

Council for British Archaeology

A guide to making Festival events inclusive and welcoming for all

This guide has been created as part of the CBA's ongoing efforts to improve the quality of the Festival of Archaeology by ensuring it is attracting a broad and representative audience.



How can I use this guide?

Following sector research and conversations with members of the CBA Festival organiser community, this guide includes key considerations, tips, content ideas, and resources, you can use and adapt to your local contexts.

The guide can be read as a single document from start to finish. Or if you prefer you can go straight to a section of interest, linked from the contents section.

We have included some audio clips and a number of links to other helpful websites and resources.

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Part 1 - Why is inclusion important in archaeology?



At its core archaeology is a tool for exploring many different histories and cultures. By using more inclusive approaches, there is an opportunity to bring a wider range of people and experiences into the profession and for the passion that archaeology ignites to be shared even more widely.

A 2018 survey of community archaeologists in the UK found that:

- 74% were over the age of 50
- 96% described their ethnicity as White British

This indicates a need to include broader audiences in our work to ensure more stories are being heard and explored. The range of work represented at the Festival should be a good way to attract different audiences into archaeology.



As a sector we need to ask ourselves the following questions...

- Whose stories and cultures are included and whose are not?
- How might the focus of archaeology events be influenced by the cultural background or context of those leading or involved in these events?
- How might the discipline of archaeology benefit from having more people from a broader range of backgrounds involved in sharing and discussing the work and its implications?

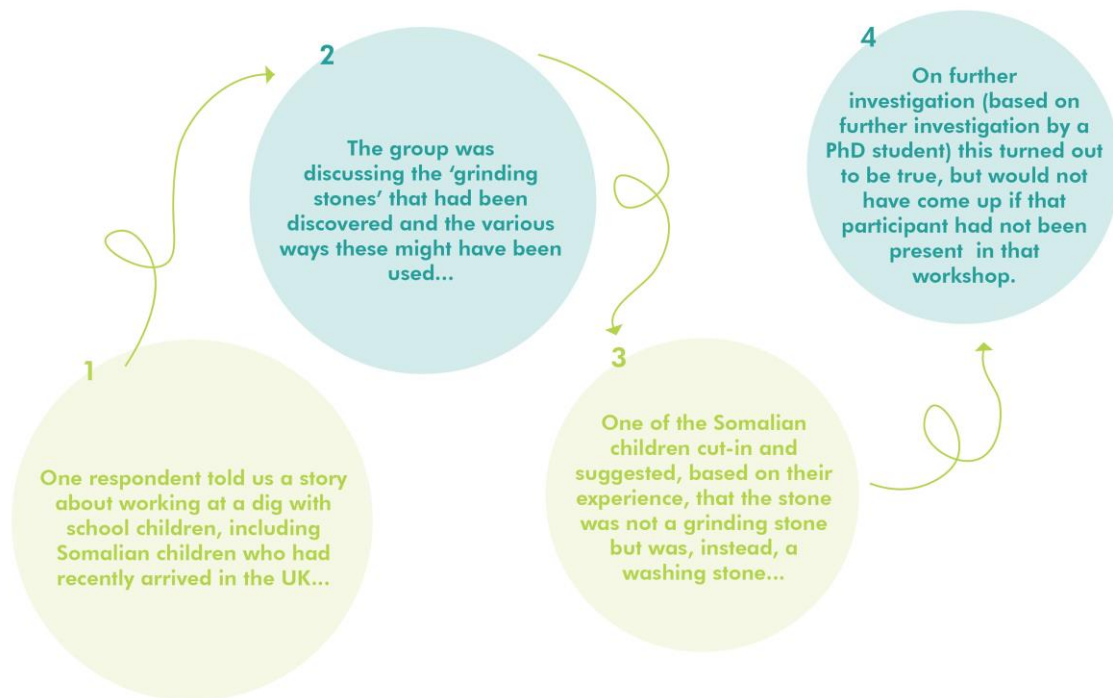
We have a (legal and moral) responsibility to ensure there are no barriers to participation or discrimination based on any of the following characteristics:

- Age
- Ethnic identity or nationality
- Sexual orientation
- Sex or gender identity
- Disability or neurodiversity
- Religion
- Relationship status
- Pregnancy or maternity status

It is also important to remember the identities associated with these characteristics change across different social contexts and that the needs, values, and experiences of people are often different, even if they share some characteristics.

