



# THE BIRMINGHAM INCLUSIVE GAMES STANDARD (THE BIG STANDARD)

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# ► THE BIRMINGHAM INCLUSIVE GAMES STANDARD (THE BIG STANDARD)

When planning the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games (the Games) our ambition was to host the most accessible and inclusive Games yet. To do this, we ensured that accessibility was embedded within Games planning from the very beginning.

The Accessibility Team worked on a host of projects across the Games, some of which were more difficult than others to find accessible planning guidance for.

This guide has been written to share what we did, and our lessons learned in the form of consideration points to provide a helping hand to those looking to make their own projects and events more accessible.

A BIG thank you to everyone who helped make Birmingham 2022 an accessible and inclusive Games.

## ► RECRUITMENT: PAID STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS

The Games recruited thousands of paid staff and volunteers. Ensuring a diverse and inclusive workforce along with associated processes and procedures was integral to ensure Games opportunities were accessible to all.

### **ADVERTISING ROLES AND CANDIDATE APPLICATIONS**

Games roles (both paid and volunteer opportunities) were advertised using various different channels such as the Birmingham 2022 website, Job Boards and Recruitment Fayres.

When recruiting, consider where roles are advertised. What recruitment channels could you use to reach more potential candidates? The Games ensured roles were advertised widely, using platforms such as disability job boards.

When you have selected where these roles will be advertised its key to ensure these channels are accessible. If online, does the platform adhere to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)? (appendix 1)

The Games ensured accessibility audits were carried out on online platforms, this included our Volunteer application portal. The audits looked at functionality of the site providing reports advising what was in need of improvement along with pointers of how to do this in the most accessible way. In addition to the portal, alternative format application forms could be requested.

It is also worth considering how candidates can apply for roles. Instead of just written applications, would it be possible to accept other types of applications such as videos?

### **INTERVIEWS**

Most paid staff and volunteer interviews were done in person either at our Games offices or 'Volunteer Selection Centre'. Our recruitment also continued during the COVID-19 pandemic, which meant some interviews had to take place online, remotely.

When conducting interviews you should consider if any of your candidates (or hiring team) have any accessible requirements that need to be considered to ensure a barrier free experience. These considerations could be things such as the interview space, providing interview documents in an alternative format, or providing a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter.

Some candidates will be comfortable to disclose an accessible requirement in advance, some won't. Try to be flexible and adaptive wherever you can.

### **PRE-INTERVIEW INFORMATION**

What information do you plan on sending to your candidates ahead of their interview?

If providing directions to where the interview will be, have step free routes been considered? If you're unsure, it can be helpful to check the route.

Is it possible to add maps along with written instructions, distances, and nearby accessible transport links? Adding instructions may be more useful to some candidates than a static image of a map. An image of the front of the building could also be provided to help with familiarisation?

What key interview specific information do you need to provide? Details about approximate interview length and if the candidate will be expected to complete a task are useful to help candidates prepare.

## **INTERVIEW SPACE: IN PERSON AND ONLINE**

It's important to consider where interviews will take place and how the space is set up.

Is there enough space to navigate around the room, can furniture be easily moved if needed?

Is the space an appropriate temperature and have enough light?

At our 'Volunteer Selection Centre' we set up interview booths, these were good to ensure quiet interview spaces, in what could sometimes be a busy and loud environment.

If online, consider the platform being used and what accessible features are available. Most platforms are user friendly and intuitive, but if you can let the candidate know what platform will be used in advance, this will give them an opportunity to try it before the interview.

## **ONBOARDING**

Once successful candidates are onboard, either as paid staff or volunteers, it important to consider how any accessible requirements can be met within their everyday role.

Talking directly to staff and volunteers is really important, never presume what someone may or may not want. Volunteers may only be with you for a short period of time, but for longer term staff members, ensure there is the option to catch up regularly with the chance to review any adjustments made.

Although equipment and assistive technology can provide great solutions, also think about if any considerations need to be made such as working times and patterns, desk location and the general working environment.

