed.
- 2** People are disabled by the barriers that they encounter. If you address those barriers, nobody should feel excluded from your workplace.
- 3** Accessible working environments benefit everyone.
- 4** Inclusion means thinking about everyone who may be excluded.



- 5** Making a workplace accessible means thinking about every aspect of the working environment.
- 6** Meeting people's access requirements is vital to enabling all of your employees to perform at their best.
- 7** Disabled people are diverse and are the experts in what they need to make the working environment work for them.
- 8** Not everyone who needs reasonable adjustments within the workplace will identify with the term "disabled". How they identify does not affect their rights to an adjustment under the 2010 Equality Act.
- 9** People may not disclose their access requirements unless they feel they are in a safe environment to do so.
- 10** Collaboration is key. Good practice should be shared and employees should feel able to participate in making the working environment more accessible.

1 ORGANISATION

A working environment cannot be accessible if policies and processes do not work for you

2 ATTITUDE

A working environment cannot be accessible if you are made to feel uncomfortable by the people around you

3 PERCEPTION

A working environment cannot be accessible if people make assumptions about your abilities

4 REPRESENTATION

A working environment cannot be accessible if you see people you identify with failing to succeed

5 WORKSPACE

A working environment cannot be accessible if you are not able to comfortably access your workspace

6 COMMUNICATION

A working environment cannot be accessible if you are not informed or able to give feedback

7 IDENTITY

A working environment cannot be accessible if you do not feel able to be who you want to be in the workplace

8 WORTH

A working environment cannot be accessible if you do not feel valued for your contribution

What do you need for an accessible working culture?

Organisation	Attitudes	Perception	Representation
Do your policies take into account staff with access requirements?	Are staff treated with respect?	Does the organisation make assumptions about what people can do?	Can staff see people like them succeeding?
Are staff's lived experiences listened to and considered?	Are staff supported to perform as well as possible?	Does the organisation have fixed ideas of what good leaders look and sound like?	Are there diverse leaders?
Do staff have a say in what they do and how they do it?	Are staff able to raise concerns in a safe and constructive way?	Are staff judged based on stereotypes and surface level information?	Are diverse employees spread across the team – the Board, senior managers, line managers etc.
Do you do certain things simply because "that's what we've always done"?	Do managers give feedback in a supportive and constructive way?	Do managers know the strengths of the staff that they employ?	Do staff have the opportunity to make their views known and learn from people they can identify with?

Workspace	Communication	Identity	Worth
Can staff physically access their working environment?	Are staff able to access the information they need to know to succeed?	Do staff feel safe and comfortable around their colleagues?	Do staff feel valued and appreciated in what they do?
Is the working environment safe and comfortable?	Are staff able to understand the information they need to know to succeed?	Are staff able to be as open about themselves and their personal lives as they wish to be?	Are staff able to take pride in their work?
Are staff able to request reasonable adjustments where needed?	Are staff able to give feedback in a meaningful and constructive way?	Do staff have a choice as to whether to separate their work and personal lives?	Are staff able to afford to keep working for the organisation?
Do staff have control of their working environment?	Do staff find it difficult to be heard?	Can staff be proud of the organisation they work for?	Are staff compensated in a way that is fair, transparent and easily understood?

10

quotes on what it is like to be a disabled person in the music and live events industry¹

My work is completely tailored around the demands of my disability.

My income is sporadic due to health so I am always trying to make up for lost income when I am feeling a bit better.

I feel like my inability to network has seriously harmed my progress because the industry is so much about who you're friends with and being fresh in people's minds.

So few music industry jobs are 9 to 5 and I have had to leave so many jobs due to severe health crashes. Also so much work is insecure, so when you get ill there is no support.

My impairment is degenerative so there is the constant need for adaptation which can be very time-consuming. There has also been a big lack of understanding and cooperation from many live event venues thus making the task of doing my job more complex when even getting simply getting to the venue can be complicated enough.

One boss refused to acknowledge my disability because I could choose to travel to London to see gigs.

A company wanted me for my experience but were not interested in my disabilities.

One employer wanted me and some other disabled workers to meet the Chairman. I refused as it was a bit of a sham discussion without him followed by a photo opportunity with him to allow them to publish how great they were with disabled people in the company magazine. They weren't!

I often find job offers are suddenly unavailable when I ask about access adjustments.

People are often cautious, nervous or confused, but once they realise I can do the job I'm there to do we usually get on well.

1. All quotes taken from Attitude is Everything's 2021 Beyond the Music Snapshot Survey targeting people who work in the music and live events industries and who identify as Deaf, disabled or neurodivergent or have a long term physical or mental health condition. Not all respondents will identify with the term "disabled" but all would meet the definition of disabled as a protected characteristic under the 2010 Equality Act.

5

things we learned from surveying Deaf and disabled people in the music and live events industry

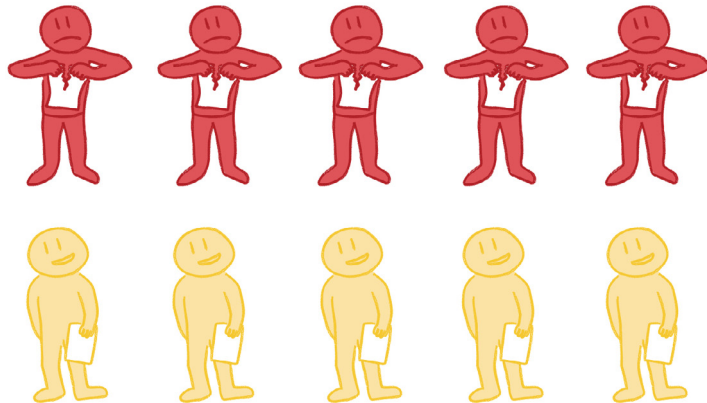


79%

of respondents believed that barriers related to their impairments had impacted on their career.

51%

had withdrawn from a job application process due to accessibility related reasons.



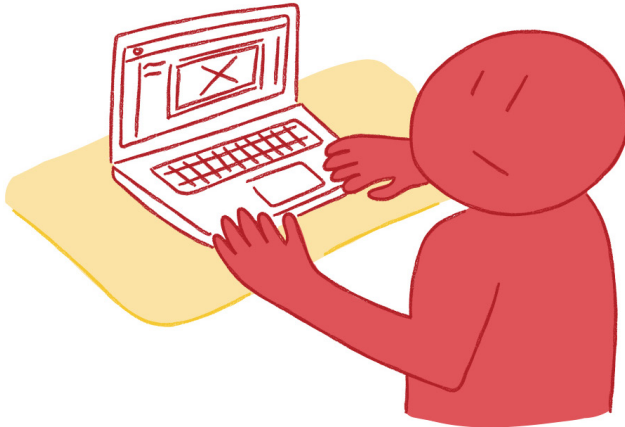
32%

of respondents were working less hours than they wanted to be working.

