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| <p><b>Reaching disabled audiences</b></p>  | <p>There are a great number of guides to access issues in organisations. This tool kit is short and it concentrates on the arts as a service provider and visitor attraction. It looks at different aspects of visitor experiences and attempts to provide summary information in ways that will be a useful, practical starting point for staff and volunteers without ignoring the overall management responsibility for setting a policy covering equality, access and diversity.</p> <p>There is diversity within disabled audiences and access requirements differ.</p>   |
| <p><b>Arts Council Intervention</b></p> <p>Arts Council England's New Audiences Programme has invested £1.8m in 112 projects supporting change within arts organisations to tackle the barriers preventing disabled people from engaging with the arts. Projects have provided significant new insights into possible ways forward which was particularly significant in 2003, the European Year of Disabled People.</p> <p>De Montfort University was commissioned to evaluate 20 projects within the New Audiences Disability strand and their findings are incorporated into this resource. Arts Council England and Arts Professional noted '...arts organisations can experience considerable barriers to becoming truly accessible.'<br/>Let's see if we can help...</p> | <p><b>Developing a policy for an access policy ... 10 tips</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 The policy needs to be <b>led from the top</b> – board or senior management</li> <li>2 You may need <b>specialist input</b> from a consultant or other expert – there is also a <b>legislative framework</b> which sets out what you have to do. You should not be limited by the legal requirements – but look at more <b>inclusive audience focused</b> approach</li> <li>3 You need to think about how you <b>consult</b> with current or potential audiences</li> <li>4 Your policy is likely to impact across the organisation – so make sure that you <b>keep all staff involved</b> in the development of the policy and the delivery plan – everyone has to work together</li> </ol> |

### Some questions for starters...

- 1 What have you done already? – are you starting from scratch or have you already attempted to make your provision more accessible to disabled people?
- 2 What research have you done with disabled people to get your service/provision right?
- 3 Have you communicated clearly to the whole organisation what you are trying to achieve in terms of widening access to your provision – and clarified individual roles within this?
- 4 Do you have the information you need: networks of disabled people, organisations for disabled people, local clubs or service provision such as hospitals, day centres and others?
- 5 Have you considered the diversity of disabled people – deaf people, learning disabled people, people with mental health issues, visually impaired people?
- 6 Have you looked at making adjustments across your provision – programming, communication/ marketing, staff training/ recruitment and selection of staff, board and volunteers. Do you need to need to make changes to the fabric of the building?

- 5 You need to **consider the impact** that policy will have. This may include:
  - your programme
  - your service
  - your education work
  - your staff training
  - recruitment of board/ staff/ volunteers
- 6 You may need to **address the fabric of the building** to make your building physically accessible and consider induction loops and other specialist equipment to help people with sensory disabilities.
- 7 You need to decide whether you are going for a series of **general improvements** across the board...
- 8 ...or whether you are going to develop **some specific niche provision** as a result of your consultation so that you can target your service and provision to the needs of specific users and meet the requirements and aspirations of local people
- 9 Have you identified clearly the responsibilities that different staff have to implement this policy and made sure that **adequate staff training** should be in place
- 10 A policy is a good start – but it has to be accompanied by a **clear plan with targets** and timescales so that you can map progress made by the organisation

### Some support available

The Lottery Capital programme has helped many organisations to address issues of physical access. However, New Audiences concentrated on supporting attitudinal and organisational change to create more inclusive cultures in arts organisations. Equata, a disability agency for the South West, developed a Disability Equality Training programme called Impact, seeking to help mainstream organisations to reach their potential audience among disabled people. Equata consultants worked alongside partner organisations to effect change in policy and practice. One, noting the legacy of this training, said “The organisation has made real progress and now has more knowledge and confidence to continue.”

NorDAF (Northern Disability Arts Forum) recognised that some organisations can find it daunting to accommodate the full diversity of requirements. Seeking to overcome these reservations, they appointed disabled people as ambassadors to visit organisations over a period, working directly with staff to initiate change. “I’ve learnt ... about mental health, learning disability, signage, visual access in design, how staff can approach people and change things without being threatened or threatening,” said Denise Armstrong from the Northern Gallery for Contemporary Arts.

#### **Ten physical access issues....**

Physical access is an important part of making it possible to welcome more disabled people to venues and services.

