Widening Engagement Phase 2: Final Report Sept 2025

Brief

To develop for the Arts Council of Wales (ACW) and the Amgueddfa Cymru-Museums Wales guidance on:

1. A minimum level of service at arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru for D/deaf, physically disabled, visually impaired and learning disabled / neurodiverse people in Wales.
2. A three tiered 'kitemark' of standards at arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru for D/deaf, physically disabled, visually impaired and learning disabled / neurodiverse people in Wales, to which these venues can work towards and implement.

Research Team

- **Richie Turner:** Lead consultant and researcher and Project Manager
- **Trevor Palmer:** Physical Disability and Learning Disability Consultant
- **Jonny Cotsen:** D/deaf Consultant
- **Chloe Clarke:** Visually impaired consultant
- **Jon Luxton:** Disability Advisor and External Policy Consultant
- **Lyndy Cooke:** Deputy Project Manager and Access Support Manager
- **Cooked Illustrations:** Illustrations
- **Films:** UCAN Productions and Arcadian Owls Productions.

Methodology:

- **Focus group discussions:**
  - Re-engage and consult with D/deaf clubs and D/deaf people across Wales (through our existing networks and research): 4 sessions of at least 5 people (target 20)
  - Re-engage and consult with disability led and disability support organisations and disabled people across Wales (through our existing networks and research): 4 sessions of at least 5 people (target 20)
  - Re-engage and consult with learning disability led and learning disability support organisations and learning disabled people across Wales (through our existing networks and research): 4 sessions of at least 5 people (target 20)
  - Engage and consult with visually impaired led and visually impaired support organisations and visually impaired people across Wales (through our visually impaired consultant):4 sessions of at least 5 people (target 20).
- **Identify existing similar models:** We are aware that other organisations have developed 'kitemark' schemes from which we can learn and adapt.
- **Stakeholder engagement:**
  - Disability Arts Cymru
  - Creu Cymru

Research Engagement Achieved:

	Total	Against target	Percentage achieved
Interviewees input to Focus groups	94	80	117.50%
Number of physical interviews	71	80	88.75%
Number of Focus group sessions	19	16	118.75%

Percentage of focus groups by disability targeted

Disability	Percentage
Neuro diverse	30%
Physically Disabled	24%
Hearing Impaired	25%
Visually Impaired	21%

Percentage of actual participants by disability group

Disability group	**Participants %**
Neuro diverse	22%
Physically Disabled	18%
Hearing Impaired	20%
Visually Impaired	19%
Multiple Disabilities	13%
Support Workers	8%

Participants by Wales regions

Region	**Participants %**
North Wales	10%
Mid Wales	6%
South West Wales	23%
South East Wales	24%
Cardiff	37%

Comparison between Ethnic Population in Wales and research survey Source: Statistic Wales Oct 2021

	Percentage
All ethnic groups in Wales by population	5%
All other groups by population	95%
All ethnic groups in Wales as participants	7%
All other groups by participants	93%

Facilitation:

- Facilitators were asked to focus their discussions around the 9 key themes we identified from Phase 1, as to why D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse people do not attend or attend arts events and Amgueddfa Cymru infrequently.
- We asked respondents to consider the minimum, acceptable, standards of service they would expect in relation to each of the 9 themes? This has resulted in at least 10 service areas to consider for arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru.

1. **Finding out about an event, an venue or Amgueddfa Cymru and booking tickets (this category also includes comments about Hynt and additional evidence to support the need for the UK Art Access Card initiative to be implemented as soon as possible):**

- Introduction: This topic probably generated more discussion than any other. Frustrations at still being unable to book tickets online, the lack of accessible marketing and the frequent lack of accessibility information easily found were key to this aspect of devising a set of minimum standards.
- Websites for venues and Amgueddfa Cymru should be exactly the same as for hotels, with the non-accessible online booking system exactly the same for ease of use as for accessible booking requirements.
- Make all publicity materials disability friendly, especially for visually impaired people, as booking forms often have colour contrasts that can make it hard to read.
- Marketing materials should simply include all access information, as that takes the onus off disabled people finding out this information and places the onus on venues and Amgueddfa Cymru to correctly list this information.
- Many respondents asked if venues and Amgueddfa Cymru reach out directly to local disability support organisations such as Mencap or Sight Life to market their specifically accessible events? Because word of mouth amongst a particular disability group or community is often strong and everyone said they prefer going in a larger group if possible.
- Booking systems are often complicated. They should automatically tell you how accessible an event is and be as straightforward as possible to use. Do box office tickets systems test their software with disabled people before they are used? If so, do they test with all disabilities?
- Requiring visually impaired people to book by telephone can be hard, for example if you are asked to list your payment card number or are trying to enter the numbers online. Can venues reserve the booking and allow visually impaired audiences to pay when they pick up the tickets on the day?
- Websites where you can pick where you sit aren’t VI friendly and are often impossible to use for VI people as they don’t have a voice control capability, and aren’t screen reader operated either.
- It’s often not clear if there are discounts on ticket prices for disabled people until after you have completed the booking. Moreover, there are now so many different discount and support schemes (venue

specific or local authority based or national) that it can be exhausting or confusing to try and work out which to use. One single scheme would really help (N.B. UK Government have greenlighted the development of the UK Arts Access card initiative in their latest Disability Strategy and that work to progress this is actively taking place and Wales already has its own companion discount card scheme - Hynt).

- Marketing materials should be available in all accessible formats: BSL, audio versions, braille, Easyread, large print, etc.
- For carers, they often don't have enough time to research which events are suitable for each individual, so a marketing email which details events, including how accessible they are, would be extremely beneficial. Although, some venues who do have marketing emails with this type of information then make booking very complex by insisting upon disabled people only via the telephone (which many find annoying or impossible to do easily).
- Amgueddfa Cymru and venues relying solely on websites for their marketing information excludes many disabled people. Email newsletters are very popular with many disabled people.
- Some neurodiverse people have topographical amnesia (their brains can't recall visually where they have been before) so giving out a physical map of facilities in each venue, especially for NMW, would help them considerably.
- All information must be very clear about what sort of accessibility each venue or Amgueddfa Cymru provides, e.g. hearing loop, sensory or quiet areas, not simply saying 'we offer accessible performances'.
- Codes and/or specific colours should be agreed for all accessibility requirements, e.g. suitable for autistic an adult/people/child; or colour codes for accessibility support services e.g. changing rooms, hearing loops, quiet spaces, etc.
- Hynt scheme needs to be expanded to show all forms of accessibility requirements, with symbols or obvious images for each category. Reference was made to the Attitude is Everything Arts Access Card and their categories and how well that scheme works for live music events.
- Posters (printed and digital) and all social media posts should have a direct link to accessible booking systems, as it's hard to go through websites, or to Google, to find a venue or specific events.
- A monthly printed booklet, written in Easyread, which shows what's on in each venue in Cardiff (or any area) for each group of disabled people or accessibility needs, e.g. neurodiverse. Email newsletters are

also helpful, but many people prefer receiving something in the post, which they read in their own time at home.

- Hynt Card can be good for finding out about suitable events, but most members find booking using the Hynt card very difficult at the moment.
- Email newsletters that are simple to navigate are popular with many disabled people, but disabled people often also need to check information by telephone. Venues and Amgueddfa Cymru need to realise that ringing an access telephone line often takes a very long time before you get through to a person, that these calls cost disabled people a lot of money if they have to wait in a long queue. A callback system should be created so it's the venue that is covering the cost of telephone calls. A text or What'sApp system should be in place for D/deaf people if requested.
- Many disabled people say that marketing materials (both digital and print) often do not have any accessibility information clearly obvious and then if you try and check on their website again it's hard to find out this information. A simply agreed system of images for each accessibility requirement on all publicity would make a big difference. Many visually impaired people also wanted a simple sign or image to say this event is audio-described.
- Many arts organisations and Amgueddfa Cymru have forgotten that advertising on local radio is a good way to reach visually impaired people and is also a good way to reach some neurodiverse people.
- Access information for visually impaired people should not just include whether there is an audio-description, but also if the venue has a member of staff to help you to your seat and how to find a staff member to show you where the toilets or bar is?
- Many respondents talked about the benefits of a virtual tour or floor plan, available on YouTube or a Amgueddfa Cymru's website, so they can check where to go or where facilities are located or which seats you will be sitting in before actually visiting. Virtual reality technology is also becoming more easily available so venues and Amgueddfa Cymru could commission VR walk-throughs much more simply than a few years ago. This technology has already been successfully deployed in healthcare services in Wales so expanding this into the cultural sector should not be difficult (https://www.bevancommission.org/projects/using-virtual-reality-to-improve-patient-cancer-treatment-experience/).
- Using videos to market events was also suggested by several people as textual descriptions can be difficult to understand or imagine. Video clips of what they will see might help them make decisions more

easily, but these videos should be endorsed by a recognised disability organisation, and subtitled with BSL too.

