



The IFI Accessible Cultural Cinema Pilot 2016-18

Report on findings



**Arts & Disability
Ireland**

Executive summary

Sit back and enjoy the show.

As the lights dim, the cinema audience settles in for a couple of hours' screen entertainment. Popcorn at the ready, reclining seats and surround sound - despite the numerous ways we can access film today, a visit to the cinema remains one of Ireland's most popular nights out. With the highest rate of cinema going in Europe, it seems we still see the thrill in this shared, darkened viewing space. Film can seem ubiquitous in a convergent world, so it is somewhat surprising therefore, that for deaf, blind, hard of hearing (HOH) or vision-impaired (VI) people, the cinema experience can still be out of reach.

The Irish Film Institute (IFI) set out to make cultural cinema accessible to deaf, blind, HOH and VI audiences through a pilot screening project, which was developed and delivered with the support of the Arts Council and the expertise of Arts Disability Ireland (ADI). As Ireland's national institute for film, the IFI has an audience development and education remit, and aims to reach and engage with audiences through a range of cultural cinema programmes. Recognising the potential for accessible cinema afforded by new digital technologies through the provision of open captioned¹ and audio description² files, the organisation first carried out a piece of research into the availability of these formats on new cultural cinema releases. While this research revealed a relatively limited amount of accessible content, with most coming from larger distributors and a marked gap in Irish titles, at the very least, a small accessible offer could be trialled.

Alongside making programme content available, creating an accessible cultural venue requires attention to other aspects too. Consideration must be given to signage and marketing collateral; front of house staff need to be Disability Equality Trained (DET); and equipment such as headsets must all be in working order, with clear and detailed instructions. IFI addressed these features in advance of the pilot programme, which was launched in April 2016. The programme comprised monthly screenings of new releases with open captions and audio description, where available. With the assistance of ADI, word was spread across deaf, blind, HOH and VI communities as well as to related support organisations.

As with any initiative, success with new audiences would depend as much on content as on trained and welcoming staff who would take time to explain the programme, how to use equipment or how the different access formats operated. Given the limited number of accessible titles available, relative to the total number of films released, one of the first challenges was communicating this to customers and explaining why every new release was not captioned and/or audio described. From surveys conducted during the pilot we got numbers and comments, and focus groups gave us detailed and qualitative feedback;

¹ Open Captioned (OC) captions appear on the screen including dialogue and sound effects

² Audio Description (AD) a recorded describing the action on screen accessible through headphones

together they offered the resounding message: people wanted access and they also wanted choice.

Key to understanding and supporting an audience for accessible cinema is to acknowledge that everyone is the audience; people or groups may have different viewing needs but ultimately the connective tissue is the love of cinema and a desire for choice. Crucially, the cinema night out also creates an opportunity for social interaction among communities who may be at risk of isolation. Through this pilot programme, it became apparent that launching an accessible programme was simply the first step – it did not automatically yield an audience. Focus group attendees alluded to a complex relationship with cinema and the arts. People who have been denied access to a cultural experience may resist overtures to participation or avoid it altogether, finding outlets in different experiences. For this project, focus groups and feedback questionnaires confirmed enthusiasm for the pilot, but also a vocalised demand for much greater possibilities, for better programme choice and above all for Irish film to be consistently available.

Statutory changes, international best practice, organisational goodwill, lobbying by interest groups, artist/industry commitment: any of these factors can affect change, but each and all are required for consistent and effective commitment to programming initiatives. In leading the way on accessible cultural cinema through this pilot programme, IFI has found an enthusiastic and informed audience, but this audience, like any cohort, expects to be well served. Out of our experience come best practice guidelines, which can support other organisations setting out to develop their audience for arts, culture and creativity. The arts are deemed integral to our identity, and as we learnt through this project, accessible cinema must be an unquestioned aspect of comprehensive, inclusive arts provision.

April 2019

Introduction

We believe the arts belong to everybody – Creative Ireland³

In setting out a national invitation to creative engagement in the arts, the Creative Ireland programme recognises that to nurture creativity and imagination across the nation, there must be equality of access. The provision of equal access to culture and the arts has its origins in the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948)⁴, Article 27, which states that (1) ‘Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits’. Further definition appears in the Arts Council strategy document, *Making Great Art Work*⁵, which describes ‘The public’ as being ‘central to our statutory remit and to our vision for the arts’. All of these statements serve to underpin the democratic potential of the arts, including cinema, once regarded as *the* democratic artform. Regardless of how technology may have altered our viewing habits, cinema remains the artform with the greatest capacity for shared experiences. Yet despite this prospective reach, cinema still can remain completely outside the range of access of persons with disability.

In March 2016, the Irish Film Institute launched a pilot project in accessible cultural cinema supported by the Arts Council and Arts Disability Ireland (ADI). This pilot set out to make cultural cinema accessible to audiences who were deaf/hard of hearing (HOH) or blind/vision impaired, through the inclusion of accessible screenings of new releases in the IFI monthly programme. Between March 2016 and November 2018, IFI ran accessible shows of 48 new films.

What is accessible cinema?

Accessible cinema can refer specifically to the physical facilities of a cinema, which allow people to visit, such as an accessible building. It encompasses user-friendly booking systems and information, disability equality trained⁶ front of house (FOH) staff, and a lift(s) by which to access different floors. It can include screening conditions for particular audiences where the lighting remains on or the volume lowered. It includes signed performances and it also refers to the provision of films with audio description (AD) that recounts the action on screen for blind/vision impaired audiences, and open/closed captioning (OC/CC) for deaf/(HOH) audiences. This latter is similar to subtitling but also includes extra information such as sound effects.

³ <https://www.creativeireland.gov.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/2017-12/Creative%20Ireland%20Programme.pdf>

⁴ http://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Documents/UDHR_Translations/eng.pdf

⁵ http://www.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/Making_Great_Art_Work.pdf

⁶ DET Disability Equality Training

The IFI pilot set out to make cultural cinema accessible through these facilities, and simultaneously, to develop the audience for cultural cinema among the respective user groups.

Background and Legislative Framework

This pilot project had its origins in an earlier study at IFI, which looked into the viability of accessible cinema provision within a cultural cinema context, through a survey of all new releases showing at IFI during 2011 and 2012. While the findings of this report revealed a great disparity between the total number of films released versus the number of films with accessible options, it did offer a glimpse of possibility for a pilot screening programme.

As the national cultural institution for film, the IFI's remit is to provide access to 'the finest independent Irish and international cinema'. IFI also has a remit to educate, which includes developing new audiences through various initiatives. The IFI receives financial support from the Arts Council, which in turn funded the earlier study, in association with Arts Disability Ireland.

In 2012, the Arts Council had launched their Arts and Disability Strategy (2012-2016) in which they set out their commitment to 'ensuring that people with disabilities can engage fully in the artistic and cultural life of Ireland at all levels i.e. as practitioners, participants, employees, audiences, advisors and board members'. As an ongoing aspect of their Arts and Disability provision and support, the Arts Council had initiated a process, 'which aims to mainstream the provision of assisted performances and accessible events for audiences with disabilities'; they were also providing grants and other supports to venues 'working to improve access through programming Arts and Disability work and engaging people with disabilities as participants and audiences'. The Arts Council had identified Arts and Disability Ireland (ADI) as a strategic partner in 2007, and was working closely with the organisation, looking at ways of improving:

'Access to and engagement with the arts for all citizens and a determination to ensure that the returns on public investment in the arts benefit as many as possible' (pg2).

Preceding this, the legislation of the Equality Act (2004) and Disability Act (2005) clarified the rights of people with disabilities with regard to the provision of goods and services across all sectors, outlined in the Statutory Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies (2006).

Demonstrating leadership in the area of arts access, and working with artists, the Arts Council acknowledged the need to 'encourage the organisations it supports, financially or otherwise, to recognise the inherent value and democratic imperative of engaging more proactively with audiences with disabilities'. This commitment chimed with our intent at IFI to trial cultural cinema access. As a strategic partner, ADI could support IFI in the initial study and continue in an advisory and supportive capacity through the implementation of the screening pilot.

International Context

2018 marked the year when Ireland finally ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, of which Article 30⁷ specifies the right of individuals to:

b) Enjoy access to television programmes, films, theatre and other cultural activities, in accessible formats;

The aforementioned formats were the basis for our pilot project and subsequently for this report.

Other background - existing access at IFI

Prior to the initial study, IFI had been part-funded for refurbishment under the Department of Arts, Heritage Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs ACCESS11 fund, which ran from 2007 to 2009. This funding scheme was created to assist the provision of high standard arts and culture infrastructure, thereby enhancing access to the arts throughout the country. In the case of IFI, funding enabled the installation of a lift; this provided access to all public areas of the building for the first time, including to a new cinema as well as to an existing cinema on the first floor.

Why accessible?

Disability: the medical vs social model

As we have seen therefore, access to the arts was an increasingly viable concept with legislative support, and alongside this, society's perception of disability was also changing. In 2004, the National Disability Strategy⁸ was launched, setting out 'to underpin the participation of people with disabilities in Irish society'. This would challenge the dominant *medical* view, in which the person with disability is perceived as having the problem, which prevents their full participation in society. In this scenario, society can choose to support the person or not and a charity culture arises. The *social* model, developed by people with disability in the 1990s to tackle their exclusion, draws a distinction between a person's medical condition and the barriers created by the way society is organised, and this creates the disability. This can range from a building without a lift to a cinema showing films only suitable for fully sighted and/or hearing customers. In the social model, the responsibility lies with society to create conditions that enable people to participate. The World Health Organisation (2001) proposed a 'biopsychosocial' model⁹; this combines elements of both the

⁷ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities-2.html>

⁸ <https://www.dccae.gov.ie/en-ie/news-and-media/publications/Documents/15/NationalDisabilityStrategyTowards2016StrategicDocument.pdf>

⁹ <http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/icfbeginnersguide.pdf>

medical and social model – so it considers the person too, and how he or she reacts to their physical and social surroundings.

In their survey, *A Social Portrait of Disabilities in Ireland*¹⁰, Watson and Nolan draw on this latter model, explaining that ‘in order to understand what people are able to do, we need to take account of the resources available to them and the barriers placed before them in their environment as well as their own physical, mental and emotional resources.’ To get a better understanding of cinema users, therefore, along with providing accessible screenings, we also needed to be aware of potential predisposition or resistance to cinema and the arts, or, existing experience of exclusion from cultural venues. As we would learn through focus groups, the prevailing model for cinema and other artforms is undoubtedly medical – having equal access to the arts is still considered something of a bonus, rather than a right. In relation to cinema specifically, change has occurred in the US where, following a number of lawsuits against cinemas failing to provide captioning or audio description, the US Department of Justice passed a final ruling in November 2016 on the American Disability Act (ADA¹¹). This outlined in clear terms what was required of cinemas in terms of providing for all of their audiences. The ruling specifies that audiences be facilitated ‘to fully participate in the movie-going experience’.

Removing the barriers: Cinema and the social model

The IFI accessible cinema pilot was framed within a social model of disability – the organisation was looking to remove the barriers that prevented blind/vision impaired or deaf/HOH people from enjoying cultural cinema. Financial support and expertise from the Arts Council and ADI allowed for a building audit, technology upgrades, development of marketing collateral and staff training.

Organisational commitment to access provision and audience development notwithstanding, the screening pilot was feasible by the technical possibilities afforded by digital cinema. Whereas film formerly screened from reels, the advent of digital cinema (DCP – Digital Cinema Package) means that the exhibitor (cinema) can avail of audio described and captioned files at no extra cost. The producers’ job is to create these files before the film goes into distribution. The job of the cinema is to make these formats available at a screening using specific technologies such as headsets for AD and either open captions on the big screen or closed, transmitted to an individual screen.

As we had learnt in the earlier study, it was apparent that films from the larger distributors, and generally the more high profile titles, are released with AD and/or OC. Cost was repeatedly cited by distributors as being the major deterrent to the creation of extra files. A challenge for the pilot was communicating this fact to the consumer, as it would directly impinge on the programme offer.