## **BEST PRACTICE**

Consider signing up to schemes such as 'Disability Confident' (appendix 2)

The UK government backed scheme aims to help employers who are committed to inclusion and diversity in the workplace recruit and retain staff. There are three levels to achieve, Level 1 – Committed, Level 2 – Employer and Level 3 – Leader.

# ▶ VENUES

Whatever your venue it is key to ensure it is as accessible as possible.

We hosted the Games using various types of venues. Some were indoor existing venues, some were greenfield open spaces, some new buildings adhering to more recent accessible building design and regulations, some older buildings which were less accessible.

Examples of different venues used at the Games were such as sport competition venues, athlete training venues, Games Head Quarters offices and athlete accommodation.

When choosing or reviewing your venue you may want to consider the following.

## ENTRANCES

Before reviewing the accessibility of internal spaces, how do you enter the venue or space?

Look to see if there is step free access, lift access, automatic doors, wide enough door widths? If the entrance isn't suitable, is there anything you can do to make it suitable? When reviewing our athlete accommodation, this was the first step of our process before looking at anything else within the various accommodation blocks.

If you have a venue where you will be doing security screening and searching at the entrance, are the search lanes and screen arches a sufficient width?

When searches are taking place, it's also important to ensure appropriate training is provided to ensure those conducting searches are competent to deliver safe and dignified searches which consider those with visible and non visible accessible requirements.

## TEMPORARY OVERLAY

Depending on the suitability of your venue or space, it may be appropriate to add temporary overlay. At our Games venues, we incorporated some of the following to make our venues and spaces more accessible.

**Portacabins and Hard-Shell Tents** – When working with greenfield sites, we added temporary structures such as these to create working space and spectator facilities. If using these types of structures, consider access into the structure to determine if ramped access is required and if the entrance is wide enough. Consider the type of floor inside the structure, and if it is a larger structure with internal walls how navigation of the space will work.

**Trackway** – If outside, review the ground condition to see if trackway is required. When laying trackway, considerations should be made for its width (to assist with passing and flow), surface type (ensuring a non-slip, flat surface is laid to avoid trips and slips) and to make traveling over longer distances and difficult terrain easier.

**Ramps** – Ramped access should be provided to areas which are not step free and meet design guidance to ensure a suitable gradient is used. The Games worked to provide a 1:20 gradient wherever possible.

## SEATING AND VIEWING PLATFORMS

As a sporting event with spectators, the Games had to ensure appropriate seating options were available. Some seating options were existing, some were temporary seating structures and viewing platforms.

Following International Paralympic Committee guidance, (Appendix 3) the Games provided a minimum of 1% wheelchair bay seating (0.5% wheelchair and 0.5% companion positions) and at least 1% easy access seating at each Games venue. These percentages were based on each venues NET capacity and, wherever possible, exceeded to maximise the number of accessible seating options available.

For more information about the Games accessible ticket process and accessible seating types, please see the 'Ticketing' section in 'Facilities and Services' of this document.

Where constructing temporary seating stands, seating positions for wheelchair users and companions should always be incorporated.

For some projects and events, a separate accessible viewing platform may be more appropriate. Accessible viewing platforms can accommodate those with visible and non-visible requirements.

When planning wheelchair bay seating for both existing and temporary seating options, we would suggest reviewing the positions to ensure those seated there don't have a restricted view. Something to be mindful of are handrails often positioned at the front of these type of structures, which will create a restriction if too high (especially for children).

## **WAYFINDING AND SIGNAGE**

What existing wayfinding and signage is there? This could be inside and outside the venue such as directional signage, room names, sign posting for facilities and services, or information in lifts and stairwells.

If creating wayfinding and signage, consider the following aspects.

**Colourways** – What colour ways will provide the best contrast? There are tools online which can assist you finding the best matches. Search, 'Colour Contrast Checker'

**Copy Size** – Ensure that any copy being used is a suitable size for the sign type and location. If too small, the signage will be difficult to read and use.

