

Introducing: Access First

A guide to help serve
disabled fans with fairness
and integrity

ticketmaster[®]



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What do we mean by Access First?

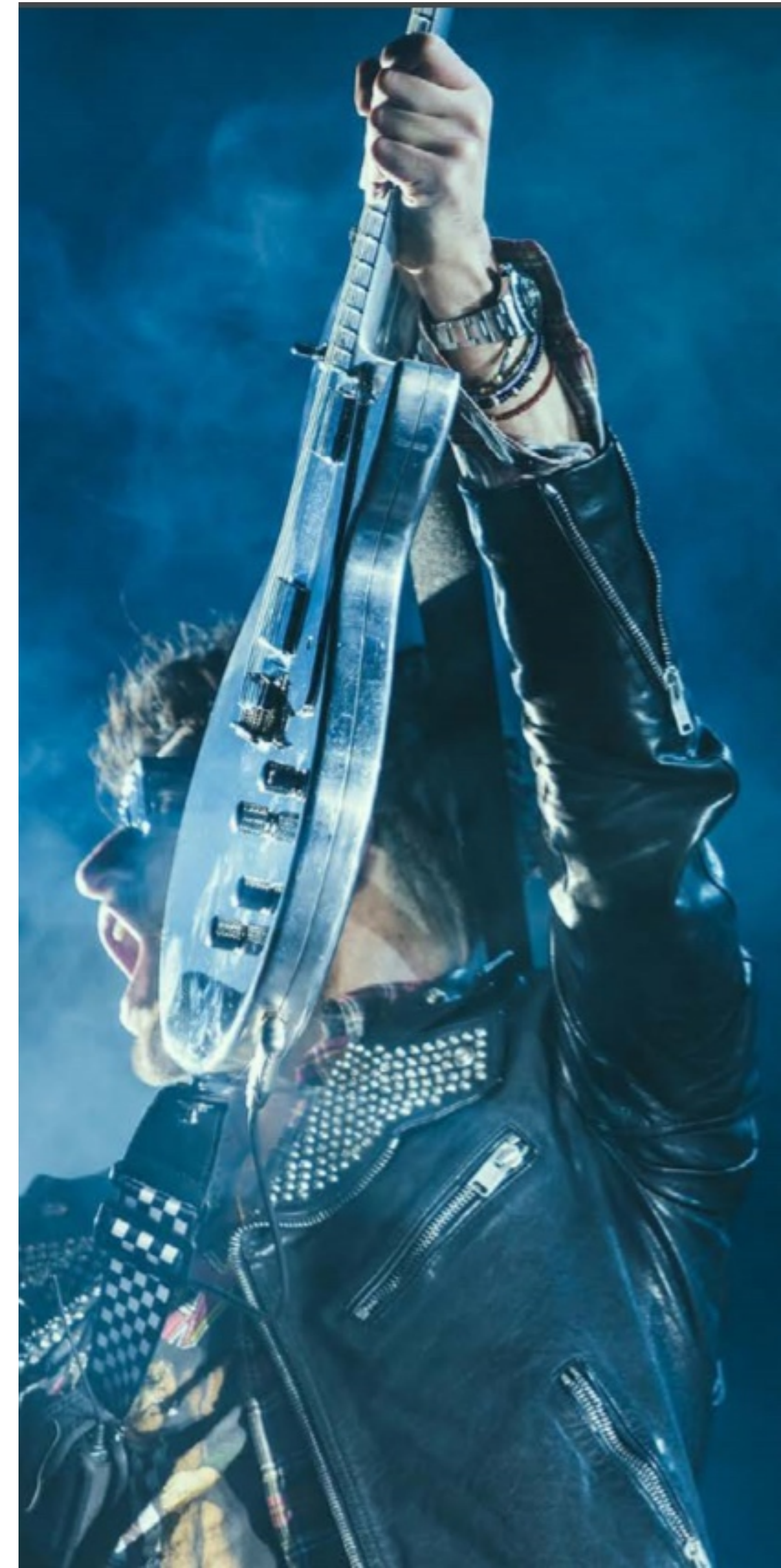
Access First is an operational aide to help support and guide businesses, putting disabled fans at the forefront of everything you do by providing equal access to live events.

