

## Owl nightclub - Marketing Plan

Marketing is about putting a brand and product out there, it 'refers to activities a company undertakes to promote the buying or selling of a product or service' (Investopedia, 2023). This should be done creatively to attract new customers and spread your message. Marketing if it is done right makes customers feel attracted to your product and makes them want to buy it, 'marketing seeks to take a product or service, identify its ideal customers, and draw the customers' attention to the product or service available' (Investopedia, 2023)

The product for the focus of this essay is a music event and the customer for the event is disabled people. The event is held at the Night Owl in Digbeth Birmingham, it is planned and delivered by Queen Alexandra Community Services attached to the special college, Gillian Leno is the Community Services Hub Manager and organiser of the event. A quote from Gill in an article said 'a night out on the town is something a lot of us take for granted - but for people with disabilities, life on the dancefloor can be difficult.' (BBC News, 2022)

According to a UK charity 'people with disabilities find it difficult to participate in arts and cultural events such as music events'. (Attitude is Everything, 2018). There are lots of barriers that stop disabled people from taking part such as a lack of accessible online information.

The charity Royal National Institute of Blind estimates that there are 'currently over 2 million people living with blindness in the UK'. (RNIB, 2023). There is very little research regarding the experience of people with a Visual Impairment (VI) and their attendance at music events but there is research to show that 'people with VI attend less cultural events, just 19% of those who had VI were attending arts activities as much as they would like, compared to 31% of participants with no impairment'. (McManus and Lord, 2012)

A document created by Advice link says that 18.5% of the UK population is disabled, they have a 'disposable income of over £200 billion' (Advice link, 2016) and are seen as a 'loyal customer base' therefore there are many benefits of making music events more inclusive.

The event organiser said that currently she lacks a marketing plan and conducts marketing without any set of guidelines, therefore a proper marketing plan would be beneficial to her. This essay will involve the creation of a marketing plan using the SOSTAC model, the model includes six stages with elements and methods to use to help put together a plan (Appendix 1). For the first element of the SOSTAC model a qualitative approach was used to learn about the events current situation. A list of questions (Appendix 2) was created to carry out a personal interview with the organiser to gain information about the event. I asked general information and about the events current performance, background situation and any competition to obtain their situation. I reflected on and evaluated the interview with Gill creating an analysis chart (Appendix 3) I have expanded on this chart with more details in the essay.

The organiser set up the inclusive club night as there were no events at a club for disabled adults to go to in Birmingham. Gill explained it gives the chance for disabled people to visit a nightclub, she also said it 'Promises a night of Magic' for disabled people. The event is called 'Come As You Are' (Appendix 4 ). The event has run every month since February 2022.

The organiser of the event described that the event was now doing well after the first 2 club nights no-one came it was slow to start, from April to May last year it began to get busy as word got around. There are now 'hardcore regulars' but new people come every time. The organiser promotes mainly to the college students but also to a variety of other day care centres and setting but she would like to attract more VI customers.

Music selection began with just a laptop using Spotify and Gill would be having to try to sort out music as well as do everything else so having the DJ has helped. He is used to having a set planned playlist.

The only similar event in the Birmingham area is a disability focused disco ran in a working men's club. Gill wanted to start a 'proper' night out in a nightclub. They consider other event organisers as possible collaborators instead of competition. Gill also explained that it is good to learn how inclusive club night events in other parts of the country are run.

The event organiser has many responsibilities that bring challenges including ensuring enough staff, keeping to a budget, networking with other charities, lack of experience in running events and lack of organisation skills.

When asked about their financial situation she stated that the night was now 'sustainable'. This is because it was going to cost £200 per night for the venue, however, the venue Manager decided to donate the venue to the good cause. With the venue now free there is money to pay for security and to pay disabled performers.

For the event organiser it is hard to find the time for planning everything. Gill would also like to make more profit from selling merch. She also said sometimes not having enough staff /volunteers can be a problem, sometime not all the volunteers show up. She explained that making a profit can be a challenge and so can gathering data.

The SMART methodology (Appendix 5 ) will enable the setting of goals that can help overcome some of the challenges that the organiser has to deal with. By using these different aspects when setting goals it will help the event to be more successful and it can help to measure how close the event is to reaching goals.

