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Dance and Drama Awards

A report on the Disability Access Review

March 2007

Of interest to Dance and Drama Awards Providers

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Appendix 1

Headlines from the CEDAR final D&DA evaluation report, highlighting some of the positive features of the initial flexible provision projects.

Executive Summary

Background

1 Since the development of the Dance and Drama Awards in 1999, there has been a need to ensure the scheme is 'responsive to other key social objectives related to widening participation and raising aspiration'¹.

2 In relation to disability, research in 2002/3 found that inclusive practices varied widely from provider to provider. This report is the culmination of the disability access review of providers, which took place from April – July 2006, looking at where practice has developed since that point.

3 This report has been produced by ADA inc for the LSC. It is supported by a second report formed of confidential reports on each school, describing their current position on inclusive practice.

4 Providers were assessed on the following areas: Ethos, Marketing, Recruitment, Course Content, and teaching, Assessment, Student Support, Teacher Support, Staff Training and Development, Quality and monitoring, Making changes and Physical Access. In total, 20 providers were assessed.

Findings

5 Overall, both the attitude towards the concept of the inclusion of disabled people and the practice within the schools has significantly improved although there are still a small number of providers who are less enthusiastic about inclusion.

6 In some areas, improvements have been less pronounced, for example, in marketing; and there is a wide disparity in relation to monitoring and quantifying inclusion with many schools having not developed action plans or other written approaches. Poor physical access remains a barrier at many schools, although some schools have worked hard to improve this.

7 The reported range of disabled people present within the schools is widening, although a high percentage of this is through improving monitoring systems rather than attracting new disabled people to the scheme. On the whole, those with less visible impairments appear to be able to be easily incorporated into the teaching practices within the schools. Those with more visible impairments, more significant learning needs and greater physical access requirements are still excluded.

Recommendations

8

The following summarises the main issues found and the twelve recommendations made within the report:

- The schools are part of a process that begins much earlier with pre-vocational training and experiences, therefore *the LSC needs to encourage D&DA schools to work with other providers to ensure a raft of provision for talented disabled individuals;*
- The LSC is clear that its priority has to be developing the providers and their practice, which is understandable given their budgetary constraints. D&DA is a small bespoke scheme and while the LSC is seeking to widen participation to underrepresented groups it can not solve all the problems of access in the performing arts training. This means there are still a wide range of talented disabled people who could come forward but who would not be able to access training within the schools and so there is *a question of ownership around the responsibility for high quality training for disabled people in the performing arts that needs to be asked;*
- It is reassuring that schools are developing and owning their own disability-specific programmes, although some may need support to fully see the potential and opportunities that their projects could have. *To avoid LSC funding access and diversity projects that are not fully formed or developed, or that do not build on best practice, successful projects from 07/08 should have access to experienced people, sourced through relevant companies and bodies, to provide support and development;*
- The Disability Discrimination Act has a new element added from December 2006, the Public Duty to do more than simply not discriminate. The LSC will need to show that it is proactively promoting the equality of disabled people. *The LSC should use their D&DA widening participation strategy to support delivery of their Disability Equality Scheme and publicise the considerable steps it has taken to widen access;*
- The Public Duty aspect of the DDA rightly places considerable emphasis on consultation with disabled people. With this in mind, *the funding proposals that focus on disability from schools should be assessed by a pool including a larger number of disabled people than is currently the case;*
- To date, within D&DA, there has been no programmes looking specifically at the access issues raised by musical theatre and classical dance. *The LSC should prioritise widening participation programmes that look at areas which have not yet been explored through the flexible provision options to date;*
- The principle from the initial access review of developing a 'supportive, not punitive, approach to developing the accessibility of the schools' has paid dividends and is still recommended, although some schools are not yet making best use of the resources available to them. *The LSC should remind all schools of the resources already available to them, and re-supply materials where this is available. The LSC might also consider making further disability equality training a required step for the schools whose practice is less developed in this regard;*
- There are a number of schools that have developed areas of expertise that should be shared. Equally, most schools would benefit from the opportunity to discuss specific situations with their peers and reflect on different approaches. *The LSC should continue to create opportunities for all schools to share practice and expertise, peer to peer, around inclusive practice;*

- LSC is to introduce Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) in 2007/08 for all providers. Disability access is not, and should not become, a 'numbers game', therefore *it is recommended that LSC ensure that the EDIMs measure quality and not only quantity;*
- Disabled students currently at the schools are a valuable resource. *The marketing strategy should include the ability to capture a small number of testimonials from disabled students, which can then be used to publicise the scheme's commitment to access and inclusion;*
- To ensure equity within the D&DA, *the LSC should ensure a balance of spend from the widening participation funds across initiatives targeting disabled students, students from a black or minority ethnic background and students from low socio-economic backgrounds.*

From the access review it is possible to draw up minimum criteria for each category, and to describe schools, in relation to their inclusive practice, as exemplary, experienced or emerging. Individual providers can then be encouraged to aim, within a three-year period, to move into the category above. Those working at an exemplary level could be used to share their practice in this regard with other schools. *It is suggested that the LSC consider the creation of such a set of standards to ensure that all providers are pro-actively working to ensure equality of opportunity for all those who are appropriately talented regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or disability.*

Introduction

9

This report has been produced by ADA inc for the LSC. ADA inc is a consultancy service run by Jo Verrent, a disabled trainer and consultant working in the arts and cultural sector. ADA inc undertook the initial research into Disability and the D&DA, including the original review of disability access in the Dance and Drama Awards.

10

This report, documenting the research process and a summary of results, is for open circulation around those involved in the D&DA and associated sectors. It is supported by a second report comprising confidential reports on each school, describing their current position on inclusive practice, as found at the site visits and documented within their relevant information. These are not for open circulation, but have been shared with each individual school for factual checking. These are held by the LSC in confidence.

11

This report includes five sections. Section one is the executive summary, highlighting the key findings and recommendations. Section two is the introduction, explaining the report and where specific information can be found. In section three, the context for the report is briefly laid out and information on the process used to assess schools can be found in section four. This section also contains a summary of findings from the schools, and itemised findings for each of the areas assessed (ethos, marketing, recruitment practice, course content and teaching, assessment, student support, teacher support, staff training and development, quality and monitoring, making changes, physical access). The final section, section five, highlights the issues raised and the recommendations arising from this research.

12

All attempts have been made to keep this report short and succinct. Further information can be gained from the original Disability and the D&DA research report and the Guidance on Disability Access produced by ADA inc for D&DA, and from CEDAR's reports, papers and appendices, available from LSC.

Context

The Dance and Drama Awards

13

The LSC Dance and Drama Awards are 'offered to exceptionally talented performers and stage managers as a capped scholarship scheme (the D&DA scheme), which provides access to the highest quality post-16 vocational training. In addition to the payment of fees, the Awards also provide income assessed support towards living costs, tuition fees and child-care costs. In essence, the scheme uses public money to purchase training places in the independent vocational training market in the performing arts of dance, musical theatre, drama and stage management'².

14

The scheme was introduced in 1999 'to support the continued growth and development of the dance and drama sectors by ensuring that the most talented students have access to high quality training which will prepare them for productive careers in the performing arts'.

15

Government support for the awards, initially managed by the DfES, and now by the LSC also serves to ensure the scheme is 'responsive to other key social objectives related to widening participation and raising aspiration'³.

Disability

16

Centre for Education Development Appraisal and Research (CEDAR) at the University of Warwick have been engaged in an extended evaluation of the awards since January 2000. In the research leading to the initial three year evaluation report it was found that the self reporting statistics on disability were very low (1.5%), and that dyslexia was the only stated impairment in the questionnaire survey reports for the second year students from the 2000 cohort (sample taken in 2002).

17

ADA inc was at that point commissioned to undertake an initial research project to identify options 'for securing effective and appropriate opportunities for students with disabilities to take part in the existing D&DA scheme arrangements and to inform the DfES about how such options might be implemented'. This was undertaken between November 2002 and April 2003.

18

This initial research involved discussions with disabled performers about their training experiences and preferences, with disability-specific companies and mainstream arts companies and bodies about options for employment in the industry for disabled performers and stage managers and visits and discussions with providers about their levels of engagement with disabled students and the potential for increasing the numbers of disabled students within the D&DA awards.

² CEDAR final evaluation report to LSC, August 2006

³ CEDAR final evaluation report to LSC, August 2006

19

This report concluded by stating the need to support seven priorities:

- The development of a supportive, not punitive, approach to developing the accessibility of the schools;
- Support for the development of partnerships between the schools and disability-specific companies/organisations;
- Extended opportunities to develop technical dance skills in talented disabled dancers prior to auditioning for schools;
- Alternative training provision for learning disabled artists and separatist training options for some disabled people with other impairments;
- To stimulate interest and confidence in disabled people to encourage them to audition;
- The need to inspire disabled people to see the performing arts as a potential career, and non-disabled people to see the potential of disabled performers.

20

Following this initial report, the DfES funded the creation of two bespoke elements – a guidance publication on access and dance and drama training and a disability equality training day for D&DA providers, which was delivered at each school via a team of disabled trainers all of whom have direct performance experience⁴.

21

An opportunity was also created for disability-specific companies to tender to deliver training opportunities for those students unable to yet study at the schools (primarily due to the inaccessibility of the schools and their teaching methodologies). Four projects were granted funding, one of which – plans for an audition preparation week for disabled people – was unable to go ahead due to staff changes within the organisation commissioned to lead the programme.