¹⁰ <https://www.esri.ie/pubs/BKMNEXT193.pdf>

¹¹ https://www.ada.gov/regs2016/movie_rule.htm

The biopsychosocial model - The cinema goer + exclusion

To consider again the introduction of accessible shows to a well-established cultural cinema programme such as that of the IFI, it is useful to reflect on the potential audience profile. For persons with vision or hearing disability, the relationship with cinema itself can be complex, stemming from long-term exclusion as well as stereotypical representation of disability on screen. This two-fold connection extends back through cinema history, from its early days as a mechanical wonder, to the Golden Era of Hollywood through to the blockbuster, CGI and digital exhibition. During each evolution, cinema has maintained its capacity to entertain and engage on a mass scale, yet despite this, attempts to reach audiences with disability have been virtually non-existent. It is something of an irony that when cinema progressed from silents to 'talkies', it actually excluded a large component of the audience who were deaf or hard of hearing. On screen itself, deaf and blind characters served as the butt of jokes or else disability afforded a character an underhand nature or special powers. Using seeing or hearing actors to play deaf or blind characters was – and remains – the norm: we think of Audrey Hepburn as the blind woman in *Wait until Dark* whose blindness lends her an ability to 'see' crime, or the stranger in Nic Roeg's *Don't Look Now*, who 'sees' the missing child. Even in a landmark film such as *Children of a Lesser God*, which featured Oscar-winning deaf actor, Marlee Matlin, her character's deafness is still the focus of the narrative itself. In these depictions, cinema, no more than the real world, perceived a model of disability in which the problem lies with the individual rather than with society. Thus, fictional characters either reside on the margins or are desperate to overcome their disability in order that they might fully participate.

While cinema for a long period was the single mass medium that reflected representations of society back to the audience, the arrival of TV simply compounded stereotypes. Nowadays cinema is just one of our image sources, nevertheless it still retains a huge capacity to influence perception. The deaf/blind audience still seeks out positive representation on screen, where fully rounded characters happen to be blind or deaf without this being their narrative impetus.

Taking all of these factors into account, therefore, in defining the operating framework for the pilot, we were conscious of the fact that improving access to the medium would not automatically yield an audience; nor would it preclude an expectation of representative cinema, free from stereotypes. Of course this applies across the gamut of fictional characterisation, which has long exploited characters of race, gender, disability for the purpose of plot device. However, a seeing or hearing audience, for example, is not excluded from the medium itself, whether or not they choose to be subjected to stereotypes on screen. The deaf/blind audience, on the other hand, is excluded from both reasonable depiction and the opportunity to experience it and make up their own mind.

In his extensive study, *Hollywood Speaks*, John Schuster points out that it was Paramount Studios' decision to offer a few captioned versions of *Children of a Lesser God* during its release that initiated the concept of accessible cinema. Up to that point, since the silent era, deaf audiences had been dependent on subtitled foreign language films for their cinema

outings. The arrival of home video and cheaper vhs technology as well as the availability of TV decoders meant that home viewing, in contrast, was increasingly accessible.

Why engage with audiences with disability?

Ireland's new development framework, Project 2040¹², cites approximately 650,000 people living with a disability in Ireland in 2016, comprising 13.5% of the population. An earlier National Disability Survey (2006¹³) which used a broader definition of disability and chronic illness, showed a disability rate of 18% - one in 10 adults of working age (15-65). This fact, accompanied by the hearing and vision impairments that are part and parcel of life for an ageing population mean that across the arts and cultural sectors, this is a viable audience for development.

The IFI Pilot

'It's a whole new outlook you know. It's new lease of life, really' – *Sheila, focus group attendee*

In April 2016, IFI launched the Accessible Cultural Cinema Pilot, with the support of the Arts Council and ADI, with an OC/AD screening of *Sing Street*. Working with ADI to develop and promote the launch event, IFI was able to connect with organisations working with deaf/HOH and blind/vision impaired people across Dublin.



Sing Street

Scope of Pilot

While the initial commitment was for a six month pilot, it was felt that given the programming limitations due to availability of films with accessible options, and the need for awareness raising, a longer time frame would allow for greater buy-in from potential audiences for accessible shows. The pilot would run therefore from April 2016 to November 2018.

The project would comprise the following elements:

- A building audit of IFI
- Regular accessible screenings of new releases in IFI programme
- Provision of technology required (headsets for AD tracks)
- Online audience survey

¹² <http://npf.ie/wp-content/uploads/Project-Ireland-2040-NPF.pdf>

¹³

- Marketing and promotion of accessible screenings to relevant organisations
- DET training for IFI FOH staff
- Signage
- Focus group meetings
- Evaluation and best practice recommendations

The scope of the pilot would be the provision of screenings for audience who were:

- Blind/Vision Impaired
- Deaf/Hard of Hearing (HOH)

The accessible screenings would be defined by:

- Open captions (OC) on designated screenings, captions visible on screen
- Audio description (AD) available on all screenings, accessible through individual headsets, purchased by IFI and available from Box Office

Providing access for other groups, for example people with intellectual disabilities, was outside of the particular remit of this project.

Objectives of Pilot

This pilot project was undertaken in order to provide for and develop the audience for accessible screenings of cultural cinema at IFI.

The project set out to:

- Make the IFI venue as accessible as possible
- Establish accessible programming as a regular feature of the IFI monthly cinema offer, within the realm of available new releases with accessible features
- Promote the screenings through IFI networks and relevant organisations, with assistance from ADI
- Monitor attendance through box office returns
- Gather audience feedback through ongoing online & hard copy survey
- Gather qualitative audience feedback through focus groups
- Use IFI experience and audience feedback to inform best practice guidelines for accessible cinema provision

Alongside these specific goals, we were also hoping to learn more about the audience for accessible screenings and how they engaged with cinema, in particular cultural cinema. Once the programme was in place we hoped to ascertain:

- How could we reach audiences with hearing and/or visual impairment so they could learn about our accessible cinema offer?
- What did cinema mean for this audience and cultural cinema in particular?
- How did this audience find their IFI experience – from getting information to booking to attending the screening to using technology, if required?
- What type of films were of interest or did the accessibility determine attendance?
- As a venue, what did we need to consider in promoting and offering an accessible cinema programme?
- How could we make the IFI more inclusive?
- How could other cinemas across the country successfully engage with providing accessible screenings to their audiences?

Accessible Cultural Cinema & Audiences

‘I think, what is culture?’ – *Freda*, *Focus Group attendee*



La La Land

Since the launch of the pilot, the IFI has run accessible shows of most new cinema releases which were screening in the main IFI programme and which had AD/OC file options (see Appendix for full list). The films have comprised a huge range of genres and subject matters and have included Oscar winners such as *La La Land* and *Moonlight*, Irish feature, *Sing Street*, and independent fare such as *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*. Audiences availing of accessible shows have

turned out in varying numbers but, when surveyed, have been hugely positive in their response to the IFI initiative. Promotional materials were adjusted to highlight the OC/AD offer on relevant titles. Significant to the findings was the fact that an available AD track is accessible through headphones on all shows, whereas OC shows were designated, as captions were open to all on screen.

Methodology

To realise the objectives of our research, we decided on two different methodologies. Firstly, we required quantitative data that would inform on:

- (i) the number of new releases at IFI with accessible shows
- (ii) the number of actual screenings of these titles, as a share of our overall programme
- (iii) the numbers attending the accessible shows
- (iv) general feedback

Over the duration of the pilot project we introduced three individual surveys for completion by patrons at key points as follows:

- after the launch event in April
- the second in September after four months of screenings
- January 2017 after 9 months of screenings.

Film titles were added to the survey as they were screened, and each survey was appropriately updated.

Limitations to quantitative surveys

Box office returns elucidate the actual number of attendees per screening but within these totals, there is no way of knowing short of directly questioning who is availing of the OC facility by way of necessity. Regarding AD, while anecdotally we could assess that there was not a huge instance of headset usage, as we would discover through the focus groups, the headsets themselves had limitations and audience members too had specific needs.

For the individual surveys, we used an online format but also made the survey available in hard copy at box office. The survey was short; what it could do was get a broad sense of respondents' IFI experience. What it could not do was offer a deeper understanding of accessible cinema programming or people's interests and needs, which we hoped the focus groups might elucidate.

The numbers

- (i) **How many new releases at IFI had accessible options?**
- (ii) **How many of these had accessible shows?**

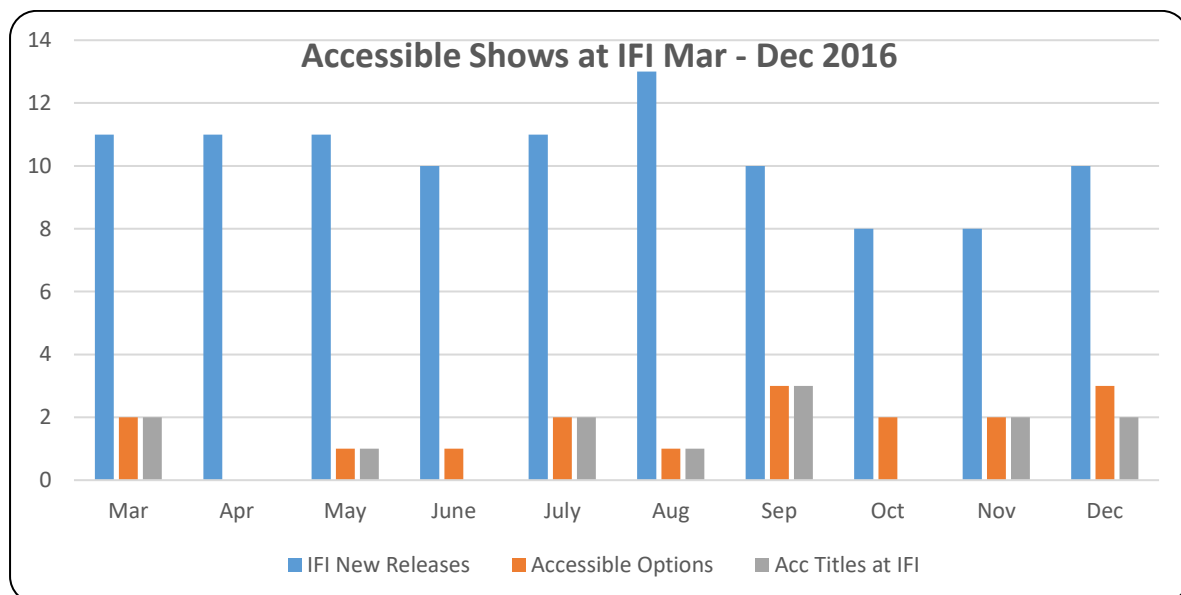


Figure 1

One had AD only (March - *Hail Caesar!*),

Looking at the chart above, we could say in a busy month such as March, which had 11 new releases, two of these titles offered accessible options and were programmed accordingly. So March 2016, accessible cinema comprised 18% of the new releases on offer. In the same month, IFI showed several other titles, including special strands such as The Bigger Picture. A special programme of 1916 celebrations featured another 7 titles, a total of 23. None of these had accessible options. Thus the accessible % ultimately was 8% of IFI cinema offer for March 2016. Also worth considering is a month when there were a small number of new releases such as November, during which IFI French Film Festival occupies much of the programme. Of the 6 new releases shown, 2 had accessible options resulting in 33% of the new programme output.

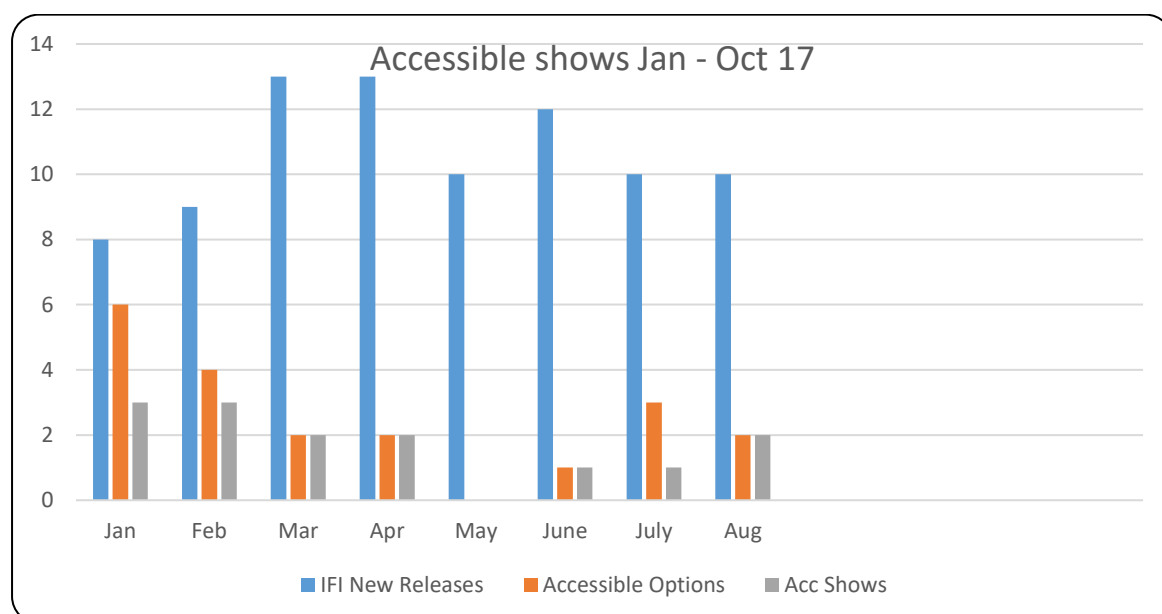


Figure 1

- June, OC only available on one title (*My Life as a Courgette*); all others OC on two screenings and AD available all shows.

