

20
STORIES
HIGH

GRAEae

The Access Manifesto:

A New Chapter for the Arts

Written and performed by Maisy Gordon & Ayzah Ahmed,
from the ideas and thoughts of young deaf, disabled, and
neurodiverse artists and activists.

Calling all Arts Organisations,
venues and leaders,

This is for you, **PAY ATTENTION!**



New Chapter, flip the script.
Hear what we have to say and continue to unzip,
What young people everywhere are shouting about.
And now is the time for you to hear us out.
From the streets of Liverpool,
To London's huge stages.
Activism bubbling, voices rising,
Rip out the pages,
We will redefine them.



It's a theatre day,
Should be fun to see a play.
Oh wait...
What if things don't go to plan?
And I am stuck,
Whilst everyone else has the upper hand.

It's simple for a place,
To be labelled as accessible.
When most days you get stuck at the door.
Waiting to see if someone will help,
Thinking to myself how the rest of my day will go;
When the problems have started before I have even
gone through the doors.



As Ruth Madeley says, 'Don't make me the problem!'
Hear our words, and make steps to solve them.
The Tardis has a ramp, you can't say you've 'forgotten,'
It's 2024, access should no longer be uncommon.

As disabled people we want our voices heard,
Our thoughts considered,
And our basic human rights met.
As disabled people we are moulded to think less,
And just go with what we have already been given.

No complaints!
No demands!

But we will complain and demand,
For what we want until we have our rights met.
Until we can dream big enough to make a change,
And we are here to stay.



Every disabled person is an individual,
Access being 'one size fits all?' Bloody typical!
So here it is,
Take note.
Our Access Manifesto
8 Important steps for
Arts Organisations to follow...



1. Open Doors for All

Make sure everyone can fully engage and participate. Every voice counts – you need to understand, respect, and value everyone. Create opportunities for the arts community to have their say and be at the heart of their local arts venues and organisations.



2. Welcoming Spaces

We need places and projects that prioritise the well-being of everyone, especially those with neurodiverse and mental health needs. Staff should be there to support, and in formal gatherings should be cosy and relaxed.



3. Accessible Spaces

Everyone should be able to take part without barriers, from in front of house to backstage areas. Many venues are accessible on paper but logistically are still not fit for purpose. Look further than what the law deems accessible. Work with professionals to implement access audits to make sure you are accessible to everyone.



4. Representation

Everyone should see themselves represented in the Arts, on stage and off stage and in leadership roles. Talk with different groups, get real life experience and expertise, make information easy to understand and show positive images in the media.



5. Clear Communication

Focus on what people have to say and give them ways to speak up. Use new, exciting and inclusive ways to share different stories in our community.



6. New Ideas

Try new ways of doing things that come from our own experiences and challenge old rules. Use different ways to develop new work so that disabled voices are amplified.



7. Working Together

Make sure everyone can enjoy all forms of art. We need clear communication and visibility for sign language users, easy access to all spaces and integrated audio description throughout performances and venues. These should all be implemented into spaces, shows and staff training, every day of the week!



8. Power in Working Together

We believe in giving everyone the power to speak up for what they need and deserve within our community. It's the responsibility of arts organisations and venues to actively seek feedback from disabled people to improve their services and spaces.





Credits:



Written and performed by Maisy Gordon & Ayzah Ahmed, from the ideas and thoughts of young artists and activists from...

Graeae Young Company, 20 Stories High Youth Theatre & Creative Community, Deaf Active, Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse, Leeds Playhouse.

As well as Jayden Reid, Jessica Horeton, Chris Flynn, Matthew Needham and Ali Dodds.

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