



The Arts

Disabled people and their carers often face difficulties when attending and participating in the arts and/or entertainment events.

This factsheet provides an overview of the different options and opportunities available to make enjoying the Arts and attending entertainment venues as pleasurable and as easy as possible for disabled people and their carers.

It is divided into two main sections:

Section One - Attending Arts Venues (Museums and Arts Galleries, Theatre, Cinema)

Section Two - Participating in the arts and arts events

Each section looks at provisions for people with mobility problems, hearing impairments, visual impairments and people with learning disabilities.

Attending Arts Venues

All venues vary in their facilities and what they have to offer disabled people. Due to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) coming into effect in October 2004, changes to practices, procedures and physical access to buildings have been made so it is easier than before to enjoy a whole host of venues and events.

An important factor for disabled people choosing to attend an arts event is confidence that their needs will be catered for at the venue. It is therefore advisable to contact the venue and make some plans before you go. If you contact the venue you can find out about tours, lectures and workshops provided for people with special needs/requirements. You may also want to ask about:

- access in different parts of the building,
- parking and travel information,
- assistance provided and whether advance notice is required,
- the provision of information in alternative formats and details about services and events specifically targeted at people with disabilities.
- toilet facilities

Phone numbers for all venues can be found in the phone book, through

directory enquires or on www.yell.com. Many venues now also have websites which might have details of disabled facilities. The websites for a venue can often be found through www.google.co.uk or by doing a search on other search engines (such as msn, yahoo and mamma).

When disability information about the venue is not provided by the venue, general disability access guides can often help you find out if a venue is suitable for you to attend. The following web-sites also provide accessibility information on other activities in the area:

- Direct-Enquires by RADAR can be accessed by visiting the website www.directenquires.com
- The Good Access guide can be contacted on **01452 741585** or you can visit them on www.goodaccessguide.co.uk
- Disabled Go have access guides to many towns www.disabledgo.info

Museums and Art Galleries

Many art galleries and museums now cater for the needs of all disabilities. The following are two websites with information on access to museums or galleries:

- The 24 Hour Museum website:
www.24hourmuseum.org.uk has an index of all the museums in the U.K. and an advanced search function that allows you to view those with facilities for visual impairment, hearing impairment and wheelchair access. They are a web only service so call TDF if you do not have internet access and want to find out about museums.
- The Good Gallery Guide:
www.goodgalleryguide.com is a guide to help disabled people plan visits to art galleries. You can contact them by calling **01924 377 748**, fax: **01924 377 090** Minicom: **01924 377 310** email: feedback@goodgalleryguide.com or look at their website to find details of how to get to the gallery and what facilities you will find there. Also available online are personal reviews of a gallery by a Good Gallery Guide visitor and web-links to various gallery websites.

Facilities for hearing impairments

Before you go it is advisable to check and find out if guided tours have portable induction loops or sound enhancement systems. Also ask if events are in British Sign Language (BSL) or interpreted into BSL. You may instead be offered either a selection of talks which will be sign language interpreted, or may be asked to give the venue notice if you plan to attend so that an interpreter may be arranged. Some events may include pre-prepared notes on the planned talk. Subtitles or captions may be used when audio-visual equipment is used. Some lectures or talks may be supported by a

Hearing Impairment

The Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) has an online guide that gives details of galleries and museums that have facilities for people with hearing impairments. You can search their website, www.rnid.org.uk for art galleries and it should take you to the relevant page.

Visual Impairment

The Dog Rose Trust website has a list of sensory and audio pieces of art: www.dogrose-trust.org.uk/current.htm

If you do not have internet access you can contact TDF for any information you require.

palantypist who types every word that is spoken which then appears on a computer screen.

Alternatively, a summary of what is being said may be available instead.

Facilities for visual impairments

Many places often give tours for blind or visually impaired visitors. A big part of these tours is the opportunity to touch exhibits.

It is fairly common to have access to audio guides - normally a portable CD player. Some guides are tailored specifically for blind or visually impaired visitors that have basic information about exhibits and may also explain the layout of the building to help you find your way around. Tactile replications are in some venues and help sight impaired people understand an object - whether 2D or 3D.

Facilities for people with a learning disability

Many places like museums and galleries often give tours for people who have a learning disability. This may include a short introductory talk in plain English. It may be delivered via an audio-guide (normally a portable CD or audiotape player) which can also help people with dyslexia or who are not confident readers. You may be able to arrange a 'one-to-one' tour or go as part of a group (normally notice is needed for this). Sometimes venues run interactive workshops.

Facilities for people with limited mobility

In general, newer venues tend to have good access for wheelchair users and for people with limited mobility. Improvements at some older venues are however restricted by the conditions of their status as listed buildings although this cannot be used as an excuse under the DDA.

