

Disability Activism Bristol

A Bristol Disability Equality Forum, Bristol Museums and Myers-Insole Local Learning Collaboration

Disability Activism in Bristol:
PIONEERS, PROTESTS AND PROGRESS FROM THE 1980S TO NOW

1985
"I needed to be able to make my own coffee or lunch, so my lunch."
Caroline Richardson

1989
"Why do nearly all our calls to assist disabled people and not 'people with disabilities'?"

1990
"I object deeply to the term 'people with disabilities', because it puts the person first and the disability second"
Aun Davis

1991
"These people would be stuck at home"

1993
"It wasn't your impairments that stopped you. It was the way that society was constructed. Buses were inaccessible. You couldn't get into buildings."
Meryl Gaskell

1995
"Disabled Rights Commission issued to raise and extend Disabled People's Act"

2000
"Whether your passion would disability calls, then we group campaigning on them. Get out but love it"

2016
"This display is not just about disabled people, it's by disabled people."

Now
"Overlaid with T-Shirt"

Timeline Milestones:
 - 1985: Disabled People's Act (DPA) introduced
 - 1989: Bristol Disability Equality Forum established
 - 1990: Bristol Disability Equality Forum (BDEF) established
 - 1991: Bristol Disability Equality Forum (BDEF) established
 - 1993: Bristol Disability Equality Forum (BDEF) established
 - 1995: Bristol Disability Equality Forum (BDEF) established
 - 2000: Bristol Disability Equality Forum (BDEF) established
 - 2016: Bristol Disability Equality Forum (BDEF) established
 - Now: Bristol Disability Equality Forum (BDEF) established

Preface

Disability Activism in Bristol: Pioneers, Protests and Progress from the 1980s

This project began as an ambition to record the history of the Disabled People's Movement in Bristol. It became a reality when Bristol Disability Equality Forum (an organisation staffed, run and controlled by Disabled People led by the late Laura Welti) partnered with people's heritage expert, Lori Streich, of Rowan Associates.

The original project was called Forging Our Future and was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund working with Bristol Museums Service.

This learning resource was commissioned by the Forum as part of the Forging Our Future project. It has been co-created by Ruth Myers of Myers-Insole Local Learning CIC and Disability History researcher, Daisy Holder.

It was made possible by the Research Group of Disabled young people (under 25s) and Lori Streich's project co-ordination. An excellent project in any times, it has been all the more amazing by being started just as Coronavirus and the associated lockdowns began.

Thanks to continuing support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project was revisited post-Covid under the expert guidance of Ruth Pickersgill. Ruth Myers of Local Learning and Disability researcher, Daisy Holder were appointed again, this time having the opportunity to pilot the resources in three participating educational institutions; Elmfield School for Deaf Children, City Academy and City of Bristol College.

As part of the process, we worked with filmmaker, David Ellington to co-create films with students and staff from the schools, college and the University of the West of England to accompany some of the learning activities. In this second phase, the project was renamed Disability Activism Bristol.

The resource has been organised so that learning from earlier activities can inform later learning outcomes. The sections appear in a recommended order, but can be arranged or used as standalone activities.

All of the learning activities can be used within and beyond the classroom.

Introduction

Disability Activism Bristol is the second phase of Bristol Disability Equality Forum's Forging Our Future project. It was funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund to tell the story of the Disabled People's Movement in Bristol from the 1980's to 2010.

The first phase

Bristol was a central place for Disability Activism during this period and the Social Model of Disability became widely used here long before it did in many other cities. But this history has not been written before. Forging Our Future was developed to fill this gap.

A group of young Disabled people volunteered with the Forum gathering the stories of Disabled activists who campaigned for equality and independent living and worked to see the Social Model implemented in Bristol's services. To support them in doing this, they had training in research and interviewing skills, and then they interviewed 15 people who had played key roles in the Disabled People's Movement in Bristol.

The activists' stories have been edited to convey the work they did, the struggles they had, and the achievements and successes that have changed attitudes, provision and the built environment in Bristol – and beyond. We have used these stories to inform digital learning activities aimed at secondary school and beyond and for the Disability Activism Bristol: A History website.

The project has been fortunate to also work in partnership with Bristol Culture who have supported the project from the beginning, and developed a display in the 'We Make Bristol' gallery at Bristol's M Shed museum which also tells the story of Disability Activism Bristol.

The second phase

Post Covid, Local Learning were finally able to go into the classroom to properly test out the existing learning materials. In collaboration with Bristol Disability Equality Forum, they could amend and co-create further activities that were meaningful and relevant to young learners.

Students from Elmfield School for Deaf Children, City Academy and City of Bristol College were key to the process, their thoughts and insights invaluable in informing the resource and shaping the final version presented here today.

Filmmaker, David Ellington captured activities in each of the education settings on camera to enhance and support the learning experience, providing a possible approach to the activities. But the films are intended as a tool to support learning and for guidance and a platform for exploring themes. We are sure that other ideas will emerge through using this resource.

University of the West of England students from Architecture, Film and Media Production also supported this project and co-developed the concepts piloted in the schools. Their creativity and interesting ideas have been presented as possible approaches to the activities.

1- Disability Activism Bristol: A History

Activity 1.1



Look at the photo above that is in the M Shed Museum and is an important part of history in Bristol.

- **When do you think this black and white photo was taken?**
- **Do you know where that building is?**
- **Some of the people are holding placards saying 'Equal Access for Everyone' and 'Disabled People Unite for Our Rights'. What do you think is going on?**
- **Ruth Pickersgill, first Director and now Chair of WECIL (West of England Centre for Inclusive Living) was at the event, but she is not in the photo. Why do you think this was?**

The photo was taken in 1989 at the Arnolfini. The people were all Disabled and were part of a group called the Avon Coalition of Disabled People (ACODP). They were protesting against the Arnolfini (which is an art gallery, café and conference space). This was because they were redesigning their café and put in a step that wasn't there before. When ACODP pointed out that this meant wheelchair users could not get in, they said they would put a 'special table' for Disabled people at the front. ACODP were clear that as Disabled people, they didn't want to have a 'special' table on their own - they wanted to be able to choose where to sit and who to sit with like everyone else.

Ruth Pickersgill took the photo and so she's not in it.

This was the first demonstration that we know of by Disabled people in Bristol, and it led to many more campaigns and actions trying to get Disability discrimination laws brought in by the Government, as at the time it was quite legal to discriminate against Disabled people and treat them worse than other people.

This protest and ones like it are part of what we call Disability Activism.

Filmmaking student, Maddy Jeffs and Media Production student, Mabe Chauca Gutierrez from UWE volunteered to create a film introducing themes around Disability and Deaf Activism.

They filmed Ruth Pickersgill in conversation with Mark Williams (who was there at the beginning of Disability Activism in Bristol and can be seen in the Arnolfini picture) and filmmaker, David Ellington (who is on the other side of the camera on this occasion sharing his experiences of being a pupil at Elmfield School for Deaf Children to becoming a filmmaker, actor, circus performer and BSL consultant).

***“When I left university, I became a teacher. At first I was not Disabled then I got an impairment called arthritis which affected my vision and I couldn’t walk well or use my hands. I thought I couldn’t teach any more, because, at that time in the 1970s, teachers used chalk on a blackboard and I couldn’t write or help the children to do their gym activities.*”**

“A few years later, I got a job in a Disabled people’s charity in Bristol and I met a lot of what we call ‘Disability Activists’ in an organisation called the British Council of Disabled People. They explained to me that being Disabled was not negative and was not my problem. They said that the problem was the school’s and that they should have changed to meet my needs. This is called the Social Model of Disability, as it means that society needs to change to be inclusive, so it is not the Disabled person who needs to change to fit in”
(Ruth).