**Font Type** – The font type should be a good height, width, and thickness to ensure it is legible.

**Positioning** – Where wayfinding and signage is positioned is also very important. Is the signage in the right location? Ensure it is at the right height (so not hidden in crowded locations) and at appropriate points on a route (to minimise unnecessary walking.)

**Use of Pictograms** – If pictograms are used elsewhere, are these also used on signage to help direct?

**Consistency** – Consistency is key, your wayfinding and signage should have the same look and format, making it easier to recognise and follow.

For more guidance see 'The Sign Design Guide' (Appendix 4)

## **GENERAL GUIDANCE**

Technical guidance for venues and overlay can be found in 'Part M' documents (Appendix 5)

## ► FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The Games offered a host of accessible facilities and services to its spectators. This section provides information about the facilities and services we offered, along with recommendations and consideration points which may be helpful if you wish to offer these too.

### TICKETING

The Games sold over 1.5 million tickets to spectators. To ensure tickets allocated to spectators were appropriate for any accessibility requirements, spectators were asked to confirm any accessibility requirements during the booking process.

Spectators could confirm if they required:

- **Wheelchair Bay Seating** – For wheelchair and scooter users requiring a wheelchair bay position.
- **Easy Access Seating** – Suitable for various accessible requirements, located up or down a couple of steps and typically at the end of an aisle.
- **Hearing Impairment Seating** – Although all seats, at every venue could use our Hearing Augmentation service, having this option allowed the Games to contact spectators to confirm if they wanted access to a Hearing Augmentation Device or if they wished to have access to our British Sign Language (BSL) interpreters.
- **Visual Impairment Seating** – For the Games, these seats were located closer to the field of play.
- **Assistance Dog Seating** – For those accompanied by an Assistance Dog. Assistance Dog seating was located in wheelchair bay positions to ensure enough room for both the Assistance Dog owner and Assistance Dog.
- **Companion Tickets** – Purchasers could apply for free of charge companion tickets, for those who required assistance due to an accessible requirement. Multiple companion tickets could be requested where required.

If issuing tickets, consider what seating options you can offer to give your spectators or attendees the best possible experience.

The Games also reviewed how tickets were sold. A Games first, Birmingham 2022 made wheelchair bay and companion tickets available to purchase online. This was to provide everyone a fair and equal opportunity to register for and purchase tickets, as in most cases wheelchair bay and companion tickets can only be purchased via an accessible booking line.

### QUIET SPACES

The Games provided 'Quiet Spaces' within our 'Spectator Information Points'. A private area, separate from the rest of the information point, was available to anyone who needed some peace, quiet and privacy away from the event.

As we mostly worked with temporary structures, we provided this by sectioning off an area of the 'Spectator Information Point' with pipe and thick drape from floor to ceiling. Depending on your venue, a separate room with a door that can be closed may be more appropriate.

In this space, we had soft furnishing such as a sofa and comfy chair. There was soft lighting, bottles of water and some sensory activities.

Quiet Spaces can be a great facility for both adults and children with visible and non visible requirements.

### WHEELCHAIR CHARGING

Wheelchair Charging was available in our 'Spectator Information Points' to assist those using mobility scooters and powered chairs.

In the case someone needed to charge their scooter or chair, 13 amp plug sockets were available for use.

Providing this facility helped to ensure that spectators could enjoy the event independently, without unnecessary worry of a flat or low battery.

## **ASSISTANCE DOG SPENDING AREAS**

Spending Areas provide a toileting facility for Assistance Dogs. The Games provided spending areas at all competition venues.

These areas were set up using pedestrian barrier (approx. 3000mm x 4000mm), water bowls, waste bins and waste bags.

The areas were located in spaces that had step free access and could provide 50% hardstanding, 50% grass surface.

More information about assistance dogs and how you can provide a welcoming environment for assistance dog users can be found via organisations such as Assistance Dogs UK. (Appendix 6)

## **BRITISH SIGN LANGUAGE (BSL) INTERPRETATION**

Depending on the content of your event, you may want to provide British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation.

During the Games, BSL interpretation was provided for spectators at both the Opening and Closing Ceremonies. This was decided due to the spoken word elements of the ceremonies, which took the forms of poetry, readings, and speeches.

