

Boundless Theatre Accessibility & Inclusion Policy

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Policy Overview

Boundless Theatre is dedicated to fostering a vibrant and inclusive environment where all young people, regardless of their background, ability, or identity, feel welcome, valued, and empowered to participate fully in the transformative power of theatre. We believe that access to the arts is a fundamental right, and we strive to remove barriers and create opportunities for everyone to experience and engage with our creative programs.

Policy Scope

This Access & Inclusion Policy applies to all staff members of Boundless Theatre, regardless of their employment status (full-time, part-time, temporary, or contract). It outlines Boundless Theatre's commitment to creating a workplace that is accessible, inclusive, and free from discrimination for everyone.

This policy covers the following areas:

- Disclosing a disability or medical condition
- Reasonable adjustments
- Flexible working arrangements
- Access to Work support
- Data protection and confidentiality of disability-related information
- Accessible recruitment and interview practices
- Digital Accessibility
- The Social Model of Disability
- Staff responsibilities in promoting an inclusive workplace
- Further reading

This policy does not cover access and inclusion for audiences attending Boundless Theatre's productions or events. A separate policy will address audience accessibility.

This policy is intended to comply with the relevant UK legislation, including the Equality Act 2010.

Boundless Theatre recognises that accessibility needs can change over time. We are committed to reviewing and updating this policy on a regular basis to ensure it reflects best practices and remains relevant to the needs of our staff.

Accessibility Statement

Boundless Theatre is committed to ensuring that all staff members, regardless of disability, have access to the information and resources contained within this Access & Inclusion Policy.

Here are the steps we have taken to make this policy accessible:

Format

The policy is available in electronic format (e.g., Word document, PDF) with a clear and readable font. We can provide the policy in alternative formats upon request, such as large print or audio recordings.

Language

The policy is written in plain English and avoids jargon.

Structure

The policy is organised with headings, subheadings, and bullet points to improve readability.

Accessibility Resources

We plan to offer staff training on how to use assistive technologies and access information in various formats.

If you have any difficulty accessing this policy or require it in an alternative format, please do not hesitate to contact the Executive Producer & Co-CEO Adele Reeves de Melo on adele@boundlesstheatre.co.uk

We are always looking for ways to improve accessibility. If you have any suggestions on how we can make this policy more accessible, please let us know.

Please note: This accessibility statement applies to the current version of the Access & Inclusion Policy. As the policy is reviewed and updated, this statement will be updated accordingly.

Staff & Artist Accessibility

At Boundless Theatre, we are committed to creating a truly inclusive workplace that celebrates diversity and ensures accessibility for all our staff members. We believe that everyone deserves to feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their talents in a supportive environment. This policy outlines our ongoing commitment to fostering an accessible workplace. We can offer support and adjustments to ensure that you can be the best you can be at work.

How to Disclose Access Needs

This policy acknowledges that disclosing a disability or medical condition at work is a personal decision. You have the right to choose who you inform and the level of detail you share. While disclosure can be beneficial in some situations, it may not be necessary in others.

If you feel it will be helpful to disclose your disability or condition to make your workplace and work more accessible, it would be best to start with a conversation with your manager. A framework for the discussion could include:

- Details about your condition or disability
- What tasks you are finding easier or harder to do as a result of your condition or disability
- What adjustments your manager could put in place to help you do your job

Explaining why you have not talked about your condition before

In some cases, you may not disclose until you've been in your job for a long period of time. Because the choice is always yours, there is no right or wrong time.

Your employer might ask why you have not spoken about this before. You could say:

- your condition has recently changed, and it is only now that it is affecting your work
- your work has changed – it was not a problem before, but now it is
- you needed time in the role to know what barriers there were
- you've only just felt able to talk about your condition

The following sections outline options you might want to consider before speaking with your manager.

