

# Disability **A work of art** Arts Cymru **Creu Celf**

Arts & Disability: Young Disabled/ Deaf  
People

**Outcomes Report**

**November 2020**



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Dr Miro Griffiths

## Introduction

Disability Arts Cymru [DAC] is a membership organisation of disabled and Deaf artists from across the country, yet our records imply that there is a clear lack of take up or presence from young disabled or Deaf people [under 30]. DAC feels that there is a pressing need to coach and develop young disabled/Deaf people to be the next wave of arts & cultural leaders through empowering and affirming their identities as Deaf and disabled people.

DAC felt it would be useful to investigate what involvement young disabled/Deaf people between the ages of 16 and 30 years, had in arts activities across Wales. We compiled a questionnaire to arts organisations already involved in delivering work to young disabled/Deaf people. This report signifies the key findings which has been discussed firstly, with young disabled and Deaf people, secondly with Arts Organisations working in this field, and finally it will become available for the wider arts companies to read and hopefully assist in giving some ideas in working more inclusively.

DAC does have another agenda with this report: it would like to identify a distinct 'Young DAC membership', by developing an arts leadership forum led by young disabled and Deaf people to guide and input into arts and cultural activities across the country. Our aim is to establish and support the growth of this network, led and shaped by the young people as leaders in Disability arts and the wider arts sector, to influence and scrutinize not only the work within DAC, but also act as a body that can help to support and influence the wider arts sector in supporting inclusive practices and creativity throughout their programmes.

To investigate this premise, we needed to gain a clear idea of the lay of the land and identify what type and scope of work is currently on offer to young disabled and Deaf people.

DAC invited Arts organisations across Wales currently working with young people to share essential information via a Youth Arts Audit, to inform, identify and shape a future way of working with disabled, and Deaf young people as leaders in the arts sector.

We strongly believe that partnership and collaboration is the right and only way forward to embed change towards inclusion and accessible arts opportunities for young disabled and Deaf people across Wales. We appreciate and value all the youth arts practitioners who work within the arts sector and hope they will feel supported and also in some ways, justified by the findings of this report and hope it will assist them to build confidence in their skills, particularly in terms of access and inclusion.

DAC invited Dr Miro Griffiths<sup>1</sup> to share the main findings of the report with a group of young disabled people, listening to their views on the report's findings. A report from Miro from this discussion is found below [[2.0. Observations from Young People](#)]

This audit focusses on how young disabled/Deaf people currently engage with arts activities in various locations from across Wales and the barriers they face in their delivery. Some responding organisations are not specifically arts based but use the arts as a tool of engagement.

We thank all those who have taken time and given energy to complete and return this questionnaire.



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<sup>1</sup>based at University of Leeds. Miro carries out research with young disabled people, focussing on young disabled people's experiences of campaigning and activism

## **2.0. Dr Miro Griffiths MBE: Observations from Young People**

### **Summary from a workshop about the Barriers identified in the Arts Audit on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2020**

Young disabled artists reflected on the barriers identified in the Arts Audit Report September 2020. Their views were unanimous: there are widespread barriers that restrict and deny young disabled people's participation within the arts. The barriers are widespread, and the report accurately captures the key themes and strands associated with youth participation. From barriers located within the built environment, through to attitudes of organisations and staff, there remains considerable difficulties when accessing and remaining in arts activities across Wales.

Young disabled artists highlighted the additional costs of disability that affect their journey through the arts. These costs are located within transport, acquiring support, and accessing suitable spaces to practice their work. The barriers should be considered in terms of the different stages of the young artist's journey: the initial stage of accessing opportunities, followed by participation within opportunities and events, and the subsequent search for further opportunities for the development of the artist's portfolio. It is essential to respond to young disabled people's concerns about a lack of support in accessing artist calls for participation. Young disabled people require more information about opportunities, and the support available to have unrestricted access. Failing to do this will devalue young disabled people's contribution and affect their confidence. Young disabled artists highlighted that identifying barriers and trying to find individual solutions is an exhausting, daily experience. This affects subsequent pursuits of activities and can lead to further young disabled people disengaging from the arts.

Two key points were raised by young disabled people:

A] Organisations need to centralise support and accessibility into the funding of opportunities for young artists. There needs to be clear dialogue with young disabled people to understand access needs, and ensure appropriate support is available and advertised at the point of disseminating information about activities. This will raise confidence amongst young disabled people and ensure accessibility is taken seriously by arts organisations.

