

#

WE SHALL NOT BE REMOVED



The Story of the UK Disability Arts Alliance 2020-21

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Introduction

Hello and welcome to the archives! We've compiled this zine in order to record and preserve the incredible work that's been undertaken by everyone involved in the We Shall Not Be Removed campaign, and to provide some narrative context to the movement and its impact during the pandemic of 2020–21.



What is a 'zine' and why have we called it that?

The word 'zine' is short for magazine. Over the past 50 years it has come to describe a particular type of self-published literature that has been prominently featured as a tool in many activist movements.

The below definition of a 'zine' has been borrowed with permissions from The Bindary, a zine publisher in Milwaukee:

“Culturally and historically, zines have served as a powerful outlet for content considered to be too niche, risqué, or outside of the mainstream, in terms of more traditional/commercial forms of publication. A zine can be produced with the simplest of tools, and easily distributed low-to-the ground, outside capitalistic or potentially oppressive systems: amongst friends, in local gathering places or homes, online, postally.

Zines provide a safe, independent platform of expression for underrepresented and marginalized voices and requires limited economic resources. Essentially, zines can be a little hard to define—but that's what makes them great: they're a glorious mash-up of art, letters, story and emotion; just like the brains, hands and hearts of those who produce them. Their small, simple format belies their unique ability to speak creatively [and loudly] for even the softest voices. (And ain't that worth celebrating.)”

How It All Began

by Andrew Miller



Perhaps living with a disability makes you more alert to incoming threats to your health, so I was very aware of the creeping approach of Coronavirus to our shores back in January 2020. Many disabled people I know were too. I had planned to spend 2020 travelling to favourite places in the UK and Europe – so that went well! Setting up a national disability arts campaign was the very last thing on my mind.

By February I was actively reducing the amount of time I spent in populated areas and became increasingly alarmed that everyone else appeared to be carrying on as normal. The consensus appeared to be that virus threats had been neutralised before in the 2000s, why not this one? I found the stench of complacency in the UK overwhelming, bringing to life Thomas Mann's fictional Venetians trying to convince tourists everything was quite normal as cholera descended on them all in *Death in Venice*.

In early March my partner and I set off for our first trip away, to Portmeirion in remote North Wales, and we spent 5 days in glorious weather soaking in the amazing scenery of the Lyn Peninsula. I only agreed to go as it was such a remote part of the country and we could steer clear of people. On our return home on 8th March we closed the door and have barely left since.

We all know what followed. Following the lead of the Premier League on the 13th March, the entertainment industry closed on 16th and the first national lockdown was reluctantly declared by the Government on the 23rd. Disabled people disappeared from public sight overnight.

As life moved online, access was largely forgotten about., and it became swiftly apparent that those of us who might be susceptible to the virus were not high on the government's list of priorities either. Shielding and ancillary support did not begin until 29 March and even then it was chaos. As Disability Champion for Arts & Culture I quickly started being drawn into meetings with DCMS officials and Ministers to help them respond to the mounting chaos. It was at these meetings I listened in horror to the experiences my disabled colleagues were sharing about their lack of access to food, PPE and other essential supplies.

Highly disturbed by these fast paced developments and feeling increasingly helpless, cut-off and without sufficient supplies myself, I wrote to the Minister of Disabled People on 16 March to both warn and express concerns about the discriminatory critical care guidelines produced by NICE, The Health Protection (Coronavirus) Regulations 2020 that suspended key elements of the Equality Act and the lack of government financial support for self-employed people (knowing that the majority of disabled people working in culture were freelance). I never received a response. Then I wrote to my fellow disability champions to see if there was something we could all do as a group to support our community. Likewise, no response.

Meanwhile the media had started to refer to “clinically vulnerable people” and “underlying health conditions” in relation to the rising number of deaths without direct reference to disability. But we all knew what they meant.

Like many others I felt deep anger that as disabled people we were being written out of the national Covid narrative and reduced to somehow ‘expected’ death statistics. Having spent 40 years emerging proudly into the social model of disability, overnight we were medicalised again, made vulnerable, and with no questions asked.

So on the 25th March I wrote to colleagues that I had worked within the disability arts sector, asking if there might be “value in us coming together as a group of sector leaders to identify the key immediate needs of our communities to feed into Arts Council England & Government, but also to start planning for the recovery and how we can help shape that in the most inclusive way possible”.

One by one colleagues began to respond positively. But it was Jenny Sealey who really recognised the immediate need and proposed that I should meet with her Graeae Theatre Company colleagues Jodi-Alissa Bickerton and Nikki Miles-Wildin together with musician John Kelly to record a podcast about what was happening around us.

Timeline 2020

March 16th

- Entertainment industry closes

March 23rd

- First national lockdown declared by the government

March 25th

- Andrew writes to colleagues from the disability arts sector, suggesting there might be some value in coming together

March 29th

- A chaotic beginning to the start of shielding and ancillary support

April 7th

- The podcast discussion between Andrew Miller, Jenny Sealey, Jodi-Alissa Bickerton, Nikki Miles-Wildin and John Kelly was where #WeShallNotBeRemoved began.

April 23rd

- First online meeting of the emerging UK Disability Arts Alliance where it was agreed to launch #WSNBR as a national campaign.

May 1st

- #WSNBR channel goes live on Slack instantly attracting members

The Beginnings of an Alliance

by Andrew Miller

Each one of us brought something to that conversation on the 7th April that helped shape what the campaign became. Whilst I focused on the need to influence cultural policy, Nickie and Jodi highlighted the huge pandemic impacts on disabled artists and young people. John came up with the #EndAbleism hashtag and the idea for a social media roar and Jenny christened our campaign with its name. #WeShallNotBeRemoved was both a challenge and a provocation as well as for us, a simple declaration of intent.

It's fair to say the podcast was recorded whilst we were all experiencing deep shock in the early days of the pandemic, but we were all resolute and in retrospect it was visionary stuff. A strong and unified voice was needed to ensure creative disabled people and disability/inclusive arts organisations were not forgotten about. Online meetings were already taking place shaping the future of the sector, with very little representation of disabled people and certainly no appropriate access. There was an immediate and pressing need to remind the sector about their commitment to inclusivity.

I then set about putting together a larger meeting of all the key disability arts and inclusive arts leaders I knew, and a Zoom meeting was set up for 23rd April. At this point Jodi set up all the meetings as I had no idea how to operate this new magic called Zoom, and Jen provided BSL interpretation from her own means. It was all very make do and mend, and that ethos stuck!

With some nervousness I chaired the meeting which was attended by around 25 disabled cultural leaders. There was broad agreement that a profile raising campaign was needed, that it should be UK wide and be open to all disabled professionals working in the

cultural sector, supported by a suitable comms platform, made as accessible as possible on no money. What we all fundamentally wanted to achieve was safeguarding the future of disability arts in the UK.

At this point Jo Verrent of Unlimited introduced me to Slack (more new and unexpected magic!) and between the two of us we set up the #WSNBR channel in early May and issued an invite for creative disabled people to join us. Whilst we knew there was no 100% accessible online platform available, we had to make a start somewhere and created a channel on Slack, aware that it would not suit everyone's needs.



We were all overwhelmed by the response with hundreds joining up within the first few weeks, eventually reaching 700+ sign ups, 1,000+ Twitter followers, with members representing every role & capacity in the creative industries.

As I had never managed any campaign before, Jamie Hale and Amit Sharma gave me some incredibly useful tips to move the whole thing forward inclusively and a collaborative leadership approach emerged which would keep the project open to all who wanted to contribute. This metamorphosed into our Conveners Group which, which I ended up chairing much of the time. The Conveners premise was simple: if you initiated an action for the campaign, you would be invited to join the organising group.

The ethos behind the campaign was always to encourage action and not to stifle it. If we had a motto it was “go forth and do”.

But keeping twenty odd different artists and arts administrator Conveners on the same page was never going to be easy or a long-term proposition and why should it be? So I was always aware #WSNBR would be a time-limited intervention and exist for as long as it was really needed. Splits inevitably developed around issues of style, approach, representation and between those that wanted to forge a new campaigning organisation and those that favoured simply being a self-organised campaign. For me as a volunteer, holding our fragile alliance together was often challenging work, set against the stressful background of the pandemic. Nevertheless, the Conveners Group served its purpose well with a core of talented individuals supportive of our mission from the very start, augmented by others throughout the year.

There had been some voices who responded to #WSNBR negatively, who claimed there was not sufficient bandwidth available for our cause. But if there was ever a time to pull together to achieve something for the wider disabled creative community, this was it.

Establishing the Slack platform forced us to formalise our aims, which we kept simple:

- To amplify the voice of disabled cultural practitioners and disability/inclusive organisations in the UK’s creative industries through and after the pandemic
- To advocate for a more inclusive recovery by the creative industries

And it all set out from there, leading us to operate online platforms (Slack, [website](#), newsletters, [filmed updates](#), [social media](#), [blogs](#)) to share ideas, concerns and solutions; host regular online meetings, develop policy proposals and publicly campaign to achieve our core aims.

Meanwhile, Jenny Sealey had also begun a conversation with Arts Council England about securing emergency funds for the additional costs of online access needed to ensure the participation of deaf and disabled people. ACE responded with speed and by July 2020 funding was in place for a Graeae managed access scheme and supporting #WSNBR to deliver access for its meetings and online activities.

This initial funding was devolved to Vici Wreford-Sinnott’s Littlecog to administer. Vici was a powerful and important voice in the early stages of the campaign and really galvanised our approach to access. And at this point tech wizard Ellie Page came on the scene and magic-ed up our terrific purple logo, website and social media accounts. Ellie became our Access Coordinator and later Administrator supported by the arts council funding and a critical voice within our movement.

Jo Verrent’s view at the very start summed up what a lot of us felt: “Isolated and increasingly ignored by many, disabled people in the cultural sector are at risk of losing everything we’ve gained over the last 40 years. #WeShallNotBeRemoved has given us a place to meet, to shelter, share and reimagine. We MUST be at the centre of the cultural sector to come, one that is both physical and virtual, includes all and excludes no one”.

Yes to all of that.

Meet the Founders

Andrew Miller MBE

Andrew has been transforming perceptions and raising the profile of disability throughout his 30 year career in the creative industries.

Starting out in broadcasting in the 1980s, Andrew belongs to the first generation of disabled presenters of British television and went on to produce and direct BAFTA nominated tv arts documentaries.

He later became the first wheelchair user to run a major UK arts venue at the Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama in Cardiff.

Andrew is a National Council member of Arts Council England, a Governor of the Royal Shakespeare Company, a trustee of Welsh National Opera and he Chairs the BFI Disability Screen Advisory Group.

Between 2018–21 he was also the UK Government's first Disability Champion for Arts & Culture, establishing the role as a powerful campaigning platform for greater inclusion across the arts, museums and film. His pioneering career has been recognised by the National Diversity Awards, The Shaw Trust's Disability Power 100 list, The Stage 100 and the 2021 New Year Honours.

In 2020 Andrew co-founded #WeShallNotBeRemoved and says, "Throughout the pandemic I have been advocating for an inclusive recovery, recognising the significant threat Covid posed to disabled people's continued participation in our culture. So it was essential that we came together in 2020 as one creative disabled community to demand our rights and ensure we did not get left behind. And whilst it is far from over, I think we made our point".

Twitter : [@AndrewM_Arts](https://twitter.com/AndrewM_Arts)
LinkedIn: [@andrew-miller-arts](https://www.linkedin.com/company/andrew-miller-arts)

Jenny Sealey MBE

Jenny has been artistic director and CEO of Graeae Theatre since 1997. She is internationally recognised for her pioneering stage work and advocacy, developing the accessible ethos within performance and changing the perception of artistic possibility. Amongst numerous other credits Jenny co-directed the London 2012 Paralympic Opening Ceremony alongside Bradley Hemmings. Jenny also won the Liberty Human Rights Arts Award, she was named in the Time Out London and Hospital Club lists of the most influential people in the creative industries and has been lauded with honorary degrees.



In 2020 Jenny co-founded #WeShallNotBeRemoved and says, "Whilst disabled people were in the same storm as everyone else, we were certainly not on the same boat. So it was vital we worked collectively to support each other through and after the storm of Covid-19, to ensure that our creative community not only survived, but remained at the heart of evolving arts policy and practice".

Twitter: [@GraeaeJennys](https://twitter.com/GraeaeJennys)
Website: <https://graeae.org>

June 2020: The First All Alliance Meeting

by Andrew Miller

In June 2020 we presented our first meeting of the full alliance on Zoom which Jenny and I co-hosted in the style of Richard & Judy. Joking aside, this was a nerve wracking moment, with over 100 figures from the disability and inclusive arts world in attendance. It was to be the first of six such meetings the alliance would host across the year. Whilst the meetings mainly featured updates from our activities in Westminster and around the country, we also presented Q&As with guests such as Chief Executive of Arts Council England Darren Henley with Director of Diversity Abid Hussain in August; and later Kamran Mallick, CEO of Disability Rights UK.

The meeting where we paid tribute to those that we lost through the pandemic stands out. Once the terrible scale of losses had been established, we never lost sight of the fact that two thirds of the UK Covid death toll were disabled people. This terrible statistic was not inevitable and none of us felt like 'vulnerable' people. Rather we had been badly let down by weak systems designed by non-disabled people that did not protect us. Leading disability arts figures Dave Toole and Chrissy Ledger had taken part in the social media roar in June, and their subsequent loss was palpable to all of us in #WSNBR.



