**Accessibility – Outdoor Arts**

**Alison Vermee, Relationship Manager, Combined Arts**

* Creative Case for Diversity

The Creative case for diversity is a way of exploring how arts and cultural organisations and artists can enrich the work they do by embracing a wide range of influences and practices.  
The nine protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act of 2010 are: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. To this ACE adds socio-economic status.

* Arts Council England and outdoor arts

The development of outdoor arts featured strongly in ACE’s 2015-18 corporate plan for Combined Arts. ACE is currently developing ten-year strategy for 2020-2030 and has been consulting widely in the last year.

* Project grants and other funds
* Project grants: open funding programme - you can apply for £1,000 - £100,000.
* Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP): about artists, practitioners and creatives making a step-change in their work, benefitting themselves and their area of practice more widely - You can apply for £2000 - £10000.
* Access support: Pre-application support
  + Costs for: note-taking in meetings with Arts Council
  + BSL interpreting
  + Support worker
* ACE can contribute towards the cost of access support workers who can access the grant management system on your behalf
* Creative People and Places Creative People and Places is about more people choosing, creating and taking part in high quality arts experiences in the places where they live: <http://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/>
* Examples
* <http://www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk/>
* <http://outdoorartsuk.org/product/isan-access-toolkit-making-outdoor-arts-accessible-for-all-2010/>
* <https://festival.org/news/gdif-gets-gold/>
* <http://www.withoutwalls.uk.com/press-release-without-walls-announces-a-rich-diverse-socially-relevent-programme-for-2019/>
* <https://www.africaoye.com/festival/disabled-access/>
* <https://www.cirquebijou.co.uk/>
* <http://www.extraordinarybodies.org.uk/>
* <http://www.thenewcarnivalcompany.com/>
* Some resources and signposting
* 2017-18 Equality, Diversity and the Creative Case Data report
* Arts Council England workshops and advice sessions – can be offered in consultation with organisations
* Relationship Manager and Customer Services team advice.
* Audience Finder <https://audiencefinder.org/>

**David Morgan, Programme Manager, Without Walls**

* What Without Walls is doing:
  + Without Walls is developing and delivering a series of activities with the overall goal of making the Consortium’s commissions more accessible by 2022.
  + NPO: allows us to develop some strategic areas in the sector, one of which is access
  + Monitoring access in our festivals
  + We ask each of the partner festivals to tell us about the access services they provide during the event as part of their evaluation
  + Making our website more accessible, guidelines for accessible communications
* Our audiences
  + The Audience Agency tells us that 11% of Associate Touring Network audiences indicated that their day-to-day activities were limited because of a health problem or disability, compared to 19% of local population

What some of our festivals have done…

* Doncaster: engaging with deaf audiences
  + Why
    - Doncaster has the 2nd biggest deaf and hearing impaired community in England
    - Well established Deaf Trust
    - Following success of CAST with first fully integrated character in pantomime
  + What did they do?
    - D/deaf & Disability Access Advisory group in collaboration with Cast, Darts, The Deaf Trust and Hesley Group as well as a Young D/deaf
    - Programmed inclusive content
    - Introduced use of AVA app
    - Performances supported by BSL interpreters
    - Produced a marketing video in BSL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gdmj8RSFM20>
    - Allowed people to sign up in advance for BSL session around site
    - Low financial investment, mindful when planning
  + Challenges
    - Reaching audiences, work with community groups and local charities. Build trust
    - Social media and bloggers are not an easy win
  + Top Tips for festivals
    - Speak to the people in your community whose experience you are wanting to improve
    - Make sure the conversation is happening while you are programming, at the beginning all the way through until the end
    - It’s not about ticking boxes but about being inclusive: think of how everybody in your festival reflects inclusion
    - Have a plan B that includes access provisions
    - Plan ahead if sign up system if you can, helps in planning and budgeting
  + Top Tips for artists
    - Think of accessibility at the early stages of your creation
    - Audiences need to see themselves represented
    - Be mindful of how to best communicate your piece: have a script that BSL interpreters can look at and identify key words, gives them a heads up re specific themes and language associated to that
* GDIF: making your festival accessible
  + access provision
    - Working with two access managers, BSL interpreters and responsible for overseeing all access provision. They also lead processional work on assisted route.
    - Document offer for future years, allocate budget
    - Communication: website, easy-read brochure, what to expect guidelines, event videos, location photo guidelines, audio brochure, BSL, Large Print
  + Communicating added accessibility
    - Access information easily navigable on website
    - Working on an ‘access takeover’, a specific spotlight on everything access-related, interviewing different people on access offer
    - Series of ‘curated’ experiences based on an access need. E.g. talking about all available provisions in one message.
  + Access for audiences
    - Step free access – if a site isn’t naturally accessible, either   
       a) don’t use it  
       b) heavily invest in ways of making it accessible
    - Assisted route for processional shows – a mobile viewing area for access users so that they always have the best view of the show (photo)
    - Audio loops at info points / BSL / Captioning (Difference Engine)/ Audio Description & touch tours
    - Show adjustments
    - Train all volunteers and external staff in access so that everyone is aware of the provision and are able to convey that to audiences
  + Top tips for festivals
    - Make your access offer as clear as possible. To simplify that even further, make your ‘access’ point of contact super easy, so if it’s not easy to navigate, at least you have ways to get in touch with one person who can help via phone, email and physical address
    - Budget for it. You can do a lot for low budget, but that takes time. Other options aren’t cheap and it can be daunting.
    - Talk to your artists early so you can have time to make adjustments

Festival Access Questions to artists

* + - Access for D/deaf and disabled artists and audiences
      * Do any people in your group have access requirements?  (i.e. BSL, wheelchair access etc.)
      * Please provide details of any access requirements
    - Performance access

We aim to make our festival as accessible as possible to all audiences. Providing access for D/deaf and visually impaired audience members usually requires advance preparation. Please help us plan for this by letting us know the following:

* + - * Are there any elements in your performance/activity/installation that could present an issue for audience members with access needs?
      * Does your performance include spoken word (scripted, unscripted or in song)
      * If your performance already includes accessible features please describe here
  + Top tips for artists
    - Make your participation opportunities as adaptable as possible so that people of all abilities are able to still take part
    - Ask the festival and see if there’s something they can do to help. E.g. Don’t be afraid to ask for an interpreter to be provided. Also, let festivals know if you are going the extra mile and making your show accessible, maybe the festival can do a feature on it!