

Inclusive Culture Roundtable - Transcript

September 30, 2025, 11:33AM

LZ

Lindsay, Zsuzsi 0:03

United by shared commitment to inclusion, creativity and of course cultural transformation. A little bit of housekeeping before we begin. We will be recording this session to share with those who are unable to attend. So if you prefer not to be filmed, please feel free to pop off your camera now and then Heidi.

Press record. We will be sharing links to the presentation after the event and relevant links to websites as well. Just a little reminder to please do keep your mics on mute and please do put any questions that you may have in the Q&A section that you'll see along the top bar of.

The screen there so that we can ask them and pose them at relevant points throughout this afternoon.

So a big welcome to all of you to the first in this series of roundtables, the Inclusive Culture Roundtable. It underpins our ongoing commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion. So alongside our brilliant keynote speaker, Andrew Miller, we also have four fantastic.

Case studies that demonstrate how our CLOA members are embedded embedding inclusion through co-creation with disabled people and inclusive marketing and communication to ensure accessibility and representation.

For those of you who may be new to CLOA, CLOA stands for Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association, and it is the professional association for strategic leaders managing public sector, culture, arts, heritage, tourism, libraries, parks, sports and leisure. So just a small portfolio.

This roundtable is the first, as I mentioned, in a series of roundtables that aims to provide an opportunity to share information and best practice nationally. So now that we've got those bits out of the way, I'm really privileged to be able to introduce to you our keynote speaker today.

I have to be honest with you that this is someone that was quite star struck by when I met them. So today we are really honoured to hear from someone whose voice has not only shaped policy but has profoundly shifted the cultural landscape of the UK. Andrew Miller is a trailblazer, a creative force, a fearless.

Advocate and a deeply compassionate leader. His journey spans decades of pioneering work in television, film and the arts, always guided by a vision of a more inclusive and equitable society, from being one of the first disabled presenters on British television to leading major arts institutions.

Andrew has broken down barriers not just for himself, but for countless others. His work has helped embed the social model of disability, international arts policy and his leadership of initiatives like We Shall Not Be Removed and the new All in Access scheme is transforming how disabled people experience and contribute to culture. Andrew's story is one of resilience, innovation and hope. And he reminds us that inclusion is not just a nice to have, it's it's a right that access is not a technical fix, it's a cultural shift. And that when disabled people are empowered to lead, our communities are better and they flourish.

So please join me in welcoming Andrew Miller. Over to you, Andrew.

AM **Andrew Miller** 3:25

Zsuzsi, thank you very much for that very kind introduction. I'll start sharing my screen in just a second. Hello everyone. I'm a white, middle-aged disabled man wearing black shirt in my home studio in front of a bright orange blind. My pronouns are he him and I'm really delighted to be with you all today.

AM **Andrew Miller** 3:45

So let's see if I can make this work and share this screen.

I hope that's working for everybody today. To fit into your themes of co-creation and workforce inclusion, I'm going to reflect on how creative disabled people in the UK are at last making a real impact. I'll talk about how we can address everyday ableism. I'll share a little bit about my own career in the creative industries.

That's usually kindly referred to, and I'll tell you about my current role as UK Arts Access Champion and the development of the National Arts Access Scheme All In, which I hope will offer huge benefits to local authority run cultural venues.

Disability in 2025 has been more visible than it has ever been in the UK. We saw the first disabled character in Doctor Who, played by the brilliant disabled actress Ruth Madeley, in a wheelchair that could fire rockets.

And Kyla Harris, a disabled actor and writer, starred in her own BAFTA nominated BBC sitcom We Might Regret This. Right now we have a very fine disabled actor, Francesca Mills, playing Ophelia in Hamlet at the National Theatre.

And across the UK, our national museums are re-evaluating their collections and for the first time, foregrounding previously hidden stories of disability driven by a new generation of disabled curators. None of this happened by chance.

And has been decades in the making, and disabled people are now firmly part of the national cultural conversation in the UK, right? Appearances can be deceptive, and as we all know, in today's world, everything can turn on a dime.

Our mainstream arts organisations remain firmly unrepresentative of a society where 22% of population declare a disability. According to Arts Council England data, disabled people make up 9% of workforce.

10% of our audiences and 12% of our boards. So there remains disparity, inequality and discrimination, and I'll have more to say on these figures later on, but let's take a moment to celebrate what progress there is.

And how far we've come. Let's travel back to 2012, when London hosted the Olympic and Paralympic Games, because that was a really pivotal moment. Back then, there were no high profile disabled people in our national culture and certainly no high profile disabled arts leaders.

Whilst we could just about access theatres and museums, our stories were not being told on stage or in museum display cases. There was a false perception that everything must be OK for disabled people because our Paralympians were winning lots of medals.

And being promoted as role models. This conveniently ignored the fact that considerable sustained investment had been placed into disabled sport over decades. Last year's brilliant metal hall in Paris, for example, was paid for by 68,000,000 lbs of investment by UK Sport.

Imagine what we could all do if that figure was invested in disability arts. Not long after 2012, I began sharing my own experiences of ableism in the cultural sector. I'd enjoyed a high profile career in the arts and as one of the first disabled presenters of British children's television.

As one of the first disabled music and arts documentary makers, and later became the first disabled person to run a major arts venue. I had a pretty good run with lots of firsts, but all the way through my career I kept on encountering glass ceilings.

And all those firsts, the first disabled this, the first wheelchair user, that that's quite a common experience for disabled people across the board. But I worry that each first demonstrates just how far we as a society have yet to go.

In integrating the disabled experience into our mainstream. Yet all my career choices

have been shaped by my disability. It's the single thread that binds everything I've done, and I've done quite a lot, entirely dictated by the provision of wheelchair access.

Whether that was in 1980s television studios where access was actually a very useful by product of camera manoeuvrability, or when I opened the fully accessible by design Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, you build venues where I was creative director in the 2010s.

But the majority of my career was spent in a time when there was fundamentally no value placed on the work of disabled creatives. Recognition, promotion, awards were very difficult to come by, and I have to tell you that time spent in the mainstream managing severe disability alongside full tilt.

Career was unsustainable and exhausting because most disabled people need to work twice as hard as everyone else just to keep up. Looking back, it was all pioneering stuff, but it came with a high cost.

The late 1980s were the first big moment for equal representation in Britain when broadcasters woke up to their lack of on-screen diversity. My first job was presenting a children's show called Boom on Channel 4, which was produced by Anne Wood, who went on to create the Teletubbies with worldwide success.

The format of Boom was ground-breaking, integrating disabled children with their non-disabled peers at a time education for disabled kids was largely segregated, and we achieved weekly audiences of around 3 million.

For a short time, I was everywhere. Well, everywhere on the four channels that we had in those days. But at the same time, the disability arts movement began their overtly political campaign for inclusion, for the adoption of the social model of disability with the slogan Nothing about us without us.

The social model was a the social model was a radically new way of thinking about disability, that it is society's structures and environments that disable us, not our medical conditions. From that single political movement came the leading British disabled LED arts companies, Grey Eye Theatre.

AM Andrew Miller 10:12

And Shape Arts, whose support of disabled artists have transformed the UK's cultural landscape. Critical to their success was the early advocacy and sustained investment of the Arts Council. But disability arts throughout the 90s and into the early 2000s remained quite niche, cut off from the mainstream.

