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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**SPREAD  
THE WORD**

# Why it's hard for deaf and disabled people to take part in literature



**Easy read booklet**



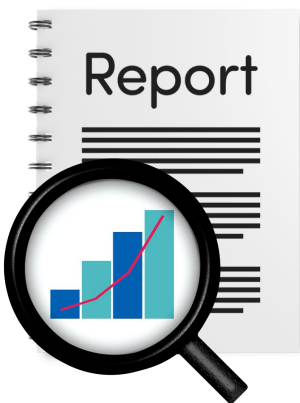
# Who we are and what this booklet is about



We are **Spread the Word**. We help writers in London to share their work.



We wrote a **report** with an organisation called **CRIPtic Arts** who help deaf and disabled artists make art.



A **report** is when you do **research** and write about what you learnt. **Research** is when you collect information to help think about a problem and find a way to fix it.



This booklet tells you about the most important parts of our report.

# About our report



Our report is called **Access to Literature**. **Access** means you can get what you need. **Literature** is writing and means things like books, leaflets and poems.



Our report tells you why it's hard for deaf and disabled people to be writers, **creative producers** or to enjoy other people's writing as part of an **audience** in England.



**Creative producers** help make an idea into writing. An **audience** is a group of people who choose to see or hear literature.



Arts Council England gave us money to do our research and write our report.



We talked to groups of deaf and disabled people who helped us find out what we should research.



We did our research from June to October 2021. Our report was **published** in October 2022. **Published** is when a piece of writing is put online or printed for people to read.



We used **focus groups** and **surveys** to talk to deaf and disabled writers, audiences and organisations who work in the **literature sector**.



A **focus group** is a small group of people who talk about a topic they are interested in.



A **survey** collects information by asking people questions. The **literature sector** means any jobs, organisations or activities to do with writing.

# The barriers disabled people asked us to research



Deaf and disabled people asked us to research the biggest **barriers** to literature for them. **Barriers** are things that stop you. They said it's hard to



- take part in writing and the literature sector.



- find chances to be creative.



- make money from writing and to get money to help them write.



- work with organisations in the literature sector.

# What deaf and disabled people told us



Deaf and disabled people told us

- they can't take part in the literature sector.



- organisations in the literature sector need to know more about **accessibility**. **Accessibility** means how things are made so that everyone can take part.



- it is difficult to get money given to them to help pay for what they need.

# What writers and creative producers told us



Most of the deaf writers and creative producers said it's hard to take part in the literature sector because there aren't many chances to make money.



They said a lot of places where writing events take place aren't **accessible**.



**Accessible** means something can be used or understood by everyone.



More than half of them said it costs too much money to take part in writing activities.

# What writers and audiences told us



Deaf and disabled writers and audiences said most organisations don't know the **law**.



The **law** protects people and makes sure everyone is treated in a good and fair way.



The law says they have to make changes so everyone can work with them.



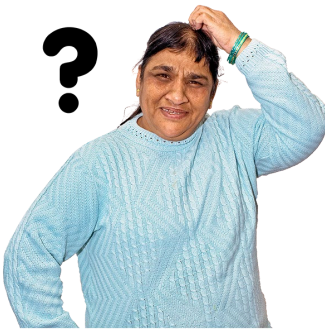
They said more deaf and disabled writers should be asked to go to events and have the chance for their work to be published and to win prizes.



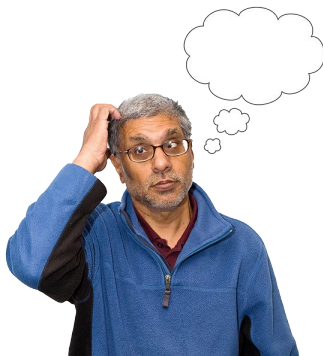
# What organisations in the literature sector told us



Only a small number of organisations in the literature sector answered our surveys.



Most organisations said they only understand a bit about how to make their work accessible to deaf and disabled writers and audiences.