This means that we shouldn't make assumptions about people based on certain aspects of their identities.

What does inclusion look like in practice?



Listen to one of our research participants describe this example in detail, **please click on the link below:**

<https://sway.office.com/fp4wirfujPMbaWut#content=mGoDbVnqmAIZ6H>

Part 2 - Why is it important to attract a broad Festival audience?



The Festival of Archaeology aims to inspire and engage the next generation of archaeologists. The more representative the archaeology community is, the easier it is to represent a full range of human experience.

There is so much passion within the field and the Festival is a celebration of this passion and the most interesting work currently taking place.

The Festival is also a space for critical reflection and debate. It exists to develop current thinking and bring people together who may not otherwise be talking to each other.

The Festival presents an opportunity to increase the representation of different voices. The more people feel their voice and perspective is represented, the more they will interact, feel connected and want to get involved all year round.



Try this short exercise:

Thinking about the last event you held (e.g., talk, seminar, workshop, online or in-person) answer the following question in less than 50 words:

How did you communicate the aim or purpose of the session in a way that makes as many people as possible feel interested, excited and eager to learn more?

You can use a blank sheet of paper, or post-it notes, to break down the audience responses even more and think about what you could do next...

What was it about the content or design of the session that you think made the audience feel...

Interested?

Excited?

Eager to learn more?

What could you do differently next time to make the audience feel these things even more strongly?

As a participant in the research for this guide told us...

"If you don't diversify you stagnate, and the discipline dies off. There's no new audience unless we build it, it is our responsibility. We're often entrenched in classist and colonialist histories and this needs to be engaged with and changed.

We need to bring in critical and broad perspectives to nudge and shift this. The workforce statistics into the sector are really bad – students are diverse, but then they disappear. The whole industry infrastructure will wither on the vine unless we change and attract new voices."

Part 3 - Inclusive language and terminology



People often feel anxious or unsure about using the correct terminology when referring to different characteristics or identities.

Remember that questions about a person's identity should only be raised if they are necessary and relevant to broader discussions taking place and people should not feel they need to discuss or disclose anything about themselves if they don't want to.

If and when you need to know about an aspect of someone's identity (for example, to keep a record of who is and is not attending an event), the best approach is often to ask people how they refer to themselves. This can be in the form of questions such as:

- How would you define your ethnicity/religion?
- How would you describe your gender/sexual orientation?
- Do you consider yourself to be a disabled person or to have a disability?



The official terms used by UK Government in data and reporting, can often be quite formal and off-putting.

However it is important to think about using language in an inclusive way to ensure that people feel welcome to attend and participate in the full range of sessions and events that the Festival has to offer.

Some of the following glossaries and guides may be helpful as an accessible way to explore and define some key equality terminology when engaging with different groups.

- The Law Society has a guide to race and ethnicity terminology and language, including links to a fuller glossary from the Institute of Race Relations
- Stonewall has a glossary of terms relating to the Lesbian, Gay Bisexual or Trans (LGBT+) communities. This includes what the + represents.
- Scope's campaign 'End the Awkward' aims to help people talk to and about disabled people with greater respect and confidence.
- The British Association of Social Workers has published a useful summary of how to engage with and talk about those experiencing poverty in its multiple forms.

As indicated above. There are not universally accepted terms that we can use to talk about different identities, although often asking how people if and how they would like these to be discussed is the best option.

Archaeology terminology

Another aspect of terminology is how some key terms in archaeology are used and whether people from different backgrounds will understand them.

