

Traverse Theatre wins award

The Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh has won a prize in a special award scheme to highlight companies in Scotland that do more to help blind and partially sighted people.

The Go Shop Awards scheme – launched by the Royal National Institute of Blind People Scotland, in partnership with Caledonian Business School with Glasgow Caledonian University – aims to encourage improvements that would make shopping, travel, leisure, banking and even web-surfing more accessible to people with sight loss.

The theatre was nominated by Anne Dignan from Edinburgh, who has the sight-loss condition, macular degeneration.

“This was a difficult category to choose from as many venues in Edinburgh are very aware,” said Anne, “but the Traverse deserves a particular mention due to the personal assistance and care given by all the staff, ranging from the booking office to the rest of the front of house staff.

“People requiring assistance are recorded in a diary and seats in the front row are reserved. Assistance is given to escort you directly to your seat via lifts and corridors, to avoid stairs. You are escorted back up to and from the café area at interval time and then finally at the end of the performance.

“Touch tours are also on offer for some of the performances which enable you to go on stage and experience handling props or speaking to technical staff sometimes. Guide dogs are also welcome.”

Speaking about receiving the prize, Kath Lowe, Front of House Manager at the Traverse Theatre, said, “Hearing that we won the RNIB award was absolutely fantastic. We try to integrate access into everything that we do at the Traverse, looking at the whole experience from the point when someone enters the

building.

“Sometimes the most difficult thing about coming into a theatre is not knowing what to expect, so from the time of booking we will tell people with access needs exactly what they’ll experience when they come to see a show.

“All of the Traverse home produced shows have a sign language performance and an audio interpreted performance, which each include a touch tour of the set prior to the performance. We believe that access is integral to theatre productions now, that it’s not just an add on.”

The Go Shop Awards scheme have been launched by RNIB Scotland this year to kickstart improvements that would make shopping, travel, leisure facilities, banking and even web-surfing more accessible to people with sight loss.

Other winners include branches of such household names as Accessorize, Waitrose and Boots.

For more information on access at the Traverse, visit www.traverse.co.uk, call the Box Office on 0131 228 1404 or email kath.lowe@traverse.co.uk

To hear Kath Lowe speaking about the award and access at the Traverse, please click [here](#).