Timeline 2020

May 19th

- We Shall Not Be Removed issues its first press release, announcing its formation and aims with statements of support from leading disability arts figures across the UK

June 4th

- First meeting of the full UK Disability Arts Alliance on Zoom

June 9th

- Campaign #1 - Open Letter to UK Culture Ministers

June 17th

- Campaign #2 - The Social Media Roar

August

- Campaign #3 - Open campaign for an Inclusive Recovery

September 15th

- We Shall Not Be Removed publishes Seven Principles for an Inclusive Recovery

October

- BBC launched its Culture in Quarantine 2, inspired by the #WeShallNotBeRemoved campaign

December 21st

- We Shall Not Be Removed Festive & New Year's Celebration Event with two very special guests; Miss Jacqui & John Kelly!

Meet the Conveners: Ellie Page

I can't remember exactly how I became aware of the conversation prompted by that podcast in April 2020 around the idea of #WeShallNotBeRemoved, but I was instantly intrigued as it spoke to my constant lockdown anxiety at being 'removed' – if not by the virus itself, then by society. I emailed Andrew Miller asking if I could interview him about the movement for my website about disability & chronic illness art and activism, Stillill.uk. After speaking with Andrew I was very keen to get involved straight away. I immediately became involved as a convener, and helped to develop the branding images for the campaign. I created and developed the website for the campaign, ready to work tirelessly alongside many others for the June 17th Social Media campaign.

Until December 2020 I worked alongside the wonderful Vici Wreford-Sinnot in managing access and administration for the meetings, campaigns and communication. Some further ACE funding was provided until June 2021, in which time I was responsible for programming and organising the 'Who's in the Zoom' webinars as well as the usual meetings, working groups and 'Coffee Table Catch-Ups'. I also managed accessible formats of documents, and all of the website & social media management. The Coffee Tables were intended as relaxed and open spaces for members to get together once a month and share what they've been up to in their own activist and/or creative work. I really enjoyed these spaces, as we were able to really get to know one another, share ideas and move things forward in a way that was perhaps a bit more difficult to do in the large full alliance meetings, which were more agenda-heavy and time-limited.



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"I particularly enjoyed working with Chanje Kunda ahead of our discussion event about 'invisible disability' identities and the notion of 'Mad Pride'. Despite numerous hospital admissions and illness in these 18 months, I'm very thankful to have been involved in such a huge and far-reaching campaign as well as to have worked with some incredibly talented creatives, many of whom I look forward to working with in the future, especially on a new project with Charlie Fitz & Miss Jacqui."



Meet the Conveners: Andrew Lansley

“I got involved in the #WeShallNotBeRemoved campaign because it represents a cohesive and coherent community led movement for disabled artists across the creative industries. The pandemic has presented an opportunity to improve so much through the 7 Inclusive Principles that I felt compelled to contact We Shall Not Be Removed and offer to help in any way I was able to.”

Company: Thrill Collins/University of Gloucestershire

Twitter: [@andrewlansley](https://twitter.com/andrewlansley)

Website: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/andrewlansley/>



Making An Impact

In addition to the full alliance meetings, welcome funding from Arts Council England enabled the Alliance to begin delivering significant amounts of access and support: ten accessible meetings of the Conveners Steering Group; numerous working group meetings to drive forward progress for our Campaigns, LGBTQI and Screen sub-groups; umpteen free-to-attend Who's in the Zoom webinars, including the reopening of ACE Project Grants programme, Jo Verrent on the latest Unlimited commissions round, a musical Christmas event with John Kelly and Miss Jacqui, and a solo show with award winning disabled artist Rachel Nwokoro.

#WeShallNotBeRemoved

Ellie initiated relaxed coffee table gatherings for disabled artists, she produced accessible agendas and minutes of all meetings in a variety of formats, commissioned subtitled film update summaries of the campaign's work from our resident film maker Revell Dixon and regular blogs for [Disability Arts Online](https://disabilityarts.org.uk/). Additional funding from The Arts Council of Wales (ACW) was also leveraged by Disability Arts Cymru to deliver Welsh specific activity under the direction of Ruth Fabby.

Due to my own position as a council member of two national arts councils, we were also able to swiftly influence policy changes to funding in [England & Wales](#). At the beginning of the pandemic my focus was to ensure disabled creatives were given priority in the hastily assembled emergency funds made available by both councils in March/April 2020.

Indeed, both councils awarded grants to greater numbers of disabled applicants than any of their previous funding programmes alongside other protected characteristic groups. It was clear there was much to learn from the rollout of these programmes for making future funding initiatives more equitable.

But it was also vital to ensure there was greater recognition of ableism and the discrimination creative disabled people faced daily in the arts, and recognition of its equivalence to the ingrained racism highlighted by the Black Lives Matter campaign in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. Both arts councils swiftly recognised this. In England the response included the creation of both Race and Disability Advisory Groups of national and area council members with relevant lived experience. Nick Serota invited me to Chair the disability group in September.

In Wales the response included the creation of a new Agent for Change role to transform attitudes both within ACW and the wider sector on race and disability issues; whilst the entire Welsh funded portfolio of arts organisations were required to endorse the Seven Inclusive Principles as part of their 2021/22 funding agreements. On both sides of the border, this represented a very significant change in approach to disability from the two arts councils, hugely influenced by the existence of #WSNBR.

And the campaign extended its influence elsewhere. We inspired the British Film Institute's [Press Reset](#) campaign to support disabled people's continued participation in television and film launched in June 2020; responding to our campaign the [After the Interval Act 2](#) survey was the first to check-in on disabled theatre audiences and discovered a major slump in consumer confidence; then

the Audience Access Alliance launched their [Open Letter](#) aimed at supporting disabled audiences across the live events industry in September.

In October BBC Arts' launched [Culture in Quarantine 2](#) – a series of 12 commissions specifically for disabled artists funded by the 4 UK arts councils and delivered by The Space in partnership with Unlimited. This programme was inspired by #WSNBR and as a former filmmaker, it was a privilege to assist shape the commission programme in its early days and later be part of the assessment panel. And I can't wait to see the outcomes of this £100k+ investment across BBC services later this year.

Throughout 2020 and 2021 #WSNBR's message spread through influential industry & parliamentary platforms such as [Designing an Inclusive Recovery](#) at the Edinburgh Fringe featuring Jenny, Miss Jacqui, Vici and I. Despite all being exhausted by the constant demands of advocacy by this point, I recall this event for its unified spirit of solidarity.

Elsewhere I was busy advocating on a range of platforms including: Creative People Places Gathering, London Film Festival, Coventry City of Culture, the All Party Parliamentary Group for Creative Diversity, the London Transition Board Arts & Culture Strategy Group, House of Lords Virtual Roundtable and many more. And I was not alone. It was great to see Robert Gale speaking about #WSNBR at the All Party Parliamentary Group for Theatre and our message being spread by Jo Verrent at the Arts Marketing Association and Vici at [Loosening Lockdown](#).

It was equally important to ensure creative disabled people were represented in the many Parliamentary Inquiries that were exploring the pandemic and so I also made submissions on behalf of #WSNBR to the [UK Parliament Women & Equalities Committee Inquiry into Unequal impact, The Welsh Parliament Culture, Welsh Language and Communications Committee Inquiry into the COVID-19 outbreak](#) and the [House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media & Sport Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors](#), some of which featured in the

Campaigns

#1 - Open Letter to UK Culture Ministers

#2 - Social Media Roar

#3 - Inclusive Recovery

#4 - Covid Certification Status Review

**WE SHALL
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#1 Open Letter to UK Culture Ministers

First up we issued an [Open Letter](#) to all 4 UK Cultural Ministers on 9 June demanding safeguards to protect the future of disability arts as a consequence of COVID-19, signed by over 150 disabled artists & cultural leaders including Dame Evelyn Glennie, actors Mat Fraser & Nabil Shaban and disability campaigners Tony Heaton, Mik Scarlet & Samantha Renke.



This was a largely symbolic act but an important one. At this point in the crisis there was an open letter being published every other day. But it announced our intent publicly and we received responses from all 4 Governments: Minister for the Arts Caroline Dineage for DCMS, Fiona Hyslop for the Scottish Government, and officials representing Lord Elis-Thomas for the Welsh Assembly and the Communities Minister Dierdre Hargey in Northern Ireland. All the responses recognised the challenges we faced, sought to give reassurance but ultimately placed the responsibility for us with their individual Arts Council.

– Andrew Miller

The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE
Secretary of State for Digital,
Culture,
Media and Sport
100 Parliament Street
London
SW1 2BQ

Tuesday 9 June 2020

Dear Secretary of State,

The UK's vibrant disability and inclusive arts sector is globally recognised as world leading. Across the last four decades a combination of the limitless imagination of disabled artists and essential public funding has led to a never-before-seen flowering of D/deaf, neurodiverse and disabled talent on our national stages and screens, in our literature and our galleries.

Disabled people are increasingly part of the national cultural infrastructure as artists but also as employees, administrators and trustees, in every artform and in every capacity. It was recently established that disabled people also make up 12% of national arts audiences in England.

All this inclusive progress is threatened by Covid-19.

The pandemic impacts on livelihoods, health, social care and creativity are all frighteningly magnified for disabled people. Worse, most disabled people operating in the creative industries are self-employed and deeply concerned about their future as a consequence of SEISS ending in August. Many disabled artists are facing long term shielding, a total loss of income, compromised independent living and the risk of invisibility in wider society.

Disabled cultural leaders call on the government and the sector to ensure the progress we have collectively made does not falter in this moment of crisis. Disabled artists, employees and audiences must be prioritised and celebrated in both cultural policy and delivery.

Additionally, the industry that closed in March, simply didn't work for many of us. The renewal and recovery of the wider cultural industries must be guided

by a fully inclusive approach informed by disabled creative professionals to strengthen the accessibility of the sector and implement the learning from this crisis about home working and online access.

Our visionary Disability Arts Movement used a phrase in the 1980s that greatly advanced the cause of the Social Model of Disability being adopted across the world. That phrase is as relevant now in the midst of this pandemic as it was then: **nothing about us without us.**

Disability arts is a uniquely British success story and as disabled people, we wish to play our part in the national recovery. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss our concerns directly, as with your support Secretary of State. We shall not be removed.

Signed by

Jenny Sealey MBE CEO/Artistic Director, Graeae Theatre
Andrew Miller, Disability Champion for Arts & Culture
Tony Heaton OBE, Chair, Shape Arts
David Hevey, CEO, Shape Arts
Ruth Fabby MBE, DL, Director of Disability Arts Cymru
Robert Softley Gale, Artistic Director, Birds of Paradise Theatre Company
Jodi-Alissa Bickerton, Creative Learning Director, Graeae Theatre
Jo Verrent, Senior Producer, Unlimited
Vici Wreford-Sinnott, Artistic Director, Little Cog / Disconsortia
Barry Farimond MBE, CEO, Open Up Music and National Open Youth Orchestra
Carlen Meijer, Chief Executive, Drake Music
Gareth Cutter, Independent artist & Artist in Residence (Drake Music)
Melanie Sharpe, CEO, Stagertext

Julie McGowan, Trustee at The University of the Atypical, Independent artist.
Stephen Bailey, Resident Assistant Director, Chichester Festival Theatre
Toki Allison, BFI FAN Access Officer, Inclusive Cinema - Film Hub Wales
Aisling Gallagher, freelance director, theatre practitioner, Councillor London Borough of Lewisham
Kelsie Acton, dancer/choreographer, Inclusive Practice Manager, Battersea Arts Centre
Becki Morris, Director of Disability Collaborative Network C.I.C.
Robert Sanderson, venue Manager retired, arts Management consultant occasional
Jonny Cotsen, Freelance Theatre Maker / Access Consultant & Facilitator
Chris Tally Evans, freelance artist
Trish Wheatley, CEO, Disability Arts Online
Stephanie Fuller, Director/CEO, Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft
Linda Rocco, Freelance Curator, Producer and Consultant
Andrew Roach, Talent Agent/MD,

Andrew Roach Talent Ltd
Daryl Beeton, Daryl Beeton Productions
Jonathan Harper, Chief Executive, Paraorchestra
Michelle Taylor, Director for Change, Ramps on the Moon
Lloyd Coleman, Associate Music Director, Paraorchestra
Sophie Woolley, Freelance Writer & Performer
2
Simon Morris, General Manager, Blue Apple Theatre
Ellie Page, Writer, Designer & Consultant, Managing Partner Still Ill OK + Nice
Time Arts
John R. Wilkin-

Performance Company
Kacey De Groot, Development Manager, EGO
Performance Company
Richard Nutter, Executive Director, DaDaFest
Aidan Moesby, Artist/Curator
Dr Vole, disabled singer/songwriter/poet
Ben Pettitt-Wade, Artistic Director, Hijinx
Alan Whitfield, National Visual Arts Officer,
Disability Arts Cymru
Sydney Thornbury, CEO/Artistic Director,
The Art House, Wakefield
Jen Garrick, Marketing & Communications
Director, The Art House, Wakefield
Ellie Tait, Critical Friend and Curator
Samantha Renke, broadcaster and disability
rights campaigner
Dafne Evelyn Glennie - Musician, President of
Help Musicians
Beth House, Development Director/Joint CEO,
Taking Flight Theatre Company
Charles Hazlewood, Conductor, Founder and
Artistic Director of Paraorchestra
Stella Patrick, MA student LIPA, DaDaFest
Flight Theatre Company
Louise Ralph, General
Flight Theatre Company
Olga Macrinici, theatre
Emily Garfield, Chair
Company.
Garrin Clarke,
Katy Stephens