22

The remaining three projects form the current flexible provision options: Graeae's Missing Piece programme (a one year full time drama training course for physically and sensory impaired people), Mind the Gap's Staging Change (a one year part time drama course for learning disabled people) and CandoCo's Foundation course (a one year full time dance course for all disabled people). For further information on these, please contact the companies directly – Graeae (www.graeae.org), Mind the Gap (www.mind-the-gap.org.uk), CandoCo (www.candoco.co.uk).

23

Staging Change and the Foundation course enter their third and final year⁵ in their current format in September 2006; Missing Piece is not running in 2006-7, instead a different programme of outreach and training is being developed by Graeae, called Scene Change. Of the flexible provision options, the CEDAR final evaluation report commented: *"This work is of international significance and represents the commitment of the scheme to creating a more equitable and representative cohort of performers through its investment in the training market."*

⁴ Liz Carr (actor/comic), Alisa Fairley (actor), Rob Lee (actor), Jo Verrent (actor/stage manager).

⁵ The schemes were developed as pilots to trial new approaches to addressing inequality within the scheme. From 07/08, LSC will be funded programmes on inclusion and widening participation developed by the schools in partnership with specialist companies.

24

A number of schools are involved in the delivery of the above projects – for example, Staging Change includes residencies at, and with staff, from Oxford School of Drama, Mountview, Guildford and ALRA.

25

In addition the Access Funds, available to all schools, have been more tightly targeted to support school-based initiatives reaching under presented groups (including disabled people). In 2005-6, these included:

- ALRA: Deaf Performers Acting Skills Course: To run performance skills for deaf actors and acting skills workshops for young people from diverse backgrounds;
- Stella Mann: One week summer course (up to 50 students): Offering full training and accommodation bursaries to hearing impaired students (minimum 10) with a freelance deaf specialist.

26

The majority of access fund projects target boys, people from low-income families and those who are BME rather than disabled people. Reaching and working with disabled people is still seen by many providers as being more problematic.

27

The LSC also funded a marketing post to help reach all the under represented groups, based at CDET and NCDT. This, with considerable work from the providers, led CEDAR to remark that there has been *"improved marketing and communication to potential students and targeted approaches to under represented groups, which is beginning to have an effect on the profile of the cohort in training."* Improvements in marketing to disabled audiences were not objectively tested.

28

CEDAR conclude that: *'The numbers of students with long term illness or disability remains low overall.'* Statistics from providers show that overall, 7.8% of the dance students claimed a long-term illness or disability... 6.5% of the other [NCDT] students claimed to have some form of long term illness or disability⁶. Compared to the original percentage of disabled students within the D&DA awards – 1.5% - this is a significant increase. Compared to the percentage of disabled people within the population as a whole – 15-20% - is it less so.

29

Accounting for disability statistically is problematic. There are questions of definition, of identification, of disclosure. The majority of disabled people have hidden impairments and so it cannot be done by simply looking at disabled people and counting them. Some impairments, in particular those around mental health and learning needs, still carry stigma in the minds of many people. Also, there is still a culture of repression around disability. Disabled people are often encouraged to 'hide' their impairment in order to fit in or 'pass' as non-disabled. Peer pressure, pressure from parents and carers and also, in some quarters, from the medical profession itself is evident. With this in mind it is important not to make statistical measurements the only way of assessing the numbers of disabled people within D&DA.

⁶ However, a significantly greater proportion of the stage management students (10.5%) reported this compared with 5.3% of acting/musical theatre students.

CEDAR final report

30

A number of the recommendations made by CEDAR relate directly or indirectly to disability and D&DA. For example, CEDAR call for *'a review of the sector which analyses the current provision of providers and courses and future industry needs in terms of ensuring equity and excellence of provision for all those who are appropriately talented.'* This clearly would have important ramifications for disabled performers – where are they currently being trained? Is there a proven market demand?

31

CEDAR also concludes that there is a need for intervention at the pre-vocational stage in order to ensure that a more representative pool of exceptionally talented performers access the highest levels of training. This was one of the key findings of the initial disability report by ADA inc. CEDAR calls for a comprehensive and coherent 'talent ladder' which clearly maps out the diverse and differentiated steps to advanced training in the performing arts which would identify potential and support the pre-vocational training needed to access the Awards. DfES are developing the identification of a Talent Ladder as part of their Gifted and Talented Team. A representative of this team sits on the D&DA steering group.

32

CEDAR commented that the providers are generally supportive and pro-active in engaging with issues of under-representation and widening participation but that they also remain 'realistic' about the extent to which their actions can be effective unless they are actively supported in both the pre-vocational sector and in the labour market for the performing arts. Employability is still an issue. CEDAR draws parallels with the equity survey that compares the length of time worked in the industry of various members, which shows disabled members work less than those who are non-disabled. It is important to remember that, to date, performing arts training has been hard to access for many disabled performers and so the statistics might instead be read to suggest the differences in employability between trained and untrained performers rather than between disabled and non-disabled ones.

Disability Access review of providers

Process

33

The disability access review took place from April – July 2006. Providers could not be visited earlier in the year as it was necessary for the provider review to be completed first. Efforts were taken to ensure the visits were as 'light touch' as possible, with materials being gained from the provider review, prospectuses and websites where possible, rather than from the providers themselves. At the visits, providers were encouraged to use the opportunity to ask questions and find out information they needed to further improve their practice.

34

Providers were assessed on the following areas:

- **Ethos- promoting inclusivity** (does the school see itself as inclusive? is this carried into other areas such as recruitment? Have they links with disability-specific organisations?)
- **Marketing - welcoming and accessible** (websites, prospectuses, other events, other publications and/or resources)
- **Recruitment Practice - practice and procedure** (getting information, outreach/specialist provider options, asking about/discussing access needs, meeting needs at interview/audition etc)
- **Course Content, and teaching - flexible and inclusive** (teaching styles, forms, texts and techniques etc)
- **Assessment - examinations and assessments** (is there a system to look at possible adjustments for disabled students?, is it reviewed regularly?, are statistics kept on examination/assessment marks of disabled students for comparison with non disabled student, adjustments to assessments, other possibilities)

- **Student Support - supporting students** (are disabled students encouraged and supported?, do they get to give feedback? how are students made aware of diversity issues?)
- **Teacher Support - supporting teachers** (are teachers supported and encouraged? Do they have access to advice, information, human and financial resources?)
- **Staff Training and Development** (are staff supported and trained effectively?, is this all staff?, is their performance around disability/access monitored?)
- **Quality and monitoring taking stock** (how does the school assess its accessibility?)
- **Making changes** (how does the school continually monitor plans and improvements?)
- **Physical Access what is the present levels of physical access and what is being considered?** (Is there level/ramped access, toilet facilities, parking, lighting and signage? Any plans for new builds? What are they systems for building management? Any alternative options? How well publicised is access?)

35

In total, 20 providers were assessed. As it was not known if Drama Studios London were to enter the scheme or not, they were not assessed but were offered a consultative visit. The visits were undertaken by two consultants from ADA inc – Jo Verrent and Sarah Pickthall.

36

Individual reports were compiled for each provider. These form confidential appendices to this report and are not for general distribution. Each report has been seen by its provider and they have had a chance to comment on the report and correct any factual inaccuracies.

Summary of findings from providers

37

The attitude towards the concept of the inclusion of disabled people has significantly improved in the majority of providers since the initial access review in 2003. Senior staff appear aware of their legal obligations and many are enthusiastic about the options opening up for them in this field. The practice on the ground has also improved, with most teaching staff able to evidence making adaptations and adjustments at an individual level to support students. There are a small number of providers who are less enthusiastic about inclusion and who find it harder to see the relevance of the issue to their practice or the importance of their involvement as a part of a chain of provision.

38

Surprisingly the improvements in marketing are poor, as contrasted with CEDAR's more positive findings in relation to marketing as a whole. Few providers ensure that their websites and printed materials conform to clear print guidelines, include welcoming and informative sections on access and inclusion and information about alternative format options for materials. There are some notable exceptions, and a small number of schools are making considerable progress in this respect, from which the other schools could learn.

39

There is a wide disparity in relation to systematic approaches to inclusion. Some schools have clear action plans, annual target setting or have introduced quality assurance processes relating to inclusion. Others have no strategy in place to move forward, and are responding reactively. It is worth remembering that the Disability Discrimination Act is anticipatory – providers of services are expected to anticipate the inclusion of disabled people and not only respond to individual requests. A small number of staff at schools are still using outmoded terminology that could cause offence and gives a dated and unwelcoming impression.

40

Poor physical access remains a barrier at many schools, although this is no longer being used as an excuse to avoid improvements in other areas. Some schools have worked hard to improve access, for the benefit of all students and staff, understanding that physical access includes lighting, heating, seating and ambience and not just ramps. Access as a whole is more dependant on attitude and approach than physical access, which is only ever a small part of the complete picture.

41

The reported range of disabled people present within the schools is widening, although a high percentage of this is through improving monitoring systems rather than attracting new disabled people to the scheme. The most commonly reported impairments are still dyslexia and other related learning needs⁷. Mental health is also often reported – in particular, anorexia, bulimia, depression and self harming. There are also a number of students within the schools with hearing impairments, visual impairments, hidden impairments (including asthma, epilepsy, cancer, allergies and so on). A small number of people with physical impairments are also present.

