

support · inform · empower



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For Commissioners
Make Sure Your Film Reaches the Audience



When you're creating a film, it is important to consider one essential question: why do you want to make this film?

Your Objectives

Everything begins with your goal for your film content. Whether you want to use film to raise awareness or spread a particular message, it's important to articulate this clearly at the outset.

Your Audience

The success of any video project rests on your understanding of your target audience. Make sure you have a firm understanding of who your audience are and how they think so you can create a film that appeals to and engages them. You may need to conduct thorough research into the target audience. From there you can base all of the creative decisions involved in the production on solid fact and research.

Your Core Message

Put yourselves in the audience's shoes. Imagine they have just watched your film.

Consider these questions:

What do you want your audience to do after watching your video?

What do you want them to think?

How do you want them to feel?

Once you've got your answer, you need to turn it into the key message that your audience needs to encourage them to think, feel and act that way. This will become the core message of your film. Make sure you can articulate this in one short sentence.

Keep your film to a few key messages. The more messages your video content contains, the greater the risk of confusing your audience.

Create A Production Brief

This written document will summarise the aims and objectives of the film as well as set the expectations, the tone and the timeline. It will serve as a guide during the whole production process to ensure nothing goes off-track.

The brief should include all the research and information you've collected so far:

Your objective(s).

Your target audience and any insights you have into them.

What you want your audience to feel, think and do.

References to existing films/ videos that you like the style of or the way the messaging is conveyed.

Guidelines on style.

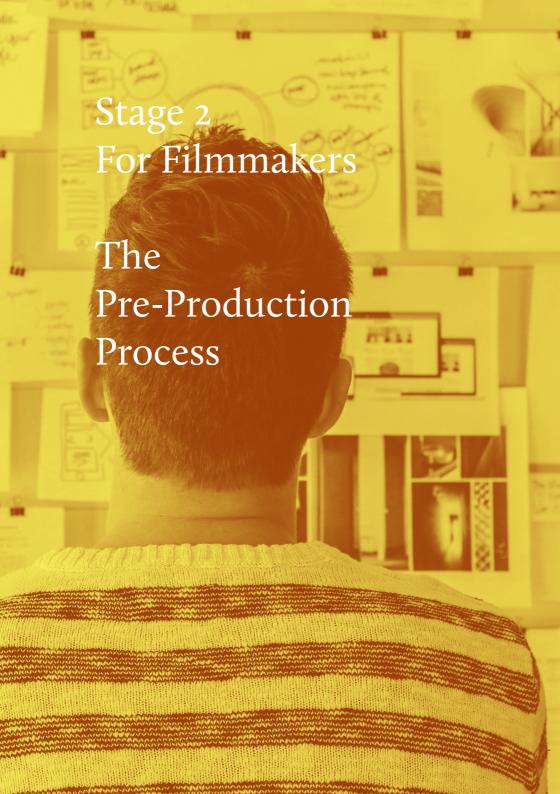
The core message(s) behind your video.

Your mandatories (logos / streamlines).

Assets you have that you want to include or could be used.

Your budget and deadline.





Develop a Concept

Taking your video brief as a starting point, it's time to come up with a creative approach. Essentially, this is the idea or concept of the film. It's useful to use references (images/ videos) to clearly show the style or structure you'd like to use.

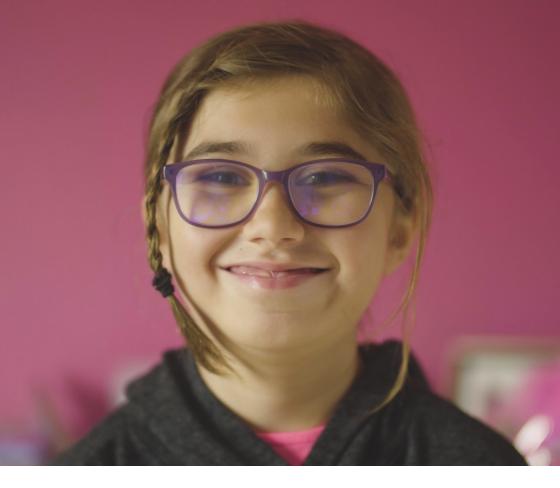
For example:

Speaking direct-to-camera can portray you as a friend and educator.

Time lapse photography is a thrilling display of artistic, cookery or construction skills.

Aerial shots reflect a limitless, panoramic scale that's set to transform something in a big way...

By focusing on a certain 'look' or stylistic tone, you'll manage to convey your message clearly and in an engaging way.



Meet the Participants

It's important to meet whoever will be in your film. This could be someone you interview or want to feature in the film. Having an initial meeting will be an opportunity to discuss the brief and find out the best approach to take. You want the participants to feel clear about their contribution and comfortable about their role in the film. It's good practice to follow up the meeting with a written summary of discussion and agreed next steps.