They told us they need to know more about the barriers for disabled writers so they can make the right changes.



They said it can cost a lot of money to make sure work is accessible for deaf and disabled people.



Over half of the organisations said they have never worked with a disability organisation.



Some organisations said they have never asked deaf and disabled people for advice on how to make their organisations accessible.



Only a small number of organisations said they teach their staff about accessibility.



Only a small number of organisations are trying to make their accessibility better.

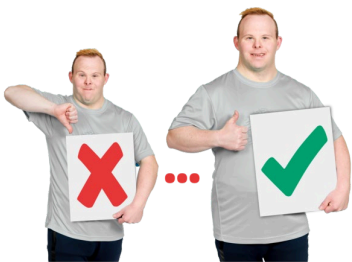
# What needs to happen next



We thought about what deaf and disabled people told us to decide what needs to happen next. We think



- more organisations need to work with deaf and disabled writers so they understand more about what they need.



- the literature sector needs to do more to understand the barriers for deaf and disabled people to take part so they can make the right changes



- organisations need to look at how they already help deaf and disabled people who work with them to make sure they help them enough and in the right way.



- organisations need to make sure deaf and disabled people who work with them can take part in writing activities, events and jobs.



- organisations need to make sure they follow laws on how to make work accessible for deaf and disabled writers.



- the literature sector needs to work with deaf and disabled people to make the right changes.



- organisations in the literature sector should work together and pay for research so they can make the right changes to be more accessible.



- the literature sector needs to train people and show them information on accessibility so deaf and disabled people can take part in literature.



- organisations need to put this training into their organisation's rules.



- deaf and disabled people should make up 20% of all published writers and people who work in the literature sector by 2030.



- there should be events where deaf and disabled writers and creative producers can learn new skills.

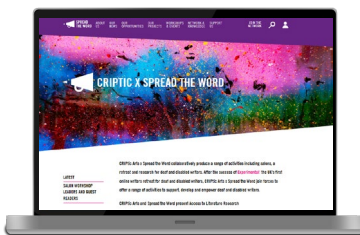


- the literature sector should give money to pay for all these changes.



# CRIP TIC X SPREAD THE WORD

Go to this website to read the full version of our report



<https://www.spreadtheword.org.uk/projects/criptic-writes-x-spread-the-word/>

## Access to Literature

This is the Executive Summary of the Access to Literature Report by Jamie Hale (CRIP TIC Arts) and Ruth Harrison (Spread the Word). The Report was published in October 2022. The Access to Literature research and report have been made possible through support using public funds by Arts Council England.

Jamie Hale and Ruth Harrison

The Access to Literature Report, Executive Summary and Case Study are available in the following formats:

Executive Summary: text (.doc and .pdf), audio, BSL video, Easy Read  
Full Report: text (.doc and .pdf), audio, BSL video  
Case Study: text (.doc and .pdf), audio, BSL video

These formats can be accessed at: <https://www.spreadtheword.org.uk/projects/criptic-writes-x-spread-the-word/>

## Executive Summary

"Don't expect people to come to you without demonstrating seriousness of wish to engage with our community / communities." Writers' survey respondent

The Access to Literature Report presents the first national picture of the barriers deaf and disabled people experience in accessing the literature and publishing sectors as writers, creative producers and audience members.

It reports on research carried out by CRIP TIC Arts and Spread the Word between June and October 2022, using surveys and focus groups with both deaf and disabled people and literature organisations. The research topics were scoped during an online deaf and disabled writers' retreat run by CRIP TIC Arts and Spread the Word.

For deaf and disabled writers and audiences, the research identified barriers to accessing literature and a demand and need for more accessible opportunities. For literature organisations, there was a need and demand for more knowledge, support and training. Both deaf and disabled people and literature organisations identified barriers associated with access to literature and publishing sectors as writers, creative producers and audience members.

Thank you to A2i for the words  
**www.a2i.co.uk** (reference 35986)

The full version of this document is called  
"Access to Literature Report Executive Summary"