⁷ This does not include people with learning disabilities such as Downs syndrome, William's syndrome and so on.

42

On the whole, those with less visible impairments appear to be able to be easily incorporated into the teaching practices within the schools. Those with more visible impairments, more significant learning needs and greater physical access requirements are still excluded. The reasons for this are complex and as much to do with access to prevocational opportunities, employability, the nature of the industry as a whole and the way the art forms are assessed as they are to do with the schools, their selection criteria and teaching/assessment methodologies.

Ethos - promoting inclusivity

43

The first area assessed was ethos – do the providers see themselves as inclusive? Are they open to increasing the numbers and range of disabled people they are working with?

44

The disability assessment team were looking for a range of indicators:

- mentions of inclusion and accessible practice within publicity and marketing materials;
- links with disability-specific organisations and the flexible provision programmes being run through D&DA;
- positive policies and statements around access and inclusion, and evidence of putting such policies into practice;
- inclusion and access evident within long term planning processes.

45

Many of the providers were beginning to embrace the challenge of becoming more inclusive. All providers had formal equal opportunities policies that ranged from a single page to more developed documents of up to 7 pages. Over half the schools also had a separate document, variously called a disability statement, disability etiquette information, disability management statement and so forth. These documents stated in more detail the specific intensions of the institutions and support they could provide.

46

Some policy statements spoke positively of the benefits of engaging in diversity work, rather than just the challenges:

'ALRA is committed to creating a safe, supportive and stimulating learning and working environment based on mutual respect and trust. ALRA celebrates and values diversity within its community of staff and students, promotes equality of opportunity and strives to challenge and eliminate unlawful discrimination.'

47

It is essential, if the numbers of disabled students are to rise within the D&DA, that providers present an inclusive image. Disabled students considering a career in the performing arts may not be coming from a point of confidence and self belief, they need to be able to recognise the existence of a supportive ethos within the publicity materials produced by providers in order to develop the confidence to apply. The wording used by providers is crucial to developing this image.

48

It is understood that many disabled people do not identify with the term 'disabled', some providers have chosen to list a number of impairments in order to illustrate their inclusive stance, and be more welcoming:

'The Hammond School welcomes students with a range of disabilities such as asthma, diabetes, specific learning disabilities and hearing/sight loss, speech impediments etc providing that the student has the ability to successfully complete the demands of the course. We will do all we can to support and make provisions for such students.'

'The school welcomes applications from students with physical disabilities, learning difficulties and sensory impairments. Various forms of disability and health conditions can be accommodated within the current entry requirements... Elmhurst is committed to the principle of equal access by all its students to the service it provides and facilities it offers.'

49

Other providers do not list impairments, but instead proactively state the importance of including disabled students for the students and the institution as a whole:

Mountview acknowledges that the talents, skills and other resources of people with disabilities are as unique and valuable as those of other people... Mountview recognises that there is demonstrable demand from employers, prospective students, audiences and others to make all features of its provision available to people with disabilities.'

Northern Ballet School has a 'particular emphasis on attracting applicants with disabilities which are not incompatible with their safe and effective training'.

50

A small number of the providers were engaged in direct initiatives to develop inclusive practices within their institutions. The three flexible provision schemes are providing some schools with this option⁸, although as two of the three courses are drama based, and the third is rooted in contemporary dance it is not surprising that drama schools are delivering on this to a greater extent than the dance schools.

51

The Arts Educational School (London), in particular, has to be commended for engaging with all three flexible provision schemes and also meeting with a number of other disability-specific companies and training providers such as Extant Theatre Company⁹ and the Orpheus Centre¹⁰.

52

Involvement with the flexible provision schemes can enable providers to gain practical skills in inclusive teaching and increase both the appetite for the work and the skills to deliver it. For example, when working with Mind the Gap, Mountview insisted that all heads of department became involved and taught a session. This enabled senior staff to overcome their initial 'fear' and experience the process firsthand. As a result, all staff are increasingly committed to the work and to the notion of inclusive practice. A similar situation has developed at ALRA through their relationship with Graeae's Missing Piece training course.

⁸ Mind the Gap have been working with GSA, Mountview, Oxford and Arts Educational School (London); Cando Co have been working with Arts Educational School (London); Graeae have been working with Arts Ed and ALRA.

⁹ Extant Theatre Company is the UK's first company run by blind and visually impaired performers working to create an aesthetic inclusive of their specific abilities and requirements. www.extant.org.uk

¹⁰ The Orpheus Centre is a residential training centre for disabled people offering a year long immersion in the performing arts alongside the development of independent living skills. www.orpheus.org.uk

53

Some providers are developing their own partnership programmes to demonstrate their inclusive approaches and aid their learning, for example:

- Stella Mann are planning a deaf summer school in the summer of 2006;
- Oxford has involved a local experienced dance and inclusion practitioner Celia McFarlane and disabled dancers she has contact with to assess their access in relation to their dance provision;
- GSA is planning a disability symposia in September 2006 and hopes to make contact with organisations such as StopGap Dance Company and the Dorothy Miles Cultural Centre;
- Urdang has been working with The Cripplegate Foundation, Green Candle Dance Company and the education department at Sadlers Wells;
- Bird had further contact with their disability equality training trainer (Rob Lee) and also involved a blind professional, Michael Spooner.

54

ALRA has been developing a Saturday programme for deaf performers in partnership with Paula Garfield, the artistic director of Deafinitely Theatre. ALRA's Head of Acting articulated a desire to take this work forward with the school through an integrated course over a longer period of time, subject to resources. This shows a marked departure from a few years previously when the school felt they were unable to meet the needs of students who were deaf or very hard of hearing.

55

The above positivity is countered by some providers using less encouraging language and phrasing within policies, statements and publicity. Statements such as

'...in respect of disabled persons, XXXX will endeavour to provide for equality of opportunity wherever a person's disability is not an absolute disqualification.'

'The College accepts disabled students but this depends on their level of disability. Each case is considered individually and the candidates' capabilities, needs and access requirements have to be carefully considered.'

'...certain kinds of psychological imbalance or fragility of mental health may make a student unsuitable for training.'

56

The above do not contain anything that is overtly untrue, but the wording implies negativity. A student who does not have the required talent or skill, or is simply not ready, will not make it through the application and audition process, there is little need to de-motivate disabled students from applying at this early stage.

57

One can contrast the impression created by wording and its indication of the ethos that underlines it, by examining the statements for English National Ballet:

Previously, English National Ballet stated it would be:

'unlikely to receive an application for training from a physically disabled person, however in the event that an application is received, the staff will make every effort to ensure that the applicant is directed towards a recognised organisation that will assist them in their chosen interests.'

A recent change of Principal has led to policies and key statements being revisited. The school now states:

'The school strives to be as inclusive as possible and welcomes students with different abilities and additional needs offering extra support where necessary.'

58

Some providers do not recognise their own commitment to inclusion, still assuming that 'disability access' means only access for wheelchair users and those with physical impairments. For example, senior staff at Cambridge felt that their practice could not be seen as inclusive due to their lack of fully accessible facilities, something that they are seeking to address. Their policy states that they:

'endeavour to make premises accessible for all members of the community. This will only be fully achieved after current building plans are realised.'

59

However, the school has developed extremely good links with voluntary organisations and support networks in Cambridge working with young people with drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorder and mental health issues. The school has a healthy funding relationship with a charity supporting disabled children in the arts that it draws upon to fund equipment, adapted footwear and extra osteopathy for those students who are less financially able to cover these costs. These evidence that the provider has a supportive and inclusive ethos, irrespective of the limitations of its current physical access.

60

It is still difficult to assess the impact of any of the above on the numbers of disabled people present within the schools due to the variations in statistics kept by each school. Some schools only keep statistics based on monitoring forms presented at audition (when only a small number of students are likely to self declare). Others update these throughout the year, sometimes on self declaration by a student, and sometimes through observation by a staff member. Few schools separate out the statistics for students with D&DA awards. Disabled people were said to account for between 0% and 20% of the total number of students within individual schools. As mentioned previously, the issues around collecting statistical data on disability are complex.

61

A number of schools have made efforts to reach and welcome disabled students, but are still unable to make contact with a wide range of individuals. There are still considerable barriers at a pre vocational level that prevent disabled people aspiring to a career in the performing arts and gaining the required skill level to audition for D&DA.

Marketing

62

One of the easiest ways to show a commitment to inclusion is to ensure that marketing materials are clearly written and welcoming, that they conform to clear print and access standards and that they are available in alternative formats. It is therefore disappointing that few schools have addressed all of the above consistently.

63

In particular, access to websites was poor, with only one provider's site – Oxford School of Drama – conforming to the international web access criteria W3C and/or the UK's Bobby criteria¹¹. Three websites were described as currently under development and planned to include improvements to access. One site (Stella Mann) had a plain text site alternative.

64

The following, taken from the access review of one provider, is typical:

There is no mention of equal opportunities or detail of physical access and provision for disabled students. The website has no accessibility measure and there is nowhere saying that information on the school is available in other formats. At site visit it was made clear that the board of governors were aware of their duties but could not prioritise development of their website at present.

