

JUST ASK



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**How to ask about and meet the
accessibility requirements of artists + crew**

introduction

“Asking about access requirements for artists and crew should be as simple as asking for dietary requirements in riders and common practice. This will have a positive impact on disabled artists and encourage a more inclusive atmosphere for everyone in the music industry.”

Ruth Lyon (solo artist)

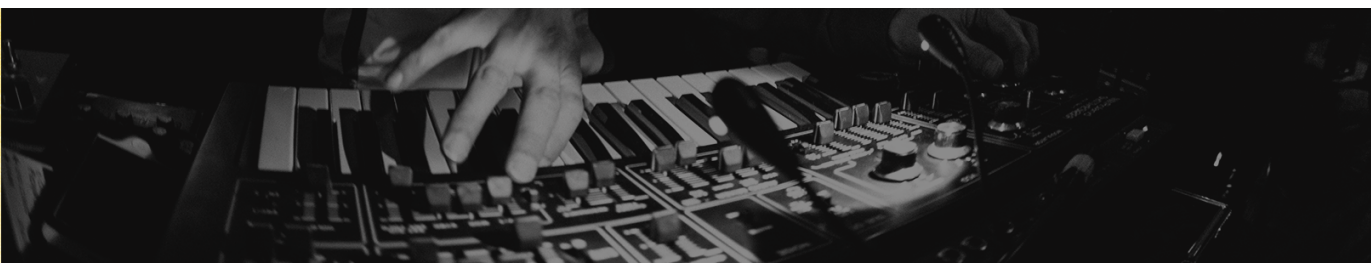
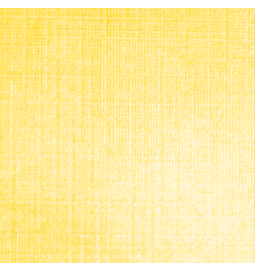
The ‘Just Ask’ campaign was created out of a partnership between **Independent Venue Week** and music and live events charity **Attitude is Everything**.

A flagship group of promoters helped to establish the scope and focus of the project, providing insight into the day-to-day world of putting on shows and how access requirements for disabled artists could be met.

- **The Boileroom (Guildford)**
- **The Night Owl (Birmingham)**
- **We Broke Free (Bournemouth)**
- **Ouroboros / Jazz In York (York)**

Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent musicians in Attitude is Everything’s [Next Stage network](#) provided guidance and ideas for how they would like to see promoters and artists work together.

Just Ask sets a standard for how we can work together across the live music industry to meet the access requirements of artists and crew.



Who is this guide for:

This guide is for **promoters, artist liaison teams, show reps** and anyone who engages with artists in advance and on the day of shows, to discuss logistics and information.

Why is this campaign happening?

The overarching barrier facing disabled artists is the fear of disclosing details of their impairment or health condition within the music industry:

A survey by Attitude is Everything in 2019 found that:

- The majority of disabled artists/musicians had **withheld details of an impairment or health condition** due to the fear of damaging a relationship with a promoter or not getting booked again.
- Most disabled artists/musicians had at some point **compromised their health or wellbeing** to perform live, rather than ask for what they need.

These findings show that the burden should be taken away from the artist and a dialog around access needs should become a standard part of pre-gig communication - just like dietary requirements, stage plots and guestlist names. Talking about this stuff should be normal.

the aims

4 things the Just Ask campaign wants to achieve:

- 1 // Reduce the uncertainty disabled artists feel about sharing their access needs with promoters.*
- 2 // Deliver a supportive culture which enable artists and their crew to reach their full potential and get on with the job of performing without compromising their health or wellbeing.*
- 3 // Establish asking about access requirements as a standard question in advancing processes across the live music industry.*
- 4 // Put on great gigs + make sure no talent slips through the net.*

The benefits of working accessibly are not exclusive to disabled artists, they can improve the experience for all musicians and performers.

3 things the Just Ask campaign is NOT trying to do:

- 1 // Give disabled artists a chance to perform for the sake of it.*
- 2 // Expect promoters and their teams to understand all impairments and health conditions.*
- 3 // Add extra unwarranted workload.*

3 steps to take

Take these steps with all artists you've booked:

1 // Include an access statement in pre-gig comms

It sends a really strong message if you can explicitly say that you want to work with all artists, including disabled artists. This presents a welcoming environment for everyone, which removes stigma and uncertainty - leading to better gigs.

Here's an example of what this could look like:

*'*Promoter name* is part of **Attitude is Everything's Just Ask campaign**, pledging to support Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent artists to get the access support they require to get out to venues and play great shows.'*

2 // Ask this question

Add the following question to your main email/doc which goes out ahead of a gig:

'Do you or any of your crew have access requirements which we can support you with?'

If you have your pre-gig advance info separated by headings, then we suggest adding 'Access support for Deaf, disabled or neurodivergent artists' as a heading.

3 // Provide a contact for responses

Clearly provide a contact for artists to respond to the question above.

Signposting a specific person's email address and a contact name can automatically make this interaction more human. Avoid using a general email address for this, as it might make the artist concerned that several people could read private details about their access requirements.

what to expect

There is no need to go it alone. You can't be expected to know about everything about health conditions and the impact they have on artists or crew members. If you are unsure or don't understand something, avoid making assumptions and just ask the artist to explain... here's why:

Disabled people are **experts in their access requirements** and will know the cheat codes to getting stuff to work for them so they can play live.

Everyone is different. Even people with the same impairment will have different levels of comfort with how things can be handled.

Health fluctuates and access needs can vary, as a result of many factors (eg. levels of rest, impact of medication, mental wellbeing).

Examples of general access requirements

- Assistance with load in and load out
- Flexible load in, soundcheck and set times (including extended soundcheck)
- Assistance navigating the venue
- Large print signage
- Adjustments to noise levels, lighting levels and lighting colours.
- Understanding that an artist may not be able to mingle, sell merch or network out front.
- Clear scheduling, sticking to timings or clearly communicating changes.

Examples of venue specific access requirements

- **Step free access to venue, stage and dressing room**
 - *Is there another performance space configuration you can use, if the stage has no step free access? Does another venue have a ramp you can borrow?*
- **Accessible toilet**
 - *If the venue you are using doesn't have an accessible toilet, could you tell an artist where the nearest one is?*
- **A quiet space backstage, away from crowds and noise**
 - *An office could work, somewhere comfortable and quiet.*

going further

Beyond our Just Ask 3 steps, here are a few quick wins you can put in place to be an accessible promoter:

1.

Knowledge of the accessible venues in your region.

2.

Partner up with local promoters, venues and businesses to share resources such as stage ramps.

3.

Display an access statement on your website, social bios and other online spaces to show you want to work with artists from all backgrounds, including disabled artists.

4.

Share this guide with your team and network.

5.

Seek out talented, diverse artists from all backgrounds and put them on your line-ups.



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The impact of promoters asking about access requirements will make a difference for disabled performers and crew members - both now and in the future.

It will set a blueprint for the rest of the live music industry to follow.

If you have any questions or queries, contact Rich Legate at Attitude is Everything
rich@attitudeiseverything.org.uk

Help spread the word and make some noise online about being involved in #JustAsk - tag us in your posts:

Twitter = @AttitudeTweets

Insta = @AttitudeIsEverythingHQ