The main objectives of the event are to increase participants as well as regular VI attendees, increase profits, ensure good communication and organisation, implement a booking system, ensure adequate training for staff and book more performers for added entertainment. (Appendix 6)

After figuring out where the organiser of the event currently is and where she would like to be, I proceed to figure out how the organiser could achieve desired results. The third element of the SOSTAC model was identified, which is the strategies.

Firstly, for the strategies element I will provide my views on the event as a VI person, I will share my experience on the accessibility of the event. From my experience of visiting events I find that there are some key areas that impact on my accessibility as a VI person these are lack of information, purchasing tickets, how staff interact, navigation and orientation problems, lack of awareness and understanding the needs of VI attendees such as how to guide, calling a cane a stick and no areas for guide dogs. I have made my own suggestions for improving access to VI people which will fall into the tactics element (Appendix 10)

Secondly for the strategies element I did some research to look at ways brands can accommodate VI people. There have been campaigns by big companies to include braille in marketing material (Appendix 7). With regards to branding and marketing materials I have made suggestions to make advertising more accessible to VI people (Appendix 10)

Thirdly, for the strategies element qualitative interviews were conducting with 8 people that have attended the events. A list of questions were produced (Appendix 8) and interviews were conducted to get a general idea of the customer's demographics, location etc. and how they perceive the event could bring higher levels of entertainment. There were further questions that helped figure out what made the interviewees come to such events. I also asked if the interviewees were aware of the events presence on social media platforms.

Through the interviews and talking to the organiser an idea of the target market was obtained. People attend with a variety of disabilities including those who experience learning difficulties, Autistic, Neuro divergent, physical disabilities, sensory problems such as Visually Impaired and mental health. They are supported to attend the event through community

services and adult social care provision. Clients attend the events with personal assistants and the event also relies on staff volunteers.

Those attending the event come from a variety of different care providers and different colleges. The majority are ex-students from the QAC who are now on a programme for adults up to 30 years they are living in supported residential settings in the Harborne community.

Some older adults in their 40's and 50's visit from a different care provider, external providers tend to come as group in the organisation's minibus, a minibus comes from Worcestershire on a regular basis. Others may come with a relative, there is someone who travels from Warwick with their mom.

There are different ways to segment the audience, such as location, different ages, different types of disabilities this can help with targeting different organisations to attract new customers, I have made suggestions for attracting new customer segments (Appendix 10)

When interviewing the group that regularly attend the club night they said they go to the event because they love music and dancing, they can socialise and have a good time with friends, they enjoy having a drink, getting dressed up and making the effort to go out. There was a mixture comments when asked about making friends, for younger people it has been more positive they have met new people they wouldn't normally see.

When asked about any issues they mentioned that if they were hungry there was no food to buy. They also said that music requests to the DJ have taken too long. When asked what more would they like they suggested themed nights like a Pride themed with gay anthems and a drag performer. One of the black people interviewed would like a reggae night.

The group agreed there was good customer service and they were made to feel welcome. They said there were some adjustments for disabilities with wheelchair access ramp, all toilets being on same level. Overall the clients were happy with physical access, space was good with enough room for wheelchairs. There was good support and help even if they found surroundings unfamiliar and difficult to navigate.

This links with positioning of the event as a customer friendly and services minded event, the organiser explained she wants a good relationship to visitors and 'Magic'. The caring nature of the event shines through with staff experienced in inclusion. There is dedication for the event to work, it also shows innovation. The event strives to offer good experiences, good music and performances.