65

Print materials produced by the providers fared slightly better. A small number of provider prospectuses stated that they were available in different formats, for example, Urdang. In two other instances, this information was included on a slip sent out with the prospectus. This latter option is clearly better than nothing, although it sends a less committed signal than including the information within the publication itself.

66

A small number of schools are not conforming to clear print guidelines. They have text appearing over images, poor colour contrast between text and background colours, and poor navigation through their materials (lack of indices, page numbers and so on).

67

GSA have produced their entire prospectus on dvd, thereby by-passing the need for an audio version, although the current lack of subtitles restricts its usage by those who may need them.

68

It is not difficult to create a more welcoming prospectus. The print prospectus for Oxford School of Drama has a page specifically for disabled applicants that looks at the accessibility of the School and what support is available for disabled students. It makes suggestions such as specialist IT equipment, notetakers or BSL interpreters. It also says that the prospectus and enrolment form are available in large print format on audio tape and on the website. In addition, students with limited dexterity or visual impairment are offered help in completing the form.

69

Two schools have made, or are making, considerable changes to their marketing processes following internal discussions on accessibility. Hammond are changing their corporate font to Arial, primarily to make documents easier to read by a wide audience, and Arts Educational School (London) are to produce an audio version of their prospectus.

70

There are other ways of signalling a degree of commitment to inclusion within both web based and print based marketing materials. One school (GSA) uses the 'Positive about Disabled People' symbol. Organisations conforming to a basic list of good practice criteria can use this symbol to indicate a positive welcome.

71

The content of materials is also crucial. One positive option that is not being used by any school, is to include representation of disabled students within images and testimonials, although Cambridge do plan to use an image of a student with short stature on their website. A student speaking positively about the support and encouragement they have been given whilst training would be a clear indication of positive action. It is understood, however, that many disabled students or students with health issues may not wish to label themselves in this way or be singled out from the rest of their cohorts (although contributions could be anonymous). Mentioning the involvement of schools in other positive initiatives (for example, as a result of their education or outreach work) would also be useful – few highlight these experiences on their websites or within their print materials.

72

Only three schools make mention of their physical access provisions on their websites or publicity. This is a particular shame given the increases made in physical access over the last few years. How are students to know if basic marketing materials do not tell them? If nothing is mentioned about physical access, an assumption is made that the premises will not be accessible.

73

Most schools have some reference to their equal opportunities policies on their websites although it is less common to find these referenced within print materials. One exception is the Performers College who include their disability charter and their equal opportunities policy within their prospectus. In some cases, providers stated their materials included equal opportunities materials when, on examination, they did not. Providers must take account of equality of opportunity across all aspects of their provision. The LSC expects that policies for equality of opportunity are in place and published in appropriate formats, available to both staff and learners. Additionally, statements summarising these policies should be made available in all promotional marketing materials.

74

Language, on the whole, is welcoming. A few schools are still using 'special needs' – a term which carries offence for some disabled people. Unfortunately it is used within mainstream education for younger people and so for schools covering a wide age range this may be unavoidable. Some schools are using more appropriate terminology and instead referring to people's learning needs and access needs instead.

75

Overall, the impression of inclusion and access given by the majority of providers is at odds with the ethos they are intending to promote. With a few honourable exceptions, there are still considerable improvements to be made with regard to marketing materials in relation to:

- Clear print and navigation;
- Provision of and access to alternative formats;
- Content relating to access and inclusion including representation (images and case studies);
- Language (in fewer cases).

76

It is worth restating that marketing materials are part of the services offered by providers and as such they are covered by the Disability Discrimination Act, and providers therefore need to make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled people to access them. This part of the Act includes an anticipatory duty – providers should anticipate the needs of disabled people in this regard rather than acting only when asked by a specific person.

Recruitment

77

All providers offer auditions, although the individual processes vary. Some offer auditions to all applicants, others to selected ones. Although it might seem that the former would be more welcoming to potential disabled applicants, in practice it depends on the criteria for selection. Taking part in an audition process when you do not meet the criteria for a particular school is not a useful experience for either the person concerned or the school itself.

78

Some schools are working hard to be flexible and adaptable – with both their auditions processes and the criteria for selection they use. In particular, Cambridge states within its Equal Opportunities Implementation Document that:

in relation to selection and recruitment of students, the entry criteria will be applied to all applicants but will be as flexible as possible in order to accommodate those with particular access requirements.

79

GSA also offer flexibility. Within their audition procedures the school will consider disabled applicants if they have particular difficulties or disabilities in the disciplines of voice and/or dance, if there is enough evidence that they have ability in the other disciplines.

80

Oxford states within its audition information that the school welcomes applications from disabled students. It has taken advice on how to make its auditions accessible and flexible enough for people to be able to show their ability and skill in different ways, and encourages applicants to speak to the Executive Director to find out more information on access, support and accessing the Disabled Students Allowance.

81

Many schools make adjustments for dyslexic students at audition by allowing additional time for preparations for sight reading.

82

There are two ways of looking at disability – is disability the responsibility of the individual disabled person, or is disability about lack of access, lack of opportunity and negative assumptions and attitudes? The former illustrates the medical model of disability, the latter the social model¹². The Disability Discrimination Act balances the two approaches, stating that it is for providers to improve access and make adjustments to a point that is defined as reasonable. They do not have to do what is considered unreasonable or which would leave them unable to maintain academic/vocational standards.

83

One school states that they will endeavour to accommodate any student, 'provided that our training can be of benefit to the individual concerned'. Another states: *'We welcome applications from disabled persons or those with learning disabilities and are happy to offer advice to individual students who need guidance as to their suitability for a particular course.'*

84

The assumption underlying both these examples is that it is the student that must be able to fit into the course, rather than that the course might be able to adapt to meet the requirements of the student. Although meant to be an honest and welcoming approach, both might serve to deter disabled students from coming forward.

85

It was accepted by providers that getting disclosure at audition from students is hard. LSC state that from 06/07 it is a requirement that schools collect this information at audition and they must fill forms in annually detailing the information as part of their provider requirements. Although most schools conform to the Disability Discrimination Act requirement in asking prospective students about access needs they might have and provisions that they might need at audition, a small number currently do not. Monitoring forms used by schools often collect information on the ethnicity of students, but not always on the disability status. As many people do not identify as disabled people, it is becoming more common place to use the wording of the UK Census return which asks people if they are 'disabled or have a long term health condition'. Cross referencing these forms with student's medical forms is also advised, as

many students disclose further conditions on these. It is important to make the process of declaring an impairment or condition as stress free as possible in order to encourage students to disclose. Many schools have supportive staff, who work hard to encourage students to come forward. Some schools however have a more rigid approach. One school, for example, states that:

'failure to disclose medical information and conditions affecting physical and mental well being and successful training could lead to immediate dismissal'.

86

There is considerable debate about the employability of disabled students, particularly in the fields of classical dance and musical theatre. In some instances the criteria of employability is used at auditions for selection. Can disabled students, particularly those with visible impairments, yet be said to evidence 'demonstrable potential' for employment? In many ways this is a 'chicken and egg' question. There have been instances when casting directors have wished to employ disabled people in specific roles but been unable to do so due to the lack of trained performers. David Toole, a dancer with a significant impairment, has been constantly in work for over 10 years, and is dancing now at an age when many dancers have retired with companies such as DV8 and CandoCo. Is it possible to know the full potential of employment for disabled students without first having a body of trained professionals? Millennium is keen to explore options within Musical Theatre for disabled people with CandoCo.

87

Increasingly, there are examples of students within the schools who have visible physical impairments¹³: SLP, for example, had a student who has fused fingers on one hand who has recently graduated and gained an agent, Elmhurst has offered a place to a dancer with one arm significantly longer than the other and so on.

88

Certainly for those with different impairments, the question is invalid. There are a large number of performers in the sector with very significant impairments who have been able to work consistently and gained high public profiles.

89

It needs to be remembered, when studying the Equity statistics and comparing the employability rates of disabled members and non-disabled members – that often one is comparing the employability rates of trained performers against those without training as up until this point, many training routes have been inaccessible for disabled people.

90

It is important that discussions about access and adjustments are separated from those around talent and potential. Elmhurst, for example, states:

'The level of any learning support a prospective student will require is specifically excluded from consideration throughout the auditions process.'

91

After a decision is made to make an offer, then discussions about access and adjustments should take place, ideally with the involvement of the student themselves (they may have information on access solutions that the school itself has not considered). The disabled student will need a degree of control over the solutions suggested for inclusion, as they may have personal preferences around the visibility of such solutions, for example.

92

In some instances, a school may wish to take a student but be unable to meet their requirements. Arts Educational School (London) describes this process within the School of Musical Theatre and the School of Acting prospectus:

'If an applicant with a disability is successful at audition the college will do its utmost to meet the student's access requirements. Before offering a place the college will discuss with the student its ability to fully support him/her during training. If after discussion, regrettably the college feels it cannot provide adequate support and cannot offer a place, it will explain to the student why and advise them of alternative opportunities.'

93

Some schools have made tailored opportunities to test out access provisions, such as a test week in the previous term to see if particular students can move between classes, have the stamina for full classes and so on.

¹³ These are not always students with D&DA awards.