Dance Company & People
Andrea Swainson - Engagement
Outreach Manager of Coral
NY
Jade French, Artist-Facilitator
Academic, University of
Amit Sharma, Deputy Artistic
Birmingham Rep
5

son, Freelance Theatre Director,
Artistic Associate, York Theatre Royal
Caglar Kinyoncu, Artistic Director,
filmpro
Dr Jessi Parrott, Performer, Poet and
Academic
Steve Moffitt, CEO, A New Direction
Joanne Roughton, Artistic Director, Taking
Flight Theatre Company

City & Agent for Change New Wolsey
Philippa Cole, Actor
Kyla Harris, Actor, Writer and founder
of The Other Screen
Ella Glendinning, FilmMaker and Writer
Sho Shibata, Executive Producer

pool
Hana Pascal Keegan, Freelance Director /
Writer / Dramaturg
Nabil Shaban, founder of Graeae Theatre,
actor, writer, painter, novelist, poet,
film-maker (Sirius Pictures), disability
rights activist
Lorna O'Brien, Creative Manager, Market-
Place, Creative People And Places
Sarah Horner, Chief Executive, Hijinx
Theatre
Laura Jones, Head of Talent Development,
Stopgap Dance Company
Ellie Griffiths, Artistic Director, Oily Cart

Beth Hinton-Lever, Actor.
Lady Kitt, Artist and Drag King, co-founder
of Nasty Women North East
Nicola Cashin, General Manager, EGO
Performance Company
Tim Nunn, Artist, Curator and Producer
Simon Yuill, Artist
Amy Trigg, Actor and Writer
Jude Skulec, Stage Technician and Dresser
Charlie Fitz, artist and writer
Will Sadler, Development Director, Beacon
Films
Mike Layward Artistic Director DASH
Katie J Redstar actor, writer, director
Pauline Heath Actor and writer
Kathryn Barnett, director of disability-led
arts organisation Regeneration NE CIC
Elaine Collins, Artist, Actor, Performer,
MA student LIPA, DaDaFest

son, Freelance Theatre Director,
Artistic Associate, York Theatre Royal
Caglar Kinyoncu, Artistic Director,
filmpro
Dr Jessi Parrott, Performer, Poet and
Academic
Steve Moffitt, CEO, A New Direction
Joanne Roughton-Arnold, Opera Singer
& Company Director, formAbility
Julian Gray, Freelance Illustrator
MIK Scarlet, Broadcaster, Musician,
Actor & Inclusive Practice Consultant.
Mat Fraser, actor and writer, co-director
of ONEOFUS
Paul Wilshaw, actor and producer,
Assistant producer at Mind the Gap
arts consultant and lecturer
Kyle McCall Wilson, Social Media Market-
ing Officer at EGO Performance Compa-
ny Charlotte Darbyshire, Artistic
Director, Candoco Dance Company
Jo Royce, Executive Director, Candoco
Dance Company
Becky Morris Knight, Freelance Comms &
Working with Drake Music
Donna Holford-Lovell, Director, NEoM
Digital Arts (NEoM)
David Proud, Freelance Actor, Writer,
Director
Samantha Tatlow, Talent Coordinator,
thinkBIGGER! Ltd,
Producer, 104 films
am Oldknow Film Studios Masters
Tserkezie, Actor, Director, MA student
Lucy, MA student LIPA, DaDaFest

City & Agent for Change New Wolsey
Philippa Cole, Actor
Kyla Harris, Actor, Writer and founder
of The Other Screen
Ella Glendinning, FilmMaker and Writer
Sho Shibata, Executive Producer,
Stopgap Dance Company
Lucy Bennett, Artistic Director, Stopgap
Dance Company
Jennifer Gilbert, Director Jennifer
Lauren Gallery and freelance produc-
er/curator
Amy Cunningham, Creative Director,
Dark Horse Theatre
Jess Thom, Co-artistic Director,
Touretteshero
Matthew Pountney, Co-artistic Director,
Touretteshero
Bobby Baker, artist, Artistic Director,
Daily Life Ltd.
Joe Stevenson, Freelance Writer and
Musician
Hannah Quigley, freelance direc-
tor/practitioner/arts Manager
Eleanore Hall, artist, Project Manager,
Club Soda Croydon
Flossie Waite, Communications &
Engagement Producer, Oily Cart
Touring Producer, Oily Cart Theatre
Company
Martin Wilson, Director, MA student
Georgie M., MA student LIPA, DaDaFest

Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Fair Work and
Culture
Fiona Hyslop MSP



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Robert Softley Gale
Artistic Director
Birds of Paradise Theatre Company
Email: robert@boptheatre.co.uk

Our ref: 20200044956
15 June 2020

Dear Robert,

Thank you for your email of the 9th of June, including a copy of the open letter to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport, about the #WeShallNotBeRemoved movement, highlighting the issues that currently face disabled people in the sector.

First of all let me state that it is heart-breaking to see the devastating effect the pandemic is having on our vibrant cultural sector. I understand that these are challenging and uncertain times, and recognise the personal and professional impacts for artists, practitioners and organisations during this period when the longer term impact on employment opportunities for disabled people and many of their fellow workers in the cultural sector is not yet known. We are committed to doing everything we can to ensure our world-class culture and heritage can continue to thrive, and I have personally been lobbying the UK government at every opportunity on behalf of the sector and I am hopeful for the future of the industry.

Promoting the rights of disabled people is central to everything we do. Tackling inequality is one of the Scottish Government's priorities and our mission is to ensure that disabled people benefit from and are included in any upcoming decisions about our sector in light of the pandemic.

We want to ensure that everybody who can and wants to work has the opportunity to find fulfilling and sustainable employment suitable to their needs and skills, and that those facing barriers to employment, including many disabled people, can access any additional support they need. Our culture organisations all share a desire and aim to include and employ as diverse an audience and workforce as possible. All public bodies responsible for culture and heritage are subject to the Equalities Act, reporting on progress against objectives frequently.

In March of this year we published A Culture Strategy for Scotland which sets the future direction for supporting culture in Scotland. The strategy recognises that all individuals should have an equal opportunity to experience culture's empowering and transformative potential. We want to ensure that everyone in Scotland can take part in culture throughout their lives and that culture in and from Scotland enriches the lives of people and communities across the

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot



Our ref: TO/DET/00944/20
Ruth Fabby

weshallnotberemoved@gmail.com
Dear Ruth Fabby

Thank you for your correspondence to the Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport & Tourism about the open letter to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media & Sport sent from disabled artists & cultural leaders from across the UK. I have been asked to respond.

This is an uncertain time for all sectors in Wales, not least the arts sector. Welsh Government is fully committed to publicly-funded arts, particularly those created by disabled people. As you are aware, under the arm's-length funding principle, all Welsh Government arts funding is distributed by the Arts Council of Wales (ACW). ACW has a strong track record of supporting the work of disabled arts organisations as well as arts organisations and projects that seek to mainstream disabled art and artists.

However, more can always be done. In *For the Benefit of All*, its corporate plan for 2018-23, ACW has committed by 2023 to:

- Develop the creative work of disabled artists by funding "Unlimited" commissions and developing a scheme similar to "Ramps on the Moon" operated by Arts Council England
- Introduce a "Changemakers" scheme placing BAME and disabled people in senior executive positions in the arts
- See a doubling of the number of disabled people in the arts workforce

ACW cannot achieve this alone. It will require support and guidance from disabled artists and practitioners to share their knowledge and expertise to ensure they achieve their goals. I would urge you and the signatories of the open letter to work closely with ACW to safeguard against a return to the pre-Covid-19 climate that you revealed for many of you, and to assist ACW in realising the goals set out in the letter.

10/06/20



weshallnotberemoved@gmail.com

Correspondence of 9 June to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture and the Creative Industries, Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP, on behalf of a great many artistic and cultural organisations, about the importance of ensuring the necessary support is available for the sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. I am responding as the minister responsible for the sector.

saying that I do sincerely appreciate your comments. Ensuring that our arts and cultural sectors are good for business, good for creativity and good for our people. To that end, the government is clear that it expects the cultural sectors to continue to play a vital role in our society in their artistic talent, workforce and audiences, and, as the development agency for art and culture, the Arts Council has a responsibility to ensure that the money benefits all of the public.

Wales recognise that this has been an incredibly challenging time for many sectors and that there are many cultural professionals and organisations working in them, and that there are many cultural professionals and organisations facing challenging and uncertain circumstances. We are very alert to the issues and are working to find solutions that support this vital sector.

I will know, in March, the government implemented an unprecedented package to support businesses, charitable organisations, workers and the self-employed through the coronavirus crisis. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employed Income Support Scheme have been of critical help to many working in the sector. We have also recently extended the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme which was announced in May to the end of July, with more flexibility being introduced from August. The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme has also been extended with applications opening in August for a second and final grant.

On 5 July, we also announced a major £1.57 billion support package for cultural organisations to help them through the coronavirus pandemic. Culture and Heritage are at the heart of our communities across the country, enriching the lives of millions, and this financial investment to the role this sector plays in our lives. The fund will protect cultural assets of international, national and regional importance, including supporting the levelling up agenda by preventing the loss of valuable cultural fabric from our towns and regions. This fund will support organisations through to the Spring of 2021.

Key organisations in England will be able to apply for grants or loans, with loans being on generous terms, with low rates, an up-front repayment holiday, and long payback periods. In order to receive support, organisations will need to demonstrate that they are at risk in the sector.

Letter of 9th June to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture and the Creative Industries
Level 7
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG
Telephone: (028) 9051 5690
e-mail: deborah.mckelben@communities-ni.gov.uk
Our ref: GM-1331-2020
Date: 30 June 2020
Caroline Dinneen
Minister of State for Digital and the Creative Industries
100 Parliament Street
London SW1P 3RD
E: enquiries@culture-ni.gov.uk
www.gov.uk
21 July
Our ref: MC2020/096

#2 Social Media Takeover Day

The Open Letter was swiftly followed by the delivery of John Kelly's long planned [Social Media Roar](#) on 17 June sharing the resilience and rich tapestry of disabled people's art online, reaching a global audience through 17,000 posts on Twitter, making our hashtag #EndAbleism trend at No3 in UK – a first for disability arts!

It was this imaginative and brilliantly inclusive idea that really cemented the ideas behind #WeShallNotBeRemoved for the wider arts sector. I found it really moving to see the beauty of the works themselves but also the warm support coming from national arts institutions across the UK as we reminded them we were still out there. John said at the time, "We want to demonstrate solidarity and support for disabled people who are facing a very challenging future because of the pandemic by sharing the rich tapestry of our artworks to raise our voice; showcase our talent and our resilience".

– Andrew Miller



Two cartoons
made in
support of
#WSNBR by
artist Dave
'Crippen'
Lupton

Two wonderful designs by visual artist Caroline Cardus, created to accompany our Social Media Takeover Day on June 17th 2020

Disability Culture Diversion

Image Description: A yellow square road sign contains the words 'Disability Culture Diversion' in large black letters, with each word on it's own separate line. Between each of these words is #WeShallNotBeRemoved written in red. Behind the entire image is a symbol usually used to indicate a file on a computer is loading; it is a series of rectangles placed as if urrounding a circle, each becoming successively fainter starting from the lower left and progressing anticlockwise.