(Based on responses from 53 people who work in the music and live events industry and who identify as Deaf, disabled, neurodivergent or who have a physical or mental health condition. Survey conducted between September 2020 – February 2021)

5

things we learned from surveying Deaf and disabled people in the music and live events industry



51%

of respondents felt their impairments had been a factor in not getting a role that they had applied for.



27%

tended not to make employers aware of their impairments or health conditions.

A further **40%** did not always make their employers aware.

(Based on responses from 53 people who work in the music and live events industry and who identify as Deaf, disabled, neurodivergent or who have a physical or mental health condition. Survey conducted between September 2020 – February 2021)

5

things we learned from surveying Deaf and disabled people in the music and live events industry

Top 6 barriers respondents cited as having an impact on their career

Other people's perception of my capabilities	93%
My perception of my capabilities	69%
A lack of understanding about my impairment	60%
People's willingness to put me forward for opportunities	60%
Barriers to accessing networking opportunities	58%
A lack of adjustments to enable me to work to the best of my ability	55%

Top 6 reasons respondents cited for not making employers aware of their impairments or health conditions

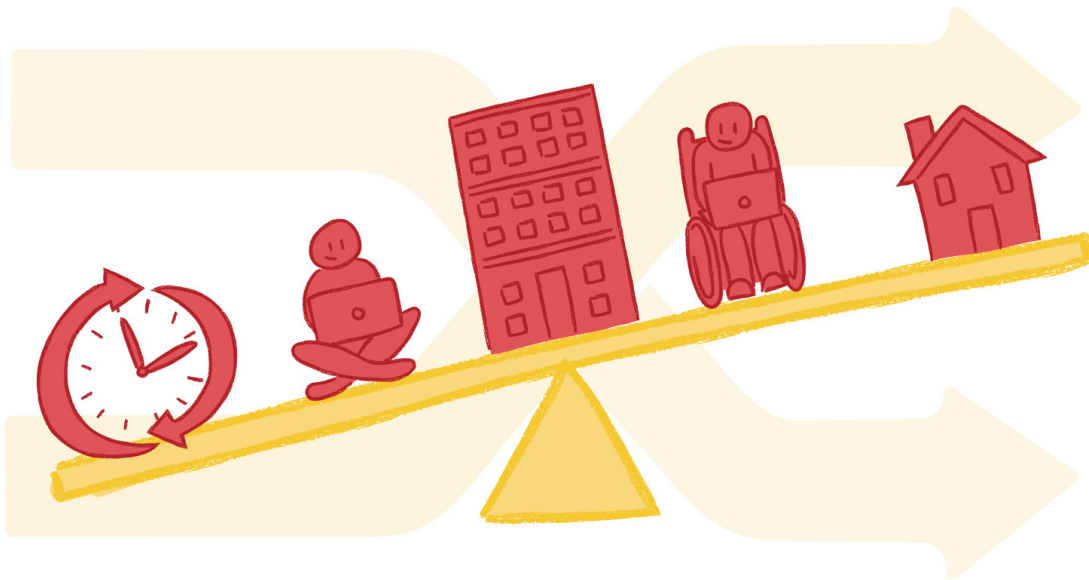
Worried about being stigmatised	65%
Worried employer would judge me differently	62%
Did not want to be perceived as different	56%
Worried employer would use it as a reason to stop employing me	54%
Worried employer would not respect me in the same way	52%
Did not feel it relevant to mention	39%

(Based on responses from 91 people who identify as Deaf, disabled, neurodivergent or who have a physical or mental health condition. Survey conducted between September 2020 – February 2021)

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steps to make your working environment work for everyone

- 1** Be as flexible as you can be in terms of where, when and how people do their jobs, as long as they are achieving what is needed.



- 2** Ensure you have a mechanism to get regular, honest constructive feedback from staff and that the feedback is listened to and considered by senior managers and directors. It is important to always be open to listening and learning. It is never nice when someone tells you that you could be doing better in any area but try to use any learning points to understand the challenges staff are facing and improve the working environment for everyone.

- 3** Set yourself an active target of ensuring your staff team is representative of your potential customer base. Include the “invisible audience” of people who are not currently customers. If you are not reaching a particular demographic of the community – and that demographic is also under-represented amongst your staff – the two may well be connected. For example, one in six people in the UK are disabled. If few people in your organisation have a shared experience in the needs of one in six people in the population, that should be considered a weakness within your organisational structure.

- 4** If your organisation is large enough, give a senior manager, HR person or board member the responsibility of advocating for accessibility and staff welfare. This should ideally be someone who can be independent from the line management structure or any disciplinary procedures for the person they advocate for.

- 5** Ensure you have a transparent pay policy and salary structure where staff understand how their salary compares with their colleagues and the reasons for any differences.

6 Simplify language in all your HR policies and all other work related documents. Avoid unnecessary jargon or needlessly complex terms. Ensure all documents can easily be made large print and can be read by screen readers, use Sans Serif fonts and good colour contrasting.

7 Your website dictates your public image. Shout about your commitment to accessibility, equality and diversity. Talk about the adjustments you make for disabled customers or staff members and ensure any photographs reflect the diversity of your team. Ensure your website is accessible for people who use screen readers and assistive technology. Use the [Disability Confident Employment Toolkit's](#) "Basic Guide for Accessible Communications" as a guide.

8 Make sure you have a training, progression and development structure in place where staff have opportunities to learn the skills they need to progress to senior management levels.

9 Look out for warning signs of problems within the organisational structure - such as a high turnover rate, excessive absences, drops in productivity or staff tending to leave particular roles or departments – and use them as opportunities to check that job descriptions are realistic and line managers are fully trained to support their staff.

10 You might not have the financial resources to make your existing premises physically accessible overnight. Do everything you can in your existing premises and ensure you think about physical accessibility in all future builds, renovations or relocations.

5

quotes from our respondents on flexible working

The level of flexibility I have is great with my company. We can adjust accordingly to promote a better work/life balance.

We had a very flexible approach to working hours. As long as you did your contracted hours you could be flexible when you achieved them. The role had areas of the week you needed to be working – on sales for example.

The company I worked for had a very flexible approach around when you started and finished and trusted you to ensure that you were present for the key areas of the day/week.