94

It is important that schools do not discriminate against students purely on the basis of their impairments or access needs, without thinking through the implications. During the access review, for example, one school stated that they could foresee a situation where a student may not be accepted if it was evident at audition that they had a severe eating disorder. If the student had limited strength or stamina, this could be a reason for not offering them a place, but the presence of an eating disorder in itself may not be, especially as the school has experience in this field and prides itself on offering excellent professional support available and has staff with global acumen in this respect. If the young person was considered a health and safety risk to themselves or to others, this would be a justifiable reason for discrimination, as the Disability Discrimination Act specifically states that health and safety considerations outweigh those in relation to access.

95

Outreach initiatives are important to bring forward potentially talented disabled students. These can be highly successful. Hammond, for example, has located a disabled individual, who had been seen during a day of boys dance in Manchester, has been invited to attend 3 days a week free of charge next year (on a specifically created foundation level course). Considerable time has been spent accessing information on his learning needs and requirements (for example, information from his current headmaster on how he learns best). The school is currently planning how best to inform and prepare staff, as well as how to support the involvement of fellow pupils.

96

Mountview currently employs 2.5 days of additional support towards the development of disability representation through an outreach development worker. The disability post has made a real difference to how the school approaches disability, inclusion and access, despite the limitations of the current building resource. Already, the worker responsible for this has made a real impact, not solely focussing on brokering applications from disabled students but building partnerships with disability organisations and individuals including Razor Edge Theatre Company, Mind the Gap and Shape. These initiatives not only serve to raise the numbers of disabled people present, but also to train staff in working with disabled people and also to raise the profile of such work.

Courses

97

All providers were able to evidence some examples of modifications to courses and programmes of study to enable individuals with specific needs (gained through injury or impairment) to progress.

98

In some cases, these come from a policy level commitment to inclusion, such as at English National Ballet where within the Equal Opportunities Policy it says that staff will provide an adapted curriculum and resources that are accessible to all students and that *'staff will evaluate the curriculum regularly to ensure that a broad and balanced programme is delivered in line with planned aims.'*

99

At GSA, the Equal Opportunities Policy says that GSA will research the different needs of disabled people and communities in order to provide appropriate training. If the core staff team feel they cannot provide the expertise necessary they will outsource. For example, a course leader going to meet a prospective deaf student at their current educational site to talk to them and their support staff about their access needs in order to replicate this as closely as possible on the GSA course.

100

For other providers there is no stated commitment at policy level, although it can be seen in practice. All teaching staff that were met described taking a proactive approach to ensuring that all students are able to work to their full potential. A policy level approach makes it easier to ensure all staff implement this positive approach, and also to monitor and assess individual staff's practice in this area.

101

In all schools, through talking to staff involved in teaching, it was possible to evidence the provision of a differentiated curriculum. There was an acknowledgement that students are at different levels, have different skills and abilities and different preferred learning styles, although this is not always seen as being linked to disability access, more to a general approach to supporting individuals. This approach appears most successful in schools that have an ethos linked to individual development and growth.

102

For example, within Cambridge, the access review visit noted that *'There was considerable evidence at the site visit to show differentiation in action, flexible delivery approaches to student style and responsiveness to impairment issues as and when they arose. A synergy exists between tutors and support workers to accommodate and adjust and this often sees students moving across diploma disciplines to meet their developmental needs and changing circumstances.'*

103

Stella Mann evidenced differentiation in the support for deaf students around singing with the creative use of dictaphones and experimentation around different vocal lines and intonation to assist the different learning styles and impart the best possible opportunity for the development of tone and modulation.

104

Elmhurst illustrated their willingness to modify class structure where required (for example, allowing a student who needs to urinate frequently permission to leave class and return a number of times each session). Their course practice is also modified (for example, the practice of moving the students to a different position on the barre each lesson is modified should the deaf student require to be in a similar position for each session for access reasons; visual cues do not work for one student with sight issues and so different cues are given to enable her to enter on time). The staff see this as simply being common sense and the most important feature as being not to draw undue attention to the student's needs.

105

Bird supported a student with arthritis by enabling him to rest and critically assess the performances of others in class when he is unable physically to take part and also supported a deaf student through a period of difficulty with balance through additional support.

106

All schools provided a range of support for dyslexic students. Some are able to formally assess all students for learning needs on entering the institution, others assess students internally and offer support when required. Some schools offer confidential support to students so they do not have to disclose to other students. Another school, Hammond, ensures that all public notices and information is automatically produced in large print, in a suitable font and on appropriately coloured paper so that all students can read the same material, dyslexic or not.

107

All schools offer a degree of individual flexibility, altering lesson plans, usually to take into account injury or rehabilitation. This is usually seen as a temporary option until a student is able to undertake all the course elements once more.

108

Some providers were able to extend their course adjustments into providing opportunities for disabled students to 'practice' for the realities of the profession. For example, Performers College previously taught a deaf student who, in his final year, was deliberately **not** given additional signals around

instruction so that he would learn to take more responsibility and develop coping strategies to best support himself in a professional situation. This approach to 'practicing' for the profession could be usefully developed by all disabled students, although for some it might be around supporting them to advocate for their access needs rather than developing personal coping strategies. No two students are the same and each will need an individually tailored approach.

109

A number of schools called for more support from Trinity in two areas – flexibility with the curriculum (currently all students have to pass all areas of the curriculum with no optional or alternative modules available) and provision of best practice examples of support for working with disabled students¹⁴.

110

Only one school reported including disabled performers as guest speakers or guest lecturers (Arts Educational School, London); some had provided the opportunity for students to work with disabled people through involvement in the flexible provision opportunities or other outreach work. At both Northern Ballet School and Bird, all students are involved in the direct delivery of community and/or outreach work as well as training as performers. This means they are all required to work with a range of school aged children, some of whom may be disabled, all of whom will learn and different paces and have different skills.

¹⁴ Trinity state that they are keen to encourage and support disabled students to participate in the National Professional Qualifications Scheme and request all providers to identify candidates with impairment-related needs when they register for their Diploma so that Trinity can better support both the candidate and the provider. Trinity has offered providers specific training or development days in any areas where they wish support or guidance but at this time none of the providers have taken up this offer. Trinity state that they will endeavour to be more pro-active in giving guidance and support on assessing students with impairment-related needs in the future.

This process ensures that the students are aware of diversity and the need for differentiation within sessions. They are then able to take this learning back into the classroom and connect it within their own training. At Hammond there are also outreach projects with local disabled dancers, which provide the opportunity to work in an integrated environment for some of their students.

Assessment - examinations and assessments

111

All providers make adjustments for assessments and examinations to support their dyslexic students. As with course adjustments, in some instances this is developed from a policy-led approach, and for others it is part of custom and practice.

112

Most providers are also well versed in supporting students with injuries when it comes to assessments. For example, at Arts Educational School (London) a student lost their voice in a production and so the voice was delivered off stage and in the case of an injury, a student was allowed to deliver a live seminar instead of a performance. One particular student in the Musical Theatre course whose writing is near ineligible is regularly invited to read his work aloud to tutors.

113

At Millennium, if a student has sustained injury and or is recovering from an accident or surgery, there is a sense that those students are assessed against their 'possible attainment'. The schema of individual's possible attainment is built up with the student and adjusted through the training, so tutors and teachers and all those who support the physiology of students are part of this continually.

114

At English National Ballet one student who by virtue of sustained injury was allowed to present two variation dance solos as written, visual dissertations. They also have developed a more flexible and responsive assessment process though holding assessments more frequently during each term rather than all being carried out over a period of 1 or 2 days.

115

Fewer schools are confident in making adjustments for people with other impairments, especially permanent physical conditions. This is partly due to the lack of students who have required this support and also the lack of access to best practice information in this area. There is evidence of ad hoc adaptations with assessments being modified and students who are unable to undertake a specific element being allowed to 'miss out' that element although it is then not uniformly agreed how that affects their final grading.

116

Examples of adjustments for students with impairments effecting their assessments included:

- Arts Educational School (Tring) and Liverpool both have students with a physical impairment who are not being graded on the height of jump within a ballet assessment.
- GSA encourages students to explore individually preferable methods of assessment including video and audio reports linked to their optimum learning styles.

117

At Hammond, a particularly flexible approach to assessment was described, considering the potential of individuals rather than specific movements. For example, they look for 'elevation' or 'turning movements' rather than plies or turnout. The success of this approach was evidenced by an example from the lower school. A girl who has a physical impairment affecting her posture and turn out expected to do poorly due to her impairment but instead scored well due to her talent and hard work. The school however acknowledges that examples of such adaptations are harder to evidence in the upper school, partly due to the need for a degree of rigidity within the Trinity qualifications¹⁵. Equally, English National Ballet's new materials talk of 'honouring a style faithfully' rather than simply repeating a posture or movement.

118

This approach can also be observed at Urdang where a deaf student with additional visual impairment was supported and passed all his assessments with high grades in acting and singing. He has not achieved what might normally be assessed as a high standard in dance but he has been measured on the fact that he can *'show a clear understanding of how movements feel' and rather than simply looking ok, this gives his performances a very watchable quality*.

119

A number of schools commented on the assessment body, Trinity College, as it was felt that much more flexibility was needed from them to illustrate how adjustments may be made in practice and a feeling that they should work to support the D&DA schools to adopt best practice in relation to the support and assessment of disabled students¹⁶.

