

DISABILITY ACCESS POLICY

The White Rock Theatre is committed to enabling all our patrons to participate in our events equally and with dignity and respect.

In order to further this commitment The White Rock Theatre has adopted the Disability Access Policy as set out in this document. For the purposes of this policy, “disability” is understood in the broadest sense of the word and covers all disabilities within the scope of the Equality Act 2010.

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as:

A physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities.

Disability affects people who use a wheelchair, are blind or visually impaired, deaf, have epilepsy or diabetes, but also those who have a much wider range of conditions, for example; facial disfigurement, dyslexia, learning difficulties, Autism Spectrum Disorder, heart disease, depression and other forms of mental illness.

Impairment is the loss or limitation of physical, mental or sensory function on a long-term and permanent basis. Disability is the loss or limitation of opportunities for people with impairments to take part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others due to physical and social barriers.

By this definition, it is not someone's impairment which creates barriers for them in accessing the world at large; it is the way that society often fails to respond to their needs. The Equality Act 2010 requires all service providers, including the White Rock Theatre, to plan ahead to meet the requirements of their disabled theatregoers.

KEY AIMS

The key aims of the Disability Access Policy are to ensure that:

- All our patrons are able to access and enjoy live entertainment, music, dance and drama.
- Disabled patrons are not treated less favourably for a reason relating to their disability, than others to whom that reason does not apply.
- All reasonable steps are taken to prevent any of the physical features of the Theatre (or indeed our practices, procedures and policies) from making it unreasonably difficult for disabled patrons to make use of our services.
- All reasonable steps are taken to provide auxiliary aids and services to enable and assist disabled patrons in making use of our services.
- Disabled patrons therefore feel as valued and experience the same high levels of satisfaction with our services, as our other patrons.

REALISING OUR AIMS

In order to realise these key aims the White Rock Theatre will endeavour to:

- Ensure all members of staff are provided with regular basic training in disability awareness and etiquette, and are aware of the policy and are able to answer any queries with regards to disabled access to the Theatre.
- Ensure specific training is available in advanced disability awareness to all members of staff as required.
- Provide a complimentary companion seat for disabled patrons who require assistance to access the venue. Proof of eligibility must be presented when tickets are purchased. This can be either:
 - Letter of Disability Living Allowance
 - Letter of carer's allowance
 - Certificate of visual impairment

The companion must be able to assist the disabled person access the theatre and its facilities, remaining with them to ensure their wellbeing and comfort. Tickets are subject to availability. Full details are available from the ticket office at the time of booking.

- Provide access information to all disabled patrons regarding parking facilities for the venue.
 - Disabled parking bays on the road outside the venue
 - Parking situated in underground car park adjacent to the venue

PLEASE NOTE: Due to health and safety reasons, our staff are unable to assist disabled patrons in and out of their transport or mobility equipment.

- Provide wheelchair access via ramp to the right of the venue as well as further disabled access inside the venue to all levels of front of house via a disabled lift.
- Ensure at least 6 wheelchair spaces are available for every show and provide a theatre wheelchair on request.
- Provide space for mobility scooters to be parked in a designated area of the venue. Please note that the use of mobility scooters in the busy public areas may pose a hazard, so any customers unable to access the theatre by other means must inform the Ticket Office at the time of booking. Our staff will then be able to provide customers with information regarding the safe use of the scooter in the theatre, and should patrons not require the scooter to enter the auditorium, where to park them in the designated area.
- Offer clear and informative advice to all disabled patrons regarding the best seating arrangement for their needs.
- Offer visits to the theatre prior to a performance in order to familiarise themselves with the Theatre's layout. These visits can be arranged by contacting the Creative Learning Manager on 01424 462287 or email jstead-burgess@whiterocktheatre.org.uk.
- Ensure the Ticket Office is briefed on the style of performances in case either a patron or carer requires further information. Information is offered in good faith however, please be aware that the creative elements of live performance may not have been finalised at the time of booking.
- Provide warning notices advising of the use of strobe lighting effects and pyrotechnic explosives and display these in the auditorium on the day of the performance.
- Provide an Infra-red Hearing Support System in the Main Auditorium. Infrared Neck Receiver's are available and can be requested at the ticket office or by asking a member of the Front of House team. Ticket Office staff will have information on the best available seats

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to ensure the best use of the system. Please note: This system is only available in the Main Auditorium and will only work for amplified performances.

- Organise regular checks to ensure that the Infrared system is operating correctly. Any patrons experiencing difficulty should report this to a member of staff who should report it to the Buildings & Technical Manager.
- Allow guide/assistance dogs into the venue and provide space for them within the Main Auditorium where required. Please inform the Ticket Office of this when booking.
- Provide our seasonal brochures in large print, when requested. Please contact Ticket Office for further information.
- Start to introduce a variety of access performances such as signed performances and Relaxed Performances where suitable.

FINALLY...

The White Rock Theatre reserves the right to refuse admission to any customer, where it is believed by the Duty Manager that, at such time, admission would contravene the conditions of the licence and/or pose a higher than acceptable risk to public safety.

We regularly review this policy, as well as the facilities we provide to disabled patrons, in order to ensure that all of our customers feel welcome at the White Rock Theatre.

We greatly appreciate any suggestions you may have on how we could improve your access to and enjoyment of the theatre and its facilities.

Please email enquiries@whiterocktheatre.org.uk with your comments and we will be in touch.