- Touch tours or audio-described tours would really encourage more VI and learning disabled people to visit Amgueddfa Cymru and venues more often. The Touch Tour at WMC was cited as really beneficial by several people. One person gave an example of a touch and feel event of dancers' costumes so that when they heard the music and audio-description they could imagine it better.
- Amgueddfa Cymru were encouraged to have more tactile tours or exhibitions and find objects that visually impaired people are allowed to touch (even if other people aren't allowed). Themed and organised tours for VI people would also likely result in higher visitor numbers.
- A high proportion of respondents said that they either don't use social media or find it hard to track in terms of finding out about arts events; consistently they prefer email communications. Many actively seek out suitable mailing lists, but a lack of consistency of accessibility information is very frustrating.
- The ability and experience of buying tickets often depends on your access to technology and your technology skills. For example in 2021, whilst 78% of disabled people say that having access to digital technologies is helpful or very helpful (https://bighack.org/accessibility-and-disability-facts-and-figures/) that means 1 in 5 don't find technology helpful, don't have access to technology still or don't know how to use it confidently.
- Venues or AC stating they are 'fully accessible' can mean making assumptions which turn out to be wrong. What is the actual definition of 'fully accessible"? It's a term that is sometimes used incorrectly as it implies all accessibility needs are provided for, but in reality it's often only the main ones, such as wheelchair ramps and hearing loops.
- If all publicity had a QR code that took you directly to the accessibility information (available in multiple formats) of an event or AC that would help many disabled people considerably, because some respondent said they simply don't try booking or visiting Amgueddfa Cymru if they can't easily find the access information.
- Venues and Amgueddfa Cymru should have a dedicated telephone line - an access hotline- that a disabled person can call (or text if D/deaf), with a recorded message that lists all the accessible services they usually offer. Then a person knows whether to bother looking for specifically accessible events there or not?
- Social media based marketing is not used by many visually impaired people as most is not 'screen reader enabled'. Getting suitable audio

content marketing information is hard to find. CD mailouts of audio marketing information from Venue Cymru was cited as good service a few years ago but this appears to have stopped.

- Audio recorded email newsletters that highlighted which events had audio-description and their specific dates, with links to easily book tickets, were suggested by many visually impaired people. For those VI people who can't use screen readers easily (e.g. those who don't have those apps on their smartphones) then a CD or Braille version would be an alternative. There is a recognition that creating audio based marketing content will increase costs for venues and AC and that this needs to be funded properly for this to happen.
- Accessing information with screen readers can be difficult as some email formats aren't able to work properly, e.g. if they are formatted into columns which many HTML emails are, and some website formats with preset design blocks also cause problems. All arts organisations and Amgueddfa Cymru should be required to have fully screen readable marketing information on their websites and email communications.
- Collaborating with other services such as libraries or healthcare services to provide relevant information about specific accessible events would be a simple way to reach more disabled people. This would also assist carers and support workers who have to find suitable events. Targeted guides that list all suitable events locally for each main accessibility/disability group would help, especially if these could assist those who are non-speech communicators with plenty of pictures to decide which events they would like to attend.
- Cinemas have an online booking system (the CEA Card for companion tickets) so why don't arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru also have online booking systems which take account of access needs? (N.B. The development of the UK Arts Access Card is in development).
- If venues and Amgueddfa Cymru worked with local disability groups more often to organise group outings, especially for learning disabled people and others with neurodiversity, then attendances would increase.
- The longer notice venues can give about accessible events the better as many carers are volunteers and need plenty of time to plan things properly.
- When booking online or registering for an email newsletter most venues and AC have mandatory categories on their forms that include a telephone number. Many D/deaf and HoH people can't use the phone so don't own one. It shouldn't be mandatory and it must be possible to complete the form without completing that question.

- The concept of a centralised database and website, obviously fully accessible, for events in Wales and the UK was suggested many times. Will the UK Arts Access card be able to aggregate this date from all websites that are APIing into it? And not just access requirements for each of the card's members, but to list all accessible events into disability categories?

2. Should venues and Amgueddfa Cymru be more honest about how accessible their events and services really are?

- Introduction: The Phase 1 Report showed clearly that many disabled people simply don't trust what they read or are told about a venue or Amgueddfa Cymru's accessibility in reality. Any minimum level of service needs to demonstrate that honesty is being placed first and foremost in all communication with disabled people.
- The overall feedback is yes venues and Amgueddfa Cymru need to be more honest. Hardly any of our respondents cited legal requirements under the Equalities Act as reasons why all venues and Amgueddfa Cymru must have fully accessible services and events. There is a recognition and understanding that they should be aiming to have as wide a range of accessible events, but that there is also a disparity between what disabled people are told or in the information given and the actual reality when they attend an event or Amgueddfa Cymru.
- Reducing the gap between expectation and reality is vital if trust between disabled people and venues is to be improved. Being let down or mis-informed by a venue about accessibility was one of the key reasons for low attendance, as those situations led people to not risk going again and, of course, if they have a bad experience they are very likely to tell all their friends, many of whom are probably also disabled. The quotes below evidence this point of view strongly.
- *-"Venues should be absolutely honest about what they are able to provide".*

  - "It would be painful to read this, but at least this would be truthful".

  - "I would rather know that than not know if it's not suitable, honest information is the key".

  -"Venues should be completely honest about their accessibility which helps me make a decision on whether I will have a good time or not?"

  - "Everyone should be completely honest about this".

  - "Absolutely venues should be honest about what they can and can't provide - they should have a basic list of things achievable. For example if a venue is good for wheelchair users, but their facilities for hearing impaired aren't great, but say we recognise we need to

upgrade them and are hoping to do this by X date, then that's better than saying nothing".

- "Venues should work to a similar system as food allergies where the first they say is do you have any accessibility needs and then be wholly transparent and admit from the outset if they can't cater for your needs".

- "Venues shouldn't be hiding things".

- "The main thing is to be honest, just say we can't do that, establish a relationship, keep the conversation going".

- "Honesty from everyone is really important. If they mess up they should apologise to reassure the person and then offer them a discount or free tickets to come back again".

- "It's like going on holiday and then you end up in the middle of a building site. Everything looks hunky-dory in the pictures and then there are cranes and diggers and noise and your holiday is ruined. It's a bit the same as visiting a theatre. Absolutely they need to be honest".

- "They need to be certain about what they are actually offering. I think a lot of places aren't actually certain about what they are offering. They need to be clear if this person with this disability is coming this is what they may need, and if this person is coming this is what they might need. Because otherwise we just come back down to a list of bog-standard access stuff that's written down".

-"Sometimes you turn up at a venue or call them and they say 'oh no we can't do that' and then suddenly everything they've said about themselves, how accessible and disability friendly disappears in an instant."

- "It's only fair to point out that somewhere is only accessible via a few steps".

- "Yes I would probably want to know, thinking about it, you would want to know one way or another, it saves you wasting your time and money".

- "I very rarely bother to read access statements published on websites anymore as they are often out of date, meaningless or simply can't be trusted".

- There is also confusion as to what an accessible or inaccessible venue or Amgueddfa Cymru really is? Some respondents have been told that a venue is inaccessible because it has stairs, but if you are not a wheelchair user it may be accessible to another disabled person. "*So I*

think total honesty is definitely the best policy, just be clear when giving our information".

- There was much less agreement around whether it is OK or not for some events to be specifically accessible to some disabled people, e.g. a BSL signed performance for D/deaf people, but not to also provide audio-description for visually impaired people. Some respondents recognised venues and Amgueddfa Cymru can't provide for all accessibility needs all the time, but others strongly argued against only providing for certain 'categories'. Access for all - all the time.
- Another issue arose with events being advertised as accessible, such as audio-described, but when they are actually due to happen the venue says there was not enough demand and so they haven't booked the access provider as advertised and crucially they haven't informed people who have booked. Clearly this is unacceptable, but it's the lack of honesty that creates future problems and the minimum standards of service being devised need to address this difficult point clearly.

3. Separate spaces in Amgueddfa Cymru and venues for disabled people

- Introduction: A significant amount of progress has been made recently to provide safe, calm and relaxed performances and other types of tailored events that can include neurodiverse people. Separate seating areas might be created so that people feel comfortable in auditoriums (for example to ensure people are not worried about talking aloud during a show or becoming anxious in the middle of a large audience). These improvements are, of course, welcomed but they often fail to think about factors outside the main event.
- Venues should create safe and calm spaces or sensory rooms where neurodiverse people can go before a performance, during intervals and afterwards. We only have to think how busy and noisy a theatre foyer can be to realise that only thinking about the actual performance misses the point of trying to reach neurodiverse audiences. It has to be a totally safe and calm experience from start to finish.
- Amgueddfa Cymru, especially the large national museums in Wales, should have safe, quiet, sensory rooms as the scale of buildings can often mean neurodiverse people becoming afraid of getting lost or afraid of large crowds.
- What to call such a space created divided opinions. Some people didn't like the terms sensory room or safe space and suggested 'Chill out room'.

- Having enough space for guide dogs to lay down and relax, perhaps with a bowl of water, in a quiet space away from big audiences and crowds was another related request. Many arts venues simply don't have enough space for a person to be seated with a large dog at their feet.
- D/deaf and HoH people also requested a quiet, safe space as they sometimes have great sensitivity to sounds of crowds, e.g. tinnitus or hyperacusis. However, unthoughtful solutions to this problem such as actually putting the person in the lighting box need challenging.
- Other people wanted arts venues to offer a similar service to live music venues, which often provide separate routes so that you don't have to queue with the main audiences and then choose whether to sit in a designated area, e.g. a viewing platform. Sports stadiums offer similar services and facilities. Some respondents though were very much against what they saw as segregation as they want to be treated equally.
- Comparisons with other sectors such as airports, that sometimes provide quiet, safe rooms, were made by several people.
- The apparent lack of events for neurodiverse children compared to adults was raised by a significant number of people too.
- Even if these spaces are created, it is vital that venues and their staff make neurodiverse people aware of how to ask for access to the space, they should be easy to find (not hidden away in frightening places such as backstage locations far from accessible toilets) and that their availability is advertised alongside other accessibility services.

4. Dedicated feedback system

- Introduction: Disabled people often feel their views aren't listened to or feel excluded from decision making that directly concerns them. Whilst they welcome being consulted again about how to devise a minimum standard for services for arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru they would like these standards to also include a continuous feedback system.
- Introduction: Some of the suggestions for this topic are currently somewhat unrealistic until significantly greater levels of funding are provided to venues and Amgueddfa Cymru to ensure better industry practice, higher FOH staffing levels and continuous improvement practices. From our first report it was entirely clear that it is not possible to achieve greater access to the arts and cultural heritage sectors without significant increased investment. More money will not solve all the issues, in fact it won't create change without a holistic

solution, but sometimes there are no shortcuts to implementing these recommendations and in the case of feedback systems, investing in more staffing resources is a prerequisite.