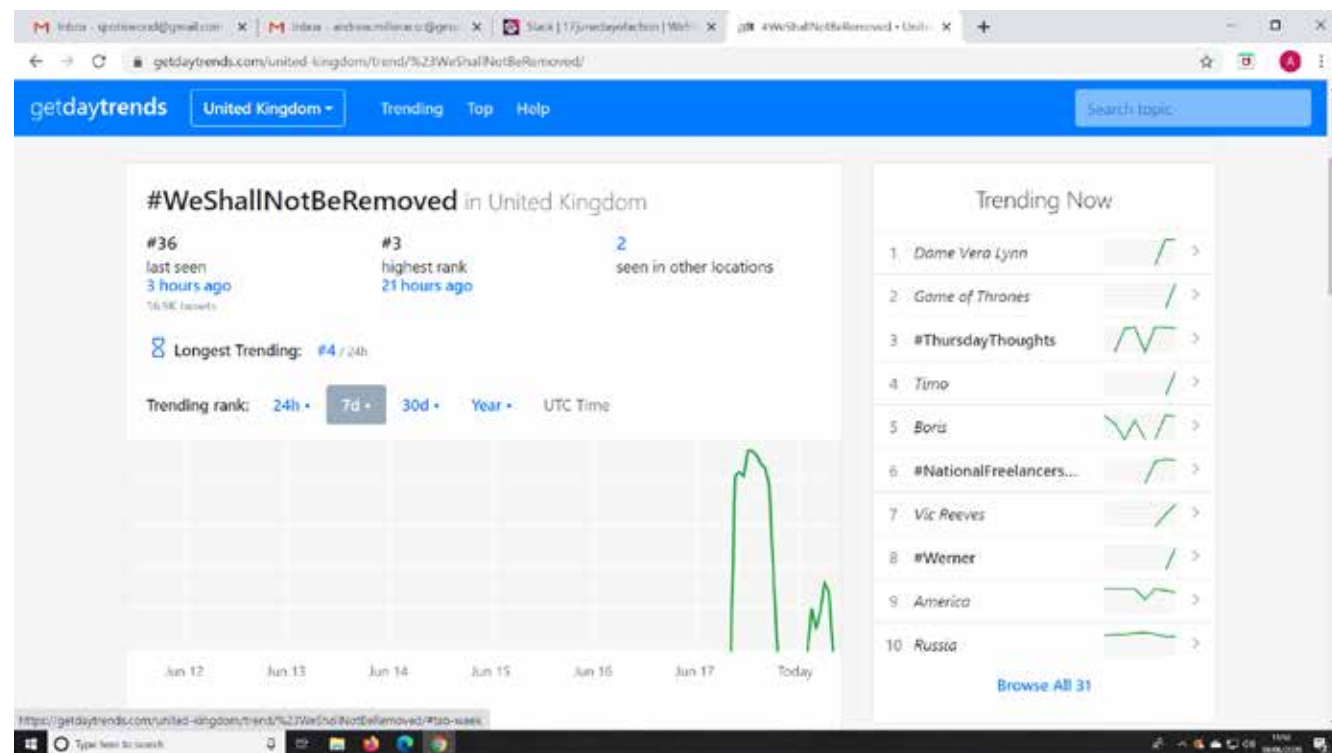
Forwards in Every Direction

Image Description: A dark purple circle sits on a yellow square background. Inside the circle are 7 arrows that all point outwards from the centre to the edges. Each arrow is a different colour and shape. The colours of the arrows are the colours of the rainbow. All the arrows have a thin white outline so they stand out against the darkness of the purple circle.



“We want to demonstrate solidarity and support for disabled people who are facing a very challenging future because of the pandemic by sharing the rich tapestry of our artworks to raise our voice; showcase our talent and our resilience”

- John Kelly



We managed to trend 3rd in the UK on Twitter for the majority of the day

**WE SHALL NOT
BE REMOVED**

IN SOLIDARITY WITH

#TakeTheKnee 6pm

#WeShallNotBeRemoved

#3 Inclusive Recovery

As we took some time to reflect over August 2020, We Shall Not Be Removed launched a relaxed, month-long campaign, inviting members to think about what the phrase 'Inclusive Recovery' meant to them. We created a Twitter archive on our website of some of our favourite responses, and Andrew, Michele, Jenny and numerous conveners spoke at a variety of events about the campaign and what it means for the industry moving forward.

On Friday 16th July, Arts Council England incorporated our campaign work into their [re-opening guidance for the industry](#).

A re-opening for everyone

considering how to make such changes where necessary. This may require them to seek independent advice.

- independent advice.
- Creative and Cultural spaces will also need to consider the Seven Inclusive Principles which we and the Department for Digital, Media, Culture and Sport endorse. These are designed to give cultural organisations a way of delivering a reopening whilst recognising and responding to the barriers faced by disabled people.
 - Creative and Cultural spaces should continue to ask their visitors and audiences how to protect people from the virus. Although legal restrictions are being recommended that in some cases to make reasonable adjustments, This may require them to seek
- about Covid-19. Although legal restrictions are being recommended that in some cases to make reasonable adjustments, This may require them to seek
- they continue to ask their visitors and audiences how to protect people from the virus. Although legal restrictions are being recommended that in some cases to make reasonable adjustments, This may require them to seek
- spread of Covid-19. In considering which measures to take, you are not alone. We strongly recommend that in some cases to make reasonable adjustments, This may require them to seek
- consider the specific needs of disabled and CEV people. We strongly recommend that in some cases to make reasonable adjustments, This may require them to seek
- with disabled and CEV employees, creative practitioners and audiences if you are not alone. We strongly recommend that in some cases to make reasonable adjustments, This may require them to seek
- about their needs in relation to your organisation at this time. Approaches will vary in different settings but may include measures such as maintaining some socially distanced performances and ensuring clear communication to disabled and CEV audience members about what safety measures are in place.

- Creative and Cultural Organisations a way of delivering a reopening whilst responding to the barriers faced by disabled people.
- consider the Seven Inclusive recommendation that in they continue to ask their visitors and spread of Covid-19. In considering which measures to consider the specific needs of disabled and CEV people. We strongly with disabled and CEV employees, creative practitioners and audiences if you are not about their needs in relation to your organisation at this time. Approaches will vary in different settings but may include measures such as maintaining some socially distanced performances and ensuring clear communication to disabled and CEV audience members about what safety measures are in place.



Campaign #4: Covid Status Certification

At the end of 2020 Vici Wreford-Sinnott bowed out to focus on her artistic practice and Graeae took on the management of #WSNBR directly with Ellie taking on more day-to-day admin. This enabled me to step back a little and focus on the bigger picture – which was shifting on a daily basis – as we all fought our way through the dark, horrible early months of 2021.

We coalesced around our theme of campaigning for an Inclusive Recovery in the arts sector and spoke up against the introduction of new barriers to cultural participation. I compiled our evidence to the [Cabinet Office Review of Covid Status Certification](#) as I feared disabled people could be seriously adversely impacted by the introduction of vaccine passports. Later I led the charge against the Government's Events Research Programme [banning](#) "clinically extremely vulnerable" people from test events.

This led to a major U-turn from the government when we pointed out they had breached the Equality Act and an invitation from DCMS to the Seven Principles partners to help inform the next round of more inclusive test events. We were anxious to establish what risks "clinically extremely vulnerable" people faced attending mass attendance events once again. This important question remains unanswered at the time of writing and #WSNBR remains very concerned that disabled and other 'vulnerable' people will be placed in greater danger attending live events.

– Andrew Miller

On Monday 29 March 2021, the UK Disability Arts Alliance responded to the UK Government's call for evidence on Covid-Status Certification by demanding that any "vaccine passport" is fully inclusive of disabled people and supports their return to cultural participation.

The submission outlined considerable concern that vaccine passports could be discriminatory and exclude disabled artists, workforce and audiences. The Alliance argued that alignment of event entry or employment to Covid-Status Certification might encourage a relaxation of existing Covid protocols and create a false sense of security. This could then effectively make events and workplaces more unsafe for those who are susceptible to the virus, reducing opportunities for disabled people to engage with culture or to secure employment in the sector.

#WSNBR recommended any certification scheme applied in the cultural sector take full account of the Alliance's Seven Inclusive Principles, and then be rigorously tested by Equality Impact Assessment to ensure disabled people are appropriately consulted ahead of implementation.

The Alliance's submission also highlighted concerns about:

- The potential exclusion of any disabled individual unable to have a vaccine, e.g. those with specific health conditions (including pregnancy)
- The risk of widening the digital divide (common to many disabled people) if the certification were a phone/digital application
- And the potential to coerce or penalise disabled people who share intersections with already marginalised communities that might be for example be vaccine hesitant, homeless, undocumented migrants or anyone unable to share health/personal information

The document quotes the new Insights Alliance report Culture Restart: Disabled & Vulnerable Audiences which warns that recent surveying established 40% of disabled audiences cannot envisage returning to live event attendance at the current time. The submission concludes "As disabled people represented 12% of the pre-pandemic national arts audience in England, this presents both a major ethical and a considerable commercial challenge for any Covid-Status Certification scheme to overcome".

#WSNBR continues to seek the views of its supporters on this issue and has opened up dialogues on social media and Slack channels.

The COVID-Status Certification Consultation is being delivered by The Cabinet Office for the UK Government to review whether COVID-status certification could play a role in reopening our economy, reducing restrictions on social contact and improving safety. In July 2021 the Prime Minister announced that the Government would not pursue Covid Status Certification on numerous grounds including the impact on equalities, but has left the door open for individual businesses to do so.

Click the screenshot below to watch a video about our statement on YouTube

Meet the Conveners: Jo Verrent MBE

I'm Jo Verrent, senior producer at Unlimited, which is a commissions programme for disabled artists – here's the official bit:

Unlimited is an arts commissioning programme that aims to embed work by disabled artists within the UK and international cultural sectors, reach new audiences and shift perceptions of disabled people. Unlimited has been delivered by the disability-led arts organisation Shape Arts and arts-producing organisation Artsadmin since 2013, and is currently funded by Arts Council England, Arts Council of Wales, Creative Scotland and the British Council. Unlimited is transitioning into being an independent organisation from 2022.

Since 2013, Unlimited has awarded more than £4.7 million to over 400 ambitious disabled artists and companies, through commissions, awards and support, which have been seen by or engaged with more than 3.8 million people globally and online, making it the largest supporter of disabled artists worldwide.

(We say that last part to try and encourage other countries to invest more – the more money flowing to disabled artists around the world, the better!)

Why did I get involved? I couldn't not get involved. Like everyone I've not got enough time to do everything but I have to make time for this. We cannot allow this moment to roll back 50 years of campaigning and fighting for our equal participation in all aspects of the cultural sector, and with covid being so threatening for our community, it was more important that ever to be part of the biggest banding together of disabled artists, creatives and organisations I've ever seen to make noise and be clear that We Shall Not Be Removed!



The Story of The Seven Inclusive Principles

by Andrew Miller

Perhaps our most significant intervention came with the publication of the [Seven Inclusive Principles](#) on 15 September – a partnership between #WeShallNotBeRemoved with Ramps on the Moon, British Paraorchestra, Attitude is Everything and What Next?

After those panicked early meetings with DCMS in March, the Ministry had created the Culture Recovery Taskforce to oversee the recovery of the arts. This included a number of committees creating guidance for the sector to reopen safely against a background of Covid restrictions, social distancing etc. It became clear that this guidance would need to reflect the different needs of disabled artists, employees and audiences.

Lizzie Crump, strategic lead of What's Next? worked closely with me to bring together the expertise needed to inform this important guidance and we all participated in a seemingly endless series of meetings about what needed to go in. When the lengthy guidance document was finally published in May, we were all deflated to discover there was little evidence of our contributions, beyond a basic reminder of the requirements of the Equality Act.

So I proposed we write our own guidance and I brought together the key individuals from the earlier discussions (Michele Taylor from Ramps, Jonathan Harper from Paraorchestra – both leading #WSNBR members together with Paul Hawkins & Jacob Adams from Attitude and Lizzie from What Next) and we hammered it all out across the summer. It was important for the document to be short as we all knew nobody would choose to read it due to the length of the government guidance, and I whittled our principles down to seven.

Lizzie ensured that our principles were sense checked from a wider intersectional perspective through consultation, but by early September we had a final document ready.

[The Seven Inclusive Principles for Arts & Cultural Organisations working safely through COVID-19](#) offers practical guidance to the arts and cultural sector to ensure deaf, neurodiverse and disabled people are not discriminated against as creative work begins again and as venues re-open. The Principles highlight the importance of: legal obligations, combating ableism in the sector, consulting directly with disabled people, comprehensive public information on Covid measures, remapping the customer journey for disabled audiences, engagement of disabled artists and celebrating disability in the workforce.

The Seven Principles are applicable across all art forms and across all 4 UK nations and come with endorsement from a wide range of leading sector bodies including: British Film Institute, British Council, all 4 UK arts councils, Museums Association, Royal Philharmonic Society, Equity and UK Theatre amongst many others.

The response to the Principles continues to resound and they have even been adopted on the other side of the globe by Arts Access Australia. I wrote at the time, *“Disabled people’s continued participation in culture at all levels has been severely threatened by this pandemic. The Seven Principles offer an essential new resource to promote an inclusive cultural recovery and to ensure the UK remains a global leader in disability and inclusive arts through and after Covid-19”*.

In May 2021 the Principles were finally endorsed by the UK Government in [the third iteration of their Reopening Guidance](#) and personally embraced by Oliver Dowden at The Stage Future of Theatre Conference. We believe they provide an ongoing roadmap of equity for the arts sector.

The 7 Principles

- 1** All organisational activities must comply with the requirements of The Equality Act (2010) and make reasonable adjustments to operating practice that ensure disabled people are not unlawfully discriminated against
- 2** All actions relating to disabled people should be undertaken in accordance with the Social Model of Disability and aim to combat and eliminate ableism
- 3** Co-production with disabled people: disabled people should be consulted when organisations develop bespoke operating or re-opening plans, and undertake Equality Impact Assessments before making decisions
- 4** Organisations need to provide clear, accurate and comprehensive information about Covid-19 measures to enable disabled artists, practitioners, employees, visitors, audiences and participants to assess their own levels of risk, and be prepared to adapt to specific enquiries or requests
- 5** The customer journey for disabled audiences and visitors should be thoroughly mapped, ensuring it is equality impact assessed, clearly communicated in multiple formats to the public, and prioritises free companion tickets to maintain essential access

6 Disabled artists are an important cultural asset in the UK and their engagement in all new creative projects should be prioritised

7 Organisations should ensure they celebrate diversity, embed anti-ableist principles to support and protect disabled people, and should demonstrate due care for the disabled workforce when making decisions about redundancy, restructuring and new ways of working

#7InclusivePrinciples

for the arts in COVID-19



WHAT NEXT?

