

THE ACCESS COORDINATOR



**Better business and equitable employment
by creating access for disabled people in
the Entertainment industry**

Objective

The Access Coordinator is an emerging role in film and series productions which creates greater employment access and excellence in the workforce. This document is intended to serve as a guide for employers, producers and other creatives.

We will:

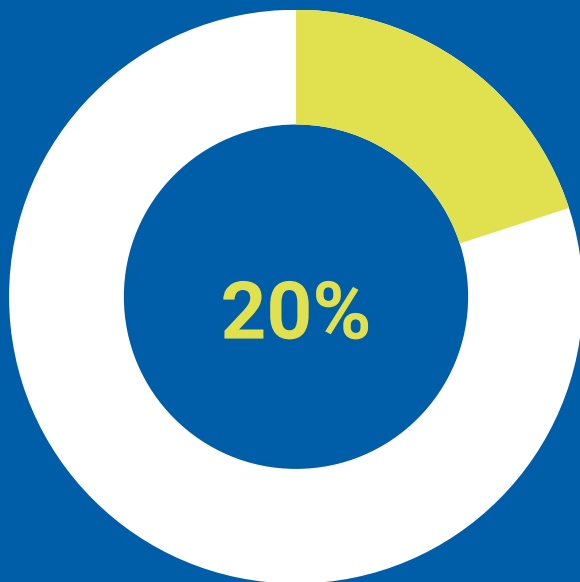
- **Define** the Access Coordinator (AC) position.
- **Outline** examples of inaccessibility and solutions.
- **Demonstrate** why the AC is an essential component to creating access, equitable employment and increase viewership in Hollywood, the United Kingdom, and beyond.

The world population is 8.2 billion.

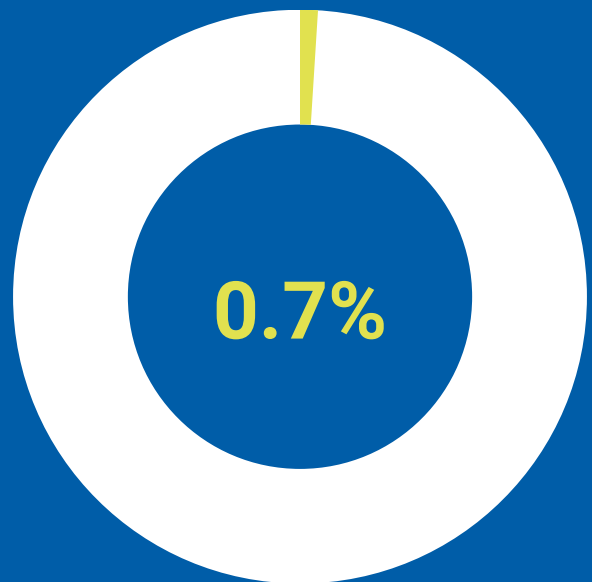
Estimates put the **global disabled population at 1.3 billion, or 20%.**

Statistically speaking, it is very likely that disabled people are already working on your film and TV production sets.

Characters are first created on the page. One data of disparity can be found at the Writers Guild of America West Disabled Writers Committee.



World Disabled Population



Writers Guild of America West Disabled Writers

Access Goes Both Ways

The role of the [Access Coordinator](#) (AC) is key to creating access and sustainable change in entertainment. It is an essential component for dismantling physical and attitudinal barriers entrenched in the industry. When barriers are eliminated, hiring is more inclusive and better work is produced. This increased representation in employment changes stories and influences culture.

The AC, therefore, is a key component for changing the cultural understanding of disability.

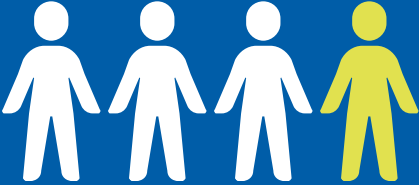
[Access is also good for business.](#) The access to alternative viewpoints and skill sets yields unique and invaluable insights, elevating the quality of work and making it resonant with more audiences. Access enhances content, increases viewership and generates spending, especially from the 1.3 billion disabled world population who want to see themselves on their screens.

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Notes to the Reader:

1. There are many dimensions to **access**. Here, **access** refers to the opportunity for disabled people to fully participate.
2. Our use of **Production** encompasses all of the stages of making a work for the screens, including writing, casting, pre-production, production, post-production, marketing, and distribution.
3. While cost, budget, scope, title and specifics vary by production and country, the experiences of deaf, disabled and/or neurodistinct (DDN) talent remain consistent across borders, genres and narratives. Given the common systemic barriers in attitudes and established practices of production, the aim is to centralize and share this information, so that the AC can be replicated in any production ecosystem.

More than
1.3
BILLION

people
worldwide
are
disabled.

Globally

The world population is estimated to be 8.2 billion [United Nations, 2024].

More than **1.3 billion people worldwide** are disabled [World Health Organization, 2023].

The global purchasing power of the disabled community is **\$13 trillion** [Global Economics of Disability Report, 2020].

Often, disabled people steer the purchasing power of their homes. Elevated disability inclusion, when done well, ends up authentically on screens. To an underserved market, this drives ticket sales in the disability community and beyond.

In the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom population is estimated to be 68 million. **16 million people are disabled**. [Family Resources Survey 2021-2022].

Their purchasing power in the UK was an estimated **£274 billion per year** [Business Disability Forum].

