



improving deaf and disabled people's
access to live music

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State of Access Report 2018

Ticketing Without Barriers

Examining the access booking experience for Deaf
and disabled music fans

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

April 2018



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

#StateofAccess

Foreword

UK Music is committed to working with Attitude is Everything and being a part of their continuing mission to make live music accessible to all.

We are proud to have supported the publication of this report and encourage the whole of the live music industry to follow those who have already played their part in making sure their venues and events are open to everyone.

In 2017, along with the UK Live Music Group, we were delighted to endorse Attitude is Everything's Charter of Best Practice as the industry standard for live music accessibility. The Charter has been supported by more than 100 musicians, with over 130 venues and festivals gaining awards so far. Attitude is Everything and its fantastic Chief Executive Suzanne Bull MBE have done brilliant work to improve the experience of Deaf and disabled music fans.

However, it is clear that there is far more to be done to tear down the remaining barriers that still stand in the way of Deaf and disabled fans getting the most out of live music events. There needs to be a concerted effort across the industry to look at ways we can work together to drive forward positive change.

That's why we are supporting Attitude is Everything's move, announced with the launch of this report, to bring organisations and companies together to start a cross-industry conversation around the booking of access requirements such as Personal Assistant tickets and accessible seating.

The Ticketing Without Barriers Coalition will examine ways of devising a unified approach to access booking that benefits everyone – fans, artists, venues, events, ticketing companies and promoters. It's crucial that this new Coalition is much more than a talking shop and becomes pivotal in pushing ahead with a shared plan to usher in real change across the industry.

I urge everyone across the industry to join UK Music and Attitude is Everything in seeking to provide Deaf and disabled people the best possible access booking experience.

No one should be denied the right to experience a live music event. We should not rest until we can ensure equal access for everyone. Please do everything you can to support Attitude is Everything.



**Michael Dugher,
CEO of UK Music**

Focus of this report

For this report, we have decided to focus our attention on the key customer service issue that impacts the ability of Deaf and disabled people to access live music – the experience of seeking to pre-book reasonable adjustments in order to meet access requirements.

In our 2016 State of Access Report, we asserted that access depends on customer service.

This has never been more the case, as venues and events across the UK put in place an array of access provisions whilst needing to control access to these via pre-booking.

This report is designed to offer a snapshot of how these models are currently working, sharing best practice case-studies, and teasing out what still needs to improve.

In doing so, we will examine what barriers can arise when accessibility has been considered and adjustments put in place, but is then subject to the gatekeeping process of having to be booked.

We have decided to narrow our attention in terms of the scale and nature of the venues and events that this report is concerned with.

Our focus is:

- Single day outdoor concerts.
- Medium to large music venues and arenas.

In addition to this, the target audiences for this report are:

- Events and venues with in-house ticketing departments.
- Events and venues that utilise third party ticketing partners.
- Ticketing companies that provide services to events and venues.

'Reasonable adjustments' are changes to policies, procedures or the physical environment that remove barriers that might place Deaf and disabled people at a substantial disadvantage when seeking to access something on an equal basis to non-disabled people. The Equality Act 2010 states that service providers have a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

'Access requirements' are the changes a Deaf or disabled person needs in order to access something on an equal basis to non-disabled people.

Context

The two aims of our 2014 report were to work with the Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers (STAR) to establish a working group to examine the access booking process, and to support the development of a proof of access requirement system to facilitate this booking. Both of those aims have been achieved and serve as a strong foundation to build upon.

The STAR Accessible Ticketing Group

The STAR Accessible Ticketing Group has met over the past four years as members have worked on developing their customer service models. The culmination of this group's work was the publication by STAR in 2017 of 'Making Ticket Sales Accessible for Disabled Customers – A Best Practice Guide', written by Nimbus Disability. This guide explores the legal context, issues relating to point of sale accessibility, and evidencing disability. This report is designed to complement that guide by shining a light on the impact of not meeting the needs of customers wishing to book access, and identifying the areas that require further development across the industry.

Download the guide here: www.star.org.uk/accessibleticketingguide

“In response to the 2014 State of Access Report, STAR formed its Accessible Ticketing Group to discuss obstacles and solutions to improving ticketing for disabled people. These discussions with ticket agents, systems providers, venues and promoters have helped promote change and led to the publication of our Accessible Ticketing Guide in 2017. There is still much to be done and we therefore welcome the Ticketing Without Barriers Coalition to help bring about further significant and necessary improvements.”