Being a media figure, I was on the sidelines of that movement. But during the 90s I wanted to make my own mark by becoming one of the very few disabled film makers. So I focused as a director and producer of TV, arts, documentaries, making films about artists, who you can see in this slide.

People like Derek Jarman, Bill Viola, Billy McKenzie, Anthony Gormley and Gerry Rafferty. My disability was irrelevant to these films. It was in some ways immensely liberating. Yeah, of course it was also a subtext dictating what I could and couldn't do.

Ultimately, at that point there was very little value placed on me as a disabled film maker and there were absolutely no career support mechanisms, no safety Nets in place. Meanwhile, my TV presenting career was brought to a premature halt in the mid 90s after an edition at the BBC where I was told.

The Blue Peter audience are not yet ready for a disabled presenter. More recently, I had to withdraw from a recruitment process for the role of Chief Executive of a publicly funded theatre, Oxford Playhouse, without a single wheelchair accessible space in which I could be interviewed.

20 years apart, those experiences conveyed to me the same demoralising message that both in attitudinal and in access terms, we have a long way to go before disabled people can truly compete on a level playing field. And that was the message of my first article in the Arts Press a decade ago.

When my TV career ended, I turned to my first love, the arts. I learned the ropes working as a head of performing arts at Arts Council England in the Midlands, then worked in performing arts venues in Cardiff, Northampton, Oxford. Attending industry conferences, I gradually noticed.

I was almost always the only disabled individual in the room. It became quite a lonely place to be. Indeed, at one theatre industry conference about inclusion, the venue itself was inaccessible, so denying access to the very people it was meant to empower.

No Co creation there.

I found all too often disabled people were kept out of the diversity discussion. So rather than be complicit with an unfair system or apply for the kind of senior roles that I knew I had no chance of getting as at that time, there were no concessions like co-leadership models or working from home.

I decided to change the sector. I did this with the help of a non-paid government role when I was appointed the first UK Disability Champion for Arts and Culture in

2018. What was brilliant about that was that it offered a platform that gave me the opportunity to share my.

Experiences to start discussing the ableism I'd endured in the industry that, frankly, no one else was talking about at that time. And that platform opened doors to influencing arts policy through my appointment to the boards of major organizations like BAFTA, the Arts Council.

AM

Andrew Miller 13:28

Welsh National Opera and the Royal Shakespeare Company, where I'm now Deputy Chair. But the very fast moving Events of March 2020, when COVID descended upon us, left many disabled people deeply distressed and very, very isolated.

So using my government platform and my role at the Arts Council, with the support of Jenny Sealey at Grey Eye Theatre, I created We Shall Not Be Removed, the UK Disability Arts Alliance to support disabled artists through the pandemic. We doggedly reminded the cultural sector not to forget disabled people.

In the rush to online services, we sent open letters to the government to pledge additional support for the arts, and we did everything we could to maintain the profile of disabled artists while so many of us shielded and could not appear in public. This wasn't co-creation. This was disabled people doing it for ourselves.

With our hashtag and ableism, we attracted hundreds of members, undertook surveys and produced reports. But our enduring contribution, I think, was the civil inclusive principles, a policy framework which helped shape UK culture to recover and rebuild inclusively.

Our website and all our sector resources are still available to view at weshallnoteremoved.com. That is where I'd identify the beginning of ableism becoming a thing that the non-disabled cultural mainstream in the UK could begin to understand.

And looking across the sector now, just four years later, I can clearly see our impact. In that desperate moment of COVID, we made arts organisations reconsider their approach to access, and when they looked, they found it inadequate.

I couldn't be more pleased to see ableism now being discussed regularly in public. It was the theme of a recent Museums Association conference. There's access coordinators improving conditions for disabled talent in film. The arts workforce more readily self-identify as disabled.

And new and vital disabled artists are receiving proper, sustained career support.

Meanwhile, through my board work, I was able to shape Arts Council's most inclusive of a strategy, Let's Create. That led to the establishment of the Disability Advisory Committee that I chair, and ultimately to the inclusion of more disabled.

Disability focused companies like Sense Arts and Unlimited in the national portfolio during the last investment round in 2022. Yeah, the controversial one. As I come to the end of my term in the National Council, I'm proud of our pandemic response of being the only government body.

That demanded priority be given to inclusion of disabled people during the recovery. And remember those Arts Council figures I quoted right at the start, proving even that I can turn on a dime. I'm proud of those too, as they demonstrate significant increases.

In the percentage of disabled people in the arts workforce and board and leadership positions in the Let's Create period, they're far from representative, yes, but my goodness, they are light years ahead of where we were a decade ago. Most recently, the Arts Council has formally adopted the social model of disability.

And they are the first arm's length body to do so. I think that's a huge win. In my time on the board of the Royal Shakespeare Company, we've seen the first production of Richard the third featuring a disabled actor in the title role at BAFTA. There I am. We have overseen the transition of the globally recognised film awards to a fully.

Accessible venue and seen disabled talent properly rewarded with museums. We've supported the development of Curating for Change, which enables deaf, disabled and neurodiverse learning disabled people to take their rightful place in the museum workforce and in so doing, ensuring long hidden disabled stories are finally being presented to the public.

This is co-creation in action, empowering disabled people to make long overdue change. And all that representation is so important because we all begin our engagement with culture by being visitors or audience members.

Which leads me to my current role. I'm the champion for Allin, which is the new access scheme for creativity and culture in the UK and Ireland. It aims to remove barriers and improve experiences for disabled people and everyone with access requirements.

Created in partnership between the five UK and Ireland arts councils, it builds on the highly successful Hint scheme that has operated in Wales for a decade. If you're not familiar with Hint, it's a Welsh language word meaning to bridge.

I was a member of the Arts Council that approved it back in 2014 and ran one of the first venue members at the Royal Welsh College, where I witnessed first-hand how it improved the experience of disabled audiences and our customer facing staff.

In 2023, our report revealed how Hint is having a significant impact on the lives of 30,000 disabled people and 40 theatres in Wales. For example, 76% of disabled card holders said being part of Hint improved their access to culture.

73% said that Hint membership improved their quality of life. Hint has generated almost 150,000 disabled attendances over the last decade and for every complimentary companion ticket issued to Hint cardholders.

Member venues generated an average of 23 lbs in secondary spend, so there's some amazing social and economic outcomes. But as you will all know, cultural access has developed in a piecemeal and rather random way.

Good practice isn't always shared out well, and disabled people often have to prove their disability every time they want to buy a ticket. Having been buying access tickets for 40 years, I can tell you it's repetitive and exhausting, but the outcome of my exposure to the work of being inspired.

It's changed my life. So for disabled people, All In will be a free membership scheme designed to remove barriers, simplifying the process of booking access tickets and making cultural Events more easily navigable. For venues and the wider cultural sector, All In is a pay for subscription change programme that provides.

Provides a suite of groundbreaking accessibility standards. These will be supported by a skills development program that aims to standardize high quality access and critically to grow disabled audiences. In its essence, this is an audience development scheme.

The all in accessibility standards have been developed with Attitude is Everything, a disabled led charity some of you will be familiar with. These structured guidelines will offer consistency to areas such as built environment, customer service.

Creative and cultural experiences and digital communications. The standards are a global 1st and they are designed to complement existing frameworks to drive meaningful change and we're really excited about them. Throughout 2025, Allin has piloted in Leeds with Leeds Heritage Theatres, Leeds.

