



## Towards Best Practice in Inclusivity

Inclusivity is central to our principles. When we take care over accessibility we are saying to our people that they are important and that we care and can be bothered.

Here are some tips from members who also make it central to their practice.

### Venues

- Access: Is it a main door or a side door that has the access? Side doors can often be cut off. What about fire doors and exits? Are they easy for anyone to open and get through?
- Ramps: Get proper details of any ramps. Ramps that meet the legal minimum of 1:20 are un-useable for many people. 1:12 is much better. Even with a ramp some people will still need help.
- Handrails: Are they on both sides; if not which side are they on? Do they go the whole way? Handrail provision can be patchy and intermittent, and the lack of handrails can make access for some people impossible.
- Toilets: Are they wheelchair accessible? The size of a toilet depends on the person who uses it and sometime a small toilet is the right thing. Which way does the door open - push or pull?

The important thing to remember is that the expert on a person's needs is the person themselves. Accessible to one is not accessible to another. We don't have to be the expert, we just have to ask.

Encourage a conversation between the venue and the person.

Go and see the venue for yourself or send a trusted individual. If something isn't right, then tell the venue.

Include detailed description of the venue and any adaptations in your publicity. Think what that says about you and about our organisation.

And as a last word, one member told us, *"I don't use upstairs rooms as a matter of principle."*

### Practice

- Lyrics: Many practitioners don't use written words. If you do use word sheets, offer words in braille. Carefully position any flip charts in good light and find out which typeface/printing/paper-colour works best for your participants.
- Movement: Stand yourself in the light rather than in front of a window. Give everyone a chair or a space for a chair or a place to sit down. Make standing an option. Make moving around an option. Accommodate people depending on where they sing so that everyone else moves to them. Make the options part of your normal chat as you teach, rather than formal rules.
- Fatigue: Tell people they can step out or lie down or just close their eyes if they feel themselves tiring or needing a break.
- Support: Offer a buddy system. Meet new people beforehand. Make yourself available. Encourage break-times as opportunities to mix and be friendly.
- Emotions: Warn participants that the physical effects of singing can be emotional. Getting upset or crying is fine, and no one will make a fuss. Leave the room or stay - whatever happens the song will carry on until you're ready to come back into it.

Many of you already have excellent accessibility practices and this will serve merely as a check list. If you have a hot tip of your own, then please let us add it. Hopefully there may be something to think about for us all.

Our message is that we care about accessibility and if we continue to have conversations with venues, with people with disabilities, and with each other then perhaps we can make total inclusivity the norm. No outsiders!

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