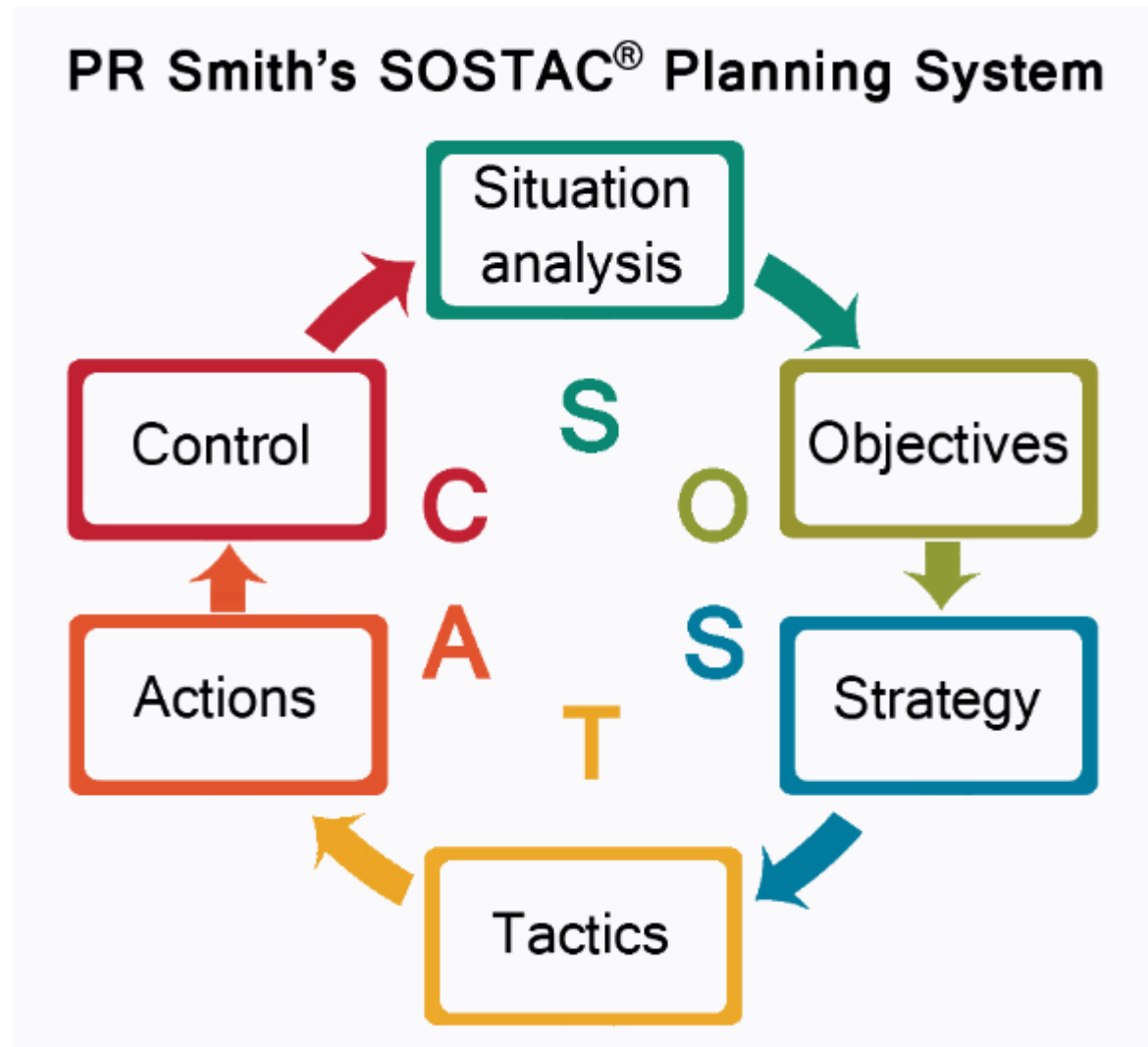
When asked about if they had seen the event promoted on social media they mentioned Facebook, there were no accounts for different platforms. They explained that a media apprentice helped QAC share posts. There was no website, I suggest to create a webpage to provide information to customers and gain their feedback. I also suggest to increase social media using tools and communicating techniques for social networks. (Appendix 10)

There are other similar clubs that run, such as the Bubble Club night in Brick Lane, London. They have set up a steering group, where 'Members of the group work as a team to help produce the Bubble Club events'. (Bubble Club. 2023) The group is Neurodiverse and learning disabled people above the age of 18 and they meet weekly. They also have had a variety of funders including Lottery and Arts Council funding. I suggest the event set up a steering group they could have a variety of tasks (Appendix 10)

The various suggestions for improvements fall into the 'tactics' element. To help with reaching goals and objectives and so that the event will grow successfully the P's marketing tool (Appendix 9) was used as a guide for the tactics element. The tactics were combined with the actions in a table format since there was not much separation in the two elements.

The table contains all the steps the organiser could carry out to implement their marketing strategy (Appendix 10).