Student Support - supporting students

120

Support for students may be from a number of parts of the providers services – pastoral, academic, and learner support. During the access reviews, the consultants wished to see how these elements worked together, how the need for confidentiality was managed and what adjustments had been made to support and develop disabled students and those with health concerns.

15 Trinity state that the learning outcomes and assessment objectives in the qualifications specification were designed not to exclude students with disabilities from participating in and achieving the Trinity Professional Qualifications should they reach the required standards. These qualifications are currently being reviewed, and extra care will be taken ensure that any revisions made are appropriate both to retaining the standards required for professional performing careers and supporting access of the qualifications to all who achieve the standard required at entry. The providers have elected representatives who will be actively participating in this revision process.

16 In addition to previous footnotes detailing Trinity College London's commitment to the inclusion of disabled dance students, there is also a section within their providers Handbook on 'Special Needs Provision' and in the final version of this Trinity has stated it will aim to make advice and guidance for the assessment of disabled students more explicit.

121

Disclosure was a major issue. The majority of disabled students within the schools did not disclose at audition, but once they are within the school, and often not until the end of the first or second year. In some cases, students were unaware of their own impairments on arrival at the schools. There is a real need to provide a number of opportunities and supported interventions to enable students to self disclose. Some schools have enshrined this within policy directives, for example, Elmhurst's equal opportunities policy states that if a student has not disclosed a disability prior to starting the course the: *'...opportunities will be provided for him/her to disclose his/her disability status in a confidential manner so that, where possible, any adjustments can be made in a sensitive and discreet manner.'*

122

For students who **do** disclose at application, some schools are providing exemplary support. For example, at Oxford, students who are offered a place and who have disclosed a disability are contacted by the Executive Director in advance of them starting the course in order to discuss any adjustments that need to be made. Recently the college worked closely with a deaf applicant who was offered a D&DA, exploring her access needs, support strategies, DSA and childcare options.

123

Providing options to disclose varied from school to school. Some offer termly 1-1 tutorials for pupils, some only offer this opportunity annually. Other options included:

- weekly tutorial groups, for about 15 students in each (Laine);
- a 'buddy' system for the first years whereby a second year student is assigned to them to help them acclimatise (GSA);

- A student council that meets twice a term (GSA);
- An annual independent appraisal form which is fed back to the course review board (GSA).

124

The induction period, when students first arrive into the schools and find out more about what is expected of them and what support is provided, was seen as key for many of the schools. Providing support here for students can be vital. ALRA bring in a work management consultant to present materials to students and answer questions about managing time and workload.

125

The size and finances available to schools can impact on the range of support that is available, but not necessarily on the quality of support that is offered to each student. For example, at Elmhurst, the school has a learning support team, four on site nurses providing support around the clock, a physiotherapy team, links to local medical staff and medical staff linked to Birmingham Royal Ballet and links to consultants and specialist providing specialised support for conditions such as dyslexia and anorexia. At Laine, the provision is at a smaller scale due to the size of the institution but the support provided still works well.

A physically disabled third year student with restricted use of one of her arms was extremely complementary of the support she had received at Laine, and confident that this was extended into the agency facet of the organisation where she felt it was guaranteed that she would be promoted on her talent and achievement rather than the fact of her impairment.

126

Practice around confidentiality varied, again with some schools having specific policies and others responding by custom and practice. Many schools involved and informed parents without always gaining the permission of the students. Whilst practical for students under 18, there is an issue around confidentiality here for older students, unless the health and safety of the individual or others is compromised. The importance of confidentiality around disability cannot be overstated.

127

Providing students with written information detailing the approach to confidentiality taken by a school is recommended. Cambridge includes a 'Who should I talk to if...' section in the student handbook in which the appropriate communication channels are clearly marked.

128

Confidentiality dilemmas arose most often around mental health related incidents (in particular anorexia, self harming behaviour and depression). A number of schools have specific policies for working with students with eating disorders which could be usefully extended into supporting students with other mental health concerns. In addition, some schools have specific policies around asthma.

129

Many schools have disabled staff members who can use their own experience to support and empathise with students. Some staff are open and disclose their experiences when they feel this might be beneficial (in particular around eating disorders and dyslexia). Others are more reticent about doing this. Providing positive role models for students with concerns is an excellent way of providing support and where models are not found, or open, within the schools, ensuring there is access to outside representatives could be considered.

Arts Educational School (London) has a disabled member of staff who works as the Head of Voice in the acting school who happens to have a plethora of experience in the Disability Arts Sector. She has taken on an additional role of Disability Officer informing and encouraging best practice at all times.

130

All schools were able to evidence instances when students had been supported, either through impairment or injury. Most often these related to dyslexia and eating disorders. In some instances it was possible to see that schools were taking a whole school approach, rather than just providing support to one disabled student. For example, Hammond have recently changed all the strip lights on site to those with filtered bulbs to aid students with visual impairments, produce all signs/notices for all students in large print on coloured paper to aid the inclusion of dyslexic students and have banned aerosols in changing rooms to support asthmatic students.

131

Many schools are also working with the students concerned to create the optimum support package. For example, Arts Educational School (London) have been supporting the inclusion of a student with Aspergers Syndrome through staff led research, skills sharing and liaison with the student himself. The student is now integrating socially in class and staff now meet his particular learning style through clear instructions and summaries. He now is able to function successfully without relying on a support worker. At Urdang, supporting a deaf student with additional visual impairment for 3 years has been a learning curve. The school acknowledge that initially they overcompensated to meet his needs, but have been able to fine tune this support over time to a mutually agreeable outcome.

132

Where students are not on a D&DA award, and therefore not eligible for Disabled Students Allowance (DSA), some schools have been able to provide additional funding for equipment or support. For example, Cambridge is supporting a student with small stature with finance to progress the design of an augmented shoe for ballet and stage. A small number of schools appear unaware of DSA and the support it can provide.

133

The range of students with impairments mentioned at site visits were wide. In addition to those mentioned previously, within the schools there were students with cancer, phobias, Crohn's disease, irritable bowel syndrome, allergies, skin conditions and a range of hearing impairments and sight impairments. There were also a number of students who have gained considerable impairments through accidents and injuries.

134

There were some instances where disabled students within schools felt that there needed to be a deeper understanding amongst staff as to how their impairments affect all areas of their lives. In particular, the way dyslexia and dyspraxia affects a student's ability to learn and illicit meaning. Some felt that their needs in relation to processing information, co-ordination in dance and understanding questions in technical sessions had been misunderstood and felt that they had been unnecessarily berated for something that related to their disability.

Staff support, training and development

135

Most providers have a least one disabled member of staff working with them, although no examples of staff claiming Access to Work support were detailed.

136

There were however a number of examples of how schools are supporting disabled staff members through a range of measures including:

- A member of staff who is losing their hearing is working and learning sign with a deaf student enrolled in the school. It is likely that BSL classes will run at the school in the future to raise awareness (GSA);
- A member of staff with an impairment that creates fatigue has been well supported and encouraged to adjust to her work within her energy levels (Laine);
- One particular member of staff has had their classes adjusted to the ground floor so avoiding the need for stairs (Mountview);
- There has been good practice around the support for a disabled member of staff with diabetes with staff aware of how they can appropriately intervene and support him in an emergency (Tring);
- Taxis were provided and lifts arranged for a staff member who was unable to drive by virtue of their impairment (Bird);
- Staff at Cambridge described feeling very supported by the 'family atmosphere' and in particular one disabled member of staff described work at the school as being the only working environment that has accepted her for her impairment issues allowing her appropriate flexibility and offering her constant encouragement.

137

Practices around disclosure amongst staff vary widely, with many schools not yet duplicating the supportive and open practices they observe for students. Most only use equal opportunities monitoring forms collected at application to report on the number of disabled staff members present, rather than asking staff at intervals if they have any unmet needs or concerns. To support an ongoing dialogue with staff around needs and other issues, Liverpool have one-to-one supervision sessions for staff when they are encouraged to talk openly about their workload and any issues they might have. Increased openness about staff impairment, access needs and solutions is required so that students can see working with diversity illustrated in practice.

138

Staff at all schools describe a variety of processes they used for sharing information about students and their needs, as well as different strategies for supporting them. In some schools the staff have access to support materials, including the D&DA guidance publication in their staff room or staff areas. Just over half the schools were unaware of the D&DA guidance publication. No school mentioned the cascade cd-rom that was provided for furthering Disability Equality understanding through out the schools.

139

Staff training opportunities varied with some schools able to make specific days each year available for curriculum and professional development, much of which touches on equal opportunities issues. Other schools were unable to offer staff training due to the costs involved and the logistics of coordinating part time tutors.

140

Where full staff training was possible, the benefits were keenly felt. Before opening Elmhurst in its new location, the move provided an opportunity for an extensive two month induction process which included disability equality training, child protection issues, the needs and requirements of differentiated learning, race issues, Birmingham specific issues and so on. Staff felt this was extremely useful in providing additional support and development.

141

Most schools offer internal staff development sessions and often equal opportunities were quoted as being core agenda items. Staff handbooks were also cited by a number of schools as highlighting the focus on equality of opportunity to the staff. For example, at Arts Educational School (Tring), their Ofsted reported that a general staff handbook contains comprehensive policies and codes of practice for equality of opportunity, disability and child protection, along with operational procedures.