- For example, many respondents were clear that disabled people should be paid to provide their feedback as they are providing professional advice that will help Amgueddfa Cymru or arts venues increase audiences and sales in the long term. If direct payment is not possible in the short-term then other incentives such as free tea or coffee or discounts on future events should be considered. Many are exhausted by giving feedback for so many years, with largely no apparent changes made. Comments made on social media, often about poor experiences, are rarely responded to directly by venues or Amgueddfa Cymru, so many don't feel that approach achieves the results they had hoped for.
- Whilst some venues do have a feedback or complaints procedure, respondents often said they receive no response to their feedback, whether positive or negative. Feeding back online or by email isn't suitable for many disabled people and often they are looking for a conversation rather than a more confrontational approach.
- Many find sifting through websites to try and find how to give feedback equally frustrating. Sometimes it's simply to provide positive feedback from a great experience or great support they've received from a staff member or perhaps simply constructive criticism, but the assumption is that any feedback is always critical.
- Some have suggested all disabled people, who have made a booking asking for some form of access services, should automatically receive a call or some form of communication to find out their experience. This is a big 'ask' of venues at the moment. Perhaps one to work towards over the duration of the Kitemark criteria.
- If venues created a simple feedback system then more disabled people would visit the well reviewed venues. All venues but some noted that bad reviews can put people off unnecessarily as what affects one person is different to another person. Creating an open and fair feedback system is the key issue here.
- The feedback system should be linked to the Hynt Card (and the future UK Arts Access card system).
- Feedback systems should be clearly printed on all event tickets,e.g. 'If you've had a problem today call this number and we will call you straight back', or have a clear link on booking website pages to a feedback portal.

- Amgueddfa Cymru should have easier feedback places for visitors, not just asking people to complete a form on their way out on the front desk (which isn't appropriate for most disabled people, especially learning disabled people). Installing the instant touch feedback stands with a range of smiling or sad faces, like they have in airports or service stations, would be a simple way for neurodiverse people to give feedback.
- Feedback by disabled audiences and visitors should just be regarded as getting an insight on their overall customer service and perhaps one way to ensure better feedback is to employ disabled people to undertake this customer engagement. The systems need to involve real people talking to real customers, not only relying on automated IT systems. Creating dedicated posts to be the first point of contact for feedback would ensure consistency and ensure learning is collated, as often respondents felt their feedback is ignored or not communicated to the right people in the venues. Disabled people need to feel confident enough to give negative feedback and know they are being heard and that responses come from a person they know and can trust. Others suggested hiring a local disability organisation to do the feedback engagement work so that it is more objective and independent.
- Feedback from disabled customers must be visible to all people via their websites, but the ways to respond must also be fully accessible, such as braille, audio-recordings and BSL. People should be encouraged to use simple language so everyone feels able to contribute and everybody can understand the comments, especially important for learning disabled people. A lack of staff training, from some people in Amgueddfa Cymru and venues, can lead to feedback being misunderstood. An inexperienced FOH staff member isn't the right person to hear detailed or complex feedback.
- Create a Trip Advisor type format for feedback that also enables positive feedback for helpful staff. The system needs to be flexible enough for any disabled person to reply, not just those who can write or talk confidently. For example, through social media like Instagram people could feedback with happy or sad photos instead of complex questionnaire formats. Evidence needs to be collected and then publicly published as several respondents said they would like to read feedback reviews online and make choices about which venues to go to based on those reviews. There was recognition that if a very poor review is submitted, then venues should be given a short space of time to respond privately (in case this is a malicious complaint), but largely respondents felt disabled people don't have the time to pursue complaints unless they are genuine.

- Secret or mystery shoppers were another suggestion for a feedback system; whatever the system chosen, everyone agreed this needs to happen regularly, not just once to achieve their 'accredited' kitemark rating. Some respondents said they feel too shy to make public comments about a venue as a named individual. They preferred an anonymous way of feeding back. Some people have already undertaken mystery shopper roles in arts venues or live music events. Sadly their experience of raising any concerns or gaps in service have been largely ignored, with FOH staff often saying 'take the matter up with management' (whoever they maybe?).
- Consumer focus groups are another suggestion for how to manage effective feedback. The models used in the NHS for local patient community feedback could be replicated for the arts and cultural heritage sectors; but it was unclear who would manage these? But the concept of coming together as a group of disabled people to collectively talk through issues or hear other comments with a venue or Amgueddfa Cymru would mean that people are being reassured that they are, at least, being listened to.
- The cultural attitude of some venues and Amgueddfa Cymru needs to be challenged, some have argued though. They feel nothing happens or changes unless they make a formal complaint, and often escalate the complaint to a funder or local politician, before they get an apology. Linking funding to customer feedback will be the only way to really see significant change. In short, some have argued for a 'name and shame' approach.
- Providing feedback is hard for some disabled people, but if venues had a simple grading system they could tick then they would get much higher levels of feedback, especially from neurodiverse people.
- If disabled people want to discuss an issue with a previous visit they should be offered the opportunity to meet a person face-to-face (preferably a manager) as some say they now don't bother with emailing in a comment or complaint as they don't get a response. This issue is closely linked to staff training (discussed next) because if a venue staff member hasn't had proper training they often listen but fail to understand the feedback being made to them. However, other people felt it was important to always email as well as talk on the phone or face-to-face as otherwise they are concerned there is not a record of the conversation. For visually impaired people the ability to talk on the phone was their highest priority.
- How to hold venues and other publicly funded organisations, such as Amgueddfa Cymru, to account was debated in detail. There was considerable support for the concept of having another person or

organisation, separate to the venue, to be able to go to if dissatisfied with the response. Moreover, if venues had to publish their access policies then disabled people can more easily hold them to account. Some felt ACW should also be part of this feedback system as they directly fund the venues. Whether this is reviewing actual customer performance against published policies or whether the review is linked to their funding is a matter for further debate.

- Finally some respondents discussed the issue of when they should give positive feedback, especially when what the venue has really done is just provided an acceptable level of service. There were many examples of this, for example for a visually impaired respondent said, "*I also feel like I'm praising people for me being able to walk in a theatre, I'm seated, I watch a play and I leave and I'm assisted to leave and that's all that's happened and it's what should happen. But I feel like I should be grateful that I've had a pleasant evening. It shouldn't be the case that I need to feel a depth of gratitude, it should just happen normally. They've really only done the minimum they should do*". Some respondents have added that they feel compelled to praise staff alongside raising concerns otherwise there is a perception that disabled people only complain. They believe this perception is incorrect, but at the same time object to having to praise staff for simply doing their job correctly.
- There were also several discussions about how to feedback that staff have provided really good customer service. Suggestions such as thank you cards, naming the staff member so they can be publicly recognised, e.g. 'FOH employee of the month' or writing in to inform the venue's management.
- This issue is clearly a highly sensitive point for disabled people. Logically most of their feedback to venues and Amgueddfa Cymru is going to be to raise concerns and highlight when the service they have received has, in their view, not been of acceptable 'minimum' standard. That behaviour is no different to anyone else. Think of the annoying emails we receive all the time, asking us to rank our purchasing experience. We are unlikely to respond unless we are dissatisfied with our customer experience. Therefore venues should not expect to be overly thanked for delivering a satisfactory level of customer service to disabled people, and should anticipate most feedback conversations to often centre around poor customer service.

5. Staff training

- Introduction: Everyone agrees staff training is essential. The issue is what level and frequency is sufficient? Also what do we mean by training? Full-blown disability equality training or disability awareness

training? Specialist arts access based training or specific disability sector training such as learning disabled, autism or D/deaf or visual awareness training? Short courses or accredited programmes? One-off training when a person starts a job in a venue or Amgueddfa Cymru or updated annually or every 6 months? Do all staff have to do the training or do the same training, or should FOH and other customer facing staff have to do more intensive training than other roles?

- One aspect that everyone did also agree upon was that the training must be delivered by disabled people. Moreover, venues and Amgueddfa Cymru need to make greater efforts to increase the number of disabled people they employ. Without also having disabled staff it will be hard for organisations to change their culture from ableist to fully equal and accessible. Employing disabled people will help trained staff recognise patterns of unconscious bias in their customer services.
- Whilst staff training is essential many respondents felt that venues and Amgueddfa Cymru should be compelled to employ D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse staff to ensure there is deep understanding of all aspects of accessibility needs and requirements. Moreover, most felt employing only 1 disabled staff member would be tokenistic and potentially push all disability issues and enquiries onto that single person; resulting in the opposite effect.
- Some people felt all staff, regardless of being disabled or non-disabled, should be tested in some way on their understanding of disability access needs, and on a regular basis after an update on their initial training.
- Creating a quick awareness guide/ staff handbook - either digitally or a printed leaflet - that staff can refer to was a suggestion that was popular with some people. This should include a FAQ type list of most requested access services or issues, e.g how to make the hearing loop work. This can prevent problems when a disabled person asks a question that the staff member doesn't know how to answer and then is left waiting whilst they try and find somebody who 'does know' the answer. These types of situations often make disabled people uncomfortable, especially if that causes queues and delays for other people.
- The creation of a disability staff champion for each venue and Amgueddfa Cymru has divided opinions. Many strongly argue that creating such a role would have numerous benefits, such as consistency (knowing who to should be the main point of contact for customers and staff), but equally as many argued against this recommendation as this approach again places all the focus and

responsibility on one person/one role, allowing other staff to avoid their own personal or collective responsibility. A variation on this idea was a dedicated FOH Disability Champion that could concentrate on customer facing services only and not get embroiled in other strategic and artistic matters related to equality and diversity. Everyone agreed that if dedicated disability champion roles are created the venues need to ensure some form of continuity, as other places such as supermarkets have published disability community champions but the staff doing the role often change and disabled people need time to build trust in these people.