Museums and galleries, Leeds Playhouse and Opera North and eight years after I propose nationalizing the Welsh model, Allin will begin rolling out across England later this year. It's a big moment.

I'm passionate about all in because I want our sector to be a world leader in access

transformation, because access never stands still, it's continually evolving. And I want the UK 16,000,000 disabled people to know that in our arts venues and museums. Everyone's welcome. You can find out more by checking out our website, allin.online. But there are challenges ahead, the ablest trade winds sweeping across the Atlantic. Where disabled people have been publicly mocked, blamed for air disasters and more, we all understand the implications as corporate America shuns EDI. This change in direction is an active threat to the participation of disabled people in civil society.

If we learned one thing during the UK government's disastrous attempt to introduce the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payments Bill in the summer, it's that disabled people's participation in culture as artists, as employees, as audiences. Is intrinsically linked to the welfare benefits that we receive. Just like Creative Industries tax reliefs, state benefits like PIP and Access to Work have invisibly oiled the wheels of our industry and enabled disabled people's participation in a way that even the best inclusive employment policies.

Cannot deliver on their own. Combined, these benefits have fuelled the UK's world leading and globally respected disability arts infrastructure, alongside a record number of disabled people in creative employment.

Time and again, the arts have led society's way with access, but we should all remain on high alert that without equitable access to both these life-enhancing benefits, disabled creatives could once again be forced to return to the margins.

But despite all the challenges, I remain optimistic. I truly believe there has never been a better time to be disabled and be part of the creative industries. There are more opportunities for disabled talent and more value placed on disabled people's contribution than ever before, and we lead this stuff globally.

The UK is regarded as an access leader and local authorities have such an important role in that picture to ensure an active talent pipeline from the grassroots, but also to ensure that your venues remain accessible. So I remain convinced that our national culture can truly embrace and value disabled people as artists.

Employees as audiences, as equals.

So that concludes my presentation. I'm delighted to take any questions you have and I'll return you back to Juji and I'll stop sharing.

LZ **Lindsay, Zsuzsi** 23:45

Thank you so much, Andrew, for such a powerful and inspiring speech, reminding us

of the importance of taking action. You've really reminded us that it's inclusion isn't just a principle, it's a practice and one that requires commitment and collaboration.

We're really grateful for you being here today, so thank you. I'd now like to open the floor to any questions or reflections from everyone here. And don't worry, you still have time to think of them because I have quite a few questions.

If you don't have any yet, don't see any, but feel free to pop them in as they come up. So Andrew, I listening to you speak there, I was thinking about whether there is a. As you look back on your career, whether there's a particular moment that stands out as a turning point in shifting attitudes towards disability in the arts, or do you think we've still got a long way to go?

AM **Andrew Miller** 24:48

Moments come and go.

And and I've experienced quite a few. There was definitely as I referred in my dress the late 80s was was was a very important time I think and then again around 2012 and I think that period immediately after the pandemic as as.

I think there was a real understanding in the sector that we couldn't carry on as we we did before that the sector before the pandemic had been very excluding of disabled people and there was a real response. So we had, you know, at one point. Just in that post pandemic period, we had, you know, Francesca Martinez show all of us at the National Theatre, Arthur's Richard the Third at the RSC. You know, there was a real moment. There was lots of awards being given to disabled people. It was great. That moment has started to subside.

And I worry we're now going to go through another phase of a regression in terms of the the sector's approach, which is why I think all in is really importantly timed to be, you know, kicking in over the next few months. So yeah, these moments come and go.

So the real trick is to grab them when they do appear and get the most out of them you possibly can.

LZ **Lindsay, Zsuzsi** 26:09

Brilliant. I mean, I think one of the things that we all strive to do as councils is to be as supportive as possible to grassroots organisations. But you know, if you had one message for council, the councils here today, how could we?

How do you think we could better support artists and creatives at grassroots level to build kind of a sustainable talent pipeline?

AM **Andrew Miller** 26:45

Keep the faith and doing what you're already doing. You know you know those councils are under huge pressures, but what they've done over decades to support disabled people and actually to help drive forward this agenda, I give a lot of credit to the arts.

AM **Andrew Miller** 27:04

Council, but actually local authorities have been doing this for years in making sure that their services are accessible. Of course it's a legal requirement, but you know that work is really important and so if you're able to continue doing what you're already.

Doing I think that's that's very important, but you know, ensuring that your services are accessible to as many people as possible.

LZ **Lindsay, Zsuzsi** 27:28

Thank you. We have a several questions, one from I'll come to Donna 1st and then I'll come to Vince who has their hand up. So with local, this is from Donna, sorry. With local authority budgets under severe strain, where would you advise councils to focus?

This and prioritize to improve access for disabled people.

AM **Andrew Miller** 27:52

I mean, clearly there's legal requirements that guide your work in this area, but I I think it's really important for for local authorities to ensure that you know all aspects of their work are accessible and that means keeping on top of what access actually means.

AM **Andrew Miller** 28:14

And referred to in my talk, you know that's the bit that changes an awful lot and it's kind of and I know that's very tricky for a lot of non disabled people to keep up on because you're dealing with a lot of you're looking over a lot of areas and.

You know, and that's where I think membership of things like all in or other access

schemes that might be available are very, very useful because they act as a sort of useful third party to signpost and direct. You know, we we go through phases. You know, the the the most recent one has been not every disability is visible. Yeah, that's absolutely right. But that also means that we can't take our eyes off the requirements of people that have very obvious disabilities. So you know, it's it's important that we.

AM **Andrew Miller** 29:02

Keep on top of, you know, what access apps actually means and and certainly that's what we're hoping all in will assist with.

LZ **Lindsay, Zsuzsi** 29:07

Brilliant. Thank you, Vince. I'll bring you in. You have your hand up.

V **Vincent** 29:17

Yeah, thank you, Andrew. That was really interesting. I found that a very fascinating discussion. Thank you. Thank you very much. And you mentioned the obviously the huge investment in Paralympics, the 60 million I think, I think you mentioned and I think you suggested if I'm not aware of any such opportunities to get that kind of focused investment on disability.

V **Vincent** 29:37

I wonder where you think there might be opportunities to get ongoing investment. For example, I'm thinking we have a city of culture every year whether more focus to be made on that. So that there's a huge requirement to invest heavily in disability and in those sort of schemes or any other ideas that you might have about where you might get some, you know, significant funding. To move things forward.

AM **Andrew Miller** 29:59

That's a really interesting question. I mean, I I I'd also say you know that I don't think the City of Culture program has delivered as well as it could have done for for disabled people over the last decade since it started. I think there could be more of a focus on on that within the programs, but I didn't see it.

In Derry, Londonderry or Coventry or or indeed Hull, which was supposed to be the

the really successful one. So yeah, I think that is something that that could be delivered because it's a DCMS program delivered by local authorities and partners. So but that that's certainly an area that I would like to see.

You know, a a greater focus. But I think it's it's really interesting that you know that level of funding that Paralympics has received over a sustained period of time is not replicated anywhere else in in terms of provision of access for disabled people of engaged, certainly not in arts.

I mean, I think in terms of the MPO portfolio just in England, disabled LED companies are less than 3% of the overall investment. It's a small percentage and we only have one organization that that achieves funding of around about a million.

Bounds and that's unlimited. So we need to see that infrastructure grow. But of course all of this is interconnected and you know what I was talking about the grassroots earlier to ensure that we see the new disabled artists coming through and and creatives.