During this period, (Jan – Oct 2017), IFI showed 85 new releases of which 29 had accessible options, of which 14 were shown i.e. 16% of total new releases (Figure 2). If we consider therefore the 13% from the first period and 16% respectively, it is not difficult to see how an accessible offer will be considerably less than a regular programme offer. When you consider that OC is only available on certain shows, then for deaf/HOH audiences the offer is even limited further. So *La La Land* for example had 69 shows, of which only 2 were OC, but AD was available on all shows.

Also worth considering is the cultural cinema aspect of this pilot. Compared to the total films released in a given month, the options for cultural cinema programming are considerably less. Lesser again is the possible programme share of titles with accessible formats available. This is illustrated in numbers and % in the charts below (Figs. 3, 4, 5) and is borne out through 2017 and 2018.

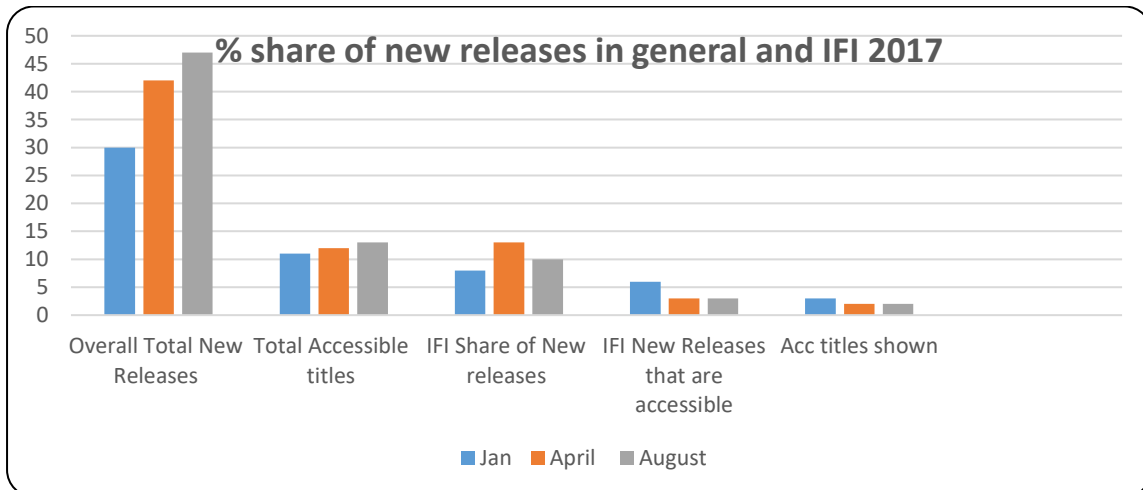
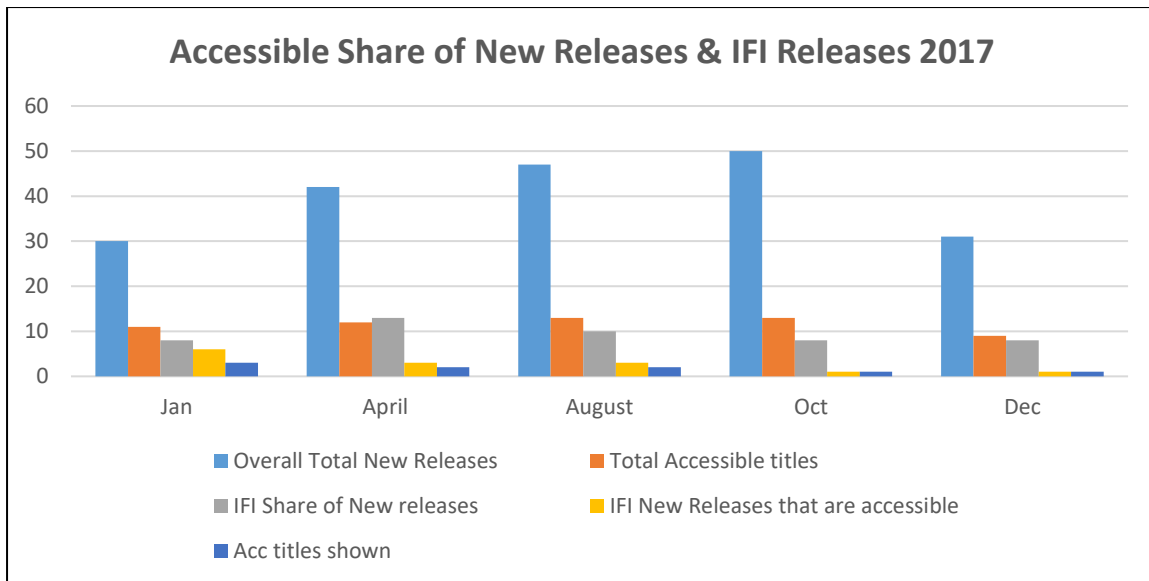


Figure 2 & 4

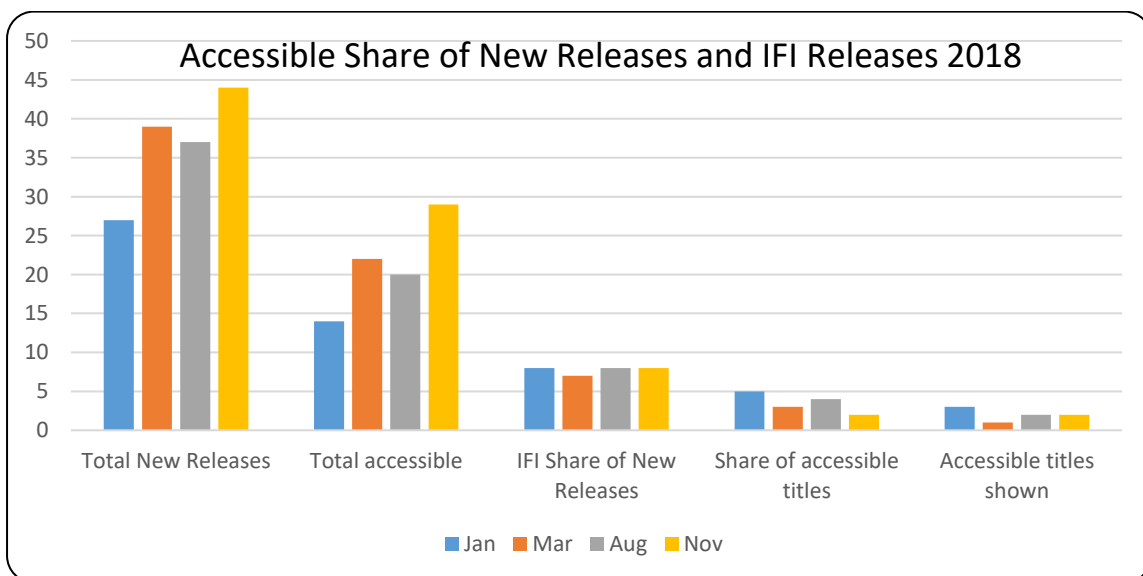


Figure 5

(iii) **What were audience figures for accessible shows?**

Throughout the pilot project, audience figures for accessible shows were gathered, and outlined in the charts below.

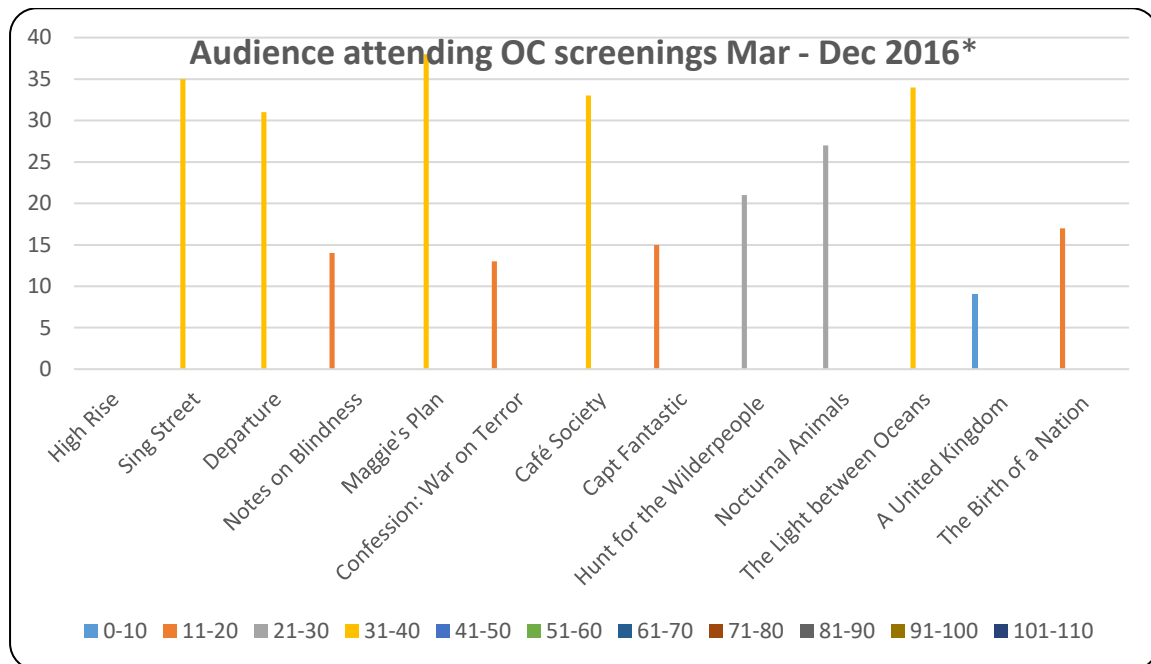


Figure 6

- Combined totals for one afternoon and one evening OC performances on different dates of a single title. (*Maggie's Plan* incl. one extra show & Meal package)
- No titles in April, June, October & AD available all shows

