

LFA2026 Guide for inclusive activity

The London Festival of Architecture aims to be an open, safe and welcoming space for anyone who wants to explore the people, places and people of our city and have a say in its present and future. As an LFA Organiser, you play a key role in shaping how people experience the Festival - from the moment they discover your activity to the moment they arrive on the day.

This guide supports you to reduce barriers to participation, plan confidently and create activity where people feel comfortable, respected and included. Following the Social Model of Disability – which understands that people are disabled by *barriers* in society, *not* by their impairments – your decisions are key to removing many of these barriers.

Potential barriers to engagement could be physical, institutional, language-based or social. It is not just working elevators, ramps, buttons or “access” hosts, but how welcome you feel to and act an activity. And while designing and planning inclusively most directly helps Disabled and people, it indirectly benefits most other people also.

This guide sets out:

▪ Minimum access and care levels expected (with LFA activities)	2
▪ Considerations for LFA Organisers when planning LFA activity	4
▪ Considerations for LFA Organisers when delivering LFA activity	6
▪ Considerations for LFA Organisers after delivering of LFA activity	6
▪ Key links and resources to help support you	7

We recommend using this starter guide to support you in the preparation, promotion and delivery of your Festival activity, alongside the connect checklists.

Please note, this guide is not exhaustive and will need to be tailored for specific LFA activity. If there anything you feel needs expanding or challenging, please email info@londonfestivalofarchitecture.org or call on 020 7636 4044.

To understand more about access and inclusion across LFA, head to lfa.london/access.

Minimum access and care levels expected (with LFA activities)

Got an idea for the Festival? Great! But let's pause for a second... What must every LFA activity do to be accepted into the programme?

Activity website listing must:

- Be written in plain, inclusive language, without jargon. Where jargon is required, this must be explained.
- Include clear and transparent information about what provisions are and are not available – at your venue/location *and* with your specific activity - using preset LFA access icons and free text box for information that cannot be captured in the icons. [Information on LFA access icons here.](#)
- Include contact email for access questions
- Include free companion/carer ticket option, and concessions for paid activity
- Include ALT text (e.g. Photo of a lively public square with groups of people sitting on colourful public benches under trees talking and laughing)
- Avoid text, logos or complicated collage in primary image

[General LFA marketing guidance here.](#)

Activity location must:

- Be step free throughout - including to toilets, refreshments and fire exits
- Have access to gender neutral and accessible toilets and baby changing facility – and ideally a changing places toilet
- Have space for wheelchair manoeuvring (minimum 1.3m turning circles).
- Have seating options available, ideally with a mix of options of soft and hard seats, with and without arms and backs, high and low
- Have a dedicated quiet space close to the main activity, ideally a separate room with soft lighting and furnishing, reduced noise levels and a space to lie down – and where possible sofas, blankets, cushions, earplugs and eye masks.
- Have access to water, and food where possible.
- Have food and drink options that cater to major dietary requirements – prioritising nut, meat and alcohol-free options
- Have a first-aid trained staff and access lead present
- Welcome assistance dogs and avoid food at low access height

Activity must:

- Have clear signage for entrances, toilets and key areas (such as food)
- Not have extremely loud noise - without warning

- Not have contributors/speakers from one practice or lived experience, except for activity such as tours (where this is the case, the content of the tour must be representative)
- Have audio described and captions content, where applicable – and BSL interpretation available (to request)
- Be captured in a way that can be accessed by those who can't make the activity in person, whether as livestream, recording, detailed write up or video.

All the above means LFA attendees can make informed choices about engaging with you and your activity – either by exploring the listing or getting in touch.

There is no such thing (or very unlikely) to have a “fully accessible building or activity”, unless you are ticketing every box and beyond. So be true about what you can or cannot offer. The last thing we want is people arriving at the activity to find out it different to what was expected.

Q: I'm not sure I meet these criteria, what should I do?

Where you feel this will not be the case, speak to the LFA team as soon as possible, to understand what steps can be taken to ensure your activity is included in the LFA programme.

Q: Why is this so important for LFA?

Firstly, it's the law. It is unlawful for service providers to treat disabled people less favourably because they are Disabled (Equality Act, 2010).

Secondly, Valuing Diversity is a core value of our New London Agenda and not a “nice to have”. It's not about ticking a box at the last minute and certainly not doing nothing at all. It's about frequently stepping back to understand potential barriers and the actions needed to mitigate these.

Thirdly, we can all do what's within our means. We recognise LFA Organisers range from one individual to global practices, and therefore the resources available varies. However, these days, many actions do not require any money, or much time and so there is no excuse for completely inaccessible activity. And these activities will not be accepted into the LFA programme.

Considerations for LFA Organisers when planning LFA activity

Have you considered whether your activity can be engaged with and enjoyed by a wide range of people?

If not, is there a particular reason why? For example, does it exclude a certain group through its format, content, costs, or language?

You will never reach a wide and diverse audience if you don't create an invite and environment which allows for people to feel comfortable, safe and welcome.