Jonathan Brown, Chief Executive, Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers

Proof of access requirements

A proof of access requirement system has also been established since the launch of the 2014 report, with input from members of the STAR Accessible Ticketing Group. The Access Card, developed and delivered via a social enterprise set up by Nimbus Disability, has been publicly accepted as a form of proof by 181 live events venues (including music, theatre and sport) and a total of 359 diverse businesses across the UK so far, with over 10,000 Deaf and disabled people signing up. The card is also increasingly accepted at a wide range of other venues that have not yet informed Nimbus directly. Only two ticketing agencies formally accept the card at the present time – The Ticket Factory and Ticketmaster.

What is 'Access Booking'?

Access booking is our term for the advance booking of certain reasonable adjustments that relate to the allocation of tickets, seating and/or limited space within a venue or event space.

What needs to be bookable?

Deaf and disabled customers often require one or a combination of the following things when seeking to access live music:

- A ticket/seat for a Personal Assistant (PA) to provide support in order to attend.
- Tickets/seats for multiple Personal Assistants in certain circumstances.
- A wheelchair-accessible space or a location to transfer onto a seat.
- A step-free seat.
- A seat with a maximum number of steps to reach it.
- Access to the best location to access British Sign Language interpretation, captioning of lyrics or audio-description.

It is the booking of these core reasonable adjustments that this report is concerned with.

Other access requirements

There are a wide range of additional access requirements that people might need to discuss with a venue or event, and make arrangements for that are currently outside of the realm of 'access booking' as defined above.

These include:

- Bringing medical equipment or medications.
- Bringing an assistance dog.
- Bringing specific food or fluids.
- Gaining early entry to avoid crowds or become familiar with a space.
- Being guided to a seat.
- The ability to come and go during a performance.

The Access Booking Survey

In a departure from previous reports where we used Mystery Shopping data, we decided to frame this report solely around the findings of our first national survey of Deaf and disabled music fans. The Access Booking survey, which was live from 20th December 2017 to 28th January 2018, gave the public the opportunity to share their good and bad experiences and the personal impact of going through the process of attempting to book access to live music.

We targeted the survey at Deaf and disabled fans who book their own tickets and access, and those who book on behalf of family members or the people they support.

349 people completed our Access Booking Survey:

- 293 Deaf and disabled people (84%)
- 56 people who book access on behalf of a Deaf or disabled person (16%)

31% of participants were Attitude is Everything mystery shoppers and/or festival volunteers.

69% of participants had no previous relationship with Attitude is Everything.

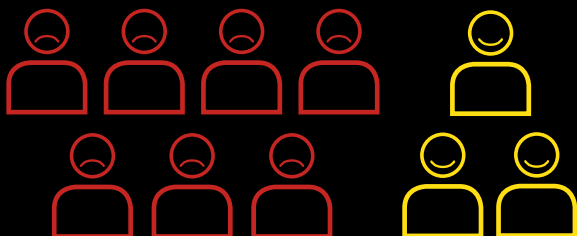
Key Findings



4 out of 5 people had experienced problems booking access



79% had been put off buying tickets for a gig due to difficulty booking access



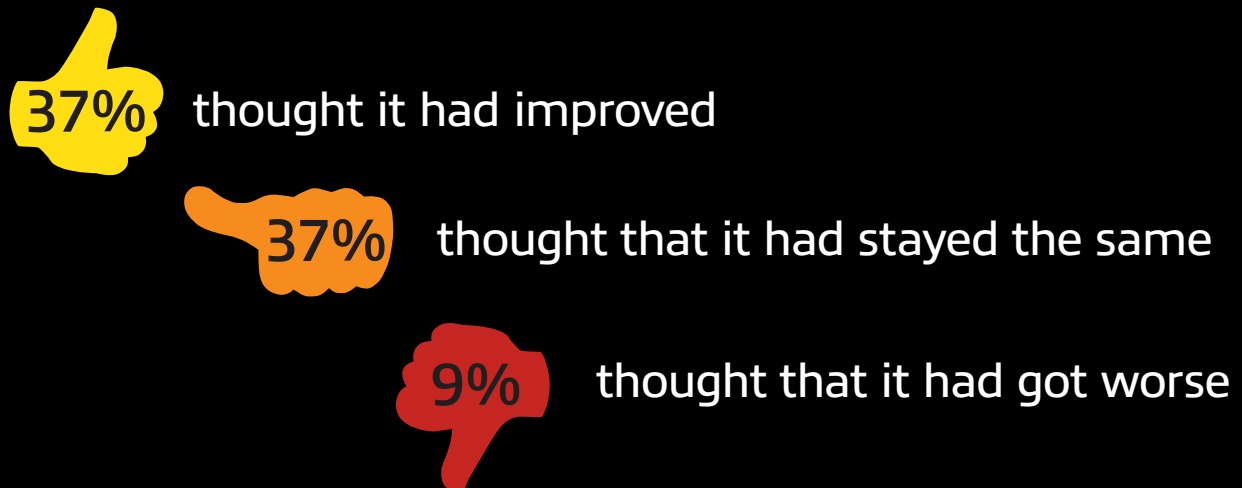
73% of people had felt discriminated against when trying to book access