Off-screen contributions made by disabled people went from **5.8% in 2019-20 to 8% in 2022-23** [Creative Diversity Network (CDN)]. However, this remains far lower than both the national workforce (17%) and national population estimates (17.8% Census, 24.9% APS) [CDN Diamond report 7th Cut].

UK cover the cost of the Access Coordinator for broadcasters through **The Access Fund**.

In the United States

The United States population is 335 million. **61 million American adults are disabled** [CDC, 2023].

The purchasing power of the U.S. disabled community is **\$645 billion**. [Forbes, 2022].

According to the Writers Guild of America, West [WGAW], self-identified Writers with Disabilities make up only **0.7% of Current Active WGAW members** [WGAW, 2021].

In California, including disabled cast and crew will help secure up to **100% of the total production's tax rebate** from the California Film Commission.

Glossary

Disability has historically been the diagnosis of a condition which impacts a person's functions, movements, senses and communication. Today, it has evolved to encompass history, culture, community, and identity.

Accessibility is when a product, service, environment or information can be accessed by disabled people. It's also a mindset, an awareness and curiosity which embraces the infinite ways that people exist in the world.

Ableism is a limiting belief that devalues and discriminates people with disabilities. It operates on the assumption that having a disability is inherently negative.

An Access Requirement is a specific adjustment necessary for an individual person's accessibility.

Access Points are supports and accommodations provided so that individuals may fully participate in a professional or social event. Access Points address physical, sensory, cognitive, communication and technological barriers. Accommodations may include adding a ramp so that a wheelchair user can access a stage; adding audio description to media for people who are blind/low vision; including sign language interpreters for Deaf attendees; or limiting loud sounds for those who may have auditory sensitivities.

Access Coordinator (AC) is a paid production crew or consultant who is hired to oversee accessibility and facilitate the inclusion of disabled creatives and executives in entertainment.

ASD/ASC stands for Autistic Spectrum Disorder / Condition, or autistic individuals.

DDN is Deaf, Disabled, and/or Neurodistinct.

LD is Learning Disability, or someone with a cognitive condition.

ND is Neurodistinct, or someone whose brain is non-neurotypical.

Production Inaccessibility: Barriers and Solutions

An accessible set is an inclusive one. It allows a production to access a vibrant pool of innovative talent and to create circumstances that empower everyone to produce their best possible work.

The following are specific examples of common barriers and solutions, provided by DDN professionals from recent productions.

Barrier: Steps/stairs

Solution: Ramps, including removable and reusable options. Ask production designers and locations to design with a wheelchair's varying width and weight in mind, especially for sets where the width of doorways can be designed from scratch.

Example: *Kaitlyn Yang* is a visual effects supervisor, and a wheelchair user. On one of her projects, the sound stages had steps and were inaccessible. She asked construction to build ramps.

Benefits: Over the course of 32 weeks, in addition to enabling Kaitlyn to excel at her job, the ramps saved the production time and money. Every department has equipment carts, including craft services. They were able to save measurable time (totaling 4 weeks!) because the ramps helped speed up daily setup and strike down. Some days, the location rental fees were saved because everyone wrapped before going into "the next day."

Barrier: Lack of audio description (AD)

Solution: Prioritize audio description by encouraging a close relationship between the key creative team and the AD teams.

Example: *Stephen Letnes* is a composer with low vision. To fully enjoy movies and series, he relies on artful AD. Not only are AD typically robotic and uninspired, they are often omitted, leaving out the potential for Stephen and blind and low vision communities around the world, to be paying consumers.

Benefits: One success story for great AD is on the motion picture **DUNE**, released by Warner Bros. The narrator's alto tones perfectly complemented that of the lead actor Jason Momoa's bass, all amplified by the quality of the AD script. The use of adjectives added meaning to the description of the ships, terrain and costumes. Making CC and AD a priority is a draw for more customers.

Barrier: Sound-based set cues, such as the "action" bell

Solution: Alternative cues, such as a flashlight.

Example: *Natasha Ofili* is a Deaf actress, writer, and producer. When she is acting on set, she cannot hear the bells that cue the start of the next scene, or the 'action' that calls in her character. One simple solution that does not rely on sound cues is a flashlight. The assistant director can simply pull a flashlight out of their tool belt to cue Natasha.

Benefits: Natasha was able to confidently participate in the ensemble and deliver her performance with zero added cost.

Barrier: Props // Antique wheelchairs

Solution: Working with the props department to ensure all chairs were accessible; collaborating with talent and movement director to establish appropriate usage.

Example: *Dan Edge* is an Access Coordinator on **LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER**, released by Netflix, for which one of the lead actors is a wheelchair user. Dan worked diligently with the production to ensure not only that a period-accurate wheelchair was used, and that the actor felt safe while performing stunts. For intimate scenes with the non disabled cast and crew, Dan collaborated with the intimacy and stunt coordinators regarding practices for the non-disabled people involved.

Benefits: The talent and crew felt comfortable with the various wheelchairs, and the crew were able to shape shots and performances that enhanced the nuance of the storytelling.

Barrier: Lack of accessible production vehicles, trailers, and toilets

Solution: Look outside of the industry for accessible solutions.

