# LFA Guide: How to make your LFA activity more inclusive



We want the LFA to be as open, safe and inclusive as possible. This means reducing barriers to participation in the Festival as an attendee or an organiser. As an LFA event organiser, it is crucial you think about any barriers which might restrict someone's ability to participate, and how you ensure comfort and care are running throughout your event planning, promotion and delivery.

This is a starter guide to empower you around the inclusivity of your events and how to remove barriers where possible. You can refer to this document at each stage of the preparation and delivery of your Festival activity. Once you have read through the document, you can find some suggested questions to reflect on at each stage of your event planning here. You can also read our accessibility statement by heading to lfa.london/access.

Please note:

- This guide is exhaustive and will need to be tailored for specific LFA activity.
- This is a working guide. If there anything you feel needs expanding or challenging, please email info@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org or call us on 020 7636 4044.

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## 1. Overview

Inclusivity means the degree to which an event, venue or service is available to as many people as possible. When we talk about inclusivity, we are talking about removing the barriers preventing someone from accessing something, but also being able to experience the activity on the same level as others.

Inclusive led design and planning most directly helps disabled and older people, but all audiences benefit from inclusive design and events. To give one example, video calling was initially invented for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people, however it has become hugely useful to almost everyone!

**Why bother?**

Firstly, it's the law. It is unlawful for service providers to treat disabled people less favourably because they are disabled (Equality Act,2010). As LFA event organisers, it if your job to plan ahead and ensure everyone is welcome to your space and activity, removing potential barriers. Barriers to engagement can be physical, institutional, language-based or linked to differences in backgrounds.

Secondly, Valuing Diversity is a core value of the New London Agenda and is not a "nice to have". Inclusivity is not about ticking a box at the last minute and certainly not doing nothing at all. It's about stepping back at each stage of event planning and delivery, to understand potential barriers, and the actions needed to mitigate these. You will never reach that wide and diverse audience you desire, if you don't create an environment which allows for people to feel comfortable, safe and welcome. Access is not just elevators, ramps, buttons or attendants. Inclusive accessibility is how you feel in a space, from the moment you receive an invitation and the moment you enter.

Thirdly, we can all do at least one action. We recognise that it is not possible for every organisers to deliver Festival activity that delivers all access requirements - for example independent practitioners may struggle to find funds for BSL interpreters. However, we can all do the most within our means. Many actions do not require any money, or much time. Sometimes it's as simple as ensuring what is and isn't available is clear with your activity, so people can make an informed decision about whether they can or cannot be part of your activity. There are no longer any excuses for completely inaccessible events and communications. And these activities will not be accepted into the programme.

Fourthly, is not rocket science. But it does need some work to manage it in an appropriate, meaningful and successful way.

## 2. Areas to consider before submitting your activity - content

**Got an idea for the Festival? Great! But let's pause for a second…**

The LFA is for anyone who wants to learn about or explore the city, its buildings and people and have a say in the future of our city, so it is important to make sure we have a programme that reflects this. Have you considered whether your activity can be engaged with and enjoyed by a wide range of people? If not, is there a particular reason why not? Does it exclude a certain part of the population, through its format, content, costs, or language?

In this section, we will explore some of the things to think about ahead of finalising your event plans and submitting your event.

### Timings

When planning your activity, it's worth thinking about your audience and how appropriate the timings are. For example, if you're running a family activity, we wouldn't suggest starting at 9pm on a Tuesday evening, but suggest a weekend during the daytime could work better.

It is also important to explore whether there can be alternative timings for certain audiences. For example, if people can't attend during your normal opening hours due to childcare commitments or sensory overload for example, could they attend the exhibition 30 minutes early? Or could you consider starting at 4pm rather than 7pm to allow caregivers to get home on time?

### Location

Before confirming the location for your activity, it is key to run through the following questions to ensure you are not faced with unexpected challenges later down the line when people start to book onto your activity.

<u>In person activity</u>

Where possible, all venues, (or routes if a tour) must be wheelchair accessible, level access throughout and allow guide dogs. They must also provide access to an accessible toilet and quiet room in the building (or nearby if a tour.

We understand that not all of London's building stock is yet fully accessible for many people. However, there are many spaces across London that do fit these criteria, therefore there is no reason to be limited to inaccessible buildings.

Where the activity is location specific, there are some simple adaptations that can be made, if thought about enough in advance.

The questions below are a good starting place to understand the accessibility of your venue.

- ☐ **Is the location of the venue safe and not too far from public transport**, or does it require a long walk through unsafe or inaccessible routes?