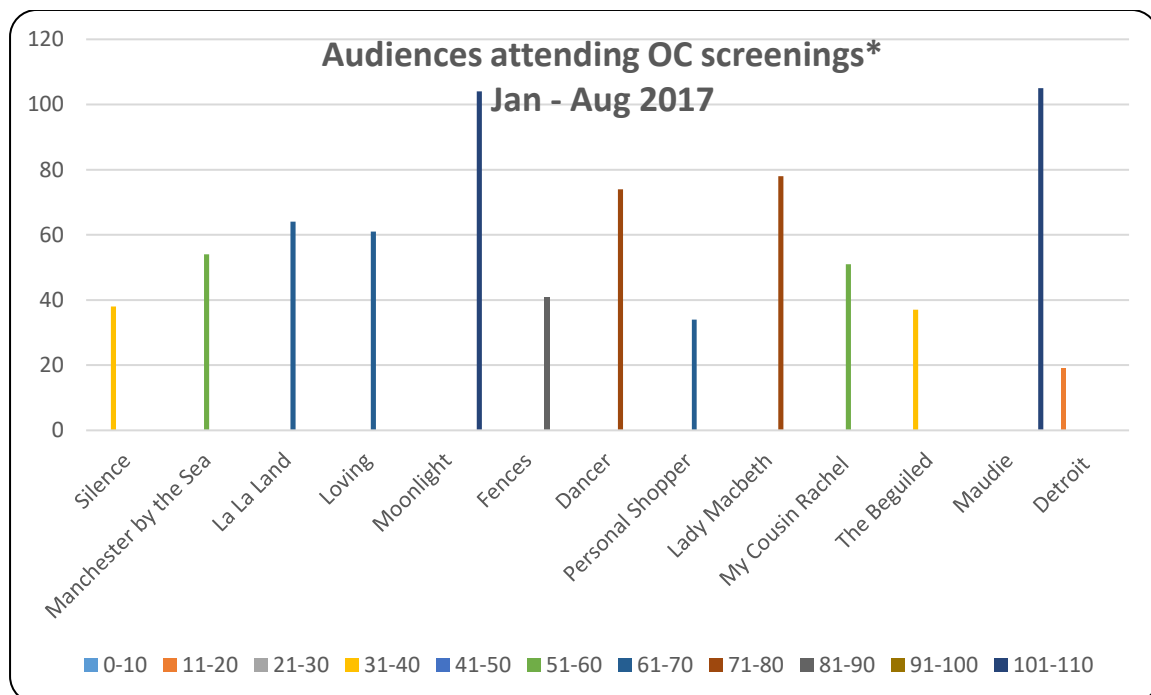
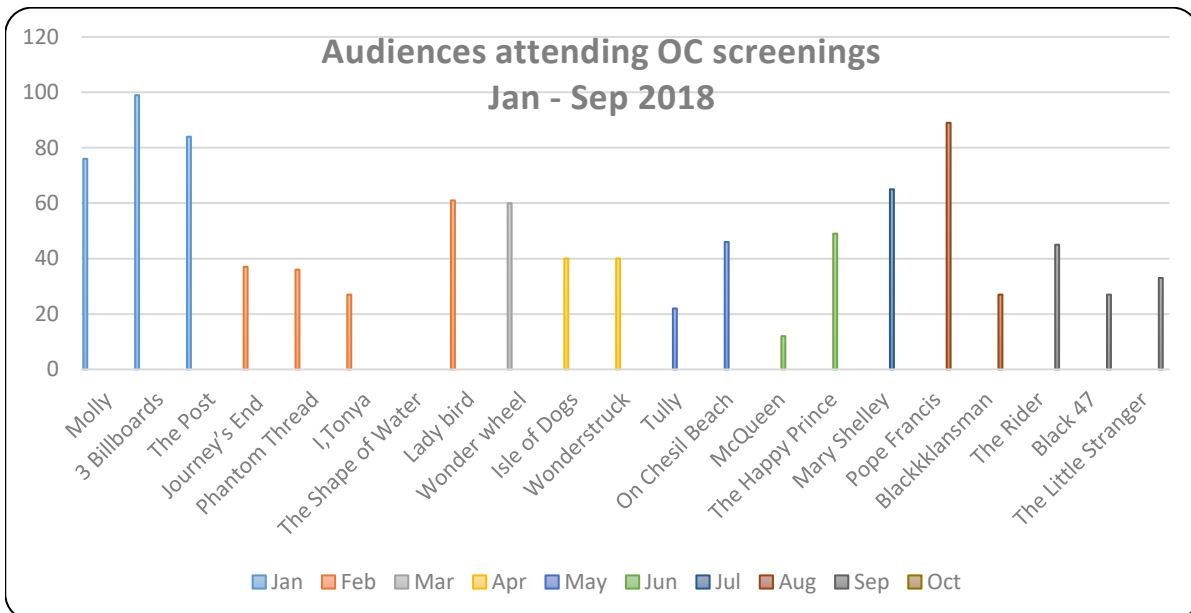


Figure 7

- Combined totals for one afternoon and one evening OC performances on different dates of a single title (e.g. *La La Land* 64, *Maudie* 104)
- No titles in May
- AD of accessible titles available all shows



- Combined totals for one afternoon and one evening OC performances on different dates of a single title (e.g. *Three Billboards...* 99, *Pope Francis*, 89)
- AD of accessible titles available all shows
- For 2018, we can consider audience share for extremely successful films for IFI such as *Three Billboards outside Ebbing Missouri* and *Ladybird*. With accessible options available every month on new releases, we observe a constant attendance at least for OC shows.



Accessible Audience Share of total audience for key films

Regarding the overall IFI audience for key titles such as *La La Land*, *Moonlight* or *Three Billboards outside Ebbing Missouri*, it's interesting to compare the accessible audience for these successful shows at IFI, bearing in mind that these are the OC audiences only, and only two shows per title. AD was available on all of these shows; anecdotally, there was no consistent recording of headset usage but the viable % for OC shows suggests potential for audience expansion.

OC Audience Share (2 shows per title)

Moonlight – 5072 / 104 – 4%

La La Land – 5668 / 64 – 1.12%

Sing Street – 3907 / 35 - .9%

Café Society – 2750 / 33 .01%

Maudie – 2664 / 105 – 4%

Notes on blindness – 172 / 14 – 8%

The Post – 3985 / 84 - 2.1 % *Three Billboards* – 6597 / 99 – 1.5%

Ladybird – 4341 / 61 – 1.4%

Pope Francis: A Man of his Word – 620 / 89 – 14%



Moonlight

Quantitative feedback from Audience

Alongside the record of audience attendance, audience feedback was gathered through online and hard copy surveys, and is summarised as follows: (see full surveys in Appendices)

Launch feedback

Summary

Overall the vast majority (81.82%) pronounced the event as 'excellent'.

Over 2/3 attendees had visited IFI before, and of those present, the larger number were interested in OC facility (55%). Interestingly only 10% of respondents were interested in the loop system, perhaps due to previous negative experiences of loop. This is supported by comments:

'I ... was just delighted to have a loop system which worked / great sound so people working it really know about it ...'

A recommendation to '(Please) put a code on each film(s) if it will be subtitled/captioned' was adopted for all our marketing collateral.

This feedback from the launch event informed some of our subsequent questions for the focus groups. Comments such as: 'Thank you for thinking of us and being so enthusiastic in including us. Very much appreciated!' offered attitudinal insight which we could investigate further.

2nd Survey

The next survey was prompted in Autumn 2016, following 7 months of accessible programming since the launch, during which there were accessible shows of 11 titles and those who responded had attended 9 of these. From the attendance recorded, we can say that there is a broad interest in different genres. The largest number recorded was still for the *Sing Street* launch screening. However, the gap between OC and AD according to the surveys had narrowed, though again this does not reflect those who may have requested headsets, and did not complete a survey.

Satisfaction with the accessible facilities had shifted from 100% 'very good' for OC to 60%. The point of personalised access to captioning as available in US was raised again:

'Just came back from America where the cinemas have subtitle glasses. Can see any film, any time with subtitles or captions!'

AD was positively received, but again the issue of the headset was raised:

'I found the head set a bit clunky; if you could plug in your own head phones it might be better... there was a noise like AM radio.'

'I sometimes found the audio description was drowned out by the dialogue/music.'

Rating IFI as an accessible cinema, the greater number (41.67%) of these respondents rated it midway; 25% gave it top rating as opposed to the 45.45% previously.

Even if there were criticisms, the overall interest in accessible cinema provision remained as evidenced by 75% who were willing to take part in focus groups.

3rd Survey

The final online survey was prompted in September 2017, by which time 27 titles had been offered with accessible shows. These included accessible screenings of Oscar winners, *La La Land* and *Moonlight*. From the survey, *Maudie* had the highest attendance among the respondents.

For this survey there was no response from attendees who had availed of AD though OC was 55.56% 'very good'.

Once again, interest in cultural cinema at IFI could be seen from the willingness to take part in focus groups ((75%).

50% rated IFI as being a 'very good' accessible cinema.

Other comments of note included a request for advance notice of captioned shows – IFI marketing collateral was adjusted accordingly following the earlier survey.

One respondent offered that the accessible cinema is 'a great opportunity not only for people with disabilities but also for foreigners.....in terms of understanding (open captions).'

'Enjoyed the film without having to struggle to hear the speech. Great to get an English language film with subtitles – hope to see more of them'.

Hard copy survey

Autumn 2016; 12 respondents

'more subtitled movies please'

The same survey was printed out in hard copy and made available through box office for cinema guests to pick up and complete. Some of these respondents may have already completed an online survey.

Results of these handwritten surveys yielded the following information:

10 respondents chose the OC option and 1 used the loop.

Responding to the accessible facilities, on a scale of 1-5, 5 found the OC very good, 3 found them very poor. A further comment on the captions read:

'Captions (were) difficult to read on a white background. They are clearer if they are set upon a black background within a frame This can be seen on some TV channels and means captions can be read fast and easily.'

As the style of captioning was outside of our control, this was raised in the focus groups by way of offering clarification.

Rating IFI as an accessible cinema. 3 rated it very good, 2 rated it very poor, 3 rated it good and 1 each neither good nor bad and poor.

Of this group, 5 expressed interest in participating in a focus group and one specified a need for loop and speedtext during such a session.

Qualitative Findings

Alongside the quantitative surveys, we sought qualitative feedback through our focus groups, which took place in April 2017, following 11 months of accessible shows. The aim of these meetings was to gather attitudinal information through a number of questions and discussions regarding participation, cultural cinema and the IFI pilot project. A focus group was convened for blind/vision impaired audiences and deaf/HOH audiences. In consultation with ADI, it was agreed that separate groups be convened as the specific requirements of each group by way of participation in discussion would be different.

In order to establish common ground and a consensus, both groups were asked the same questions. Both groups were invited through the same channels – IFI, ADI and their wider networks. Participants in each group had either hearing or vision impairment or occasionally both; a sighted partner attended and took part; a filmmaker attended as an observer. All participants shared an interest in cinema and the arts. All participants were aware of IFI though they had not all attended IFI or availed of the accessible cinema programme. All were 18+ in keeping with the IFI membership age. There was a gender mix in each group although the makeup was predominantly female.

Both meetings were co-facilitated by IFI personnel, drawing on questions and topics which had been developed and agreed beforehand with ADI.

The focus group discussions were grouped broadly around the following areas of interest:

- **Participants as film fans and cinema goers**

What did film mean to them? What type of films did they like to watch?

- **Participants and Accessible cinema**

How and where do they avail of accessible cinema?

How does accessible cinema facilitate their continued enjoyment of film?

How accessible is cinema to the participants?

What is their understanding of the accessible facility of cinema?

- **IFI as an accessible cinema**

How often do they avail of IFI accessible screenings?

What has been their experience of our pilot project?

How do they get information?

- **Accessing culture**

How can access to culture be improved? How is IFI performing in providing access in comparison with other cultural venues? How important is access to culture?

Format

The format of both meetings followed the same pattern, questions were asked in the same order and participants were given the questions printed out to consider before being invited to comment. Two facilitators led the discussion while a third IFI colleague chaired.

The first group, for Deaf/HOH, had 19 participants. The second group for blind/vision impaired had 9, of whom 6 were blind/vision impaired. The meetings began with an outline of the pilot project and an explanation of what the organisation hoped to learn through the participants' feedback.

Combined findings

A summary of the findings from both groups, responding to the questions posed is recorded below:

- **Participants as film fans and cinema goers**

'We enjoy film like everybody else'.

From the outset it was clear that participants were highly enthusiastic about film and culture in general, and the possibility of enjoying more cinema through accessible cinema programming. For some, cinema was relaxing. Participants liked all types of films – from *Brooklyn* to *Fantastic Beasts* - and were keen to have the full cinema experience, as far as possible. Accessible cinema enabled people see the films on release, rather than having to wait for the OC/AD functions on DVD. Some had experience of film festivals at IFI. People varied in how often they went to the cinema, some had gone more previously, for example when fully sighted, for others it was a time fact or change in lifestyle. It was remarked that more accessible shows would allow for more cinema attendance.

- **Participants and Accessible cinema**

The groups had varying experiences of accessible cinema at other venues in Ireland, overseas and at IFI. Some were persistent in asking for a loop system in other cinemas 'I try to encourage people to keep on asking'. Others welcomed the 'fuss' which FOH staff in other venues made of them when they came in, for example with a 'seeing dog'. In terms of frequency of attendance, one attended once a week using the respective cinema's loop system, for others the timing of the accessible screenings didn't always work. One individual planned their weekly trip to Dublin around cinema, for others it was maybe every two or three months. Planning was key as more was at stake than simply deciding to go to the cinema. The choice of film was the first consideration. There was agreement across both groups that accessible cinema was not widely available in Ireland.

People were not necessarily well informed about the accessible programme at IFI, many had attended the launch but others had just heard about it through the focus group call out. Across both groups was a passion for engagement, a willingness to share experiences and

positive regard for IFI for offering the facility. There was a sometimes pragmatic sense of acceptance that limited access was the way things were, and that it was up to the individual to persist in asking for facilities. Both groups were clear in their belief that *'all films should have the facility here'*. Again the contrast with the US was made, where certain individuals had experienced far greater access opportunities in cinemas through both the programme offer and the equipment provided.