Example: *Julie Fernandez* is an Access Coordinator who supported a production where the co-creator, writer and lead actor was a wheelchair user with multiple access requirements in the form of equipments. Given the lack of accessible vehicles to rent, Julie and team sourced a mobile motor-home which provided what the actor needed and allowed the shoot to run smoothly and safely.

Benefits: Being able to stow portable access equipments within a vehicle allowed this creative to do their best work by being in proximity to the set.

Barrier: Unexpected and temporary disabilities occurring mid-production.

Solution: Hire an AC to make accessibility improvements.

Example: A non-disabled senior executive had an accident on set and needed adjustments to continue with their job. *Julie Fernandez*, an Access Coordinator, worked with the executive to make adjustments, including ramps and other mobility and medical aids.

Benefits: The production was able to continue with this senior executive intact, preserving the team and procedures already established. In addition, the executive directly experienced the value of an experienced AC in a way that, without their accident, would only have been second hand. The senior executive is now committed to using an AC for all forthcoming productions.

Barrier: Keeping on schedule when working with multiple neurodistinct actors.

Solution: Create an environment that is accessible for neurodistinct actors.

Example: *Elaine Hall*, an Access Coordinator, added a quiet area which mitigated noise and over-stimulation for neurodistinct actors.

Benefits: This helped the actors succeed, and the crew to meet the planned shooting days. The AC's support on three successive seasons assisted the actors in becoming series regulars. Their work enhanced authentic disability representation and contributed to the series success.

Example: *Elaine Hall*, Access Coordinator, provided education and solutions including transparent face masks, name badges, entry and exit points, lighting and noise awareness and general best practice for the Heads of Departments, crew and caregivers to any DDN cast and crew.

Benefits: An inclusive set, a smoother production, as well as education to be carried forward to future projects.

Barrier: Movement and safety for intimate scenes and stunts.

Solution: Work closely with all talent and collaborate with the intimacy and stunt coordinators to make sure movements are authentic, accessible and safe for those with mobility limitations.

Benefits: Talent felt safe and comfortable and could concentrate on their performance.

Barrier: The absence of disabled people from test screenings and premieres prevents valuable feedback and potential influencers, respectively.

Solution: Employ a disabled professional to work on the marketing and publicity team. Ensure invitation list has disabled influencers and key disabled-led industry groups and individuals.

Benefits: More awareness leads to more business.

Barrier: Lack of accessible restrooms leads to longer breaks because of inconveniently located facilities.

Solutions: Rent, build and centrally locate accessible restrooms.

Benefits: Less time spent on restroom breaks for all.

Barrier: Oftentimes only inaccessible scouting vans are provided, leading to self-drive which creates inefficiency and additional exhaustion.

Solutions: Source accessible transportation. A creative approach is to source them in unconventional places, like from vendors who provide to amusement parks and parking lots.

Benefits: Setting an example of an inclusive set from the start.

Barrier: Long distances to walk

Solutions: Limit unnecessary physical exertion, for instance, assistance with receiving food and drinks. Provide transportation access if there are distances that most non-disabled people can easily walk (likely strenuous for those with chronic illness).

Barrier: No seating options on set or on location

Solutions: Work with location managers to provide collapsible stools and other seating options for location scouting or physically demanding tasks.

Benefits: Helping all cast and crew manage the grind and morale from long hours, including disabled cast and crew who haven't disclosed their non-apparent disabilities.

Barrier: Long continuous production hours and lack of access points leading to protracted shooting days.

Solutions: Find space in the schedule for breaks and rest periods to allow individuals to manage fatigue.

Benefits: Preventing lost work and delays due to injury from physical stress.

Barrier: The fear to disclose a non-apparent disability or the extent of an apparent disability.

Solution: Education and guidance from the AC leads to greater experience and normalization working with DDN talent for everyone on set.

Benefits: It's only when we feel safe and acknowledged, are we primed to pour all of our time into producing our best work.

ON SET

BARRIERS	SOLUTIONS
Call sheets with dense information	Create easy to read call sheets – Simplify the format to clearly highlight the key facts, where to meet, when to meet, for how long, before moving onto the next planned scene. Offer alternative formats with black background and simple white font for those who need them.
Complicated stage layouts and lack of signage	Display clear signage around sets – including color coordinated maps to clearly label production bases and other resources.
Tightly spaced sets	Prepare ahead for pathways that are accessible for wheelchair users and others with mobility access requirements at the design stage.
Remote and inaccessible locations	Think of access in the way that a production provides for the camera, ie, what works for equipments on wheels. For example, rubber matting for gravel and unstable surfaces. More light may be needed for those with low vision. Visual cues for the Deaf or hard of hearing. Provide quiet areas.
Noisy buildings and rooms	Include quiet areas – extremely useful for those who are neurodistinct, or have other physical conditions that require quiet time during long filming days.
Stairs to offices, trailers and toilets	Install ramps with handrails for stairs or alternative step-free pathways. Choose offices with platform lifts that also have solutions for when the lift breaks. Source accessible trailers and toilets and have backup options like motor-homes.
Production team's name and role	Implementing name badges (name, job title, department). It's a simple ice breaker for any production, especially for those who are new to a set.
Drastic light changes going from outside to inside the stage	Implement gradual lighting to transition from the bright outside into the dim studio. The Grip department can set this up. This aids people who are neurodistinct.
Animal bans and lack of awareness	Open up permission to allow service animals and guide dogs.
Audio-only fire alarms	Visual Fire Alarms – these are inexpensive to install and aid people who are Deaf and hard of hearing. Be sure to include those in corridors and toilet facilities.
Traditional face masks and coverings.	Transparent masks – for those who are deaf and can lipread, or those who are neurodistinct, while still ensuring everyone's safety.