This guide has been created to give everyone a better understanding of how we can serve disabled fans equally; providing the correct language and terminology to give the confidence to communicate effectively.

Attitude is Everything (a charity dedicated to giving disabled fans better access to live events) listed five basic requirements for disabled fans in its [State of Access Report 2018](#), this document will address each of these points in a bid to drive improvements:

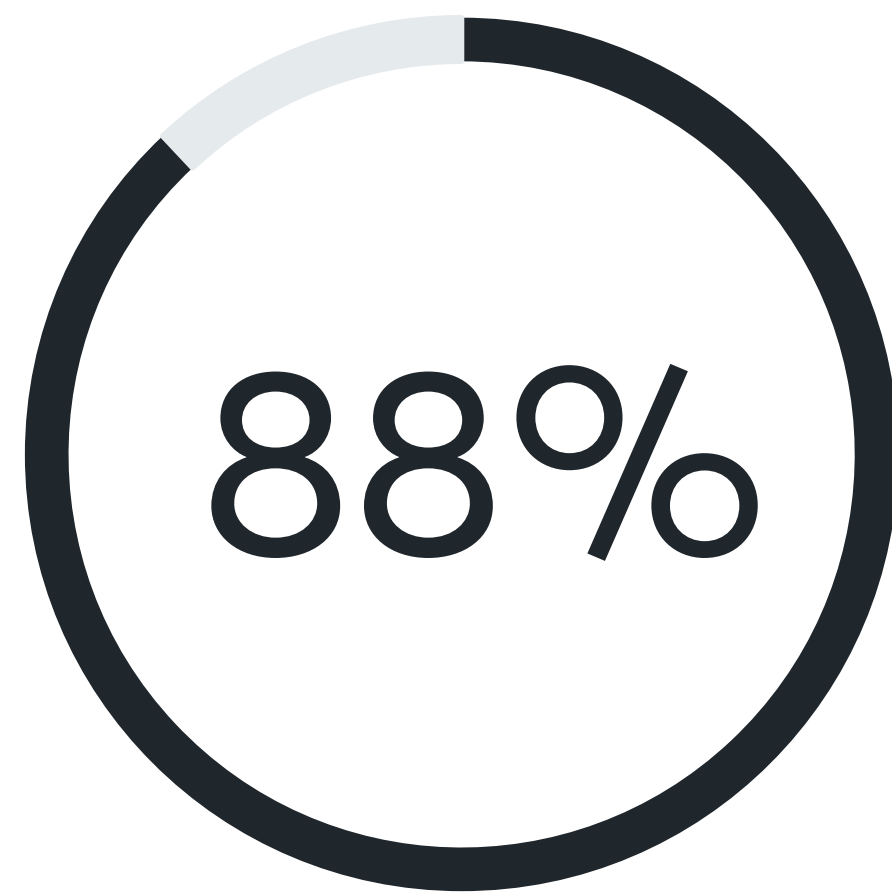
- Choice and flexibility when booking tickets
- Clear information and fan support
- Gathering evidence and access needs
- Assurance that access requirements will be met
- Equal access to every ticket

Ticketmaster is proud to be part of [Attitude is Everything's Ticketing Without Barriers Coalition](#), and is leading the way in giving disabled fans the very best experience.