A lack of flexible start times have certainly been an issue before, along with micromanaging the way I work.

My employer helped me by giving me flexible hours reflecting fatigue levels, provision of technology for access reasons and administrative support in employing PAs.

ACCESSIBLE RECRUITMENT

10 steps for an accessible recruitment process

- 1** Ask all candidates to complete an equalities monitoring form. This information should be collected anonymously and separately to the application. It should not be seen by anyone on the interview panel but should be analysed to assess whether your applicants are representative of the wider community.

- 2** Use the information from the monitoring to find out if there are sections of the community who are not applying for your jobs and ensure you advertise future jobs as widely as possible, including advertising in places that reach specific audiences. Don't be afraid to experiment with where you advertise to find out what works.

- 3** Consider whether an interview is the best way to assess the skills needed for a particular job. Consider whether options such as work trials or practical tests might be more suitable finding out a candidates' strengths.

- 4** Ensure all job adverts state that you welcome applications from Deaf and disabled people and include a link to information about the access within the physical space and examples of the reasonable adjustments that you could make.

- 5** Ensure all adverts include an opportunity to email or telephone a named contact to ask questions about the role. Only being able to telephone or only being able to email can be a barrier for some Deaf and disabled people so offer both contact options to give people a choice. Ensure that all applicants – internal or external – are given the same information that you would give to any other applicant if asked.



6 You might decide to interview all candidates who meet the essential criteria who identify as being disabled. This can reduce discrimination but is a mitigation of failure rather than a mark of success. The ultimate goal should be to have a fair and accessible recruitment process where candidates are genuinely assessed solely on their own merits.

7 Where possible, aim for three people on an interview panel and, if you are the lead recruiter, try to recruit colleagues whose views you respect but who will think differently to you and will spot aspects that you might miss. Ensure there is at least one on the panel that you do not line manage and who you can trust to give impartial feedback.

8 Be wary of psychometric and AI tests, unless you feel confident that they are designed accessibly, that you understand what they are designed to measure and how they measure it, there is clear, independent and empirical evidence of their effectiveness. Many psychometric and AI tests have not been validated as producing results for Deaf and disabled and these may discriminate disabled people within the process.

9 If your premises cannot be made accessible, provide clear information about the layout of the building so potential candidates have clear information to decide whether to apply. Consider any reasonable adjustments you could make, whether candidates could work from home, or from an alternative location. If a candidate is working from home, ensure you find ways to include them as part of the team.

10 If you are using an external recruitment agency, make sure they know that it is important to you that the recruitment is accessible to Deaf and disabled people and ensure that they put steps in place to ensure this happens.

6

quotes from our respondents on recruitment and selection

Some organisations have a guaranteed interview scheme if you're disabled but it's not really clear how you don't meet the minimum requirements for the role.

Telephoning not an option for me because of communication problems and misunderstandings.

Often the list of essential duties is the most inaccessible thing - I have been told there's no point applying or jobs in the past when I can do 99% of the essential duties and all of the desired duties because of my visual impairment limiting working at height and driving

They had a panel of 4 interviewers and I was seated opposite in a cavernous room and it was difficult to hear some questions and I ended up asking to repeat the questions.. The room was totally inappropriate for the interview

Employers need to have more of an understanding of disabilities and if they are going to refuse to put additional things in place then there needs to be an understanding of what that can do to someone's mental health who already has several barriers.

The company I worked for talked a lot about inclusion and that but never had people in leadership roles with those impairments. There was a reluctance to give opportunities to those characteristics, so you reached a level and stayed there.

10

steps for accessible job applications

- 1** Plan the job carefully before advertising. Make sure you understand exactly what you need the person in the role to do, how it fits into the organisation. Think about whether it is essential to be based in a particular place, whether it can be remote and whether there are specific days you need someone.
.....
- 2** Make sure you understand the job description. Show it to a colleague who is not familiar with the work and ask them to confirm that the job description explains to them what is required. Once you have completed the job description and person specification, review it to take out any jargon or needlessly complex language and use the simplest language possible that clearly explains what is required.
.....
- 3** Only include something in the person specification if it is genuinely necessary for the role. If you are copying something in from a previous job description, carefully consider whether it really applies here too. Only include qualifications if they are actually relevant to the job and avoid general terms that simply describe the bare minimum that any employer wants from any employee (such as “hard working”, “punctual” or “good attitude”).
.....
- 4** Once you have completed the person specification, review each point and consider whether someone easily write a short paragraph of text that clearly explains whether they have that skill. If you are asking for things that cannot be objectively measured, find an alternative way to phrase the ask.
.....
- 5** Think very carefully before including a set number of years of experience. Is what you are looking for actually someone who is skilled at a particular task or role rather than someone has done it for an arbitrary length of time? If so, rephrase what you are looking for to accurately reflect that.
.....

6 Be as transparent as you can be about the job application process. Explain to candidates what you want to see on the application forms - providing an example answer if possible – and explain how the applications will be scored and shortlisted. This avoids disadvantaging people who simply have never been told how to fill out a job application well.

7 Where possible, design your application process so that you have an anonymous screening process where candidates are shortlisted for interview based only on their explanation of how they explain their skills and experience in the application and the candidate's CV, education and employment history are not seen until the shortlisting is complete. This means that candidates are shortlisted solely on whether they can show they have the skills to do the job and avoids candidates being disadvantaged by factors such as gaps on their CV or educational accomplishments that are not relevant to their role.

8 Ensure that your applications are accessible with screen readers. Try to keep the formatting as simple as possible so that candidates don't need to negotiate the layout of the form as well as trying to answer the questions.

9 Give candidates the option of submitting their application in alternative formats. For example, some candidates may prefer to submit a video or an audio recording of themselves explaining how they meet the person spec. If someone submits a video for a role where you are screening anonymously, simply ask somebody who is not involved with the recruitment to transcribe the answers into a written document.

10 Ask all candidates if they require reasonable adjustments in order to attend the interview. Where possible, the person who collects and arranges the adjustments should be separate from the interview panel and information should only be shared with the panel as necessary.

10

steps for accessible interviews

- 1** Have a discussion as a panel prior to the interview to ensure you all have a shared understanding of the role and the key skills you are looking for. Be honest about whether you feel it is a role where you can develop someone's skills or a role where you need a candidate to hit the ground running. If you recruit an inexperienced candidate into a role where you are going to stigmatise them for their lack of experience, you are simply setting them up to fail.