If providing BSL interpretation, considerations should be made for where interpreters can be positioned to ensure clear viewing of both the interpreter and the content being interpreted. If outside or in a darker setting, lighting should be provided to ensure BSL interpreters can be clearly seen.

Different interpreters may specialise in particular content, such as signing to live music lyrics. When booking an interpreter, make sure you have as much information as possible about what you would like interpreted, for example type of content, event timings and if scripts will be available in advance.

## **HEARING LOOPS AND HEARING AUGMENTATION**

At the Games, Hearing Loops were positioned at our Ticket Office and Spectator Information Points. These locations were chosen as this is where we felt the most spoken word interactions would take

place (purchasing and collecting tickets, providing spectators with information, etc.).

Due to the nature of our venues and sites, these were portable devices which, if required, could be moved to different locations.

Hearing Augmentation devices were also available to loan. The personal FM radio devices provided an in-ear feed of the sports presentation commentary. These devices could be used at all venues, for all sport sessions, from any seat in the venue.

## **WHEELCHAIR LOAN**

Wheelchairs were available to collect from our 'Spectator Information Points', the purpose of the wheelchairs was to assist spectators to their seat, and back again to help reduce walking distances.

This facility was very popular, especially at our larger venues.

If offering this type of facility, a robust process for booking wheelchairs and assisting spectators would be recommended. Based on the demand at the Games, specific volunteers (or a team) should be dedicated to running this to ensure the best possible spectator experience.

## **ACCESSIBLE GOLF BUGGIES**

If looking to reduce walking distances, enhancements like Accessible Golf Buggies are also useful.

Various number of seater buggies can be hired, included wheelchair accessible buggies.

The Games used Accessible Golf Buggies to transport spectators from blue badge parking to venues and also within venues from one side of the site to the other.

If providing this type of enhancement, those driving the buggies and helping to load and unload passengers, should be provided with training.

## **ACCESSIBILITY PANELS**

An Accessibility Panel can offer you invaluable insight, advice, and support in how to make your services and projects as inclusive as possible. They can also assist you in spotting risks in your plans or initiatives which might leave people out or damage your reputation. Involving and testing your ideas on your community or customer base leads to better decision-making, both commercially and legally.

A Panel will also help you broaden your network and allow meaningful relationships with people who have lived and learned experience in the field of accessibility. No individual holds all the knowledge and so a pan-impairment group will mean different members can offer deeper insight on specific issues. Facilitating an Accessibility Panel demonstrates your commitment to accessibility and inclusion, as well as sending a positive message about your values.

The Games hosted its own Accessibility Panel 'Accessibility Advisory Forum' which met each quarter throughout Games planning.

The members of the Accessibility Advisory Forum have created a guide to encourage organisations to involve customers, experts and service users who experience access barriers into their decision making. The guide is intended to help readers understand the value of an Accessibility Panel and the key issues to address in your planning process. (Appendix 7)

## **ACCESSIBLE TOILETS AND CHANGING PLACES TOILETS**

Different types of projects and events will require different numbers of toilets.

How to calculate this can be found in guidance such as the Green Guide. (Appendix 8)

Ensuring the right number of accessible toilets is key. This number may be made up of existing toilet facilities, or temporary porta-loo style toilets.

Changing Places toilets should also be made available wherever possible. Changing Places toilets are a facility used by people who may need equipment to help them either get on to the toilet, or to be changed. More information about this facility and where nearby changing places toilets can be found is available from Changing Places charity (Appendix 9)

## **TRANSPORT**

To ensure your attendees can reach you, make sure to review your nearby transport links.

These could be public transport options such as trains and buses. If you expect people to use public transport, it is worth checking the accessibility of recommended stations and stops. Information about the accessibility of these can usually be confirmed by the operator. In some cases, another station or stop further away may need to be advised.

If advising locations further away, solutions such as accessible shuttle buses or golf buggies may be required. If operating shuttle or golf buggy services, when selecting the type of vehicle, consider access for wheelchair and scooter users and what other accessible features these services have (such as visual and audio announcements).