Young Disabled people have interviewed people about their experiences of Disability Activism in Bristol in the 1980s and 90s. Many of the following activities will be drawing on these interviews to learn more about what was achieved at this time and what work still needs to happen.

Activity 1.2

The timeline below shows important events that have taken place in Bristol to further equal opportunities and Disabled People's Rights. It also highlights some events that have taken place elsewhere in this country and across the world to provide a local, national and international context.

Some of the language used to describe these places and events is now considered offensive and does not reflect present day attitudes and beliefs. Historic language and attitudes is further explored in Activity 2.1.

The timeline was created exploring some of the themes raised through testimonies collected for this project, focusing on Disabled People's Activism in the 1980s and 1990s in Bristol.

This is a very reduced version of the timeline, if you want more information about the history of Disability activism, a full version can be found on BDEF's Disability Activism Bristol website. The full URL can be found in the appendix.

- 1. What were people protesting about outside Bristol's Arnolfini in 1989?**
- 2. How many times was the name changed for the Guild of the Brave Poor Things after it was first set up in 1895?**
- 3. What was the World War 2 base for American soldiers later converted into?**
- 4. What was the only sport at the first Stoke Mandeville Games in 1948?**
- 5. What concept did US Deaf actor and performer, Bernard Bragg develop in the 1960s?**
- 6. Introduced in 1970, what did Alf Morris's Act of Parliament force local councils to do with their public buildings?**
- 7. What was called for in 1981 during the United Nation's International Year of Disabled Persons?**
- 8. What did ALLFIE campaign for in 1990?**
- 9. In 1992, which soap opera first introduced a TV character to be played by a Disabled actor?**
- 10. In what year was the 9th attempt made to outlaw discrimination based on disability in the UK?**
- 11. What did the 2010 Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulation aim to improve?**
- 12. City of Bristol recognised British Sign Language as a language in 2000. How many years later did it take the UK Government to do the same?**

See the appendix for answers

Disability Activism Timeline



Bristol Disability Equality Forum History

Bristol Disability Equality Forum was created in 1994 as a way for Bristol City Council to consult Disabled people in the community, with a specific brief to advise them on Disability equality issues and overcoming barriers across all its activities.

The Forum later moved to full independence, and became a charity in 2010.

It recently relaunched as BDEF, you can find out more about their work from their website <https://www.bristoldef.org.uk/>



Mayor Marvin Rees speaking at a BDEF event

Activity 1.3

The timeline shows important events that have taken place in Bristol and beyond to further equal opportunities and Disabled People's Rights. It also highlights important legislation and what has been achieved through Disability activism and campaigning.

Below is a list of events that do not appear on the timeline. The list also includes two events that are yet to happen.

Place the events below in chronological order, from the oldest to the most recent events. Remember two of the events have not happened yet.

1. **The updated Representation of the People Act allows patients in mental hospitals to vote.**
2. **Central government provides Local Authorities with enough funding to make all stations wheelchair accessible.**
3. **Alf Morris becomes the first Minister for Disabled People.**
4. **Protestors chain themselves to buses at Campaign for Accessible Transport in London and are arrested.**
5. **After World War 2, the Poor Law system is abolished and the Welfare State is introduced. This includes a benefits system.**

6. **British Sign Language becomes a GCSE offered in all schools.**
7. **Some Bristol-based Disabled People Organisations contribute to an inquiry by the UN committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities finding evidence of "grave and systematic violations of UK disabled people's human rights".**

When you have completed the activity, you might like to consider the following:

- Were there any dates that you placed before or after they actually occurred?
- Were there dates that surprised you?
- Which events would you most like to find more out about?
- Referring to the two events that have not yet occurred, when do you predict that they will happen and why do you think that they have not yet taken place?
- What do you think is meant by the term Disability Activism? On the Disability Activism Bristol Learning Resource website you will find some ideas shared by other students.

See the appendix for answers

2- What's in a Name?

Ada Vachell (1866-1923).

“Vachell was visionary in choosing to see Disabled people as individuals whose potential was suppressed by poverty and prejudice.” Bristol 2017 – Journey to Justice.



Bristol Museum, 3984/P/1b/1

Ada Vachell was the first person to set up a social centre for Bristol's homeless Disabled children in 1905. This was originally named the 'Guild of the Brave Poor Things'. Ada had an illness called Scarlet Fever when she was a child. Scarlet Fever killed two of her sisters and left her with a lasting hearing and physical impairment.

On a visit to London she came across the first Guild of the Brave Poor Things, an organisation that helped to combat deprivation and isolation amongst D/deaf and Disabled people. They had social events, organised lectures and trained young people in vocational careers.

In the early 1900s, most support for Disabled children came from charities or churches. It was very unusual for a woman to be leading this sort of work, and a Disabled woman doing it was unheard of – so she was what we call a 'pioneer'.

Language often shows us things about the attitudes of a society and gives us an insight into the thoughts and opinions held by people at any given time. We would hope that an institution set up today would not name itself the Guild of the Brave Poor Things.

The following activity explores what her choice of language shows us about attitudes to Disabled people at the time, and helps us to understand why this name is no longer acceptable.

Activity 2.1

1. List 5 things that are nearby to you at this moment.

It is likely that those things are all inanimate objects. They are not alive. They do not have feelings. They do not breathe. They are not human beings.

2. What do you associate with the word 'things'? What do you think is revealed about early 20th century attitudes if these children are described as 'things'?

3. Looking at the word 'poor' – what does this word mean to you?

Poor has a number of different meanings:

- It can refer to poverty - having very little money, not enough to live on, to buy food or clothes.
- It can be used to show pity, to suggest that you should feel sorry for them. This might look as though they are being seen as victims who rely on other people's help.
- It might mean the opposite to good. If something is of poor quality it is considered not to be perfect, flawed, of a low standard.
- It might also be about health. Being poorly means being ill, not being very well.

4. What is your interpretation of 'poor' in this context? Why do you think that the Guild of the Brave Poor Things first chose to change their name?

In the appendix you will find contributions to a discussion around the interpretation of the word 'poor' with students from Elmfield school for Deaf Children.

The Guild of the Brave Poor Things changed its name to The Guild of the Handicapped in 1918. This is still a word that we no longer use to describe Disabled people, as people link it with going 'cap in hand' or begging.

Disabled people now call the old fashioned language and thinking we have been looking at with the 'brave poor things', the Medical or Charitable Model of Disability. This means thinking Disabled people have something 'wrong' and should be pitied or looked after by charities. Now we talk about Disabled people just being different, but having equal rights and not being any less than non disabled people.

“Many Disabled people believe that they are not disabled because of their health condition or impairment, but because the world is not organised in a way that allows them to access things. For example, I am not disabled because my legs don't work properly, I have been disabled because this shop doesn't have a ramp for my wheelchair. If everywhere had a ramp, I would not be disabled because I would be able to do anything I wanted”
(Daisy).

Activity 2.2

"I worked with a Deaf person who used British Sign Language (BSL) and she said to me, 'I don't have a communication problem - I use BSL. You have a communication problem as you don't understand it'" (Ruth).

