

# >> StageTEXT

Every word counts

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## Stagetext Marketing Pack

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Find out more at

[www.stagetext.org](http://www.stagetext.org) | 020 7377 0540

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## Stagetext Marketing Pack

1. **About Stagetext.**
2. **What is captioning and live subtitling?**
3. **About audiences for captioning and live subtitles.**
4. **Top tips for marketing to current caption users.**
5. **Top tips for marketing to current attenders.**
6. **Top tips for reaching new audiences.**
7. **How can Stagetext support you?**



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## 1. About Stagertext.

Stagertext provides captioning and live subtitling services to theatres and cultural venues to make their activities accessible to people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

We were established in May 2000 by Peter Pullan, Merfyn Williams and Geoff Brown, each of whom had varying types of deafness and a determination to improve access to the performing arts for all deaf, deafened and hard of hearing people.

The Stagertext team delivers over 400 captioned performances and live subtitled talks a year, as well as supporting in-house events, marketing activities and providing training.

## 2. What is captioning and live subtitling?

Theatre captions are similar to television subtitles and give people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing access to live performance. The actors' words appear on a caption screen (or screens), placed next to the stage or in the set, at the same time as they are spoken or sung. Captions include additional information such as speaker names, sound effects and offstage noises.

A trained captioner prepares the captions in advance, formatting the script into the captioning software, working with a DVD recording of the show and viewing the production several times. They then cue the captions live as the action unfolds on stage.

Stagertext works with museums, galleries and other cultural venues to make their talks, lectures and tours accessible through live subtitles, also known as speech-to-text transcription (STT).

A speech-to-text reporter (STTR) transcribes every word a speaker says using a special electronic shorthand keyboard which allows them to type phonetically. The words are then immediately converted back into English text by a computer software program, enabling the STTR to keep up with the speed of spoken English. For tours the audio is relayed to an STTR and the text is outputted to tablet devices, which the users carry with them as they move around the tour.

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## 3. About audiences for captioning and live subtitles.

The primary audiences for captioning and live subtitles are:

- Deaf People
- Hard of Hearing People
- Deafened People

Caption and live subtitle users can fall into any one of these categories and each individual may have a different perspective.

In the UK there are 11 million people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, that's 1 in 6 of the population and just over 40% of the over 50s and 70% of the over 70s. It's a large market of potential new audiences, as well as current audiences who could receive a much better cultural experience, and it's a growing market, expected to reach 15.6 million by 2035.

### **D/deaf People**

There is a strong cultural identity among the deaf community, often referred to as 'capital D' Deaf. Many people who have been deaf since birth use British Sign Language (BSL) to communicate.

Using deaf with a lower case 'd' usually refers to the full, broad range of people who have some level of deafness.

### **Hard of Hearing People**

Hard of Hearing (HoH) refers to someone who doesn't hear well. This may be because they were born without hearing or they may have lost some or all of their hearing later in life. It is often used to describe someone who has lost their hearing gradually.

### **Deafened People**

Deafened refers to people who were born hearing and became severely or profoundly deaf after learning to speak. The hearing loss is often sudden and can be caused by an accident, an illness or exposure to loud noise.

Captioning and live subtitles are also useful for:

### **People whose first language is not English**

Seeing the words at the same time as hearing them is very helpful for people who do not have English as their first language.

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## **Students**

People who are studying the text of a play can find it useful to see the words as they are spoken.

## **General public**

Stagetext receives a lot of positive feedback from the general public about the usefulness of captioning particularly for performances in acoustically variable venues where the actors speak quietly, with strong accents or which are particularly text-heavy. Often caption users find out about the service through friends and family who have seen captioning and live subtitles at an event.

**More information about audiences is available at [accessibletheatre.org.uk](https://accessibletheatre.org.uk)**

## **4. Top tips for marketing to current caption users.**

- Announce which events are captioned or live subtitled when you announce the event and first put it on sale
- Have an area or seats held in the best place for the audience to see the captions or live subtitles and ensure that the box office is briefed as to where this is
- Be clear and direct in your communications
- Ensure box office and front of house staff are briefed on communication tactics
- Stagetext can provide training and advice to staff to enable them to feel more confident when communicating with deaf, deafened and hard of hearing audiences
- Provide online booking or communications by email and text, rather than over the phone
- Ensure that dates are listed on your website and on any marketing materials for the event
- Think about how you might invest in current users so that they can spread the word to new audiences
- Advertise future captioned performances or live subtitles talks in your programmes
- Direct marketing to those who are currently using the service
- Tell Stagetext about your event

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## **5. Top tips for marketing to current attenders.**

Many of your current audience, who are not yet aware of captioning or live subtitles, may benefit from the service.

- Think about advertising the captioned or live subtitled performance wherever the event is advertised
- Don't only put details of the event on an access page, some hard of hearing people do not consider themselves to have an access need and would not look at an access page for information
- Ensure that there is a clear description of captioning and/or live subtitles on your website and/or your printed brochures. If possible it is also a good idea to have a description at the point of sale
- Brief your box office/sales team so that they are confident in talking about captioning and the benefits it offers
- Advertise the service in your front of house areas on the day/evening of the event
- Talk about captioning and live subtitles in your general marketing materials
- If you have a loop system, consider handing out leaflets about captioning to audiences that use it

## **6. Top tips for reaching new audiences.**

- Contact your local deaf and hard of hearing groups
- Contact local lip reading teachers and lip reading groups
- Find out about any events for deaf and hard of hearing people taking place in your local area
- Think about advertising captioned or live subtitled events directly to older audiences e.g. your local University of the Third Age (U3A), publications that target the over 50s market
- If you have a Google AdWords account think about using some of your Pay Per Click (PPC) activity to promote captioned or live subtitled events
- Create a social media campaign around your captioned and live subtitled event, or target some of your social media advertising to the audience
- Ensure you advertise your captioned or live subtitled events to everyone to help spread word of mouth
- Have clear information about captioning and live subtitles on your marketing and at point of sale, including any ticket offers or discounts

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## 7. How can Stagertext support you?

- We can list your shows on our website which lists captioned performances and live subtitled events around the country, [www.stagetext.org](http://www.stagetext.org)
- We can feature your event on our website or in our e-newsletter
- As part of our social media activity we can include any captioned and live subtitled events happening at your venue
- We can feature your event as part of our Google AdWords activity
- Stagertext can provide training to your front of house and box office staff
- We offer marketing support and advice to venues and producers
- We can send you flyers and banners for your front of house to promote the service
- We have feedback cards available for you to distribute at your venue

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