'I'm Irish. I'd like to watch Irish-made films, but I can't'

Across both groups there was a strong feeling of anger that more Irish films were not accessible. The fact of accessible files being mostly with bigger budget films, which Irish films often were not, did not reduce feelings of 'exclusion' and disappointment. Discussion occurred in both groups about the facts of creating captions and AD files – people were keen to understand the process, who was responsible for including accessible files and why.

- **IFI as an accessible cinema**

'It's a brilliant venue, there's no question about it'.

Across both groups, top of mind responses to the venue were positive: people liked the building, its history, the layout, the different styles of the auditoria. Some had formerly been members. They expected to see different kinds of film at IFI. They felt the staff were welcoming and friendly but *'maybe just need a bit of direction'*. Those who received the IFI newsletter found it 'invaluable'. Some relied on making a phone call to find out what was on. Generally it was felt that information was hard to come by, that it could be much easier to find out which films were accessible.

- **Accessing culture**

People varied in their approach to culture, and discussion arose around the nature of culture itself. Across both groups there was great interest in getting out and being involved. It became apparent that individuals had different coping strategies when it came to accessing cinema. Some might avoid it altogether as a result of negative experiences, or their partner may not wish to attend; one would attend with children or grandchildren, perhaps not understanding every word but enjoying the atmosphere. People wanted the social aspect of cinema including attending with friends or family who may not require accessible formats. They liked to meet up with others at accessible shows, but not necessarily be defined by this or obliged to make contact. Interesting comparisons were drawn with the Abbey Theatre OC/AD performances and the National Gallery tours for deaf/HOH of which participants had considerable experience. A desire for culture and 'social outing' outweighed the fact of repetition such as seeing the same paintings.

For cinema listings, participants relied on the Your Local Cinema app, as well as the ADI website and ADI text messages. Some had regular emails from other venues.

They had suggestions to make regarding booking systems and marketing materials. There was a need to include access in mainstream materials rather than only niche promotion. This would serve to raise awareness of the IFI endeavour as well as promote events. A lack of interest in organisations in reaching out to patrons outside of the mainstream was a not uncommon experience. A strong message from both groups was the need for 'getting the information out there' which would allow for individual planning. Other suggestions included adding recognisable OC or AD symbols to the posters in the foyer and on the flyer. Across the group, people did not use the IFI website for information and found it hard to navigate. They believed IFI website and other listing sites could be tested by users, who would have a better understanding of what was required.

Both groups were in agreement that **'What we need is CHOICE'**.

Accessible Cinema Focus Group 1

10 April 2017

Target group: People who are Deaf/HOH

Present: ADI x 1

ISL interpreters x 2

Speech to text operator x 2

IFI Facilitators x 2, IFI Chair x 1

19 participants

Questions

A large, mostly female group of people with hearing loss ranging from mild to profound. Many of the group came through call-outs to organisations such as Deaf Hear or Hearing Loss Ireland, and several knew one another. Many had experience of loop systems. Discussion was lively and challenging at times, with several forthright contributors.

Along with the combined findings summarised above, discussion in this group around issues of access for deaf/hoh audiences yielded several points of note.

Participants as film fans and cinema goers

There was a broad range of film interest. Foreign language films as they were subtitled, festivals, talks and events were among peoples' experiences. As a group they were very clear on what they required in order to participate. Feelings of being left out were common. For some, experiencing the arts and culture was as much about the social outing as about the artform; it was remarked that venues may not wish to be regarded as social venues for hard of hearing rather than as providers of culture.

Participants and accessible cinema

Participants ranged from individuals who relied entirely on captions in order to access a film to those who could use the loop system with their hearing aids. One had given up on cinema altogether. Others had experienced non-working loop systems in various places. Patrons had enjoyed captioned screenings at IFI of such titles as *Loving* and *Manchester by the Sea*. People



Loving

were very clear about the type/style of captions which they could easily follow, such as yellow text. Cinema was enjoyed for escapism or a good story.

Previous negative experiences of cinema such as muffled sound 'put you off going'. For one person, good captions allowed them 'hear' what characters were saying and with this 'you are not aware of your hearing loss'. Cinema was for

some a family outing and where there were deaf parents and hearing kids, or vv, it led to feelings of being 'left out' when there were no subtitles. The quality of captioning was important and the type of film – when there was 'too much going on' (such as 3D) was impossible.

People were keen to understand the rationale for studios providing OC files. They did not accept the lower budget argument which precluded captioning from many smaller films including Irish titles. Some found that friends and family often resisted going to films with captions, for others, their family was used to it. There was no sense that a cinema should avoid showing captioned shows for the sake of the wider audience.

IFI as accessible cinema

While some participants had attended IFI before, others were completely unaware of the cinemas' loop systems. People were curious to know why some months featured accessible shows and whose decision that was. They were clear on their desire to have film screenings day time and evening and to advertise that the cinema was accessible by lift, if required. As a cultural cinema, in which seminars, talks or presentations take place, it was believed that these additional events should all be made accessible with speed text and ISL interpreters and this would 'draw people in'. There were positive experiences of IFI staff.

Accessing culture

As previously mentioned, **the group were keen to access all types of culture, but the social aspect of getting together - be it in a gallery or theatre or cinema - was a crucial dimension.** With hearing loss – 'socialising with friends in pubs and restaurants becomes more difficult', so it was 'important to... have a social outing and to be able to go and enjoy things as much as everybody else'. Anecdotal evidence of the successful National Gallery tours was offered by way of explanation. This had become an established social event for deaf/hard of hearing patrons and along with meeting up, they 'absorbed culture' at the same time. It was suggested that the IFI programme could link up with other accessible programmes such as the Deaf Film Festival which had previously been in the Lighthouse.

As the group was large, there was a further option to submit thoughts by email, particularly for those who had not had a chance to speak.

Accessible Cinema Focus Group 2

19 April 2017

Target group: People who are Blind/Vision Impaired (some also HOH)

Present: ADI x 1 (also participating)

IFI Facilitators x 2, IFI Chair x 1, IFI Observer x1

6 participants with sight loss ranging from total blindness to partially sighted. Some also HOH.
1 artist observer making a film with AD; 1 partner.

Findings

Along with the general observations recorded above, this group had some very specific points to make regarding their experience of cinema and accessing the IFI programme.

- **Participants as film fans and cinema goers**

‘it’s like you’re enjoying every aspect of the film’.

Responding to general questions about their enjoyment of film, despite progressive sight loss, the group were eager to continue accessing cinema of all types. Films with action, films about relationships, films with the kids, the group were interested in various different genres. Some relied on partners providing audio description for them during a screening. Cinema numbered seat allocation was a deterrent.

- **Participants and Accessible cinema**

While DVD and then the arrival of Netflix meant that people could access film with AD easily without having to make the extra effort of going to the cinema, there was still an interest in having the whole cinema experience. AD allowed for a fuller experience of, for example, tense moments. Among the group, some had attended IFI several times and other venues availing of AD. One regular attendee was very interested in what accessible cinema would mean for him. They were familiar with audio description and its effectiveness, in relation to different films. Participants cited specific details which the AD illuminated such as facial expression or an action sequence. It ‘fills in the blanks’. Although sight loss meant missing out on ‘the colour and some of the nice shots’, for one participant, AD had shown him that ‘all is not lost ... (he)... could still partake in this art’. For one couple, the AD had brought them back to cinema after 20 years. A key factor was the independence offered by AD – people did not have to rely on companions filling them in on the plot.

- **IFI as an accessible cinema**

For this group, the main issue with the AD provision was the particular on-ear headsets on offer in IFI. People had experience of other venues where an individual wireless box was available, through which the AD played, transmitted through one's own ear phones. In IFI's set-up, the film soundtrack was drowned out. 'It's like being locked into an MRI scan. You couldn't move your head left or right'. This exclusion of the soundtrack led to people feeling they missed out on part of the film experience.

Regarding printed materials for this group, there were strong opinions on what was acceptable such as no black backgrounds or use of larger print. The venue itself came in for praise through the use of a large screen at the entrance to advertise the programme and the well-lit tunnel which facilitated access. It could be useful to have a film synopsis in advance so a person 'has some idea before (s)he engages his brain with AD to figure it all out'.

- **Accessing culture**

This group were passionate about culture and had regular experiences of theatre, music venues and cinema. One was a regular attendee at the Abbey audio described shows. Another would attend if he really wanted to see something, whether it was accessible or not. Individuals had developed various different systems themselves for finding out what was on and whether it was accessible, from phone calls to emailing. Perhaps more than the other group, these participants demonstrated an assertiveness and determination to persist in their expectations of venues with repeated requests for listings etc. There was a sense that film offered a lot of enjoyment and the accessible function added to this.

Conclusion

The focus group meetings of the IFI Accessible Cinema Pilot Project offered rich feedback which would inform the ongoing delivery of accessible shows but also the broader conclusions of the project. Both groups comprised individuals who were passionate about the arts in general and enjoyed a whole range of films. They were keen to share experiences and open in their view of what accessibility meant to them, not only as cinema goers but also as social, engaged and participative citizens. For both groups, the organisational factors of providing an accessible programme were not really of significance to them – they wanted choice and ease of information and the freedom to be able to attend and enjoy cinema. For blind/vision impaired cinema goers, they viewed accessible screenings – the AD function – as being vital to their complete enjoyment of a film but it was not AD at any cost – the headset option at IFI was limiting in their experience and could be contrasted unfavourably with other venues. Nevertheless, they recognised the endeavour as being positive and were willing to return to IFI to enjoy both the cinema and other facilities of the venue. For the deaf/HOH group, the limited OC offer of, for example, two showings per film run meant their choice was restricted leading to feelings of exclusion and annoyance. The desire for a social outing was often in tandem with the interest in culture. Both groups are a viable audience for cultural cinema and

had a sense of being under-served by cultural organisations in general and cinema in particular, but were very enthusiastic about future possibilities instigated by this pilot project.

The IFI Accessible Cinema Pilot

Conclusion and Recommendations

The IFI Accessible Cinema Pilot was delivered between March 2016 and November 2018. The pilot set out to make cultural cinema accessible to audiences who identified as deaf/HOH or blind/vision impaired through the facilities of open captions on screen and audio description available through headsets. The programme content was determined by the new releases in the general IFI programme, which had accessible files available. Other than the launch screening, no accessible shows outside of the main programme were scheduled.

During the period of the pilot project, a total of 27 films were screened, yielding a total of 54 screenings with OC available and AD available on all the shows. The accessible programme comprised 14% of the complete IFI new releases programme for this period. Accessible options were mostly made available when the films were released with these formats. During the pilot, the most popular films based on attendance were *Maudie*, *La La Land* and *Moonlight*.

The pilot was informed by Equality & Disability legislation in Ireland, by the UN definition of human rights, and the UN Convention on Disabilities. It was developed within the context of IFI's commitment to providing access to cultural cinema and to audience development. It was supported by the Arts Council and delivered with the expertise and ongoing support of ADI.

An earlier study which informed on the viability of accessible cultural cinema through a survey of new releases, recommended the implementation of the pilot project. As a first step, an accessible audit was made of the IFI building and appropriate signage introduced; IFI marketing collateral was altered following participant recommendations and new communications developed, in conjunction with ADI. IFI front of house staff underwent DET training.



Feedback was gathered from accessible cinema attendees through online and hard copy surveys and two focus group meetings.

What did we learn?

'This sort of set-up is ideal in that we're looked after, without it being too obvious.'

From the launch event to the screenings and focus groups, patrons availing of the IFI accessible screenings were hugely positive about this new addition to the Dublin accessible cultural events. They were generous in their praise and welcomed any opportunity to engage with the arts. Their overwhelming desire was for regular and easy access that was not separate from the main programme and offered the possibility for cinema access 'the same as anyone else'. Scheduling was an issue - when OC films were just once or twice a month and sometimes programmed in the same week, this meant limited opportunities for this audience. With AD available on all shows, this audience could attend any screening in the

schedule. However, the difficulties cited with the headset in that they were uncomfortable and also drowned out the regular soundtrack meant that there was disappointment concomitant with their experience. Although cost had been a mitigating factor in determining the accessible technology which IFI had acquired, at the same time it was acknowledged that what we were offering through our headset setup was restrictive. Cost had also determined the open caption options as opposed to an individual closed caption set up. Similarly the handset or eyeglasses model available across the US as cited by one patron, was not within IFI's budget.