- During the discussion our facilitators tried to tease out those questions raised in this introduction and the consensus is:
    - Frequency: All staff must get training when they start. Updated annually unless they have a FOH role in that case it should be updated bi annually. For existing staff the assumption should be that they have to begin training from the start unless they have evidence of recent training.
    - Disability champions: There was no clear outcome for this issue. There is near 50:50 split between those that see creating this role as vital to ensure organisations tackle disability issues fully and disabled people know they have a named champion on 'their side'. Others fear it will allow venues and Amgueddfa Cymru to continue to operate an ableist service as they can 'pass the buck' to the disability champion all the time. Perhaps both approaches need to be piloted to see which works best?
    - Staff role or level of responsibility: Whilst everyone felt FOH should have the highest level of training, many said that it should start at the top with chief executives and artistic directors. If they don't fully understand the needs of disabled people then they won't be able to understand how to change all their services to become entirely accessible. At the opposite end of the scale all volunteers and casual staff, even if it's just for a 1 day event, must have some training before they can begin their shifts. Many also requested that cleaners and security staff (sometimes recruited as outsourced staff) be required to undertake the same training, as leaving cleaning equipment in accessible toilets is quite common and unfriendly security staff is unfortunately still the norm.
    - Type of training: It must be disability equality training (which by definition is led by disabled people). It should tackle conscious and unconscious bias. FOH staff to have specialist training e.g. D/deaf awareness; perhaps aiming for one specialist aspect

each 6 months. This should be action based and linked to the Kitemark, and visibly published.

- Accreditation: Staff should have to demonstrate they actually understand their training and can put this into place when needed. This could be tested through the mystery shopper idea. Meeting an accredited level of disability training was recommended, but it was unclear if any training courses actually provide certification or accredited tests.
- Picking the right people: Not everyone is suited to customer support work for disabled people. Amgueddfa Cymru and venues need to recruit more carefully - it's more of a vocation than simply adding a training skill to someone's existing role. One person gave the example of arriving in a theatre and the venue had allocated them a support person but they immediately said, " '*Right let's go to your seats' and I'm like woah! I wanted a wee and then a drink as I've just been on the train for 2 hours and they replied 'I don't have time I need to take you now'. That's really poor service when they think they are providing a good, extra service. You feel like being heard as cattle not an individual*".
- Consistency: Time and again the issue of consistent customer service was raised. One highly trained person may provide the level of service required one week, but disabled people often found if they returned to the same venue or Amgueddfa Cymru they may receive very poor service. That leads to a lack of trust and sometimes means the disabled person reverts to their usual position of not bothering to try and attend. Amgueddfa Cymru and venues must try and ensure these minimum standards of customer service are delivered everyday and not reliant upon a few highly trained staff, but can be consistently delivered by all staff.

- Specific disability training was discussed in each of the four themed strands of research and each highlighted their own particular needs. For example, as a visually impaired person having a support person greet you when arriving is great, but in reality unless they stay with you to help you buy a drink, show you where you can sit for a drink, where your drink is on a table, guide to your seats, take you the toilets at the interval, etc. then the visually impaired person often feels uncomfortable and anxious. There is recognition of the resource implications of dedicated venue support staff, but on the other hand offering very limited support doesn't really solve their full accessibility needs. But examples of good (minimum practice) were also shared where staff met, greeted and stayed with a person until seated and the

performance started. Safety evacuation training for staff dealing with visually impaired people was also raised many times. Most VI people are supported to be seated, but usually nobody mentions what will happen in an emergency (whereas for wheelchair users this issue is more commonly dealt with). Another example, was a lack of D/deaf awareness training often means BSL interpreters struggle to translate idioms, colloquial terminology and that leaves D/deaf people out and feeling disconnected from the performance. Specific neurodiverse training for FOH would mean they can begin to recognise the different types of neurodiversity, such as autism, where any slight difficulties lead to increased anxiety that make disabled people feel even worse, e.g. their stuttering gets much worse.

- Many respondents suggested venues and Amgueddfa Cymru should have an annual 'performance' review to check how they are performing on disability access services, including how many staff have been trained, at what levels and and on which topics? This should be undertaken by a trained disabled person or disability organisation. These organisations have annual reviews from their funders on many other aspects of their operations so why shouldn't disability access services be added to these criteria? Linking these annual reviews with a mystery shopper programme was also suggested. Some said venues and Amgueddfa Cymru should carry out their own internal access audit first; which is published and then this is checked by an external audit (the same as happens with financial and risk management).
- Staff that have been trained in access requirements should wear badges that clearly show this (as staff who are Welsh speakers already do). Clearly this would not be helpful for visually impaired people.
- Staff in franchise providers at venues and Amgueddfa Cymru such as bars and restaurants should also have to undertake the same level of training as directly employed staff. These services are part of their overall customer service so they cannot be exempt from these minimum standards being developed.
- Learning from mistakes and sharing that learning with all staff was also raised. Some suggested that once a month managers should share feedback they've received and explain any changes in accessible services or additional training now required so that the same issues don't arise again in the future.

6. Timing of events

- Introduction: This topic centres around the question of how to programme accessible events so that they reach the widest and largest number of disabled people. Should these events happen in the daytime

or evenings? Should events be targeted at one specific disability group, e.g. D/deaf with one specially advertised BSL performance or should all events simply be made fully accessible all the time?

- The findings on this topic are pretty clear. Disabled people don't want to have to organise their diaries so they can attend the one targeted event aimed at them at a particular venue or Amgueddfa Cymru. Simple as that. They have pretty much unanimously asked for all events to be accessible (with perhaps the exception of relaxed performances).
- For clarity disabled people are saying please can we have BSL interpreted, captioned, audio-described and touch tour events all at the same time and for all events all the time. They want the same level of choice as non-disabled people.
- Many disabled people recognised that relaxed performances could be included in that list too, but often felt they would prefer not to have a sometimes reduced or 'watered down' version e.g. reduced light and sound experience.
- However, all relaxed events or performances should also include BSL interpreted, captioned, audio-described and touch tours. Relaxed performances are usually aimed at children and adults who are autistic, neurodiverse or have a learning disability. Or for adults with dementia, Alzheimer's and other cognitive disabilities. However, there are many other people who may benefit from a relaxed performance, such as anyone with epilepsy or anyone who has conditions that make them sensitive to light and sounds, such as migraines or misophonia. Anyone who cannot sit still for very long for whatever reason. People who may need to leave the auditorium to go to the bathroom more frequently. Anyone with Tourette's syndrome or who makes other involuntary noises. They can be particularly useful for anyone with mental health conditions such as anxiety or panic disorder because you can come and go as needed and you're not sat in the dark.
- The concept of special nights for each disability group was generally disliked intensely as it makes disabled people feel categorised. Moreover, many disabled people have multiple disabilities so they are excluded from these targeted events anyway.
- Added to the fact that many disabled people have friends who are also disabled, and sometimes with different disabilities and access needs, so putting audio-described on one night and BSL other night and captioning on the matinee, ends up stopping them going with friends.
- The issue of accessible events usually being programmed as matinees was also largely unpopular, apart from those with learning disabilities or those people who rely on carers/support workers. For the majority

of disabled people putting accessible events into matinee slots is patronising, as actually most disabled people work (just the same as non-disabled people). Programming relaxed performances as matinees is still popular for many learning disabled people, but others stated that there is an assumption that relaxed performances are usually aimed at children, whereas some adults prefer them, but just not in the afternoons instead of evenings. The two things need to be separated as they are not specifically linked. And even if the relaxed performance is targeted at children, many families have non-disabled children too. Which events are they meant to attend?

- Adult themed events programmed in the morning or matinees are extremely limited. If venues or Amgueddfa Cymru could recognise not all daytime events have to be for children they would reach out those constrained by evening curfews, e.g. carers/support workers often leave by 9.30pm.
- The influence of carers/support workers on event timings was also raised. If they are usually placed on daytime shifts then they are less likely to want to go to evening events. The care and support companies need to recognise this issue and increase their timetabling of staff for evening activities too. Other disabled people who have to pay for care/support workers themselves often said that they have to go to matinees as they can't afford the additional costs of paying for evening support to attend evening events.
- D/deaf people questioned why venues make one evening accessible with BSL interpretation and then put captioning on a separate evening. Many D/deaf people have friends or partners that need one or other accessibility services. It really frustrates them that they can't attend together.
- Therefore venues and Amgueddfa Cymru should continue to programme accessible matinee events, but recognise disabled people also want accessible events in the evenings.
- Further reasons for not programming disability specific events are that many people have found that by the time they have seen an event and want to book the one night that has their specific accessible service is already fully booked. And of course, you can't pick another day as it's only available for one night.

7. Amgueddfa Cymru specific points

- Introduction: Whilst most of the findings can hopefully be applied to both arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru there were some discussions that focused very specifically on Amgueddfa Cymru.

- There were several discussions in the visual impaired groups about perceptions of what types of artforms and events they prefer to attend. Of particular note were discussions around visiting Amgueddfa Cymru and art galleries, where people often assume that as a visually impaired person any visual based art would not be of interest. Many stated they do like the visual arts, but only enjoy visiting these exhibitions if "*somebody passionate helps it bring it to life*". That often means trying to find a family member or friends to come with them, but being able to attend independently is a key aspect of this topic. Pre-recorded audible guides are very popular as they were described as stale and often outdated, and tend to only cover the permanent exhibits. Whereas if Amgueddfa Cymru provided trained and dedicated staff, who would accompany a visually impaired person as their guide and describe exhibits in their own words, then their passion would convey much more and the visually impaired person would be much more engaged. Each time they visited they may get a different guide who would focus on different topics and thereby the learning would be greater.
- Having dedicated VI guides was also welcomed to tackle a common barrier to attendance, i.e. a concern about not being able to touch exhibits or breaking objects, etc. The guide in this instance would be able to allow a visually impaired person special dispensation to touch some objects under their supervision, again greatly enhancing their visitor experience, and enabling them to attend independently. However, it is recognised this will require significant resources which Amgueddfa Cymru currently does not have.
- Creating dedicated guides to support visually impaired people getting around the AC was also welcomed. Most Amgueddfa Cymru sites are large, and in the case of St. Fagans it's huge, and often overwhelming. Other Amgueddfa Cymru museums such as Big Pit or the Slate Museum sound too daunting to visit without a dedicated guide. Putting visually impaired people into regular guided tours just doesn't work for VI people, as they move too quickly, the guide is pointing at things that can't be distinguished and usually nobody is allowed to touch exhibits. Someone gave a experience of being on a standard tour and the other tour members getting bored with the guide having to describe things in detail, e.g. the 10 colours of a stained glass window (whereas non-visually impaired people could simply see all the colours), and because the guide was having to describe things they don't usually talked about the tour overran and they had to skip some exhibits. Nobody had a good customer experience on that occasion, whether disabled or non-disabled. It will take much longer to guide a visually impaired person around an Amgueddfa Cymru site or

exhibition than a non-disabled person therefore offering integrated tours is not the way forward.

