

Business in the Arts:North West



Resource Pack

Enabling Equal Access to the Boards of Arts Organisations



THE BATTY CHARITABLE TRUST



Resource Pack for opening up board membership to excluded groups

BIA:NW operates a Board Bank programme which introduces business people to arts organisations and museums as potential board or management committee members and ensures that they receive appropriate introductory training. A later strand of the scheme, the Positive Action Board Bank (PABB), targets Black and Minority Racial candidates. Building upon the success of the PABB, from 2002 to 2004, BIA:NW was supported by Arts Council England, North West (ACE,NW) to carry out action research into the feasibility of running a Board Bank scheme for Deaf and Disabled people in order to increase diversity on boards in the arts sector.

In 2006, further funding was made available from ACE, NW to support this work and to increase the diversity of boards in the cultural sector by widening the Board Bank service to include people from more excluded disabled communities and to positively encourage those who have a learning disability to take part.

The resulting work from 2006 – 2008 with arts organisations in the North West of England, people from potentially excluded groups and interested professionals, identified that one of the biggest barriers to opening up board membership is a lack of time to prepare and take advantage of best and better practice.

Therefore, to help you and your Board to become more inclusive we have put together this pack which is organised around the various headings people agreed would be useful when they came together at a workshop held by BIA:NW in September 2007.

The pack points you via Internet links towards sources of information, support and practical examples rather than printing out materials so that you can save time in the research stages of your development and concentrate your resources on getting started or further improving your practice.

We hope you find them useful.

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Making a start

Don't re-invent the wheel

There are many organisations in the North West that already successfully involve a diverse range of people as active Board members in their organisations and their experiences were shared in a workshop held in September 2007.

Good practice principles which emerged were:

- Boards need as much support to be inclusive as those with extra needs who aspire to be Trustees
- Making Board processes easier is beneficial to all Board members
- Boards and their prospective trustees should learn and grow together methods which work for their organisations – no one way would work for all
- Board involvement should evolve at the pace of the organisation and its prospective trustees

The key outcomes organisations have expressed for involving a diverse range of people on Boards of arts organisations are:

- A Board which realistically reflects the people who benefit from their services and the community
- Effective input by a diverse range of people to decision making at Board level
- Service user Board members who have used the experience to develop wider interests and become more confident and competent
- Better services for the beneficiaries of their organisation

To achieve these outcomes, working with people, at their own pace is vital.

One way of finding out how ready your organisation is to either to begin or further develop is to look at the challenges and possible solutions from both the perspective of your Board members and from potential Board members who may have been excluded from this opportunity in the past.

The people who attended our workshop in September 2007 told us that for them, the challenges to becoming Board members were:

- Meeting venues and their accessibility
- Transport - finding out how to get there as well as travelling time
- Overcoming fears on both sides, type of language used in Board meetings
- Attitudes of Board members and their understanding of their roles
- Worry about cost, transport, food, personal support
- Ignorance about what they would be asked to make decisions about

What they saw as the solutions were:

- Using accessible venues and locations for training and keeping meetings short and sweet
- Having a trial board membership period and creating internet forums for mutual support For whom?
- Sharing good practice with other Boards and offering training for Boards
- Making sure any trainers used have proper experience of working with learning disabled people
- Make sure people with learning disabilities are encouraged to speak
- Influencing organisations to accept a wide range of people on to their Boards

You can draw up your own lists of issues and concerns of your Boards, staff and potential Board members using the survey in the next section or design your own with the help of good practice outlined below. Whichever methods you use, you will then be able to take the findings to kick start discussions with your Board and potential Board members to identify and prioritise action.

Finding out what people think

There are good examples of working successfully with people who have learning disabilities and mental health problems, both nationally and locally to find out their views and adapt ways of working.

'In the Frame' national report of the Learning Disability and Arts Conference 2005 hosted by Mencap at the Tate Modern in London.

<http://www.mencap.org.uk>

'Chipping In' a conference report on the participation of children and young people in decision making in community arts held at the Lowry in 2000.