Production Experience

In our experience of working with children and young people with learning difficulties, and their families, meeting with them at the outset is a critical. It is an opportunity to start a working relationship based on mutual trust and understanding of the project's outcomes and process. The young people can meet you and get to know you and the process.

We had to be patient and understand issues such as anxiety, impulsiveness and difficulties with social communication. We had to understand that timetables would need to be flexible due to families being too busy or the young people being too unwell to fit us into their already complex lives. We showed them previous films and talked through the process. Sometimes taking along the film equipment to explain how the camera works can help reduce the worry about filming.

Preparation was the key, and this involved a lot of work on the part of the families and those around them. Each shoot was discussed in detail and a schedule created that outlined timings and activities. We discussed the best locations to film, times of day that would suit the young person and best approach to the filming. Keeping family/ parents in each scene also made the young people relax. Choosing easy everyday scenes to film helped the young people ease into the filming and gave them a sense of confidence from the outset.

Write A Script Outline

Create a written outline of the film. This should be a description that includes the visual imagery and spoken dialogue. A script should also include details about specific locations, actors, props, and actions.

A good script needs to:

Be human and natural.

Be engaging, interesting and emotive.

Be interesting to your target audience.

Be simple and easy to understand (so that anyone could pick up and understand).

Be short and concise.

Makes sense when read aloud.

Convey your core message.

Share the script with trusted colleagues and the participants to check the script content.



Create a Storyboard

You may also want to create a storyboard. A storyboard will likely show every shot of the video in detail, which will then be followed during production. Your reliance on a storyboard during the production depends on the type and complexity of the video. Many videos simply use a detailed script when it comes time to film.

Schedule the Shoot

In this part of pre-production, everything related to the shoot of the video is organised and scheduled.

This long list of planning includes:

Scouting and securing a location (indoors or outdoors).

Organising all equipment.

Acquiring all necessary licences and permissions.

Putting in place contingency plans if anything goes wrong.

Writing a production schedule.

Risk assessments.





Organise the shoot

The final step before filming can begin is to organise all the crew, equipment and assets required for the shoot.

The essentials are:

Call times: tell each of the crew and participants where to be, when to be there and when they will be finished as well as their role for the day.

Timings are an important consideration. Young people require a regular break during and in between scenes and the shoot schedule needs to reflect this.

Locations: everyone needs to have the address or addresses for the shoot and it's always a good idea to include a map so it's nice and clear. If people need to park their car, include local car park details or local public transport information.

When working with children and young people with learning difficulties, the location will have to be the subject of negotiation. It is important to work in places that are familiar and comfortable for the young person. Sensitivity to heat, noise and light can be key factors for people with learning difficulties, for example. We found that using familiar locations was very useful for helping the young people relax and gain confidence early. We scheduled these familiar locations as the first scenes to achieve this.

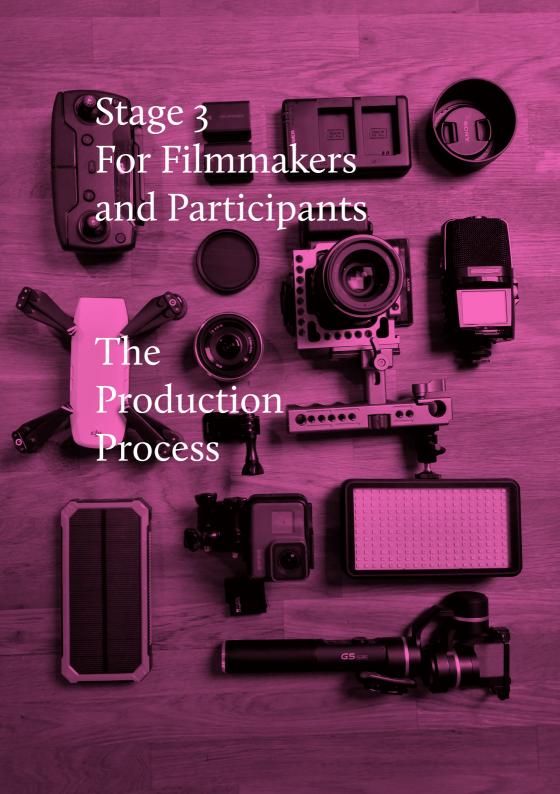
Equipment: the production company will list all the equipment that is required on each day of the shoot. The list will usually be broken down in the camera department, lighting department, grip department, and sound department.

We were careful to film with minimal kit. This means we didn't take long to set up and didn't intimidate the young people with lots of kit around them. We often filmed using natural light so we didn't need to use our large film lights.

Brief the participants: ensure everyone involved in the filming have all the relevant details for their role. This could include the script, interview questions, what they need to wear or what they shouldn't wear.

Working with children and young people with learning difficulties means that the briefing described above for the participants is especially important. As some young people will have preferences about clothing, including hypersensitivity to some textiles, the usual aesthetic preferences may not be applicable.