- Visually impaired people all agreed they experience some events and locations very differently. To take in all the information they require to understand an exhibit or an old building they often have to touch everything, from stroking the dip created by thousands of people walking up stone steps or feeling the cracks in an old wooden door. But when they do this in an integrated environment, with many non-disabled people about, they often feel uncomfortable.

8. Staff Attitudes and Behaviour

- Introduction: Despite the best intentions of arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru, Phase 1 report found that some staff are not as helpful as they perhaps could be (whether intentionally or not). One bad experience, especially for neurodiverse people, can put them off visiting a particular venue or Amgueddfa Cymru forever, or worse put them off visiting all arts or Amgueddfa Cymru again. Therefore we asked how we could stop or reduce these instances?
- Venues and Amgueddfa Cymru must stop being defensive. They should think before immediately responding by having to defend themselves as that approach reaffirms ableist culture.
- Clearly this issue is related to training, or the lack of staff training. For example, inappropriate behaviour such as 'placing hand on a disabled person's shoulder' or being told by FOH staff that 'you don't look autistic' immediately creates barriers. When disabled people give feedback on poor service so many venues or Amgueddfa Cymru staff prefer to talk to carers, parents, teachers instead of talking directly to the disabled person. In these instances many people said the only way to stop this is to directly challenge such comments calmly, but directly at the time. However, many disabled people didn't feel confident enough to do this. They stated that they only feel able to stand up for themselves if in a group situation, or worse still they have to attend with a non-disabled person who is then usually listened to without confrontation or an immediate rebuttal.
- Venues and Amgueddfa Cymru should not contract third party companies to provide key services for them as it is often these staff who are least helpful, and probably because they haven't received any training. Security staff, bar and cafe staff were often cited as being very impatient with disabled people.
- COVID has increased the examples of staff being unhelpful many people felt, for example despite FOH staff having screen protectors several D/deaf people said their requests for them to take off masks so

they could lipread were often refused. Lack of awareness of legal guidelines around exceptions for various disabilities should have been better communicated to all staff; again this comes back to better training.

- When pushed for ways to stop unhelpfulness most people simply said it comes down to attitude and friendliness. This point was already made about ensuring staff in FOH, customer facing services, are suited for such roles is paramount. Culturally security guards may feel they need to be aloof, offish, unapproachable to maintain their authority, but to most disabled people this comes over as unfriendly and unhelpful. There must be a way to deliver their security tasks whilst retaining a friendly attitude to all customers.

9. What role, if any, should venues and Amgueddfa Cymru have in providing transport?

- Introduction: This topic is a complex issue and the majority of respondents recognised that arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru have limited resources and that transport services are largely beyond their current capabilities, unless it's a local authority run venue (which should be providing integrated public services anyway). However, solving transport issues that many disabled people face in attending arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru would significantly help increase their regular attendances.
- The idea of offering an additional 'confirmed taxi booking service' with your ticket option was mentioned by some people. Getting to an evening event is often manageable, but trying to book a taxi for the home journey is harder (as end times for performances vary and some firms get booked up later in the evening). If a system, similar to being picked up from an airport arrival, could be built into venue ticket systems that would be popular. Disabled people would be largely willing to pay more for these integrated transport services, if available.
- The only group of respondents that did think venues and Amgueddfa Cymru should incorporate transport services into their own services were some learning disabled people. They recognised that providing these services for individuals would be very difficult and probably cost prohibitive, but if the services were for groups then they did wonder if this could be an additional, paid for, service in some cases? For example, travelling on public transport in the evenings often means less frequent services, and often means the only option is an expensive taxi. If a partnership with community transport services could be established, especially for targeted events and for an additional fee, they felt this would increase their attendance. Others said that if the venue or Amgueddfa Cymru had a 'preferred and

licensed' mini bus provider then they would be happy to pool their taxis fares and book one instead with their friends. It's difficulties in sorting the booking that puts them off. Another request was for the Amgueddfa Cymru to provide combined event 'excursion' trips with pick up points in the main towns and cities, on particular days, similar to package tour coach providers.

- For almost all other disabled people there was not an expectation that venues or Amgueddfa Cymru directly offer these services, even if in partnership with other transport providers. It would be wonderful if transport services were offered, but that could be a service that 'Gold star' kitemark holders could aspire towards, it's certainly not a minimum level of service expectation.
- However, providing accurate and updated information about accessible transport services to and from a venue or Amgueddfa Cymru should be a minimum level of service requirement. There needs to be full transparency about how easier or how difficult it is for disabled people to travel to and from a venue or Amgueddfa Cymru. FOH staff should also know where the nearest taxi rank is, and in some instances be willing to help a disabled person to the rank if possible (and within a few minutes walk). There were some examples of staff (in English venues) actually walking visually impaired people to the nearest train station as they knew taxis would refuse to take them as the journey was so short. Most respondents agreed that disabled people must ask in advance if they want help sorting out transport to and from a venue and not expect staff to be able to help them without notice.
- Some examples of arts venues having nowhere for even taxis to stop and drop off or pick disabled people were raised. In these instances it was suggested that local authorities should insist on some form of safe drop-off/pick up spaces for a public events licence to be granted. Under venues risk assessments the lack of safe drop-off/pick-up space should be highlighted.
- The lack of disabled parking spaces came up many times. As well as issues around the scarcity of disabled spaces some people pointed out that many are not fit for purpose. For example, if you require a large van or minibus to transport you in your large electric wheelchair then you will likely also need 3m space behind your vehicle and 2m either side. There was less agreement on whether disabled parking spaces should be free or not. Many respondents felt there should be no differentiation between disabled and non-disabled charging rates.
- In addition, it is crucial there is clear signage from any designated disabled parking to and from the Amgueddfa Cymru or arts venue.

- Linking event ticket purchases to buying a disabled parking space should be automatic in booking systems (the forthcoming arts access card scheme should ensure this becomes a feature of its services).
- The ability to pre-book a disabled parking space is vital for some disabled people to feel secure when going to an Amgueddfa Cymru location or arts event.
- For visually impaired people the option to have someone meet and greet them from a bus stop or nearby train station would be wonderful; but they recognise that type of service is resource heavy for most smaller venues. For larger venues and national Amgueddfa Cymru this offer could be feasible though. A further problem for many visually impaired people is taxis refusing to carry guide dogs, despite it being illegal.
- Many also questioned the need for them to travel to a venue to purchase their tickets (whereas non-disabled people can buy online). If you live in a rural location then it is almost impossible in terms of time, money and complexity to have to travel to buy a ticket before attending an event.
- The timing of events and linking those finish times with the latest public services for buses or trains should be taken into account by arts venues. Many people said the only way to get home after a show was by taxis and therefore the costs were too great and so they didn't bother going.

10. Reminding non-disabled people that not all disabilities are visible

- Introduction: Non-disabled people are slowly getting more aware that not all disabilities are visible, however much more still needs to be done to reinforce this. For example, simply displaying posters that say "not all disabilities are visible" can help improve awareness.
- The majority of disabled people don't have access needs that are obvious, but there remains a reliance on tacking barriers that can be seen by venues or Amgueddfa Cymru e.g. physical barriers, rather than starting from the social model and ensuring everyone has the equal chance to attend.
- Several respondents said that when they have explained they are autistic to venue or Amgueddfa Cymru staff some have responded saying 'how can you be? That's only children who have autism'. Clearly they need better training, but also venues and Amgueddfa Cymru who have developed autism friendly services, e.g. a help pack, have only done this for children and they have crayons and a colouring image

which obviously isn't appropriate for adults, and makes the autistic person feel stupid.

- A few people mentioned that cinemas used to run a short film at the start explaining their accessibility services/features and why disabled people need such varying levels of support. This seems to have been phased out now. Bringing this back for all arts events might help non-disabled people better understand that not all disabilities are visible. Moreover, an announcement at the beginning of all events stating clearly which disability access services are being provided would help reassure people. Some people gave examples of good practice where the FOH staff or performers check everyone is happy with their access needs before starting the event.

11. Pricing policies

- Introduction: This appears a sensitive subject to many. Very few disabled people expect automatically discounted ticket prices, but they do expect free companion tickets, they do expect full refunds if their experience is poor and they don't expect to have to pay more to sit in a seat that they need to for their access requirements.
- It is imperative that all arts venues provide free tickets for a companion/assistant (as is the case with the Hynt scheme). Some venues only offer discounted rates.
- Limiting disabled people to a maximum of 1 companion ticket should also not be allowed. Some disabled people need 2 assistants/carers and venues should be aware of this. Moreover, some volunteers can't access companion tickets as they aren't formally listed as such by the venue.
- Some large venues have seating that's not appropriate for particular disabilities. However, they also charge more to sit in locations that are better suited. For disabled people that means they don't have a choice about paying for a higher priced seat or not. This should be taken into account when deciding prices for different locations in a venue, e.g. Wales Millennium Centre do charge more for better seats whereas Sherman 5 scheme prioritised best seats for disabled people at no extra charge.
- Guaranteed refunds: Disabled people should be given full refunds if some aspect of advertised access services didn't work or wasn't available. Many respondents said venues are reluctant to do this and instead offer them credit for a future event. Moreover, all venues refuse to cover their travel costs even if the disabled person has not been able to attend the event e.g. advertised hearing loop or audio

description wasn't working. Refund guarantees should be built into all tickets purchases for disabled people.

