



Factory International Access Policy

This policy was updated in March 2023. It will be reviewed and refreshed annually, with the next review due in March 2024.

About Factory International and our access work:

Factory International hosts a year-round programme of the world's best dance, theatre, music, visual arts, performance, installation and digital commissions. We run Manchester International Festival (MIF) – the festival of brand new artistic work that has captivated our city since 2007. We invite communities from Manchester and beyond to meet, exchange ideas, learn new skills and have their say through our free Factory Academy training programme, Artist Development programmes, International Training, Learning Programmes, Forums and Community Partnerships.

At Factory International, we believe in enabling everyone to share in what we do on an equitable basis, with dignity and respect, and we aim to offer a high quality accessible experience for everyone.

As such, we work hard to ensure that accessibility is a thread that runs through everything we do and every part of our organisation.

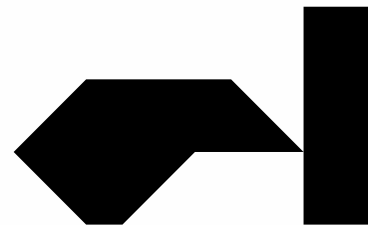
Our work on this is led by our dedicated Access team, but accessibility is part of everyone's job here and it is considered at every stage of every project.

We understand disability through the Social Model (although we know that this has some limitations) and as such, we acknowledge that it is our collective responsibility – with our partners and collaborators – to make our work and our spaces accessible for Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people.

We are committed to listening to the lived experience of Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people, learning, testing new approaches and continually refining and improving accessibility across our organisation.

As part of this commitment, we have adopted an Access Policy as laid out here.

For the purposes of this document, 'disability' is understood in its broadest sense and – as a minimum – covers all the impairments and conditions within the scope of the Equality Act (2010).



Key aims:

These are the aims we're working towards:

- Everyone can access and enjoy Factory International events and/or work, collaborate, participate or volunteer with us on an equitable basis.
- We work first to remove (and avoid creating) systemic barriers to participation for Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people. If removal is not possible, we provide a range of structures, adjustments and options to deliver equitable access.
- Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people feel as valued and have as positive an experience of Factory International as anyone else.
- Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people are fairly and authentically represented across our artistic programme, our workforce and our governance structure.
- At Factory International, accessibility is seen as a creative opportunity. We actively encourage artists to explore and integrate new access approaches within their work.
- Accessibility as a guiding principle is part of our everyday thinking and embedded in all areas of our organisation.
- Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people are not treated less favourably by Factory International for a reason relating to their impairment or neurodivergence than others to whom that reason doesn't apply.

How we are achieving these aims:

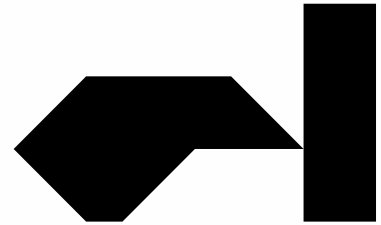
Organisational planning and strategy:

Accessibility and disability representation are firmly embedded in our Business Plan, with a focus on:

- Embedding accessibility in our creative practice as an organisation
- Consistently creating accessible productions
- Authentic representation of disability across our artistic programme
- Providing equitable employment training opportunities for disabled people
- Establishing Factory International as an example of best practice for visitor accessibility, both digitally and in person.

Progress against our strategic objectives in these areas are regularly reviewed by our Board.

Disability Representation is also represented with specific KPIs in our Equalities Action Plan.



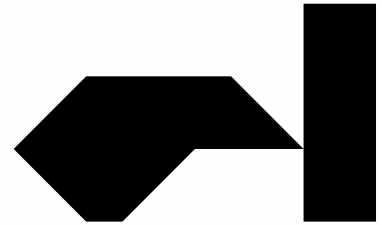
Alongside this, we are part of two major external benchmarking programmes, [Attitude Is Everything's Charter Standard programme](#), and the UK government's [Disability Confident](#) scheme, which help to provide a basis for our work on accessible visitor experience and accessible recruitment and workplace culture respectively.