142

All schools undertook Disability Equality Training after the initial access review. This was viewed as a positive process by most of the schools, although some felt it was less relevant to their disciplines than others. Some schools have committed to ensuring that all staff (new and old) will undertake Disability Equality Training from either an outside source or internally on a regular basis (Oxford). At this school the Disability Equality Plan (DEP) also states that the Executive Director will also ensure that staff have the opportunity to work in partnership with Disability Arts organisations and experts in the field to further develop and extend their learning.

143

At Hammond, specific staff are engaged in delivering the community/outreach elements of the schools programme, and have the opportunity to stretch their knowledge and extend their practice through inclusive practice in this work. Some senior staff are also extending their learning, and in particular, enjoying the elements of study relating to inclusion. Staff at Hammond have visited the Orpheus Centre, and seen CandoCo through school orchestrated trips.

144

A number of schools reported that staff had accessed specific training on supporting individuals with dyslexia and eating disorders.

Physical access

145

A number of schools now present reasonable, good or exemplary access for physically disabled people. In particular, Millennium, Performers College and Elmhurst present real opportunities for involving students with significant physical impairments.

146

Within other schools, a commitment to increasing the level of physical access presented can be demonstrated. Improvements include:

- Installation of an entry phone, highlighting of the edge of steps, provision of handrails and improvements to the main door, creation of an accessible toilet, shower and changing room from the ground floor toilet (Italia Conti);
- Adapted toilet on ground floor, induction loop system in auditorium (Arts Educational School, London);

- Creation of a ramp to the front entrance, a more generously spaced foyer, a number of doors that have been altered to an appropriate width (Liverpool);
- Redesign of the dressing room provision in the studio space, installation of an accessible toilet, purchase of a number of portable ramps (Hammond).
- Creation of accessible toilet facilities on the ground floor, ramped/flat floor access to theatre performance space (ALRA);
- Creation of accessible toilet facilities, and plans to create accessible shower facilities and new lighting tubes with diffusers over summer 06 (Bird);
- Ramp to entrance, increased size of foyer area, air cooling systems and plans for developments including a lift to upper levels (SLP).

147

Some providers have clear action plans in place to improve physical access, with a realistic approach to small and progressive steps (Stella Mann).

148

GSA has recently acquired new accommodation that will eventually house the whole school with full accessibility and accessible accommodation. Urdang aims to complete its move to accessible premises in Finsbury Town Hall by January 2007. Other schools are planning to relocate or gain additional spaces in order to provide better access (Mountview, Arts Educational School (London), English National Ballet, ALRA).

149

As have been mentioned previously, few schools advertise or detail their physical access or lack of it on their website or promotional materials. Within those who do, sometimes the statements about access do not match the facilities present within the schools.

150

Some schools have not yet acted on recommendations to improve access from audits dating back to before 2003. Reasons for these include cost implications and the level of disruption likely to be caused being felt to be prohibitive.

151

Two schools evidence adaptations that have been made that do not conform to recommended specifications. In one case, the provisions have created a health and safety risk.

152

A small number of schools have no current plans to adapt or improve access to their sites. Of particular concern is the lack of provision in some schools for fire evacuation of disabled people and those with injuries.

Quality and monitoring

153

Whilst most schools were undertaking auditing processes, developing policies and improving their practice, a smaller number were engaged in systematically auditing, reviewing and monitoring their progress and making accountable plans for future development.

154

Oxford, for example, has made a commitment to anticipate any changes that need to be made at the School, not just when a disabled student requires it. Within the DEP (page 4) under Anticipating Adjustments, it states that 'the school has undergone an access audit of its site, audition and application processes and promotional material. It has an action plan to improve inclusivity at the school which is reviewed annually as part of its Quality Assurance procedures.'

155

Liverpool includes disability and access within its annual review cycle and Hammond has a three year disability action plan developed initially from a review of physical access but now incorporating all areas of their operation.

156

Equal opportunities policies were in place within all the schools, but these were on the whole static documents not linked to annual targets. Some schools, for example, Mountview mentioned that they review their Equal Opportunities Policy every year, monitoring and evaluating its implementation and Stella Mann gather and analyse statistical information in depth with respect to equal opportunities as part of their quality assurance process.

157

Some schools were currently creating development plans of which inclusion and diversity will be integral elements (for example, Performers College).

158

Other positive examples of assessment or development activity included:

- Forming an equal opportunities committee made up of staff and students, meeting termly (Italia Conti);
- Implementing quality assurance measures in relation to student support from entry through to graduation and beyond (GSA);
- Working with Razor Edge an external disability-specific company to attempt to create a specific HE programme for learning disabled adults (Mountview);
- Proactively contacting disability-specific companies to look for synergy between their activities and the school's and pool resources (Arts Educational School (London));
- Annual anonymous student surveys asking if they have experienced discrimination or harassment (Urdang).

Issues and recommendations

159

A number of issues have arisen from this research and there are also some that remain unresolved from the research that preceded it. These are explored below, and where appropriate, recommendations have been made. The recommendations are for the LSC, as they are the commissioners of this research.

Coming forward

160

The schools can only audition those who apply. All the reasons for the lack of disabled people coming forward for training as stated in the initial report by ADA inc into Disability and the D&DA in 2003 are still valid¹⁷. The numbers of disabled people within the D&DA scheme are not going to be able to reach their optimum levels without a range of initiatives targeting some of these issues.

161

The schools can and need to improve their outreach and marketing approaches, but this will only ever serve to widen the pool of potential applicants by a small degree. A more strategic, multi-agency approach is required if the status quo is to be shifted and the numbers of disabled people represented within performing arts training – including D&DA is to increase dramatically. As was stated in the original report:

'This research, and the recommendations and initiatives arising from it, set out a road map that should enable the D&DA awards to begin to address issues of access and inclusion, not only within the schools, but within

*the industry as a whole. However, it cannot be done alone. The DfES [and now the LSC] needs to ensure that this process is fully integrated with other Government departments and initiatives designed to promote the inclusion of disabled people in society as a whole.'*¹⁸

162

It is therefore recommended that the LSC encourages D&DA schools to work with other providers to ensure a raft of provision for talented disabled individuals. This echoes the recommendation made by CEDAR in their final report that LSC review how to connect the Awards to other government initiatives which support excellence and widening participation in the performing arts so as to create a clearly defined, inclusive and transparent 'talent ladder' and this will be reflected in the criteria for the widening participation specification.

¹⁷ Disabled people are still not encouraged to see the performing arts as a viable option for employment, this can be compounded by pressure from carers and parents, who often have a greater degree of influence over disabled young people than over their non-disabled peers; disabled people still face a lack of opportunity to take part in pre vocational experiences and training options that are open to their non-disabled peers, from formal options such as local ballet classes and drama courses to options such as school performances, youth theatres and so on; the support available for disabled people within the options does not yet outweigh the barriers to disabled people in attending; there is a concern that tutors will have a lack of knowledge about working with disabled people/adapting work; attitudinal barriers; financial barriers /difficulties with benefits.

163

The inclusion of disabled people in all areas of life is a key governmental priority as can be seen by papers and plans like Valuing People (www.valuingpeople.gov.uk), Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People, produced by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit (www.strategy.gov.uk/work_areas/disability) and the inclusion of the Public Duty within the Disability Discrimination Act (www.drc.org.uk/disabilityequalityduty) and therefore this is a necessary step in placing the scheme in context. It is understood that the D&DA scheme does not have the finances to, for example, develop a high profile conference, or a series of smaller but more targeted events designed to gather key stakeholders and search for solutions to some of the bigger questions but it can continue to ensure the discussions are progressed through steering group meetings and presentations at existing conferences, seminars and events as this needs to involve LSC, and DfES personnel, from outside of the D&DA awards to progress forward adequately. These issues can also be addressed as part of the developing widening participation programme.

In or out?**164**

The LSC is clear that its priority has to be developing the providers and their practice, which is understandable given the budgetary restraints of the scheme. Given that there are still a wide range of talented disabled people who could come forward but who would not be able to access training within the schools - for example, students with learning disabilities such as Downs syndrome, students with significant physical access issues and so on – the question remains 'whose responsibility is it to train them?'

165

It is therefore recommended that the LSC continues to use the above process/es to ensure that the question of ownership around the responsibility for high quality training for disabled people in the performing arts is asked.

166

Providers are not yet able to meet the needs of all disabled people. In drama it is conceivable that a situation could be reached when the vast majority of talented disabled people could access conventional training at D&DA providers with additional access support where required. For musical theatre, whilst curriculum requires a high standard of ability in all three disciplines (dance, drama and singing) this situation is less easy to imagine within the next five years. For classical dance, similarly it is problematic to imagine yet a truly inclusive future whilst the assessment processes are rooted in technical accomplishment. The lack of contemporary dance in D&DA means that the largest growth area for disabled dancers is unrepresented.

167

As well as not being able to meet the needs of all disabled people, some providers are not always able to develop fully rounded initiatives to involve and include disabled people, due to their level of previous involvement in this field. They made need support to fully see the potential and opportunities that their projects could have. **To avoid LSC funding access and diversity projects that are not fully formed or developed, or that do not build on best practice, it is recommended that successful projects from 07/08 have access to experienced people to provide support and development.**

168

This could be delivered in a number of ways – providers with bids that the LSC would like to fund from widening participation funds that impact on disability could be gathered together for a ‘development day’ where the bids are developed, stretched and their synergy optimised. Or providers could be supported through the appointment of project mentors from the sector to provide information, support and contacts. The aim would be to encourage providers to deliver the very best projects they could, with the maximum impact for learning within the schools and the maximum reach into the specific communities they wished to target. Suitable individuals should be sourced from disability/diversity related companies and training providers, organisations supporting the empowerment and equality of underrepresented groups, and through nominations from relevant members of the steering group.