WE SHALL NOT BE REMOVED

attitude
is everything



Click here to read The Seven Principles in a number of accessible versions on our website

The 7 Principles as a Guide: Practice-Based Research

by Magdalena Slowinska Janowitz

I'm a User Experience (UX) professional and theatre artist with a background in Occupational Therapy, Psychology, and Human-Computer Interaction (HCI). I'm also an accessibility advocate, and I run Bepartofit Hub, which is a voluntary organisation addressing social issues in an inclusive way by creating opportunities and implications of accessible technology to champion and support people with disabilities, hearing impairments, and mental health conditions. I'm used to working in an agile way, incorporating flexibility and diversity into my professional and academic user-centred design (UCD) process.

But then the Covid-19 pandemic hit, and suddenly I had to face a challenge of planning a specific strategy for my recent academic (University College London, UCL) research involving blind and partially sighted (BPS) participants. The project aimed to explore how a development of a voice-based assistant (similar to Amazon's Alexa or Apple's Siri) can help BPS novice designers create proposals for work in the area of theatrical prop design, and what effect gamifying the process of prop ideation can have.

The rationale behind the idea was informed by the recent research and practice in Architecture and Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) exploring opportunities to make design accessible to a more diverse audience. Initiatives such as Bartlett's (UCL) "Architecture Beyond Sight (ABS)" and The DisOrdinary Architecture Project, aim to challenge architectural design's fixation with the visual by opening up education to BPS students and creating an environment where people with sight loss are included as design consultants and participants rather than users. Still, a relatively long study period, licensing exams, and registration assessments seem to be a barrier. Thus, other design fields, for example, scenography and prop

design may propose a quick win solution to support people with visual disabilities into creative employment by offering a diverse set of "paraprofessional" roles without the need to go through a practice-based body registration and licensing. Moreover, BPS people have been previously involved in creative industry as writers, directors, producers and performers, however, their scenic and backstage participation has been poorly reported or integrated. Theatre industry has been actively embracing inclusivity and anti-ableist principles, however, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic has left many disabled artists uncertain about the future. The Government's National Disability Strategy, if efficiently funded, may help re-integrate disabled creatives back into the world post lockdown and provide further support, especially to those working from home. Online work and lack of adequate adjustments and assistive tools can bring specific challenges that technologies such as conversational voice assistants or audio game-based applications may be able to address.

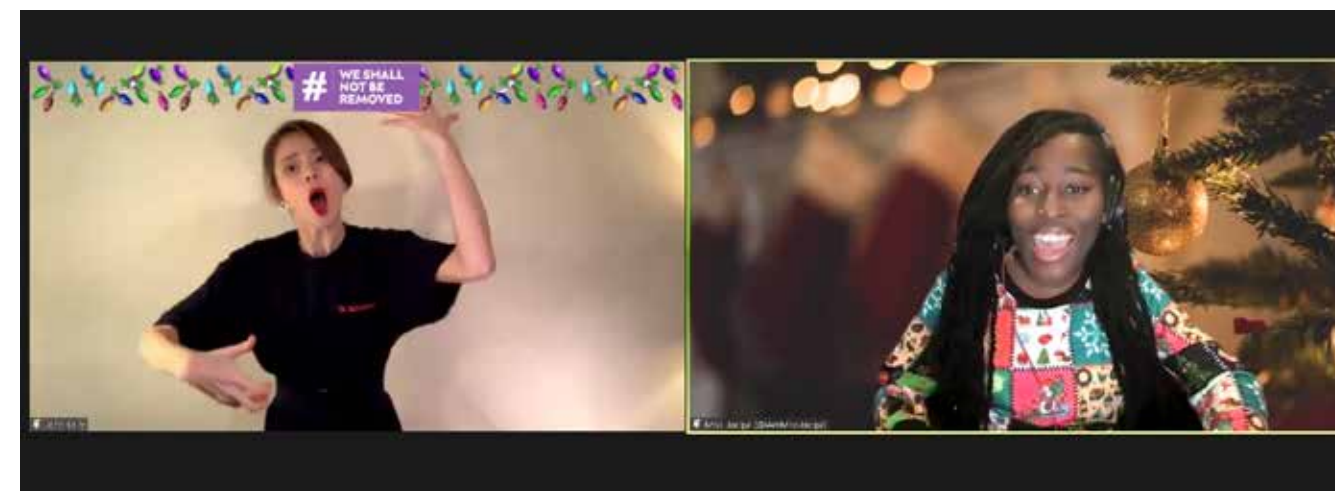
In order to inform the study design, which due to the pandemic needed to be conducted remotely through the Internet, I decided to explore voice interfaces and speech recognition AI technologies, as well as audio games, to further investigate both their accessibility and research utilisation potential.

I knew I'd have to adapt to ensure inclusivity and accessibility of my research approach. In accordance with the broader context analysis of BPS people's experiences related to the current creative artistic and/or design-based education, employment and socio-economic conditions, I acknowledged that the disability arts communities are severely isolated and concerned about the pandemic and its implications. Thus, the research strategy employed a remote simulation-based approach toward exploration of the prop design opportunity for BPS participants, and was designed as a remote real-life theatre prop design work-based simulation where participants went through a prop-design process experimenting with ideas whilst working in line with a brief prepared by myself and the study's industry partner – Extant Theatre – the UK's leading professional performing arts company of visually impaired artists and theatre practitioners.

For the purposes of the study, I adapted and re-wrote an original theatre script created by Chris Campion of Extant Theatre, I then imagined and documented production set design features, which later informed a design brief used as a key study intervention material. Moreover, through an active engagement with the Extant Theatre and disability community, the study created opportunities for everyone involved in the research process to contribute in an inclusive way. Moreover, the study managed to provide unique informal research-based paid work experience opportunities to BPS people who expressed interest in participating in this study, thus addressing the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, limited economic activity, and social isolation. By doing so, this study supported the Seven Inclusive Principles for Arts and Cultural Organisations created by the #WeShallNotBeRemoved UK Disability Arts Alliance, to ensure deaf, neurodiverse and disabled people are not left behind and are recognised as “an important cultural asset”.

To further integrate the Seven Inclusive Principles, I am determined to reflect upon the process and implement the research findings in practice involving an extended collaboration with the disability community and theatre sector.

More information can be found on www.tinkerprop.com.



New Year's Eve Party with Special Guests

John Kelly & Miss Jacqui!



#

WE SHALL NOT BE REMOVED

The #WSNBR Christmas show was a tremendous evening. Empowering, moving yet also fun. We all wanted to get shot of this terrible year 2020 and John & Jacqui provided us all with the perfect way to do that. As a creative community our resilience, our talent and our heart were all there for everyone to see.



We Shall Not Be Removed: 2021 and Beyond

Like many of the campaigning groups established in 2020 as an immediate response to the pandemic, we steadily felt the wind slipping out from our sails during the course of 2021. For me this was an inevitability. Instinctively people wanted to get their lives back, to return to some sort of normality, and to work.

– Andrew Miller

International Women's Day 2021: Choose to Challenge

by Rachel Stelmarch

This event was a Challenge in itself, getting this many extraordinary Disabled, Deaf and Neurodivergent women, from all four corners of the UK to come together in one timeslot on International Women's Day was quite a feat. We have Zoom to thank for that, as we'd have struggled to get us all in one physical location. The event was organised in Partnership with #WeShallNotBeRemoved and Jenny Sealey's impassioned session addressed this important campaign to keep Disabled, Deaf and Neurodivergent artists included in the conversations about recovery from Covid and the Seven Principles to an Inclusive Recovery for the Arts & Creative Sector offer practical guidance to arts and cultural organisations to support disabled artists, audiences, visitors,

Disability Arts Cymru A work of art Creu Celf

& **PRESENTS**

WE SHALL NOT BE REMOVED

International Women's Day
Monday 8th March
4-6pm

I was especially delighted to have Julie McNamara acting as MC for this event as she had also MC'd what was probably the first ever Disabled Women's Cabaret organised for International Year of Disabled People in 2003 (in a field). She kept the event rolling along expertly and we were even treated to a song from Julie by Harlem Hannah – 'Keep Your Nose Out of Mama's Business'. Dr Natasha Hirst introduced the event and skilfully set the context. Francesca Martinez gave a fantastic talk, both funny and fervent, explaining that the term for the suffering that other people expect her to have endured through being wobbly is 'BOLLOCKS'. This event was not a pity party, but a show of talent, strength and endurance. Deepa Shastri spoke about the difficulty Deaf actors experience in casting and theatre, an important lesson for anyone involved in that industry. Claire Cunningham spoke about her development as a disabled dancer, another industry that finds the notion of physical imperfection challenging in itself. Hilary McCollum gave a challenge to the notion of choosing to challenge with a reading from her upcoming novel '12 Days' about the Suffragette Movement, very apt for this event and the wider context.

The diversity of musical talent on show ranged from a virtuoso piano performance from Rachel Starritt, live from the RWCMD to the audience participation encouraged by Miss Jacqui and her anthemic song 'Freedom'. Back in Cardiff Mared Jarman was exquisite, singing 'Deuawd' acapella in Welsh whilst admitting to being "pre-menstrual AF". We commissioned 2 poems for the event; Wendy Jones wrote her poem in Welsh using the white, pink and the red rose to symbolise menstruation and Dr Vole wrote her 'Challenge to Patriarchy' in English, addressing the multiple oppressions of women and the uprising: "These witches aren't for burning. A million women rise, and then ten million women more, From each oppressed community. We're women – hear us roar!" Edel Murphy from the University of the Atypical gave a beautiful and revelatory tribute and poem written for much-loved Chris Ledger who died in 2020.

Finally, Kaite O'Reilly, introduced by Julie as a 'dearest colleague, friend, compadre, mischief maker, award-winning superb writer, playwright, thinker, theatre-maker' wrapped up the event, starting with the emotions of thinking about those that we have lost and the notion of the many meanings of the theme Choose to Challenge – "Well–

behaved women never made history, difficult women do". She reminded us of the fact that 60% of Covid deaths were disabled people and the impact of the pandemic on women has been described as 'devastating' by the Fawcett Society. She spoke about women making up only 16% of STEM careers, yet it was a woman who led the team that developed the first Coronavirus vaccine. She finished by quoting from Vital Voices by Amanda Gorman:

"We all leap forward when one woman tries,
when she defies with her rallying cries"

"So let's keep choosing to challenge."

Click the image below to watch the event
on Youtube

Disability Arts Cymru A work of art
Creu Celf
The Crip Talks
A series of conversations about disability,
art, intersectionality and accessibility

Disability Arts Cymru

by Ruth Fabby



Wales/ Cymru became involved with the development of #WeShallNotBeRemoved at its very earliest stages, thanks to the force of nature that is Andrew Miller. Right at the outset, key leaders from across the Disability & Deaf Arts sector came together to make known that this pandemic would impact upon us all in very scary and life-changing ways. We were eager to show that together

we could raise the alarm about the way we would be treated with the threat to end our hard work to gain a tangible presence into the arts and creative industries sector lost. We feared we would be ignored and we would go back 40 years in the fight to be included in this important component of our society.

We are now reflecting on what has been a year like no other: on the one hand we see that everyone had to be indoors, had to face restrictions in how we engaged with daily life and many aligned to the issues many disabled people live day in day out. But also, we saw the issue of the rise of disability hate crime and disabled artists being visibly excluded from the opening up of the sector, post-pandemic.

The impact this movement has had across the UK has been vital in a way none of us envisaged when we held our first meeting, particularly so in Wales.

We set up a Wales channel on Slack, the communication platform we used to share messages about the campaign.

On the 17th June 2021, the national social media frenzy to push the messages of #WSNBR at one point featured as no 1 tweet in our nation as most of the arts organisations and individuals retweeted, caught our passion and proclaimed they were with us. I am proud that the 7 principles for inclusive recovery have been embedded into Arts Council Wales directives for all arts funded organizations to endorse and adopt. It has led to more organisations seeking Disability Equality Training and putting aside budgets for access. It has encouraged debates and zoom events that are focussing on disability and truly embedding change, organisations seeking to employ disabled artists and technicians right across our arts sector, from Film and TV to community arts. There is a consensus that we are all working to ensure we are part of the wider offer.

There is no doubt, that #WSNBR has changed the arts culture here in Wales and we have allies like never before. Our job now is to hold fast to what we have learnt as we move to ease lockdown – this is where our shared fight will really be seen.

Diolch yn fawr to everyone who got alongside us, to the artists who shared their stories, to the work that has been created and to the future opportunities that we know will happen because of #WSNBR.



Meet the Conveners: Jonathan Harper

“In what felt like the darkest moments of the first lockdown, I was invited to the initial conversations about whether an alliance of the willing could come



together and advocate for the needs of disabled artists, disabled-led and inclusive organisations. At that time it felt that everyone in the arts was shouting as loudly as possible and I was massively concerned that D/deaf, disabled and neurodiverse people would be left behind. The whole community at the heart of We Shall Not Be Removed should be proud of the work it has delivered. It has not been easy and there is always more to do, but it feels very much like we have been heard time and time again.”