- ☐ **Is parking available on site?** Or are there parking facilities nearby, in particular blue badge parking?
  How people get to your event is just as important as the venue and event itself. It's important to think about aspects such as parking and drop off points, transport linksand proximity to location, lighting outdoors if running an event that ends after dark.

- ☐ **Is the venue wheelchair accessible, with level access throughout and space to manoeuvre with ease?**
  What appears to be a flat space is not always suitable for wheelchair users or those with buggies. Kerb rises, uneven paving stones, long grass and gravel can often go unnoticed. Saying that a location is accessible implies that the location is accessible in its entirety. That includes everything from the main area to the entrance, restrooms, parking area and areas such as the bar – and fire exits. Therefore, it is key you do not make this unless it is actually the case, or without leaving specific notes on the event listing.

- ☐ **Does the venue have accessible toilets, with space to manoeuvre with ease and changing facilities?**

- ☐ **Is there a separate designated quiet space?** And is it close to the main space?
  As well as checking the physical access to a space, considerations should be taken around how people exist in the space, one they're there. For example: people who might be uncomfortable in crowded or loud environments, may appreciate a dedicated 'quiet space', that is gently lit, ideally with soft furnishings, reduced noise levels and a space to lie down. Additional items for comfort can include sofas, blankets, cushions, earplugs and eye masks.

- ☐ **Are there sufficient power points nearby** (which may be needed to charge specialist equipment)?

- ☐ **Are there places to get food nearby,** if not provided at the event already?

- ☐ **If people are unable to travel to your event, is it possible to record the event**, and making a transcript or a video available online later?

<u>Next steps - of your answer to all the above was no:</u>

It's worth asking yourself whether there are other venues you could use instead. Below are a few resources to help discover some accessible venues in the city.

- AccessAble
- Euans Guide
- Sociability
- Sisters of Frida's Accessibility Guide to Meetings and Events – a Toolkit

Alternatively, you can drop a message to the LFA team to see whether we are able to partner you up with an accessible space from our database. But please note, things change each year based on availability and we are not able to guarantee a space for your event.

Next steps - if your answer to some the above was no:

If you are tied to your venue, now is the stage to explore what adaptations can be made to improve the accessibility of your venue, even if temporarily. This could be renting ramps or accessible toilets, bringing in additional lighting and sound systems. Often this can be more affordable and easier to organise than it seems. Possible organisations to explore can include:

- Roll-a-ramp or The Ramp People
- Portakabin or Hire-a-Loo

Or why not get creative, and work with Disabled artists to create bespoke site adaptations, which can inform future accessibility of the site – like Seats at the Table by The DisOrdinary Architecture Project and Re-Fabricate here.

Remote Access and Online activity

Not everyone can travel, so it is important to think about how people can engage in your activity remotely. E.G. Is it possible to live stream or live tweet? Or could you record the activity and make a transcript or a video available online later?

Depending on your activity and the type of engagement you expect from the audience or participants, it is important that you select the right digital platform. It is also important you have the right experience and training with the platform to ensure your event is as smooth, and inclusive as it can be. E.G, pinning interpreters is easy on Zoom, but not MS teams. It is key to understand which makes the most sense for your event and participants. Sisters of Frida's Guide to Accessible Online communication can be found here.

**The key thing is to be clear about what you can and can't provide, and where you can be flexible based on individual requests. You don't want people turning up on the day to find out the space if different to what was expected.**

**Participants**

Inclusivity doesn't stop with the space but extends to who is involved in your event. To reach, and be welcoming, of a wide group of people, it is key that your activity is involves individuals from a variety of backgrounds.

However, it is not good enough just to invite diverse voices. Once invited, participants need to be treated with care and respect. Whoever you are working with, it is good practice to ask if there is anything additional that you can do to make their experience with yourself and your activity more comfortable. This should be offered to everyone – not just reserved for those with visible disabilities, as not all disabilities are visual or match the common sign we see around. You may like to use an access rider for this, which allow individuals to disclose as much or as little as they would like about their specific access requirements.

Remember: Always be respectful and keep in mind the social model: ask about access requirements, not people's impairments. If you're unsure about any of the above, and want to feel more confident, why not speak to the LFA team.

There may be some cases however where there may be a clear action you can take. For example, if you will be working with Deaf/Hard of Hearing speakers, you could learn some basic fingerspelling or BSL, to be able to directly communicate with the speaker, alongside an interpreter.

If you have not previously worked with interpreters, it is worth checking out these resources:

- Sign Video
- NRCPD
- Roger Beeson's London BSL Interpreters
- Interpreters of Colour Network

If one of your participants might require help getting to the venue, adaptations or extra time on site to familiarize themselves, you could welcome to them to the space beforehand or send a video of the space if not able to visit in person.