Theatre, Ballet and Opera

If you are going to a performance it is a good idea to make some plans before you go. Theatres have responsibilities under the DDA but venues vary in their facilities and what they have to offer disabled people. Information can be accessed by calling the theatre or by looking at their website. Some small theatres run schemes for disabled customers and their carers, offering reduced admission to disabled people and/or carers.

Blind and visually-impaired customers

Most theatres have induction loops – either infra-red, induction or both. An induction loop is a system that helps you hear more clearly by reducing background noise. In a theatre, a loop can help you hear the play more clearly. Induction loops cannot be used to give stereo sound – but infrared systems can. Make sure that you check whether the theatre has this facility when you book. Since 1 October 2004, theatres are required by the law to make sure that the induction loop or infrared system is in working order and that staff know how to use it.

Braille

Some theatres may have the layout of the cinema complex as well as other information in Braille. Performance times are also often available as a recorded message over the telephone.

Audio description is available in some theatres. This is a service where the action, scene changes and the actors' body language is described in addition to the dialogue. You listen to the commentary through a lightweight headset. Make sure that you reserve this when making your booking.

Deaf and hearing-impaired customers British Sign Language (BSL)

Some theatres offer BSL interpreted performances. You can find these performances on the SPIT website www.spit.org.uk or by telephone on **0161 773 1715**

Support and assistance dogs

If you have an assistance or support dog, contact the

The National Theatre in London houses three theatres in one location which all provide audio-described performances and touch tours for visually impaired people as well as sign language interpreted and captioned performances for hearing impaired visitors. Find out about current performances at www.nationaltheatre.org.uk or by calling them on **020 7452 3400**

E-mail
info@nationaltheatre.org.uk

There is a guide to access on the London Theatre Guide website www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk/home/access

The English National opera

www.eno.org has information on disabled facilities. You can contact them by calling **020 7845 9258**

Cinema Concessions Card

This card allows a disabled person to take a carer with them to a cinema free of charge.

It costs £5, lasts for three years and can be used in many of the big cinema companies, e.g. Odeon, Cineworld or Empire (a full list can be found on the website).

To obtain a card download the form from their website www.ceacard.co.uk or contact The Card Network on Tel: **0151 356 7113**

Cinema Websites

Website addresses for the larger cinema companies

UGC Cinemas

www.ugccinemas.co.uk

Odeon

www.odeon.co.uk, disabled info and booking number **0800 138 3315**, e-mail info@odeonuk.com

Cineworld

www.cineworld.co.uk

Vue Cinemas

www.myvue.com

theatre and book in advance so that they can allocate the most appropriate seating for you. Since 1 October 2004, theatres are required by law to allow support or assistance dogs to accompany their owner to performances.

People with limited mobility

If you are a wheelchair user or have restricted mobility, contact the theatre in advance to check their facilities for accessibility. Since October 2004, theatres are required by the law to make sure they are accessible; this includes, for example, having accessible toilets and seating. Theatres must also provide an area for wheelchair users. If you need a wheelchair once you are inside the theatre, contact them beforehand.

You can find the phone number of all your local theatres in your yellow pages or by visiting www.yell.com.

Cinema

Most cinemas, especially the more modern multi-screen types, provide good facilities for disabled people. Details of facilities are normally found on their websites. Many cinemas run schemes that include passes for disabled customers. If you have a carer or someone to support you on a daily basis, some cinemas also offer reduced or free entry to them. Cinemas have a responsibility to allow assistance dogs and to provide an area in the cinema for wheelchair users.

Blind and visually-impaired customers

Many cinemas offer, and more and more films contain, audio description. This is a service where the action, scene changes and the actors' body language is described in addition to the dialogue. You listen to the commentary through a lightweight headset.

Make sure that you reserve this when making your booking. Some cinemas may have the layout of the cinema complex in Braille as well as other information. Programme times are available as a recorded message over the telephone.

Support and assistance dogs

If you have an assistance or support dog, contact the cinema and book in advance so that they can allocate the most appropriate seating for you.

Deaf and hearing-impaired customers

Most cinemas have induction loops – either infra-red, induction or both. An induction loop is a system that helps you hear more clearly by reducing background noise. In a cinema, a loop can help you hear the film more clearly. Induction loops cannot be used to give stereo sound – but infrared systems can. Make sure that you check whether the cinema has this facility when you book. Since 1 October 2004, cinemas are required by the law to make sure that the induction loop or infrared system is in working order and that staff know how to use it.

You can also visit the RNID website www.rnid.org.uk and search for a cinema. It will tell you which have a digital subtitle or audio description service for those with hearing impairments.

Audio description and subtitled film information also appears on a website called 'Your local cinema', the address is www.yourlocalcinema.com or call 0845 056 9824, Textphone 18001 0845 056 9824, text message 07931 341377 or Fax 0845 056 9824

People with limited mobility

If you are a wheelchair user or have restricted mobility, contact the cinema in advance to check their facilities. Cinemas must provide an area for wheelchair users. If you need a wheelchair once you arrive at the cinema, contact the cinema beforehand. Since 1 October 2004, cinemas are required by law to make sure they are accessible. This includes, for example, having accessible toilets and seating.