Jonathan Harper

Chief Executive, Paraorchestra

Twitter: @jojoharper @paraorchestra

Reflections from Scotland

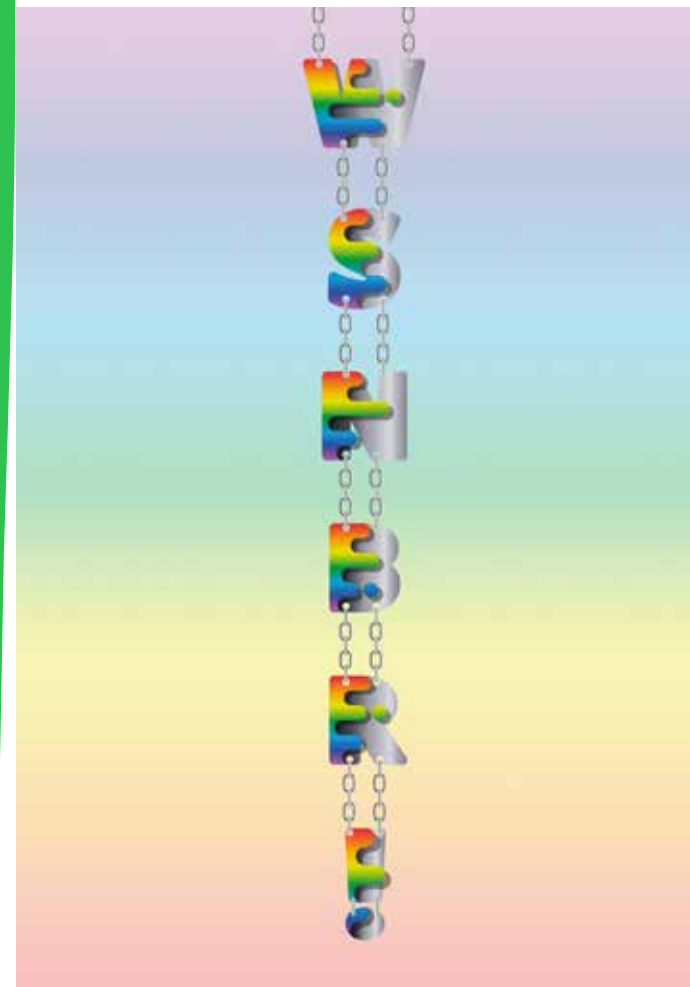
by Alex Callaghan

One of my first memories is being at the Block Telethon demonstrations, I was 6. I didn't fully grasp what the protest was about, but I vividly recall two people who had stormed the building being thrown down the entrance stairs by security guards, I sensed fear. Fast forward 30 years, I realise now that this fear was also wrapped up in protesters sense of injustice. 25 years have passed since the DDA, on one hand things have progressed for disabled people living in the UK, however plus ça change resonates in my head. Despite legislation enshrining disabled peoples' rights to employment and independent living, disabled people are all too often marginalised.

Finding and securing both fulfilling and stable employment is extremely difficult for many disabled people. Whilst figures have risen, the UK level of disabled people working within the arts lags the overall sector average. This clearly signals that policy changes need to happen to ensure advancements made over the past three decades are not in vain and help things move towards increasing the amount of disabled people working in the creative sector. The current forecast is grim, the fallout from Covid-19 is set to see an increased downward trend.

This is the core reason why I set out to do a practice-based dissertation, this research sought to collectively create policy recommendations with disabled artists in Scotland. Not that I believe a small-scale piece of research can affect sector wide change on its own. Rather, I see it as a component that can feed into other research and strengthen the case for power holders to act progressively on the issues of disabled people being able to access culture and work within the creative sector.

Whilst doing my research, I came across WSNBR, I was enthused to see that a UK wide disability arts movement with social justice at its core was happening. This imbued sense of optimism increased when I noticed that Arts Councils in the UK had signed up to the seven principles. I feel this is a key inroad to influencing change, but it is only the start. Rhetoric needs to be matched with positive and swift action from the funding councils. The 'Rights Now' mantra rings as loudly now as it did at the inception of the disability rights movement.



“I am a neurodiverse artist from Edinburgh, who has a background working on cultural projects that aim to raise awareness around disabled peoples' history, both past and present. I'm also studying an MA in Arts, Festival and Cultural management, my dissertation is based on creating progressive disability policy recommendations, these will be forwarded to Creative Scotland, the national public funding body for the Art in

Scotland. Through my research, I came across WSNBR, whilst my role in the movement has been partial, the Seven Principles have greatly aided my thinking for my research, and I'm delighted to be featuring in the WSNBR zine.”

Screen Industry Group

by Will Sadler

Why we called these meetings:

We want to work together to increase the representation and meaningful inclusion of disabled people – including learning disabled, neurodivergent and Autistic people – in the U.K. screen industries.

This became the group aim.

Why do we say 'screen industries'?
We say 'screen industries' because it includes any job that involves making or showing stories for the screen.

*The screen could include TV ...
.. phone / computer
... or cinema*

The traditional screen industries of feature film and television production are very London and South-East centric, therefore to be inclusive, we must include all types of screen production within the definition.

screen@weshallnotberemoved.com

Eleana



We are going to go into our second breakout room

Taking themes from the first Screen Industry Group meeting, we will discuss ideas about what this group is for.

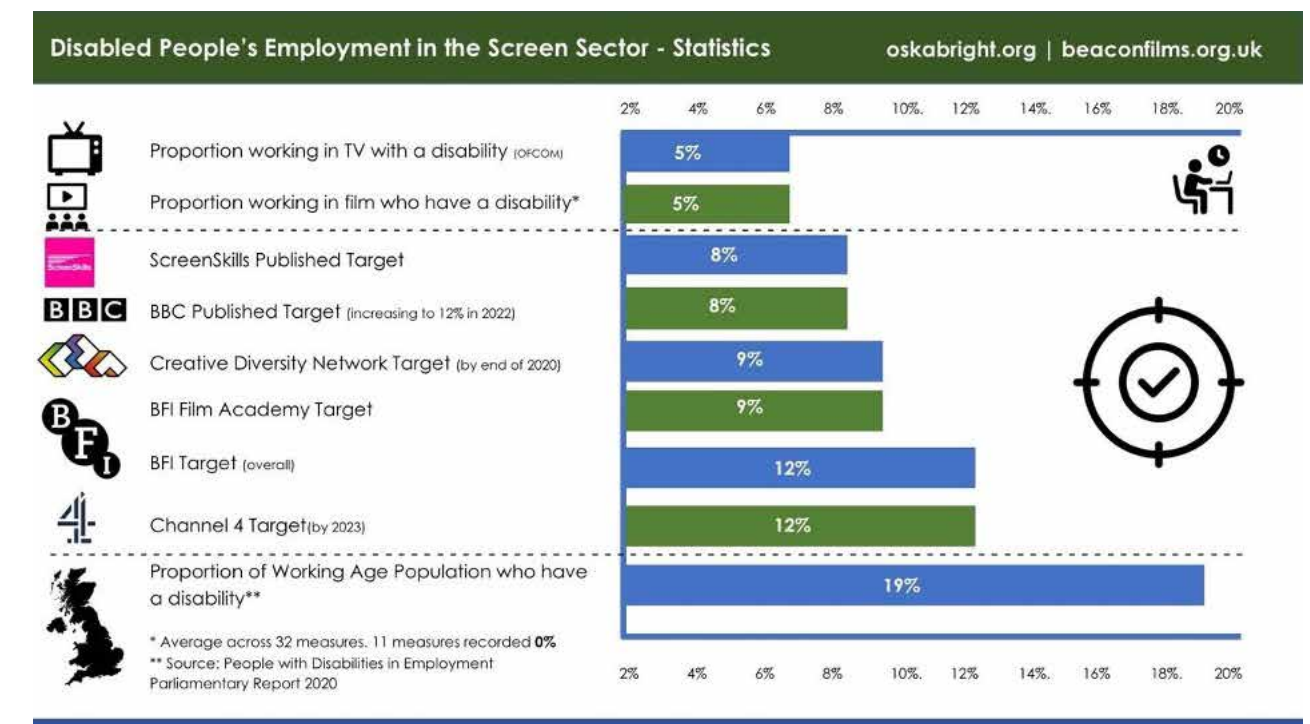
When coming up with ideas, we must remember that we are an online group. Some of us live hundreds of miles apart from each other. Let's be ambitious, whilst realistic!

What problem are we addressing?

The following is taken from work by Will Sadler, one of the members of the Screen Industry Group.

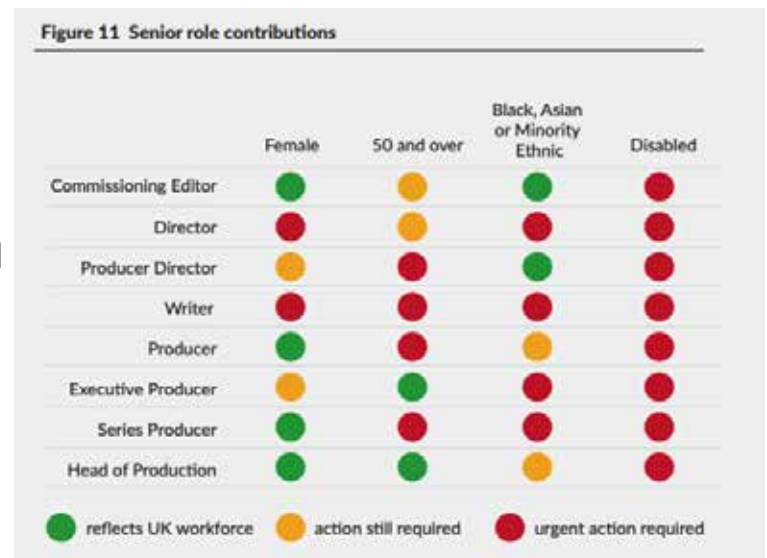
a/ People with disabilities remain chronically underrepresented in the screen industries.

The following chart compares a) the proportion of the current screen industry workforce who identify as disabled, to b) the disability targets set by major commissioners and funders, to c) the proportion of the working age population who identify as disabled (2020).



b/ Those few people with disabilities who do work in the screen industries are prevented from reaching senior roles

This chart is from Project Diamond (Creative Diversity Network) "fourth cut" report (2020)



c/ The mainstream Film and TV industry remains predominantly located in London.

BFI data shows that London has more production companies than the rest of the U.K. combined. The North East of England is home to just 0.8% of the UK's film production, distribution and editing companies. In terms of turnover, North East England generates only 0.1% of U.K. film industry revenues.

d/ Many disabled people rely on their support networks at home.

38% of people with a learning disability live with family or friends. For many disabled people, moving to London (or anywhere else outside their region) for work is simply not an option

e/ The 'screen sector' is now far more than just "mainstream film and TV".

Increasingly, filmmaking skills are relevant to many roles, including marketing, evaluation, outreach and content creation for digital and online. According to Cisco Systems, 80% of the internet is video. The North East is a UK-leader in digital and interactive production. Evidence that has emerged from our own practice suggests that it is through cross-sector partnerships that our regional screen industry can thrive.

f/ Self Shooting has been an essential skill in both broadcast and non-broadcast screen for many years.

The BBC describes it as an "essential part of the job description of assistant producers, directors and researchers". In the North East, most freelance filmmaking contracts are aimed at self-shooters.

g/ Many existing training courses are inaccessible for talented people with disabilities

There is a need for regionally based courses that respond and adapt to differing learning needs and can provide the support required to address disabling barriers. Beacon Films has worked with both Tyneside Cinema/ Random Acts and Film Hub North to design accessible development programmes that are designed to be accessible for people with a range of differing abilities and learning styles.

SCREEN INDUSTRY GROUP MEETING 1 – 14th OCTOBER 2020

Before the meeting:-

Will Sadler (Beacon Films) came up with the idea for the group. He had a chat with David Parker (Oska Bright / Carousel) who agreed to help set up the group. BF and OB are long-time partners. But Will and David do not identify as disabled, so we had a planning meeting with members from Beacon Films and Oska Bright Film Festival who do identify as disabled. These were Zosia Feher, Jules Fraser, Matt Hellet – and later we were joined by Eleana Button.

The group recognised that people with learning disabilities and autism are often excluded from conversations – including disabled-led conversations. We were keen to make the meeting as accessible as possible for everyone.

We decided to use as much Easy Read within the meeting itself as possible by having a slide show that ran alongside the meeting. As part of the process of signing up to the meeting, people were asked to let us know their access needs. Importantly, this included being able to request a phone-call to chat over the meeting and how they'd like to be involved. One person took up this offer. We felt it was important to offer this, particularly for people with learning disabilities or who might have been nervous about taking part.

We also decided to limit the numbers who could come to the first meeting. This was because the planning group were worried that too big a group would be inaccessible for someone with a learning disability as it'd be more difficult for them to get involved.

The meeting:-

15 turned up

We asked everyone to introduce themselves and tell us why they had come to the group.

We discussed what the aim of the group was, and agreed upon:

We want to work together to increase the representation and meaningful inclusion of disabled people – including learning disabled, neurodivergent and Autistic people – in the U.K. screen industries.

We discussed some of the barriers to entry into the screen industries for disabled people, including some of the points made above.

Afterwards:-

The group was “hosted by Oska Bright Film Festival and Beacon Films” but we decided afterwards that we should remove institutional links to the group, because it suggests power structures that shouldn’t be there. Instead, this is a group of equal individuals who want to make the screen industry a more inclusive place for disabled people.