Reasonable Adjustments

The Equality Act 2010 says that employers must make reasonable adjustments for:

- employees and workers

- contractors and self-employed people hired to personally do the work
- job applicants

Depending on your needs and employment agreement Boundless Theatre will endeavour to make reasonable adjustments. These can include:

- making changes to the workplace
- changing someone's working arrangements
- finding a different way to do something
- providing equipment, services or support

Employers must make reasonable adjustments by law. Not everyone may want or need adjustments, but this can change over time.

Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

The following are a list of general example adjustments:

- Ergonomic adjustments of workstations
- Templates to help with reports
- A personal workstation rather than sharing a space or hot-desking
- A visual timetable
- Providing a mentor or buddy
- Flexible working hours, to allow earlier or later starts and finishes.

Flexible Working

Flexible working is a way of working that suits an employee's needs, for example having flexible start and finish times, or working from home. All employees have the legal right to request flexible working. Employees can request a change to:

- the number of hours they work
- when they start or finish work
- the days they work
- where they work

Employees can make a request for flexible working from their first day in a job. Boundless Theatre will consider each request seriously and terms will be negotiated in each individual case. Please note that due to the nature of some roles, there may be limits to the degree of flexibility we can offer

Details on how to apply for flexible working can be found in the Boundless Theatre Company Handbook.

Access to Work

Access to Work can help you get or stay in work if you have a physical or mental health condition or disability. The support you get will depend on your needs. Through Access to Work, you can apply for:

- a grant to help pay for practical support with your work
- support with managing your mental health at work

Practical support with your work

Access to Work could give you a grant to help pay for things like:

- specialist equipment and assistive software
- support workers, like a BSL interpreter, a job coach or a travel buddy
- costs of travelling to work, if you cannot use public transport
- adaptations to your vehicle so you can get to work
- physical changes to your workplace

Your workplace can include your home if you work from there some or all of the time. It does not matter how much you earn. If you get an Access to Work grant, it will not affect any other benefits you get and you will not have to pay it back.

You or your employer may need to pay some costs up front and claim them back later.

How to apply

[Check you're eligible](#) and then [apply for an Access to Work grant](#).

Training

Boundless Theatre is committed to continuing education and upskilling of all staff during their time working for the organisation.

If you are currently employed by Boundless Theatre and would like to inquire about possible Access & Inclusion training Executive Producer & Co-CEO Adele Reeves de Melo on adele@boundlesstheatre.co.uk

Interviews & Recruitment

We understand that not all applicants may disclose their condition or disability on their application form. This could be because of a fear of not getting an interview, or because of a hidden disability. Regardless of the reason, Boundless Theatre are committed to having an accessible recruitment process for the benefit of every candidate - disabled or not. As standard, we will ask all applicants if they have access requirements prior to the interview date.

Our interview locations will vary depending on the project, but we will always be able to offer:

- Accessible bathrooms
- Changes to lighting
- Interviewing in a small space to control sound and enable ease of lip reading
- Wheelchair friendly spaces, and the option to transfer if desired
- Sharing interview questions ahead of the interview
- Allowing breaks, especially for interviews that may involve multiple parts (eg a test then interview)

If you have any questions about accessibility for your interview, please speak with the hiring manager for your role and they'll be able to discuss adjustments or venue details with you in more detail.

Audiences and Participants

Boundless Theatre events and performances take place at a range of different venues across the UK. We will endeavour to outline access information for each Boundless Theatre event on the event listing page on our website, but for up to date accessibility information for each of our venues, please contact the venue directly.

Where possible, we will ask at the point of booking if you have any access needs we need to be aware of to make your experience as enjoyable as possible. This information collection will vary depending on the booking system of the venue or third-party site. This information will be held by the venue. We appreciate that your access needs may change between the point of booking and attending one of our events or performances. If you need to get in touch to update the information you have shared with us, please email adele@boundlesstheatre.org.uk or contact the venue directly.

Where possible, Boundless Theatre will attempt to create the following accessible performances within our seasons:

- Captioned performances
- Touch Tours and Audio Described performances
- BSL interpretation
- Relaxed performances

These performances will be outlined clearly on event pages, as well as listed within the ticket booking flow.