"So for me, being the only [Deaf] child in a hearing family, there were a number of times growing up that I felt left out, that I didn't know what was going on, that I was missing out on important information" (Hilary).

The Social Model of Disability: In the 1970s, an organisation called Disabled People International decided to use the term 'Disabled People' instead of the negative terms that had been used before. They said that was because they felt proud to be Disabled as it is part of their identity (like being a woman or a man) and were explaining that they are Disabled by society e.g. lack of access to buildings and the environment, lack of accessible information, (Braille, Easy Read) and other people's negative attitudes. This thinking is called the Social Model.

"The social model is a completely transformative mechanism. I genuinely think it's saved lives over the years" (Liz).

You might have noticed that a capital D has been used for Disabled in the paragraph above and elsewhere in this learning resource. Why do you think this is?

What do you think is the significance of Deaf with a capital D for members of the Deaf community?

We worked with children from Elmfield School for Deaf Children to create visual poems about their sign names and identity. They used movement and theatre, British Sign Language and spoken word in their poetry.

This form of physical poetry is called Visual Vernacular and has its roots in Deaf culture. The name, Visual Vernacular was first used in the 1960s by Bernard Bragg, a Deaf American performer.

Filmmaker, David Ellington captured the children's thinking and filmed them working in groups, composing their Visual Vernacular poetry together.

Creating your own Visual Vernacular poetry

David shared a little bit about his own sign name in the film. But you do not have to have a sign name to do this activity. This activity is around identity and whatever name you choose to explore – this could be a sign name, a nickname or your birth name.

1. Watch the “What’s in a Name?” film on the learning resource website. Then, discuss in pairs the following ideas:

- something you remembered or found interesting about what David was saying about his own name
- something you remembered or liked about how David created his own Visual Vernacular poem about his name

2. In pairs, find out about your partner’s name.

Take it in turns to ask each other about your names. Below are a few prompts to help you.

It may be that one of the answers is so interesting that you just focus on that one area. You don’t have to ask or answer all of the questions. And of course, you can ask other questions that are not listed below. These are just some suggestions.

- What is their full name?
- Do they have any other names?
- What name are they most happy to discuss? This can include sign names.
- Do they know why their name was chosen and what it means?
- Is their name shared with anyone else? Another family member or someone famous?
- If they have a sign name, how did they come by that name?
- Do they have any nicknames? And why do they have these nicknames?
- Are there any rhymes with their name (including sign rhymes)?
- How do they feel about their name?
- Are there any stories around their name?

3. Go round the class and share something that you learned about your partner’s name with the rest of the class.

Ruth Myers and Daisy Holder were with David at Elmfield. They shared some thoughts about their own names:

Daisy – her sign name is the sign for a clown. This might be to do with the colourful clothes she wears, but she also thinks it is to do with her having big feet, like a clown!

Ruth – ‘Ruth’ means friend in Hebrew. Her initials are REM which is also short for ‘rapid eye movement’ which happens when you are asleep and dreaming.

4. In pairs, discuss how you might create a Visual Vernacular poem about their names.

For Daisy, you might want to think about how you would show that it is about circus first of all. You might pretend to be a clown getting ready to go on stage and transforming yourself into a character who entertains audiences and makes them laugh.

For Ruth, you might think about how you would show friendship or you might prefer to focus on her initials and explore ideas around dreaming. Or even combine the two.

5. In pairs or small groups, create your own Visual Vernacular poetry around your own names.

Remember you can decide what you choose to include about your name. It is up to you how you want to present your ideas and what you want to share with the rest of the class.



David Ellington at Elmfield School

There has been a Deaf Centre in Bristol since 1884 that was set up by the Christian Mission. In 1912, it was based in a building in King Square in St Pauls. You can still make out the original name in the ghost sign on the building. “Bristol Institute for the Deaf and Dumb” uses an offensive word that would not be used today. But this is not the only name change that has taken place.

In 1962, it crossed over the square to a new building and was called the Centre for the Deaf. Now the organisation is called CfD – the Centre for Deaf and Hard of Hearing People.

What difference do you think it makes referring to ‘Deaf and Hard of Hearing People’ rather than just ‘the Deaf’?

3- Access

"In Bristol. The Arts centre [...] had everything on the ground floor and they had an accessible cafe, which is on the wheelchair access on the ground floor. [They] spent something like £400,000, which was a lot of money at that time to raise the cafe up off the ground and made it completely inaccessible. So we had a big demo outside and got the local TV and radio interested in this kind of thing. It was the first time that Disabled people were being publicly angry" (Ian).

Since these events in the late 1980s, the Arnolfini has improved access. However there is still room for improvement.

Access for any café goes beyond the entrance...



Ruth Pickersgill's photo of a protest at the Arnolfini

Look at the image (on the next page) of possible barriers in cafés.

Lots of light to see, but darker areas that aren't so bright as well

Pillars in the way of the walkway

Wide front door to allow access

Counter too high for seated people or those with short stature

Decor is simple and not too distracting or overwhelming

Step, with no contrast tape to help see it

Floors, walls, counters and chairs are all similar colours so hard to tell apart

Chairs can be moved out of the way



Level floors from the door across the seating area

Not enough space to move between the tables

Different types of seats to choose from

High ceilings can mean echoing, making it hard to hear

Activity 3.1

How accessible do you think this café below is?

Identify what makes it accessible and any potential barriers.



Disability Activism in Bristol: Pioneers, Protests and Progress from the 1980s

Activity 3.2

"I was one of the founding trustees of the Vassall Centre, so I was in it from day one. The purpose of the project was to provide office space for charities within that building. I am a wheelchair user, so I give the example of a wheelchair user, I needed to be able to get through all the doors. I need to be able to get to not only my desk, but anybody else's desk in the office. I didn't want to have to say, 'Please could someone come over and speak to me?' If I need to speak to them, I want to be able to go and speak to them at their desk. I needed to get at the filing. I needed to be able to make my own coffee or heat up my lunch, open and close the building at night"
(Gordon).



Drawing by UWE Masters Architecture Students following discussion with pupils from City Academy

Carry out an audit around the classroom using the survey questions:

- Is there a level entrance into the classroom? If there are steps, is there also a ramp?
- Wheelchairs can be different sizes. How wide are the doorways?
- Is there an automatic door to get into the classroom? If not, how easy is it for someone in a wheelchair to open the door and keep it open?
- Does the door have a 'push pad' and, if it does, what height is it? Is there anything stopping a large wheelchair getting close enough to use the push pad?
- Are instructions displayed all in plain English and clear fonts and colours?
- Is there a big enough space under desks or tables for wheelchair users to get their knees under? Are the plug sockets at an accessible height for everyone to be able to reach?
- Are the tables spaced well enough so that everyone can easily get around?
- Is the whiteboard accessible to visually impaired people?
- Are there enough lights to light the whole room so everything is easy to see?
- Are the lights flickering in a way that would be a problem for anyone who was sensitive to flashing lights?
- If there are tannoy announcements, is the information also presented visually so that D/deaf and hard of hearing people can also know what is going on?

In groups, discuss the situations below.

- a) **Imagine that there will be a new teacher starting next term. The teacher is Deaf and their first language is British Sign Language (BSL).**
- What barriers to access do you think there might be at the moment for that teacher? Consider both in the classroom and staffroom.
 - How could the school make sure that the new teacher could work independently and not have to rely on other people?
- b) **Imagine that there will soon be a new student in your tutor group who is visually impaired.**
- What do you think the school would need to do to meet their access needs?
 - How could the new student be made to feel welcome and an equally valued member of the school community?