1 in 10 have considered legal action

Public perception of the situation

We asked people if they felt that the situation for Deaf and disabled customers when booking access for live music had changed in the last four years:



Value to the industry

On average, the 349 Deaf and disabled people represented in the Access Booking Survey had:



This represents £250,000 of income for the live music industry.
3.3 million Deaf and disabled people go to live music events every year.

Contents of the full report

The full report explores the deeper context behind this publication, shares all of the results of the Access Booking Survey, and examines following topics in more detail:

Before booking

Venue access schemes

“I feel confident if I know in advance that the venue understands my access requirements.”

82% of people surveyed said that if a venue or event had a system that allowed them to pre-register access requirements in order to speed up the access booking process, they would sign up.

Proof of access requirements

“The Access Card has been amazing, I just wish more venues linked with them for online bookings.”

Deaf and disabled consumers ultimately need a single, free (funded), universally-accepted and cross-sector proof of disability scheme, which captures the nuances of people’s access requirements and includes people who do not receive disability-related benefits.

Access information

“One big problem is finding out HOW to book - info is often hidden away and not obvious.”

76% of people completing the Access Booking Survey had been put off booking tickets due to lack of access information about a venue or event.

Booking methods

Booking by email

“[With] an email I can print off confirmation of my requirements and instructions from staff.”

47% of people reported having faced problems booking access via a venue or event’s access email address.

Booking by phone

“When staff are well informed, it is good to speak to someone on the phone to confirm my access requirements are understood. Speaking to someone on the phone is a good gauge of how ‘access savvy’ a venue and its staff are. Speaking to a friendly and helpful member of staff makes me feel confident in attending.”

Booking access over the phone is the primary method offered to Deaf and disabled fans at the present time.

270 people had booked access over a phone line (77% of respondents).

71% felt that they had experienced issues when doing so.

Booking online

“It’s so much better! Much fairer, faster and easier to do.”

STAR’s Best Practice Guide on making ticket sales accessible points out that ‘most major ticket sellers for entertainment now see well over 90% of their transactions online’. We strongly agree with STAR that ‘there now needs to be a focus on giving disabled customers the same opportunity of choice’.

70% of survey respondents said that they would prefer to book access online.

Beyond simple sales

Booking for a party

“If I’m going with a friend, I have to buy my tickets and theirs in two separate transactions.”

People want and need to be able to book their access and tickets for other members of their party at the same time. This is particularly important for Deaf and disabled parents.

High demand events

“I’ve given up trying to go to high demand events.”

73% of people had felt discriminated against when trying to book access for a high demand event.

We need the industry to work towards better solutions.

Pre-sales

“I had a pre-sale code for a particular event and was told it was only for “normal” tickets and wheelchair access was on a first-come first-served basis on the day of sale.”

55% of people had faced problems booking access through a pre-sale or early-bird scheme.

This is one of the key areas where we need promoters and artists to take responsibility, liaise with venues and events, and ensure that access booking is facilitated.

VIP and artist meets

“I’ve never been able to attend any meet and greets as they are usually inaccessible.”

75 people in our survey had faced problems booking access along with a VIP or artist meet and greet package.

Gift vouchers

“I’ve been told I cannot use gift vouchers to purchase tickets because the dedicated booking office specifically asks disabled customers to book through them instead and then refuse to accept the vouchers meaning that I’m unable to spend my birthday or Christmas presents.”

With multiple companies now offering entertainment gift vouchers, it is essential that the industry ensures that these can be used by all customers.

Resales

“When there has been an event I’m not able to attend, I’m not aware of any way to sell-on tickets to other disabled users. I’ve never tried to get a refund as I assume this wouldn’t be accepted.”

Across the UK, there are venues and events providing excellent customer service when it comes to enabling refunds and resales of access bookings. However, there is still much to do to support the whole industry to adopt best practice policies in this area.

64 people had faced problems re-selling tickets linked to access bookings.