ATTITUDINAL

BARRIERS	SOLUTIONS
The presumption that a disabled person can't do something.	Add language and etiquette education – Make an effort. Mistakes are OK, disabled people will coach you. Include disability awareness workshops in cast and crew onboarding as part of diversity, sustainability, and sexual harassment trainings.
The assumption that catering to someone with access requirements will take added time and expense.	
The assumption that disabled people are not present in a given circumstance.	

VIRTUAL MEETINGS

BARRIERS	SOLUTIONS
The assumption that no one in the meeting is hard of hearing, has low vision, or is neurodistinct. Video meetings / calls without self-descriptions, captions, or video-relay sign language interpreters	Practice starting introductions with self descriptions, a few simple sentences to capture the essence of one self. For example, I'm an Asian woman with long brown hair and glasses, wearing a blue shirt. Incorporate sign language interpreters on video calls to ease communication between Deaf / hard of hearing people. Provide live captioning (preferred), or auto captioning as standard for every video call.

WORK RELATED SOCIAL EVENTS

BARRIERS	SOLUTIONS
Physical layouts including entryways with stairs but without lifts or ramps Furniture and lighting Noise	Consider spaces with an accessible entry and terrain, tables and seats with varying heights and spacings in between to accommodate wheelchair users. Consider lighting level for low vision and noise level for Deaf and neurodistinct attendees.

SCREENINGS AND EVENTS

BARRIERS	SOLUTIONS
Invites with no information about accessibility	Include information about accessibility on the screening invites and events emails, preferably with a direct contact line.
Inaccessible venues, including outdoor areas that are not ADA compliant such as grass and other uneven surfaces	Review venue's accessibility features walk/roll-through before booking. Don't assume a location is accessible. Go beyond the basics of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
Out of reach amenities for people of short stature	Place stools in bathrooms, in front of high counters, and at open bars.
Limited accessible parking	Increase accessible parking spaces for large events by grouping together regular spaces to make additional accessible spaces.
Inaccessible ticket windows or will call	Implement ticket windows or will-call at different heights.
Lack of accessible toilets and porta potties	Ensure all toilets / porta potties are accessible. Don't assume a facility's accommodations are sufficient.
Peripheral, or end of row seating for wheelchair users	Reserve center seating area for wheelchair users for optimal viewing experience.
Scattered seating which prevents Deaf patrons from viewing interpreters	Reserve seating for Deaf Patrons close to the stage for optimal viewing experience of sign language interpreters.
Limited presence of sign language interpreters at events	Hire multiple sign language interpreters to take turns interpreting out throughout an event. Place the interpreter on the stage next to the speakers. Test live captions, and audio description equipments during prep so they are at the ready.

WEBSITES AND ONLINE PRESENCE

BARRIERS	SOLUTIONS
Inaccessible websites which prevent people with disabilities from accessing it fully.	Update a website's design to include ADA features by hiring an access coordinator to consult with the web team. Ensure the entirety of the website can be read by a screen reader with keyboard navigation, for those who are low vision or have motor disabilities. Update design and functionality so that all of the page's navigations have access in mind.

COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

BARRIERS	SOLUTIONS
Videos without captions and other access points	Add open and closed captions, video description in the caption of the video, and audio description for each segment of video content connected to the production or event.
Images without image descriptions	Include image descriptions for each photo, ideally in the caption.
Emojis which are not screen reader friendly	Limit the use of emojis in between words. For example, "Let's (hand-clap-emoji) Go!" can be changed to "Let's Go! (hand-clap-emoji)".
Lack of text vs page color contrast	Ensure that a screen reader can pick up the contrast, font size, color and text size.
Hashtags in all #lowercase	Include capitalization, such as #CapitalizeFirstLettersOfHashtags to ensure captions are being read correctly by screen readers.
Outdated language regarding disability inclusion	Elevate current language to be disability inclusive, to encourage disabled people to apply during the hiring stage.

WHY SOLUTIONS MATTER

DDN candidates, like *Taylor Lewis*, still face many industry-wide barriers, especially when most entry-level positions rely heavily on physical ability.

Taylor currently works as an assistant editor and has had several entry-level production jobs, including as an assistant on Zack Snyder's *REBEL MOON* through the Group Effort Initiative via the partnership with 11N4 Coalition.

The Stress of Creating Accessibility

When Taylor was hired as a camera PA on his first large feature, his mobility requirements created certain challenges with transportation, limited parking, broken elevators, and the demanding physical requirements of working as a PA on location. He and the production team had to struggle together through unfamiliar territory trying to find solutions to issues as they arose, all while maintaining an intense shooting schedule. Taylor eventually found a place in the editorial department where his accessibility concerns could be more easily addressed, but navigating those accessibility hurdles added unnecessary stress to an already challenging experience.

How to Avoid This

Taylor believes that having an Access Coordinator available prior to Day 1 of filming would have helped him and the production team anticipate his needs and devise solutions before the rigorous shooting schedule began. An Access Coordinator would relieve Taylor and the production team of the responsibility of finding solutions, allowing them to focus their passion and skill on their designated role.