What solutions can you think of to address any of the barriers you have identified?

See the appendix for responses from City Academy students.



Children sat in a classroom in Ashton Vale Primary School in the 1950s, Bristol Archives, 40826/SCH/1/6



Nicholas Spurling, courtesy St. Alban's Review

4- Making an Entrance

Activity 4.1

“The thing about M Shed, there was two parts to it. One was the physical accessibility, they wanted the building to be user-friendly for everybody, but they also wanted the stories that M Shed tells to be the stories of everybody...and so my role was specifically around Disability, but not specifically around sight loss, it was about making a museum that included and worked for Disabled people in total” (Paul).

“Inclusive design principles say that you should include everybody and think about everybody from the start” (Paul).

Underline what you think are the most important parts of the quotes above.

Before any new building work takes place, there needs to be a design for builders to follow. This is similar to the instructions that come with a LegoTM model. These instructions help to make sure that the building meets the needs thought of by the designer or architect.

But how does the architect know what those needs are?

If a new building is going to be used by the general public, a range of people will be asked to come together to share their thoughts and ideas about what this new building might be like. The most important people to involve in what is called the ‘consultation process’ are those that will be actually using the new building.

The first part of the consultation process addresses what kind of activities young people would like at the proposed youth club.

List activities you would like to have at a youth club – to be fun and engaging for young people.

You might want to consider

- activities needing specialised equipment or spaces, such as for cookery or playing pool
- activities for both indoor and outdoor spaces
- activities that might not be so easy to do at home, such as playing basketball

This activity was piloted with Year 10 students from City Academy, Bristol working alongside Masters Architecture students from the University of the West of England.

How would you make sure that your youth club was fully accessible?

You can refer back to the previous access activities and you might also find the list below useful.

Have you considered...?

- How people will get upstairs if your youth centre is on more than one floor
- Any pavements people need to use to get from the parking spaces to the youth club have dropped kerb[s]
- Level access or a ramp to the entrance of the building
- Ramp and steps - tactile paving at the top of the steps to let visually impaired people know they have got to the top, and that there may be 'cross traffic' from the ramp
- Solid handrails (not rope ones) on all steps, stairs and/or ramps that strongly contrast with the steps/ramp
- Automatic entrance door[s] that is/are able to accommodate a large electric wheelchair (minimum 75cm wide)
- If the doors can't be automatic (for 'Listed Building' reasons perhaps) – put a wheelchair -height button outside to alert reception that a wheelchair user needs the door to be opened for them
- Clear, contrasting signage in the entrance lobby clearly showing people what is where in the building
- Clear, contrasting signage outside each room/dedicated space (e.g. gym) with text also provided in Braille
- Is there a quiet space for anyone who feels overwhelmed?
- Is all the IT equipment accessible to any visually impaired young people?
- Is there a sensory room?
- Are the acoustics good everywhere or are there spaces where it is difficult to hear people?

For more ideas on Youth Club activities provided by City Academy students, see the appendix

Design your accessible youth club. Draw a floor plan with annotations to clearly indicate how your design decisions are accessible.

For more ideas on floor plans provided by City Academy students, see the appendix.

After the students designed their accessible youth clubs, they shared their plans with members of WECIL's (West of England's Centre for Inclusive Living) Access and Inclusion Team (WAIT). These conversations were filmed by David Ellington.

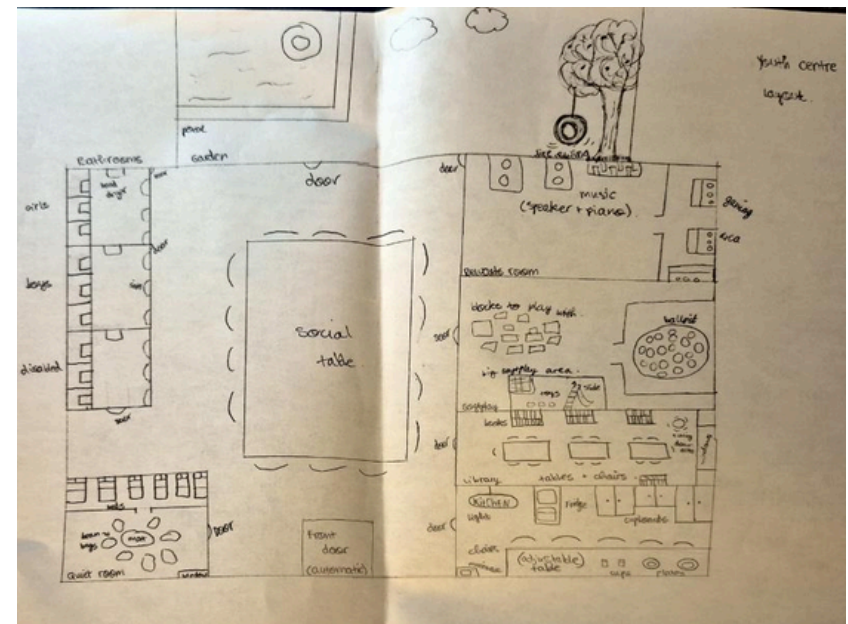
The consultation with the WAIT team was a valuable exercise. Everybody could see the importance of sharing ideas to gather different perspectives and improve upon designs with ideas that might not have been already considered.

Below are some comments shared by the WAIT team about accessible design.

- “The contrast between the colour of the floors and the walls is very important for visually impaired individuals.”
- “You also need to think about cupboard heights in the kitchen for wheelchair users.”
- “Audio Accessible WCs are great for guiding individuals with visual impairment.”

You might also like to give some thought to some wider access issues for the youth club.

- Where would the youth club be? Would it be in a place that is easy for everyone to get to?
- How would you ensure safe arrival and departure at night time?
- Is it near a bus stop? Or perhaps you would provide a minibus to take people home at the end of the session?
- Would the youth club be free to use? If there was a charge for any of the activities, do you think that would make it difficult for some young people to come along?
- Would there be a variety of food options to suit religious preferences? Would there be vegetarian and vegan options?



Student design for an accessible youth club

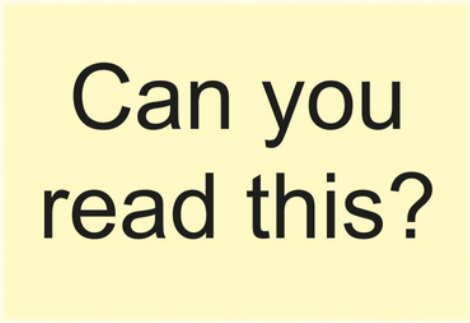
Activity 4.2

“Their corporate identity, they picked a font that’s completely inaccessible” (Laura).

After designing a youth club, the next stage is to get the word out. It is important to choose a font and colour scheme that is both eye catching but also easy to read.

For any poster or other publicity, it is important to consider inclusive design to make sure everyone feels that it is aimed at them too, such as using fonts and colours that everyone can see. Certain colour contrasts or fonts don’t work for people with visual impairments or dyslexia and certain colours don’t work together for people who are colour-blind.

Which of the two text boxes (below) do you think has enough colour contrast between the text and background?



Can you read this?



Can you read this?