The impact of bad experiences

81% said they would be less likely to go to the venue or event again.

76% said they would be less likely to book tickets through the ticketing company again.

21% said they would be less likely to see the band or artist live in future.

15% said they would be less likely to buy records or merchandise from the band or artist.

Conclusion

In our 2014 State of Access Report, we stated that if non-disabled people are able to purchase tickets online, by telephone and in person, the same options should be available to Deaf and disabled people.

We still stand by this assertion.

Some people wish to be able to book access completely online, others will always wish to speak to someone on the phone, pop into a box office, or communicate via email.

They all have one wish that anyone working in the music industry should recognise – to see their favourite artists play live.

The focus of this report has allowed us to present the voices of Deaf and disabled fans regarding the single most important customer service issue that impacts them.

By sharing extensive quotes, we hope to communicate a sense of the massive and often un-tapped consumer group that is out there, asking the industry to embrace their custom and recognise what they need in order to be granted an equal service.

There have been significant advances across the industry in recent years. There are also sections of the live event world being left behind by competitors, and failing to make the reasonable adjustments they are legally obliged to provide.

With discussion of ticketing comes the topic of competition - by its very nature the name of the game is to attract customers over competitors and secure their custom.

Whilst we embrace a competitive spirit when it comes to pushing the boundaries of live music accessibility, the key message of this report is that the industry now needs to collectively agree a baseline set of standards when it comes to the implementation of access booking.

We need promoters, managers and artists to join venues, events and ticketing companies in tackling this issue and finding solutions that work for everyone.

Let 2018 be the year in which the industry joins forces to begin a step-change in access booking.

What customers need

When we talk about Deaf and disabled music fans, we include many of our own staff, trustees and all of our volunteers.

As a disability-led organisation committed to sharing the voices of fellow Deaf and disabled people, we are a unique and direct link between the music industry and the 3.3 million Deaf and disabled live music fans that go to gigs in the UK every year.

Following our Access Booking Survey, feedback from 600 Mystery Shops over the past 4 years, and our 18 years working in this field, these are the 5 key things that Deaf and disabled fans have told us they need it comes to access booking:

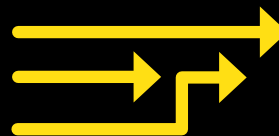
1 A simple and universal system for evidencing access requirements



2 Accurate and disability-aware information and customer service



3 Choice and flexibility when booking tickets



4 To be able to trust that access requirements will be met



5 Equal access to everything



Our vision for access booking

1. A simple and universal system for evidencing access requirements.

- A single, free proof of access requirements card that can be used across the UK and across all sectors.
- Uniform policy for evidencing access requirements adopted across the industry, as outlined in STAR's Best Practice Guide and our Charter of Best Practice.
- No venue or event referring to the now defunct term 'registered disabled'.

2. Accurate and disability-aware information and customer service.

- Uniform standard for access information adopted across the industry, as outlined in our Access Starts Online guidance.
- Uniform terminology for access bookings adopted across the industry.
- Internal and external sales staff familiar with all access booking policies.
- Disability Awareness and Inclusive Communication Training for all frontline sales staff.

3. Choice and flexibility when booking tickets.

- The following bookable online:
 - Wheelchair accessible spaces, transfer positions and step-free seating.
 - PA tickets / seats in any location.
 - Locations for hearing loop / BSL interpretation / captioning / audio description.
- PA tickets bookable for any location within a venue or outdoor site.
- Call-back options integrated into access booking lines.
- Whole party booking available when booking personal access.
- All seating options include information about distances and steps before confirmation of booking.
- Access booking systems integrating online, email and telephone booking preferences.

4. To be able to trust that access requirements will be met.

- Access booking available as soon as tickets go live.
- Dedicated access staff contactable via phone and email.
- All venues and annual events operating data protection-compliant access schemes to enable people to submit evidence once to be held on record for a set period of time (3 years recommended).
- Access bookings managed in-house wherever possible.

5. Equal access to everything.

- PA tickets bookable by any Deaf or disabled person who requires one.
- Accessible seating priced in line with lowest seat prices in a venue.
- All access booking lines use free-phone numbers.
- All pre-sales, VIP and artist meet up tickets include the ability to book access.
- All live music gift cards work with access booking.
- Resales of accessible seating tickets facilitated.
- Pre-registration lottery systems for anticipated sell-out sales, to enable all customers including Deaf and disabled people to avoid jammed phone-lines on the day.