B] Disabled people need to be embedded within such organisations, notably at positions of influence and authority. This will lead to a focus on improving accessibility and disabled people's participation. Disabled people are experts on inclusion and accessibility, and their contributions should be valued and included within the functioning and design of our arts-based organisations.

**Refer to appendix 7.3. for details of Young People**

### 3.0. Arts Organisations Findings

DAC is extremely grateful to the arts companies who gave time to complete this questionnaire. We wanted to identify arts activity and how often they worked on their projects. It was important to gain a sense of the offer currently available to young Disabled/Deaf people.

This next section details:

- The art forms on offer
- Time spent on engagement with young people
- Frequency of the sessions
- Duration of the sessions
- Accreditation on offer for the young people

**Refer to appendix 7.2. for details of Organisations**

#### 3.1. Summary of Art Forms

The numbers equate to the arts organisations, please note some organisations offer a selection of arts activities.

<b>Numbers</b>	<b>Art Form</b>
8	Visual arts
4	Combined arts
7	Creative technology
12	Creative Word
13	Performance arts
13	Youth and community arts
7	Music
6	Others: Hip-hop, Film, broadcasts, Competitions, Theatre, Heritage, non-prescriptive person-led support

### 3.2. Frequency of Delivery

Numbers	Frequency
2	Daily, during school term [6th Formers in Arts Class]
1	Twice a week
10	Weekly
2	Every two weeks
2	Monthly
8	Annual Competition throughout the year, Summer camp [ 5 days], project dependent.

### 3.3. The Duration of The Sessions

Numbers	Duration
5	Up to 1 hour
9	1-2 hours
6	2-3 hours
3	3-4 hours
5	4+ hours

### 3.4. Accreditation

We wanted to gain a sense of what qualifications were offered to the young people. A total of 7 of them had accreditation in-place for their arts activities. These ranged from RAD awards

<https://radawards.com/2021/en/page/home>

International Dance Teachers Association <https://www.idta.co.uk/> [IDTA],

The Arts Awards <https://www.artsaward.org.uk/>, particularly Explore and

Discover part of the Arts Award. Some accreditation was achieved through schools, mainly with General Certificate in Secondary Education & Advanced



A/S Levels, and through Business, Technology Education Council [BTEC] digital Media Award.

Other arts organisations worked in collaboration, for example with Groundwork on projects which include accreditation such as Level 1 Extended Award in Personal Social Education. Opportunities were also created through Welsh Joint Education Committee [ WJEC]

<https://www.wjec.co.uk> entry pathways

Agored Cymru is the Welsh awarding body of choice for education and training providers in Wales.

### **3.5. Details of Showcasing Events**

We were eager to identify how the young people's work was seen by wider audiences. The showcases tended to be a mix of, films, pop up exhibitions, social media, online activity, devised shows (often in local community centres), radio stations, music performances at events, yearly shows.

**Refer to appendix 7.4.**

### **3.6. How Many Young People Participated?**

It is not clear from the survey how many of the total of **749** young people this questionnaire represented are disabled or Deaf people. We do know that there are 607,863 young people living in Wales between the ages of 16 and 30 ([SatsWales](#)) It is estimated that at least a quarter of these are Disabled or Deaf young people, equating to 150,965. Equality and Human

rights commission said - 'More than a quarter of all people living in Wales are disabled [Click Link](#).

## **4.0. Funding Sources for Arts Activities**

Funding was received from a variety of sources, including ACW project funding or being a member of their portfolio, various trusts and foundations, Local Authorities, Lottery, Private sponsors, Universities, Charities, Welsh government, Partnership project funding.

**Refer to appendix 7.5. for details**

## **5.0. Barriers Preventing Engagement**

These are multiple and wide ranging. We wanted to gain an understanding from the arts organisations themselves as to the biggest barriers they felt were facing the young people participating in this questionnaire. We have decided to allow the information to speak for itself, as follows:

### **5.1. Physical Access**

These examples were given in survey:

- Access – "our building is not friendly and isn't fully accessible"
- Inaccessible studio space on the first floor!
- listed historical buildings pose many challenges
- Our spaces are accessible but need infrastructure to ensure that access is maintained.
- Upstairs access to our office is limited as we only have a chair lift in place.

- Lack of accessible buildings within certain geographical areas; RCT has been highlighted as one of those areas:  
“in the Rhondda, there are no spaces available to us that disabled teachers or participants with mobility issues can join us in, also that is within close proximity to public transport, we have no structure in RCT for equal access to work, and this means that there is no open access and equal access for all.”