Geoffskirkman@yahoo.co.uk

All of Us Theatre Company in York have been working together since September 2002. There are 10 adults with learning difficulties and two artists and the company offers an opportunity for its members to present the views, needs and achievements of people with learning difficulties to a wider audience. contact@actionspacemobile.org

Artspider run by Mencap seeks views of learning disabled people about their access to arts events and they have a good example of a pictorial interactive survey online which uses a Smileometer. www.artspider.org.uk

There are also two key books which aim to support organisations and individuals who want to support volunteers with mental health problems without risk to the volunteering activity.

- You Cannot Be Serious: A Guide to Involving Volunteers with Mental Health Problems.
- Overcoming a Lack of Awareness of Mental Health Issues.

Both by Sherry Clark. [Energize Bookstore](#)

Survey

BIA:NW have successfully used the questions below as a survey and a tool to aid guided interviews either face to face or by telephone with arts organisations in the North West and the results helped to inform the contents of this Resource Pack.

1. How ready do you think your Board are to consider opening up membership to those with diverse needs?
 - What would it take for you to begin considering how you might make this happen?
 - Have you attempted this already and if so, with what success?
2. What do you think the main challenges are/have been?
3. How ready do you think your volunteers and staff are to support service user representation on your Board?
 - What would it take for them to begin considering how they might make this happen?
 - Have you attempted this already and if so, with what success?
4. What do you think the main challenges are/have been?
5. How ready are potential service user Board members?
6. Do service users already have their own representative group and are they accustomed to representing their views to your organisation?
7. Have service users already expressed a wish to further involved at Board level?
 - If not, what would be needed to make this an attractive opportunity?

This survey can be adapted for use with potential Board members, existing Board members and staff of arts organisations. The results can then inform action planning which reflects the needs identified and develops at a pace and time which suits everyone.

To show how this has been achieved successfully, the case study which follows sets out the challenges, solutions and progress to date for an organisation in the North West.



Developing Board membership A case study

So Many Words (SMW) are a specialist theatre company for people with learning disabilities, based in Eccles.

Contact: mappleyard@oakwoodhighschool.co.uk

SMW are currently working to put in place a board of trustees made up of dedicated, creative individuals, which will include disabled members of the company. This board would be independent and meet on a regular basis. So far, members of SMW have been Trustees of Oakwood Youth Club, where they have been involved in interviewing potential employees, being Trustees and becoming volunteers. As part of SMW's development and sustainability it is felt that greater autonomy from the youth club in the form of its own identity is required. This has led to the plan for a separate organisation, with the help of those with learning disabilities who have already contributed to the successful management of Oakwood Youth Club.

The main organisational challenges for them have been:

- Finding the staff time to consult with members. SMW staff have found this necessary but feel the time is well invested and absolutely vital to ensure that the company is structured in a way that reflects the actual needs of its members.
- Meeting individual support needs. SMW have learnt that achieving this has to be viewed as a developmental process and involves reducing barriers and changing attitudes, and as ever, there is a cost factor.
- Staffing issues. For those who are not used to communicating with young disabled people, SMW have put in place training so they can be supported to work with the group effectively.
- Board issues. SMW allowed time to develop the idea of participation by previously excluded groups.

Supporting potential Board members

In order to support new Board members, SMW set up Member Empowerment sessions. The aims were to give the adult members an opportunity to take on more responsibility and to train them in areas of volunteering and workshop leading. Sessions used drama and visual techniques and were designed to identify where the members' strengths were and areas where they felt needed development. They also looked at the potential barriers and opportunities created by taking on an extra responsibility within the company. During these sessions members were able to look closer at how the company is organised and to voice their opinions.

The first stage of the Member Empowerment sessions has now been completed and members are keen to continue on similar lines. From evaluating the sessions it was clear that the members felt positive when their views were being taken into account before decisions were made at the company. Some members who responded well to these sessions now wish to move on to Board level. Others are more reluctant and in this case SMW are working with these members to encourage their participation. The main concerns are about going into a 'business' environment and knowing how to articulate their ideas.

SMW are keen to work alongside these members and the other trustees to create a safe environment, which the young people feel they have ownership of. They also intend to be creative about the way that meetings are conducted by using visual and audio tools to move away from too much reliance on text and writing.