Score the following fonts for readability with 1 being hardest to read and 5 being easiest to read.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| a) Century Gothic: | Score this font for readability from 1 to 5. |
| b) Brush script MT: | <i>Score this font for readability from 1 to 5.</i> |
| c) Times New Roman: | Score this font for readability from 1 to 5. |
| d) Comic Sans: | Score this font for readability from 1 to 5. |
| e) Bauhaus 93: | Score this font for readability from 1 to 5. |

It’s hard to see the letters when they blend into a background image. Some fonts may seem okay at first, but some different letters look the same, for example: l, I, 1. (The lower case letter L, a capital letter i and the number one)

For some people with visual impairments or migraines, bright colours together are dazzling and can be painful to read.

Some people find fonts with characters that are mirrored such as d b, q p confusing. Some people find ‘serif’ fonts with decorative “feet” harder to read, but others find they help distinguish between different letters, allowing them to read quicker.

So while there are lots of ways to make text more accessible, it is also worth remembering that sometimes, fonts that are good for one person may be bad for another.

If you were being asked what was needed to ensure that a poster promoting the youth club was fully accessible, what advice would you give?

Activity 4.3

It is not just about accessibility. It is also important that the font you choose is appropriate for your target audience and purpose.

For example, writing in a fancy decorative font may not be the best choice for a notice on what to do in the event of a fire, or a newspaper article addressing serious issues.

In the image to the right, can you match up the fonts on the left with the most appropriate uses on the right?

See the appendix for answers

[applause]

Fire safety notice

Once upon a time

Newspaper
headline

WARNING

Party invitation

Happy Birthday!

Subtitles

BREAKING NEWS

Formal email

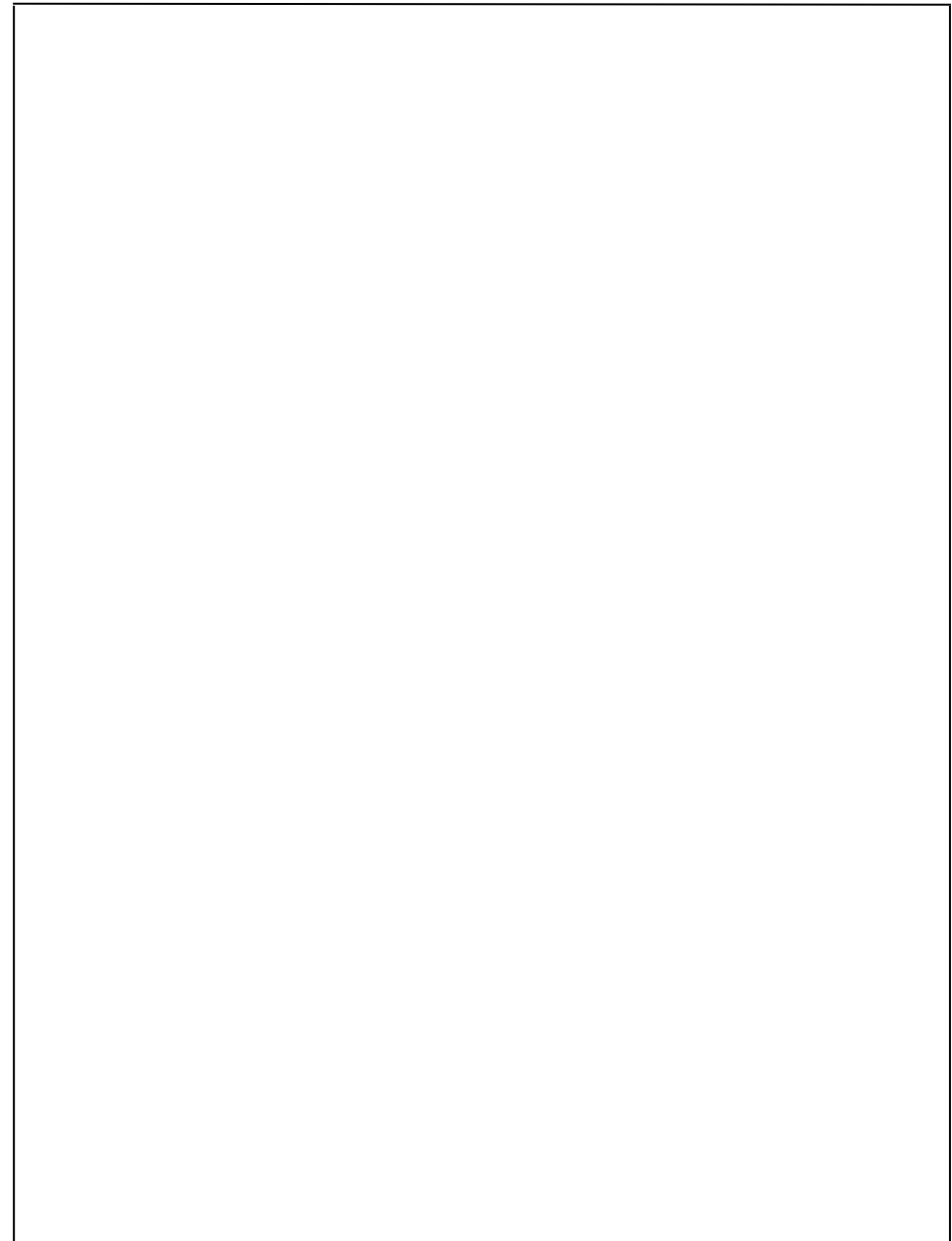
Dear Sir/Madam

Children's book

What kind of information do you need on your youth club poster?

- What ages is it for?
- What kind of activities will people be able to do there?
- Where is the youth club?
- When is it open?
- How could you word it so that people feel welcome?
- How will you ensure people know that it is open for everybody?
- Will you use questions directly addressing the audience? Perhaps in the second person. E.g. Do you sometimes wish there was more to do for your age group in your area?
- What pictures might you include to encourage people to come to the youth club?
- What colours will you use? How will you make sure there is a good contrast?
- Where will you place the images that you choose? Where will they appear in relation to the text?
- **How would you make sure that any young person seeing the poster would feel that this youth club is for them? That regardless of disability, gender, race, class, sexuality all young people would feel that they are welcome at this youth club?**

Design an accessible poster to promote your youth club, ensuring that it is engaging and clear.



5- Transport for All

Activity 5.1

“If you’ve got public transport and a whole sector in society can’t use it, it’s not public” (Liz).

“But now it’s all physically accessible, it’s the much harder stuff, how do you make people behave properly to provide the staff support [needed] to make sure the other passengers don’t impede access, and we’ve had noticeable problems over wheelchair space on buses, and that actually resulted in a court case that went to the House of Lords” (Will).

“We just said that transport was inaccessible and self-defining. You say you need it, you need it. I’m not going to query. And who’s to say, I mean I’ve had this argument quite a few times, who’s to say that somebody says ‘Well, I’ve got a hip replacement and I can’t do this, that and the other.’ Well, some people with hip replacements are running marathons. I mean there’s no rhyme or reason to it, but it’s just sort of a hangover from the old days when Disabled people were classed as sort of medical conditions rather than people” (Meryl).

What are your thoughts about the comments above? Do you agree with everything Liz, Will, Gordon and Meryl say?

Working with students from City of Bristol College and Masters Architecture students from the University of the West of England, we assessed and mapped accessible travel across the city.