There are organisations that provide advice and guidance about improving physical access – you should consider commissioning a professional Access Audit.

But you will need to consider:

- Changes in level inside and outside of the building
- The signage
- The toilets
- Colour contrasts for example around steps
- Trip hazards and hazards at head height
- Queuing systems
- Provision of seating in relation to any communications services or devices, and in gallery spaces
- Counter heights for ticket sales and catering
- Investing in induction loops and other equipment to extend access
- Making available clear accurate information about the state of the physical access – what visitors can expect and what you can really do...

#### **Human aid to communication**

There are a number of services which might need to be provided for audience members/ participants to effect full access for disabled people:

- Sign language interpretation - using British Sign Language (BSL)
- Lip speaker – relays talking in the line of sight of the lip reader
- Deaf blind communication specialist
- Audio description
- Open captioning

In most of these areas there are accredited qualifications for practitioners. Some disabled people will have their own Personal Assistant to help them deal with access issues – it is a good idea to check. These communications services can be in very high demand and so ensure that you have plenty of planning time for events that need these inputs.

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| <p><b>Marketing and communication</b></p> <p>As with any audience, establishing effective lines of communication is vital if disabled people are going to be attracted and retained as audience members and participants. So what are appropriate formats and styles of communications that can make a difference?</p> <p>We often talk about the arts in ways that may not encourage first time attenders. Imagine you had never been in a car- you would want to be assured the vehicle is safe and reliable – not necessarily fast and exciting, features more designed to attract experienced car drivers. You may need to think radically about how you sell yourself to disabled people as first time attenders. It may be useful to include images of other disabled people using your facilities and to include endorsements from disabled people to back up what the photographs portray.</p> |   | <p><b>Internal communications</b></p> <p>When trying to bring about change within an organisation it is vital that you communicate effectively with everyone within the organisation. Access and inclusive customer service will only be possible if the whole organisation works effectively together.</p>   |
| <p><b>Phrases to use:</b></p> <p>Language, and what is considered acceptable to say, changes over time – but the rules are to stress inclusion and focus on access needs people have. Front line staff are concerned to say the right the thing, here are a few helpful notes on what to say...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disabled people is safest and used by most disability organisations – some individuals prefer people with disabilities</li> <li>• Visually impaired</li> <li>• Blind</li> <li>• People with hearing impairments</li> <li>• Hard of hearing</li> <li>• Deaf</li> <li>• People with learning</li> </ul>   | <p><b>Website technology</b></p> <p>Web based technology can overcome a number of communications barriers. Jackie Clifton of Musicians in Focus works with visually impaired musicians; she maintains that by thinking through the communications issues for visually impaired people you get many other benefits for wider groups of people with communications and access issues. This can include people with attention deficit disorder who prefer the spoken word over the written word</p> <p>There is more web information in the Online Media toolkit – but ask yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do the images on our website have text equivalences?</li> <li>• Does the site work effectively if users don't have good colour recognition?</li> </ul> | <p><b>Print</b></p> <p>There are some general rules for you usual print:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print size 12 – 14 point and 60-70 characters per line</li> <li>• Use good colour contrasts – black on white, blue on yellow – make sure when you <b>white out</b> you make the print large and have strong colour contrasts</li> <li>• Use clean type faces – this is arial – it does not have curly serifs</li> <li>• Avoid excessive use of <i>italics</i> or BLOCKED CAPITALS</li> <li>• Double spacing can help – so can good use of white space</li> <li>• Make sure numbers are legible – they can be easily confused</li> <li>• Don't justify right – the odd word and letter spacing causes confusion</li> <li>• Don't have the text follow the line of images – especially on the left hand edge of the text</li> </ul> |