An option for blue badge parking is always recommended. Consider the number of spaces available and how these can be pre-booked in advance if necessary.

## ► **MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS**

Ensuring your marketing and communications activity are in an accessible format will ensure you are able to reach out to and engage with more people.

The Games Accessibility, and Marketing and Communications Teams worked together to develop Games accessible communication standards. The standards covered various types of content and accessible requirements, providing guidance for the team during content creation.

We found that the majority of content for the Games was on digital platforms, with very little in printed formats.

### **WEBSITES AND PLATFORMS**

The Games had various websites and portals to talk to spectators, volunteers, and anyone with an interest in the Games.

All websites and platforms underwent accessibility auditing to ensure Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) compliance. (appendix 1)

To make our websites and platforms as accessible as possible, we also added an 'accessibility toolbar'. The toolbar gave users the option to customise the sites to meet their individual preferences. Functionality included read aloud, colour way changes, language translation, font type and size.

### **SOCIAL MEDIA**

The Games had official social media accounts which provided a platform to push out various types of content and interact with followers. If posting social media content, consider what font type is used for your posts and ensure Alternative Text (ALT) has been added to images to make your posts more accessible.

### **VIDEO**

Video content is a popular and engaging way to communicate messages. The type of content in the video will determine what you can do to make it more accessible.

If there is spoken word, could subtitles, captions or British Sign Language Interpretation be added? Are there images with no spoken word, maybe to music? Could the content be audio described?

### **ALTERNATIVE FORMATS**

Some document formats may not be accessible to all readers. When producing a document, consider the format and what alternative formats may be required.

Although alternative formats of documents may not necessarily be readily available, a simple way of requesting these should be available. The Games did this by directing readers to an email address, where they could advise what document they wanted and in which format.

For the Games, we found many documents were automatically created in a Portable Document Format (PDF) which could not be read by those using text to speech software. Working with our Marketing and Communications Team, we developed a process to ensure if a PDF had to be used, an accompanying word document was also available.

### **DESIGN**

To compliment your messaging, ensure you are following accessible design principles considering colour ways, font type and size and avoiding content such as flashing images.

### **BEST PRACTICE**

Various guidance documents are available with more specific guidance for specific content types (Appendix 10)

## ► APPENDIX

Please find below links to useful resources referenced in this guide.

**1. Understanding WCAG 2.1**

[www.gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service/understanding-wcag](http://www.gov.uk/service-manual/helping-people-to-use-your-service/understanding-wcag)

**2. Disability Confident employer scheme**

[www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign](http://www.gov.uk/government/collections/disability-confident-campaign)

**3. International Paralympic Committee Accessibility Guide**

[www.paralympic.org/sites/default/files/document/160307102314920\\_IPC+Accessibility+Guide.pdf](http://www.paralympic.org/sites/default/files/document/160307102314920_IPC+Accessibility+Guide.pdf)

**4. The Sign Design Guide**

[www.signdesignsociety.co.uk/book/the-sign-design-guide](http://www.signdesignsociety.co.uk/book/the-sign-design-guide)

**5. Access to and use of building: Approved Document M**

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/access-to-and-use-of-buildings-approved-document-m)

**6. Assistance Dogs UK -Information for Service Providers**

[www.assisteddogs.org.uk/the-law](http://www.assisteddogs.org.uk/the-law)

**7. Guide to Accessibility Panels**

[www.birmingham2022.com/publications/guide-to-accessibility-panels](http://www.birmingham2022.com/publications/guide-to-accessibility-panels)

**8. The Green Guide**

<https://sgsa.org.uk/greenguide>

**9. What are Changing Places Toilets?**

[www.changing-places.org](http://www.changing-places.org)

**10. Accessible communication formats**

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/accessible-communication-formats](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inclusive-communication/accessible-communication-formats)

**Other documents you may find useful.**

- Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Post Games Report  
[www.birmingham2022.com/publications/edi](http://www.birmingham2022.com/publications/edi)

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