12. How to overcome worries about lack of access support at an arts venue or an Amgueddfa Cymru location?

- Introduction: This was one of the biggest reasons (we found in our Phase 1 research), as to why disabled people don't attend Amgueddfa Cymru and arts venues as much as non-disabled people. It therefore stands that measures should be put in place to rectify these issues highlighted in our first report. The suggestions that came up the most were simply to be honest and be friendly.
- Some disabled people wanted the right to bring a companion with them, whenever they felt unsure about how their access needs might be supported. They said disabled people should be assured you can always bring a companion and not be questioned as to why you have needed to do this. If disabled people hadn't been let down previously they would often not need to bring a companion 'just in case things go wrong'.

13. Other smaller points:

- Emergency evacuation procedures: All visually impaired groups raised the issue that it is very rare for a performance to start with any announcement about evacuation and other emergency procedures. Most said if they are shown to their seats FOH staff don't say anything about who will help them in the case of an emergency, e.g. a fire. They point out that shouting 'this way or meet in the foyer' is no help if you are visually impaired and also no help if you are D/deaf too. This seems a significant weakness in venues risk assessments which need to be addressed.
- Gig buddies: Some people asked ACW to replicate the 'Gig Buddies' scheme operated for live music events. The Sherman 5 'gig buddy' scheme where a disabled person was met at their taxi and then accompanied throughout the event by a buddy was commended by many.
- Seating difficulties: Most online booking systems aren't screen readable when trying to choose a seat location. Seating plans are usually image or pdf files that aren't interactive and therefore can't be used by most disabled people. So disabled people end up having to go in person to a box office to book, which is unfair and costly.

Recommended Core Principles of Proposed Minimum Standards of Service Provision for Disabled People by arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru

Based upon the large list of minimum standards requested by disabled people we are recommending the initial standards of service (as listed below) and these have been grouped into the categories which disabled people responded to in our Widening Engagement Report (Phase 1) as being their most important issues to improve.

We recognise there are a considerable number of proposed minimum standards and that some will require additional resources and investment. However, some standards can be implemented for little or no cost, and many can be implemented for relatively low cost and low impact on staff resources. We have placed each minimum standard into 3 categories to assist venues and AC with implementation plans.

- little or no cost
- low cost
- requires additional investment

1. Marketing, communications and booking tickets

- Arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru should produce marketing materials trilingually -Welsh, English and British Sign Language (given that the British Sign Language Act came into effect on 29th June 2022). The production of marketing materials in other accessible formats should also be easily available upon request, such as Braille, Audio-description, Subtitling/captioning, EasyRead, Large Print and fully Screen Readable (noting that many formatted digital communications such as HTML column designed emails are not screen readable). *Requires additional resources.*
- All websites should have an accessibility 'button' on their front page that goes directly to a section listing all accessible services and facilities in detail; including up to date information if any of these services are not currently available.

  Little or no cost.
- All marketing and other general information must have a QR code, clearly available, which links directly to access information about the venue, about the specific location and facilities of a particular event and list all accessible services provided for during that event, e.g. a touch tour of the stage and sets is available 1 hour before the

performance starts for any visually impaired people and the main show is fully audio-described.

Little or no cost.

- The QR code should also link directly to an accessible online booking system, which ideally is personalised for each registered disabled person. Such functionality and user friendly design will only be possible when the UK Arts Access Card scheme and database goes live (hopefully in 2025), and that scheme becomes integrated into an expanded Hynt Card scheme in Wales. Amgueddfa Cymru have recently joined the Hynt Card scheme (and thereby hopefully also the the UK Arts Access Scheme) however timescales for this to become operational are yet to be determined.

  Requires additional resources.

- Dedicated telephone (voice calls, especially for visually impaired people) and What'sApp numbers (especially for D/deaf and some neurodiverse people) should be available to all disabled people at each arts venue and Amgueddfa Cymru. These venues and Amgueddfa Cymru should adopt a callback service where possible to minimise costs for disabled people and to ensure the highest quality service, e.g. box office staff can call back when they are fully available to respond to the enquiry.

  Low cost.

- Arts venues and all Amgueddfa Cymru sites should be careful not to market themselves as 'fully accessible' without following the kitemark arts access scheme guidelines.

  Little or no cost.

2. Creating an environment of honesty and trust

- Trying to set a bar upon what constitutes an honest relationship between an arts venue or Amgueddfa Cymru and all disabled people is extremely difficult. In reality this can only be achieved over time and through genuine dialogue. Yet it is not unreasonable to require arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru to publish statements that declare their commitment to openness, honesty and integrity, in terms of their services for disabled people.

  Little or no cost.

- The General Medical Council has published information on how NHS staff should behave in an open and honest way with both patients and those close to them. The UK Civil Service code includes integrity and honesty within its 4 published principles. Those appointed to Public

roles have to agree to follow the Seven Principles (or Nolan) Principles of Public Life.

- The statements do not need to be overly complex, but should build upon existing policies and statements around disability equality and adopting the social model of disability. They could be as simple as "We commit to being fully open and honest in all our communication, and other interactions, with disabled people in the delivery of our services."

  Little or no cost.

3. Separate safe/calm spaces in Amgueddfa Cymru and venues for disabled people

- The extension of creating relaxed events and 'safe' environments is a provision that disabled people should now expect arts venues and AC to provide, whenever possible.
- However, Amgueddfa Cymru and venues can't simply always create separate, 'safe', relaxed spaces for their disabled customers, if their building facilities are fixed and constrained. Therefore the minimum standard provision needs to navigate a position which works for both disabled people and venues and Amgueddfa Cymru equally.
- It is proposed that Amgueddfa Cymru should ideally look to identify suitable spaces in their buildings that can become a designated 'safe' space, either all the time or if that's unfeasible then a space that can be designated a 'safe' space during less busy days or periods of time. Disabled people should be able to quickly and easily see how busy a specific AC location or event is at any time and then decide whether their experience will be positive based on that information. This should be relatively simple to manage given that Google announced in 2020 they were expanding their live busyness information which can be displayed in Google Maps even when people aren't looking for anywhere specific. It shouldn't be too difficult for Amgueddfa Cymru to post a live link from Google maps which shows busyness.

  Low cost or may require additional resources.

- For arts venues the issue is slightly different in that they should know when they are going to have a busy performance, and when they've scheduled any relaxed performances. For busy performances we think venues should always look to provide a 'safe', quiet space for their disabled customers, and if this is not possible the venue should publicise the lack of this service as part of the accessible information for that event.

  Little or no cost.

4. Dedicated feedback systems

- This issue is linked to honesty and availability of accurate accessibility information, but in other ways is a separate topic.
- As a minimum standard of service all Amgueddfa Cymru and arts venues must be required to put a feedback system into place and to publish what any disabled person should expect in terms of procedures and communications. We recognise that most Amgueddfa Cymru and venues will have different operating environments and systems and therefore a one size fits all approach, in this instance, is not feasible.
- Yet insisting that every venue and Amgueddfa Cymru has a published feedback system is fair and realistic for a minimum standard. This won't just benefit disabled people, but will benefit all customers; in knowing how to give their feedback, when they should expect a response, who will deal with any feedback or complaint, and whether they should expect any follow actions or not.

  Little or no cost.
- Bringing in such a requirement would take away many of the frustrations of disabled people, when giving feedback, as they often feel ignored or that they are perceived as always complaining, when sometimes they want to simply suggest changes that could improve the service for all disabled people.
- The wider issue of how any feedback system is linked to any kitemark scheme is discussed later.

5. Staff training

- There is absolute agreement that staff training for everyone is a vital element in improving the customer experience for disabled people from both venues and Amgueddfa Cymru and disabled people in general. Yet there is little agreement as to what level, the frequency of training and who should be trained should become the minimum standard.
- However, some aspects are clear. All staff, both employed or volunteers, working in an Amgueddfa Cymru or arts venue, whatever their role or level of seniority must have at minimum induction training. This should also include regular contractors and contracted and subcontracted services e.g. security, cleaning, bars and catering outlets.

  Requires additional resources.
- Freelancers are not currently included in this requirement as we believe this is a more complex issue and needs further consideration.

For example it would seem unreasonable to expect an arts organisation to train a freelancer for a 1 day contract. However, conversely it does seem fair that anyone delivering services for an arts venue or Amgueddfa Cymru should be trained to a sufficient level of awareness and service delivery.

- All people working at Amgueddfa Cymru or in venues (as listed above) must also annually update that training.

  Requires additional resources.

- From the perspective of disabled people, our research unanimously says that all training undertaken must be provided by disabled people, who have direct lived experiences i.e. the training must be disability equality training not disability awareness based training.

  Requires additional resources.

6. Programming of events (including timing for arts venues)

- This topic triggers some very strong responses from disabled people. Yet their requests around it have triggered strong responses from arts venues, less so from the Amgueddfa Cymru.
- In short; two issues need to be addressed from the perspective of disabled people. Firstly, venues should not programme events for disabled people as matinees, unless they have formally consulted several local disability organisations, and these organisations have agreed a matinee timing is the best option.

  Low cost.

- Secondly, venues should not separate between accessible performances on different days, e.g. programming a BSL interpreted show one night and a touch tour and audio-described show another night. Disabled people often have other disabled friends or colleagues (with different access needs) and they have strongly expressed their frustration at not being able to attend together, or even if they can attend together, being unable to sit together. If a show is accessible, and accessible in multiple ways then as a minimum standard all forms of accessible services should be available at the same time and disabled customers should expect to be able to sit together (in a suitable location for their collective access needs). If this level of service is not available then venues must make this information easily available to all potential disabled customers before they book their tickets. The minimum expected service is to aim to not segregate provision or visitors. Aim to design all events and activities with the widest flexibility of access services as a baseline.