You can find the phone number of your local cinemas in the yellow pages or by visiting www.yell.com. Alternatively you can check out the website for the cinema, if they have one.

Discrimination

If, after reading this factsheet, you feel that your local arts venue or any place that you visit has not made any adjustments to accommodate your disability you should:

Telephone the manager of the venue and place a formal complaint with them. This may require you to put the complaint in writing so there is a paper record. If this does not resolve the issue then:

Contact the Disability Rights Commission on DRC Information, Freepost, MIDO 2164, Stratford upon Avon, CV37 9BR

Tel: **08457 622633**
Fax: **08457 778 878**

Textphone:
08457 622644
www.drc-gb.org

Getting Involved with Shape

If you would like to get involved with any of the projects offered by Shape or want to take advantage of their ticket scheme you can contact them on:

Shape
LVS Resource
Centre
356 Holloway Road
London
N7 6PA
Tel: **020 7619 6160**
Fax: **020 7619 6162**
Minicom:
020 7619 6161
E-mail:
info@shapearts.
org.uk
Website:
www.shapearts.
org.uk

There are similar organisations to Shape based in other regions around the UK. If you want to find information on any of these then contact Shape directly.

Shape

Shape's main aim is to achieve full access to the arts for disabled people whether it is to attend arts venues or participate in events.

The charity was established 30 years ago and now runs several projects:

- Shape Ticket Scheme
- Deaf Arts
- Participatory Arts Programmes
- Open the Door

Shape Ticket Scheme

This is an audience development scheme working in partnership with many London venues. It enables disabled people to visit arts events at a reduced ticket rate. Shape can also provide a volunteer driver, free of charge, to attend with a disabled person. This is to enable people who are unable to use public transport to get to and from the event. All the available tickets are featured in a newsletter that is sent to all Shape's members.

Deaf Arts

This service encourages access for deaf and those who are hard of hearing. It also encourages people to become artists or performers as well as attend a range of arts events. Shape runs several projects under the Deaf Arts service to assist those who want to perform to get involved and obtain some experience.

Participatory Arts Programmes

Shape runs many different projects for disabled people to get involved in the arts. These include a Saturday club for disabled children, an arts journalism training course, photographic exhibitions and training for those who want to become Access Auditors or Disability Equality Trainers.

Open the Door

This service provides Disability Equality Training and Access Audits to arts organisations to enable them to fully understand the needs of deaf and disabled people.

Getting Involved

There are many opportunities for people with disabilities to become involved with the arts.

The National Disability Arts Forum

(www.ndaf.org) has a range of information about disability arts including links to lots of local disability arts groups. The website also provides a calendar of disability events and shows. Tel: **0191 2611628/0845 260 11 66**, Textphone: **0191 261 2237**, Fax: **0191 222 0573**.

The London Disability Arts Forum

(www.ldaf.org) has information on the Disability Arts in London (DAIL) Magazine, the Disability Film Festival and Visual Arts Exhibitions. Tel: **020 7916 5484** or Fax: **020 7916 5396**

The Disabled Photographers Society

(www.dps-uk.org.uk) is a source of information on photographic matters for the disabled. They also collect equipment, modify them as necessary and produce camera supports etc. for people with specific disabilities. Tel: **01256 351990**.

The RNIB information for painters

(www.rnib.org.uk) has information on blind and partially sighted painters. You can also call the RNIB helpline, **0845 766 9999**, for advice and information on living with impaired vision.

The Living Paintings Trust

(www.livingpaintings.org) produce specialist touch and sound packs that explain a wide variety of fun, interesting and educational pictures

for those who are visually impaired. It is a free service for visually impaired people of all ages, their families, carers and schools.

Tel/Fax: **01635 299771**

CandoCo

(www.candoco.co.uk) is an integrated dance company which also offers the following throughout the UK and abroad: workshops, dance and choreographic residencies, professional development courses, summer schools, inset training, education specific performances. Tel: **020 7704 6845**, Fax: **020 7704 1645** e-mail: info@candoco.co.uk

The Art House

(www.the-arthouse.org.uk) is a membership organisation for visual artists. They create opportunities for artists to make, show and sell work, provide professional development training, information and advice. Tel: **01924 377740** fax: **01924 377090** minicom: **01924 377310** e-mail: info@the-arthouse.org.uk

The Drake Music Project

(www.drakemusicproject.org) is a UK-based, nationally represented, arts charity working with disabled people. They are the only UK charity working in the fields of disability, music and technology. Tel: **020 8692 9000**

The Disability Foundation
RNOH, Brockley Hill
Stanmore, Middlesex,
HA7 4LP
Tel: 020 8954 7373
Fax: 020 8954 7414
Minicom: 020 8954 7413
info@tdf.org.uk
www.tdf.org.uk