Filmmaker, David Ellington captured the journey we took together on foot and by bus from the College Green campus to the Ashley Down site.

Watch the transport film and identify three issues that the students encountered on their journey.

How do you travel to school? Do you walk or cycle? Do you get the bus or a train? Or perhaps you arrive by car?

In pairs, describe your journey to school this morning.

However you travel, whether on foot or on wheels do you think the route is a smooth one for everyone?

- Are the pavements always level and free of obstacles, like wheelie bins or cars parked on the kerb?
- Does the pavement drop down at road crossings? And are there raised bumps to indicate to visually impaired people where it is safe to cross?
- Is there an accessible seat at the bus stop?
- Have roadworks meant that the bus stop has been moved to a less accessible place?
- Is there a ramp easily accessible for creating level access on to the train?
- Is there a safe place to park within easy distance of the school?
- Are the bus timetables lit up at nighttime?
- Does your bus pass allow you to travel before 9am?

See the appendix for issues City of Bristol College students identified on their journey.

Carry out an access audit of your route to and from school. Add any issues not already there to the list of considerations above.

“I’m the BDEF representative on the Bristol Walking Alliance, so that they understand the particular needs of wheelchair users, the pedestrianised parts of any scheme. So the pavements, the crossings, the traffic lights...” (Gordon).

Activity 5.2

Look at the map of the area around College Green.

- What do you notice first?
- Find City of Bristol College on the map. What is the symbol used to represent an educational institution?
- Count all of the bus stops represented by the blue symbol on the right.
- Which is the closest bus stop to City of Bristol College?
- Make a list of all the things represented on the map. Include different types of roads and think about what the different colours might represent.

You already have:

- Educational institutions
- Bus stops



Next to each item on your list, draw the symbol used to represent that feature.

This written list of features with the symbols next to it is called a 'legend'.

It is difficult to tell from looking at the map alone how accessible the areas are.

What do you think the road signs below mean?



There are a number of things that help us to understand what these signs mean.

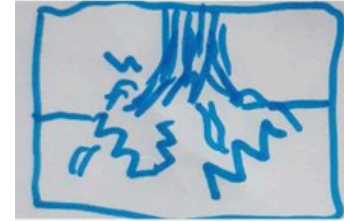
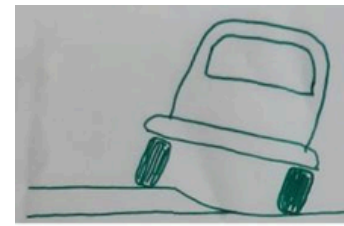
How is shape and colour used to help convey the message?

See appendix for the answers.

City of Bristol students designed their own symbols to represent some of the issues they had encountered on their journey.

Match up the students' symbols with the meanings below.

Note that the map of Bristol City Centre does not show any of these barriers.

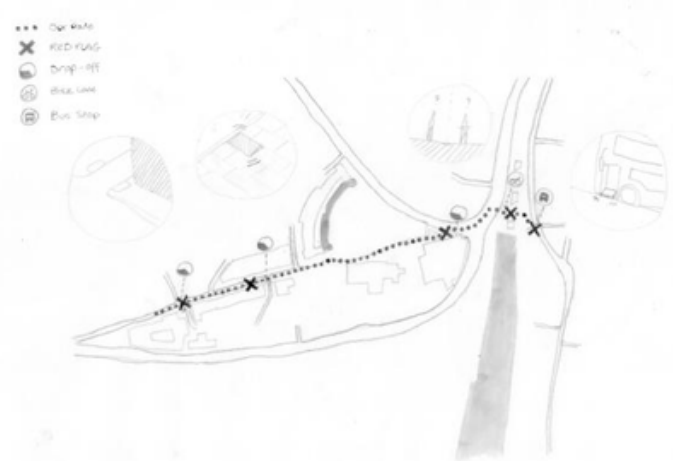
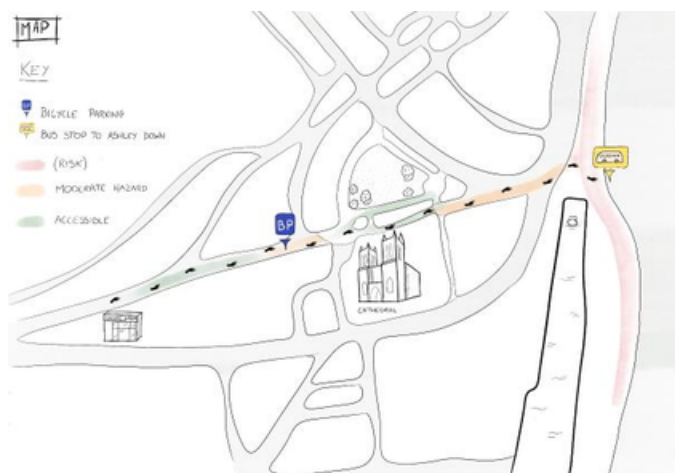


1. Noisy area
2. Trip hazard (such as tree roots)
3. Uneven paths (such as cobble stones)
4. Uneven surfaces
5. Cars parked on drop down kerbs
6. Reckless bikes

Think again about your own journey to school.

How might you represent some of the hazards, barriers and obstacles on a map? Also how would you show the most accessible parts of the route?

See examples created by City of Bristol College students working with UWE Masters Architecture students below. The groups focused on different barriers and hazards encountered along the route.



Share your findings with the rest of your class and consider together how you could address any barriers, hazards, threats arising from this exercise.

Now map what an ideal route to school would look like.

Consider what you would put instead of any of the barriers and hazards that you had identified on your first map. Remember to keep all the positive parts of the journey.

Some thoughts from City of Bristol College students were:

"The bus timetables should have bigger numbers and the destination names written."

"Maybe there should be a different colour for the pedestrian spaces, like blue for example."

Activity 5.3

"I booked a taxi to collect myself and my PA from the garage to return home. It needed to fit my wheelchair and me sat in it. A taxi turned up my PA asked if it was for Mr Williams. It would not fit a wheelchair in. The taxi driver phoned his boss who said no problem I'll send out another taxi to fit a wheelchair in. It will now cost £40 not the original £20" (Mark).

"In 1985, a survey revealed that Disabled people embarked on 1/3 fewer journeys than non-disabled people" (Will).

The students from City of Bristol College and UWE Architecture created a board game to promote awareness of travel access based on their own discoveries when moving across the city.

If you were designing a board game which will help players learn about travel access and Disability equality, what kind of information could you include?

- **What are your favourite board games?**
- **List the different ways of winning in board games.**
- **What are the features of your favourite board games? Is there an element of chance? Does it involve throwing a dice? Are there question cards? Are there things to collect? What skills are required? Do you need to be good at drawing? Do you need to work things out? Do you need to be quick-thinking? Does it involve working together as a team? Is it very competitive?**
- **What board games have you played where you can learn information whilst playing?**

You might like to revisit some of the activities in this section of the resource for inspiration, to gather more ideas about possible content that you could include in your board game.

City of Bristol College students suggested having a double sided board with daytime and nighttime on either side to explore accessibility issues when travelling in the dark.

Design your own board game, make sure it is fun and engaging whilst also helping players to gain greater awareness of the issues that have been explored in this section. Consider how to make it accessible eg to visually impaired people.