Patrons for accessible screenings wanted to get information easily and also to be able to recognise which screenings were accessible. They were clear in what they required from a programme and communications in terms of font size, style, colour and layout. Top of mind responses to cinema as a cultural offer were very positive. People enjoyed coming to IFI, they welcomed being taken seriously as cinema goers, and they talked openly about feelings of exclusion from culture as a result of vision or hearing impairment. Some focus group participants were vocal in their opinions of the possible disruption for other patrons of captions on screen – for some it was a familiar scenario from partners, family or friends who may not like captions; for others it was up to people to get used to them. Patrons varied in their taste for particular film genres – for some accessibility was the defining factor in determining whether they'd go or not, for others, it was the quality or genre of film.

Within the IFI building, patrons enjoyed the full experience of the café bar, the building's architecture, the experience of being in a cultural venue. Participants found IFI front of house personnel helpful and friendly.

'It's great to see the new releases subtitled when they come out first....you can form your own opinion'.

Throughout the pilot project and the feedback processes, it became apparent that access to cinema was about much more than that alone. Having access to new films on release offered this audience an independence and sense of inclusion - they did not have to rely on what others told them. Similarly the AD track allowed for full enjoyment of the film, without relying on another's intervention. Although the number of titles with accessible formats available was outside of IFI control, focus group participants were unhappy with this limitation. Even when the distribution and producer situation was explained in focus group discussion, at the same time, feelings of exclusion and anger were expressed at the disparity between the number of new films programmed and the number of films with accessible files. Similar annoyance was felt with regard to Irish films which people strongly felt should be available to them.

'A lot of the time I don't go because... the accessible times might (be) the wrong time, wrong film'.

‘We’d be going more often if cinema was more accessible to us in general’.

From quantitative research across the time of the pilot, it is increasingly obvious that just adding accessible screenings to the programme will not instantly yield audience in great numbers.

Many reasons mitigate against persons with disability attending cinema on a regular basis, even when it is made accessible. As one participant said, ‘...hard of hearing people drop out of things. We can’t socialise unless we’re very well supported’. While some people expressed a preference for screenings to be at the same time each month, so they could plan around it, for others the important thing was to have accessible screenings at times when friends would be available to go too – such as weekends and evenings rather than off-peak times which did not suit working people. Overall people wanted choice, and not to be restricted to just one or two shows. There was a prevailing need for easily available information and accessible booking systems.



Next Steps

‘I just want you to know how important it is to everybody here to have a social outing and to be able to go and enjoy things as much as everybody else’.

For this pilot project, it became increasingly clear that the cinema outing had bigger implications for the groups than the mere fact of going to see a new film. Accessing cultural cinema, being part of an audience with friends or family, experiencing new films on release and forming opinions, availing of the full facility of a cultural venue, being valued as an audience member and cultural consumer, and offering feedback, having choice - all of these elements contributed to a sense of involvement. ‘People don’t just come here or just go to the cinema, they go to all sorts of things’. The success of the pilot project at IFI was in creating awareness that cultural cinema, along with other artforms, can be accessible. The task remains to maintain accessibility as a priority, to expand scheduling and recognise the needs of all audiences both existing and potential. We must keep improving on the offer, share our learning, and influence other organisations to offer similar. Keeping access at the heart of the IFI remit, we acknowledge cultural access as a right, enshrined by law and, most importantly, fundamental to our commitment to cultural cinema exhibition, audience development and, creative engagement.

Guidelines for cinemas offering accessible cultural cinema programmes.

Following the IFI Accessible Cinema pilot project, which comprised the delivery of an accessible cinema programme for audiences who are deaf/HOH or blind/vision impaired, we offer the following guidelines to cultural cinema venues, for best practice in the area of accessible cinema and audience development. The guidelines are informed by our experiences directly but also by the legislation which informs equality of access to arts and culture. These guidelines reflect principals which evolved over the course of the pilot project to inform our practice. They acknowledge the right of access to cultural cinema and the responsibility of organisations to provide this. While the guidelines are based on the experience of IFI –(which is a national cultural institution and situated in the centre of Dublin), they have application for all cultural cinema venues and programmes.

For these guidelines, the term audience refers to patrons who are deaf/HOH or blind/vision impaired, who were the focus of our pilot project.

1. The audience

The audience for accessible screenings are your audience. They should not be classified as a disabled audience nor audience with special needs. They are an audience who enjoy film, who want to engage with cultural cinema, to participate in events, who have opinions and are willing to offer feedback. The venue and programme must be organised in order to be accessible to this audience.

2. Staff training

Develop the venue front of house staff, with DET training, to cultivate a welcoming and inclusive environment.

Provide learning opportunities for ongoing awareness raising about disability issues, rights of access and technical training where appropriate.

Ensure front of house and programming staff understand equality legislation and the implications of cultural access.

Ensure front of house & projection staff fully understand the workings of the accessible facilities.

3. The programme

Make the regular programme as accessible as possible. Accessible cinema is not a charitable endeavour but a cultural right, underpinned by legislation.

Offer the customer choice and allow for flexibility. Avoid scheduling all accessible titles in the same week.

Avoid the multiplex pitfall of scheduling at dead times. Like other patrons, the audience for accessible cinema want to see a range of film and at different times of the day.

Pursue opportunities for collaborative programming with other relevant organisations.

Explore outreach opportunities with partner organisations both locally and nationally.

Set up focus groups or survey to gather feedback on the cinema experience and particular areas of interest.

Consider opportunities for audience volunteering to support the accessible programme.

4. Facilities



Ensure that signage is clear and readily visible, including to wheelchair users.

Ensure furniture is movable and set out with adequate space for ease of movement.

Ensure lift, if applicable, is functioning and accessible.

Ensure venues are adequately equipped for events to include talks, presentations, ensuring microphones are used and operate

through the loop system.

Ensure the loop system in the cinema is working.

Ensure wheelchair spaces are available in each screen.

Ensure all marketing collateral is accessible, considering font size, background colour etc. on printed material, signage and website.

Service equipment as required e.g. headsets for AD.

Provide clear instructions for use of equipment and ensure FOH staff are adept in handling them.

5. The visit

Ensure the booking procedure is accessible and user-friendly whether online, by phone or in person.

Appoint a trained staff member to liaise with guests at designated screenings.

Create opportunities for feedback.

6. The social aspect

Create 'welcome events' for the audience, to include venue tour etc. with a DET trained facilitator.

Offer bundles to include meals in venue or local café, as part of the social aspect of the cultural cinema experience.

Recruit volunteers from the audience to become advocates for the programme among their communities.

7. The Commitment

Ireland's ratification of the UN Convention on Disability will lay the groundwork for universal access to cinema. Digital technology makes it more feasible. Show the audience your commitment to accessible cinema by making it a regular feature in your programme. Communicate the information through as many channels as possible and involve your audience in ensuring the information is accessible too.

8. Expertise

Seek advice from ADI in making your programme and venue accessible. Share expertise with other venues in your area.

Acknowledgements

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Facilitators

Deirdre Quinlan & Richard Fallon (IFI), Louise O Reilly,

ISL interpreters Aoife & Lisa

Real time captioning Michelle & Shane PCR

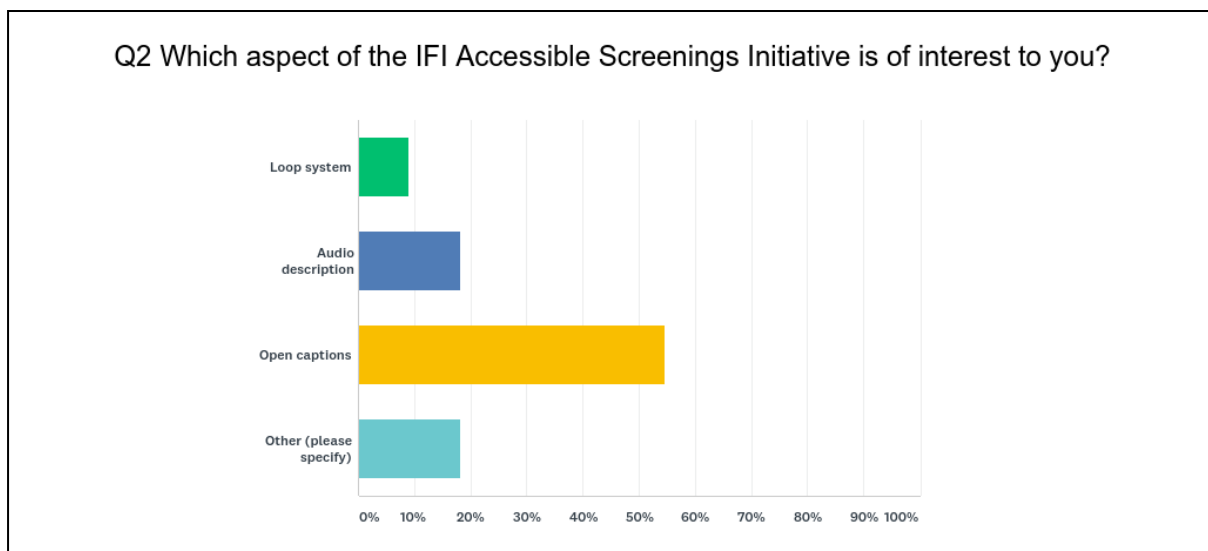
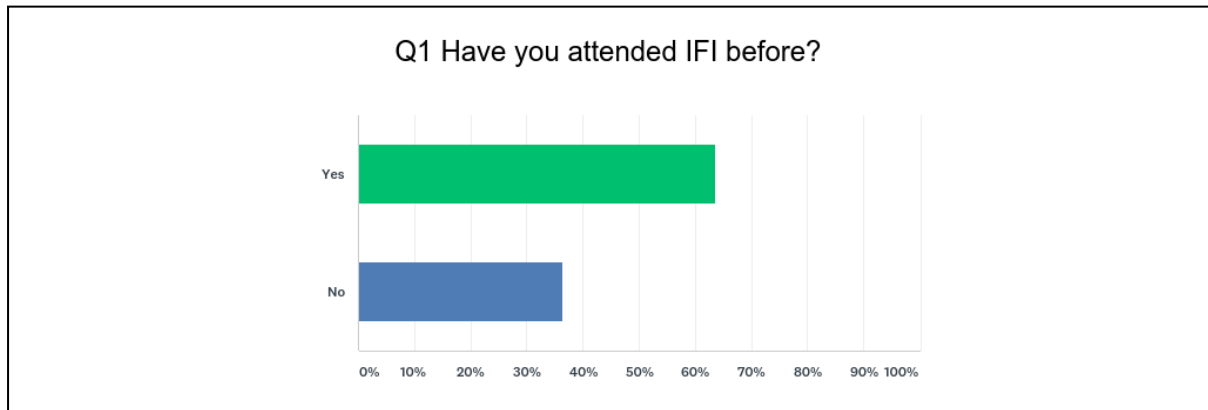
About the author:

Alicia McGivern is Head of Education at IFI. Over a few years, she lost all her hearing and she received a Cochlear Implant in 2017. She depends on Open Captions in cinema.