- 2** Send all candidates the interview questions at least five days before the interview. Not only does this meet some candidates' accessibility requirements but it will mean that you are finding out the answers candidates give when they have time to consider and research their answers. This can give you a much more relevant picture of their skills. Be sure to also give candidates advance notice of any interview tasks as this will give candidates a chance to tell you about any access requirements.

- 3** Make sure that you have a transparent and defined process for scoring the interview questions and explain to the candidates in advance how they will be assessed. This ensures everyone understands what is expected of them and reduces the risk of favouring candidates who are good at answering job interview questions rather than the most skilled for the role. It also means that all members of the interview panel understand what they are looking for.

- 4** Provide as much information ahead of the interview as possible. Explain who will be on the panel and what their roles are, the length of the interview, what type of room the interview will take place in, information about dress code, parking and public transport options, information about any busy periods or times when you know there may be delays, how to enter the building and any useful access information such as the location of accessible toilets. The more information you give people, the more likely it is they will arrive relaxed, prepared and able to represent themselves as well as possible.

- 5** Only ask questions that relate directly to the person specification. Think about how you would answer each question. If you don't know the perfect answer you would like candidates to give, it may not be the right question. Avoid "quirky" questions or any question where it would be hard to objectively assess the candidates' answers.

6 Before the interviews commence, agree as a panel a consistent approach to how and when you would ask a candidate to expand on an answer to ensure all candidates are given the same opportunity to perform to their best. If you do want to ask a specific candidate an individual question this should be done in a way where it does not form any part of the scoring process.

7 When the interview begins, welcome candidates, introduce yourself and the rest of the panel and explain what to expect. Remind candidates they are welcome to take a moment before answering if they feel nervous or wish to think about their answers and explain that you will be writing notes so may not look directly at the candidate. Remember somebody who lipreads as part of their access requirements will need you to face them when you speak to them.

8 Be aware of the Halo and reverse Halo effects and that your judgement of someone is likely to be shaped by your first impression of them. If you find yourself reflexively awarding a candidate very high or very low scores, take a moment to check yourself to ensure you are scoring objectively rather than letting first impressions affect your judgement. Try your best not to avoid being dazzled by buzzwords or jargon.

9 If you want to know information about interviewing people with specific impairments, refer to the “interviewing candidates with disabilities” guidance in the [Disability Confident Employment Toolkit](#)

10 Take the time to give feedback to any unsuccessful candidates. This may be crucial in ensuring someone who is not experienced in attending interviews learns how to be more successful next time. Whilst it may not always be possible, even try to give short written feedback to candidates you do not invite to interview. This can also serve as an important “sense check”. Explaining why you have not invited someone to interview or offer them a job can ensure you are also clear on the reasoning for your decision.

10

steps for an accessible induction process

- 1** Make it a standard part of your pre-employment process to ask all employees if they require any reasonable adjustments. Include information about [Access to Work](#) so that, if required, the employee can work with you to put an application in at the earliest possible stage.
.....
- 2** Only ask staff to complete a pre-employment health questionnaire if it is relevant to the role. Where a health questionnaire identifies a medical condition, discuss with the candidate whether they know what reasonable adjustments they need and what has worked well in previous roles. Do not refer a potential employee for an occupational health assessment unless you and they have agreed this is helpful to them in understanding the reasonable adjustments they will need, or unless this is standard for all new employees. Avoid any circumstance where a disabled person is waiting longer to start a new role than a non-disabled person would, due to a wait for an occupational health assessment.
.....
- 3** Give clear information in advance about expectations for the first day, including the time of arrival, dress code, who to report to and what to expect. Include access information about the building the person is working in – irrespective of whether that person has declared an impairment – and ensure you include a telephone number in case of any problems on the day.
.....
- 4** Ensure you have a structured induction process with regular meetings and reviews. Ensure the new starter has clear information about what is expected of them and has plenty of chances to ask questions.
.....
- 5** Provide clear information about the organisation, the team and how the new starter's role fits with the rest of the organisation. Explain the culture and the values that are important to the organisation and make it a habit to talk about your approach to accessibility and inclusivity – even where the new starter has not declared an impairment.
.....

6 Introduce the new starter to the rest of team members and key contacts across the organisation and arrange for them to have a one to one meeting with everyone they are working closely with to get to know them and find out about their work.

7 Ensure the new starter has access to all policies and get written confirmation that they have read any key ones (such as Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity, Leave and Absence and anti-Bullying and Harassment Policies)

8 Ensure that the new starter is encouraged to come forward with any questions and concerns, including who to approach if they do not feel comfortable speaking to their line manager.

9 Consider pairing a new starter with a more experienced “buddy” or “mentor” who can support them during their first weeks in the role.

10 If you are a large organisation where this applies, explain networks that the new starter might like to join – such as if there are networks for women, black and ethnically diverse staff members, disabled people, LGBT+ People or other networks. Also let them know of any specific Champions, such as mental health or accessibility champions.

6

quotes from our respondents about disclosing impairments

My disability is not widely known which means it's rare for people to understand, and to describe my disability is very personal and uncomfortable.

Rheumatoid arthritis is often an invisible illness and not "what their nan has"!

When I mention to people my visual impairment I find they then distrust me as having any value within the working team.

It is frustrating when people think that one person's experience with a condition is the same as someone else's with same condition. We can have very different challenges, severity, inconsistencies etc.

I feel like mental health conditions and neurodiversity still carry a great deal of stigma and ignorance that make it difficult to talk about and be understood by others and I have only recently started opening up to selected people, mostly to ease my burden so that I can be more myself without constantly masking.

I'm most concerned about being denied employment due to misconceptions around my disability therefore I have to decide in the future whether or not I disclose.

5

quotes from our respondents about reasonable adjustments

When I have asked for time off for hospital or Audiology appointments - I get it.

I am deaf on my left hand side and am always open about my disability within the work environment. Employers have always been helpful and understand and want to help when possible. In an interview situation I am not afraid to say I need to sit on the right side of people when possible.

I'm not very good at asking. I usually just try to "get on with it" and sometimes make life harder for myself rather than asking for help.

I have not dared to ask for adjustments.

A company allowed me to bring on drivers for jobs so I can still work as a tour manager without the driving.

ACCESSIBILITY IN THE WORKPLACE

10 steps to embed accessibility into the working environment

- 1** Encourage and support staff to take regular breaks. Try to avoid a situation where a staff member has back-to-back meetings for more than two hours at a time and encourage people to spend time away from their desks periodically throughout the day.