Ideas and suggestions

There is no single way of opening up Board membership to diverse groups.

What was agreed by the organisations we worked with was:

- they each had a responsibility to enable wider board membership
- their own staff were the best people to make this happen

It was felt that expecting people with support needs to 'fit' into existing Board training systems even with support, would not work except for the most highly empowered. Programmes of support should therefore be tailor-made for each organisation and their prospective Board members, be flexible, creative and accessible and take as long as would be necessary to achieve results. This could lead to different timescales and programmes of support for each organisation.

But arts organisations also recognised they would have severe resource constraints in achieving this within current budgets and that their staff would need ongoing support from experts to help to do this. This would mean bidding for resources either as an organisation in their own right, or as a consortium with other organisations with similar ambitions. The monies, it was suggested could be used to bring in someone who could undertake the current duties of a member of staff so they could invest more time in this work to develop and widen Board membership.

Resources

Increasingly, resources needed to encourage participation in the decision making of arts organisations are less easy to find. Instead organisations are expected to include participation in their overall bids as part of good practice and implementing equal opportunity policies.

For more specific information about grants and funding, you can search using Google on the Internet with key words such as: Arts, funding, involvement, participation.

It is also worth checking locally with your council to find out which arts activities they are likely to support and with your local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS).

The Big Lottery Fund has a private part of their website just for helper agencies - organisations that help others apply for Lottery Funding. Helper agencies can login to get resources on their programmes and policies including training materials, quick links and events.

[Big Lottery Fund](#)

Information about grant applications and possible sources of funding have been compiled by various lead organisations for the voluntary sector such as:

- Arts Council England who provide grants for the arts for individuals, arts organisations and other people who use the arts in their work. [Grants for the Arts](#)
- The [National Council for Voluntary Organisations](#) which has a whole section devoted to the various aspects of fundraising with toolkits and lists of potential resources included.
- [The Baring Foundation](#) was set up in 1969 to give money to charities and voluntary organisations pursuing charitable purposes. In 39 years they have given over £95 million in grants. Their budget for grant-making in 2008 is £2.7 million. They have specific grants programmes concerned with strengthening the voluntary sector, the arts and international development. All these programmes are now closed for this year. They are also working on special initiatives which include: creating a better deal for parents with learning difficulties, interculturality and climate change

Training

Boards may feel that they need training before recruiting a person with a learning disability. The following organisations can offer specific support around working with people with learning disabilities:

- Listening to Us is a sub section of Mencap and Paul Anstee is the national facilitator for people with learning disabilities and a trainer of organisations. paul.anstee@mencap.org.uk
- The North West Disability Arts Forum provides art opportunities and training for disabled people. Contact : Ruth@nwdaf.co.uk
- [Future Leaders](#) offers leaders a free seminar on board management aimed at de-mystifying the whole process of being a board member or trustee.

Another key learning point was that training or support to potential trustees and boards members was best held on the organisation's premises, in collaboration with them, in a specially designed programme to meet their particular needs. This would reduce officer and potential trustee travelling time and increase the opportunity to attend if support was offered on site rather than in a remote venue and enable the trainers to design support which is tailor made to the organisations' key challenges.

Peer Support

One method which is being piloted during 2008 is the peer mentoring of potential Board members by people with similar challenges who have been successful as Board members in other organisations. Two groups in Manchester have been matched to facilitate mutual learning between their respective Board members, staff and potential Board members. Early signs are that this is an effective method which can utilise existing staff resources.

Contact:

mappleyard@oakwoodhighschool.co.uk or amanda@venturearts.org



Lessons from active Board membership Case studies

Prism Arts, Cumbria

Prism have successfully worked with a Board member who has a learning disability for three years. The staff and board members worked together to make the meetings more accessible and have agreed:

- Not to use acronyms or jargon
- Board papers go out early
- Large accessible print is used
- Buddy system - so that confidentiality can be assured knowing Board members have someone they can talk to in confidence about confidential matters
- Pre meetings to discuss any issues as required
- Board training which is straightforward, fun and effective. Prism get an excellent attendance now that they have introduced fun!