A report by [WIMD](#) (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation) shows that RCT (Rhondda Cynon Taff) have some of the most deprived communities in Wales. In general, the valleys and urban local authorities have higher concentrations of multiple deprivation than anywhere else in Wales.

A report by [Save the Children](#) says Wales has the highest proportion of children living in extreme poverty in the UK. This means that around 90,000 children in Wales are going without necessities that their better-off peers take for granted.

A quote from a recent report by [Senedd Research](#) stated:

**“More than one in five people in Wales (23% of the population) currently live in poverty, which is the highest level of all UK nations. This means that 710,000 people in Wales live below the poverty line, including 185,000 children,**

**Forecasts of poverty in Wales predict that the situation is not set to improve. By 2021-22, it is estimated that 27% of the Welsh population will be living in poverty, and that 39% of children will live in poverty.”**

## 5.2. Lack of Access Provision Generally

- Access - our building is not friendly for those who having hearing aids/assistance
- Lack of provision of access support across the board including communication support – one org said, 'We do not always offer sign language interpretation.'
- Not having access provisions in place, or they are in place, but nobody is coming - then perhaps it is advertisement in the wrong places too."

## 5.3. Transport Barriers

Transport is a particularly big issue for those living in rural areas of Wales and poverty in rural Wales is a hidden problem

Report by [Public policy institute for Wales \(2016\)](#) say: 'Public transport in many rural areas is infrequent, inadequate and more expensive than elsewhere. This means that it is difficult for those without private transport to travel, a lack of affordable and available childcare in rural areas and limited access to the internet are also seen as barriers. The lack of public transport, poor access to other services and the higher costs of services can all have a significant impact on people living in poverty and their ability to escape from it. It is important not to think about accessibility simply in terms of distance.'

**"We want to be able to transport of pupils from further away in the catchment area so that we could do more extra-curricular activities, including theatre**

## **visits and performances outside school.”**

Accessibility also includes a range of other considerations such as:

- physical accessibility
- responsiveness to users' needs
- affordability

**“Some of the barriers that have arisen with this particular group are around transport as some of them have moved away and now can't easily access the group as it began locally. Our workers provide local transport to attend sessions, but we can't do this outside of RCT as it isn't practical, since discovering Zoom we have been able to connect with people again digitally but for some of our group this is the one time they leave home in the week so, we need to find a way of developing both capacities. We also run a tiny creative writing group for 2 young adults who can't leave home at the moment because they are shielding. Again using Digital platforms have made this possible.”**

### **5.4. Appropriate Marketing**

Most of the organisations would like information on how to make their marketing accessible and to find out the right networks to be advertising with. They highlighted the following areas:

- lack of awareness of accessible sessions, events and activities taking place.
- Call outs are often generally advertised so perhaps could be focused for disabled or deaf young people

- General awareness and access to our activities.
- A lack of tailored marketing and outreach to ensure disabled or D/deaf young people are made aware of activities available to them, aka knowing how to target these young people.
- Access - we don't communicate with them or look like an organisation where they could get involved

## **5.5. Limited Opportunities or Provisions**

It was highlighted that there is a lack of integrated activity for disabled and non-disabled people to engage together (within peer/friendship groups).

## **5.6. Technology**

A misconception has arisen in mainstream society that new technologies have met the needs and are accessible to all disabled people. This is not the case; issues such as poverty and being in low broadband or cold spot areas can mean more isolation, especially within lockdown. Complications of how to work technology makes it easy to leave disabled young people behind.

- Young people need help to connect on zoom
- We have many neuro-diverse young people in our network and we are always working on being more accessible.
- Since lockdown video calls have further complicated participation for some young people who do not feel confident with technologies like Zoom.

## **5.7. Monetary Issues**

- lack of available funds was a barrier which many of the organisations faced.
- recruitment - arts organisations being able to recruit, we depend a lot on schools to help us
- Funding for teaching assistants to give their time so that the required number of adults are in place.
- Lack of support if working with larger groups.
- Funding does not usually cover time to develop confidence, funding the right tutor, cost of tutors ie £90 a session.
- Not enough access for Deaf people as limited resources for BSL interpreters.

## **5.8. Lack of Confidence**

This was consistently expressed from organisations, citing they hear these issues from young people and their parents

- not having adequate trust built up with young people to participate
- Anxiety/Nervousness - we need to do more as an organisation to be really clear about what support is available and how we can support people to participate especially if they are new to our work
- A lot of parents are unsure that the workshops can be accessible, it's hard to communicate that we are open to all, somehow they don't think that there is a place or it is possible for them to join in.

