

Top Tips #2



Role of Volunteers & Access Companions

- Super Culture in Weston-super-Mare sets an example with access champions in distinct tabards who assist visitors.
- These volunteers receive training on inclusive language and offering assistance appropriately.
- **Recommendation:** Introduce trained Access Companions at events to enhance accessibility.

Touch Tours for visually impaired audiences

- The touch tour is highly valued especially when delivered by members of the cast and can include:
Descriptions of the stage and performance area.
Interaction with props, costumes, and set pieces.
Direct engagement with performers, allowing guests to understand their physicality and movements.
Colour descriptions are appreciated, as colour holds emotional and cultural meaning even for those with vision loss.
- **Recommendation:** Offer and refine touch tours, ensuring performers are comfortable with limited physical interaction.

Venue & Gig Accessibility

- Venues have re-evaluated their gig layout to allow wheelchair users to be at the front rather than at the back.
- Stick to the key principle of all audience members having the same choices as each other whether disabled or not.
- **Recommendation:** Continue adapting spaces based on direct input from disabled patrons.

Performance Accessibility

- While music can convey some narrative elements, much of the visual storytelling (facial expressions, body language) is lost for blind attendees.
- Options for d/Deaf audiences include British Sign Language Interpretation, captions or providing a written print out of the text.
- An easy read guide to the venue and the performance can help some members of the audience.
- **Recommendation:** Introduce Audio Description alongside touch tours for visually impaired audiences. When booking British Sign Language Interpreters make sure you leave plenty of time.

Feedback Mechanisms

- Stickers in different colours (e.g., red for improvements, green for good practice) allow for direct and immediate input.
- This method ensures that feedback is based on real-time experiences rather than formal focus groups.
- **Recommendation:** Continue developing and refining this approach, sharing findings with other venues.

"The touch tour was brilliant, and the highlight of the evening, they brought the stage to life, and didn't shy away from using colours, which some would do. So that's a really key point. I have sight loss, but colour is really important to me. And if it's important to the show, then do talk about it. For some blind people, it won't necessarily mean anything, but even so you're aware that there are emotional connotations to colours, like red means things ...blue is a cool colour...even if someone can't remember physically what that colour looks like, they'll understand if it's a creative choice to have red costumes so do talk about that. Also feeling the texture at the same time as understanding the colour of something was really helpful and added to that experience."

- Sarah Goddard