Leading the field

169

D&DA has been seen as leader in the field of increasing access to performing arts training through the establishment of the flexible provision options, initially set up to include those for whom training within the current D&DA system was not possible. They have had significant benefits for the companies involved, students and the schools offering D&DA awards (see appendix one). When these were initially established, they were considerably ahead of what might have been considered a ‘reasonable adjustment’ under the Disability Discrimination Act. Although the funding for the D&DA flexible provision programmes in the form they are currently configured ends in summer 2007, other future widening participation projects are to be funded, concentrating on those emerging directly from the D&DA providers themselves. In relation to disability, this will help satisfy the public duty addition to the DDA¹⁹ that demands more favourable treatment for disabled people as opposed to simply the removal of discriminatory barriers to access by publicly accountable authorities. The LSC produced its Disability Equality Scheme on the 4th December 2006 in response to the Public Duty and it is assumed that this will contain its future strategy in relation to the D&DA awards and disabled people.

19 The new Public Duty element of the Disability Discrimination Act demands that publicly accountable bodies:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people;
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the Disability Discrimination Act;
- eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disability;
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people;
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life;
- take steps to meet disabled people’s needs, even if this requires more favourable treatment.

170

It is recommended that the LSC use their D&DA widening participation strategy to support delivery of their Disability Equality Scheme and publicises the considerable steps it has taken to widen access, its successes in this field and disseminate its future approach to inclusion in relation to the D&DA awards and disabled people.

171

This could also include drawing attention to and celebrating the considerable achievements made by the providers of the flexible provision - Graeae, CandoCo and Mind the Gap - and the benefits that these approaches have provided to the students, the companies and most importantly the schools that have been involved.

172

The Public Duty aspect of the DDA rightly places considerable emphasis on consultation with disabled people. **With this in mind, it is recommended that future funding proposals that focus on disability from schools are assessed by a pool including a larger number of disabled people than is currently the case. This can be taken further to ensure all bids are assessed by a wider group more closely representing all the diversity aspects included.**

Employability

173

There is a tension between opening up the training within the schools and the lack of representation of disabled people within the profession for some genres of work, in particular musical theatre and classical dance. These are also areas of the profession that the current flexible provision options do not cover. It is important therefore to undertake action research programmes that demonstrate the potential of work in these areas with disabled performers. This could be delivered through a prioritisation of applications under the forthcoming widening participation programme that progress work in these fields.

174

It is recommended that the LSC prioritise widening participation programmes that look at areas which have not yet been explored through the flexible provision options to date, in particular musical theatre and classical dance.

Support for schools

175

The principle from the initial access review of developing a 'supportive, not punitive, approach to developing the accessibility of the schools' has paid dividends and is still recommended in the most part, with the exception of the small number of schools who do not yet embrace the concept of inclusion.

176

The providers still need support, but also need to use more fully the resources they already have available. The guidance publication, created specifically for schools and available in hard copy and on the web, is underused and answers many of the most frequently asked questions arising from the face to face meetings that occurred as part of the recent review. Some schools believe they never received a copy or information about the resource. All schools were also sent a cd-rom after their Disability Equality Training day, to aid the dissemination of the information provided on the day. Again, this does not appear to be widely used.

177

A specific Disability Equality Training programme was created for the schools and offered free once to each school by DfES. At the end of the programme schools were told that it would remain available, so that they could choose to offer this to new staff, or offer refresher courses to all staff if they wished, although they would have to pay to do so. None have requested it to date.

178

It is recommended that the LSC remind all schools of the resources already available to them, and re-supply materials where they are available. The LSC might also consider making further disability equality training a required step for the schools whose practice is less developed in this regard.

179

The level of practice in some areas is high, but each school is developing its own individual process and there is little sharing between schools. For example, a number of schools have worked with hearing impaired students but there has been no opportunity to discuss the merits of specific techniques and approaches or to share those with schools that have not yet taken this step. A number of schools suggested that Trinity might be well placed to provide examples of best practice, particularly in relation to adaptation for assessment²⁰.

180

It is recommended that LSC continue to create opportunities for all schools to share practice and expertise, peer to peer, around inclusive practice.

This could be done through the existing provider days and undertaking facilitated sessions on specific areas such as 'supporting hearing impaired students', supporting visually impaired students' and so on. This would enable schools with exemplary practice to act as beacons of good practice to others.

181

Some form of resource is required (possibly a web resource) where providers can log supportive adaptations/approaches for the benefit of all. Although LSC do not have the funds to create such a resource, it may be that they can work with Trinity and other partners and include best practice from the above days and also information on provisions that are acceptable in relation to assessment. In the short term, LSC are able to consider publishing any information provided by schools at their site <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/financialhelp/dancedrama/index.cfm>

²⁰ Trinity has stated that it will work towards producing some best practice examples of working with disabled students for inclusion in its final version of its providers Handbook.

Assessment and monitoring of inclusivity

182

LSC is to introduce Equality and Diversity Impact Measures (EDIMs) in 2007/08 for all providers. It is essential to ensure that these monitoring processes are designed to measure quality and not just quantity. Due to the range of factors described earlier, a school may have exemplary practices but few disabled students in a specific cohort through no fault of their own. It is assumed that the measures will include the areas covered within the disability access reviews – ethos, marketing, recruitment, courses and assessment, student support, support for staff, staff training and development, physical access and quality and monitoring.

183

It is recommended that the LSC ensure that the EDIMs measure quality and not only quantity.

Supporting disabled students

184

D&DA does present a way to deliver clearly on some of the priorities established from the initial Disability and the D&DA review that have as yet not been developed. The initial priorities included the need *'to stimulate interest and confidence in disabled people to encourage them to audition'* and *'the need to inspire disabled people to see the performing arts as a potential career and non-disabled people to see the potential of disabled performers'*. None of the schools are currently using testimonials from their disabled students to comment on the support and adaptations they have benefited from, which would be an inspiration to others.

185

It is recommended that the widening participation strategy includes the ability to capture a small number of testimonials from disabled students, which can then be used to publicise the scheme's commitment to access and inclusion.

Widening participation

186

The proposed approach to developing widening participation within the scheme will allow for schools to bid in for work that increases participation in the Dance and Drama Awards Scheme from currently under-represented groups. In particular, this applies to disabled students, students from a black or minority ethnic background and students from low socio-economic backgrounds. In the past, many of the schools have prioritised the latter two categories for initiatives funded by their own access funds.

187

It is recommended that LSC ensures an equitable balance of spend from the widening participation funds across initiatives targeting disabled students, students from a black or minority ethnic background and students from low socio-economic backgrounds.

Progression for providers

188

In relation to their approach and practice in relation to inclusion of disabled people, schools could be described as emerging, established or exemplary. From the access review it is possible to draw up minimum criteria for each category, aiming for:

Exemplary

- Clearly demonstrated ethos embracing inclusivity;
- Accessible, informative and welcoming marketing materials;
- Open and flexible recruitment processes;
- Evidence of flexible approaches to course structure, curriculum development and assessment;
- Evidence of supported disabled students, support evidenced in both practice and policy;
- Evidence of supported disabled staff, support evidenced in both practice and policy;
- Provision of training opportunities, resources and involvement in initiatives to develop inclusive practices;
- A minimum level of physical access for disabled students achieved;
- Clear monitoring processes, including annual assessment of progress and target setting with regard to developing inclusive practices.

189

Once the criteria are established, it becomes possible to locate the providers within that framework. Individual providers could then be encouraged to aim, within a three year period, to move into the category above. Those working at an exemplary level could be used to share their practice in this regard with other schools.

190

It is suggested that the LSC consider the creation of such a set of standards to ensure that all providers are pro-actively working to ensure equality of opportunity for all those who are appropriately talented regardless of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

Appendix 1

The following headlines are from the CEDAR final D&DA evaluation report, highlighting some of the positive features of the initial flexible provision projects:

- Establishment of a number of robust partnership relationships between theatre companies and providers;
- Challenging and changing the normative aesthetic judgements of tutors, students and others to recognise the new aesthetics of inclusive performance;
- Contribution to building up a momentum towards integrated training by raising awareness of disability issues in the sector;
- Unique nature of CandoCo's Foundation Course has brought about new levels of understanding of teaching and learning strategies that are dance specific;
- Increasing number of D&DA tutors who now have some experience of teaching students with a disability;
- Tutors at companies and schools observed different approaches to teaching on which to draw for all their teaching;
- Potential for experience to be taken back into schools;
- Provision of quality technique training experiences of a wider range than those previously available to the students;
- Introduction of episodes of integrated learning which have been enjoyed by both disabled and mainstream students as a basis for further engagement
- Evidence of the value of episodes of integration in supporting the learning of disabled students and expanding mainstream students' understanding of their own training;
- Achievement of accreditation for two of the programmes and for the third, identification of steps towards accreditation.

Notes