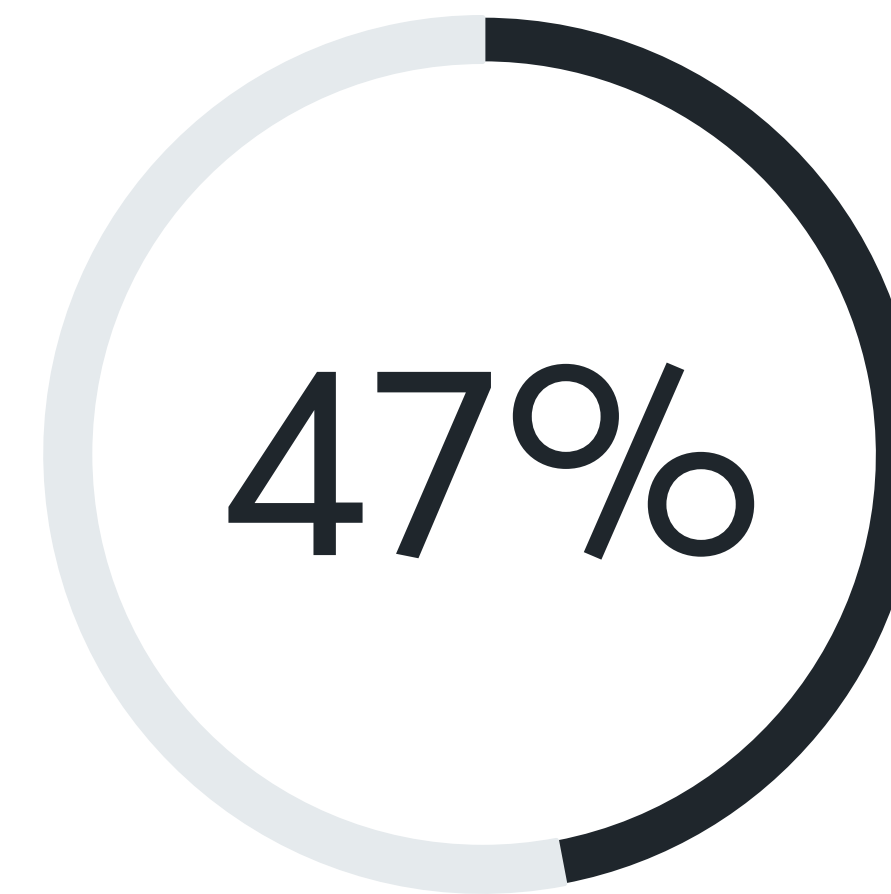


Background

In a recent survey compiled by Attitude is Everything, it was found that 83% of disabled gig-goers had been put off buying tickets because of inaccessible booking systems.



Felt discriminated against when buying tickets



Had considered legal action as a result

Background

Whilst it is a legal requirement to treat everyone equally, the main reason for an Access First policy is because it's the right thing to do.

It is useful to bear in mind that as businesses we're legally required under the [Equality Act](#) to make "reasonable adjustments" to the way we provide our services to disabled fans. Meaning that we need to give extra thought to how we offer disabled fans the same choice, experience and service.

A new Equality Act came into force on 1 October 2010. The Equality Act brings together over 116 separate pieces of legislation into one single Act. Combined, they make up a new Act that provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all.



Flexible Booking Options

Accessible tickets can be booked in a number of different ways. Each situation will depend on the relevant policy of our clients, whether that's the event organiser or the venue.

ONLINE

Whenever selling accessible tickets, they should always be made available online to give disabled fans the same choice and should be made visible on the Interactive Seat Map with this icon:



BY PHONE

Some fans still prefer to talk about their needs, so businesses should also provide a free phone telephone line manned by experts to help deal with all manner of queries that may come through.



Flexible Booking Options (continued)

AT THE VENUE

If the venue is selling the tickets, they must provide contact information to the relevant ticketing agencies so that disabled fans can be redirected appropriately.

DURING PRESALES

Accessible tickets should always be made available during a presale, for fans that qualify for that presale (eg. disabled fans who are members of a fan club).



Information & Support

One of the biggest frustrations for disabled fans is often the lack of information about how and where to buy tickets, as well as access details for each venue. Providing this up front, in a clear way is key to fans having a trouble free and memorable experience.