**Budgets and ticketing**

It is important that you work out the budget for your activity from the start, this way you won't have to make any unexpected compromises later on. For example: If you know you will need needing an interpreter, find out the costs of interpretation in advance so you can plan this into your budgeting.

When it comes to ticketing, it is important to consider both prices and format from the start. We're keen that as many LFA events as possible are free, reducing the barrier to be involved. Where there is a need to charge to help cover your costs (particularly for workshops), we ask that you keep the cost as low cost as possible. Sometimes it is possible to partner with another organiser to cover or reduce the costs of your event.

For every event we advise you to have an option for free Companion/Carer Ticket tickets. This means a Disabled person's needs can be correctly supported without an unnecessary cost. A free companion ticket may make the difference between someone being able to attend or not.

This can ideally be automatically included in the booking form, or can have a call to action, such as getting in touch with a designated contact.

Example text for booking: Audience members with access requirements can have a free ticket for a companion or carer. Please contact [E-mail address and phone number] for more information and to book your accessible tickets.

**Still got questions at this stage?**

Why not take bring in some external voices to work with on the inclusivity of your activity. Whether that me the LFA team, organisations like The DisOrdinary Architecture Project or Sociability.

## 3. Areas to consider before submitting your activity – event listing

It is key that your activity is inclusive in all areas, including the event listing and marketing and communication of the activity. Below you can find some areas to consider with your LFA activity listing. You can find a General LFA Marketing and Branding Guidance here.

**Creating inclusive text**

When creating the text for your LFA activity, it is key potential attendees understand what they should expect from the event. Poor language or grammar choices can make it tricky to understand what the event is. To avoid this, it's helpful to think about the five W's when reviewing your listing text.

The W's are:

- What is the event and how can attendees expect to engage once there
- When is it happening
- Where is it happening
- Who is involved, and who is it for
- Why the event is happenings and what the importance of it is

The W's sit along the 'how' people access the activity, how they book spaces (if needed) and any other information they might need to be aware of.

Once you've completed the above, you can also do a jargon check, to make sure you have removed any industry or other technical language to your listing. Where necessary to include certain jargon, instead at this stage you can add a definition to expand on the meaning of the word or term.

**Choosing an inclusive image for your LFA website listing**

The chosen hero image for your activity is often the first thing that draws people to your activity when browsing the LFA programme, so it is key it is a striking image, and relevant to what you are talking about in your event text. However, often organisers overcomplicate this by adding logos or text.

Adding logos or text makes browsing the programme overwhelming for some, and often doesn't help organisers much as the font size is often too small to be understood in many places. Therefore, all images must be drawings or images only, with relevant ALT text included.

**Confirming the correct access information for your LFA website listing**

It is vital that you and your attendees are clear on what access needs you can and cannot meet with your Festival activity. There are three main ways of doing this.

- ☐ You can make sure you have the correct boxes ticked for the 'Accessibility Icons' section of the submission form.
- ☐ You can add a contact email or number for people with specific access related questions, to the 'Access contact section of the submission form
- ☐ You can add any further information, that cannot be captured in the icons, to the 'Additional access information' section of the submission form.
- You could also create an access guide to your activity or venue - like this guide here from the University of Washington. Or a sensory map – like this map here from the Science Museum.

LFA Inclusivity Icons includes information relating the Venue or location, such as:

- **Wheelchair accessible**: The entrance to the venue, route to the activity and space where the activity is being held all allow for access and manoeuvring space for a wheelchair user.
- **Level Access and Automatic Doors (or No Doors):** There is level access through the venue or location, with doors that are automatic and have an opening width a minimum of 75cm.
- **Mobility Impaired Walker**: The approach/entrance to the building has no more than three steps. Please note on the listing if there is a handrail.
- **Accessible toilet**: Accessible toilet with step-free access, a manoeuvring space of 150cm x 150cm, doors opening widths a minimum of 75cm, a transfer space with a dropdown rail and wall-mounted grab rails.
- **Baby Changing Facility**: A baby change facility is available.
- **Gender Neutral Toilet**: A gender neutral toilet is designated.
- **Hearing enhancement system available**: This may include a loop system
- **Quiet Space**: This will vary between facilities

LFA Inclusivity Icons also includes information relating event content, such as:

- **Audio described**: Audio description will be available at this event
- **BSL interpreted**: There will (a) BSL interpreter(s) present at this event
- **Captioned**: This event will be captioned

Please note, this list no longer includes 'Assistance Dogs welcome' - as it is a legal requirement to allow Assistance dogs into a space. It is key to note on your listing if this is not possible. And 'Personal Assistant or Carer Discount' - As we expect free or discounted tickets for companions/carers available for all LFA activity

## 4. Areas to consider when preparing for and delivering your activity

**You've submitted your Festival activity, you've sold all the tickets, and it's happening today, tomorrow or this week… what should you do now?**

Now is the moment to step back once again to and check you haven't missed anything or missed anything that might've changed. Below are a few questions to get you started around participants, environment and content.