Appendix

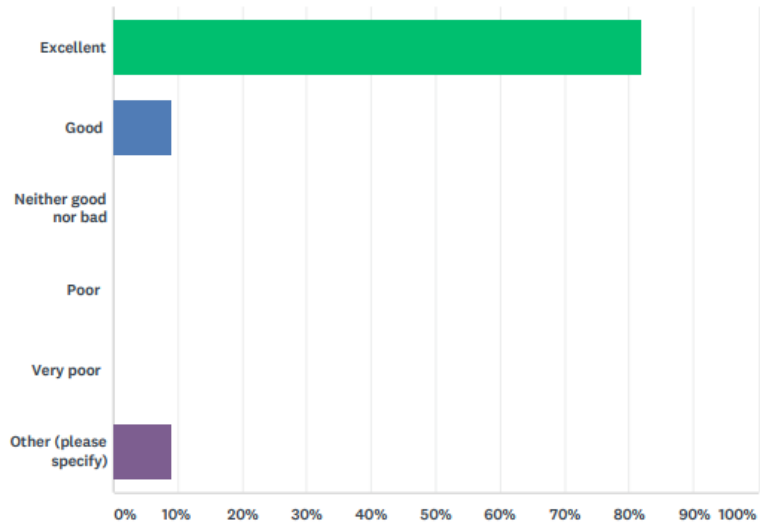
Online Survey results

Launch



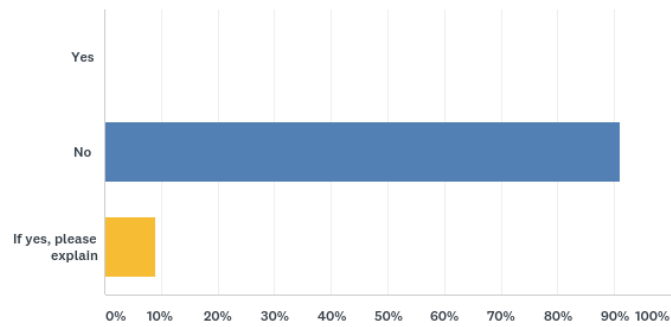
Q3 How would you rate the launch event at IFI?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0

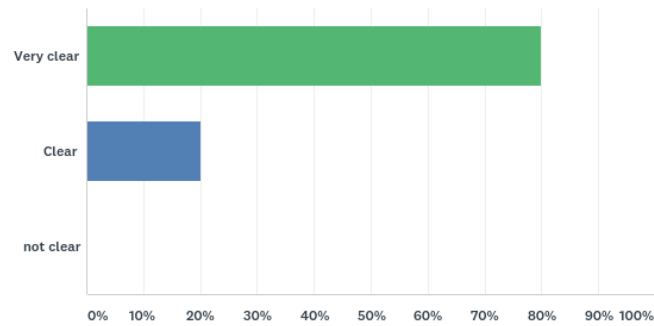


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent	81.82%	9
Good	9.09%	1
Neither good nor bad	0.00%	0
Poor	0.00%	0
Very poor	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	9.09%	1
TOTAL		11

Q4 Did you (or your guest) have any issues with accessibility at the event?

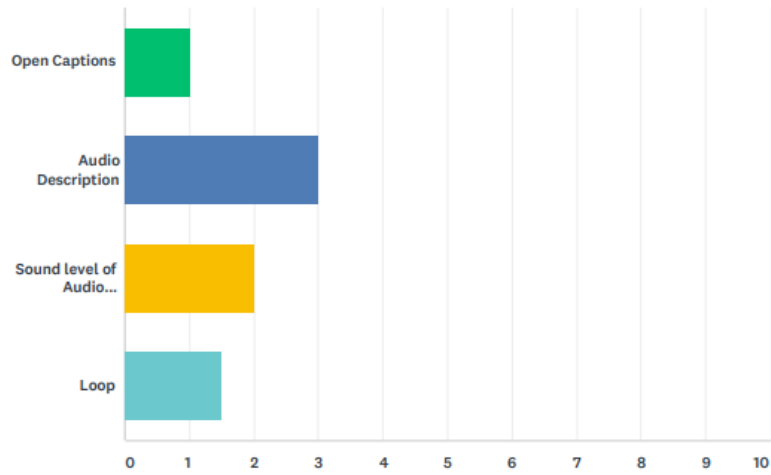


Q5 If you were using equipment that was new to you, how clear were the instructions provided?



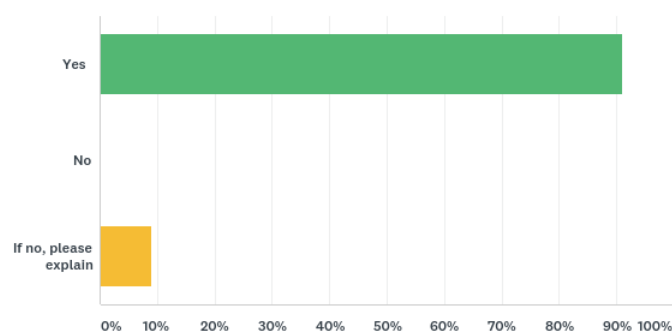
Q6 How did you find the accessible facilities?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



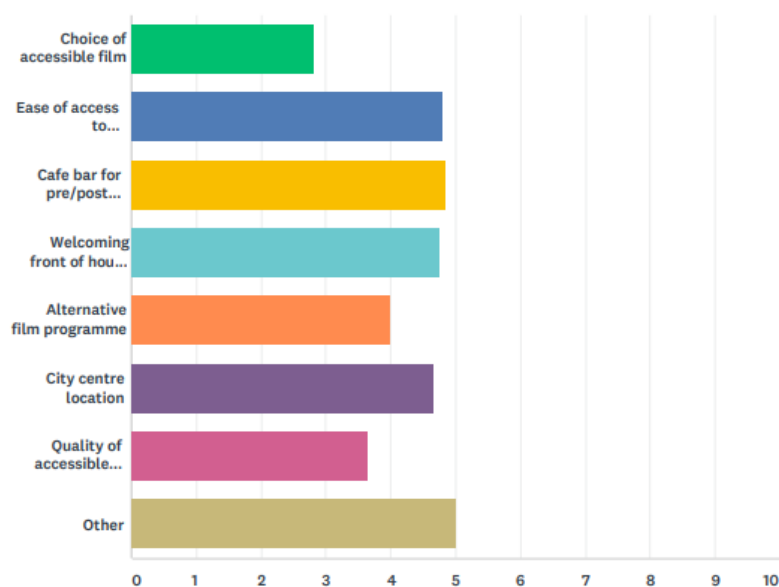
	VERY GOOD	GOOD	NEITHER GOOD NOR POOR	POOR	VERY POOR	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Open Captions	100.00% 9	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	9	1.00
Audio Description	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	2	3.00
Sound level of Audio Description	0.00% 0	100.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2	2.00
Loop	50.00% 1	50.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2	1.50

Q7 Would you come back to the IFI for accessible screenings in the future?



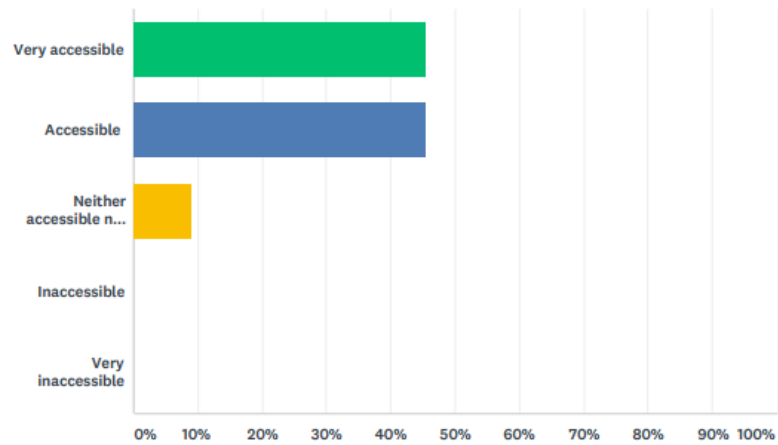
Q8 In deciding to spend a night at the cinema, what would encourage you to choose IFI? Please rank the following in order of importance to you (1 being least important, 8 being most):

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0



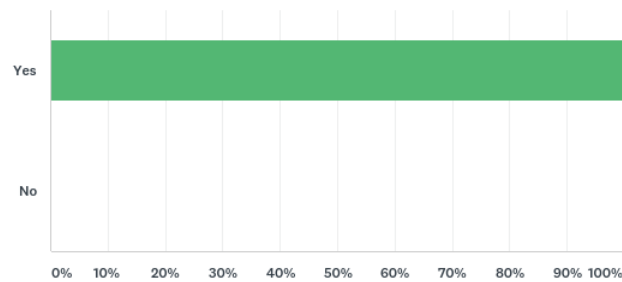
Q9 How would you rate IFI as an accessible cinema?

Answered: 11 Skipped: 0

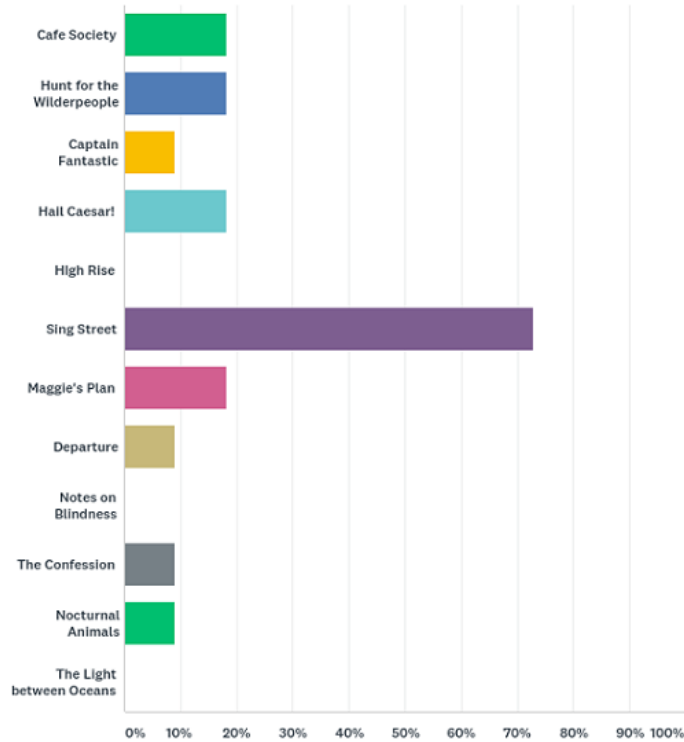


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very accessible	45.45%	5
Accessible	45.45%	5
Neither accessible nor inaccessible	9.09%	1
Inaccessible	0.00%	0
Very inaccessible	0.00%	0
TOTAL		11

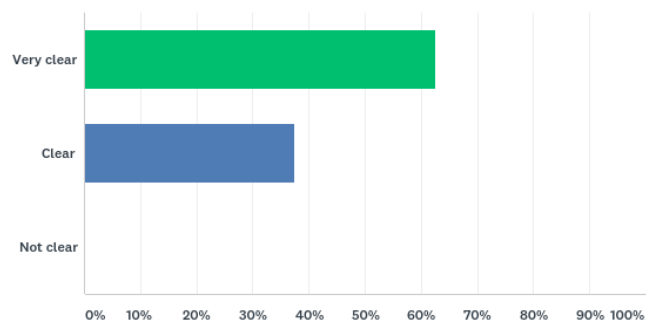
Q10 Would you recommend IFI's accessible screenings to a friend or colleague?



Q1 Which of the following accessible screenings have you attended since we launched our programme in March? (please tick all that apply)

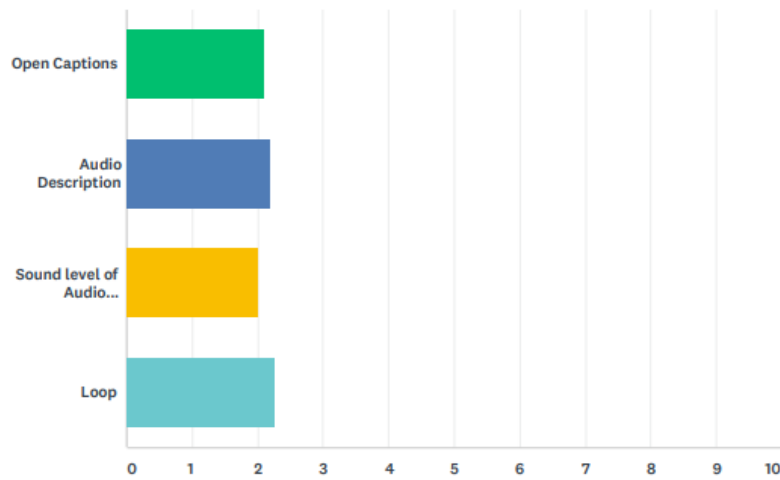


Q3 If you were using equipment that was new to you, how clear were the instructions provided?



Q4 How did you find the accessible facilities? Please rate 1-5 with 1 being very good and 5 being very poor.