- i** From initial contact with event organisers, it's important that all the relevant details of each event's access requirements and the type of accessible tickets are made available. Providing the correct information from the very start of any interaction with fans is vital.
- i** If you're not selling accessible tickets for an event, it is a must to tell disabled fans where they can purchase tickets – even if that requires providing competitor details.
- i** All of this information should be as detailed as possible and listed on the event page.

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Example: For an event where tickets are being sold for both wheelchair accessible and companion seats online, it must clearly differentiate both types of seats with clear descriptions and an information lightbox to describe the details, such as:

Accessible Ticket

Please select the required Accessible Ticket from the Accessible Tickets list. Select the required seat from the options displayed on the seating map. Wheelchair Accessible - Change 'Ticket Quantity' to 1 ticket. - Add a Companion ticket if required (the Companion ticket, must be added along with a Wheelchair ticket at the time of booking). Upon arrival patrons should go to the box office, and will be directed to the Live Access Team.

Accessible Companion Ticket

Companion not valid without a paid Accessible ticket, and must be added and purchased together. Cannot be added at a later date.

Categorising Access Requirements

It's important to understand the various different access requirements and the different ticket types available for disabled fans, here's some common examples that you might come across:

Wheelchair Accessible Bays

These typically account for around 1% of the overall venue capacity and should be available for wheelchair users who will remain in their chair for the event.

Ambulant Seating

Easy access seating is standard seating that can be accessed by short distances and avoids stairs. Again, this should account for around 1% of the overall capacity and there should be a proportion reserved for people who wouldn't be able to attend unless they have these seats.

Seats within Loop Range

Fans with a hearing impairment may need to use loop systems, which will only have a working range within specific parts of the venue or will require distribution of specialist equipment on arrival to a venue. The seats that can access the loop system should be clearly categorised and reserved for those who need them.

Nearby Toilet Access

For some fans, urgent access to a toilet may be the difference between booking a ticket and not. Where possible, seating with the easiest access to toilets should be highlighted.

Essential Companions

Free ticket allocations should be available for Essential Companions with a paid ticket. With the support of a companion, disabled fans may be willing and able to sit in other areas of the venue so this shouldn't be restricted to being sold in a specific area. In some cases, fans may need the support of more than one person and where reasonable these additional tickets should also be provided without charge.

The Role of Essential Companions



Essential Companions provide a disabled fan with support at the event. Without this, the fan wouldn't be able to safely enjoy events on the same level as non-disabled fans.



Many Essential Companions are provided with a free ticket to assist as a carer. Evidence is often asked for at the point of purchase to ensure these free tickets aren't being abused.



It's important that any venue operating an Essential Companion scheme has a clearly defined policy - this may include asking for evidence that the disabled fan needs a companion at the event.

Asking for Evidence of Requirements

It's really important to notify fans upfront of what evidence maybe required, even though asking for evidence can sometimes feel awkward. It shouldn't. Disabled fans understand the need for this, especially where a free companion ticket is being provided.

That said, each interaction should be treated with sensitivity and care showing understanding and compassion, allowing fans to retain as much privacy and dignity as possible when providing this information.

Free Essential Companion tickets are made available as a "reasonable adjustment" to disabled fans that require them. Offering these free tickets can present a high risk of fraud if not handled carefully.

That's why its known and important to put measures in place to ensure that these schemes are not abused.



Asking for Evidence of Requirements

There are lots of different documents that support this process, including:

- **Blind or partially sighted registration certificate (BD8 or CVI Certificate)** or evidence from an eye specialist, such as an optometrist, that the individual would qualify to be registered as severely sight impaired (blind) or sight impaired (partially sighted). Further advice can be found on the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) website.
- **A personal letter from the GP, community nurse or social worker** that the individual has a long term impairment or disability and requires assistance.
- **Confirmation in writing from Social Services** that the individual is included on their Deaf Register, or a letter or report from an aural specialist confirming that hearing loss has been recorded at 70 – 95 dBHL or worse.
- **Benefit award letters** including the following state benefits: Disability Living Allowance (DLA), the Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Severe Disablement Allowance, Attendance Allowance, War Pensioners' Mobility Allowance/Supplement or War or Service Disablement Pension for 80% or more disability.
- **Government** issued cards or other independent evidencing cards such as [The Access Card](#) and [the Hynt](#) can also be used as evidence, any supporters requesting an Essential Companion ticket with the +1 symbol on such cards will receive one without the need for any further information or evidence.