**Considerations with activity content**

- ☐ Is the final activity length and format appropriate, with regular breaks (particularly if over an hour)? Or is the pace too fast?
- ☐ Are font sizes on presentations or printed materials large enough, if using?
- ☐ Are videos captioned, BSL Interpreted and/or audio described, if using?
- ☐ Do printed handouts have bullet points and visuals, not blocks of text, if using?

Exhibition specific

- ☐ Are works hung at a suitable height, as well as labels/interpretation panels, plinths, display cases (eye level at 1.10m for wheelchair access)?
- ☐ Is there turning space for wheelchairs and buggies (minimum of 1.30m)?
- ☐ Is there adequate lighting to move around the space, and see works?
- ☐ Is there interpretation in a range of formats e.g. Audio description, Large Print.

You can find a useful guide to for inclusive exhibitions, from the National Museums of Scotland here.

**Considerations with participants**

- ☐ Have you taken appropriate actions for participant and attendee access requirements? E.G: If event is more than 30 mins, is there a 2nd interpreter.
- ☐ If providing food, have you got options for all dietary requirements, and have you provided for this correctly and put in an accessible space?

- ☐ Are participants ready to visually describe themselves (appearance, clothes etc.) in the introduction of the event?

**Considerations with the environment of the activity**

- ☐ Is there clear signage to the event, inside and outside the venue?
- ☐ Is there clear signage to facilities, including the toilets, drinks, etc.?
- ☐ Is event signage with good colour contrast and using clear font types and suitable point size and is written in plain language and/or illustrated?
- ☐ Is the space in format that allows enough room to manoeuvre wheelchairs, mobility aids and pushchairs?
- ☐ Are your accessible toilets and lifts well maintained (e.g. that the emergency pull cord is within reach from the floor and NOT tied up out of reach)? If toilets are kept locked is signage clear on how to access them, do all of staff know where the key is kept and are they aware of any obstructions stored inside?
- ☐ Is the quiet room set up correctly?
- ☐ Are people able to hear what is being said, particularly in the back or online if hybrid? Or is the background music too loud and making communicate hard?
- ☐ If there will be an interpreter is present, is there sufficient lighting and a direct line of vision between interpreter and those using the interpretation?
- ☐ Have you got seating reserved for people who need to see the interpreter or hear the speakers more clearly. Have you also got space for their friends?
- ☐ Have you informed all your team of the seating options available?
- ☐ Is your assigned first point of contact for access requirements easy to spot?
- ☐ For walking tours, have you tested out your route to check there are no changes which would mean the route is no longer a step free route, or has too loud noises for example.

For any further areas to consider with your venue, you can check out this building check from BBC here.

## 6. Areas to consider after the activity

**Your LFA activity has come to a close… what should you do now?**

Reflect

Once your event has finished, it is key to step back a final time and assess the success of your event. This is both useful for you as an organiser with any future activity you may deliver but also us at LFA, to ensure we are improving the inclusivity of the Festival each year by giving you the tools you need to make that happen.

This can be as simple as gathering your team to create a one page document to help you improve next time, or it could be a more public guide to help others in their accessibility journey like this guide from We Are Limited.

Feedback

By delivery an activity for LFA, you are agreeing to complete an event feedback form for each activity you deliver. On this form there is a section around inclusivity. We'd love you to use this section to let us know how you find you experience this year, what you learnt and would do differently next time and how we could support you next time?

The deadline for LFA2025 feedback is the 7th July.

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We've come to the end of the document now. If you would like to keep exploring how you can make your event more accessible, why not check out some of the resources below.

- Many More Parts than M!, The DisOrdinary Architecture Project
- Making events accessible, Shape Arts
- Access Toolkit, Independent Street Arts Network
- Engaging with disabled people, The Equalities and Human Rights Commission
- Multiple Resources, Centre for Accessible Environments
- Accessible events (whole website + checklist, Accessible Events

If you there is anything you think is missing from this guide and should be included, or anything that you feel is incorrect, let us know by emailing info@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org or calling 020 7636 4044.