6- Representation

Many Disabled adults report how hard it was growing up as a Disabled child, when they never saw anyone who looked like them on the television, in school books or as professionals they met. We talk about representation as making sure that all parts of society are represented in the media, different roles etc. For example, if Parliament was representative of Disabled people in the numbers they exist in society, there would be 100 Disabled MPs, but there are less than 10.

Representation is also making sure the voices of all groups are heard and acted on.

"... 'Hang on, no, you're not part of a separate world' ...he was non-Disabled, but he just was tuned into that way of thinking, steeped in both race and gender equality, and rightfully put me right on where my thinking should be" (Will).

"The reality is that our message isn't the one that dominates; our interpretation of Disability is very minority, it isn't embedded in society [...] They don't understand that I'm actually saying 'this is the powerful identity and expression of this whole movement' " (LC).

For the original Forging Our Future project David Constantine took individual photographs of the Disability Activists who had shared their stories to create this image. Each person discussed with David how they were going to be represented. This included not just their physical appearance, but also their surroundings and where they were going to be photographed. Often these places had a personal connection or meaningful significance to the project.

Activity 6.1

What do you feel is the most powerful image in this resource? What message do you think it sends out?

Can you think of any examples in your school curriculum of where you have learnt about Disability equality or Disabled people's history? If there are not many why do you think this might be?

“There was no Disabled person in public life. No David Blunkett, for an experience, or Frank Gardner presenting on the news from a wheelchair, no Tanni Gray-Thompson, none of that. I remember seeing when I was probably 10 or 11, the film Reach for the Sky, about Douglas Barder, the pilot who in a crash before he lost his legs, but he came back to being a very successful pilot in the Second World War. I was just blown away by that film, because the first time I'd ever seen a positive image of a Disabled person” (Will).

Can you think of any Disabled MPs or politicians, sports people or musicians?

You can find some examples in the appendix

Activity 6.2

This activity involves watching two videos of Children In Need which can be found on the learning resource website. Once you have watched them, answer the questions below.

Transcripts can be found in the appendix.

In the 1993 video:

- **Who is interviewed?**
- **Who made the design decisions about the sensory garden?**
- **How much do the young Disabled people get to speak? Are they introduced?**
- **How much of the young people's thoughts, opinions, insights, feelings are shared?**
- **To what extent do you think someone else speaks for the young Disabled people?**



In the 2018 video:

- **Who is interviewed?**
- **At what point do we learn his name?**
- **How much does Luke get to speak?**
- **How much of Luke's thoughts, opinions, insights, feelings are shared?**
- **Why is it easier to identify with people when they are speaking for themselves?**



In the 1990s and 2000s, Disabled People's Organisations protested against Children in Need and other charity fundraising activities.

"They decided to lock arms and block Whiteladies Road and put up banners challenging the very stereotypical approach that Children in Need had towards Disabled people"(David).

"People were very aggressively hostile to us, because they didn't like that helping-Disabled-people attitude being challenged" (Alun).

"I got punched in the face and told not to be such an ungrateful b..." (Alun).

- **Why do you think they were demonstrating against Children in Need?**
- **What attitudes towards Disabled people were they objecting to?**
- **Why do you think there was some anger towards the Disabled people demonstrating?**

"I hope that somehow teacher education and others involved in working with Disabled young people and people who require Disability knowledge, the message gets through that your role is to help that person find out what their potential is and push them to fulfil it, not to make judgements of them, not to let them sit back, and certainly not to make assumptions about what they can't do" (Will).

Activity 6.3

"And basically it's power isn't it? It's about the power relationships. And the fact that Disabled people were saying, "We want to speak for ourselves. We want to represent ourselves. We want to make our own decisions. And your job is to help us do that" (Penny).

- **How can you help make what Penny wants happen?**
- **Who needs to be involved in the discussion?**
- **What are the questions you need to ask?**

Reread the quotes in Section 6. Underline any words or phrases that you think are important messages.

In order to get the key messages about Disability equality across to the public, Disabled people's groups like Rights Now and Avon Coalition of Disabled People created a number of slogans that were on t-shirts, placards etc. 'Piss on Pity' showed the anger that Disabled people felt about the patronising way they felt they were shown in charity fundraising, which often showed them as people who were helpless and needed charity and could not do things for themselves. Other slogans often used were 'Rights Not Charity', 'Choices and Rights', 'Nothing About Us Without Us' and 'Disability Rights are Human Rights'.

Design your own t-shirt using one of these phrases to help promote Disability awareness.

7- Inclusion

“Start from the beginning, and actually look at what inclusion is, and what an inclusive school is, and how we can get our schools to move to that point” (Ruth).

“School taught me to pretend not to be blind” (Ian).

“We were trying to say, we’ll take the expertise, and the learning and the good practice from special schools, but put them into mainstream settings. So the children have a lot more chances to be included and integrated, and meet with their peers. And have a much wider academic opportunity as well” (Ruth).

Activity 7.1

**What is inclusion? How can we be more inclusive?
What does an inclusive school look like?**

“WECIL has been really clear that it comes from a social model of Disability...So I think it does still work from the social model. So what it’s trying to do all the time is to say, ‘Well Disabled people aren’t the problem. The problem is society’” (Gordon).

“It’s actually not anyone’s problem, but it’s also not a favour to ask. It’s actually a right” (Ruth).

“And what we’re trying to do is get rid of all the barriers that stop Disabled people doing what everybody else in society is able to do” (Ruth).

We have talked about physical barriers in terms of access, but what other barriers are there in our society that stop Disabled people doing what everybody else in society is able to do?

Disabled people say that inclusion and integration are different.

Integration is where children with a range of so called Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are in a mainstream school, but the school doesn’t necessarily change to give them the right support and to meet their needs.

Inclusion is where all pupils in a school - Disabled and non-disabled - are able to take part in all activities and to learn together with the right support.

Can you think of ways in which your school could be more inclusive for Disabled pupils and staff, parents and carers?

8- Evaluation

After working with students and staff from Elmfield School for Deaf Children, City Academy and City of Bristol College we asked them to share their thoughts and ideas to help us improve our own practice, and shape future activities.

Think about your own responses to the questions in the evaluation form. You might like to do this as an individual or in small groups or perhaps part of a whole class discussion.

You can find some of the responses from the students who have helped shape this learning resource on the learning resource website.

Thank you for taking part in this project.

We would really appreciate you sharing your thoughts and ideas to help us to improve our own practice, and to shape future activities.

Your first name	Date
What did you most enjoy about this activity?	
Please tell us something that surprised you about this project.	
What would you tell someone about this project?	
What would you like this project to achieve?	
How have these activities changed your thinking?	
How would you like this project to change other people's thinking?	

This is a Bristol Disability Equality Forum project funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund.