  Requires additional resources.

- The same should apply to Amgueddfa Cymru when programming specific accessible support events, i.e. the aim should be for fully integrated services that caters for all access needs at the same time.

  Low cost.

7. Embedding design thinking for disabled people into all creative content creation, commissioning and organisational leadership and development:

- This report and its recommended Minimum Standards of Services for disabled people largely focuses on how current services can be improved to increase accessibility. However, given that our aim is also to move to a holistic approach to inclusivity and accessibility now feels the right time to introduce the requirement for arts venues (and thereby all creative producers and commissioners) and Amgueddfa Cymru to adopt a design thinking methodology to all aspects of their cultural services content creation.
- Moreover it is clear that the ownership responsibility for access and widening engagement should sit within an organisation and it is vital that this is absolutely embedded in the leadership of individual arts organisations and the leadership of Amgueddfa Cymru and being thought about and included at the very early stages of planning and strategy development for these organisations. Once embedded at leadership level then all creative and service functions of these organisations should be supported to adopt design thinking into future services and creative activities.
- Adopting the key principles in design thinking: to empathise, define, ideate, prototype and test - in relation to providing arts and cultural heritage services and creative content for disabled people means the arts sector and Amgueddfa Cymru should be able to better understand disabled customers, challenge assumptions, redefine problems and create innovative solutions rather than the current model where barriers to access are tackled after an event or exhibition is devised.

  Requires additional resources

- Amgueddfa Cymru and arts venues (including the producers they commission or book) must be able to demonstrate they are devising their new content using this fully inclusive methodology. This should become a condition of funding by ACW for creative production grants. By turning the production methodology from making an existing work more accessible to a framework where accessibility is built-in from the outset of devising new creative content we will eventually require less reactive interventions (as listed in our other Minimum Standards) to increase accessibility. Or in other words Amgueddfa Cymru and the

arts sector will be able to reduce its reliance on service (re)design to improve its services for disabled people because accessible design thinking will have become the norm when creating any new arts or cultural heritage events or services. Moving from reactive to strategically pro-actively designed services.

Requires additional resources

- It is encouraging to hear that Amgueddfa Cymru are already looking to adopt a complete design thinking methodology to their future events and exhibitions.

8. How to ensure high quality customer services?

- It is hard to define a minimum standard of service provision that would completely eradicate some staff being unhelpful towards disabled people.
- Nevertheless the introduction of fair and publicised feedback systems for disabled people and the mandatory requirement for all venues and Amgueddfa Cymru staff to undertake annual disability equality training should significantly reduce this problem.

Requires additional resources.

9. What role, if any, should venues and Amgueddfa Cymru have in providing transport?

- Realistically, given current levels of funding to arts and Amgueddfa Cymru in Wales, requiring them to provide a minimum level of transport linked services for disabled people, is beyond our current recommendations.
- Instead, we do propose, though, that up to date information relating to all aspects of getting to and from a venue or Amgueddfa Cymru location is easily available as part of the wider accessibility information and QR code systems. Information such as, which public transport services are available, how near they are to the actual venue and what times they operate? Often public transport stops before an evening performance finishes, so questions such as, is there a taxi rank nearby, can taxis actually stop directly outside the venue, how do I book a taxi in advance? Other questions such as, are there dedicated disabled parking spaces, and if so how can I book these in advance with my show tickets should all be clearly answered and regularly updated. Making this information more easily available doesn't mean the venue or Amgueddfa Cymru is being asked to provide greater transport services for disabled people, but venues are being asked to research this and crucially keep this information up to date for

particular events and performances. Linking a venue or Amgueddfa Cymru's travel information website to live travel data updates, such as Transport for Wales, should not be difficult. This reduces the onus on the disabled person to have to manage this aspect of their visit.

Little or no cost.

10. Reminding non-disabled people that not all disabilities are visible

- This may seem a wider, societal issue, which should not be placed upon venues and AC. But we believe a few simple actions could have a major impact on improving non-disabled people's understanding of disabled people's needs.
- For example, if venues and Amgueddfa Cymru clearly displayed posters or digital screens that say "Not All Disabilities Are Visible" that would be a good minimum standard starting point. Running a short video or making a public announcement at the start of a show, which explains the accessibility services/features for that particular day/show or facility would help wider knowledge of why disabled people need such varying levels of support. Moreover, an announcement at the beginning of all events stating clearly which disability access services are being provided would help reassure disabled people attending that their access needs are being provided. All these examples should become the minimum expectation from any venue and Amgueddfa Cymru in seeking to tackle discrimination and ableism.

  Little or low cost.

11. Pricing policies

- As agreed in the current Hynt card scheme and as proposed in the UK Arts Access Card initiative, all companion tickets for disabled people must be provided free of charge (including any booking fees). We also believe that, in certain circumstances when verified, more than one companion ticket should be provided free.

  Low cost.
- An additional, but related minimum standard is that a disabled person should not be required to purchase a ticket that is more expensive than the seat or location they have requested, simply because the venue requires them to sit in another section of the auditorium, which happens to cost more than their originally requested seat.

  Low cost.
- Refunds policies should be clearly publicised and easily found before booking a ticket, and included with a wider feedback system.

Moreover, disabled people must be given full ticket refunds if some aspect of the advertised access services didn’t work or wasn’t available to them i.e. there was a failure to deliver promised and agreed access services (clearly this needs to be verified). Venues must not only offer alternatives such as credit for a future event in these circumstances.

Low cost.

Devising a Kitemark system in Wales for arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru services

We have been asked to investigate how to devise an appropriate Kitemark system for arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru that encompasses all aspects of services for disabled people in Wales.

Our consultation on this aspect of the brief was limited to disabled people and disability-led organisations in Wales, and an analysis of similar kitemark schemes that could be adopted wholly or partially for an arts Kitemark scheme in Wales. We are fully aware that further conversations need to happen with arts venues and the wider arts sector, and that ACW and Amgueddfa Cymru need to discuss those findings with their partner bodies in England, Scotland and N. Ireland. These recommendations are a starting point for devising a full kitemark scheme.

To begin this complex work we have separated our research into 2 strands:

1. Most importantly to ask disabled people what they think a Kitemark scheme should include and how its management and assessment should be undertaken?
2. To review other Kitemark schemes, in arts and heritage sectors but also across other sectors, to determine if there are models which Wales could base its own Kitemark scheme on?

Feedback from disabled people:

- Introduction: The idea of creating a Kitemark system that venues and Amgueddfa Cymru can seek to be accredited for was largely welcomed by those consulted. There were consistent recommendations that any system is linked to any feedback systems also proposed, including a mystery shopper and annual auditing process.
- Discussion mainly focused on what the Kitemark system might look like and how easy it is for disabled people to navigate the scoring.
- Suggestions include
    - The kitemark system would have to be run and monitored by an independent disability organisation; there must be fair comparison between venues and locations. The size/scale of an organisation should also be taken into account. Amgueddfa Cymru or WMC should be expected to achieve better access services than a small independent cinema, for example. Yet the small independent cinema is not exempted from reaching the minimum standards of services which every arts venue and Amgueddfa Cymru must offer.

- Venues and Amgueddfa Cymru must display their score publically, as happens with food hygiene ratings.
- Only disabled people should be allowed to score venues and Amgueddfa Cymru.
- There must be annual audits to confirm their rating or more radically the proposed disability Trip Advisor scheme being directly linked to ratings.
- Criteria should include specialist disability awareness of all disabilities such as autism, learning disabilities, visual impairment, etc.
- Criteria should also cover levels of staff training undertaken, the frequency and how often staff are required to update their training and the number of disabled people Amgueddfa Cymru and venue employs.
- A top rating would mean disabled people are actively involved in creating work with the venue or Amgueddfa Cymru, they are clearly disability led in their decision-making; they must have top scores from any feedback system implemented.
- Kitemark scores must be able to move both down as well as up; if performance deteriorates significantly then a venue or Amgueddfa Cymru may lose their kitemark entirely.
- Criteria should work from a place of kindness to each other and should seek to embody a new cultural context within the scoring.
- There must be agreement on common standards. This agreement should be led by disabled people, but must also involve venue and Amgueddfa Cymru networks such as Creu Cymru and perhaps the Welsh Museum Federation, alongside ACW and NMW.
- Accessibility score for shops, bars and restaurants and other franchised services should also be incorporated into any overall Kitemark ranking. If they refuse to be assessed then that should exclude any venue or AC from applying.
- The ownership responsibility for access and widening engagement should sit within an organisation and this should be absolutely embedded in the leadership of all organisations and then considered included at the very early stages of planning and strategy development.
- Lots of people wanted a separate criteria for toilet facilities.

- A scoring system using stars was preferred by many instead of gold, silver and bronze; of course other people like the concept of working towards a gold rating.
- Public organisations such as the Welsh Government, ACW and Amgueddfa Cymru will have to endorse the Kitemark ranking system and reward high achievers with more funding; by necessity therefore reducing funding to poor performers.
- The scoring should show disabled people how a venue is doing in relation to a range of accessibility services, e.g. they could score well on wheelchair access, but poorly on BSL marketing. That would help disabled people know which Amgueddfa Cymru or venues are best placed to cater for their needs.

Other Kitemark Schemes

Background
To put it simply, a kite mark is a symbol created by organisations and awarded to service providers and manufacturers that indicates that the holder of the kite mark has reached and maintains the kite marks agreed to common standards. The most well known is the BSI Kitemark. It confirms that a product or service claim has been independently and repeatedly tested by experts, meaning that you can have trust and confidence in products and services that are Kitemark certified. Other kite marks are more about how companies are managed and can operate across the world with the most famous being ISO and their 9000 series of standards.