The Board member says that she now:

- Feels she is respected more and has more self confidence and feels more independent
- Is better able to make decisions and to understand things like office systems and how charities operate

The Board itself says:

- It can only see positive outcomes for the Board of Trustees
- The adaptations made have resulted in praise from many Board members who were finding the jargon increasingly difficult to understand

As a result they feel they have a strong Board as the format they have introduced ensures a supportive friendly atmosphere and they get praise about how the meetings from non-disabled Board members.

And, the Local Authority Cultural Portfolio Holder has insisted on joining our Board instead of being an Observer because he now enjoys and understands the meetings!

Contact: www.prismarts.org.uk



Start in Salford

Start in Salford promotes emotional well-being and recovery by providing creative arts-based activities and training opportunities for people who are, or may be at risk of, experiencing mental health difficulties.

Start in Salford's vision is to create a centre of excellence enabling individuals to develop their aspirations, confidence, self esteem and creative skills. Using the arts, renowned for their therapeutic benefits, Start helps to remove the stigma around mental ill health by fostering a common interest amongst individuals from all walks of life.

The organisation has had two users on their Board for over three years and currently there are four members out of Board total of eleven who have direct experience of mental health problems. They report that their previous experiences of being active members of a Day Centre Opportunities group helped them when they joined Start in Salford's Board.

Their experience has been that other Board members are very supportive. Agendas and minutes are sent out in advance and they feel they can always ask for explanations before, during or after a meeting about matters they do not understand.

They have joint strategic development days once a year for staff and all Board members when take part in blue sky visioning and long term strategic thinking.

The Board meets every quarter for about two hours and pre meetings are offered. Members with direct experience of mental health problems meet with their peers before a trustee meeting to find out their views on issues which are on the agenda.

Contact: liz.shone@startinsalford.co.uk



DIY Theatre Company, Salford

DIY is a theatre company of actors who all have a learning disability. They do not have a Board of Directors as they are a not for profit organisation which is run by a Management Committee of actors.

There is a co-ordinator who manages the logistics of the company, for example booking travel, carers, venues, expenses etc and she is employed by the Community Health and Social Care directorate of Salford Social Services. The council and other organisations grant fund the group who employ:

- An Artistic Director
- A Communications Officer
- An Administrator

There are management/planning meetings every month which the staff attend but the meeting is chaired in rotation by one of the actors. They discuss what they are going to do and when, how much money they have and what is going to happen in the next month.

Pictorial agendas, large print, planning wheels or paths are used to arrive at three year business plans, they have just produced their second one, and meetings can take two hours, or as long as it takes to explain things and get decisions.

Everyone sits in a circle and the group have started to manage agenda items in the form of a drama game to see if this aids better understanding. The staff then go away and make it happen, logistically and organisationally. The staff also put together funding bids based on what the actors have said they want to go in them and manage the acting company on behalf of the actors.

Contact: [Di Critchley on 0161-737 6923](tel:0161-737-6923)



Wicked Fish, Liverpool

Wicked Fish is an ensemble theatre company based in Liverpool. All the performers have learning difficulties and they work with other professional artists and theatre workers.

Together they create new work which says something about who they are, and how they see the world. They set up in 2000 and became an independent, professional company in 2003.

They work with other theatre professionals and artists, like photographers, dancers and painters to create work that is exciting and accessible. They devise and perform new shows which they have toured in the UK, and in Spain and Portugal. They use stories, poems, music and their own experiences and imaginations to build their performances. They create new theatre to tour and work on commissioned pieces for conferences and other events.

Wicked Fish is a charitable company. This structure prevents the actors being members of the Board as they receive a salary, but other ways have been found to involve them in the running of the organisation. For example:

- Actor representatives attend Board meetings on a voluntary basis, three meetings each, a system they say works well.
- A staff member reads the minutes of the last meeting to the representatives before a meeting and works with them so they can take a full and active part in the meeting.
- Meetings are informal, time is set aside beforehand for people to meet each other and they do not use jargon or acronyms.
- Meetings only last one hour and business is still done!

Inclusive working continues outside Board meetings as well. For example, staff are now working on a filing system devised by the actors as they want to work in the office. They are choosing the symbols to be used and will do the filing for the administrative staff.

