

Out and about

# Cinemas and theatre

Buildings or spaces not accessible



**RIGHT TO  
PARTICIPATE**

## Useful knowledge

The Equality Act 2010 requires service providers, including shops, pubs, restaurants, art galleries, museums and theatres to make reasonable adjustments, if asked, to ensure that disabled people can use those services.

This can include providing additional support or assistance, providing a ramp to ensure wheelchair access, or making information available in alternative formats, such as braille or easy-read.

If you need reasonable adjustments that do not appear to be available, you will have to ask for them yourself. However, the Equality Act also requires service providers to think ahead and develop adjustments they think disabled people using their services are likely to ask for. Failure to make reasonable adjustments, particularly when you ask for them, is a form of discrimination.

Speaking to or writing to the owner or manager of a service is often the best way to ensure your access needs will be met. If you know what kind of adjustments you need, it is usually easier to get them implemented.

## Cinemas and Theatres

Like other public spaces and services, cinemas, theatres and music venues have obligations under the Equality Act to be as accessible as possible, and to make reasonable adjustments if necessary to ensure that access. This can include modifying premises, installing accessibility equipment, providing seating areas and providing information in alternative formats.

## Useful skills

- Effective communication
- Negotiation skills
- Writing clearly

## Ways to assert your legal rights

1. You can ask the venue if their facilities are fully accessible and ask them about other reasonable adjustments and support they can offer.

This can sometimes require contacting a venue prior to attending, for example to reserve you a seat for general admission performances, or to inquire about 'relaxed' performances, screenings with subtitles or performances with BSL interpreters.

2. If a cinema, theatre or music venue refuses to let you in because of your disability, or refuses to make reasonable adjustments upon request, they have likely breached your rights under the Equality Act. If this is the case, you should inform the manager of the venue. If you're not happy with their response, you can take them to court. You should seek legal advice before doing this. There are strict time limits for taking legal action under the Equality Act.

Download [venue complaint letter](#)

You may also want to consider seeking [injunctive relief](#)

You will have six months minus one day from the date of discrimination to make your claim in the County Court. A court can allow an out-of-time claim in limited circumstances. You can claim for compensation and a legal order for the service provider to make the reasonable adjustments you originally asked for.

Many cinemas have already introduced measures to make screening more inclusive and accessible for disabled people, including those with learning difficulties and sensory sensitivities.

[Dimensions](#) for example works with ODEON, Cineworld, Vue and Showcase to host autism friendly screenings at over 300 cinemas nationwide.

Adjustments include:

- A relaxed environment where people understand the needs of children and families with autism
- Lights left on low
- Sound turned down

- No trailers or advertisements (unless they are embedded in the film)
- Staff trained in autism awareness
- Chill out zone
- Freedom to move around and sit where you like
- Being allowed to bring your own food and drink
- Free entry for carers with a valid CEA Card

## You can get more help from

The [Equality Advisory & Support Service \(EASS\)](#) runs a free helpline assisting individuals with equality and human rights issues across England, Scotland and Wales.

**Telephone** • 0808 800 0082

**Text phone** • 0808 800 0084

**Email** • [through websites form](#)