## 5.9. Other Barriers Identified

- Failure of identifying Training Needs
- Wrong attitudes - people not understanding what is needed.
- Education and experience of workers
- Welsh language is an issue for some performance pieces
- 'I don't know if I'm honest. We are 'fully accessible' but I don't think we have many disabled and/or deaf participants in these sessions which implies there may be issues we are not aware of. We would be interested in discussing this more to see where we could improve our practices'
- Capacity of staff team and the engagement strategy - not reaching those who might benefit and need to encourage
- Lack of strong partnerships to help assist more disabled and deaf young people to participate
- Feeling welcome, appropriate support, infrastructure of organisation,
- Lack of role models within our creative programme who are D/deaf or disabled.
- Clashing commitments - I have been told by several people who have learning disabilities they are unable to go out at night to join a group/ or go to a theatre etc. because there is no one available to support them in an evening.

## 6.0. Supporting and Developing Work

We asked the arts organisations to let us know what they think is needed to continue their art services for young disabled people.

Their answers were wide and varied, but funding came top – which is no real surprise.



- Accessibility to funding opportunities, support from outside artists, work experience opportunities
- We are planning an artist callout to create a creative activity available as a download or as a video workshop. Advice on considerations regarding deafness and disability when devising artist brief would help.
- To have a network of people in the Creative Industry - who can visit and work with various different groups.
- I love arts organisations however artists are precious of their work and cost a lot to bring in - I have suggested that each local authority has one arts representative that is the 'go to' for arts projects
- All sessions are for a range of needs including but not limited to Learning Difficulties.

The key results from this questionnaire were plentiful in suggestion. The commonalities were around training and examples in best practice, making strong partnership & collaborations with other arts organisations and specialists in this field, bespoke funding for providing access when working with young Deaf and disabled people, engaging young people in the decision-making process, better knowledge on how to market and communicate activities, and lastly consultation.

The key result on how DAC could support organisations included workshops and training for the organisations staff on the following topics:

- Learning best practice, confidence and using the right Language
- How to provide integrated access in marketing and communication
- Making sure they have what they need in place to be accessible
- Receiving consultation and advice on how to devise a support plan for the organisation

- Sharing of information, partnership working and collaboration
- Tapping into relevant local and national support networks
- Having a directory with contacts details of tutors, professionals, organisations who work with young Deaf and disabled people
- Communication support i.e. sign language interpreters
- How to meet more creative young people and their parents to encourage them to take part

**Refer to appendix 7.6. for the full details of responses**

## **7.0. Appendices**

### **7.1. The Questionnaire**

Disability/Deaf Youth Arts Activities Audit / Wales

Name or Organisation/Group:

Name of Contact:

**Important note: We are a Disability/Deaf Arts development organisation and we acknowledge the lived experience of living the way we do and this means, we are a community with our own cultural identity. We follow the Social Model of Disability and therefore apply the terms 'Disability' or 'Disabled' to refer to attitudinal, societal and political barriers that prevent equality of access. Please see this reference for further information**

<https://www.scope.org.uk/about-us/social-model-of-disability/>

**We include young people between the ages of 16-30 living with:**

mental health conditions, long term health conditions, Deaf people, learning disabled young people, neuro diverse young people and those living with impairment/s.

- 1) Where do you meet?  
Post code:
- 2) What art forms do you work with?  
Please state:
- 3) How often do you meet?  
Weekly:    Every Two weeks:    Monthly:  
Other:
- 4) How long are the session/s and what time do they take place?  
Duration:.....Times:.....
- 5) Is there any accreditation in place (i.e. the arts awards)?  
Yes / No
- 6) How many young people participate in total?
- 7) How are you funded?
- 8) Is any of the work showcased (performed/displayed etc)
- 9) What do you think are the barriers that prevents involvement for disabled/Deaf young people?
- 10) What is needed to support and develop this work further?
- 11) How do you think DAC can support or develop your work?
- 12) Please feel free to make any other suggestions.

