

Communicating with and welcoming people: insights from

INCLUDE



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ENGLAND**



INCLUDE
Inclusion Focus Programme



The INCLUDE groups made small changes to the way they welcome and initially interact with new people to improve the accessibility and inclusive feel of their groups.

ENABLING ACCESS THROUGH INFORMATION

SHORT TERM

The groups made changes to the information they provide about coming to their rehearsals and concerts, so it is easier find and helps people understand how to access their activity. They particularly focused on access information for disabled people.

Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society updated their website to provide more details about the venue and what to expect at a concert. They added an [‘Accessibility’ page](#), clearly visible in the website’s menu, which provides more information about the adjustments they offer. **Luton Choral Society** developed an [‘information document’](#) to give new members all the information they need in a welcoming way, and recorded a [video of their rehearsal venue](#). **OutSingCancer Choir** used [‘Frequently Asked Questions’](#) as a friendly way to provide key information.

As well as practical barriers they considered cultural barriers. In their concert programmes, **Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society** added a ‘Did You Know?’ section with explanations of musical terminology that appeared in the programme notes. This has been popular with new and regular audience members.

You could try...

- Creating a webpage [specifically dedicated to accessibility information](#).

- Recording a video of your rehearsal and/or concert venue (smart phone recordings are good enough quality).
- Asking someone who isn't in your group to look at your website to see if they can find all the information they would need.
- Including information in your programme for people less familiar with the music you're performing.

COMMUNICATING THE CULTURE OF YOUR GROUP

LONG TERM



The groups explored ways to help people understand what it's like to be part of their group before they arrived and made sure that their messages were always welcoming and inclusive.

Great Bowden Recital Trust obtained grant funding to make a [short video](#) to show people what their group and its members are like. They also added quotes from members to [their website](#). **Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert**

Society replaced concert reviews with [photos, video clips, and audience comments](#) to provide a feel of the concerts they offer; views of these webpages have also increased.

You could try...

- Filming short videos of your members talking about what they enjoy.
- Gathering quotes and testimonials from your members or audience.

PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

ONGOING

All four groups involved their members in making people feel welcome. Warm and friendly buddies and front-of-house teams made a difference to the inclusive feel of their activities.



OutSingCancer Choir have 'choir reps' that welcome people, make sure they have everything they need, support with musical learning and feedback to the choir's leadership. **Great Bowden Recital Trust** introduced a buddy system to ensure new members had someone looking out for them. Luton Choral Society has the contact details of their membership secretary easily [available on their website](#), including a photo so visitors know who to look for.

Audience members at **Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society** are warmly welcomed on the door and given an overview of the facilities and interval arrangements. They have created a 'Soloists' table in the interval for people attending alone to chat to each other and now encourage committee members to start up conversations with people on their own.

They have actively built a sense of community by checking in with their members, coordinating lifts and sending cards. Members are now more confident to get in touch for help if they don't have transport to a concert. The professional artists they book have been impressed by the warm welcome and have started to spread the word to others, resulting in the concert society developing a reputation for having a 'warm and supportive approach'.

You could try...

- Creating a space for conversations during concert intervals.
- Pairing new members with a buddy who can support them until they feel settled.
- Making sure there is a named person that people can contact.

ASKING PEOPLE ABOUT BARRIERS AND ADJUSTMENTS

SHORT TERM

The groups built in ways for the people taking part in their activities to tell them about any barriers they might face, so they could plan and prepare for [person-centred adjustments](#).

Great Bowden Recital Trust added an open question to their registration forms, which they plan to ask all members annually: “Do you have any access needs or is there anything that we can do to make it easier for you to participate fully in the ensemble?”. When people book concert tickets online, **Luton Choral Society** asks: “Please advise if there is anything you need to help make your visit more enjoyable”.

Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society also ask the artists they book about any adjustments they might need, including dietary requirements, accommodation, or transport.

You could try...

- Adding a question to ticket booking forms or joining forms that asks about adjustments.
- Surveying your existing members annually to ask if anything has changed.

PROVIDING INFORMATION IN AN ACCESSIBLE FORMAT

SHORT TERM

The groups worked to make their written communications more accessible. **Great Bowden Recital Trust** now make their concert programmes available in a plain text html version so they can be used with screen readers and translation apps. **Luton Choral Society** identified that the text on their concert programmes is often quite small, so include a QR code to an electronic copy on their website that can be enlarged on a phone or tablet.

You could try...

- Considering the printed materials you provide (programmes, welcome packs etc.) and producing them in a digital format too.
- Using our [inclusive communications resource](#) to review your writing style, format and accessibility.

For more information about identifying barriers and making adjustments see our [Creating an Accessible and Inclusive Group resource](#).

This is one of a set of four ‘**Insights from INCLUDE**’. You can find the full set at makingmusic.org.uk/insights-from-include

Thank you to Great Bowden Recital Trust, Luton Choral Society, OutSingCancer Choir, and Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society for their participation in INCLUDE. We were supported using public funding by Arts Council England as an Investment Principles Support Organisation.