After the tactics and action it's important to explain how the organiser could measure the performance of their actions and tactics they used. This can be done by providing a description of control, the last element of the SOSTAC model. Control is about monitoring and evaluation, finding out and knowing how you personally feel. It is important to evaluate your own work at all times, remembering what went well and what didn't go as planned. There are a series of questions (Appendix 11) that the organiser could use to analyse their performance and ensure that they are moving in the right direction. Once the Steering group are set up they can discuss how things went with staff. They will cover what things went well and what things could be made better with evaluations of the results, this is an additional action in the marketing plan. (Appendix 10)



## Appendix 2 - Questions for organiser (Gill Leno)

- Background on who you are, what your job is?
- Why did you decide to run this event? What were your objectives?
- Did you do any market research (survey, discussion) on whether people (young) wanted this type of event?
- Who is the event for / your target audience?
- How often have you ran the event? Are you planning to run it again?
- What location / venue did you choose and why?
- Did you have publicity, get on news etc?
- Where did you share the event to find people to attend? Social media, what platforms worked best? Who did you share it with, charities, organisations?
- Did you design posters / leaflets? Any branding used?
- Who provided the music / entertainment at your event? What different types of music entertainment did you have, artists? Live band, DJ, silent disco, sensory room?
- What were the costs involved? Did you have a budget?
- Were you able to reduce costs in anyway? Gain funding / free support?
- Did you consider accessibility for disabled people (Physical, VI, HI)
- How did you sell tickets? Did you sell them on a digital platform?
- What was most successful in the planning and running of the event?
- What could you have improved?
- Did you get help with the planning of the event? Who helped?

## Appendix 3 – SWOT chart

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Strengths</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good venue it is a proper club</li> <li>• Location in central Birmingham</li> <li>• Variety of communication and advertisement methods</li> <li>• An enthusiastic planner with experience of disabilities and inclusion</li> <li>• Offering a safe, fun and engaging event</li> <li>• Disabled DJ employed to play music</li> </ul> | <b>Weaknesses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No website</li> <li>• Lack of fundraising</li> <li>• Inaccessible information for VI</li> <li>• Limited time to prepare for the event</li> <li>• Not enough performers</li> <li>• Lack of group experience in planning</li> <li>• Not all volunteers are trained</li> <li>• Cost of transport to and from the events</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Opportunities</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All inclusive event</li> <li>• Learn from other similar music inclusive club events in the UK</li> <li>• Build connections with charities and organisations for future partnerships</li> <li>• Valuable experience for volunteers</li> <li>• Collective enjoyment in a club environment</li> </ul>                              | <b>Threats</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not enough volunteers</li> <li>• Lack of transport for volunteers to travel to event</li> <li>• Public transport issues</li> <li>• Do not attract enough Visually Impaired people to attend</li> <li>• Late changes (for example volunteers, musicians, entertainment dropping out late)</li> <li>• Limited availability of dates to book venue for</li> <li>• Capacity of venue</li> </ul> |

## Appendix 4 – Poster / Facebook page / photos



**COME AS YOU ARE**

18

MONDAY, 18 APRIL 2022 FROM 19:00-23:00 UTC+01

**COME AS YOU ARE**

The Night Owl

21 Mar 2022 18 Apr 2022 16 May 2022 +1

**Details**

- Event by QAC Community Services
- [The Night Owl](#)
- Duration: 4 hr
- Public - Anyone on or off Facebook

Come As You Are is an inclusive nightclub evening at the amazing Night Owl in Birmingham. For everyone 18+ - inclusive of neurodiversity, autism, and other support needs, plus partners, friends, family! £5 on the door - carers go free. See you there!! [See less](#)

Birmingham, United Kingdom









## Appendix 5– SMART Methodology

## What does SMART mean?

**S**

### Specific

Be as specific as possible with the desired goal.

#### EXAMPLE

Close \$10,000 in sales by the end of the quarter.

**M**

### Measurable

Set a measurable goal to track and quantify the progress.

#### EXAMPLE

Aim to walk one mile, three times a week.

**A**

### Achievable

Set a realistic but challenging goal that is reasonable to achieve.

#### EXAMPLE

Increase newsletter sign-ups by 10% month over month.

**R**

### Relevant

Align the desired goal with the broader business goal.

#### EXAMPLE

Create and test two versions of the email before sending out the email blast.