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| <p>disabilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People with mental health needs</li> <li>• Non-disabled</li> <li>• Access requirements</li> <li>• Access workers/ personal assistants</li> </ul> <p>Don't get hung up over everyday language: for example visually impaired people will say 'see you later' and you should not worry about talking a polite, courteous and natural way.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It there consistency in the lay out and placing of the navigation bar?</li> <li>• Does the information flow logically and are all of the steps necessary</li> <li>• Is the text clear?</li> <li>• Can all information – including downloads and Pdfs be easily printed in a larger type size?</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to avoid text over images – even when the image is very pale</li> <li>• <b>Large Print</b> means <b>16 to 22 point</b> photocopied enlargements are often distorted and unclear – see if you can access an A3 printer instead. It may be acceptable to produce a large print summary of large documents (perhaps accompanied by an audio tape)</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>Deaf audiences</b></p> <p>There is a range of ways of extending access to cultural participation for disabled people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Sign language interpretation using British Sign Language</li> <li>– Open captions – text accompanying a production to help people with hearing loss to follow what is going on</li> <li>– Induction loops</li> <li>– Mini-com</li> <li>– On-line services such as ticketing can help deaf people</li> </ul> | <p>Hands Up! provided the following useful note for people writing about their project. Use the word “Deaf” with a capital “D” as this is the chosen way of identifying BSL-using Deaf people or members of the Deaf community.</p> <p>MAGIC – Museums and Galleries in the Capital – worked with Deafworks to provide a service for Deaf people in London through a website (<a href="http://www.magicdeaf.org.uk">www.magicdeaf.org.uk</a>), giving information in both written and BSL form, using video clips. The site seems excellent but there is a real question mark over whether it is cost effective to build sites which are so niche – or whether more arts related data should be added into the site setting out the complete arts diet of activities made accessible to people for the 70,000 people in the UK for whom BSL is their main language.</p> | <p>The Hands Up! project aimed to overcome barriers to attendance and participation identified by the Deaf community in Derby, to test marketing innovations and develop new programming. Ian Carpenter, a Deaf community development worker, was appointed by <b>Q Arts</b> to develop networks and training for arts organisations, and to create links with Deaf people. A new attender said: “I always drove past <b>Derby Dance Centre</b> thinking it was a posh place not for public use. Now I know it's a place that's accessible for Deaf people.”</p> <p>One of the arts organisations participating commented “As a result of the Hands Up! project we have already seen an increase in Deaf people accessing our activity. Hands Up! has enabled us to make very positive steps into working with the Deaf community in Derby. With the support of Ian Carpenter and the range of workers and participants along the way, it has already altered the way we work”</p> |

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| <p><b>Visually Impaired audiences</b></p> <p>Access for visually impaired people can be improved with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- large print information</li> <li>- Braille information</li> <li>- Audio tape recorded information</li> </ul> | <p>We'd like to add in examples of good practice in the region: if you have examples to share, get in touch with us through the site</p> |  |
| <p><b>Other disabilities</b></p>   | <p>We'd like to add in examples of good practice in the region: if you have examples to share, get in touch with us through the site</p> |  |

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| <b>Summary</b> | <p><b>Short-term impact</b><br/>Find out what help is available from the Arts Council England, the Local Authority, Job Centre Plus disability advisor.</p> <p>Find out what groups, networks and services operate locally and ensure you keep them informed about your organisation and build up details of key contacts of people who can help you to plan for future collaborations.</p> | <p><b>Medium term impact</b><br/>Are you doing enough to <b>recruit disabled people</b> as staff, volunteers, board members or advisors? More diversity amongst the people in the audience will help send positive messages to customers and potential customers about the attitude of the organisation to people with disabilities.</p> <p>Look at <b>programming</b> work that will be of interest to an audience of disabled people and their families.</p> | <p><b>Long term impact</b><br/>You may need to make significant changes to the <b>physical fabric of your building</b> to address access issues effectively. Investing in a good Access Audit can help you to address physical access issues. This may not be possible all in one go but you may make significant progress through a planned approach to maintenance and repairs and renewal by planning ahead. Some equipment and major building work may be necessary and useful</p>                              |
|                | <p><b>Performing arts issues</b><br/>The performing arts sector is increasingly responding to the demands of deaf and disabled audience members. Signed performances and Audio Description enable deaf and visually impaired audiences to enjoy performances. Check out Signed Performances in Theatre on <a href="http://www.spit.org.uk/">http://www.spit.org.uk/</a></p>                 | <p><b>Participatory arts issues</b><br/>Many of the processes at the heart of community and participatory arts will work well as a way of supporting increased cultural participation from people with disabilities.</p>   | <p><b>Visual arts issues</b><br/>Galleries can be difficult places for disabled or elderly people – many do not provide adequate seating in galleries to support people who need regular rest. Captions on pictures are often small.</p> <p>There is a growing movement of BSL tours of galleries. Larger galleries and exhibitions have audio tours of exhibitions and visually impaired visitors can be supported to experience visual arts such as tactile sculpture and through the use of tactile diagrams</p> |

**For anyone to try**

Do some research into clubs and services for disabled people and see if you can access these networks for some future collaboration.