Being supported, that's really important because I see none of this stands still and it moves actually at quite terrifying speed in terms of what access is and what it's mean and what people are, are, what support people are requiring to to to to engage. So I don't have any magic wand.

I'm afraid, but but I, you know, there are certain areas and I think you're right. City of Cultures is is one of them that we could see more of a focus on engagement of disabled people.

V Vincent 32:06
Thank you.

LZ Lindsay, Zsuzsi 32:08
Thank you. I think we have time for the three last questions here. So I'll go to Sarah, then Jonathan and then Paula. So Sarah has asked, can you suggest best practice? Practice co-creative ways for us to co-devise developments to our offers with those who identify as disabled within our communities.

AM Andrew Miller 32:32
The simple response to that is to listen and to engage with disabled people as equals and do it proactively and you know you know really make get the take the initiative to go out.

And create relationships and partnerships with disabled people. Very often you will find disabled communities and disabled individuals are quite isolated. So and they can be isolated in very different ways, whether that's through, you know, digital poverty or other means.

I think taking the initiative and you know, really going out to listen to what those disabled individuals and communities require and what support they want, that's the real key thing in in in developing.

Uh, Co creation, Co created projects.

LZ **Lindsay, Zsuzsi** 33:32

Thank you. And so Jonathan says, hi Andrew, great to have you here. My question relates to the phrase reasonably practicable. Is that is that a word? Am I saying that right, which I hear?

AM **Andrew Miller** 33:36

Hello, Jonathan.

JC **Jonathan Cochrane** 33:46

Yeah, that's the right phrase. Yeah, yeah.

LZ **Lindsay, Zsuzsi** 33:47

Thank you, which I hear in use a fair bit in relation to disability access. Do you have any reflections of challenging this and when and where that is acceptable and where it isn't?

AM **Andrew Miller** 33:53

Are you thinking, Jonathan, in terms of reasonable adjustments?

JC **Jonathan Cochrane** 34:06

I just hear the phrase we will.

Address access issues through the use of this fund or through the delivery of this project where reasonably practicable. I hear it a lot. It's kind of a quite a typical bureaucratic phrase, kind of a way to caveat your ability to.

AM **Andrew Miller** 34:19

Yeah.

JC **Jonathan Cochrane** 34:29

Get out of it. And it's great to see you. Hello. Bye.

AM **Andrew Miller** 34:30

Not do something. Yes, I.

I mean, inevitably this is this is bind. I mean there are various things that bind this.

There's the legal requirement around reasonable adjustments that's enshrined in the Equality Act. But I think that the rule is always going to be here, you know, if you're making adjustments and making changes around.

Access, you know, hopefully you will be co-creating those with disabled experts and disabled people. And I think it's always better to go, you know, you know, achieve the sort of gold standard with what you're doing and go beyond what is strictly.

Necessarily or strictly required because that'll be the thing that will save money in the long to longer term. And so you know, I think you know, you know going the making the extra effort now is probably always going to be advantageous to the future, but you know it's how long.

As long as a piece of string, you know, it depends on what the project is, what, what, what, what, what the adjustments are. But yeah, I'd, you know, I'd always try and stick by the rule of, you know, doing more now, you know, to to ensure inclusion, you know, for later.

JC **Jonathan Cochrane** 35:48

So when challenging this phrase, you're talking about making the case around the long, long term gain out of committing to it. Yeah, cheers, Andrew.

AM **Andrew Miller** 35:53

Yeah, I think that's that's it. Good to see, John.

LZ **Lindsay, Zsuzsi** 35:58

Thank you. So there is another question that has just come up, but Andrew is

wondering if you'd be happy to answer this after this. Thank you so much, Mariana. Thank you for your question. So over to Paula As for our last question.

AM **Andrew Miller** 36:07

Sure.

RP **REDWAY Paula** 36:13

Thanks, Andrew. I remember being part of that initial kind of hint project within Wales and it's just brilliant to see how that's come to fruition. My question is, are there any go to places where people will look for details?

Access information. The reason why I say this is because I appreciate that there will be some people that join all in. There may be not everybody. As a council, we put in quite substantial investment into something called Access Able.

Used to be called disabled to go. I don't know if you know about it. And as we were doing it and working with our communities as best we could, we did get a lot of reports and detailed information up there. But I'm not sure you know few years on now whether there there's different platforms that we should be looking at.

AM **Andrew Miller** 36:50

OK.

RP **REDWAY Paula** 37:09

Or other places or whether actually the all in is going to be, you know, envisaged to be that place.

AM **Andrew Miller** 37:18

And it's a really good question, Paula, because, you know, I think this is one of the things that people struggle with because, you know, there are so many options and the information isn't sort of enshrined in one place. There's been talk over the years of creating a, you know, a purple book.

For theatre and things like that, they could sort of encapsulate, you know, all the like Green Book for environmental issues, but it's never happened. I mean inevitably the standards that the all in is developing, you know, which is taking existing frameworks, existing practice, kind of bringing it all together, you know.

In terms of, you know, audience expectations around support for, you know,

delivering work with disabled people as artists or as participants, I think that will go some way, certainly within the cultural sphere.

To providing that kind of one stop shop if you like that's that was our intention and the standards are is a significant document you know it's going to provide it you know it's not like the seven principles which was you know easily.

You know, consumable in one bite, you know it was about 7 pages long. Maybe the this thing is about is very significant. So when organisations subscribe to one in, they get access to all of that very, very rich detail, which is what we hope will be the thing that's going to be really helpful. So it does.

Bring all of that stuff together. Beyond that, I don't think what you just what you were seeking in terms of our, you know, a platform where all this information can be stored. I don't think exists because so many the sectors all have such different requirements and needs.

So I'm hoping all in will to some extent provide that in in culture and I think that will also be useful in terms of other areas, related areas. But yeah, I don't think that the the universal platform exists yet.

But we're on our way to it, I think through on him, but I'm not a neutral. I'm not a neutral voice on that.

RP REDWAY Paula 39:24

Thank you.

LZ Lindsay, Zsuzsi 39:28

Thank you very much. Thank you, Andrew, for your time today and for such an inspiring and motivating speech. It's been brilliant to have you and thank you for answering our questions. I feel like we could have spent a lot longer on our questions, so thank you.

AM Andrew Miller 39:46

Thanks for having me.

LZ Lindsay, Zsuzsi 39:48

So now I would like to invite our four case studies from councils across the UK to present just a little reminder that we have 10 minutes for each case study presentation. So I'll give you a quick heads up at 8 minutes and I'd like to.

To invite participants to please pop your questions in the Q&A area and our speakers will hopefully be able to answer those in the Q&A area. So first of all, I'd love to invite Robin Gold Smith, Culture Development Manager from Medway Council and Beth James.

From Square Peg Arts to talk about the Creative Medway Accessibility Pledge. Thank you.

RP goldsmith, robyn 40:37

Hi. Hi everyone. I'm just going to share my screen. Just bear with me.

Can everybody see someone say yes or no?

Yeah. Oh, I can see. I can see nodding happening. That's good. Hello there. Hi. I'm from Medway Council, which is in North Kent in the southeast. I today. Oh, just to mention, I'm middle-aged, white woman, brown hair, bow on my hair.

GR goldsmith, robyn 41:13

And my pronouns are she her. And I'll just let Beth introduce herself as well quickly.

B Beth James (she/her) Square Pegs Arts 41:22

Hi everyone, I'll introduce myself properly shortly, but I'm Beth James. I'm a white woman in my mid 40s with bleach blonde hair, a red and pink top and red lipstick.