- 2** Understand that everyone works differently. Some staff members may work steadily and constantly throughout the day whilst others may work in shorter bursts of rapid productivity. Where possible, assess performance based on output rather than technique.

- 3** Wherever possible, make flexible hours and the option to work from home on occasion a standard part of your employment offer for any employee. This can help staff manage their work-life balance, reduce anxiety and gives staff autonomy to decide how to perform at their best.

- 4** Ensure all staff members have a senior staff member, board member or member of the HR team they can talk to about accessibility or welfare who is not part of their direct line manage process and would not be involved in any potential disciplinary processes. This person should then be able to raise common themes or advocate for a particular individual without revealing their identity (as long as the employee has not raised safeguarding concerns or admitted misconduct).

- 5** Speak openly and positively about reasonable adjustments. Make offering adjustments a standard part of your organisational approach and celebrate them as a way to help staff perform at their best.

6 Encourage staff to block emails when on leave and avoid sending emails outside of their office hours. Where a manager or employee chooses to stay late and write emails, encourage them to save the emails as drafts and send them the next working day.

7 Encourage teams to have open conversations about the environment and conditions they work best in and what helps them to perform at their best. Use these conversations to design agreements on office and meeting etiquette.

8 Make discussions of wellbeing a regular feature of staff meetings. Encourage staff and managers to talk about their wellbeing and try to create an environment where staff members feel able to let others know if they need support.

9 Discourage a culture of presenteeism. If staff at any level of the organisation are regularly working excessive hours of unpaid overtime, treat this as both a risk to mental wellbeing and a barrier to accessibility. Try to understand the reasons why the overtime is being worked and, where needed, adjust the job description towards more realistic expectations.

10 Encourage all senior managers to lead by example by taking regular leave and using up TOIL, avoiding replying to emails outside of work time, taking breaks regularly and, if comfortable doing so, talking about how they manage their own wellbeing in the workplace.

10

steps for accessible line management

- 1** Hold regular one to ones with the staff that you manage. Ensure that they have a chance to discuss their targets, any concerns, ask about their wellbeing and anything they need to better perform their role. Make a written record of what's been discussed and ask them to confirm by signature or email that they feel that your record reflects their interpretation of the conversation.
.....
- 2** If a staff member raises a need for a reasonable adjustment, create and store (with their permission) a confidential record of what has been agreed. This means that this information can be transferred in the event of a change of line manager so the employee does not need to explain everything from scratch.
.....
- 3** Keep a record of any concerns fed back by staff and be sure to take them seriously. If one staff member raises a number of concerns about the working environment, do not discount the possibility that they may be the person who has the confidence to say things that other members of staff are also thinking.
.....
- 4** Make talking about wellbeing, access requirements and reasonable adjustments a standard part of your conversations with your team. Ensure that all staff members know that they should not be worried about making a request for a reasonable adjustment and this will be welcomed as a sign of a wish to perform well in the workplace rather than seen as a problem or something outside of the ordinary.
.....
- 5** If staff require a workplace assessment, they may be anxious that this will be used as a tool to catch them out or pigeonhole them as a nuisance. Reassure them that the results will be used positively to help them do their job as well as possible. Never use an occupational health assessment as a tool to catch someone out or manage them out of the organisation as this will undermine confidence for other staff members.
.....

6 Avoid excessive clock monitoring, and understand that toilet breaks may take longer for a team member with impairments. If a staff member is regularly late arriving or from returning from breaks, discuss the reasons with them with a view to finding solutions rather than immediately treating it as a disciplinary matter.

7 Regularly review the workload of the staff you are managing and ensure that the targets are realistic and achievable and that staff are supported to achieve them.

8 Never dismiss a concern that someone you line manage raises as “simply the way the system works”. Ensure that you pass any feedback to whoever is responsible for HR (preserving anonymity wherever possible). It may be several staff are raising the same seemingly-trivial issue and that there is a quick and easy solution.

9 Respect the confidentiality of the people you line manage. Do not discuss potentially sensitive matters, including declarations of impairments or access requirements, with other managers unless there is a clear and operational reason to do so. If you do feel the need to share potentially sensitive information with another line manager, try to make the individual concerned aware of this first.

10 Show the same respect to the people that you line manage that you would like them to have for you. Do your best to avoid making any comments to others in the team about them that you would not be comfortable with them hearing.

5

quotes from our respondents on good and bad line management

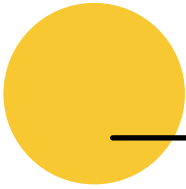
My employer and his client have experience with disabled people and that's contributed to my wonderful experience after disclosing.

I guess there have been times I've been made to feel like I have to do something even though I'm unwell because of the hassle it'd cause them to change/cancel things.

My immediate line manager has always been helpful, supportive, signed off loopsets for my mobile and adjusted when we used Zoom etc. It was leaders higher up who I had challenges with.

Line managers certainly allow me a little more room to do things the way I do them, knowing that they'll still be done well, just a little differently on the way.

My manager was not willing to compromise and made me feel guilty and that I couldn't do my job properly.



Words our respondents used to describe how employers and line managers reacted to their impairment

Knowledgeable
Confused
Uncomfortable
Willing to learn
Patronising Discriminatory
Flexible Confident to let people know **Hostile**
Supportive
Inappropriate
Overbearing
Helpful



10

steps to take if a staff member acquires or declares an impairment

- 1** Do not appear panicked or flustered or treat the impairment as problem or nuisance. Treat it as an everyday matter of a staff member requesting support.

- 2** Reassure the staff member that you want to support them to do their job well, that you will take their access requirements seriously and that the impairment will be treated positively.

- 3** Be matter of fact – avoid being overly sympathetic or treating the impairment as a disaster or tragedy. This may not reflect how the person feels and, if it does, reinforcing that feeling can be stigmatising rather than supportive.

- 4** When asking any questions, always ask about what someone’s access requirements are rather than the nature of their impairment or condition. You don’t need to know personal information about the exact biological effect a condition has on someone – you just need to know what they need from you to allow them to work effectively.

- 5** Before asking a question, consider if you are asking it because you need to know the answer or if you are asking it because you are curious. If the latter, it may not be an appropriate question to ask in a work setting.

- 6** Ask the staff member if they know about [Access to Work](#). This is a government scheme through which Deaf and disabled people can claim the costs of reasonable adjustments. Disabled staff members may not know about this, especially if they have recently acquired an impairment.

- 7** Learn about the access requirements the person needs by talking to them. You might decide to research on the impairment but do not assume an individual will follow an internet case study.