The Festival is a space for opening up involvement and discussion, so it is especially important to use accessible language, avoiding or explaining any acronyms and ensuring content can be understood broadly.

It's also important not to shy away from controversial topics or conversations. This is often what can make a session lively and interesting. From an inclusion perspective it's also about being mindful of the range of identities and backgrounds that may be represented and ensuring people feel secure to engage constructively and respectfully.

As one research participant told us...

"Any topic in archaeology can be pitched to anyone of any age. Can we talk about trade, exchange, migration, families, cultures? We need to just be a bit more imaginative. How can we contextualise this stuff even more and make it relevant to contemporary discussions?"

Part 4 - Engaging new and representative individuals and communities



Some top tips from the archaeology community...

- This is a **year-round activity** and something you should aim to integrate into your work and events in general, not just for one-off festival activity.
- You don't need to set up all the relationships yourself if you can find the right person who can act as your '**link**' and support further direct contact, or share information on your behalf.
- **Community access teams** in local councils or universities. May not have resources to fully support events but could be a useful source of knowledge.
- **Schools** can be really useful points of contact and partners – often quite diverse pupil representation and having the pupils involved can often extend to their families.
- Promoting events via **social media and Facebook groups of local communities** you might want to engage (e.g., mum and baby groups or local history groups).
- Setting up **partnerships with other organisations** who you know work closely with groups you are not engaging or would like to (e.g., youth groups, cultural organisations, charities and support groups).

To hear a colleague talk about their approach to community engagement, **please click on the link below:**

<https://sway.office.com/fp4wirfuiPMbaWut#content=GiPPSJ1qXy01FI>

A short exercise to extend Festival networks and build new audiences...

Step 1 – Schedule a morning in your calendar in the next two weeks to come back to this guide and exercise. It should take around an hour or two.

Step 2 – Looking at the different categories below, indicate where you have an existing relationship, where you know someone who could link you, or where you need to start searching or taking a different approach to make contact.

Step 3 - For those in column 1 (known) write a short email asking if they would be happy to talk to you in the next month about how to connect with a new community, group or individual that you would like to reach out to. For those in column 2 (linked) write a short email to the link person outlining you needs (similar to the first email, but indicating that you will need them to help you to access this group or person). For those in column 3 (needed), schedule more time in your calendar to do web-searching on key terms to find them, or ask colleagues/peers if they may have 15 minutes for a cup of tea to discuss how to get started, and schedule these short meetings.

| Potential contacts | Known | Linked | Needed |
|--|-------|--------|--------|
| Schools | | | |
| Community access team (e.g. council) | | | |
| Partner organisations working with these communities | | | |
| A 'linked person' (e.g. community ambassador) | | | |

Part 5 - What to consider when delivering a session at the Festival



Aim

What are you trying to communicate, to whom, and why? Asking yourself these questions can help to clarify who should be in the 'room' (including online spaces).

Tone and content

Being human and considerate in tone. Being friendly and conversational is more engaging and inclusive than reading a presentation from a pre-prepared script, although you can also provide written material summarising the key points.

Try not to make it too academic or use any unnecessary terminology. The whole point of the Festival and engaging broad audiences is to communicate your ideas clearly; to widen and deepen the conversations around your work – this requires inclusive language and formats (e.g., ideally not 20-page journal articles or overly complicated handouts).

"It's not difficult to make things accessible. Using plain English, labelling pictures. Assuming no prior specific knowledge. Keep it friendly. It's not a competition, it's a celebration, you want people to enjoy the experience and they will if they can find a way in."

- Research participant

Access

Know your audience and build around their needs, don't just do things the way you always have. It's not all about 'radical new approaches'. Using emotional intelligence is very useful to make people feel comfortable and included. Also, checking in and asking if anyone needs anything to be changed

or adapted in advance is a good way to make sure people feel comfortable. This applies to presenters too – if they are feeling happy and relaxed then the audiences are more likely to be so.