Contact: www.wickedfish.org.uk



Accessibility

Opening access to the arts is an important part of every organisation's responsibilities. It can take many forms, from opening up participation and making information more accessible to improving physical access to premises.

Improving participation and physical access

Comprehensive guide to increasing participation in the arts by disabled people as artists, audience members, participants and employees. Includes checklists and an action plan template. Available **ONLY** on line from Arts Council England. [Disability Access: A Good Practice Guide](#)

- 'Welcoming People with a learning disability to your venue' good practice guide from Mencap 2004. [Download Good Practice Guide](#)
- Vic Health have produced 'Audience Access Standards' for people with Mental Health problems which contains useful advice. [Download Audience Access Standards](#)

Website Access

Making information accessible to potentially excluded groups is a challenge for all organisations and the internet is increasingly being used to reach wider audiences. To this end, the Equality and Human Rights Commission have produced website accessibility guidance which can be found at:

- [Equality and Human Rights Commission](#)

The RNIB offer advice for making websites accessible for those with visual impairments:

- [RNIB](#)

and there are some good examples of accessible websites listed below:

- The Artslife site is written in clear English with many visual cues so that it is easily accessible to people with learning disabilities.

www.artslife.org.uk

- Produced by Mencap, this website includes a links page to many arts organisations in the country offering arts to people with learning disabilities.:

www.artspider.org.uk



Presenting written materials in a user friendly way

If you provide services you need to make sure people have the information that they need to know about your services, so that they can access them. You have a legal duty to provide accessible information to people and not discriminate against them.

People with learning difficulties have a right to understand the information you provide, so that they can:

- Access your services
- Take part in society
- Not feel, or be, excluded

There are several services you can use to adapt your information and materials such as:

People First Easy Read

- a service which:

- Makes complicated documents easy to understand
- Makes sure people have the information they need
- Has large print and pictures to meet access needs
- Does not leave anything out
- Uses no jargon!

People First have a track record in providing Easy Read documents, including:

- 'Improving Life Chances of Disabled People' - Prime Minister's Strategy Unit
- 'Disability Equality Scheme' - London Development Agency

www.peoplefirstltd.com

Mencap

Mencap offer support and advice to enable people with a learning disability to be included in community life and to have access to good information in appropriate formats. They have a unit which is staffed by people with and without a learning disability. They work to a set of easy read standards called Make it Clear which have been drawn up in collaboration with people with a learning disability, speech and language therapists, carers, people who do not have English as a first language and they also incorporate good practice from the RNIB. Mencap review their standards via feedback from users, people with a learning disability and independent audits of material they have produced.

Mencap have experience of working with many different organisations, statutory and non-statutory bodies to produce easy read information including government - national and local, Healthcare Commission, police forces, NHS, energy companies, BBC and charities. They can produce easy read material from text and images right through to fully designed booklets and leaflets. They also have their own recording studio and produce good quality audio CDs. Voice recording is done by people with and without a learning disability as appropriate. They also have experience in producing easy read pages for websites and can give advice about how to make sites easy for people with a learning disability to use.

They run half day and full day training sessions on a range of topics to do with written communication and inclusion. Training sessions can be adapted to meet the needs of different organisations. They also give advice about easy read and communication and offer a 'first hour free' consultation service.

Publications which can be downloaded from their website are:

- Communicating with people with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD)
- Communicating with people with a learning disability
- Make it clear

Contact: accessibility@mencap.org.uk www.mencap.org.uk/

Other organisations which produce communication tools:

Click on these names to access their websites.....

[CHANGE](#)

[Mencap's PMLD resources](#)

[Widgit](#)

[Signalong](#)

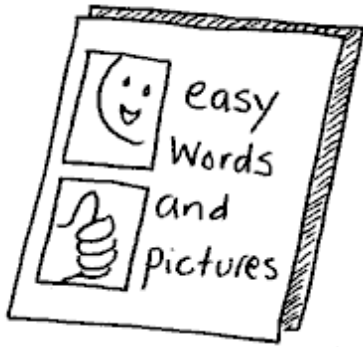
[Keytools](#)

[Clear Consultants](#)

[CHANGE Words to Pictures service](#)

[Makaton](#)

[Talking Mats](#)



Examples of how management information can be made accessible for all

People First is an organisation run by and for people with learning difficulties to raise awareness of and campaign for the rights of people with learning difficulties and to support self advocacy groups across the country.

