

Twelve recommendations for theatres and theatre companies

What theatre management can do to ensure the best quality of the audio description of their productions and the experience of the blind or visually impaired user at their venue.

1. Talk to users of the AD service at your venue. Listen and respond to their concerns.
2. Ensure that any paid or volunteer staff that an AD user might encounter (box office, front of house, shop, bar, etc.) understands:
 - a. what audio description is, and what it involves (including the Audio Introduction and the Touch Tour);
 - b. how the headset works;
 - c. how to communicate effectively with audience members.
3. Encourage as many staff members as possible to read or listen to the audio description of your productions and attend touch tours.
4. Involve actors in the AD process: share the questionnaire with them
5. Encourage actors to attend Touch Tours.
6. Give the describer access to the creative team, including designers, wardrobe and props: anyone involved in creating the visual aspects of the production.
7. Involve describers as early as possible – their description will be better for it.
8. Give the director the opportunity to attend the AD dry run so that they can offer feedback. Make sure they understand AD and its purpose beforehand.

9. Respect describers' independence and their role as providing blind and visually impaired theatre-goers with information about the show's visual aspects; rather than being an extension of the director's vision, or marketing.
10. Name the describers and/or AD company on your website, in your marketing, and if possible, front of house, and as an insert into the programme on the day(s) that the AD is provided.
11. Tell everyone about your AD service: in the programme, over the PA, in your marketing, press and comms. Word-of-mouth is one of the most powerful ways to get new patrons, and everyone in the community can help spread the word.ⁱ
12. Ensure there are feedback procedures in place in case any member of the company feels there have been problems around the AD and ensure that it is offered upwards through the organisation.

This questionnaire is an extract of the report:

Describing Diversity: An exploration of the description of human characteristics and appearance within the practice of theatre audio description.

[VocalEyes.co.uk/about/research/describing-diversity](https://vocaleyes.co.uk/about/research/describing-diversity)

Contact VocalEyes at enquiries@vocaleyes.co.uk

i For more information about best practice in promoting access performances see M. Cock and others, *State of Theatre Access 2019*

[VocalEyes.co.uk/state-of-theatre-access-2019/](https://vocaleyes.co.uk/state-of-theatre-access-2019/)