Ask yourself some of the following questions:

- Is access free? Can people afford to get there?
- What are the real and perceived barriers to attending your events?
- What else are you able or unable to provide? (e.g. due to resources not every event will be able to have full British Sign Language interpretation or audio description, but making people aware that access needs will be accommodated whenever needed is a basic first step).
- How can I make people feel comfortable by encouraging them to participate, but not making them feel exposed? How can I enable discussions that are easy to engage with?



Physical space

How is the atmosphere and environment going to act as an inclusive or exclusive space? Think about the space in which the event is happening and the perceived identity of the building or institution. Quite often there are literal and figurative walls. Is the event taking place in an elite education space? Does it have to take place there? How could the way people relate to the venue affect their willingness to come through the door?

Speakers

Who is represented in the events and panels (and who is not)? Having more diverse speakers and presenters can attract a broader range of participants and audiences.

Also, using some high-profile or familiar names from archaeology or other sectors can attract wider audiences than usual.

How can we extend beyond the usual 'go-to' faces? Can we bring in more faces from around the world? The Festival (particularly online) is increasingly international. Can we make the most of this

and invite speakers and presenters from more diverse nations. This could also appeal to a more diverse range of UK-based audiences.

Listen to one of our research participants talk about how the food provided at a conference made the young people she had brought to participate feel a bit awkward and out of place, **please click on the link below.**

<https://sway.office.com/fp4wirfujPMbaWut#content=evM1x6rXRHdzrH>

Exercise - Imagining inclusive spaces

Step 1 - On a blank piece of A4 paper (or larger if you have it) draw an outline of the space in which your event will take place*. You can be as detailed as you like, but it doesn't matter how good the drawing is!

Step 2 – Review each part of the drawing and choose a different coloured pen to mark any potential physical areas which could present a barrier to participating. This could be related to steps/stairs/surfaces/platforms, how people may hear or see the event from different angles or areas, how they might access food or drinks, or how people might move around the space at different times.

Step 3 – Choose another colour of pen and repeat the exercise but now think about your likely audience and how the way the space is arranged may make them feel when they enter, experience the event and leave. Are there any other adjustments you could make to ensure the space is as inviting and inclusive as possible?

Step 4 – Review the marks and notes you have made on the drawing and convert these into a short set of actions, outlining what you can realistically do, or work with venue or other partners to achieve.

*If it is an online event, read our other guide [here](#)

Part 6 - Sustaining relationships



People should leave a session with an understanding of how they can continue to be involved.

It will be much easier to get people to share their experiences and return in the future if there are ways for them to continue to be involved beyond the session – whether this is through newsletters, social media, or promoting more opportunities at that venue or with the organisation.

Your communication offer needs to be tailored to the way that different people access information.

Ask yourself:

- What do I want people to think of our offer?
- Who will I include or exclude by using social media?
- How might I use traditional media to promote events and opportunities (e.g. newspapers, radio, television)?

Part 7 - Some available resources



You may be interested in some of the following further resources, guidelines and information:

- Historic England recently published a [Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity and Equality](#), which outlines their aims and focus areas for the next four years.
- [Council for British Archaeology Equalities and Diversity Hub](#) – has a broad range of sector-specific and general resources on equality and inclusion, much of the content will be relevant to your interests and needs.
- This short blog from the [UK Civil Service on making events accessible](#) is useful to think through some of the essentials on event accessibility.
- Birds of Paradise theatre company have also produced a very short and straightforward guide to [event accessibility](#)

Contacts and acknowledgements



We would like to thank all those who contributed their time to this guide. Including the 12 interviewees and the 24 attendees at the discussion session at the Festival of Archaeology 2021.

We would like to continue to develop tips and ideas around this topic. If you have any further thoughts or resources you think it would be useful to include and share, please email festival@archaeologyuk.org

If you require this guide in another format that would be easier for you to use (e.g. large print, audio or a language other than English), please also let us know.

If you have any questions or comments about the background research for this guide or require any further information, please email claire@tialt.org or douglas@tialt.org.