They also provide various easy to read [guides](#) and [factsheets](#) in an accessible format on a range of topics from disability equality to becoming a charity. See www.peoplefirstltd.com publications section.

There are 13 fact sheets which could be of interest to potential Board members and which cost £5 each:

- About Management Committees
- Strategic and Financial Planning
- Why it is important that people with learning disabilities are in control of their own groups
- Writing a constitution
- Becoming a registered charity or a limited company
- Police checks and criminal records



Practical advice about legal issues

Introduction

The guidance on whether people with learning disabilities can serve as Board Members is not cut and dried and each situation is likely to require a case by case judgement. It also varies according to the legal status of the organisation. There are three common structures:

1. An association with charitable status governed by a group of people who are the trustees of the charity – Charity Law applies. (An association might not have charitable status, in which case Charity Law would not apply.)
2. A company limited by guarantee governed by a board of directors – Company Law applies.
3. A company limited by guarantee with charitable status governed by a board of people who generally wear two hats as both directors and trustees – Company and Charity Law applies.

Each of these will be considered in turn. The term 'board' is used to describe the group of people who have responsibility for taking major decisions affecting the running of the organisation but which may be called a management committee or similar.

1. An association with charitable status.

The Charity Commission has an excellent website www.charity-commission.gov.uk which contains some helpful guidance. The Commission is clear that people with learning disabilities can serve as charity trustees. The guidance goes on to say:

"One of the eligibility requirements for trustees is that trustees must be considered capable of managing their own affairs if they are to be considered capable of managing a charity. While this may rule out some people at the more severe end of the learning difficulties spectrum, many people with learning difficulties will be able to meet this criterion and play an active and responsible role in managing their charity, bringing useful experience and perspective to the trustee board. This applies equally to many people with other mental health issues, both permanent and temporary and caused by either injury or ill-health."

Therefore the organisation (existing trustees and any staff who serve the board) and the potential trustee must decide whether the role is suitable for the individual concerned taking account of what support can be provided and the complexity of the organisation. It would be inappropriate to encourage a person with severe learning disabilities to take on the role and the responsibilities that go with it. It is worth bearing in mind that in a structure which is not a company, the members of the board could all become personally liable if the organisation ran into financial difficulties.

Even if the association is not a charity, it is suggested that the same careful consideration should be given to the recruitment of board or committee members with learning disabilities.

2. A company limited by guarantee

Company Law is less helpful, though the rule has always been that Company Directors should be capable of understanding their responsibilities.

These responsibilities have been expanded in the Companies Act 2006 and, for the first time, have been written down whereas previously they were established in case law.

There is now considerable emphasis on the need to consider the wider implications of decisions made by directors and also the requirement to behave in a way that is for the good of the company rather than any individual. Directors' duties can be summarised as follows:

- To promote the success of the Company (including consideration of the impact of decisions on employees, customers, suppliers, community and environment)
- To exercise reasonable care, diligence and skill
- To act within its powers
- To exercise independent judgement
- To declare interests in proposed transactions or arrangements
- To avoid conflicts of interest
- Not to accept benefits from third parties.

English law generally follows a medical model, though the principles laid down in the Mental Capacity Act, include the following:

"A person must be assumed to have capacity unless it is established that he lacks capacity. A person is not treated as unable to make a decision unless all practicable steps to help him to do so have been taken without success."

Therefore, it seems safe to presume that the law accepts that some people may require support in order to make decisions as directors.

However, the role of personal assistants should be handled carefully. In the hopefully unlikely situation where a personal assistant took a dominant role in meetings, he or she could be considered as a shadow director which means that if the company ran into difficulties, the personal assistant could be considered to bear the same responsibilities and liabilities as any other director.