We wanted to use the second meeting to start facilitating as much decision-making power as possible within the group, collectively.

We also had concerns about the intersectional representation within the group and wanted to do more to encourage people who had other identities in addition to identifying as disabled, to join the group.

So for the second meeting, we did a lot more to advertise the meeting as far and as wide as possible. We also sent the details of the meeting to an organisation that focuses on intersectionality (particularly ethnic diversity) within the entertainment sectors (DandI) and we are delighted they came along.

SCREEN INDUSTRY GROUP MEETING 2 – 4th MARCH 2021

28 people came to the meeting.

This meeting focused on two questions:-

1. What do we mean by ‘the Screen Industry’
2. What should the ‘Screen Industry’ group do?

Because the group size was much larger, we used breakout rooms so that people with learning disabilities would (hopefully) be more able to join in conversations.

Afterwards:-

We took the answers to question 2 and grouped them into themes.

GROUP 1 - TRAINING. For example: skills training for group members, or offering training to screen industry organisations.

GROUP 2 - KNOWLEDGE SHARING. For example: sharing industry news, including funding & opportunities with the rest of the Screen Industry Group.

GROUP 3 - NETWORKING. For example: asking people to join or come and talk to the whole Screen Industry Group, or joining other groups such as the BFI Disability Advisory Group to tell them what we would like to happen.

GROUP 4 - CAMPAIGNING. For example: talking to funders and organisations about how to make their applications more accessible, or data collection that is not just about ticking boxes

GROUP 5 - PROMOTION. For example: showcasing lots more films by disabled filmmakers in the mainstream media, or building up lots of new partnerships with film festivals.

We asked people to use a google form to sign up to the themes that they were most interested in. At the time of writing, we have had 14 responses, which we are pleased with.

The Future:-

The next step is to connect the people who signed up to each theme and ask them to set up a group to explore this theme.

The groups will be autonomous, but we plan to use SamePage app to keep each other informed as to what we are all doing.

The Screen Industry Group meetings will become a forum for the groups to share back what they have been doing.

Ongoing challenges:-

I am very open and honest about the fact there will be big time lags between group activity. For example I have not been able to act on connecting the people in the themes yet, but we hope that once people are connected, the groups will be able to take a life of their own and momentum will build.

To get involved with the Screen Industry Group, please email screen@weshallnotberemoved.com

LGBTQIA Group

To me pride means power, protest and community.

I am hugely grateful to be part of an (ill)logical family of queer, D/deaf, disabled, neurodivergent artists in my home city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

We revel in queer mess making and creative joy; sharing ideas and tools for people to grow mutual support systems and communities of practice. These networks are hard to find, I know that I'm extremely fortunate to have my chosen kin so close to home.

Image

Description: colour photo, interior. A white human with a shaved head and a big smile wears a headdress made of huge multi coloured flowers and a black long sleeved shirt on which white and orange text reads "queer crip craft power".

Lady Kitt

(they/ them)

ladykitt.com



**Meet the
Conveners:
Michèle
Taylor**

Ramps on the Moon aims to elevate the place of disabled and deaf people in the professional theatre industry. We believe that this will lead to an enriched and enlivened cultural sector for everyone.

We are an Arts Council funded consortium of six mid-scale mainstream theatres, each working on a local change programme and advocating for change across the sector. Agents for Change act as catalysts in each partner venue to embed practices and approaches that make this change sustainable.

Michèle Taylor is Director for Change, supporting the Ramps on the Moon partners and the wider theatre industry to remove long-standing barriers to disabled people's place in professional theatre.

"Working alongside colleagues in the #WeShallNotBeRemoved movement on the Seven Inclusive Principles was vital to me, since disabled people were being largely overlooked in the rhetoric around the pandemic and there was a real danger that we would get lost in what might turn out to be a two-tier reopening. The document was designed to support organisations to see that equality is possible and necessary for the reopening of a healthy and vibrant sector."

Website: <https://www.rampsonthemoon.co.uk>

Who's in the Zoom?



We hosted a series of free webinars for members on a variety of topics, each hosted by a key influencer within the disability arts world. In 2020, this included Arts Council England, who discussed the recent emergency funding as well as the changes that had been made to make their other funds more accessible to apply for. Unlimited also gave two advisory talks about their most recent commissioning opportunities.

Integrating Access with Jorge Lizalde

'A look into integrated access solutions available for live digital productions and talks, after 1 year of research and development, working for different theatre companies and organizations. From video conferences and meetings to streaming presentations, these technical solutions are aimed at making live performances more engaging and versatile.' – Jorge Lizalde

“They Can’t Stop Us” – Storytelling and Post Traumatic Growth in an Age of Chaos



We hosted a glorious evening of angelic agitation, creative exploration and storytelling with artist Rachel Nwokoro

[Click here to head to Rachel's website and find out more about her incredible work.](#)

Invisible Disability & Identity - An Afternoon of Poetry and Discussion with Chanje Kunda

On Thursday 1st April 2021 we hosted a shared screening of Chanje's visual poem Kintsugi Gold, followed by a discussion with Chanje about personal & community identity with an invisible disability.

[Click here to find out more about Kintsugi Gold at Chanje's website.](#)



“Being mad is not a disadvantage of being an artist. I accept myself as a disabled person. If I’m talking about having a disability with arts organisations or commissioners, then I will talk about it as something positive and it’s something I can contribute. I want to contribute against ableism and I want everybody to be included and celebrated rather than problematising. I’d never be condescending about ableism, I’d say, ‘Let’s celebrate disability, diversity, let’s empower women.’”

- Chanje Kunda

Meet the Conveners: Jodi-Alissa Bickerton

“My involvement in We Shall Not Be Removed came through a reactive and timely zoom podcast discussion I was involved with.

We were fearful and angry about the impacts of the pandemic on disabled people. As we looked into our screens at each other's concern, we knew we had to find solutions to bring all our warriors together for one of the biggest fights of our lives.

I'm so proud of everything all the warriors of the #WSNBR movement have fought for and all the allies it has sparked.”



Coffee Table Catch-Ups



I began to arrange the so-called 'Coffee Table Catch-Ups' during our transition into the New Year. While our all alliance meetings had gone really well, I was aware that because our agenda was always so packed, there wasn't always enough time for members to voice their concerns, ideas and updates. We held a 'Coffee Table' once a month in 2021, and these were always attended well and by members who consistently wanted to contribute to our campaigning activity. It was such a joy to be able to catch up with people in a more relaxed space, and every week I was just in awe with all the campaigning and activism that our members had been undertaking – usually unpaid – all as part of our desperate need for an inclusive recovery of the arts & cultural sector.

– Ellie Page

Online Coffee Tables: A Perspective

by Angela McCarthy

Starting in March 2021, I attended three 'coffee table chats' hosted by the We Shall Not Be Removed campaign, personified by the kind, funny, and compassionate Project Co-ordinator Ellie. It seems strange that I only started going to these in March of this year, as I had thought there were more for longer. In my personal experience of time, that is a good sign.

Perhaps the reason for this perception is that those Zoom meetings were like chinks of sunlight, where – to mix up some metaphors – I could come up for air, talking about disability access, conversations with organisations, and activism. The coffee table chats became a sanctuary that I could come to, in order to recharge my activist batteries.

Prior to finding the courage to attend those coffee/chat meetings, my activism in relation to the creative industries largely consisted of emails and video calls with creative organisations I wanted to connect to, making my case for improving access for disabled people, audiences and creatives. It was me, alone, talking to people I thought were listening, and appreciating, the effort I had gone to state my case. Me, as a chronically ill person struggling with fatigue, doing research into helpful resources, which I passed on to them. Only to find that what I had asked for, and received nods of agreement on, had passed through without a trace of understanding, or action for that matter, like the timely distribution of papers before a meeting, or an explicit commitment to continuing online options for meetings and other events. Instead, the person I had spent so much of my time and energy on speaking with and exchanging emails full of references and resources, introduced a larger meeting by saying that it would hopefully be the last one online.

During this pandemic and ensuing lockdown, disabled people like me often thrived on being able to access people and events online, as well as suffering to a greater extent with COVID-19, and its effect on health and social care services. In online spaces that were not disabled or neurodivergent-led, I would hear the words 'we all' wanting to 'go back to Normal', often spoken in an almost tearful, reverential 'I dream of' way. Well, I dream of a life where my 'Before' is not what I have to go back to, but where I can continue to

meet friends, go to book festivals, and learn with others in 'live' online courses, all from the comfort of my own home. My home, in which the accommodations and supports I rely on for my health and wellbeing, are all present if I need them. Online, where support groups that create communities and foster positive relationships with other people who 'get it', can connect me with people beyond geographical and physical restrictions. Where those opened doors, that I didn't know existed before – and which did not exist in the same way as they do now – are not slammed shut in my face when the majority of people go back to their hallowed 'normal'.

The coffee table chats with Ellie from WSNBR, and the other people I met at those meetings, were part of those online spaces. Being able to talk about my frustrations in dealing with organisations like the one mentioned above, which felt like banging my head against a brick wall, helped to heal my sore head (all figuratively, but still). Hearing about successes of others in altering those conversations in their respective creative fields was thought-provoking and gave me hope.

My only complaint is that the precious and welcome funding for the WSNBR campaign is ending at the end of June. With much of the public narrative dredging up the dreaded 'normal' again, I do not think the need for the campaign for a recovery that includes disabled audiences and creatives has lessened one bit. The need to let people with creativity, and motivation, change the 'way things are done' for the better, for more people including those previously sidelined, will only be increased by the numbers of people who are experiencing the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, be they physical, mental or emotional. Let us also not forget while people in the UK are publicly expressing their craving for what they call 'normal', the world is dying in ever increasing numbers from COVID-19 at this time. And the impact of a health service that has not been able to tend to the medical needs of chronically ill people (not for lack of care by health professionals, but for longstanding neglect of funding by politicians) will likely be felt by those people for years to come, unless some of those consequences should shorten their lives, too.

Angela McG – is a neurodivergent writer and activist living with chronic illness, an occupational therapist, medical herbalist, and research officer by background.

The UK Disability Arts Alliance 2021 Survey Report

Our final organised intervention was the [UK Disability Arts Alliance 2021 Survey](#) that took place in April. The idea was proposed by Jo Verrent, shaped by Jessi Parrott, Ellie and I, delivered and analysed by the brilliant Alistair Gentry. Drawn from a sample of 130+ responses, it was the first survey of disabled people working in the cultural sector since the pandemic began and highlighted significant threats to our continued participation. It revealed a prevalence of homelessness, zero hours contracts and career insecurity amongst the disabled arts workforce. It also exposed a lack of trust that access would be maintained for disabled audiences through reopening of venues, no doubt as a consequence of the Government test event ban and the introduction of numerous additional barriers.

The Survey also revealed #WSNBR to have an above average diverse membership in nearly all metrics and there was considerable buy-in for our mission. But as the industry moved towards reopening in May we decided to formally pause the campaign in June 2020, not to seek renewed funding, resist any attempt to become formalised as an organisation and to return to a basic online awareness raising campaign, using our hashtags and social media as primary tools to call out bad practice or to influence when needed. It felt like the right time for individuals and organisations to absorb our themes into their own practice.

– Andrew Miller

We Shall Not Be Removed Members Survey 2021



Survey Report Summary

We marked the first anniversary of the **#WeShallNotBeRemoved** campaign by revealing the findings of a new survey that highlights significant threats to the continued participation of creative deaf, disabled, learning disabled and neurodiverse people in the cultural sector.

The **UK Disability Arts Alliance 2021 Survey Report** is the first to focus specifically on the impact of the pandemic on disabled people and organisations in arts & culture. The survey reveals a shockingly fragile cultural environment for disabled people:

- Half of respondents reported they had less work than before Covid, or no work at all
- Half did not access government or arts council financial support
- One third describe themselves as precariously employed or on a zero hours contract
- A further third have experienced homelessness
- Nearly two thirds are worried that they will have to leave the creative industries

- The vast majority of our respondents are freelance with only 7% reporting being in full time salaried work, and half of them are worried about their long term job security
- One in five disability arts organisations have already made people redundant, not renewed contracts, or not taken on new staff because of the pandemic.
- 8% of organisations have needed to dip into their financial reserves in 2020.13% had no reserves to start with
- Government or arts council emergency financial support schemes (including CRF and SEISS) have been critical in maintaining organisations, preventing further redundancies, supporting freelancers and have been necessary and wholly productive for beneficiaries.
- A significant 82% of respondents expressed concern about the continued provision of access for disabled audiences through reopening. This implies the cultural sector needs to swiftly offer reassurance to disabled audiences that access remains a top priority.
- The **#WeShallNotBeRemoved** campaign is achieving better than average representation across most diversity metrics, with a high degree of support expressed for the Seven Inclusive Principles

The Survey took place during April 2021 and is an analysis of over 130 individual respondents.

The full **UK Disability Arts Alliance Survey Report** with detailed analysis and alternative formats can be found here: <https://www.weshallnotberemoved.com/2021survey/>

This project was enabled by **Unlimited** thanks to additional financial support from the **Paul Hamlyn Foundation**.

