

Engaging under-represented groups might mean re-thinking where you hold events and activities, including taking content and experiences to where people already gather.

If you must deliver activities at a specific historic site or property, are you able to make any small, non-invasive changes to the property?

For example, a removable ramp, extra signs, better lighting might all improve access at little cost.



4.1 Making spaces welcoming and accessible

What makes space welcoming?

Different people and communities may find different spaces and venues welcoming.

In the UK, [Arts Council research](#) shows that libraries are the only cultural venue where a higher percentage of BAME* people than white people asked say they've visited and taken part in the past year.

Tips



How to make spaces welcoming and accessible



- Is there a space the group you're trying to engage already uses and feels comfy in? Can you bring the event there?

- Welcome people to the space with a smile!
If possible, position this welcoming person or desk to the side of the space—it can be more intimidating if there's a desk or person right in front of the entrance.

Have enough people around who can help with access—think about the staff (and volunteer) to visitor ratio.



- Think about how formal the space seems. Some groups may be comfier in more informal or formal spaces.
- Cultural representation makes a difference too. For example, a LGBTQ+ group might feel more seen and included if there are artworks or heritage objects in the space which relate to their community and history.



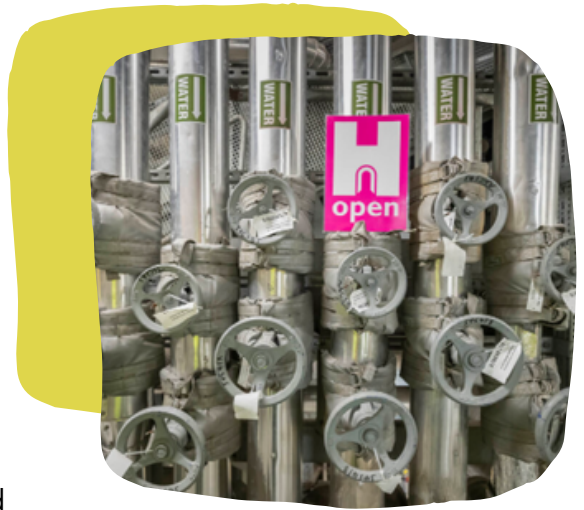
- Always include refreshments in the budget!
- For example tea, biscuits, fruit – and remember to cater for different dietary requirements.
- People might need to use a bathroom, breastfeed, take medications, or use a quiet space away from the main event for mental wellbeing or religious observance –can people meet these needs while taking part in the event?

Tips



on setting up the space

- Plan to have enough time and people for setting up.
- **Seating:**
Think about where seating is placed—there should be plenty of space between furniture for people in motor-driver wheelchairs to get through. If there's a talk or presentation, have you left space in the front row for wheelchair users to sit?
- **Signs:**
What do people need to know about the building and its facilities?
Are the signs high contrast (black or another dark colour on white) printed in big enough font that someone across the room could read them?
Are the signs written clearly, and in all the languages the group needs?
- **Sound:**
If people are going to be talking in groups, leaving more space between tables can make it easier to hear.



[Pictures credit : Chris Lacey.](#)

Case Study

Learning from the enabling grants scheme

In 2019 Scotland piloted a small-grant scheme for venues participating in Doors Open Days.

The Scottish Civic Trust (SCT), the charity that delivers the national programme, secured a block grant of £10,000.00 (€11,344.00).

Venues then applied to SCT for up to £2000.00 (€2204.00) to make changes to their sites to increase accessibility.

Seventeen buildings received grants to pay for a variety of changes.

These included the improvement of pathways, addition of temporary ramps, better lighting, and rental of portable toilets.

These small changes had a positive impact on visitor numbers at each of these sites and raised awareness of the sites within their local and regional communities

4.2 Mapping how accessible a site is

If you don't know which spaces are accessible to a group, you can create an access map together for building that knowledge and addressing barriers.



Do-It-Yourself Group Access Mapping



You will need: big maps printed out (or you could find a way to do it online), and pens for drawing or writing on them.



If you're doing an access mapping walk or roll around a venue or neighbourhood, consider using clipboards.



If you're staying in one place, having the maps on a big table works well.

Step 1 : Get people together and introduce the idea,

making notes on maps together so the maps show how we experience a space.

