

# Adapting and developing your group: insights from

# INCLUDE



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ENGLAND**



**INCLUDE**  
Inclusion Focus Programme



The INCLUDE groups made changes to the way they operate their regular activity to make their groups more inclusive, involving their members to ensure they felt included and changes were well-suited.

## GATHERING IDEAS AND OPINIONS

### SHORT TERM

The groups involved their members in change, asking people about their experiences and inviting them to be part of decision making. **Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society** carried out an access audit by contacting first-time audience members and asking them about their experience. They have 'comment forms' on tables in the interval and now speak to people to encourage them to fill it in. **OutSingCancer Choir** introduced a 'suggestions box' at rehearsals for choir members to leave feedback in.

**Luton Choral Society** appointed an Access and Inclusion representative who is named in welcome documents and well-known to the group. Requests from members go through them and they make sure they are actioned and followed up on.

### You could try...

- Appointing someone as a main contact for Access and Inclusion. Make sure everyone in your group knows who they are and how to get in touch.
- Regularly inviting your members and audiences to give you feedback; don't forget to tell them why it's valuable and how you will use it.
- Inviting a 'mystery shopper' to audit a rehearsal or concert. If you're [targeting a particular demographic](#), this could be someone from that group.

## DEFINING YOUR GROUP

### SHORT TERM



The groups identified that having a clear definition of their group helped set expectations when welcoming new people in. The process of thinking this through with their members was valuable and enabled the group to come together behind their vision.

Great Bowden Recital Trust noticed that the way they spoke about their Orchestra didn't reflect the nature of the ensemble so potential new members didn't think it was for them. They asked members for their opinions and used their responses to develop a new

definition statement. They also changed the name to 'Community Orchestra' to reflect its inclusive nature.

*We hope that this will help with recruitment and ensuring that new members have a clearer idea of what we do when they come along to their first rehearsal.*

– GBRT

**Luton Choral Society** wrote a vision statement: a succinct statement of who the choir is, which is now clearly visible on their website along with their value statements.

**OutSingCancer Choir** is an example of a group with a restricted membership: members must have a close connection with cancer. Through feedback from their suggestion box, they confirmed that creating a supportive community for people who share that life-changing experience is the essential purpose of the choir, even if this limits the number of people who can join. They clearly communicate this purpose on their promotional material and website.

### You could try...

- Reviewing how you talk about your group: is it clear who you are to new people?
- Involving your members in creating a definition statement through suggestion boxes, discussion activities, etc.
- Using our [Defining Your Group resource](#).

## PERSON-CENTRED ADJUSTMENTS

After the groups went through the process of [asking audiences and participants](#) about their access needs they took action to make the required adjustments. These were person-centred and individual to each case. Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society observed that people were more likely to communicate their needs to them when they were treated as an individual not just an audience member.

From information given in forms and through conversations, the groups found out what people needed and tailored solutions to suit them, including:

- no-cost subscriptions,
- offering one-to-one sessions with a musical director to support with musical learning,
- reserving seats and parking spaces for an audience member that used an oxygen cylinder,
- coordinating lift-shares between members,
- reviewing fire evacuation procedures to take account of wheelchair users.

**Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society** noted the need to consider adjustments to emergency procedures, as well as regular activity, to particularly ensure the safety of disabled people.

**Luton Choral Society** observed that when making an adjustment for one person, it had benefits for more than just them, and a positive impact on the whole group.

“*Different members can and do benefit from these various initiatives [...] others help some people some of the time, but all help to engender our sense of community.* – Luton Choral Society

### You could try...

- Using the information people give you about their access needs to implement any person-centred, specific adjustments that you can.
- Using our [Creating an Accessible and Inclusive Group resource](#) to learn more about reasonable adjustments.
- Appropriately communicating any changes you've made so others can benefit and to show that you will work to make your group more inclusive.

## EXPERIMENTING MUSICALLY

### LONG TERM



**Some of the groups made changes to their musical programming to try and connect with a wider diversity of people.**

To learn music that represented Luton's Polish community, **Luton Choral Society** included the popular Polish hymn, *Gaude Mater Polonia* (Klonowski), in their Community Singing Day. This was programmed alongside classical choral music commonly sung in the UK, and 1960s pop songs arranged for four voices.

**Scunthorpe and North Lincolnshire Concert Society** plan their season to include a variety of music, instruments, and performers. They see their biggest audiences when booking high-profile artists (e.g. BBC Young Musician of the Year contestants), but concerts that feature more specialised music often draw a more diverse audience and people will travel to be part of it. For example, for a concert by Chinese classical guitarist Xuefei Yang, they targeted marketing at local guitar groups within 50 miles and drew a keen audience from further afield.

They reviewed this as part of their inclusion strategy and remain confident that this is the best way to reach a diverse audience across the year and build a loyal audience base. Variety encourages first-time attenders to return and keeps the programme fresh for chamber music enthusiasts.

### You could try...

- Researching music from different cultures or countries and learning about it together as group.
- Making sure that your programme contains a variety of music (e.g. different composers, different styles, different instrumentation) across each year.

This is one of a set of four 'Insights from INCLUDE'. You can find the full set at [makingmusic.org.uk/insights-from-include](http://makingmusic.org.uk/insights-from-include)

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