**T**

### Time-bound

Set a goal with a target end date.

#### EXAMPLE

Grow the number of monthly users for the mobile app to 1,000 by the end of four months.

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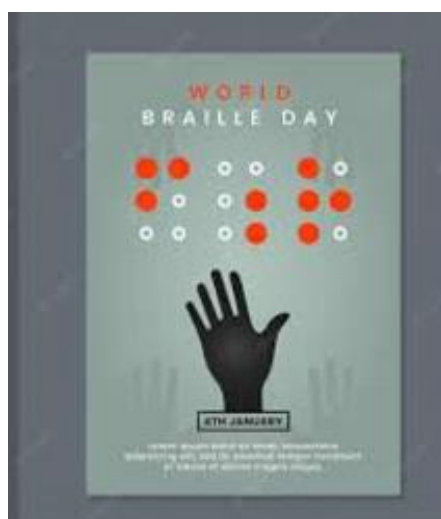
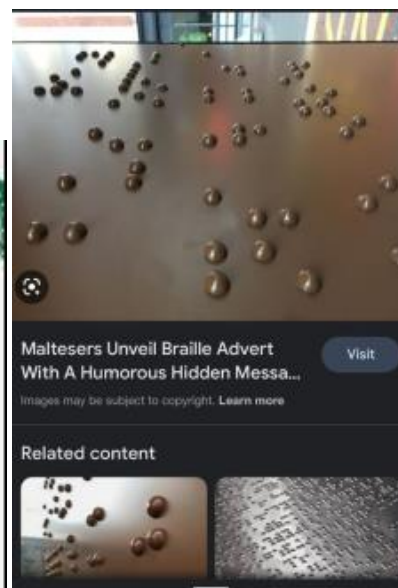
## Appendix 6 – Event SMART Objectives

| Goal  | S   | M   | A  | R   | T  |
|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| To increase participants for future events by at least 25% over the next 6 months, also increase public awareness and marketing campaigns by using social media | To increase participants by 25% over the next 6 months.                     | Can easily compare takings on the door from one event to another through simple calculations. | Increased public awareness and marketing should increase participants.                     | Increasing participants is directly related to overcoming challenges, especially in making a profit.          | As the goal is to increase participants over a 6 month period  |
| Increase regular Visually Impaired attendees by 20 over the next 3 months   | To increase participants by extra 20.                                       | Can ask when booking about disabilities or survey before and after 3 months                   | Increase access of marketing materials, adjustments to venue should increase participants. | Large community of VI people in the West Midlands area, many VI organisations that could approach to promote. | As the goal is to increase participants over the next 3 months |
| To increase profits generated by the event by at least 10% compared to the last event.  | This goal is clear – to increase initial profits by 20% by hosting a raffle | Can easily calculate how much of your overall profit came from this raffle.                   | A 10% increase is not much a raffle is a popular way to do this.                           | As it will depend on a return of investment   | As the aim is to increase profits by 20% at the next event.    |
| To create a steering group  | To ensure optimal   | Can easily list all   | Ex- students of QAC that   | Organisation and  | As communicatio  |

|   |   |   |  |   |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|
| before the event to help with good communication and organisation., the group will host weekly meetings   | communication and organisation so that the event goes to plan | members and keep a list of dates when the group meets.  | attend the event visit the Day Centre can form group   | communication is essential for an event to be successful, especially involving different parties        | n should happen weekly.   |
| Implement a simple booking system As there are no ticket sales and to be better organised and to get an idea of how many people will attend                               | To allow for greater organisation through an booking system.  | Not measurable, but it enables measurement of how many people will attend the event, contributing to better organisation. | Booking systems like Eventbrite are quite standard.  | For the success of an event need to know how many people are coming to accurately plan for an event.    | As it implements a booking system for your next event. It's also convenient |
| Ensure adequate training in VI for staff, all staff to be trained over the next 6 months  | to train 50% of staff by 20%                                  | Can easily keep a log of the staff that have completed the training.  | There is a charity to do the training for free and staff will be able to do it in worktime as professional development | If the event wants to have more VI people and for them to come back they need to be supported correctly | As the aim is to ensure staff training over 6 month period.                 |
| To invest in booking bands / solo artist within the next two months to attend every other event over the coming year. To ensure the entertainment needs of events are met | it mentions booking band for every other month                | Whether or not you book a band / artist makes this completely measurable.   | Approach One Love Band, MAC Makes Music, BIMM performers for support   | will be more entertaining with a variety of performances  | Will have the bands / artists booked within 2 months.                       |