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Appendix

Activity 1.2 Answers

1. What were people protesting about outside Bristol's Arnolfini in 1989? **Because the redesigned café was no longer accessible**
2. How many times was the name changed for the Guild of the Brave Poor Things after it was first set up in 1895? **Once more.**
3. What was the World War 2 base for American soldiers later converted into? **The Vassall Centre – 'earliest barrier free workplace in the UK'.**
4. What was the only sport at the first Stoke Mandeville Games in 1948? **Archery.**
5. What concept did US Deaf actor and performer, Bernard Bragg develop in the 1960s? **Visual Vernacular.**
6. Introduced in 1970, what did Alf Morris's Act of Parliament force local councils to do with their public buildings? **Make them accessible.**
7. What was called for in 1981 during the United Nation's International Year of Disabled Persons? **A plan of action for disabled people, with theme of 'full participation and equality'.**
8. What did ALLFIE campaign for in 1990? **The rights of**
9. **disabled learners to be included and supported in**
10. **mainstream education.**
11. In 1992, which soap opera first introduced a TV character to be played by a Disabled actor? **Eldorado.**

13. In what year was the 9th attempt made to outlaw discrimination based on disability in the UK? **1994.**
14. What did the 2010 Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulation aim to improve? **Accessibility on trains.**
15. City of Bristol recognised British Sign Language as a language in 2000. How many years did it take the UK Government to do the same? **3 years.**

Activity 1.3 Answers

1. After World War 2, the Poor Law system is abolished and the Welfare State is introduced. This includes a benefits system. **1948**
2. Alf Morris becomes the first Minister for Disabled People. **1974**
3. Protestors chain themselves to buses at Campaign for Accessible Transport in London and are arrested. **1990**
4. The updated Representation of the People Act allows patients in mental hospitals to vote. **2000**
5. Some Bristol-based Disabled People Organisations contribute to an inquiry by the UN committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities finding evidence of "grave and systematic violations of UK disabled people's human rights". **2016**

Hasn't happened yet:

- Central government provides Local Authorities with enough funding to make all stations wheelchair accessible
- British Sign Language becomes a GCSE offered in all schools

Activity 2.1 Student Ideas

Comments from pupils from Elmfield School for Deaf Children during a discussion around the interpretation of the word 'poor':

- "It means helpless"
- "It has three meanings that are all negative- not having any money, being poor quality, being pitied or felt sorry for e.g. 'poor you'"
- "It suggests you can't do things"
- "The word shows a lack of respect"
- "It shows Disabled people don't matter"
- "It shows people distancing themselves for Disabled children-distancing"

Activity 3.2 Student Ideas

Responses from City Academy students:

- "Students and teachers should attend British Sign Language class."
- "Integrate BSL as another language class."
- "Laptops should have braille on the keyboard to allow students to take notes on laptops."
- "The visually impaired student should be able to leave class a bit earlier to avoid the loud and crowded corridors."
- "There should be a different texture at the front of each classroom for the visually impaired to know which subject they are entering."
- "Crowded hallways should have a balustrade separation between the directions so nobody bumps into each other."

Activity 4.1 Student Ideas (Activities)

Thoughts about possible youth club activities from City Academy students:

- "A music room!"
- A quiet room! I want a place to be away for the noise."
- "A kitchen!"
- "A computer room!"
- "An outdoor space!"
- "I want a basketball court"

Activity 4.1 Student Ideas (Accessibility)

Some ideas provided by City Academy students:

- "The entrance doors should open both ways. Could automatic sliding doors work?"
- "A speaker could be placed in each room for announcements. But also having BSL screens!"
- "Tables can't all be the same height! How will wheelchair users use them? We should have adjusted tables!"
- "Signage could also be written in braille for visually impaired individuals."
- "What if we had different textures on the floor depending on the space we're in?"
- "We need access ramps at the entrance."
- "There should be an accessible sport court. Lowering basketball hoops could be an idea."
- "At the reception, we could have an activity board which announces the activities going on throughout the week."

Activity 4.3 Answers



Activity 5.1 Student Ideas

Issues the City of Bristol College students identified on their journey.

- "The unstable stones are a trip hazard."
- "The unaligned stones of the pavement make it hard to drive wheelchairs."
- "The bus timetable isn't clear enough. How are we supposed to know how to read this?"
- "The bus timetables are written in small words."
- "The screens at the bus stop are not bright enough, I can't see."
- "Buses do not have space for more than one wheelchair".
- "Handlebars are too much of an obstacle".
- "I struggled to get on the bus".
- "Some drivers are helpful; some are not".
- "I have a mount chair and an electric chair but I mostly use the mount chair as I get picked up often by car and the electric chair is too big and heavy to fit in the car".
- "Some Drop-down pavements are too steep".
- "Pavements are quite smooth and wide for people with disabilities (suitable for big groups)".

Activity 5.2 Answers



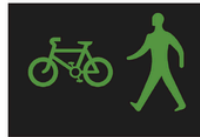
Risk of falling rocks ahead



No Entry



No overtaking



It is safe for cyclists and pedestrians to cross the road



No U turns



Road ahead narrows from both sides



Slippery road ahead

Road signs using a red triangular border is used as a warning.
Circular signs are orders that tell the driver that they must do something.
The colour green is used to indicate when it is safe to move.

Activity 6.1 Famous Disabled People

MPs and Politicians:

- David Blunkett (former Home Secretary) is blind
- Jack Ashley MP 1966-92 is Deaf
- Gordon Brown (former Prime Minister) has one eye
- Baroness Jane Campbell (House of Lords) is a wheelchair user
- Winston Churchill (twice Prime Minister) became Deaf and a wheelchair user

Sports people

- Dame Sarah Storey won 30 Paralympian medals as a swimmer and cyclist
- Tanni Grey-Thompson won 11 gold Paralympian medals and won the London Wheelchair Marathon 6 times
- Jonnie Peacock won 2 gold and 1 bronze Paralympian medals as an amputee sprint runner
- Ellie Simmonds was the youngest paralympic winner in 2008 and set two world swimming records at 13

Musicians

- Stevie Wonder – blind musician
- Ozzy Osbourne – part of Black Sabbath band and reality star has ADHD and Dyslexia
- Lewis Capaldi - award winning musician has Tourettes Syndrome
- Robbie Williams - one of the most successful musicians and former Take That member has Dyscalculia
- Ariana Grande has PTSD since the terrorist incident at one of her concerts
- Will.i.Am - successful musician and producer and business person has ADHD which he believes is what contributes to his creativity

Activity 6.2 Transcript

Children in Need 1993 Clip Transcript

Presenter

This is what we did some time last year, have a look at what the committee decided.

Mark Blair, Wrexham Maelor Groundwork Trust

We are here at the Child Development Centre, at the Wrexham Maelor hospital. They do a lot of their work through play and observing the children at play. And they had nowhere outdoors to do that. So they asked the Groundwork Trust to design them a garden, which we did. We decided that an artist would be a good idea to implement the project. We applied to Children in Need for grant as we had no money to start with, and that sort of got the ball rolling and from there, we drew up a full design, a full costing and went around to local businesses and charitable organisations within Wrexham and nationally, and raised a reasonable amount of money. A lot of the resources were really gifts in kind, as everyone knows, who's raising money for projects, it's not the cash, it helps when people come along with labour and materials, and that's how we put the project together really. It was over a 10 week residential period, gardeners came in and lived in the area and worked with the children, got to know their needs and drew the project up from there.

Children in Need 2018 Clip Transcript

Lucas

My name is Lucas. I'm 11 years old and I love playing tennis. I have cerebral palsy which I've had since I was born. That means I struggle to keep my balance when I stand. Thanks to your donations I've had help from Go Kids Go, who taught me wheelchair skills and how to move safely on ramps and kerbs. They have taught me never to give up on my dreams no matter what life throws at you. Ace! Thank you.



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- Audio description: William Elliott
- Mark Williams' PA: Clare Blunt

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- **The URL for the Disability Activism Bristol website is www.bristoldef.org.uk/disability-activism-bristol**
- **You can find the films on the Learning Resource website at www.locallearning.org.uk/disability-activism-bristol**