Location

The location of your activity often has the biggest impact on people's ability to attend. Consider where your activity is taking place, and what the barriers to entry or movement might be. For example, consider:

- Whether the chosen location for your activity meets the minimum access and care levels expected (with LFA activities) to begin with
- Whether the limitations of your location, and adaptations you can make to prevent barriers. Where this is not possible state these clearly in the listing and consider alternative forms of engagement you can offer (livestream, recording, transcript).
- The journey to the location also – such as proximity to public transport, lighting if activity ends after dusk, availability of Blue Badge parking and wayfinding from the street to the entrance/starting point.
- For (walking) tours, ensure the route is step free, wide and flat enough for all.
- If online - accessibility of online platform, and ability to pin interpreters, record and use captions easily.
- Whether you can create an access guide or sensory map for the location, if this doesn't exist already

Timings

When your activity happens can make the difference between someone being able to attend or not. Consider who your activity is for, and when they will actually be able to attend and have the most energy to engage. For example, consider:

- Whether audience may have childcare or caregiver commitments, or don't have enough energy for an activity starting at 7/8pm.
- Whether you could run two versions of the same activity or an extra quite or low stimulus time slot

- Whether you can shorten your activity or break it up into parts to make engagement more manageable, including regular breaks every 45-60 mins
- Avoiding activity on weekdays before or during work for the general public
- Avoiding activity during or just after rush hour, as this can be an overwhelming time for some

Contributors / Speakers

Who is involved in your activity can determine who will engage and attend the activity on the day. Consider who your activity is for, who you might involve and who may not currently feel welcome? For example:

- Invite contributors who represent a range of voices, backgrounds and experiences, ideally financially honouring time where possible and offering early arrival options or preview visits if helpful
- Once invited, participants need to be treated with care and respect. Ask all contributors to share any access needs they may to make them more comfortable – and for you to get the best out of them. Once you have this, work out a plan to immediately action any needs that are shared.
 - You may want to use an access rider to allow individuals to disclose as much or as little as they would like.
 - To ensure respectful behaviour, ensure you ask about access requirements, not people's impairments and ask questions to the contributor or LFA team if you are unclear, to avoid making assumptions
- If you know you will be working with Deaf/partially Deaf contributors, learn some basic fingerspelling or BSL, to be able to directly communicate with the speaker, alongside an interpreter. And ensure you have enough budgeted in for interpreter(s)

Video / visual content

If you are sharing content at your activity, whether that is a short video as part of a talk or a whole exhibition, it's key you ensure as many people as possible can engage with these. For example:

- Hanging work at accessible heights (around 1.1m eye level for labels) and ensure there is at least 1.3m turning space between displays, free from clutter
- Providing large-print versions of exhibition or installation text, and audio descriptions where possible.
- Building in time/capacity to caption (and ideally audio describe and include BSL interpretation for content.

- Ensuring slides use high contrast and large fonts (minimum 24pt), bullet points rather than dense text and are provided as printed or digital handouts where needed.
- Ensuring reserved seating and good lighting for people who need clear sightlines to lip-read and see speakers and interpreters, alongside low noise levels to hear speakers or video

Budget / ticketing

It's key to have sufficient budget for your activity from the start, this way you won't have to make any unexpected compromises later on. Consider what your need for activity, and how you will resource this. For example, considering:

- Whether your activity can be delivered with the people, time and equipment you already have, or will this need to be brought in.
- What costs are there are going to be for materials or equipment
- If someone needs an interpreter, or other access needs, what is the plan for organising this
- Do you need to partner with another individual or organisation to ensure your activity is free or to cover costs.

Considerations for LFA Organisers when delivering LFA activity

You've submitted your Festival activity, you've sold all the tickets, and it's happening today, tomorrow or this week... what should you do now?

Now is the moment to step back once again to and check you haven't missed anything or missed anything that might've changed.

[LFA2026 Inclusive activity checklist here](#)

Considerations for LFA Organisers after delivering LFA activity

Your LFA activity has come to a close... what should you do now?

Reflect

Once you've finished your activity, it is key to step back a final time and assess the success and learnings of your activity. This is useful for both you as an organiser with any future activity you deliver but also us at LFA, to ensure we best support our LFA Organisers each year with the best tools for success.

This can be as simple as gathering your team to create a one page document to help you improve next time, or it could be a more public guide to help others in their accessibility journey like [this guide from We Are Limited](#).

Feedback

By delivery an activity for LFA, you are agreeing to complete an LFA feedback form for each activity you deliver. Use the section in the form around inclusivity to share your reflections and learnings. Check the LFA Account for deadline.

Key links and resources to help support you

General guidance on inclusive spaces and activity

- [Accessible events](#) (whole website + checklist, Accessible Events)
- [Access Toolkit](#), Independent Street Arts Network
- [Making events accessible](#), Shape Arts
- [Many More Parts than M!](#), The DisOrdinary Architecture Project
- [Multiple Resources](#), Centre for Accessible Environments
- [Sisters of Frida's Accessibility Guide to Meetings and Events – a Toolkit](#)

Inclusive venues and locations

- [AccessAble](#)
- [Euans Guide](#)
- [Sociability](#)
- [Science Museum Sensory Map](#), Science Museum

Inclusive venue adaptations

- [The Ramp People](#)
- [Hire-a-Loo](#)
- Or why not get creative and work with Disabled creatives to create bespoke site adaptations, which inform future site access, like [Seats at the Table, 2023](#)

BSL interpreter networks

- [Sign Video](#)
- [NRCPD](#)
- [Roger Beeson's London BSL Interpreters](#)
- [Interpreters of Colour Network](#)