## **Appendix 7.2. Organisations completing the questionnaire**

Avant Cymru	<a href="https://www.avant.cymru/">https://www.avant.cymru/</a>
Canolfan Ucheldre Centre	<a href="https://www.ucheldre.org/">https://www.ucheldre.org/</a>
Carmarthenshire Theatres	<a href="https://www.theatrusirgar.co.uk/en">https://www.theatrusirgar.co.uk/en</a>
Eisteddfod yr Urdd	<a href="https://www.urdd.cymru/en/eisteddfod;">https://www.urdd.cymru/en/eisteddfod;</a>

Frân Wen	<a href="http://www.franwen.com/en/author/franwen">http://www.franwen.com/en/author/franwen</a>
MOSTYN,	<a href="https://www.mostyn.org/">https://www.mostyn.org/</a>
National Museum Wales	<a href="https://museum.wales/">https://museum.wales/</a>
Oriel Davies	<a href="http://www.orieldavies.org/about">http://www.orieldavies.org/about</a>
Oriel Mon	<a href="https://www.anglesey.gov.uk/en/Residents/Museums-and-galleries">https://www.anglesey.gov.uk/en/Residents/Museums-and-galleries</a>
Peak - Art in the Black Mountains	<a href="https://peak.cymru/">https://peak.cymru/</a>
Pontio (BLAS, Pontio's Arts Participation workshops)	<a href="https://www.pontio.co.uk/Online/default.asp">https://www.pontio.co.uk/Online/default.asp</a>
Sparc, Valleys Kids	<a href="https://sparc.wales/">https://sparc.wales/</a>
Taking Flight Youth Theatre	<a href="https://www.takingflighttheatre.org.uk/youth-theatre/">https://www.takingflighttheatre.org.uk/youth-theatre/</a>
TAPE Community Music and Film	<a href="http://tapemusicandfilm.co.uk/">http://tapemusicandfilm.co.uk/</a>
Ty Pawb, Venture Drama Group	<a href="https://www.typawb.wales/">https://www.typawb.wales/</a>
Wales Millennium Centre	<a href="https://www.wmc.org.uk/">https://www.wmc.org.uk/</a>
Willows Centre Troedyrhiw- Willows Youth	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/willowscentre.troedyrhiw">https://www.facebook.com/willowscentre.troedyrhiw</a>
Ysgol Gogarth	<a href="http://www.ysgolygogarth.co.uk/">http://www.ysgolygogarth.co.uk/</a>
Ysgol Ty Morfa	<a href="http://www.ysgoltirmorfa.co.uk/">http://www.ysgoltirmorfa.co.uk/</a>

### **Appendix 7.3. Young People Attending Training**

Facilitator, Dr Miro Griffiths MBE [ former UK, UN representative for Disabled Youth], Vicky, Timothy, Niamh, Menai, Eleanor, Emlyn

## Appendix 7.4. Showcasing Venues and Places

- Jams, Dance platforms, festivals, theatre shows.
- Eisteddfod yr Urdd
- Social media
- Online, and co-develop exhibitions and takeovers/pop-ups at the museum
- exhibitions in gallery of local college students, participants, local art groups (in cafe gallery)
- Yearly exhibition of the work created during the workshops.
- Films, pop up exhibitions, using other venues, performance (whether that is on the side of a mountain or on a canal boat etc.)
- Devised show - created by the young people during workshops. One in May for primary school age and one in November for Secondary school age.
- Local community centre some beautiful pieces that were devised and created by the group looking at issues of homelessness and identity - many of the group are keen gamers. Because of the funding situation due to Covid 19, the commission will be postponed until next year.
- Multi-platform
- Work produced during youth projects has been presented as part of exhibitions in the past. We also have a youth theatre that meets, this will resume hopefully in 2021, and the group performs public shows regularly.
- Two shows a year performed to an audience
- We have a Radio Station we also showcase work on our stages
- Young performers
- WWII project with Head 4 Arts in Library
- End of year art gallery and drama performance when possible

## Appendix 7.5. Funding Sources

- Arts Council of Wales – through project funding or being a member of the portfolio
- Ashley Family Foundation
- Awards for All Wales

- BBC Children in Need
- Community Foundation Wales
- Community funds
- Conwy Connect for Learning Disabilities
- Core funding from SLA agreement, equipment from previous funding bids, art is community support us with tutors, additional funding sources.
- Full day sessions have been funded via the creative schools project by ACW
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Internal budget - includes waged staff member to run sessions, volunteer assistant. Small budget for materials.
- Local Authorities: Powys County Council, Wrexham County Council, Carmarthen County Council
- Organisations
- Partners project funds
- Partnership funding e.g. Canal and River Trust
- Postcode Health Lottery
- Private Sponsors
- School budget, pupil fundraising, support from Rhiannon Hughes at the Little Theatre
- The Henry Smith Charity
- The Moondance foundation
- Various trust funds or foundations
- Welsh Government
- Widening Access, Bangor University