GR goldsmith, robyn 41:39

Thanks, Beth. Yeah. So we're going to talk to you today about the accessibility pledge that was developed by Creative Medway. And I'm just going to start off by giving you a bit of a context as to what Creative Medway is. And then Beth will come on to talk about the pledge itself and the process they went through.

To establish that and some of the learning and outcomes from it. So Creative Medway is a 10 year cultural strategy and it's.

It is led by a compact, a creative compact, which steers Medway the place to deliver against what we set out in the strategy. It came about because Arts Council, there had long been a need for a really robust culture.

Strategy for Medway Arts Council put in some funding for the writing of a new strategy and Medway Council championed and supported that, particularly the compact model.

What existed really before in in the form of our previous cultural strategy, it was very

much council led. It was written by the council people from the local community and sector were kind of invited.

Did.

To a cultural partnership. The difference with this is that Medway Council shifted position into more of a role of support. We're one voice in the room rather than the loudest voice in the room and therefore we now have a cultural strategy that's been written effectively by the sector and.

The Compact, the Culture Medway, Creative Medway Cultural Compact are the group of people who lead that strategy and make sure that we are on target for delivering what we set out in it. It's made-up of a representation of people.

There are as a chair, vice chairs who lead on a number of themes that were established as part of that strategy. You can see here we've got priorities, work in partnership, evaluate the impact before we move on strategic.

And thinking long term, our actions are environmentally sustainable. We enhance access for all. We recognise culture is integral to well-being and that all of those principles are written through our five themes of connectivity, shared ambition.

Spaces and places.

Grassroots up and community engagement we have. So aside from the chair, the vice chairs who lead each of these strands, these themes, we also have a wider membership and we hold a big cultural.

Get together once a year where people from the sector can come together and essentially set the aims and objectives for the coming year. And out of that working groups are formed who lead on what we've set out and what we've identified as challenges or gaps.

One of the gaps that we have identified for the year 24 to 25 was accessibility and Beth was on the working group that worked towards our accessibility pledge. So I'm going to hand over to Beth so that she can.

Explain because like I say, although this is a local authority officers group really for Medway, the importance of creative Medway is that we as a council, we're not in the driving seat we're supporting. So Beth's much better place to talk about the the nuts and bolts of.

The pledge. So I'll be quiet now and let Beth talk.

B

Beth James (she/her) Square Pegs Arts 45:57

Thanks, Robin. Just to quickly introduce myself, I'm Beth James. I'm Artistic Director

and CEO of a disabled LED charity based in Medway, working across Kent and Medway we work with.

Predominantly learning, disabled and neurodivergent people of all ages. We deliver a broad community programme. We have a professional theatre company and we advocate and champion disability, arts and equity and access and inclusion.

As well as my role with Square Pegs Arts, I founded and run a disability arts network for Kent and Medway, through which we co-deliver a.

A conference called Elevate which is around access and inclusion. We also work with the local authorities, the Kent County Council and Medway Council. For example, we consulted on both of their cultural strategies with.

The disabled arts community when they were both in development. So that's a bit of context to who I am in terms of my role within Creative Medway and with Medway Council, I have been the access and inclusion champion on the Cultural Compact.

Throughout the time it's been operating and as Robin said, last year I joined and chaired the working group working with access as a priority. I invited a colleague from Attitude is Everything who has actually already been mentioned.

Earlier by Andrew, who are a national organization who work to improve access in venues and live events. I invited them to join the working group as a partner as one of the priorities that came through the consultation with the sector was to develop some kind.

Of pledge for venues and events to support them in having the tools and resources to be more accessible for their audiences and for artists.

So we as a working group, we did some more consultation with the disabled arts community and decided with the support of Attitude is Everything to develop a pledge which would be to some extent a kind of lighter.

Touch pledge for local organisations, maybe smaller organisations, artists who are delivering events single-handedly that wouldn't feel too arduous, too complex, too admin heavy, but that was really realistic for people to be able to use and apply and.

That was also meaningful in terms of outcomes and actually feeling like it would genuinely support people to improve their access, so.

B

Beth James (she/her) Square Pegs Arts 49:15

OK. So we is there another slide, Robin?

Brilliant. So we developed a pledge which organisations and venues can sign up to, and by signing up they are pledging to be transparent and honest about their

accessibility. We developed a checklist which they can refer to.

Which covers all things along around access in terms of digital access like tickets, social media, etcetera, travel, parking, physical access in the venue.

Toilets, etcetera, and also access in terms of supporting staff and artists who they work with. There's also a toolkit that sits alongside that checklist, which gives advice and signposts to further resources that organisations can use.

To support them in improving their access alongside the checklist. So once people are signed up they get the sort of badge as such which they can use on their websites and their materials. Thank you Robin.

They are supported by all the resources that we've developed that can be accessed on the Creative Medway website. So that's a very brief overview of what the pledge is we rolled out across Medway.

And then we spoke to partners in wider Kent and we are rolling it out across wider Kent as well, working with Kent County Council and Kent, the University of Kent Institute of Art and Design, who are supporting the pledge as well. So we're a lot of partnership work.

And we're still, it's still early days. We're still kind of in the process of rolling it out. I think we're really proud of what we achieved. I think the input of attitude is everything was really valuable as they've got that, you know, Bank of resources and experience in this area, but to be able to make something bespoke for our area that felt kind of realistic and meaningful.

For smaller organisations and venues, we're really proud of what we've achieved and we look forward to kind of reviewing more formally kind of how it has been successful and also of course the lessons learnt from it.

LZ **Lindsay, Zsuzsi** 51:50

Brilliant. Thank you so much. And if you haven't had a look yet, definitely take a look at the at the link to the pledge. It's absolutely brilliant. So thank you so much for coming and sharing with us today. I'd now like to invite Gemma Clarke. Yes, that's right. Sector specialist.

This from Elscar Bridging Project in from Barnsley Museums to talk about the sensory tour that they created of Elscar Heritage Centre.

CG **Clarke , Gemma (SECTOR SPECIALIST ELSECAR PROJECT)** 52:20

Hello there. Hello. Just sharing my screen now. I'll just start the presentation. Hello

everyone. I'm Gemma Clark and I'm, as I mentioned, I'm Sector Specialist for volunteering over at Elsecar Heritage Centre, working within Barns and museums and the Barnsley Council and the Museums. I'm a 30 year old white woman. I've got brown blonde hair, wearing my hair in a ponytail and wear glasses. I've also got a black Barns and Museums jacket.

On today as well. So I just wanted to share a little bit about my work that I've that I've done with a local group called the Barnsley Blind and Partially Sighted Association.

The work that we've done was part of a larger and wider project called.

Elsecar Building Bridges. The project was delivered throughout 2024 and the this sort of mini project was a small part of it and the idea was to create a sensory touch tour.

So throughout the project what we were wanting to do was develop.

Our current and kind of popular tour programme, which kind of ranged from site tours to engine demonstrations and walking hikes to create a an accessible and interactive guided tour for a visually impaired audience.

So in developing the tour, as you can see from my first slide, we wanted to hold a consultation session with the group to find out more and gain their feedback. And in preparation for this, I worked to kind of really consider.

The site and how we could use it more to add more of an experience for the visitors and the group that we were going to have attending on that day. So the first two images that you can see on the right hand corner.

