

**Ellie and Naomi from GL4 reflect on their experience of working with Jess Thom when they booked their tour 'Burnout in Biscuit Land'. Although not part of the Circus Around and About 2 project, they felt that this experience has helped inform future work.**

## What were your most important "take aways" from working with Jess Thom?

"Ensure that everybody in your team is prepared for an access question, and they don't look like a rabbit in headlights when approached by someone in a wheelchair. We really, really strive as a team to make sure that everybody makes them feel comfortable. We do everything we can to try and help just so that they're not feeling like they're an inconvenience, because they shouldn't have to feel like that."



Photo: Mark Gray

## What have you changed because of this experience?

"We used to ask the question in the booking process: 'Do you have any access requirements that we should be aware of?' We thought we were being really accessible. And then we were told what we should do is to give as much information as possible. So now we include information about the show – including the running time, the venue, how far the car park is from the entrance, what the entrance is like, what toilets are there, all that sort of information. This is so that people do not need to disclose personal information unnecessarily and are fully equipped to make a decision. We then also include the contact details if they want to discuss anything further."

## How have you made a visit to a GL4 event more accessible?

"Although everything is pay what you like, there's an adult option, a child option, a pay it forward option and a free essential carer option. We also have a wheelchair option so then we don't have to say "are you in a wheelchair?" If they're a wheelchair or a mobility aid user; they book that ticket and we know we've got to make sure that they've got space when they come."

## What top tips would you like to share with other venues?

- If you're marketing something, make it as simple to understand as possible. If it's marketing information that you can't change, try and do an easy read version. When it becomes too complicated, people are just instantly put off.
- Everyone's websites are different, but when people click onto a page to see an event, you have the picture, the name, the date, the time, whatever that important quick information they need. Don't put the BOOK NOW tab half way down the page – put it at the top – make it easy.
- By creating access for one person, you may be putting in a barrier for somebody else. You're never going to fix it all and be fully accessible. Nobody can ever say they're fully accessible. Do what you can and communicate what has been put in place.
- Biggest learning – Talk to people with lived experienced of disabling barriers.

**Thankyou to Ellie and Naomi from GL4**



Photo: Paul Blakemore