## Appendix 7 – Examples of marketing materials for Visually Impaired





## Appendix 8 – Interview Questions for attendees

- What area do you live in?
- Age:
- Disability:
- Are you at college?
- How did you find out about the event?
- Did you see the event on social media?
- Did you see the event advertised on posters?
- Was it easy to get tickets?
- Do you think the ticket price is reasonable?
- Did you go with a carer?
- Were there other people at the event to provide help / support?
- Did you go with friends? Did you make any new friends there?
- What is important about these events?
- What makes this event entertaining / exciting for you?
- What could be introduced to events that has not been done before?
- Do you like the music, was it the type of music that you like? What other music would you have liked to hear?
- Did you like the venue / place where the event was? Was it suitable for the event? Were able to find your way around the venue, were the toilet facilities ok for you? Was there parking available?
- What did you like most about the event?
- What could have been improved? Is there anything that would have made the event better for you?

## Appendix 9 – P's Marketing Mix

### **Product strategy**

- Offer a safe and inclusive event for disabled and VI people
- Create 'magic'
- To have more performances, activities
- Improve accessibility
- Improve the branding and logo
- A proper night out in a nightclub

### **Price strategy**

- Have special early bird offers
- Keep it free for companions / carers
- Make money through extra sales on day, raffle, food, merch
- Venue was booked originally booked for 6 months for £200 per month
- The manager of venue decided to give the venue for free.
- Not paying for the venue has made the event sustainable
- Money taken goes to cover staff costs and security.
- Money taken from the door is put into a separate pot (banked with code)
- Pay all performers (band and DJ) as disabled want them to earn a living

## **Promotional strategy**

- Word of mouth
- Use more social media sources
- Social media – set up 18 months ago some help to share on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook
- Flyers have been put through doors, handed out at meetings and events.
- Organiser emails professional contacts with e flyer.
- QAC broadcast by resharing, social media apprentice helps with this.
- Promotional poster could be improved and updated and made more accessible
- Did consider tickets but decided to just see who turned up
- No need to pre-book tickets
- Promote to wider audience as mainly QAC students
- Promote to different care providers, colleges
- Email professional working in organisations with disabled people.

## **Place strategy**

- Venue is available, has been used for previous events
- Good parking is available
- Located in central Birmingham, difficulties with public transport at the moment due to Tramlane being built in Digbeth High Street
- If it becomes very popular a bigger venue maybe needed or to sell tickets in advance to limit numbers.
- 350 capacity but that would be for non-wheelchair users.
- Car park opposite with flat access from gate right opposite to the club
- Have wheelchair ramps, disabled toilets, the event is all on one level.

## **Positioning**

- QAC has a good name for educational setting for disabled people
- Organiser known by many students has experience in working with young people in relationship education

## **Packaging**

- Overall brand should be more appealing and accessible to VI
- More variety of themed nights
- More entertainment

## **People**

- Recruit quality staff and enough volunteers for a good experience for the customer.
- There's lots of help from support staff for those attending.
- Make training available in disabilities / VI for all staff
- Consider the needs of visually impaired people
- House managers go with clients along with Personal Assistants or parents.
- Ben is the DJ he has a disability
- To find live bands with musicians with disabilities.



## Appendix 10 – Tactics and Action Table

| Objective theme                                    | Tactic  | Action  | When  |
|--|---|---|---|
| Increase attendees                                 | Target new customer segments<br><br>Age<br><br>Location<br><br>Different type of disabilities | Contact colleges for younger people, Day care centre with older residents.<br><br>West Midlands area - blind colleges in Hereford, Worcester, Loughborough.<br><br>Contact local charities with clients with a range of disabilities e.g. National Autistic Society, Sense, RNIB, Mencap, Down's Syndrome Association. Hospitals links for people with rare diseases, Royal Orthopaedic hospital for physically disabled. | Once Steering group is set up they can support with this  |
| Increase public awareness (to gain more attendees) | Use more social media channels  | With support from apprentice set up Instagram, Twitter accounts<br><br>Make use of various available tools for managing multiple social media accounts at once  | Set new accounts with support from social media apprentice after the summer holidays  |
|  | Create a webpage and ensure accessibility for VI  | Add accessibility information on parking, how to get to the venue<br><br>Add Feedback form for complements, comments and complaints.<br><br>Include information which may be important to attendees with VI, layout of venue etc<br><br>Option for pages to be viewed without images, provide image and video descriptions  | Set up meeting with Social media apprentice to discuss support at the beginning of next term (September)<br><br>Set up meeting with QAC IT technical support team to discuss before end of term |