- 8** Ask the person what language they use to describe their condition and reflect that language back to them. If they consider themselves to be disabled, don’t shy away from the term or treat it as a negative word. However, if they do not, they may not be comfortable with that label.

- 9** Discuss with the person before sharing information about their impairment with others. Find out what they are comfortable being shared and who they are comfortable with it being shared with. If you feel it is essential to tell your manager or the HR Department, make them aware of that first and agree with them what you will say. Do not share personal details about a staff member with anyone if you do not have an operational reason to do so.

- 10** Treat the individual as the expert on themselves and what they need but do not pressure them to be a “poster child” for diversity in your organisation or expect them to be the organisational expert on all types of impairment.

3

quotes from our respondents on access to work

I had an initial assessment & the company were helpfully supportive of this process.

I have literally just accessed it for the first time. They are providing me with a desk and chair which is so great.

I guess I myself never considered looking into access schemes because I don't necessarily consider neurodiversity a disability, although it certainly affects every area of my life and my place in our society.

10

steps for accessible absence management

- 1** Be aware of the facts around disability and absence. Multiple global studies, including the UN's 2007 Report on Decent Work for Persons With Disabilities have found that disabled staff members consistently take less sick leave than non-disabled staff members. Do not fear that employing disabled people will lead to excessive sickness leave as this not likely to be the case.

- 2** Consider whether your absence management procedure gives staff the wrong incentives. Staff members who continue to work because they fear being penalised if they take time off when they are unwell may infect other staff members and cause additional absence, or work themselves to a point where they end up taking much more time off work.

- 3** Never make someone work if they are not well enough to so but do allow flexibility. If a staff member would prefer to work from home because they feel a little under the weather, this might prevent an absence in the longer term.

- 4** Where possible, encourage staff with respiratory infections to work from home or take a sick day to reduce the possibility of infection spreading around the office, especially as some staff could have compromised immune systems.

- 5** Introduce a Disability Leave Policy that treats planned absence due to disability (e.g. medical appointments, tests or procedures that are directly linked to the impairment) as a reasonable adjustment and does not record these as part of sick leave or compel staff to take annual leave.

- 6** Where a certain number of absences triggers an absence management procedure, it may be a reasonable adjustment to raise the threshold if someone has declared an impairment which may lead to unplanned absences.

- 7** Where an absence management procedure is triggered, initially use this as an opportunity to support the staff member around their attendance rather than immediately treating it as a disciplinary matter.

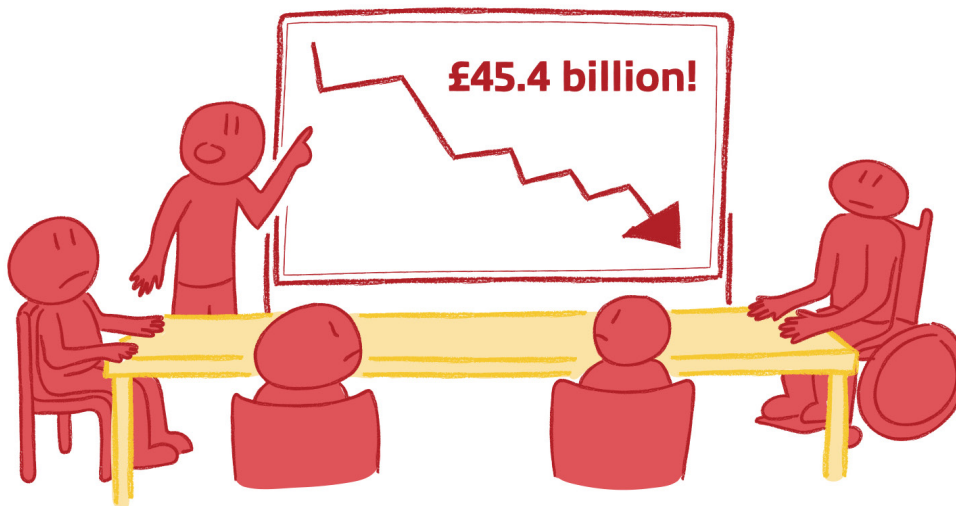
- 8** When a staff member returns from absence, check in on them and work with them to ensure they return in a structured way. Ensure they have any reasonable adjustments that they need, which might include short term adjustment to hours or responsibilities or proactive steps being taken to support them and reduce the risk of future absences.

- 9** Keep an eye out for patterns in sick leave. For example, if a lot of staff are taking time off sick from a particular department or at a particular level, this might be an indication of inaccessibility within the working culture.

- 10** Discourage all staff from boasting about their ability to work through sickness or treating others' sick leave as a sign of weakness or poor commitment. Ensure that senior staff lead by example.

10 steps for accessible meetings

- 1** Before you organise a meeting, make sure that you understand the reason why you are calling a meeting and that a meeting is the best to achieve that goal. A 2019 report by Doodle found that the UK economy loses £45.40 billion a year through unnecessary meetings and that 44% of employees felt poorly organised meetings were affecting their ability to perform their roles.



- 2** Think carefully about who you actually need in a meeting. Inviting too many unnecessary people to a meeting will have a negative impact on decision making. Failing to invite key people may mean more meetings are needed to complete the work.

- 3** Think about where the meeting takes place and whether it will be physical or virtual, or whether it can be a hybrid. Some people may find virtual meetings difficult due to their access requirements whilst others will find it more accessible to attend in person.

- 4** Prior to any meeting, ensure you have thought about what you want to get from the meeting and ensure the meeting remains focused on that goal.

- 5** Always send out a written agenda in advance of the meeting. This ensures everyone understands what the meeting is about and can help anyone whose access requirements include needing to know what to expect in advance to get the most out of a meeting. During the meeting, refer back to the agenda to ensure you stay on track.