Access Coordinators can carry their experiences from one production to the next, ensuring that people like Taylor won't have to repeat the process of reinventing their own solutions each time. By implementing their growing knowledge and resources, the AC fosters an accessible environment that allows talent like Taylor to explore their potential and for productions to benefit from diverse creativity and skill.

If the industry were to create and be open to alternative routes for entry level DDN candidates, the pool of talent will expand and diversify. The lack of access limits not only people like Taylor with enormous potential, but also the productions who would've otherwise benefited from his passion and skill.

Access Coordinator: Definition

An Access Coordinator (AC) is the solution for dismantling barriers of employment in production. An AC is a paid production crew, or consultant, hired to oversee accessibility and facilitate inclusion of disabled creatives and executives in entertainment.

This role is a vital piece of the puzzle for advancing disability inclusion, representation and employment.

Access Coordinator Role Summary

Establish protocol for questions and issues related to access.

Acting as a bridge between production and anyone with Access Requirements. This creates a safe space not only for the disabled employees, but for everyone involved.

Ensuring the Access Coordinator's insights are fully integrated into decision-making requires clear collaboration with key department heads and the right level of autonomy to make sure their recommendations are taken seriously. Partnering closely with the Unit Production Manager (UPM) and Assistant Directors can help reinforce the AC's authority, embedding accessibility considerations into workflow planning, scheduling, and department coordination from the start.

Verify that requirements and Access Points are met respectfully and effectively.

While the UPM oversees the overall logistics and budgetary management, the AC ensures that accessibility needs are proactively integrated into each department's workflow. By working in tandem, the AC can provide targeted guidance on accessibility while the UPM ensures those considerations are realized effectively across the production.

This allows **all** crew or cast members to focus on the specific jobs that they have been hired to do, without the added responsibility of figuring out individually how to navigate their workspaces.

Provide direct and indirect education to the current production or team. This is also potentially beneficial to the studio and/or financier. For example, in the UK, some broadcasters are mandating the AC as a line item in the budget on every production, not just projects with a known connection to disability on or off screen.

Encourage and include brainstorming for accessibility of sets, schedules, facilities, processes, events, and social spaces. An accessible office or set benefits everyone.

In essence, **the AC serves to guide, enhance, and facilitate access.**

BY
IMPLEMENTING
THEIR GROWING
KNOWLEDGE
AND RESOURCES,
THE AC FOSTERS
AN ACCESSIBLE
ENVIRONMENT
WHERE WE ARE
PRIMED TO
POUR ALL OF
OUR TIME INTO
PRODUCING OUR
BEST WORK.

The Access Coordinator Job Description

WRITERS ROOMS/PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

- Collaborate with the development team to identify and recruit Deaf, disabled, and/or neurodistinct writers. Please see Triple C's Writers Rooms Guidelines.
- Ensure that storytelling involves diverse perspectives and experiences.
- Read and consider at least two DDN writers with a range of lived experience.
- Provide guidance on access requirements in the writers' room, including screen readers, rest breaks, and scribes.
- Oversee the accessibility of physical spaces and processes for equal participation.
- Create scripts, treatments, and pitches in Easy To Read Accessible formats.

CASTING CALLOUTS/AUDITIONS

- Review scripts and casting callouts to identify opportunities for Deaf, disabled, and neurodistinct actors and contributors.
- Collaborate with the casting team to establish updated language and formats for inclusive casting callouts.
- Recommend organizations representing Deaf, disabled, and/or neurodistinct talents and advocate for a 25%, or a 1 in 4 inclusion rate.
- Adapt scripts and audition materials to accessible formats, such as Easy to Read or screen-reader-friendly versions.
- Advise on casting language and ensure accessible audition spaces and application processes.
- Advise on how to make self-taping or virtual auditions accessible.

Access is a catalyst for mutual growth and connection -- a driving force for personal and collective advancement within art and business.

PRE-PRODUCTION

- Ensure productions are fully aware of and fulfilling the broadcasters' D E I A commitments - A for access, as we can't have DEI without access first and foremost
- Primary Stakeholders: Director, Writers, Casting, UPM, Producers, Department Heads
- Assess producers and department heads' familiarity with an Access First approach and offer guidance
- Signpost and encourage disability awareness training sessions at the start of each production
- Nominate production contacts for the Access Coordinator role and liaise with Diversity & HR teams
- Facilitate discussions with the production team to address gaps in access awareness
- Ensure the accessibility of production offices, studios, and known filming locations
- Discuss access requirements in confidential one-on-one meetings with cast and crew
- Signpost or carry out comprehensive disability training sessions at the production's outset, covering access awareness and best practices
- Provide an AC introduction memo, ensuring inclusion in all production onboarding start paperwork
- Include essential information about the Access Coordinator's role on daily callsheets
- Distribute necessary documents, such as easy to read call sheets and disability etiquette guidelines
- Establish and attend accessible production meetings, read throughs, and tour rehearsal spaces
- Attend, either remotely or in person, location and technical scouts and recommendations to assess accessibility
- Coordinate with production contacts, unit managers, and facility companies to proactively plan access for each Unit Base, ensuring a smooth workflow
- Ensure that accessible transportation, including at least one accessible minibus and unit vehicle is available when required. In cases of unavailability, guide on how to secure alternative accessible vehicles.
- Collaborate with intimacy and stunt coordinators as needed, in addition to providing support alongside any wellbeing or personal caregiver roles
- Advise on access assessments and reasonable adjustments for cast members, including communication between them, their coaches, and the production
- Advise on accessible accommodations for all cast and crew members, keeping a focus on individual needs and preferences
- Guide, advise and oversee the suitability of Access Points for crew members who have disclosed their access requirements, ensuring that information is handled with sensitivity and confidentiality
- Collaborate and advise the Line Producer in how to allocate the Access Budget efficiently and effectively

Act as a liaison between individuals with access points, including cast, and crew, executives and producers, fostering trust and open communication.