- Drawing where stairs, benches and bathrooms are
- Marking on the map where something is missing, like if there's nowhere to sit
- Noting where they feel most comfortable and included
- Noting where they can get information in their own languages



Step 2:

If you're taking a walk/roll, split into groups of 2 or 3.

If you're sitting around tables, bigger groups can also work.



Step 3: Start mapping!

You might want to spend 30-70 minutes on this, depending on the group. If needed, facilitate conversation about access and support groups to make notes on the map.

Step 4:

Get back into one group to discuss the maps.

You might ask prompt questions like:

- How did you decide what to draw on the map?
- Did you use any symbols (like X's, smiley faces or a colour code)?
- What did you notice while doing the activity?



Step 5: Put the information together.

If the maps are on transparent sheets, you can layer them to see everyone's access maps at the same time.

If not, you could draw a map which combines everyone's notes on barriers and access.

Or you could go through the access checklist (see section 6.5) and note all the barriers the venue or neighbourhood has, as well as any ideas people have on making it more accessible.



Step 6:

Keep using the maps after the event.

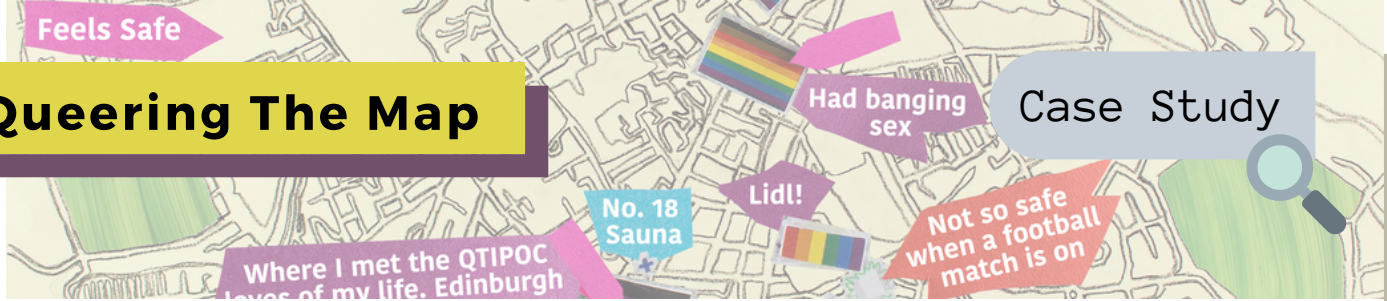
You could display them, use them to address barriers, or create an access guide for the site if there isn't one already.



Feels Safe

Queering The Map

Case Study



In November 2018 we co-led a focus group in Edinburgh with LGBT Health & Wellbeing's Queer Transgender Intersex People of Colour group.

When asked if there were any historic places or heritage spaces in the city where attendees felt that they belonged, one respondent said simply, '*I don't know where to place myself*', being pulled between her identity as a member of the LGBT+ community and as a woman of colour.

We decided to explore this further through community mapping.

Community mapping invites individuals to interpret and record their local environment from a personal, subjective perspective.

Whereas maps have traditionally been official and authoritative, community maps aim to be 'multi-vocal, dynamic and inclusive' (De Nardi 2014: 6).

They are meant to be a group creation that is 'inclusive, empowering, and transparent' (Parker 2006: 472).



For our community map we held a 4-hour workshop co-designed and co-delivered with LGBT Health & Wellbeing, who helped us to advertise the event throughout their network.

We provided large-scale (A0) printed maps of Edinburgh city centre, as well as smaller (A3) maps of surrounding neighbourhoods.

We also provided markers, pens, and collage materials.

We included sets of printed flags reflecting different LGBT+ identities (e.g. trans, bisexual), as well as flags for autism, British Sign Language and wheelchair access.



Participants were asked to highlight spaces where they could embrace different parts of themselves, where they could connect to the past and the present, and try to locate places where they could be wholly themselves.

Thirty-five people attended and the activity generated a lot of thoughtful, in-depth discussion. The maps were filled with memories, both collective and personal.

It showed the shifting geography of LGBT+ Edinburgh over time and flagged up the types of spaces that were missing but that the community wanted: places to socialise that weren't commercial establishments; spaces to come together informally as a community in the way that the mapping event created.