Or the top right hand corner of the slides there they show physical objects that we kind of used as part of the sensory tour to help the group interact with the history of the site. So on the right hand side there's a large pit wheel and then in the centre we've got a kind of locomotive.

Sort of wheel base there that we were using to describe some of the stories of Elsecar. We also use not just physical objects, but also the terrain under the foot, under our feet. So we use the terrain not just to share stories, but to help.

The group understand changes in cobbles or we we've got like a little sort of Victorian type streets on our on our site. So making sure that as we were making our way around they could find their way around the area.

But we also used things like original rail lines to show the difference in terrain and share the stories of the site along with the buildings, so the feel of the sort of the stonework.

And some of the stories that that shares with horizontal lines being scored through the buildings to signify all the buildings that were owned by the sort of ill Fitzwilliam.

So there's lots of stories that we were able to share with this.

And as you go to your left hand corner, top left hand corner, it shows an image of us around our kind of engine and the space around our engine where we were using different objects to explain how the engine worked.

And we also worked with the University of Leeds where they had already developed different pieces of research around geophysics that was delivered as part researching a kind of local gas works for the for the area.

So they had created tactile resources, so we tested them out as part of that first consultation session. But I'll just share a little bit of information about some of the objects that we used. So we didn't just use the physical objects that were out already on the site, we wanted to add.

Different physical objects to explain some of the kind of story. So on your left hand side you can see two images of objects relating to sort of iron production. So we've got like a gate hinge.

And a kind of something that you'd see on the top of the fence post. And it wasn't just about sort of feeling the objects, it was kind of the how heavy the kind of iron is. And then on the right hand side we've got an object that kind of has movable parts. So it shows how our engine.

And the beam on our engine can move up and down. And then in the bottom left hand corner we wanted to use different senses for the tour. So we used something called aroma cubes that had different smells of, you know, steam trains or coal mines to add to that. So there's a different.

Sense as well as feeling different objects and then in the centre this as part of the first consultation feedback. We collected all sorts of different pieces of feedback and one thing that was mentioned was around.

Having sort of sounds, more sounds of like original sort of engine sounds, that kind of thing. So I researched and found a sensory radio that's used for people with dementia to have different sounds and.

The other good thing about this particular thing is you can actually press the button yourself, so they can also stop the sounds if they've had enough or they can they can access that themselves.

So I'll just share a little bit more about our work with the University of Leeds. So I mentioned how in a project that was done over at Elsecar, the team at the University of Leeds has done what a large amount of geophysics.

Research around a local gas works and they wanted as part of a further project to

enable the research to be accessed by a visually impaired audience. So we combined. The two projects and we tested the different pieces of material or resources that they'd created. So on the left hand top corner you can see raised line drawings. So a semicircle for one of the gas holders and then an L shape for one of the buildings that kind of remains underground. And we tested those resources as well as acrylic panels which have a kind of a deeper sort of depth. So it was really. Fantastic to test those resources with the group and in addition to that.

LZ **Lindsay, Zsuzsi** 59:55

Sorry, Gemma, it's your 8 minute heads up.

CG **Clarke , Gemma (SECTOR SPECIALIST ELSECAR PROJECT)** 59:58

OK, so oh, 2 minutes. Yeah, sorry. I'm not very well today, so sorry about that. So what was you going to say? So yeah, we also worked with the University of Leeds to.

CG **Clarke , Gemma (SECTOR SPECIALIST ELSECAR PROJECT)** 1:00:14

Create a tactile kind of maps. And then one of the pieces of feedback was that it would be useful to have sort of spots where people could feel where they were actually standing sort of on the tour. And the other fantastic thing was you can see from the central sort of.

At the top was that we won an award for the work that we've done. So the emerging an emerging Cultural Impact award and I'll just go to the to the next slide. So this is from a second consultation that we did with the Blind Association and.

As you can see, we used some of the resources that we'd created and we also used the feedback and used, as you can see in the top left hand corner, the one of the sort of pieces of the engine for the group to interact with the history of our engine that we.

Have on site and then my last side, this is just a little bit of information about how since we created the sensory tour, we've continued to work with the Barnsley Blind Association on lots of further projects, so over at Elsecar.

We have recently created a new visitor centre with lots of new objects on display in the in the visitor centre. So we had a session where the group were able to actually interact with some of these objects and give us feedback on how we could create a sensory basket which you can see on the top left.

Left hand corner. So one of the important examples is a pit check which is just in the

top left hand corner in the in the basket and that was something which is quite small in a museum case you can.

And.

You could feel like a small sort of semi-circle, but basically it it was, it was good. The feedback was that we could create a larger sort of piece to sorry, so just moving on. At the bottom you can see some images of where we've also worked with one of our other local museums called Wisbro Mill, where we've had the Barnsley Brand Association visit the museum and help us get more information about how we can. Interact with them as well, so thank you.

LZ Lindsay, Zsuzsi 1:02:51

Thank you so much, Gemma, for sharing your work with us. It's absolutely brilliant and especially as you're feeling unwell today and really appreciate you being here. Thank you. I'll hand straight over to Hannah Kilburn, Programming and Audience Development Manager from Wakefield Council.

JR Clarke , Gemma (SECTOR SPECIALIST ELSECAR PROJECT) 1:02:52

I'll stop sharing.

Thank you.

HK Hannah Kilburn 1:03:31

Hello, I'm Hannah Kilburn. I work with Jenny Rogers and I'm the Programming and Audience Development Manager at Wakefield Council. I'm a female, white with a brown ponytail in my late 20s and a pink jumper with a picture of.

Field Exchange is my background, so I will share my screen.

Oh, one second.

So this presentation is about how we used our learnings from our year we to and made that approach in practice and have continued that work so.

Where it began, our year was a district wide celebration of culture and community in 2024 and it was our first step towards a more integrated audience development and marketing approach. It wasn't just about the programming, it was how we communicated that and made sure that the programme really reflects.

We've impacted our commitment to accessibility and we've made sure that that inclusivity and the learnings that we've taken from that remain central in what we do. So I'm going to talk a bit today about our approach in practice. So since our year

finished, we've opened Wakefield.

Change, which I'm in today, which is our new big events hub in Wakefield City Centre. And this past summer we had a huge exhibition by Jason Wilshire Mills, which is a disabled inflatable artist and he took over the space for the whole of the summer.

How we really thought about how to make that exhibition as inclusive as possible to make sure that everyone everywhere could attend.

So the first thing that we did was we thought about accessible planning tools. It wasn't just about how we could be accessible once people got here. It was giving them the confidence to know what they could expect and be confident before they actually arrived. So they knew what.

What they were walking into. So we did that through having a really clear, accessible page on the website that had everything listed that you'd need to know. And that included easy read guides, visual story guides which were free to download or print. And also a sensory map which highlighted the areas that might have been overstimulating. So if you're not aware of Jason Wilsher-Mills work, it's very bright, it's very colourful. The inflatables can be quite noisy. There was video involved, so it was quite an overstimulating.

Ambition. So we really wanted to make sure that people could plan accordingly and knew what to expect and we continue to work with the partners that we'd built during our year to communicate what was available as well from an accessibility part point of view so that they could.

Pass that on to their service users as well.

So we had also a range of inclusive tours and promotion throughout the exhibition. So this included a series of free British Sign Language tours and we worked with the provider to make sure that we had a BSL promotional video as well to reach.