Digital Accessibility

This policy recognises the importance of digital accessibility, also known as web accessibility. It refers to the creation of websites and digital services that are universally usable by all individuals, regardless of device, environment, or ability. This principle aligns with the concept of physical accessibility, exemplified by wheelchair ramps in buildings or Braille as an alternative to printed materials. In the digital realm, accessibility ensures that users with diverse needs and requirements can access and effectively utilise online services.

Boundless Theatre recognises its legal obligation to ensure accessibility under the [Equality Act 2010](#). This Act prohibits discrimination based on protected characteristics, which may include disability. Websites and mobile applications that fail to meet accessibility standards could be considered a breach of this Act.

Specifically for websites, the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#) provide a framework for creating content that is accessible to users with disabilities.

[Public Sector Bodies \(Websites and Mobile Applications\) Accessibility Regulations \(PSBAR 2018\)](#) apply specifically to the public sector. These regulations mandate that public sector organisations make their websites and mobile applications accessible to all users.

By adhering to these legal requirements and accessibility best practices, Boundless Theatre strives to create an inclusive online environment for all audiences.

Protecting your Data - What we do with your information.

Boundless Theatre adheres to GDPR compliance and do all that we can to keep your data safe, secure and up to date. You can read our full [Data Protection policy here](#).

Boundless Theatre does collect data about staff members' health and medical conditions, on the grounds that this information will help us ensure that we are able to create reasonable adjustments and support systems for all staff. This is considered sensitive data and employees must give permission for this data to be kept by Boundless Theatre.

This data may be collected:

- When completing our Equal Opportunities forms when applying for a role at Boundless Theatre;
- When disclosing information as part of a sick leave request;
- When disclosing information as part of an incident report;
- When you disclose information about a health condition or disability to your manager or employer at any point in your employment.

Boundless Theatre takes all available measures to protect your data. This includes:

- Limiting access to HR documents and incident reports to the Executive Team;

- Encrypting personal data to protect against unauthorised disclosure;
- Performing regular backups to ensure the availability of personal data;
- Monitoring and logging of access to personal data to detect and respond to security incidents.

You can request to see a copy of the data held on you, or request changes to your data, at any time.

If you have any questions about your data being held at Boundless Theatre, please contact Executive Producer & Co-CEO Adele Reeves de Melo on adele@boundlesstheatre.co.uk

Social Model of Disability

Access is the understanding that artists, colleagues and participants will have specific requirements and legitimate barriers to accessing our spaces and the work presented in it. Our job is to ensure that we break down the barriers and create smooth access for everyone working or participating in Boundless Theatre activities.

Not everyone needing access support has disabilities, and not all disabilities are visible.

Social Model of Disability

The Social Model of Disability was developed by disabled people to identify and take action against, discrimination.

It's a different way of looking at disability. Rather than the disabled person being 'the problem' and focusing on what someone can't do because of their impairment (known as the 'Medical Model') the social model says that barriers are created by our society. These barriers may be physical, organisational or attitudinal.

So it's not illness or impairment that are the real problems, it's discrimination and the barriers in society. But how do we put this into practice? You could try:

- Asking about a person's access requirements rather than details of their medical condition – 'what do you need?' rather than 'What's wrong with you?' This is very important for hidden impairments or fluctuating health problems where access needs may not be obvious.
- Concentrating on improving the access you can provide, not on focusing on individuals and their impairments.

Don't make assumptions – ask! Disabled people are the experts in their own requirements and access needs. It is important to give people the chance to talk about their access requirements at the beginning of your communication with them. This shows that you are ready and willing to talk about access and can be reassuring.

