

Performance Venues recognises that in order for some of our customers to be able to fully access the performance and take advantage of all that we have to offer they may require support from another person.

It is our policy that where a person requires assistance to access the event they are attending we make available 1 free ticket which will enable a guest with access requirements to bring a personal assistant or companion with them to support them with their access needs.

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## **Requesting a free Companion Ticket**

This scheme is potentially subject to fraudulent misuse, all our venues operate a system to check eligibility for a free companion ticket and offer access customers the opportunity to be added to a database to stop repeatedly being asked for information each time they need to book. You only need to register once.

To apply for a companion ticket, a customer will either provide their Access Card details or will be required to complete our registration form and submit appropriate supporting information. They must also purchase a full price ticket for themselves.

We do not and will not authorise free tickets to people who do not need the use of a Companion. It is important therefore that you read the section regarding 'The Role of a Companion'.

Please note a ticket for your PA / Companion will not be sent out before the event. The companion's name will be added to a list. Please bring your booking information with you.

We cannot always guarantee a seat for companions, however we will ensure they are not separated from you.

If a show is sold out and tickets have not been purchased through an official outlet we are unable to provide a Companion Ticket.

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## **Evidence and Supporting Information**

When you apply for a Companion ticket, we will ask you to complete a booking form and send in some supporting information that indicates that you need assistance in relation to your disability or impairment.

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## **We Accept the following as support information:**

Note: Any amounts or other non-relevant sensitive information can be blanked out.

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement (or government standard equivalent).
- Personal Independence Payments (PIP)
- Receipt of either the Severe Disablement Allowance or Attendance Allowance.
- War Pensioners' Mobility Allowance or War or Service Disablement Pension for 80% or more disability.
- Blind or partially sighted registration certificate (BD8 or CVI Certificate) or evidence from an eye specialist, for example an optometrist, that the individual would qualify to be registered as severely sight impaired (blind) or sight impaired (partially sighted).
- A personal letter from a GP, community nurse, social worker or consultation letter that states the individual has a long term impairment or 'disability' and requires assistance.
- Confirmation in writing from Social Services that the individual is included on their Deaf Register, or a letter or report from an aural specialist confirming that hearing loss has been recorded at 70 – 95 dBHL or worse.

We also accept [The Access Card](#) and customers requesting a Companion ticket with the +1 symbol on their card will receive one without the need for any further information (unless the show is sold out or tickets have been purchased via a secondary ticketing site).

Someone with a severe disability may require more than one companion. If this is the case, evidence from a medical professional will need to be provided which states the number of PA tickets the customer will need in order to support them during the event. We are always happy to discuss on the phone.

## **We Do Not Accept:**

- Christmas Bonus Letters
- Travel and Bus Passes
- Blue Badges
- Other card schemes such as CEA.

Blue Badges cannot be accepted for anything other than their intended purpose which is the allocation of accessible parking. There are many reasons a person may be entitled to a blue badge but these do not translate well into the provision of a variety of reasonable adjustments to shows. As such we are unable to accept Blue Badges or similar forms of evidence including travel passes CEA cards etc.

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## **The Role of an Essential Companion**

By accepting the free ticket, a Companion accepts responsibility for providing the support needed by the access customer to attend an event. This includes being able to provide them with additional assistance during the course of an emergency evacuation.

The staff at the event are unable to provide assistance in excess of their typical role and general reasonable adjustments so it's important that, if a customer needs assistance while at the venue, their Companion is ready and willing to support you with this.

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## **Young Carers**

It is the Performance Venues policy that all children under the age of 14 are accompanied by an appropriate adult (some venues are strictly over 14s and others may have events that are 18+).

We accept that young carers are a much valued and needed source of support but we are only able to accept them under the free Companion ticket scheme where there is no risk of them being left unattended and they must be within the age restrictions at the venue. An example would be a young person accompanying someone who then has a seizure. The young person is then left unattended.

If a need for a Companion is something related to a potential deterioration in a condition then a Companion ticket may not be authorised for anyone under the age of 14.

If a person that attends the venue with a Companion under this age, or if there is doubt in the absence of valid photo ID, we reserve the right to refuse admission. This policy does not apply where there are other adults in the party able to accept responsibility for the young companion.

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## **Contingency – what happens if you lose your support?**

It is important that you and your companion are aware of what happens if for some reason you lose your support. If it is felt that your Companion is not providing you with the support you need we reserve the right to eject them from the facility at any time and refuse access under the companion scheme for future events. An example is if a companion behaves in a way that is negatively affecting others, overly intoxicated or other behaviour deemed unreasonable, they will be removed.

We will endeavour to support you with the rest of your visit if this is the case but if we are unable to make appropriate reasonable adjustments to do this and it

jeopardises your, or other customers, Health and Safety we may be left with no other option than ask you to leave also. Any decision would not be made lightly and no refunds will be provided for any ejections. It is especially important that you choose the right support to come with you.

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## **Abusing the System**

If we feel that either the customer or their companions are abusing the system we reserve the right to investigate this matter and remove from our database.

Every accessible space taken up by somebody that doesn't need it represents a disabled person missing out.

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## **Further Questions and Support**

We take our commitment to our disabled customers very seriously and are always striving to improve .

Any questions or concerns about access can be directed to: performance venues@sheffield.ac.uk