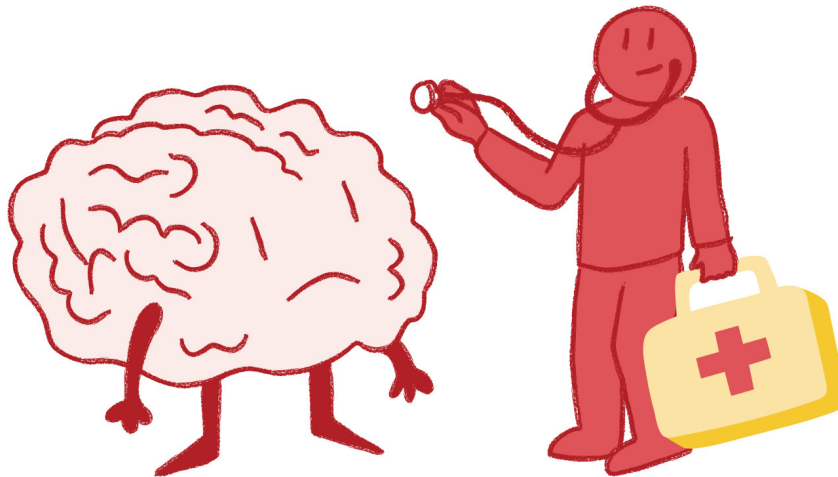
- 6** Take a break in any meeting that lasts longer than an hour and try to avoid letting meetings run longer than two hours or scheduling meetings back-to-back without breaks.
.....
- 7** Make sure whoever is chairing the meeting monitors participants and checks that everyone is following what is being discussed. Encourage people to ask questions if they are not sure. The Chair should also ensure that the meeting is not dominated by the most outspoken people and that everyone gets a chance to have their say.
.....
- 8** In any meeting, have a "Parking Area". This is a document or a space on a flipchart or whiteboard where you can note down any topics that come up that are not relevant to the meeting's agenda to ensure they are discussed later. This keeps meetings on track whilst ensuring that people's other concerns and questions are not forgotten or ignored.
.....
- 9** At the start of the meeting, give people permission to take a 5 minute break from meeting at any point. Knowing that it is possible to leave can reduce anxiety and mean people feel more comfortable staying in the room.
.....
- 10** Write down your meeting etiquette – including the above and any reasonable adjustments – as an accessible meeting policy and ensure it is always followed within the organisation.
.....

10

steps for positive mental health in the workplace

- 1** Regularly review job descriptions to ensure that expectations of staff members are clear and realistic.
-

- 2** Arrange for line managers to have Mental Health First Aid Training to enable them to recognise when employees need support around mental health.



- 3** Develop a Mental Health Policy that explains how the organisation will support the mental health of its staff. You could do this by using the [Health and Safety Executive's Management Standards for Mental Health](#) or the Mental Health Foundation's [Guide to Managing Mental Health in the Workplace](#).
-

- 4** Treat workplace stress as you would any other health and safety concern in the workplace. Keep a record – with identifying information removed – of incidents where staff miss work through stress or report concerns about the stress they are experiencing. Regularly review this to see if there are departments, seniority levels or areas of the workforce that are experiencing an increased amount of stress and, where this is the case, investigate and find strategies to manage it.
-

- 5** Encourage all staff members to complete a wellbeing action plan that discusses how to identify early warning signs that they are becoming stressed or experiencing poor mental health and allows them to explain how they would like their line manager and colleagues to support them when they experience stress.
-

- 6** Regularly survey staff about the level of stress that they are experiencing. Examine if there are policies, processes or practices that are creating avoidable stress and work to remove or reduce unnecessary stress wherever possible.
.....
- 7** Encourage peer support networks where staff members with lived experience of mental health conditions are able to meet and discuss strategies to manage mental health successfully in the workplace, and find sources of support if there are concerns or suggestions that they would like to raise.
.....
- 8** Allow flexibility in working practices. An option of home working or an adjustment to hours can sometimes make a huge difference to someone who is experiencing stress or anxiety.
.....
- 9** Where a staff member has an absence related to mental health, support them to return to work with a Back to Work Plan. This might include regular meetings and check-ups, a phased return to work to build their time back up, adjustments to work patterns to manage stress and strategies for communicating and addressing early warning signs in the future.
.....
- 10** Bring in a Mental Health Champions Scheme where individuals within different departments are given information and training and are tasked with promoting positive wellbeing in the workplace. The Champions should meet regularly to discuss ideas for improving the working culture.
.....

10

steps for accessibility for freelancers

- 1** Before you hire a freelancer, ensure you have a clear understanding of what the project is that you are recruiting them for and what you want them to achieve. If you are recruiting a freelancer without understanding what you expect from them, you are likely to create a situation where neither you nor they are satisfied with the outcome.

- 2** Make it a default to ask freelancers about access requirements before your initial meeting and, once the contract is agreed, ahead of them starting the role. Asking about access requirements before the contract is agreed may result in the freelancer feeling unable to be honest for fear of losing the contract.

- 3** Have a clear Freelancing Policy so that all freelancers know what their rights and responsibilities are and that freelancers are treated fairly across the organisation.

- 4** For each contract, make sure you have a written agreement, timelines, expectations and what you expect from the freelancer to know that they have succeeded. Ensure that you agree working hours and that it is realistic that the freelancer can do what is needed in the hours that are agreed.



- 5** Ensure a freelancer knows who their line manager is and their key contacts are, and that those key contacts know why the freelancer has been brought in and what they need to do in their role to support that work.

6 Ensure freelancers have regular check-in meetings and opportunities to provide any feedback or concerns.

7 Have a standard Freelance Pack that you give to any freelancers, which includes information such as how to submit timesheets, your policy around access requirements and expectations around administration. Best practice is to provide information for first time freelancers too – such as how tax works – as new freelancers may not have been told this information before.

8 Tell your freelancers about [Access to Work](#), which is a government scheme where disabled workers may be able to get financial support for reasonable adjustments. Many Deaf and disabled freelancers do not know that they can apply for this.

9 If a freelancer is working onsite, ensure everything they need is agreed and understood by your onsite team. For example, some disabled freelancers may need a personal assistant or essential companion to assist them. This person should be provided a pass and given the same access as the freelancer on site.

10 Pay can be an equality issue. Do your best to pay freelancers as quickly as reasonably possible rather than waiting for the maximum contracted period.

5

quotes from our respondents on freelancing

I work more hours than I probably should factoring in my health. But because all my freelance roles are inconsistent or poorly paid I have to push myself.

I am self employed but do find the grind the industry puts on freelancers for each job is quite heavy.

If you flag up issues about your health that might mean extra work for the clients. You fear they'd pick another easier option.

I'm less capable of taking on opportunities that are great for exposure or experience because I always have to consider health repercussions. You're still made to feel awkward when you request fair payment for some roles/opportunities that are desirable that many (able) people would be happy to do unpaid.

Everyone has to prove themselves when doing freelance work, but I feel that I have to provide an extra layer of proof which is hard work.

10

steps for accessibility for volunteers

- 1** Volunteers can be a vital resource for an organisation and volunteering can be a great way for people to give back to their local community, support their favourite organisations, learn skills and make friends. However it is vital that volunteers are appreciated and not exploited. Ensure that volunteering is never used as a way to get free labour from something that should be considered paid work and ensure that you are respectful and fair to your volunteers and don't make unreasonable demands on their time or commitment.