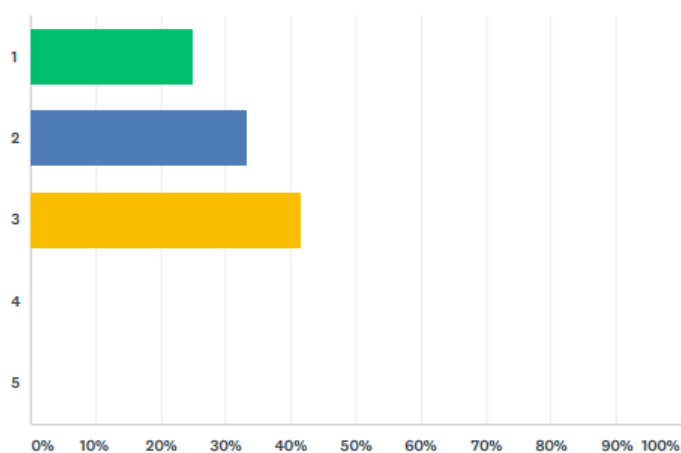
Answered: 12 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Open Captions	60.00% 6	10.00% 1	10.00% 1	0.00% 0	20.00% 2	10	2.10
Audio Description	20.00% 1	40.00% 2	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5	2.20
Sound level of Audio Description	40.00% 2	40.00% 2	0.00% 0	20.00% 1	0.00% 0	5	2.00
Loop	50.00% 2	25.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	25.00% 1	4	2.25

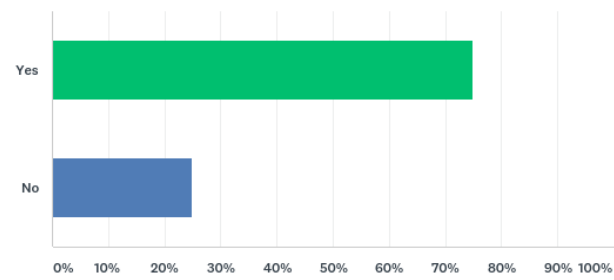
Q5 How would you rate IFI as an accessible cinema? Please rate 1-5 with 1 being very good and 5 being very poor

Answered: 12 Skipped: 0

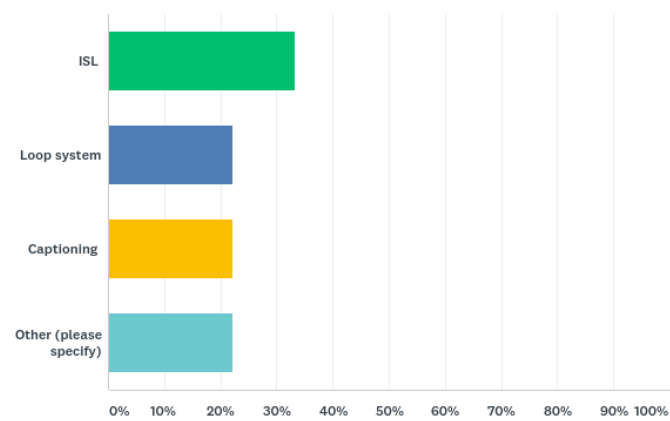


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	25.00%	3
2	33.33%	4
3	41.67%	5
4	0.00%	0
5	0.00%	0
TOTAL		12

Q6 Would you be willing to take part in a focus group on Accessible Cinema at IFI?

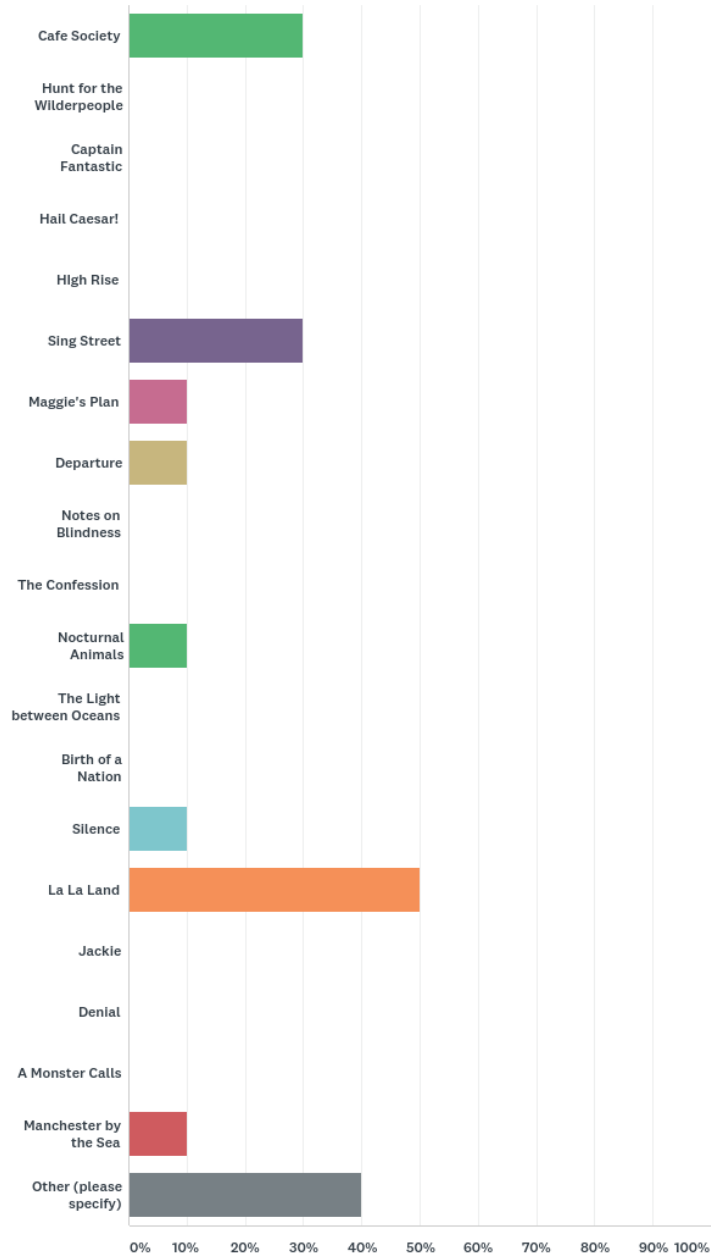


Q8 If taking part in a focus group, would you require any of the following facilities:

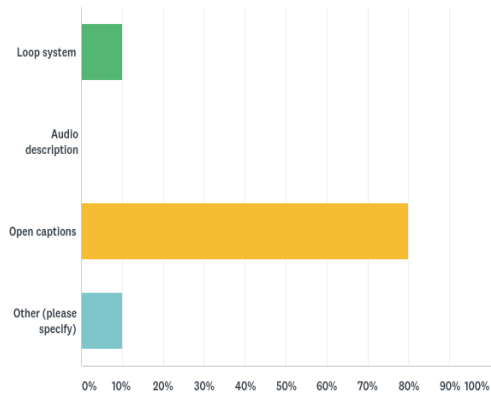


Sept 2017

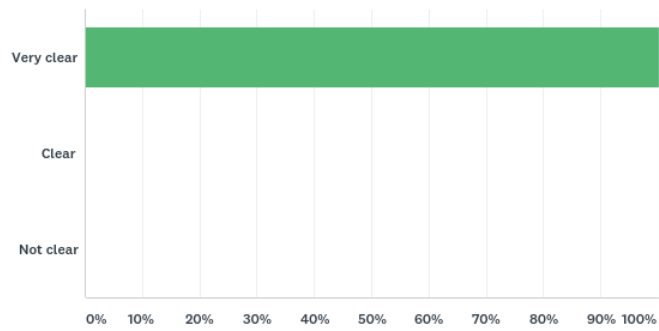
Q1 Which of the following accessible screenings have you attended since we launched our programme? (please tick all that apply)



Q2 Which accessible facility did you avail of?

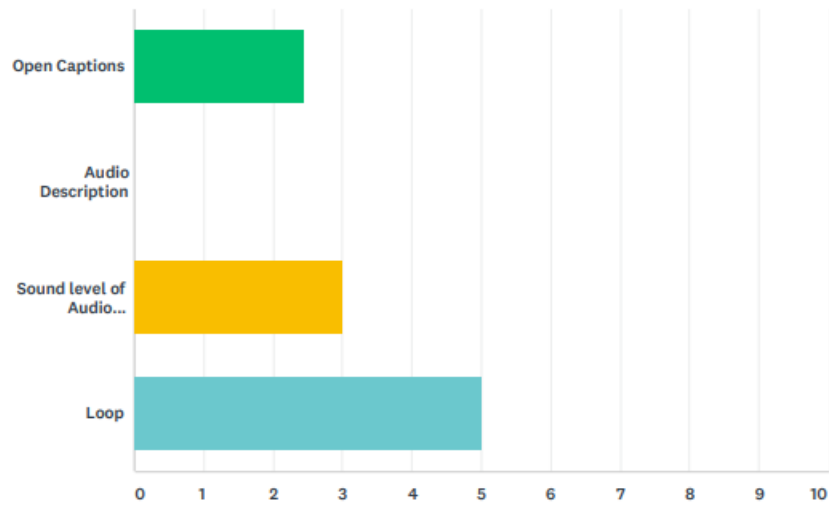


Q3 If you were using equipment that was new to you, how clear were the instructions provided?



Q4 How did you find the accessible facilities? Please rate 1-5 with 1 being very good and 5 being very poor.

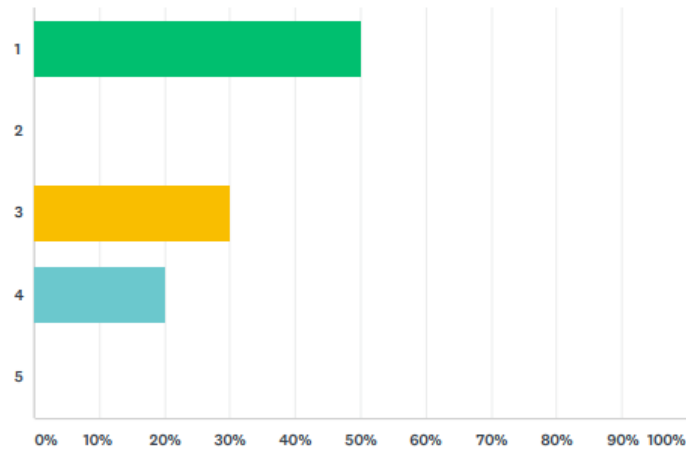
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Open Captions	55.56% 5	11.11% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	33.33% 3	9	2.44
Audio Description	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0	0.00
Sound level of Audio Description	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1	3.00
Loop	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	100.00% 1	1	5.00

Q5 How would you rate IFI as an accessible cinema? Please rate 1-5 with 1 being very good and 5 being very poor

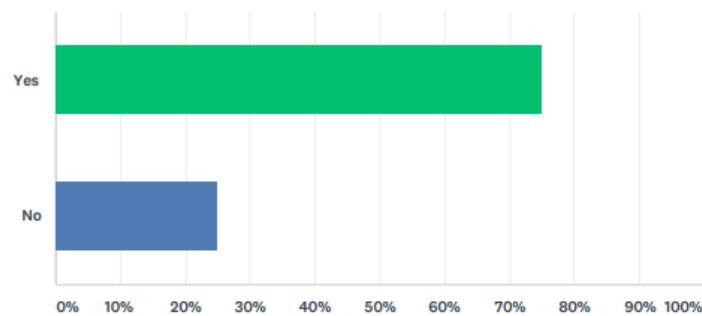
Answered: 10 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	50.00%	5
2	0.00%	0
3	30.00%	3
4	20.00%	2
5	0.00%	0
TOTAL		10

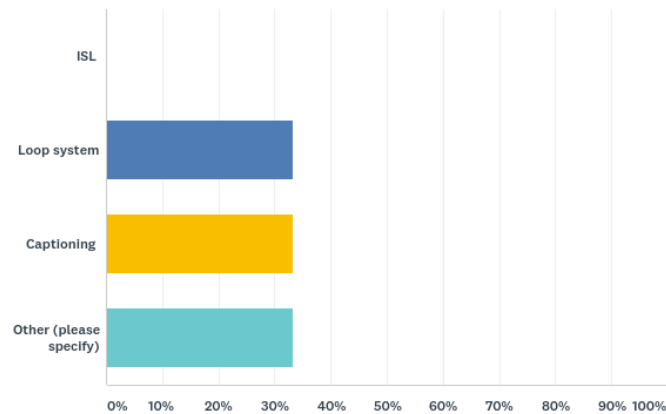
Q6 Would you be willing to take part in a focus group on Accessible Cinema at IFI?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 2



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	75.00%	6
No	25.00%	2
TOTAL		8

Q8 If taking part in a focus group, would you require any of the following facilities:



Manual Surveys 2016/17

Q1. Which of the following have you attended since we launched our programme?