Accessible Language

Language is important; it helps us avoid misunderstanding and offence but the most important thing to remember is...don't panic! Make sure the language you use is always:

1. **Descriptive** (e.g. Wheelchair user; Blind person).
2. **Understandable** (e.g. has a hearing or speech impairment).
3. **Simple** (no unnecessary adverbs like 'severely' or 'profoundly'. They might mean very different things to different people anyway).
4. **Not emotive** (no 'suffering from...' or 'victim of...').
5. **Respectful** – be guided by disabled people and incorporate a social model perspective. Take the lead from disabled people and be open and adaptable to change the language you use, based on their suggestions. Here are some of our suggestions to get you started:

If you understand the social model, have the appropriate language and a clear vision of the access you can provide – then you can be disability confident when dealing with the public. The following general guidelines can help:

1. Listen – Listen to what disabled and/or older people are asking for or telling you. Make time and space for this.
2. Ask – Be confident in asking disabled and/or older people for advice, information or the best way to work together. Never assume.
3. Act – Acknowledge that you have heard and understood – then respond accordingly.
4. Learn – Learn from what went well and what didn't – build access into every stage of the review and evaluation process.

Disability confidence is about both providing everybody with the same level of good service and knowing what you can do differently for disabled and / or older people to ensure equal access.

How can you be a Champion in the real world?

Identify the legitimate physical, organisational or attitudinal barriers in your workplace. If you find a barrier, interrogate how this issue could be resolved. Raise the issue and possible solution with your line manager (if at work) or with staff if you are working with a partner venue.

1. Listen to customers, colleagues, collaborators and stakeholders who are telling you they are experiencing a barrier and commit to being an ally in resolving the issue.
2. Don't be afraid to ask questions, or to misstep. People appreciate the effort.
3. Lead by example - create a new normal in your workplace culture
4. Look for small projects. You may not be able to change the whole venue, but you might be able to change one institutional
5. Keep educating yourself - there are so many resources available!

Resources for Further Reading

The following links are further reading to help you learn more about access and inclusion within the wider industry context. These resources will help you understand the barriers to access that your colleagues, collaborating artists and audiences might face while working with Boundless Theatre.

Shape Arts

We are a disability-led arts organisation that works to improve access to culture for disabled people by providing opportunities for disabled artists, training cultural institutions to be more open to disabled people, and running participatory arts and development programmes.

<https://www.shapearts.org.uk/>

Seeds for Change

We are a workers' co-op of experienced campaigners. We offer training, facilitation, online resources and other support for campaigns, community groups and co-operatives.

<https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/access>

Euan's guide

Disabled access reviews by and for disabled people. You can search for venues in your area and find fairly detailed reviews.

www.euansguide.com

Attitude is Everything

An organisation improving Deaf and disabled people's access to live music. Includes practical guides for people organising live music events (a lot of the guidance is relevant to other events too).

www.attitudeiseverything.org.uk

Manchester Disabled Peoples Access Group

Advice and resources on accessible meetings and venues

www.mdpag.org.uk

Tel: 0161 455 0219

Equality and Human Rights Commission

For guidance on protected characteristics and how to comply with the Equality Act 2010 (Great Britain)

www.equalityhumanrights.com

Sisters of Frida

Accessibility Guide to Meetings and Events – a Toolkit

www.sisofrida.org/resources/sisters-of-fridas-accessibility-guide-to-meetings-and-events-a-toolkit

New Work Network

No Budget Guide for Artists to Disability Access

www.ju90.co.uk/access.htm

Radical access mapping project

Free Audit Templates for checking your venue

www.radicalaccessiblecommunities.wordpress.com/the-radical-access-mapping-project/radical-access-mapping-project-vancouver/

StageText

We are Stagertext, a deaf-led charity. We are passionate about making the arts a more welcoming and accessible place.

<https://www.stagetext.org/>

Vocal Eyes

We believe that blind and visually impaired people should have the best possible opportunities to experience and enjoy art and heritage.

<https://vocaleyeyes.co.uk/>

Ability Net

Our services support a wide range of users. From older or disabled people looking for help with their technology to digital professionals advocating for accessibility best practices within their organisation.

<https://abilitynet.org.uk/>

Mencap

We want people with a learning disability to be listened to and included in all aspects of life.

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/>

Wellbeing in the Arts

Mental health and wellbeing support for the creative industries.

<https://www.wellbeinginthearts.org.uk/>