In addition to this strategic grounding:

- We have a dedicated, permanent **Access Manager** role – this role works strategically to embed accessibility in all we do across the organisation and develop delivery frameworks for our access workstream.
- We have developed an **Access Action Plan** to help us continually improve accessibility and disability representation across Factory International. This is reviewed regularly by our staff and Board.
- We have a **Disabled People's Engagement Group** which was established in 2019 and has members with a diverse range of lived experience of disability. The group is facilitated by Breakthrough UK and meets at least four times per year to provide input from disabled people's perspectives as 'experts by experience' into all aspects of accessibility at Factory International.

Visitor experience and operations:

- We offer discounts for disabled people, and free Personal Assistant/Companion tickets where required.
- We enable visitors to join our access mailing list by setting up a Factory International account and selecting their access preferences.
- We programme a variety of types of accessible performance (including but not limited to captioned, audio-described, relaxed and BSL-interpreted presentations) both in-person and online, across our artistic programme.
- We provide up-to-date access information about our venues, and details of our access performances and presentations on our website.
- We offer online booking for all access performances and all types of access tickets. You can book online from any Factory International event page.
- We offer wheelchair spaces and access seating as needed across all our events.
- We have a dedicated Groups and Access Assistant in our Ticketing team who coordinates access booking and ensures that the whole Ticketing team is able to confidently answer questions and concerns from bookers with access needs.



- We have a dedicated access telephone number 0161 817 4531 (open 10am to 5pm Monday to Friday) and email address (access@factoryinternational.org) where visitors can contact us about specific access requirements, access bookings, or details of Factory International access performances.
- We have an Assistance Dog Policy and welcome assistance dogs at Factory International.
- We provide ongoing training in disability and access awareness to our staff and as part of our volunteer induction.
- We provide Access Stewards at our large-scale events to act as a point of contact for access bookers and provide assistance as needed.
- We ensure that all staff are aware of this Access Policy and can answer queries about access at Factory International.
- Our Venue Access Working Group meets regularly to ensure the smooth running of access provision in our building. This group includes access leads from a variety of operational teams.

Workplace and workforce:

- We are a **Disability Confident** employer and regularly review the accessibility of our recruitment and employment practices.
- We have an active Disability Representation Working Group that any member of staff can join. This group is part of our wider Equalities workstream and exists to provide an empowering space and mutual support for Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent staff as well as to provide challenge, debate and learning around disability representation in the organisation.
- We ensure that accessibility is a key topic in our induction and onboarding process for new starters, with a dedicated access induction session available for all, and opportunities for new staff to discuss any reasonable adjustments they may require.
- We provide ongoing training in disability and access awareness to our staff.
- Our Access team maintains a knowledge hub of access resources for all staff to draw on and advises on accessibility best practice across all workstreams.
- We facilitate workplace needs assessments as required, and support employees through the Access to Work application process as needed.



- We provide up to date access information about our main workplace in the form of an Access Statement.

Artists and the artistic programme:

- We are developing an R&D Access Policy to support the access needs of artists in the earliest stage of making work with us.
- We are developing an Access agreement process as part of our commissioning framework, to ensure that artists and creative teams understand our baseline expectations around accessible performance, and that we collectively agree to deliver them in the way that best suits each production.
- We identify at least one access innovation project per year – a commission that will in some way explore new technologies or methodologies to create accessible work.
- We offer dedicated Access Innovation funding at R&D stage to enable artists to develop their thinking around creative and integrated access.
- We have an inclusive casting policy with specific goals around disability representation, which we ask all productions to use.
- We provide detailed access information about our front and back of house spaces at Factory International as part of our technical specifications and our Artist Liaison process.
- We use accessible audition spaces and rehearsal rooms and can provide accessible accommodation and travel plans as required.
- We encourage the sharing of access riders / access documents to help us ensure that appropriate support is put in place for artists and creative teams working with us.