The responsibilities of being a company director are more onerous than those of a charity trustee, but, as a company, the directors do have the protection of limited liability and as long as the board behaves prudently and honestly this does mean that individual directors should not become personally liable. Generally, the larger the organisation, the more likely it is that it will be a company and may be more complex than the association considered under (1) above. Once more, the organisation should consider whether the role is suitable for the individual concerned taking account of all the circumstances.

3. A company limited by guarantee with charitable status

This structure is common for larger arts organisations and obviously both Charity and Company Law apply to such organisations. Arguably a larger organisation should have enough resources to provide excellent support to board members who need support.

Again, a case by case approach should be taken. There are large organisations who are charitable companies and have people with learning disabilities on their boards, eg Mencap has a requirement that one third of its board is made up of people with learning disabilities.

Conclusion

The legal responsibilities of board members are becoming increasingly broad and weighty with each new piece of legislation. However, there are degrees of burden. It is lightest for unincorporated associations without charitable status and heaviest for charitable companies.

It is clear that boards need to consider each candidate with a learning disability on his or her own merits and in the context of the particular organisation. It is important that boards have a clear and supportive process by which they do this and they must guard against discrimination.

Some organisations encourage people with learning disabilities to attend board meetings and contribute, but do not register them as directors. For some organisations this may be the most appropriate way forward, especially if their users are severely impaired. Apart from board membership, there are other ways of gaining the views and opinions of users, members and customers which may be more practical and productive in some circumstances and may allow for a broader spectrum of people to influence decisions.



Still not found what you want?

A quick way to see what is available is to use the Internet to search for topics which would be useful to your organisation at this time. For example:

Searching using Google with the following 'Opening up Board membership of Arts organisations to people with learning disabilities' gives you several sources immediately:

- Disability and the Arts publication from the Arts Council - 1998
- Action for Access Guide from the Arts Council – 2004

Searching on 'Arts and people with learning disabilities' gives you links to information on:

- The Arts and Disability Directory for Ireland
- Artslife – which is a new group run by artists with learning
- Rockets Artists - which are a group of artists with learning disabilities who work alongside art students from the University of Brighton to make artwork at the Phoenix Arts Association in Brighton, Sussex

Searching on Disability Arts gives you information on:

All Change

All Change uses the arts to promote social inclusion. Our projects reach people of all ages and backgrounds. Participants gain skills and develop confidence whilst creating original and authentic art. All change works in a range of ways - accepting project commissions, responding to government and community briefs and raising funds independently to deliver tailor-made arts programmes.

www.allchangearts.org

Disability Cultural Projects

Disability Cultural Projects (DCP) is a company formed by Geof Armstrong and Silvie Fisch, formerly of the National Disability Arts Forum (NDAF) which closed in February 2008. DCP exists to further the cultural equality of Deaf and Disabled people. It continues some of NDAF's work, including the free weekly newsletter [EtCetera](#) and [Arts Access UK](#), a national online access database.

www.disabilityarts.info

Department of Health

Anne Williams is the National Director for Learning Disabilities at the Department of Health.

Richmond House
79 Whitehall
LONDON
SW1A 2NS
www.dh.gov.uk

Learning Disability Coalition

www.learningdisabilitycoalition.org.uk
info@learningdisabilitycoalition.org.uk

The Coalition's aim is to make sure there is enough public funding for people with a learning disability so they have the same life chances and choices as everyone else. It represents ten learning disability organisations:

Association for Real Change (ARC) www.arcuk.org.uk

BILD (British Institute of Learning Disabilities) www.bild.org.uk

Downs Syndrome Association www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

Foundation for People with Learning disabilities
www.learningdisabilities.org.uk

Mencap www.mencap.org.uk

People First www.peoplefirstltd.com

Sense www.sense.org.uk

The National Forum for People with Learning Difficulties
www.nationalforum.co.uk

Turning Point www.turning-point.co.uk

United Response www.unitedresponse.org.uk

Soap Box Films

Soap Box were commissioned by Elect in Liverpool to produce a short video about the issue of Governance. The video promoted the idea of people with learning difficulties setting up their own groups and suggested ways in which they could get their voices heard.

http://www.soapboxfilms.org.uk/movie_elect.html

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