Deaf audiences and made sure that they knew about the tours and the exhibition and that had a great sign up throughout the summer holidays, which was lovely to see. We also put on audio description tours for blind and visually impaired visitors. And we're continually learning. I'd say that the audio description tours were not as well attended as the British Sign Language tours. So it's about reaching out to the community groups that work with the people that might require those tours and saying how can we improve this next time? What might?

We do differently, so we're constantly trying to improve what we do. As I said before, we do, we did a lot of outreach to those community groups to make sure that we

were supporting residents that needed the tours.

We had audio introductions as you arrived on top of the interpretation, so you could actually hear about the exhibition from Jason himself. And of course we had subtitles on the exhibition video and any promotion that we did to make sure that it was inclusive as possible.

And most importantly, the exhibition was free. We really wanted to make sure that this was something that anyone could attend, no matter what your income is, which is something that we've taken on from our year, making sure that as much as possible of what we do is accessible for low income.

Residents.

I am.

Oh, there we are. We also had a range of sensory friendly experiences. So as I said before, the exhibition was quite overstimulating. So it was really important to us that we did do relaxed opening hours with lower light levels reduced.

Sound and we also did a range of sensory family tours which we had amazing take up on. So they were really a sensory friendly exploration of Jason's inflatables. Someone would guide them around the inflatables. There was hands on creative activities that they could choose to participate in.

And we had great feedback from those. We also then took that further by doing a specific program that was tailored to sensory schools as well. So it was really thinking about how we could reach different audiences and make sure that they.

Had a pleasant experience that was tailored to them. Another thing that we did, which was thinking about being sensory friendly, it was those silent signals. So we had ear defenders available throughout the exhibition to pick up and use for free and it was important to us.

But people didn't feel like they had to go and ask someone permission to use those. They were out, they were available to pick up and use and we had some great industry feedback on that, which is always very nice to hear.

Our printed materials as well were really thought about, so we had a lot of interpretation for the different pieces, but it was thinking about how we could write them in plain English to support visitors with low literacy levels.

Um.

We thought about the representation as well, so making sure that we use Jason's diverse characters across the promotional materials so people could look at this vinyl. For example, this was a vinyl that was on the outside of our building and hopefully.

Quickly, it's an indicator that everyone was welcome. We also thought about how we could engage all ages and people that maybe don't normally participate in culture. A big part of our year was tackling those barriers to participation and one of the key indicators of that was that some people felt like culture just wasn't for them. So we put on a whole range of workshops. We made sure that we had family activity books during the exhibition as well so that people.

Would hopefully come along and see it as a fun activity, but then they're surrounded by art whilst they're there, which was really lovely to see so many families over the summer holidays, getting involved with creative workshops, doing the family activity books and it and it really just was a way to get people involved in in culture.

And they might not have even realized that they were.

LZ **Lindsay, Zsuzsi** 1:11:43

Sorry, Hannah, this is your two minutes.

HK **Hannah Kilburn** 1:11:45

No worries. We also had clear on-site promotion of all the accessible provisions that we had. We made sure that people knew what was available to them, if they did need any of the access provisions. And finally we made sure that the interpretation panels were also.

Translated into the top three languages of the district, so that if people needed those, they were readily out and available as well.

So what's next for us? As I said before, we're continuing to monitor data and population trends and seeing what works and what doesn't work and always trying to evolve and make sure that we're as accessible as we can be.

We are continuing our everyone, everywhere ethos, sometimes tricky because not everything is suitable for everyone, but where possible, those big moments in our programming, we want to make sure that.

There's not an access reason that somebody couldn't attend it. It's that it is open for everyone and we're also using visitor feedback to make sure that we're continually improving and learning and growing from the organisations that we're working with on programming to further develop our approaches.

So yeah, that's a very quick snapshot of just some of the activities we did across our summer exhibition and the learnings from our year. But yes, thank you.

LZ Lindsay, Zsuzsi 1:13:18

That's brilliant. Thank you so much, Hannah and Jenny. I hope you make it out of the corridor all right. Yeah, absolutely really inspiring and so wonderful to see that continued journey kind of embedded and the deep listening embedded that Andrew. Referred to. So really looking forward to seeing what happens next. Congratulations on an amazing project. So now I'd like to bring in our final case study speaker, Angie Farrance, Senior Policy Officer from London Borough of Culture, to talk about the Liberty Festival.

LZ Hannah Kilburn 1:13:37

Thank you.

AF Angela Farrance 1:13:54

Thanks for having me. So yeah, my name's Angie. I work at the GLA, which is the Greater London Authority. I'm in the Culture and Creative Industries team and I look after the London Borough of Culture and Liberty Festival. So I'm a white woman in my late 40s. I've got blonde hair with green glasses and a red jumper. And I have a bookshelf as my background, which I've blurred to hide all the mess. So I have 5 slides, but they are mostly images of people or performers and I will mention who they are when you have the slides sent to you.

We detailed alt text behind them, but if you don't want to follow them, if you've been looking at the screen a long time, if you want to look out the window, that's cool.

You're not going to miss anything. There's no, there's no text on there. So this picture shows Midgitte Bardot, who's one of the performers at the festival that we just had last week. OK, so brief bit of background.

And Liberty is the Mayor of London's flagship festival for deaf, disabled and neurodivergent artists. It was launched in 2003, and it's since played a key role in raising the profile of the disability arts sector. Since 2019, it's been part of London Borough of Culture, which hopefully you're all aware of, but.

Essentially, it's a competition where every two years a London borough takes the title and celebrates the culture and creativity of its people and places inspired by the European and UK Cities of Culture idea. We stole the idea. So for Liberty, we work very much in a partnership, so us at the GL.

Play the host borough and then a creative delivery partner. This year we've been

lucky. We've worked with the brilliant Wandsworth Council in London and also an organisation called Cryptic Arts. And we have a Liberty Advisory group which provides strategic advice to us all. And that's what I'm here to talk to you about. So to get to where we are with a really well attended and well regarded advisory group, we did have to overcome a number of challenges including the accessibility of our recruitment and our onboarding processes. And that's what I'm going to address. So it's worth saying and I'm sure you will know this already that a lot of the. Stuff I'm going to talk about is actually good practice for any advisory group, whether the members are disabled or not. So you might know about Selwyn Goldsmith. He was an architect and disability rights campaigner, himself a wheelchair user who invented the dropped curb in the 60s and which is now widely used across the world.

So this idea obviously benefited lots of others, like parents with push chairs, for example. So this idea of designing for disabled people really is about universal design. These ideas help lots of people. So I'm going to click through to my next slide. So this picture shows lots of beautiful people. This is some of the members of our Liberty advisory.

Group with our Mayor Sadiq Khan and our Deputy Mayor for Culture and Creative Industries, Justine Simons. The group is made-up of 11 expert representatives from the deaf, disabled and neurodivergent creative sector and they guide the vision for the festival and they help us to ensure that Liberty models best practice.

It embeds long-term positive local change in the host borough and that we make sure that disabled and neurodivergent artists have the opportunity for development and growth. So in terms, the first thing I'll talk about in terms of strategies and stuff is recruitment.

So think about the professional and lived experience you need represented on your board and your group, and consider how you're going to articulate and articulate that in a clear and inclusive way. Spend some really good time developing a comms plan for your recruitment. How are you going to find the good people?