Compiler of this survey Alistair Gentry said, “As an artist and arts freelancer myself I knew that the vast majority of arts practitioners rely on other jobs. But even I was shocked that a third of the disabled, D/deaf and neurodivergent people in our survey are so precariously employed or on zero hours contracts, and a further third have experienced homelessness. Nobody can be productive or creative under conditions like that. No support and respect for freelance artists and arts workers, no arts sector. It’s that simple.”

#WSNBR Convener Jo Verrent MBE said, “We all knew the pandemic was impacting on disabled people in the arts sector heavily - now we can see just how weighty that blow has been. There is a brief window in which to act if we wish to stop the erasure of disabled people from the place it’s taken over 30 years for us to gain in the cultural sector. It is now for the right people to read, share and act on these findings and take immediate action. We Shall Not Be Removed.”

#WSNBR co-founder Andrew Miller MBE said, “This survey is the first to reveal the full fragility of disabled people’s place in the cultural sector following the pandemic and highlights alarming intersectional inequalities. The impacts on disabled freelancers and disability arts organisations are significant, and will require additional targeted support from funders and a rebuilding of trust with the wider sector to ensure the UK remains a global leader in fully inclusive culture”.

Meet the Members: Joe Stevenson



“Born in Manchester in 1989, it’s been tricky to find work ever since I graduated from the University of Salford in 2012. Severe memory loss has caused me trouble, but after blogging about disability arts earlier this year, I’m now editing the first draft of a young adult novel I wrote in 2020 that involves various disabled characters.”

- Joe Stevenson

In the Spotlight

Joe Stevenson kindly volunteered to interview a number of our members for the [We Shall Not Be Removed website](#). Joe has been interviewing a number of disabled activists and artist on his own website, [The Disability Issue](#), so we were overjoyed to be able to host three interviews on our new Spotlight section. Head over to our website to read Joe's interviews with Jo Verrent, John Kelly and Revell Dixon. Across the page, you can read highlights from Joe's interview with Revell Dixon, who has been our wonderful in-house film-maker since the start of the campaign.



“In my eyes, writing up the interviews with disabled artists wasn't so easy, but it was all an enjoyable task to complete. I've become more and more aware of the sort of

work various disabled artists have created ever since the pandemic and #WSNBR began. Their working efforts have inspired me, so I wanted to learn more about them, and therefore was more than happy to interview them. I could speak with three interviewees via Zoom too. We got along well, and now, after writing up and publishing their interviews, I only admire their work more.”

- Joe Stevenson

Spotlight on our King of Collaboration: Revell Dixon



The following series of extracts are from an interview by #WeShallNotBeRemoved member, Joe Stevenson.

As a freelance video producer, Revell's been involved with #WeShallNotBeRemoved by continuously tracking the various movements artists have made during the pandemic period. He's continued to collaborate with disabled artists who joined the UK's Disability Arts Alliance with his filmmaking and continues to occupy the primary role of building up a quality database of videos. Life has been made more difficult, but we want to remember what work we've completed during this bizarre experience that's affected all disabled artists around the world.

Last year, like me, you were obviously getting involved with #WeShallNotBeRemoved. How have you enjoyed working with other group members over the past 12 months?

It's been great working with other people during the movement! I just love collaborating with other people when it comes to creating projects together. It was difficult for us, and we were working really hard in a difficult situation back then, but it was important for us to work together and just create something positive. We needed to use all of our skills to create something meaningful for #WeShallNotBeRemoved. I've really enjoyed the time working with other people, and hopefully there will be more chances to later on this year.

Are there any particular members of the UK's disability arts alliance that you've worked well with?

I'm not great with names, but I know I've enjoyed working with Vici [Wreford-Sinnott]. She's in charge of the Little Cog Theatre. There's also Andrew [Miller], and Ellie Page as well. I've enjoyed working with them to put out a monthly video series for the organisation. Hopefully, there will be more people to come soon.

Yeah, they are key members; I appreciate them a lot too, no doubt.

Yeah, they are. As a whole, it's been a pleasure to just work for the organisation.

Well, I'm keen to learn a bit about your history too, Revell. From what I've read on LinkedIn, you label yourself as a freelance digital producer, and specialise in video editing and presenting. Do you still label yourself like that?

Yeah, I do – I've always had a passion when it comes to creativity. Creating video content and raising awareness really means a lot to me. I think it all began was when I entered a video competition back in 2016. The video competition was about filming yourself and talking about something you're really passionate about – talking about an interest. It could be anything, it was sort of a vlogging competition. So, I entered and spoke about disability. I have my speech impediment and language difficulties. It takes me time pronounce some of my words clearly, and it takes me quite some time to get my words out. So, I took part in the competition, talked about my disability, and made it to the grand finals too. It was a huge surprise for me. After that, I just kept an interest in making video content. It wasn't only about me; it was about other people's disabilities and obstacles they might face in life. I still have a channel running, and my main aim is to raise awareness

for people with disabilities and try and get their message out there: make sure their voices can be heard.

Well, I've enjoyed watching your films, and it's great to hear you're up to all that sort of work too. Disabled people and I can only really appreciate it. I also noticed online that in you received a Jack Petchey Award and was awarded the Creative Apprentice of the Year in 2019. Can you tell us a bit about that?

I was very proud to be awarded that at the time. I got that award as it was a part of the apprenticeship that I did working for the Philharmonics Orchestra. I was the digital and education projects apprentice and gathered administrative support for both of those departments. I hope I can achieve more awards like that in the future when I get more content up and running.

Moving on, have been involved in any studies in film in the past?

What I studied at college for three years wasn't just about film, but multimedia studies. Still, at different times I did learn a bit about how to use a camera and film certain things during the course. I haven't done a film course alone, and we'll see if I can benefit from one in the future perhaps. But might be a bit too late for that.

Well, there's nothing to worry about. You seem to know what you're doing when making these documentaries!

Exactly. I kind of self-taught myself how to use the camera.

Like me, you've become involved with the UK's disability arts alliance. Would you say that the pandemic has had a major effect on your career? Has it led to more or less work regarding filmmaking?

When the pandemic began, it was difficult. It's still difficult for me now. It was because of the pandemic I was made redundant from my previous job. I'm looking for other working opportunities at the moment, but it's so difficult because we're still in a long lockdown. I'm not getting much filming opportunities because of it and am just trying to create my own personal projects in the meantime. I need to try and get them up and running until I get some freelance work going again. All in all, it's been very difficult for me to be honest.

You mentioned you're working on your own projects. Do you have ideas about new films you might make, or are there any plans you have?

I can't really tell you my secrets! Well, all right – there are projects I want to get out soon. One of them is to create sort of a discussion show, where we'll be talking about various topics; how people feel about all events happening recently. And, once again, I want to set up a collaborative series. It would be good to get any disabled people who are interested in taking part in certain projects to talk about the arts they're interested in. It'll just involve making an announcement to others when the time is right.

Well, that sounds like a plan. Everybody is going to want to spend more time with others.

Yeah, exactly. We need to get things moving again.

Website: revelldixon.com

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/revelldixon>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/>



The series of videos for #WeShallNotBeRemoved that have been produced by Revell are entitled Interactive Mobility and are available to view via the Revell Dixon YouTube channel.

This interview was produced by writer Joe Stevenson, the founder of disability arts blog The Disability Issue. Based in Manchester, Joe is also a member

of #WeShallNotBeRemoved. Looking to offer information about disability arts, The Disability Issue wants to grant people with easy access to disability arts-related events and opportunities, as well as offer them interviews with interesting disabled artists on a regular basis.

Ellie's 10-Minute Poem Challenge

"I was a bit nervous this morning before our final meeting, so I set myself a 10-minute poem challenge to mark the end of this amazing campaign in its current structure. I asked Twitter if I should read it out and Twitter said yes. So don't blame me, blame Twitter!"
– Ellie Page

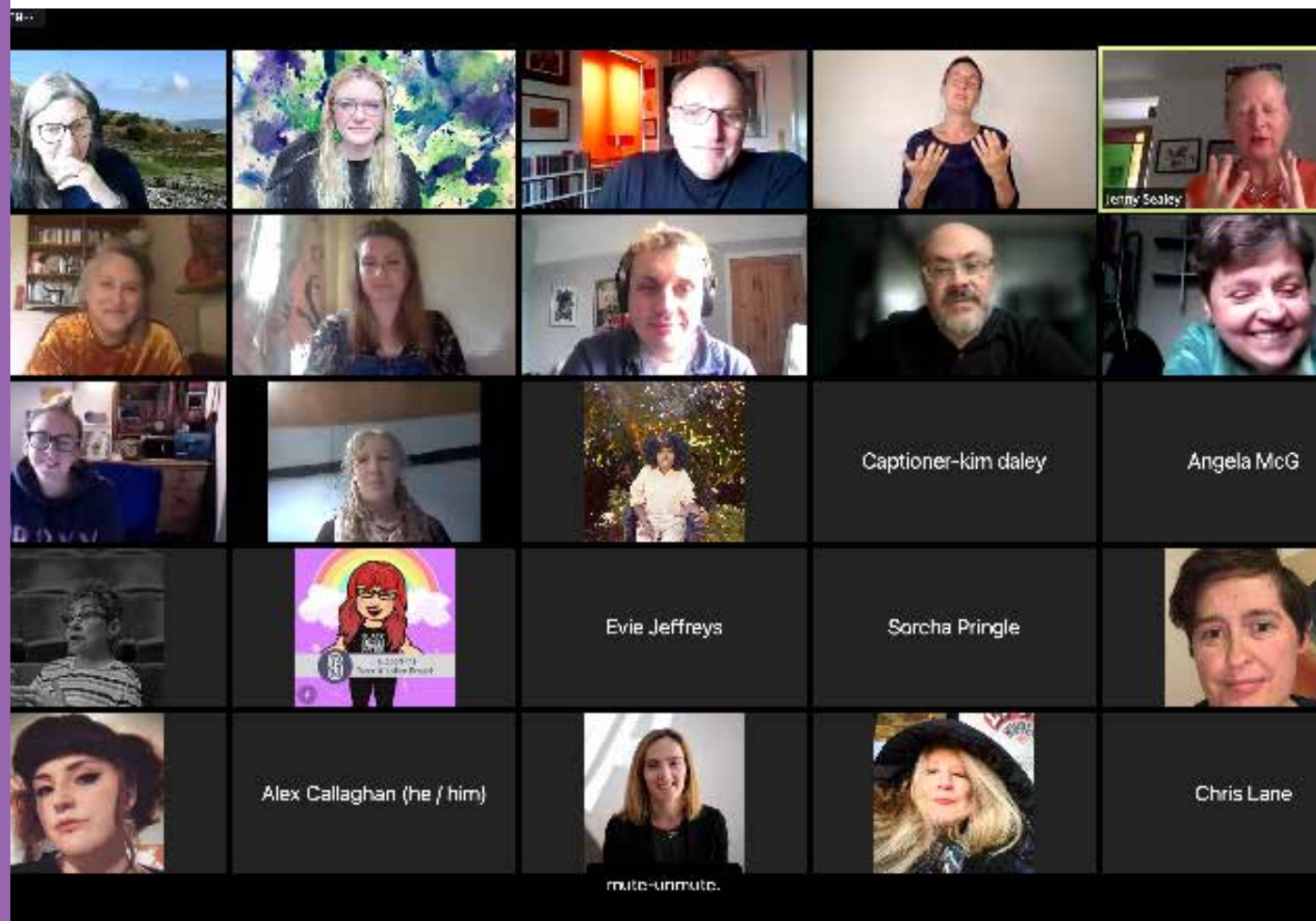
The last year has been awful
The policies were bad
A lot of it was unlawful
And that just made us mad

And so without rehearsing
Not knowing each other long
And despite our lives reversing
We stuck together strong

We screamed from zoom
We screamed from bed
Not everyone approved

Then word got out
They heard us shout
"We shall not be removed!"

The June Finale 2021



The final Alliance Zoom meeting took place on 18 June 2021 with over 30 members attending, hosted by Jenny & Andrew. The meeting considered the findings of our Survey, reflected on the campaign's achievements as well as remembering those disabled creatives we have lost, culminating with a rousing rendition of "Freedom" by Miss Jacqui.

Our Legacy

The promise #WSNBR makes as it pauses, is that if we are needed we will be back.

We recognise the work of advocating for creative disabled people through this pandemic is not yet over and we will continue to campaign and make noise. But the Alliance has strengthened and in some places created relationships between key individuals and organisations across the disability and mainstream arts sectors, across the 4 UK nations, across individual artforms and across impairment groups. So I am confident that individual disabled artists and arts organisations are now best placed to advocate and secure the next stages of progress.

The legacy of #WSNBR will be primarily in the reignited activism of disabled creative people. I also believe it will not be possible to reverse the huge impact we have had on cultural policy. I'm convinced there is heightened recognition by arts funders and the sector itself of the need for inclusion, of the need to engage with anti-ableist practise, of the resilience of disabled artists and of the fragility of our place in the arts ecosystem which this pandemic has cruelly exposed.

At its core, #WSNBR has demonstrated that there is fundamentally no level playing field for creative disabled people and that the recovery of the arts must be more inclusive than it was before. Because, on the other side, we will all have been through too much to allow the old discriminatory barriers re-emerge to prevent inclusion.

– Andrew Miller

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Visit <https://www.weshalnotberemoved.com>

shut in / shut out



#WeShallNotBeRemoved

Front cover art by Dave Lupton
Back Cover art by Caroline Cardus

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