|  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
|  |  | <p>Make titles clear and colour schemes that can change to provide good contrast.</p> <p>Provide clear, large text that is aligned to the left</p>   |   |
|  | Press<br>(possible radio mention / article)  | <p>Contact radio stations for blind / disabled</p> <p>Create content for a Press /newspaper article with the support of QAC media students.</p> <p>Add article to local Talking Newspaper</p>  | <p>By end of year</p> <p>Make contact with media course leader before end of term</p> <p>Set up meeting with Talking Newspaper in next 2 months</p>   |
| Increase profits                           | <p>Funding</p> <p>Merchandise</p> <p>Donations for raffle</p> <p>Catering / sale of food</p>   | <p>Set up go Fund site / Crowd funder site, Pay Pal (or similar)</p> <p>Investigate funding from charities, music inclusion funding.</p> <p>Buy Tshirts, to print 'Come as You Are' design</p> <p>To contact local businesses / visit shops for donations, send out letter to parents at college etc</p> <p>Speak to catering at college to provide food or hire burger van (or similar)</p> | <p>Once webpage has been created add to the webpage. Once Steering group has been set up they can support this Task</p> <p>Make contact with QAC printing services to discuss</p> <p>Once steering group has been set up</p> <p>Ensure snacks / food by next event June event</p> |
| Ensure good communication and organisation | Set up Steering group to have weekly meetings to discuss plans, review with set task and to help with set up<br>Improving relationships and networking | <p>Decide on theme produce / distribute themed poster. Decorate venue, check stage, equipment, facilities for issues</p> <p>Produce song list for DJ, Book artists</p> <p>Help with social media. Contact other colleges / organisations /charities to further promote</p>   | Begin to ask around at next event and at the day centre Hub for interested people, aim to be set up in next 2 months.   |
| Booking System                             | Use Eventbrite as a booking system   | Add event to Eventbrite, check   | Test out at next event in June  |

|                       |  |  |   |
|-----------------------|--|--|---|
|                       |  | number of bookings day before to ensure enough staff, to inform catering etc.  |   |
| Volunteers & training | Recruit volunteers and provide disability awareness training or equality and diversity training            | <p>To have enough volunteers in place and trained.</p> <p>To help staff feel confident understanding the needs of and assisting VI attendees</p>   | <p>Contact charities such as Guide Dog for blind, local universities for support, post ads.</p> <p>Contact charities that can provide practical training and support</p> <p>Make sure Guide Dog policies are understood by staff by next event.</p> <p>Provide VI training online training or handout by next event</p> |
| Artists / performers  | Recruit and make requests for performers by making links with music inclusion charities and music colleges | Contact MAC Makes Music<br>One Love Band (Band member is Teacher from local VI school)<br>BIMM   | Ryan to make contact over the summer holidays   |
| Post event activities | Variety of tasks<br><br>(can be supported by Steering group once set up)                                   | <p>Post about success of event on social media platforms, upload pictures / videos taken during the event</p> <p>Thank the attendees, DJ's / performers / volunteers for participating, handle any payments for DJ's etc</p> <p>Evaluate the success of the event, discuss issues, challenges faced, begin preparation and planning for next event</p> | <p>On day after event</p> <p>In week after event</p> <p>With various staff and some attendee, in week after event</p>   |

## Appendix 11 – Control Questions

How many people attended?

How much did merch, raffle, food make?

Did the event received any funding, sponsorship?

What was the feedback from participants, volunteers, artists attending ?

What was on website feedback forms?

Any testimonials added to website?

Were Facebook and other social media goals achieved?

What was the traffic on social media sites?

How did the booking system go, get feedback on use of?

How many charity, organisation and other leads have been made?

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