People that you need. We talked to our partners and members of our advisory group and identified which networks they could share the opportunity with. We also secured some budget to advertising relevant publications like Disability Arts Online. We created a recruitment pack that had comprehensive information. So this included our terms of reference in terms of appointment. It covered things like remuneration, the frequency and the format of the meeting, the time commitment we were asking,

the responsibilities of the group. These were all clearly laid out from the start. We made these available as a BSL video.

And also as an easy read document. And I think as Hannah mentioned before that we didn't wait to be asked for these things. This is all part of our initial roll out of the opportunity. We held two live webinars, one with the BSL interpreter and a live captioner where we presented more information about the role and answered questions from.

We recorded one of these sessions and added it to our website. We created a really simple application process. So we asked candidates to answer just five questions and they could be presented to us in a number of ways as a written document, as a recorded video or a recorded audio.

We allow plenty of time for applications. Our opportunity for the advisory group was 7 to 8 weeks in the field, I think, and we had a named contact if there are any questions. And then when we had our applications in, five people separately read and assessed them, including people who have lived experience of disability.

Ability and neurodiversity. So click on to my next slide, which is a picture of performers called Daughters of the Sea. So the Liberty Advisory Group is a non statutory group, but we still have to go through quite a rigorous onboarding process. This meant we asked for lots of information from candidates, some personal information, and often these were duplicate requests because we have various online platforms which are managed by different partners that we work with. So we're often asking them the same questions in different ways.

So we created an onboarding roadmap which set out all the information that we'd require from people and why we needed it. And I should say that this was shared as part of the recruitment pack, so people knew what was coming. This was really important because it helped people to make informed decisions about whether or not they wanted to apply.

I'll give you an example. One element of our onboarding was that candidates needed to go through an adverse media check. We do these as we want people who work with us to be aware that things they might have posted publicly before in a non political environment might get picked up by the media and used against them and we wanted to protect people.

From that having that negative experience. But some people hadn't heard of these and they obviously felt quite intrusive maybe. So we set out in the roadmap what the process would be for collecting the information we needed and how we were going

to use it. Some of our members use different names on social media and they couldn't understand how we were going to check.

As we hadn't asked for their handles or accounts, so it caused a bit of anxiety and so we had to be really clear about exactly what we were going to do and what the process was. And so I think the key thing with that is, is not to assume that people know what you're talking about. Often we're nervous about stating the obvious, but it's just super important to communicate things really well.

So moving on to my next slide, this is artist Simeon Campbell in part of a publicity shop for their performance, Sad Boy. So this bit is about remuneration, remuneration. I never know how to pronounce that word, sorry, but paying people essentially. And this was one of the processes that we.

We are still working on. We weren't able to deal with it internally, but we were really keen to pay our members. So in order to attract and retain a diverse mix of people who best represent London, we wanted to be able to offer this voluntary stipend and also to cover travel and access costs.

Our members, many of our group are freelance, some are students, many have caring responsibilities and we wanted to recognise and value their time and contribution on the board. So in line with other boards at the GLA and having done some wider sector research, we secured budget to allow for 50 lbs per hour.

For each meeting of the advisory group, of which there are four year, I should say. So we allowed two hours preparation and two hours for the meeting and then up to 150 lbs for access or travel. So it was a maximum of £350 per member per.

Meeting as I say proved to, I mean everyone works in the public sector. It proved quite complicated for us to try and manage this via our public sector finance system and also we have an external provider that looks after temporary and agency workers, but that process and the online platforms are so.

Associated with it weren't particularly accessible and then the guidance that was shared, you know how to access those platforms actually made it a bit more confusing. So this is an ongoing area of work for us. It's something that we're trying to fix and we've got good partners that want to kind of improve things as well, but instead we worked with a third party organization who pay the members on our behalf. They're able to pay members within two weeks of them submitting invoices. We have checks and balances built into the system, but it's very straightforward. They do charge us a small management fee, but this was actually less than the fee that we would be charged internally by our provider, so it works.

Great. And as part of that, we have to make it clear obviously that we can't advise how payments affect individual members, tax liabilities and also their benefits. Often many of our disabled members are in receipt of benefits as well.

LZ Lindsay, Zsuzsi 1:23:51

Sorry, Angie, just your one minute warning.

AF Angela Farrance 1:23:51

Yeah, great. Thank you. So I've just got to my last slide now. So this is, this is about our ongoing engagement with members. So in this image you can see this is AJ Venturini, the artist, and an extract from his work, alter their work, Altar to Joy. So yes, ongoing engagement, really important. So we send out an agenda and papers four weeks in advance of every meeting so people have time to prepare. In each two hour meeting we build in a comfort break. We don't require people to have their cameras on when they're speaking. We share notes and actions rather than full minutes back with members.

Within a week of the meeting, the feedback loop is super important. People want to know that what they've said has been heard and actioned. A really important thing we did, all members were asked to share an access rider with us at the start, so we understood their needs and they didn't have to keep telling us the same thing over and over again at the start of each meeting. Something that Andrew.

I referred to at the beginning. Some of our members are very familiar with these, others not so much. There are lots of templates online you can have a look at. We should say not everyone likes them because your access rider could be different depending on which situation you're in, but broadly they have worked for us. They're confidential documents and we treat them as such.

And we plan to check in regularly about these riders because people's situations change. And that's part of a kind of ongoing feedback loop where I think as Hannah said, it's a journey of improvement and we're always trying to be better. So yeah, that that's I'll finish there. Thanks very much.

LZ Lindsay, Zsuzsi 1:25:26

Thank you so much, Angie. That's brilliant. And thank you for joining us so soon after the end of the festival as well. I hope you had a long rest yesterday because it happened it finished over the weekend, didn't it?

AF**Angela Farrance** 1:25:39

It did. It was a beautiful thing and I don't know if there are colleagues from Wandsworth on the call, but it was an amazing festival. Yeah, and there'll be lots of content that comes from it and I'd love to share it with you so you can see and make sure you come when it's in Haringey in 2027.

LZ**Lindsay, Zsuzsi** 1:25:55

Thank you. Thank you for joining us and this brings us to the end of our roundtable today with one minute to spare. Thank you to everyone for going through their presentations and for sharing their experiences with us.

What we've heard has been really powerful and deeply inspiring. From inclusive marketing and sensory heritage experience to co-created access pledges and festivals led by disabled artists, each case study is showing us.

What is possible when we centre lived experience and commit to meaningful inclusion. So as we move forward I would I will certainly be challenged by a lot of the things that everyone has shared today to take back into my own context and I hope. All of you on the call do the same, looking at how we can build on what we've heard today and what partnerships we can strengthen, what barriers can we remove and how we can ensure that inclusion is not an add-on but a foundation to our practice. Just a quick reminder if you are not yet a member of CLOA, but would like to be.

Please do consider joining. It'd be brilliant to have you and a really big thank you to our sponsors who make our work possible with their contributions. XN Leisure, leading IT solution provider to the leisure sector, Bigwave marketing, leading creative agency specializing in culture and Leisure, Blake Morgan, a UK law firm providing leading legal services across the private and public sector, Playfootball, a specialist recreational football company providing a complete solution for all weather sports pitches. And so finally, thank you to all our speakers, Andrew, Robyn, Beth, Gemma, Hannah and Angie and Jenny, thank you to our audience members, to the EDI group that supported this roundtable and to Heidi, who has been the technical wizard behind the scenes. And I hope to see you at the next roundtable in November, which will be our cultural strategies hosted in partnership with the LGA. Hope you. Have a fantastic afternoon and thank you for your time today.