PRODUCTION

- Primary Stakeholders: ADs, Department Heads, Cast, Crew, Access providers such as interpreters.
- Be present on set and on-call as needed.
- Act as a liaison between individuals, including cast, crew and creatives with access requirements, and Executives/Producers, fostering trust and open communication in virtual meetings and in-person.
- Provide assistance in troubleshooting issues related to suppliers or equipments, swiftly resolving access-related concerns.
- Advise on and oversee the booking of necessary assistance, such as British Sign Language/Black American Sign Language/American Sign Language interpreters, Mental Health Professionals, Occupational Therapists, accessible transportation drivers, hotel accommodations, and other experts as needed.

POST PRODUCTION

- Primary Stakeholders: Post Supervisor.
- Advise on and oversee the thorough assessments of post-production vendors and facilities to evaluate their accessibility, making recommendations for improvements as needed.
- Encourage and facilitate disclosure of access requirements among DDN post-production cast and crew members. Distribute the access toolkit and introduction letter to ensure comprehensive support at this stage.
- Encourage director and access coordinator to attend ADR (Automated Dialogue Replacement) sessions to advise on the use of elevated and inclusive language and authentic performance.
- Advise on closed and open captions for content, and Audio Description to verify their compliance with accessibility standards.

By creating an environment and conditions which benefit everyone, you will tap into the enormous potential of your staff and your clients to capitalize on the \$13 trillion market of 1.3 billion disabled people and communities worldwide (The Valuable 500, 2022).

MARKETING & DISTRIBUTION

- Primary Stakeholders: Public Relations lead, Marketing and Distribution Teams
- Review marketing, communications, and press materials to ensure they use appropriate and inclusive language.
- Ensure that all cast and crew screenings are fully accessible.
- Oversee the prominent listing of access points, such as audio description and closed/open captions, in all marketing materials to provide clarity and transparency to the audience.
- Advise and guide press materials with accessible designs in mind, adhering to guidelines that address both physical and cognitive access. This includes the provision of interpreters, live captioning, and audio scribes to continually demonstrate the production's commitment to accessibility to a global audience.
- Advise and oversee that event venues and press lines are accessible, including parking, entrances, red carpets, pose (step) and repeats, pathways, seating, restrooms, and photo opportunity setups.
- Include influencers from the disability community to help raise awareness of the production's accessibility and inclusivity, especially on social media.

When Hiring an Access Coordinator:

1) Start Early

The earlier a production team considers accessibility and engages with an AC, the easier and more cost effective it will be to create seamless access. Retrofitting can be expensive, but planning and building from the start can be cost neutral or cost saving.

2) Budget for the AC

As with any other role, the expense for AC varies with budget. Allocate a budget for the AC at each stage, pre-production, production, and post-production, including funds to spend on access points when needed. To ensure comprehensive coverage of Access Coordinator (AC) costs, consider working with the UPM to integrate AC-related costs into relevant department budgets. The AC is likely not needed every day, but can work in a consultative way across the duration of a production.

3) Include an AC during development

The AC can be beneficial during development with respect to creative direction and barrier removal. Check creative materials for inclusive language, character depiction and storylines before getting to the stage of casting and crewing.

4) Include an AC in Prep

Discuss accessibility considerations before locations or vehicles are rented. The AC is a crucial consultant for aiding procedures, communications, casting, crewing, offices, locations and stages. This can be especially important for employees not wanting to disclose their disability. The cost savings of Access Coordinator involvement are significant.

5) Include a Deaf AC if there is a Deaf person involved in the production

Ensure there is Deaf awareness training for all. Proactively hire an AC in pre-production, through measures such as integrating interpreters and training casting directors when working with Deaf actors, can prevent costly miscommunications and the need for re-casting later in the process.

6) Include an AC in Post Production

For post production and delivery, the AC can be pivotal in reviewing all accompanying access materials, such as open and closed captioning, audio descriptions, marketing language and promotional events, ensuring that this story reaches the largest audience possible during one of the last stages of production

7) Contact [Bridge06](#), [Casarotto Ramsay & Associates](#) talent agency and the [1IN4 Coalition](#) for a list of AC recommendations

AC DEVELOPMENT AND FUNDING IN THE UK AS OF 2023

Spearheaded by the [TV Access Project](#), a key part of a UK pan-industry response to improving Accessibility is to emphasize the necessity to include the Access Coordinator as a funded and paid line item in the budget.

Here are a few resources of where to hire and how to fund ACs:

The [British Film Commission](#) has a commitment to the UK's leadership in matters of Equality Diversity and Sustainability in Production. In 2022, BFC provided funding to [TripleC/DANC](#) which allowed them to compose a report with first-hand testimony of the barriers faced by Deaf, disabled and/or neurodistinct (DDN) production crew in the UK production industry, advising of the need for an Access Coordinator to be present on productions. Following this, they were able to provide further funding to Bridge06 and the 1IN4 Coalition to embark on the research contained in this document.