The Ticketing Without Barriers Coalition

We are pleased to announce a new music industry coalition to get to grips with the issues that Deaf and disabled people still face when it comes to access booking as outlined in this report, and to examine the practical ways of achieving a joint vision for access booking.

The initial members who pledge to join us in working towards real and sustainable solutions to meet the five needs outlined are:

Umbrella organisations

PRS for Music	www.prsformusic.com
UK Music	www.ukmusic.org
Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers	www.star.org.uk
Music Managers Forum	www.themmf.net
Featured Artists Coalition	www.thefac.org
National Arenas Association	www.nationalarenasassociation.com

Ticketing companies

Ticketmaster	www.ticketmaster.co.uk
See Tickets	www.seetickets.com
Ticket Factory	www.theticketfactory.com
We Got Tickets	www.wegottickets.com
alt. tickets	www.alttickets.com
Skiddle	www.skiddle.com
Ents24	www.ents24.com
The TicketSellers	www.theticketsellers.co.uk
Ticket Web	www.ticketweb.co.uk
Gigantic	www.gigantic.com
Ticketline	www.ticketline.co.uk
Twickets	www.twickets.live

Venue and event companies

Live Nation	www.livenation.co.uk
Festival Republic	www.festivalrepublic.com
AEG Presents	www.aegpresents.co.uk
Ground Control	www.groundcontroluk.com
Broadwick Live	www.broadwicklive.com
DF Concerts and Events	www.gigsinscotland.com
IMG	www.imgevents.co.uk
NEC Group	www.necgroup.co.uk
AMG	www.academymusicgroup.com
Southbank Centre	www.southbankcentre.co.uk
Echo Arena Liverpool	www.echoarena.com
SSE Arena Wembley	www.ssearena.co.uk
Motorpoint Arena Nottingham	www.motorpointarenanottingham.com
Colston Hall	www.colstonhall.org
Roundhouse	www.roundhouse.org.uk
The O2	www.theo2.co.uk
Barbican	www.barbican.org.uk
Sage Gateshead	www.sagegateshead.com
Kilimanjaro	www.kilimanjarolive.co.uk

The first meeting of this group will be hosted in partnership with UK Music and take place in the months following the launch of this report.

We will report back on the first year of this initiative publicly at the Ticketing Professionals Conference in March 2019.

Beyond live music

Many of the issues that Deaf and disabled people have raised in this report mirror those experienced across other sectors. Indeed, several people shared examples of good practice beyond live music when it comes to access booking. Attitude is Everything is keenly aware of the best practice to learn from and common challenges experienced in other sectors. Whilst our core remit is and remains live music, it has become increasingly apparent that there is significant scope for sectors to exchange ideas and unite around common principles when it comes to accessibility.

The immediate topics that we think deserve a cross-sector conversation are the provision of access information, evidencing access requirements, and the implementation of access booking.

With this in mind, within a year of this report we will convene a new cross-sector group, bringing together interested parties from music, cinema, theatre, heritage and sport.

The following organisations and industry bodies have already pledged to join us:

Arts Council England	www.artscouncil.org.uk
UK Music	www.ukmusic.org
UK Theatre	www.uktheatre.org
Society of Ticket Agents and Retailers	www.star.org.uk
Society of London Theatres	www.solt.co.uk
Nimbus (Access Card)	www.accesscard.org.uk
Hynt Card	www.hynt.co.uk
Vocaleyes	www.vocaleyes.co.uk
Stagetext	www.stagetext.org
Signed Culture	www.signedculture.org.uk
Euan's Guide	www.euansguide.com
Shape Arts	www.shapearts.org.uk
Level Playing Field	www.levelplayingfield.org.uk
Disability Co-operative Network for Museums	www.musedcn.org.uk

Share this report

Please help us to spread the word about this report and the help raise awareness of how access booking can be improved for Deaf and disabled fans.

The download link for the report is:

www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk/SOAR2018

Tweet about this report using @attitudetweets and #StateofAccess

Tweet about the Ticketing Without Barriers Coalition using #TicketingWithoutBarriers

If you intend to quote from this report or wish to use the infographics, please contact jacob@attitudeiseverything.org.uk

About Attitude is Everything

Attitude is Everything improves Deaf and disabled people's access to live music by working in partnership with audiences, artists and the music industry.

Find out more about our work here: www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk

Follow us for updates on our work to make live music accessible for all.

Website: www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk

 Twitter: @attitudetweets

 Facebook: /attitudeiseverything

 Instagram: @attitudeiseverythinghq

Sign up to our mailing list here: <http://bit.ly/aiemailinglist>

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