## **Appendix 7.6. Training and Support Needs**

- Attend a freelance meeting on disability needs and access ideas.
- Partner with local artists on consultation on needs
- Help with making RCT council and ACW campaign for the use of the YMCA to be run by a diverse board of disabled, ethnically diverse, various genders and ages (Instead of the same board of Artis Community) so that the YMCA can be a truly inclusive building in all senses - at all levels of business. "
- Training on how to provide integrated access

- Sharing information with your members
- Actively encouraging young people to take part - as competitors or supporting new opportunities to showcase performance and visual arts at Eisteddfod events.
- Keep companies up to date on best practice on working with disabled or deaf/disabled young people. Any suggestions on tapping into north Wales networks that would benefit on our works.
- I know some discussions have already taken place about supporting young artists and we are keen to develop these further to see what we can do together.
- I'd love to meet more creative young people
- consultation process that looks at where org is in terms of access to opportunities and help to. Advice line. Information sharing
- Signposting to relevant training. Informing us of any relevant support networks locally. Sharing marketing information to our accessible sessions.
- advice and collaboration
- Training; confidence, and training around language, inclusive and equitable practice
- Advocacy; introducing YP Peak work with to inspirational artists with disability, different lived experiences.
- Networking; being able to share this work with young people with peers across Wales"
- Staff training also support in how to encourage young people and parents to engage with inclusive workshops.
- We have had really successful partnerships with DAC delivering joint workshops but what would be really helpful would be to support with the work with young adults want to do, upskilling and training of workers, joint advocacy and campaigning for better access and services for young disabled adults in RCT, someone who we can talk to about the work, problem solve and trouble shoot with - not expect you to do the things that we should be doing but that friendly voice that signposts us and encourages us to deliver the best quality services. An opportunity to discuss pathways for those disabled adults who may want to progress and develop their work. A chance to meet with other groups offering similar work.
- Help us spread the word about the youth theatre to members and people across Wales, e.g. teachers who work with Deaf young people, organisations that they have contact with- support our recruitment drive
- Send a DAC rep to things like show backs, sharing's and launches so that DAC are fully aware of what the YT is doing so can share info and signposting as required

- Share info about Deaf arts professionals living in Wales that we may want to book to run sessions with our YP
- Support TF in ensuring that in Wales, there are progressions opportunities for young people when they reach 18 and have to leave the YT
- more generally- share social media posts and news about organisations working with Deaf and disabled arts professionals in Wales
- be able to respond to arts organisations who need things like up to date lists of BSL interpreters who are happy to do theatre for example- as we spend a lot of our unfunded time on this kind of activity
- Partnership working, communication, collaboration
- Introduce us to D/deaf and disabled artists; work with us as project development stage to ensure our we have what is needed in place to attract and welcome young people who are D/deaf or disabled.
- To provide workshops/training
- Artists/ Tutors to visit our group.
- Networks. We'd also like to talk about engaging DAC in our makerspace project
- A list of tutors and organisations
- The full day sessions result in an end show. Last year it resulted in a Maker Fair. so promotion guidance support
- Experience and support

## **Appendix 7.7. Final Open Discussion and Audit Launch November 2020**

A panel discussion took place on Tuesday, 24 November 2020 with the public launch of the audit. The panel consisted of young disabled artists who outlined the barriers and opportunities to advance young disabled people's participation within the arts. The panellists presented a clear mandate for change. There are material and attitudinal barriers, as well as policy implications, which affect young disabled people's access to and retention within the arts. Emphasis was placed on changing the environment – and broader social position of disabled people – rather than placing responsibility on the individual to address barriers.

The panellists highlighted the following points:

– Specific resource allocation to meet the additional costs of disabling barriers (such as: transport, personal assistance and support, and accessible studios and auditoriums).



– Mandatory disability equality training for everybody involved in commissioning, creating, curating, producing, and delivering the arts. This needs to be led by disabled people and their organisations.

– A youth led support network of disabled artists, who can provide advice, guidance, and peer support to young disabled artists. This can be useful for newcomers and established artists.

The exclusion experienced by young disabled artists cannot be justified. Young disabled artists are experiencing extreme exhaustion, despondency, and frustration when encountering inaccessible environments and prejudiced attitudes towards their work and identity.

Art remains essential for challenging and reflecting on the political, economic, social, and cultural arrangements within society. It is an integral part of achieving disabled people's emancipation and must become an inclusive and accessible space for disabled artists.

**Dr Miro Griffiths MBE**

**26.11.2020**

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