Language and Terminology

The language that we use and the way that we talk too or about our disabled fans is really important, but not something we should be afraid of.

- i* Remember that having a **good intention** goes a long way and **open questions** are always best, allowing the fan to lead the conversation.
- i* The term "**disabled fans**" is absolutely fine to say. When talking about Deaf fans, you should always capitalise the 'D'. You can find out why [here](#).
- i* Not all Deaf or disabled fans will require accessible seating, they might prefer to be in general standing or seated areas so you should **always check** if the fan has a preference.

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Example:

If you are speaking to a disabled fan and want to establish which ticket type is best for them, your opening question could be: *"Can you please tell me about your Access Requirements?"*

Language and Terminology

This table lays out some commonly used phrases, showing the comparisons side by side. The language that should be avoided is displayed on the left, whilst the right-hand column shows you the alternative language to use instead:

Phrase	Preferred Terminology
Disabled Tickets	Accessible Tickets
Disabled Seating	Accessible Seating
Wheelchair-bound	Wheelchair User
Hard of hearing	Hearing impaired
Free Carer Ticket or PA Ticket	Essential Companion Ticket
Special Needs	Access Requirements
Guide Dog	Assistance Dog
"Normal" seating / ticket / parking	Seating without specific access requirements

Glossary of Terms

Access Card

The Access Card is an independent proof of Access Requirement registration used by Ticketmaster to quickly communicate and evidence a fan's needs.

Accessible Tickets

Tickets and areas of an event which have been reserved to meet the needs of disabled fans. These tickets are not made available to the general public and are protected from mis selling through evidencing and/or pre-registration.

Assistance Dogs

There are a range of assistance dogs beyond the commonly known guide dogs. Each provide a unique function on behalf of a disabled person and, where possible, they should be accommodated.

Attendance Allowance (AA)

Attendance Allowance is a version of Disability Living Allowance (or DLA) which is for people over the age of 65. After your 65th birthday you are not able to make a claim for DLA and must claim AA instead.

Ambulant Disabled / Ambulant Seating

Ambulant refers to disabled requirements that do not include specific wheelchair accessibility. It is an umbrella term for people who have some mobility issues and those who may be able to manage short distances or a few steps. It also covers people with sensory impairments such as Visual or Hearing Impairments and a wide range of other needs such as Mental Health Issues or hidden long-term conditions.

Attitude is Everything

Attitude is Everything is an organisation for disabled people which improves Deaf and disabled fans' access to live music by working in partnership with audiences, artists and the music industry.

Glossary of Terms

Blue Badge

Blue Badges are parking entitlement passes for disabled people. Blue Badges should not be used as evidence of a disability.

DLA

DLA stands for Disability Living Allowance and is a benefit many (but not all) disabled people claim and is often used to evidence access requirements. This benefit is being replaced by Personal Independence Payment (PIP).

Essential Companion Tickets

These are free tickets made available to disabled fans who require additional support from another person in order to attend a ticketed event. This offer is a reasonable adjustment which enables disabled fans to attend the event and is not to be confused with a buy one, get one free offer for all disabled people.

Hynt Card

The Hynt card is an access register funded by the Arts Council in Wales. Theatres involved in this scheme recognise it as being entitlement to a free companion ticket.

Loop System

Audio induction loop systems, also called audio-frequency induction loops or hearing loops, are an assistive listening technology for individuals with reduced ranges of hearing.

PIP

PIP stands for Personal Independence Payment. It is a benefit claimed by many, but not all, disabled people and replaces DLA.