**For more experienced practitioners**

Make a directory of the access workers in your local area who can help with signed or audio described performances. This can be very tough work and needs a combination of skills and some empathy with the arts is clearly an advantage. Find out who is good by asking other organisations. Think about how you could incorporate greater physical access and remove barriers to enjoyment.

Produce a paper for your management committee reviewing all aspects of access either as part of your diversity policy or as a stand alone document. Initiate some discussions amongst colleagues about the issues and gauge the level of awareness in your organisation. Develop a plan that address all of the issue you have identified in your policy document – including skills and knowledge of the staff and board in relation to deaf and disabled audiences.

Ensure you are aware of all of the health and safety implications of increased access by deaf, disabled or learning disabled people – this may mean that you need to revise your drills and have greater staffing provision.

**May need specialist input**

These two arts organisations plan to make training nationally available.

**mind the ... gap: Includo II**

Includo II worked to identify the barriers that exclude people with a learning disability from accessing arts opportunities, and to devise practical solutions to dismantling those barriers. The project has resulted in the production of a CD-ROM based training package for venues.

Contact: Julia Skelton

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**Web:** <http://www.mind-the-gap.org.uk/>

**Theatre Resource: Knocking on Doors**

A new play “*At Home with the Cripps*” was devised and performed by four disabled people to work with the venues to develop their access for performers and audiences as well as their marketing strategies and connections with local disability organisations. Contact: Theatre Resource

**Phone** 01277 365626 **Fax / Minicom** 01277 365003 **e mail** [info@theatre-resource.org.uk](mailto:info@theatre-resource.org.uk)

### **Legal and ethical issues**

The law is increasingly dictating minimum standards of acceptable behaviour in relation to the services provided to disabled people. Ethically arts organisations are likely to want to accede these legal minimums and work toward the provision of an organisation focused on providing fully accessible services.

In order to offer a positive action initiative you must be able to show why such action is necessary. This involves getting permission from the **Disability Rights Commission**. You will be expected to be able to present quantified information on why your programme is necessary and which historical discrimination or under representation in the workforce you are trying to address.

### **Disability Discrimination Act 1995**

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was passed in 1995 to end the discrimination that many disabled people face. It protects disabled people in:

- employment
- access to goods, facilities and services
- the management, buying or renting of land or property
- education

The law has been phased in. Since: **December 1996** it has been **unlawful to treat disabled people less favourably** than other people for a reason related to their disability. **October 1999** you have had to make **reasonable adjustments** for disabled people, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their services; **From 2004** you have had to make reasonable adjustments to the **physical features** of your premises to overcome physical barriers to access. In October 2004 Disability regulations came into force and in December 2006 Age Regulations pass into law which may impact further on your need to sort out access issues.

|  | <b>Low cost and time</b>  | <b>Medium cost and time</b>   | <b>Resource Intensive</b>   |
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|  | <p>Start to collect examples of what local arts organisations are doing to support deaf and disabled audiences.</p> <p>Build up a directory of individuals and organisations that can help you drive up the accessibility of your organisation.</p> | <p>Undertake some research into the needs and requirements of local deaf and disabled people – working through appropriate groups and by accessing individuals known to the organisation.</p> <p>Think about what you can do to flag up your approach to access in your print and other communications. Have you considered all of the access issues in your education and outreach work.</p> | <p>Review all aspects of your service and think about how your arts organisation can become more accessible to deaf and disabled audience.</p> <p>Ensure that you have all of the equipment in place that is required.</p> <p>Go out of your way to make your organisation an attractive place for deaf and disabled people to work and ensure that you have support structures in place to maximise your retention of staff in the organisation.</p> <p>Produce a programme with greater attention to access requirements – produce a section of your web site dedicated to the needs of deaf and disabled audiences – making sure the site is fully accessible.</p> |