- 2** Advertise on your volunteering materials that you welcome Deaf and disabled volunteers. Avoid generic statements that could be seen to exclude disabled people such as "all volunteers must be in good physical health."

- 3** Ensure all your volunteering materials are written in plain English, screen reader friendly, can be enlarged online and try to provide information in accessible formats. What is possible may depend on the size of your organisation but large organisations should consider Easy Read, BSL or Braille being available on request.

- 4** State on your publicity materials and applications that you will make reasonable adjustments and give examples of the type of adjustment you might make. Many reasonable adjustments that are simple to implement can make a real difference. This includes offering volunteers access to a seat, offering to make adjustments to shift times or giving volunteers an opportunity to take regular breaks.

- 5** Make it a default part of the volunteer application process to ask what adjustments someone needs for volunteering and if they need any other reasonable adjustments for any training they may need to attend.

- 6** Allowing volunteers to bring an essential companion or personal assistant can make a huge difference to many Deaf and disabled volunteers. It would not be a reasonable expectation for you to source a personal assistant for someone but you should give them permission to bring an assistant if required.

- 7** Actively advertise volunteering opportunities to Deaf and disabled organisations, both nationally and within your local area.

- 8** Pair new volunteers with an experienced partner who can assist them to learn their roles and answer any questions.

- 9** Remember that you have a duty of pastoral care and safeguarding towards any volunteer. Ensure volunteers know who to approach for support on site and that you have a clear safeguarding policy.

- 10** Put a system in place where volunteers are routinely told about paid opportunities that arise in your organisation so that they have a chance to apply if they wish to do so.

10

ways you can help champion access across the music industry

- 1** Challenge negative attitudes about disability. If you hear someone express that disabled people cannot succeed in their industry, or that disabled people should hide their impairments for their own protection, ask the person why they think that and explain your own organisation's commitment to accessibility.



- 2** Treat the use of inappropriate and discriminatory language relating to disability as seriously as you would inappropriate and discriminatory language relating to any other type of inequality. You can learn more about appropriate language around disability by booking Attitude is Everything's Disability Equality Training. Contact Gideon@attitudeiseverything.org.uk
- 3** Frame discussions of access and disability positively. Avoid speaking about disability as though it is a tragedy and talk about it as another part of everyday life.
- 4** Look at how your organisation makes decisions around disability and other types of inequality. Avoid situations where people who are not impacted by a form of inequality are making decisions on behalf of those who are.
- 5** Take mental health and stress seriously. Avoid treating stress or other symptoms related to mental health as an individual weakness and do everything you can to promote good mental wellbeing in the workplace.

6 Avoid inadvertently pitting one type of inequality against another. You don't need to prioritise one type of inequality over another. You can instead work to make your environment inclusive for everyone.

7 Don't let a desire for good publicity lure you into promises you can't maintain. A day celebrating disabled people is meaningless if you are inaccessible 364 days of the year. Prioritise gradual but meaningful change over token gestures or short-term initiatives.

8 Promote the value of lived experience. If you are planning to arrange training around disability equality, ask if the training will be designed and delivered by someone with lived experience. If you are invited to a panel discussion or conference, ask who else is taking part. Encourage event organisers to invite disabled speakers, as well as those from other groups who face inequality.

9 Don't wait for others to talk about disability or for staff to reveal their disability to you. Ensure all your employees, customers and partner organisations know about your commitment to accessibility and that you welcome requests for support around access requirements.

10 When planning access, think about the whole journey. There is no value in having an accessible toilet or a platform lift somewhere where it cannot be accessed without using steps. Often, when access does not work as it should, it's because insufficient thought has been given to how the access facilities will be used in practice.

10 next steps

- 1** Advertise any jobs and opportunities to our Beyond the Music Network of Deaf and disabled professionals by contacting Phoebe Roberts at phoebe@attitudeiseverything.org.uk.
- 2** Encourage any Deaf and disabled professionals in your organisation or your networks to sign up to the Beyond the Music Network to access mentoring, training, support and learning opportunities
- 3** Book our training courses on Accessible Recruitment, Selection and Induction or Creating an Accessible Workplace Environment by contacting Paul Hawkins, Head of Volunteering and Skills Development at paul@attitudeiseverything.org.uk
- 4** Review your policies to ensure that you are including Deaf and disabled people. Paul and the Attitude is Everything team can help so do get in touch!
- 5** Consider implementing your own mentoring and placement system or contact Phoebe about becoming one of Beyond the Music's mentoring or placement partners.
- 6** Aim to have Deaf and disabled people represented at all levels of your organisation. Look at the accessibility of senior management roles and consider fast track management schemes for talented people from underrepresented groups including Deaf and disabled people.
- 7** Set yourself a goal of ensuring everyone is included in your organisation. Make improving your accessibility for Deaf and disabled people part of a wider piece of work to address intersectional equality and inclusion in your organisation. For example, the UK Music Diversity Taskforce has published a [ten point plan](#) to diversify the music industry in terms of race and gender representation.
- 8** Review your website and communications to ensure you publicly state your commitment to accessibility, that you are using plain English and that your website is compatible with screen readers, text magnifiers and other accessibility tools.
- 9** If you are a festival or venue that runs live events, sign up to Attitude is Everything's [Charter of Best Practice](#).
- 10** Publicly demonstrate your commitment to employing and supporting Deaf and disabled people by signing up to the government's [Disability Confident Scheme](#).

Useful resources

ACAS – Free impartial advice for employees and employers

Access to Work – a government scheme where employees can request the costs of adjustments to the workplace.

The Business Disability Forum – A forum working to remove structures that create barriers to accessibility in the workplace

Creative & Cultural Skills – **Best Practice Recruitment Guide for Creative Leaders**

The Health and Safety Executive Management Standards for Stress in the Workplace

Inclusive Futures' **Disability Confident Employment Toolkit** – A comprehensive guide including technical specifics on making workplaces accessible.

The London School of Economics Inclusion Initiative – A three year project to use Behavioural Economics to build inclusive working environments.

The Mental Health Foundation's Guide to **Managing Mental Health in the Workplace**

RNID – **Supporting employees who are deaf or have hearing loss to thrive at work.**

The Universal Music Creative Differences Handbook – Universal Music's Guide to supporting Neurodiverse staff in the creative industries

Without Exception – Improving Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Festival Industry

attitude
is everything

**ACCESSIBLE
EMPLOYMENT
GUIDE**

ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

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Funded by the National Lottery Community Fund

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