The Shoot

A typical filming day will be something like this:

Setup: all the gear, personnel and participants will arrive for set up.

Film crew: they will get all the camera, sound and lighting equipment ready. The director and producer, whilst everything is being set up the director and producer will meet with you and the participants to brief everyone on the day's activities. Once the equipment is in place the cast will be called in so that the lighting can be tweaked for each individual and the sound levels will be checked.

Filming: where all the shots are gathered. The amount that is shot each day very much depends on the complexity of the shots and the type of location.

It's important to keep the filming as relaxed and enjoyable as possible and ensure there's enough time to make sure we capture the best content possible. To also help with this it's a good idea to include regular breaks and to have a good supply of refreshments.

Young people with learning difficulties are especially appreciative of regular breaks. They may also have difficulty coping with noise or strong lights and with understanding or remembering instructions. It is important to use clear and consistent language – best

not to say 'Break a leg!' immediately before beginning the filming! Before starting the filming, talk through the scene with the young person, explaining exactly what you want them do. It's often a good idea to ask them to practice or show them what you want them to do, even if the scene is a simple walking one. The more you explain, the clearer it will be - and will avoid multiple takes for the young person. It's also important to ask the young person for their ideas: what would they like to do? Follow their lead. They are co-directing with you!

Pack-down: once the filming has finished for the day and the location won't be needed again the equipment is packed down.



Production Experience:

Here are some important processes and advice for producing films with young people:

Meet with the young person to get to know them and chat through the film.

Find out what they want to contribute and what they would be comfortable doing.

Find out the best time of day for filming with the young person. Mornings are often good.

Schedule regular breaks and keep filming sessions to around 30 minutes.

When possible, do half day production schedules. Young people can find a full filming day very demanding and exhausting.

Make sure you know the legal regulations for working with young people.

Ensure you have all necessary consents from the participants for publication and ongoing distribution of the films from the outset.

Conducting Interviews

Here's some advice for capturing successful interviews:

Make sure the interviewee receives the questions in advance and in a format they can understand.

Choose a location that makes the interviewee comfortable and relaxed.

Keep the tone of the interview relaxed and conversational.

Establish the process clearly at the outset. Make sure the interviewee knows how the process works: that you might have to stop for sound issues or ask interviewee to repeat or rephrase answers.

Schedule enough time to conduct a full interview and to reduce rush or time pressure.



Production Experience:

Young people with learning difficulties usually find clear and consistent language the best, so ask questions in clear, unambiguous, language. If you repeat a question during the interview, try not to use language that is different from before. Be sure to focus on what is going well during the interview and praise the young person. It's best to treat the interview as an informal chat. Do some fun, easy questions to start with to relax the young person. These don't have to be interview questions - just everyday chat to get started. It's also important to ask the young person to sit in the right place as early as possible. This helps them get used to the equipment around them.

Stage 4
For Filmmakers
and Commissioners

The Post-Production Process

Once all filming is complete, it's time to begin editing.

Good edits:

Are as short as possible while containing all the necessary information.

Are cut in a way that makes the video easy to understand and follow.

Are visually interesting.

Get across the core message of the video brief and script.

Include a motivating call-to-action to encourage your audience to take action.

When giving feedback to the filmmakers on your video, be clear, specific and ensure everything you request stays on-brief. Always allow a reasonable amount of time for your changes to be made.

It can a good idea, where possible, to invite the young people to come and see the editing process and learn how it works. They can also share their ideas and feel part of the edit.

Using Music

Any music included in in your video should:

Complement the mood and tone of the video.

Help to get across your core message.

Be appropriate for your target audience.

Match the pace of the edit.

You'll have to buy a licence or pay fees for the music you want in your video.

Here are a few music libraries that are worth using:

premiumbeat.com

<u>audiojungle.net</u>

<u>audionetwork.com</u>

musicbed.com





Once your video content is filmed, edited, formatted and hosted, you can begin to distribute and promote it according to your release strategy and social media strategy. Keep in mind your core message and your target audience.

You'll need to market your video where your audience will see it, and in a way that makes your core message clear. There are many ways to distribute your video, and they will vary depending on your audience.

Some of the most common are:

Social media seeding on sites where your target audience spend time.

Using Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) to optimise your video for relevant search keywords.

Reaching out to your audience's key influencers to help spread the video.

Engaging in PR to promote your video content.

Investing in ad spend to push promotion across digital platforms.

Incorporating the video into your email marketing.

Production Experience

If your film involves young people with learning difficulties, it is important to acknowledge the enormous effort they have made to take part. It is essential to let the participants know how the films will be used. Keep them up to date with any big 'wins' from the films such as wide distribution or positive feedback. Let them see an early draft to check they like the shape it is taking and check they are comfortable with the scenes you've used. And, if they are proud of it, they will share it!