The UK training body, ScreenSkills, had funded two Access Coordinator training courses in 2023. The first of these courses was run by [Bridge06](#), which in turn was powered by the work and advocacy of lobby group Underlying Health Condition and their report [Everybody Forgot About The Toilets](#). Be part of the solution, not the problem.

Bridge06 is proud to partner on this work with [1IN4](#), a coalition of disabled Hollywood creatives on a mission to reframe the experience and understanding of disability, by breaking down the systemic barriers that exclude disabled people from being employed in front of and behind the camera.

For more additional resources to hiring, including, and progressing disabled production talent, please see [Channel 4 Guides](#).

Conclusion

The first step towards the creation of equity in the entertainment industry is to acknowledge that barriers exist and that improvements in accessibility benefit the production as a whole.

Access Coordinators are a vital piece of the puzzle for creating solutions that will lead to systemic change. By standardizing the work of ACs throughout the creative process, productions and employers will move the various entertainment sectors toward equitable employment. Increased disabled representation in front of and behind the camera will lead to more diverse sets and authentic and innovative content, which grows audience and drives business.

The establishment of the AC has the potential to create global change beyond the business of entertainment. Our imaginations and psyches are deeply influenced by the stories we see on our screens. These stories affect not only how we process the world, but how we perceive ourselves and how we treat others. Authentic disability inclusion in front of and behind the camera is key to changing the narrative of disability and to understanding it as one of the infinite ways that people exist.

Acknowledgments & Contributors

Bridge06 This Inclusion Consultancy was created in 2021 to align with those working to increase Disability Representation in the Film, Media and Entertainment Industries and beyond. It was founded by TV Drama Executive, Parent Carer, CODA and long-time disability advocate Sara Johnson, who partnered with full time Access Coordinator, Actor and Disability Consultant Julie Fernandez. After taking their expertise to Australia & New Zealand and kickstarting the AC role over there, Julie and Sara created the Access Team at Casarotto Ramsay & Associates talent agency in December 2023. There they represent and supervise a roster of production trained Access Coordinators and other roles. They passionately believe that the rollout of the Access Coordinator as a paid and valued position, is the key entry point towards a sustainable and fully inclusive industry. Sara and Julie also work in strategic consultancy with corporates, broadcasters, indies and distributors, bringing purpose, intent, commercial savvy and creativity together for long-term sustainable pan-Industry change.

Learn more at www.bridge06.com and <https://www.casarotto.co.uk/access-team>.

The 1IN4 Coalition is a coalition of disabled Hollywood creatives on a mission to reframe the experience and understanding of disability by breaking down the systemic barriers that exclude disabled people from being employed in front of and behind the camera. Given that over 25% of the US adult population is disabled, disability is not a rarity. Portrayals of it on our screens shouldn't be either. For more information, visit us at www.1in4coalition.org and follow us on social media [@1in4coalition](https://twitter.com/1in4coalition).

The British Film Commission (BFC) is the Government's national organization responsible for inward investment film and TV production in the UK. Funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) through the BFI, and by the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), the BFC leads on:

[Maximizing and supporting the production of major international feature films and high-end TV in the UK.](#)

[Strengthening and promoting the UK's screen infrastructure.](#)

[Liaising between the Government and industry to secure and maintain production-friendly policies.](#)

The UK offers universally recognized and respected talents in-front-of, and behind-the-camera, and the BFC is dedicated to helping the UK infrastructure address the need for better accessibility and inclusion in our workforce. These are essential considerations in sustaining and building a crew base that is able to support increased levels of production in the UK and are a significant priority to BFC's US clients when considering bringing production to the UK.

A document by 1IN4 & Bridge06 funded by the British Film Commission (March 2025)

With thanks to everyone who so generously shared their expertise
and thoughts with us across this process.

If you need alternative formats to access this document, please contact support@1in4coalition.org

Appendix A: The DDN professionals

This report includes the experiences of the following US and UK experts, Access Coordinators and creatives, all of whom are DDN.

Access Coordinators:



Julie Fernandez

Julie Fernandez is a full-time wheelchair user with a 30-year acting career that includes roles in the UK version of **THE OFFICE**. As one of the first disabled actors on a UK long running series, she has also been a documentary maker, Disability Consultant, and Campaigner working with clients like Buckingham Palace and CitiBank. She is a highly experienced Access Coordinator with clients across all broadcasters, genres and budgets in the UK, Europe and beyond. She works with the BFI, BAFTA, and carries out consultancy for Disney and other global streamers. Her work spans script development to production, advising on adjustments, physical access, crewing practices, and supporting talent with disclosed Access Requirements. Julie works with the BBC long running series **SILENT WITNESS** alongside other jobs, to ensure an Access First approach to this seminal BBC show. Additionally, Julie worked on Disney's **SHARDLAKE**, Paramount's **BLINDSPOT** and other productions, providing direct AC support as well as Access First consultancy to the respective studio executives. Julie has taken her AC experience and deep knowledge of the value of the role to Australia and New Zealand, because barriers exist regardless of geographical location or language.