Developing attitudes, policies and practices
Some kite marks seek to offer assurance that the attitudes, policies and practices of the holding body or individual are positive in regards to a particular cohort. They are often awarded at three levels thus allowing the holder to go on a reward driven journey:

- Bronze award

This level of award is often self certified and does not measure/require any actual change, however, they are useful to get people/organisations onto that recognised stepladder of change.

- Silver award

This level of award does often require evidence that good policies are in place. They often have to be submitted to the awarding body for scrutiny. To increase success, often, awarding bodies are keen to assist through offering some sort of hand holding.

- Gold award

To achieve this level of award, awarding bodies often require there to be measurable changes in the way the organisation operates and the impacts and outcomes of its work. This may include changes to their customer base, customer satisfaction, staffing demographics, inclusion being embedded at the organisational/institutional level, physical access to service, and access to information.

This type of structure is very popular amongst LGBTQ+ organisations and also forms the structure of the UK government's Disability Confident three tier scheme, a scheme much derided because of its lack of vigour and involvement of disabled people.

Single function type targeted awards

Some kite mark issuing organisations offer different kite marks for different functions and are not based on a ladder principle. For instance, Nimbus Disability have three CredAbility awards reflecting distinct goals:

- CredAble Provider: This kite mark is designed to help communicate to disabled customers that the holder is willing and able to provide disabled customers with good services.
- CredAble Access: This kite mark denotes that a building from which a service is being provided has been assessed as meeting core accessibility standards for disabled people.
- CredAble Employer: This kite mark denotes that a building that is used for staff employment has been assessed as meeting core accessibility standards for disabled people.

This approach has its merits, especially when managed by disabled people.

Sticker in the window or web site. 'scores on the doors'

Some kite mark schemes can be very niche and sometimes very local. For instance, there are schemes that seek to put 'scores on the doors' in shops and restaurants, sometimes having a scoring system while others choose to use well understood symbols in a binary way. Of growing use is the symbol for dementia friendly which can only be achieved through training. We recently found one 'scores on the doors' system which combines both binary symbols and a 0-5 score. That was very confusing to us and surely not appropriate for many neurodiverse.

Associated with sport
Many sporting bodies have developed their own kite marks to encourage participation through making their potential participants feel that they will not receive discrimination in that activity and that their access needs will be met.

Disability Bowls England and their disability access team have developed a kite mark scheme that seeks to reassure (or otherwise) potential participants of any bowling club that they will be treated well and that the greens are accessible, or otherwise. Their criteria includes Participation, Communications, Workforce, Facility Accessibility, and Policies and Procedures. On award, they can use the symbol on all their communications and marketing

Sport Wales runs its disability development programme which includes a kite mark scheme identifying commitment towards the provision of inclusive sports opportunities.The programme has a four-tiered approach intended to encourage and support the delivery of opportunity throughout sport and leisure.

Awards based kite marks
These are often presented at general and equality award focused events. They are contentious with disabled people, especially where there is a judging panel, often with no disabled people. However, this is not the case for all of these award based kite marks. For instance, Warwickshire Inclusion Kitemarking Scheme seems to be more vigorous and also encouraging of development in their scheme winners.

Festival awards based kite marks
Attitude is Everything, award UK music festivals Gold, Silver, Bronze or no award, all based on criteria they have developed over the past 20 years.

The application process is vigorous and is only awarded after the festival has taken place, because disabled members of Attitude is Everything, secretly

attend the festival, checking the facilities against what was claimed in the application.

The award is then made, or in most cases, not made. In the last 23 years, only 16 festivals have achieved a Gold award with one of them being Pride Cymru. Many disabled people consider this the best disability kitemark award in the UK. It is perhaps the most applicable model to base the Wales kitemark scheme upon. However, reviewing a festival is far less complex than reviewing a whole annual programme of events at an arts venue or Amgueddfa Cymru, so clearly more work will need to be done to finalise any proposed pilot scheme.

The issue is how to combine static information and assessments e.g. building based accessibility with dynamic information about accessibility for each individual event and different needs of disabled people.

UK Access Card / Hynt type card membership

While these are not strictly kite mark schemes, they do offer some crossovers. For instance, they both identify associated venues which in-itself can create confidence in the same way a kite mark would. One of their most potentially useful functions is their intended comprehensive listings of events taking place with additional access provision. If fully up to date, this could be a game changer for many people. The UK Arts Access Card scheme is looking at developing kitemarks too and collaboration between ACW and Arts Council England is ongoing.

ACE have suggested grouping any kitemark scheme into 4 aspects, and we recommend the same approach in Wales.

- Built environment
- Communication and digital services
- Visitor experiences and customer service
- Programming, events and commissioning

Adopting these four categories allows arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru to segment progress against the kitemark criteria. For example, if Amgueddfa Cymru are unable to secure a high kitemark for physical accessibility in one of their old, Grade 1 buildings it does not mean they cannot achieve the highest ranking in the other categories.

This approach takes away the onus on arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru to always be pushing for higher 'grade' on their kitemark, and instead switches the scheme to focus on showing all disabled people up-to-date information about accessible services throughout their customer journey, so that they can make informed decisions about visiting Amgueddfa Cymru or an arts venue based on the four key kitemark criteria. Not scoring the top level for

building accessibility should not necessarily mean the overall organisation is not achieving good practice in all other accessibility criteria.

Review base access information sites
Again, these are not strictly kite mark schemes but they do offer some crossovers. The identification of accessible venues is their goal, very similar to kite marks. The addition of an online comment site, displaying the opinions of disabled people, sitting alongside a kite mark scheme, would offer up some interesting and dynamic possibilities.

What can go wrong?
Awarding bodies seek to maximise market recognition of their symbol and of its content, without this market recognition the kite mark will fail. It will also fail if the target cohort does not buy into the content of the kite mark, believing that it has little value and relevance to their lives. This is a particular danger when the kite mark is designed and managed by people other than its target cohort. In addition, successful kite marks can become irrelevant in the public eye - how many people now want that Investors in People award badge and plaque?

Do kite marks matter?
When they have market recognition, are relevant, trusted, simple to use and have content that's in demand – yes. Their very existence can have real value - 89% of LGBTQ people said they would feel more confident accessing a service which displayed an LGBT+ kitemark, thus driving customers to those who do.

The business case for access and kite marks
People tend to go to events together, so the impact of poor accessibility stretches far beyond the impact of any individual disabled person. According to wearepurple.org.uk, 75% of disabled people and their families have decided against spending their money with a UK business because of poor accessibility or customer service. However, businesses and venues are constantly renewing themselves and without a simple way to inform people regarding any access changes, disabled people and their friends and families may never return to the now accessible venue.

The Business Disability Forum found that £420 million is lost each week by British High Street Businesses due to a lack of accessibility. This is known as the "Walkaway Pound". Meanwhile inaccessible websites and apps accounted for £11.75 billion of lost revenue in 2016. This is known as the "Clickaway Pound".

Way forward

Art and culture venues are desperately seeking to increase their customer and artistic base. If a robust kite mark could help facilitate this need, then it should be identified, developed, and implemented.

23% of the population are disabled people so any promoter, creator, employer or business failing to reach disabled people is missing out on both 23% of potential audiences and 23% of potential artist and employee talent. No business or culture can afford this. Accessibility and inclusion within art and culture is not something we should do, but something we must do.

Any useful art and culture based kitemark will be complex, as there are so many things to consider. Any scheme must be able to reflect the needs of customers whilst being manageable for arts venues and Amgueddfa Cymru. We are confident in the assertion that at this moment in time, that no UK scheme exists that is anyway near adequate for the task, however, its creation is a fully achievable proposition and highly needed. However, our brief is largely to represent the views of disabled people and the message clearly given to us is that no scheme can be devised and managed unless it is primarily based on assessment and feedback from disabled people. The scheme needs to avoid detrimental impacts from vexatious reviews from an individual, but venues and Amgueddfa Cymru can't expect to be able to publicly moderate reviews that don't paint them in a positive way either. The development and management of the kitemark must be led by people with lived experience - disabled consumers and disabled artists, disabled staff members in venues and Amgueddfa Cymru.

Recommended approach to developing a disability access kitemark scheme in Wales

1. Confirm the Minimum Standards of Service Provision for Disabled People as proposed in this report; in addition to existing requirements for physical access.
2. Ask venues and Amgueddfa Cymru sites to undertake self-assessed audits against those published Minimum Standards of Service Provision for Disabled People within the first year, including evidence that the ownership responsibility for access and widening engagement sits within an individual organisation and the importance of this principle is absolutely embedded in the leadership of that organisation and will be included at the very early stages of planning and strategy development.
3. Achieving the Minimum Standards of Service Provision should become a requirement for entry to the kitemark scheme.

4. During the first year of introducing these Minimum Standards ACW, Amgueddfa Cymru and other support agencies such as the Welsh Museum Federation, Creu Cymru and Visual Arts Group Wales should recruit a paid 'Critical Friends Group' of disabled people who will oversee the kitemark scheme delivery and assessment.
5. The 'Critical Friends Group' will then itself recruit a team of 'disabled mystery shoppers' whose role is to test the self assessment scores of arts venues wishing to join the kitemark scheme. We suggest a direct accessibility assessment is also undertaken of all AC sites once their self assessments are completed.
6. The 'Critical Friends Group' will also directly monitor feedback they are receiving from disabled people, focusing particularly if they have received feedback that a venue or Amgueddfa Cymru site is not delivering services to the stated kitemark assessment.
7. We suggest that a traffic light system is initially adopted for the four assessment criteria - where red means not achieving the minimum standard; amber means partially achieving the minimum standard; and green means fully achieving the standard. Venues should then display their standards physically and digitally so that a disabled person can quickly check its accessibility. A red score would indicate the need for a disabled person to investigate further.
8. Once the initial kitemark scheme and assessments have been verified we suggest the consideration of a more complex kitemark scheme that rewards better and best practice. These must, of course, be devised and measured by disabled people.

September, 2024