Elaine Hall

Elaine Hall, renowned for founding The Miracle Project, profiled in the Emmy winning HBO film, **AUTISM: THE MUSICAL**, transitioned from her role as an acting coach and teacher in the US to becoming an Access Coordinator and Consultant. Her pioneering work with young DDN actors and fully inclusive productions attracted Netflix's **ATYPICAL**, which sought authentic casting for the peer group around the non-Neurodistinct lead character. She continued as AC for three seasons, with the actors evolving into series regulars. Additionally, Elaine contributed to Amazon's **AS WE SEE IT**, advising on scripts, training executives, and overseeing Production Assistants with DDN backgrounds. Her work extends across development, bridging processing differences, and supporting neurodistinct and Autistic cast and crew, driving the industry toward innovative solutions and increased efficiency in working with LD, ND, and autistic individuals in animation and live-action productions across the US. Her clientele includes Disney, Nickelodeon, Hulu, Shondaland, CBS, NBC Universal, Sony, and the United Nations. Most recently, Elaine was the 1IN4 lead AC at the Warner Bros Los Angeles **BARBIE** Premiere.



Keely Cat Wells

Since becoming disabled in her teens, Keely has been dedicated to advancing the rights of disabled people. Keely is the CEO of Making Space, an accessible talent acquisition and learning platform designed to help companies train, access, and retain pre-qualified Disabled talent. Making Space has secured partnerships with NBCUniversal, Indeed, Netflix, and Amazon, among others. A Forbes 30 Under 30 honoree, Keely has served on the advisory board of Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation and is the youngest Presidential Leadership Scholar in the program's history. Prior to building Making Space, Keely founded C Talent, a talent agency representing disabled artists, which significantly increased disability representation in the media. Their roster had a combined reach of over 50 million people. The acquisition of C Talent in 2022 marked a major investment in disabled talent and a milestone for the creative industries. Keely and co-founder Sophie Morgan have also built Making Space Media, a division of Making Space. They produce film, TV, and promotional content that centers on the disabled voice and have secured a first-look deal with Reese Witherspoon's Hello Sunshine. Keely has served as a Storyteller in Residence at the Clinton Global Initiative, participated in the inaugural Mental Health Youth Action Forum at the White House, and is currently one of two Gloria Steinem fellows.



Dan Edge

Dan Edge, a prominent access coordinator and disability consultant, has made a significant impact across the arts, broadcast, entertainment, media, and business sectors. His diverse clientele includes #WeThe15, Sesame Street, Twitter, Sony, Netflix, the BFI, and BAFTA. Dan is actively engaged in the Trade Union movement, serving on Equity's committees and as a Council member. He's also a valued member of the BFI Disability Screen Advisory group. His pivotal work on Netflix and Sony Pictures' **LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER** marked a breakthrough, featuring Matthew Duckett as the first Disabled actor in the role of Clifford Chatterley. As an AC, Dan facilitated accessible travel and onset experiences for Matthew, conducted Access Audits, and collaborated closely with Intimacy Coordinator Ita O'Brien on handling multiple intimate scenes.

Creatives:



Kaitlyn Yang

Kaitlyn Yang is the CEO of Alpha Studios, a visual effects artist turned supervisor since 2007. She is a list maker for Forbes 30 Under 30 for Hollywood and Entertainment, Variety's 10 Artisans to Watch, and a recipient of the Young Alumni Merit Award from the USC Film School. As a Chinese American immigrant woman, and a wheelchair user, she believes that more overlooked talents can be found at the intersection of disability and all other diverse populations.



Natasha Ofili

Natasha Ofili, a multifaceted writer, actor, and director, is also a passionate educator on BASL (Black American Sign Language) usage and Deaf culture. Committed to innovation and accessibility, Natasha's work both on and off screen showcases her dedication. During her role on **THE POLITICIAN**, she and the DP devised a creative solution, using a flashlight to ensure she could follow verbal cues. Natasha's involvement in the groundbreaking Writers' Room for a Starz/WB show, featuring a deaf man's love story, fostered a collaborative environment with both deaf and hearing writers. This experience reinforced her belief that solutions arise when diverse teams collaborate and find common ground.



Stephen Letnes

Stephen Letnes, a film composer and advocate who leads the non-profit Able Artist Foundation, focuses on collaborating with DDN artists and those on the blindness spectrum for his projects. He is a strong advocate for the often-overlooked power of Audio Description (AD) and its vital role in enhancing the viewing experience. Stephen emphasizes the need for a thoughtful approach to AD, including matching narrators to the tone, managing audio ranges, and creative casting. He highlights the importance of using the right platforms for AD, such as true stereo or Dolby. Stephen faces challenges in disclosing his visual impairment when working in the TV and film industry, as it often requires adjustments in mindset from directors and producers. His goal, shared by fellow DDN talents, is for the industry to catch up and recognize their capabilities.



Steven Verdile

Steven Verdile is a designer, comedy writer, and the founder of Squeaky Wheel Media, a nonprofit organization that empowers disabled comedy writers to use humor to combat ableism. Its digital magazine The Squeaky Wheel is the first-ever satire publication focused on disability. He executive produced **THE SQUEAKY WHEEL: CANADA**, a broadcast sketch comedy series featuring an ensemble cast of 8 disabled performers. He is also an advisor to NBCUniversal's MyAbilities group, where he advocates for positive disability representation in television and film. He hates stairs; please do not invite him to visit your favorite staircase.