

Everybody Forgot About the Toilets



**Underlying
Health
Condition**

An Independent Study into the Accessibility of the TV Industry

**Disabled-Led Pressure Group
Of TV Industry Professionals**

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Introduction

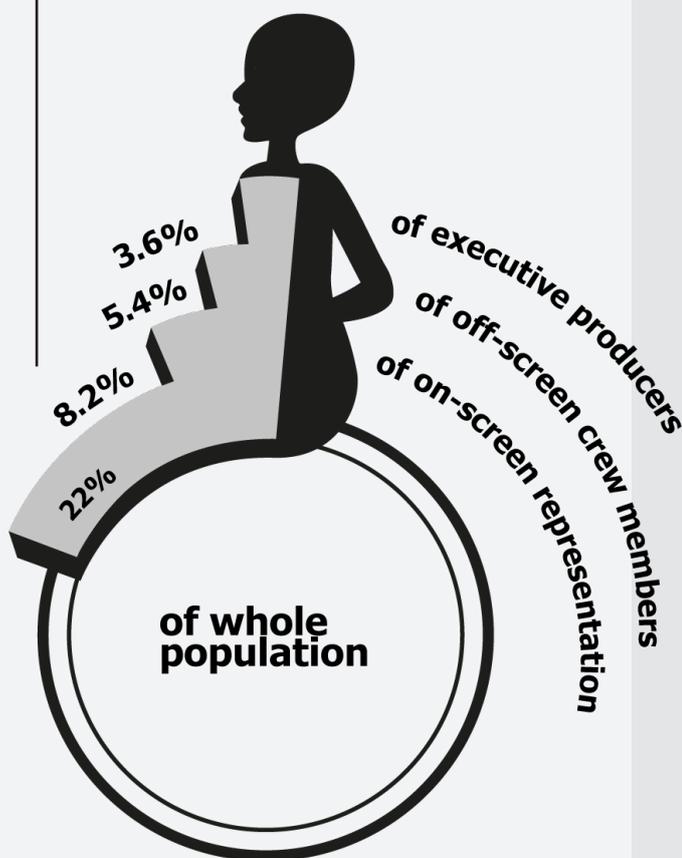
First things first, we need to explain why we're called Underlying Health Condition:

Because those three words have constantly been used to denigrate disabled people and never more so than during the pandemic. To explain away a huge number of deaths. To divide society into the withs and withouts. Because Television has one. A long history of shutting out disabled talent. A history that is proven by statistics over and over again.

There are a lot of reasons to be angry about the treatment of disabled people in this country. The brutal erosion of support and benefits under the name of austerity. The ableist language used by those in power that has transcended into our culture. And there is no doubt that Covid 19 showed the true colours of Great Britain: the grey murk of non-treatment of disabled people, people being left to die because others were regarded as higher priority, the disgrace that was the support given to Care Homes, and the destructive choice of freedom for those who have been left to shield for almost the entirety of the pandemic.

What starker way for the country, in fact most of the world, to reveal its priorities than by dividing deaths into two: those we don't care about - labelled underlying health conditions - and those we do.

Representation of Disabled People On, and behind, screen in comparison to how much of the total population has a disability:



There are also lots of reasons to be angry with television about its treatment of disabled people. The reasons for this anger could fill this entire report.

Disabled people are 22% of this population, and yet Ofcom found that disabled people are under-represented at all organisational levels, making up just 7% of television employees overall. Disabled people are 22% of this population, and yet 8.2% of on-screen represent them, 5.4% of people work off screen, and at the top, just 3.6% of Executive Producers are disabled. The deficit in those statistics are felt and translated through the television box - to those sitting in front of it.

Television has a responsibility to reflect and engage society.

It is an empathy box in the corner of the room. It is meant to represent who we are as people. It is meant to challenge who we are as people. In the last two years we have seen a profound lack of empathy for disabled people in this country. Disabled people made up 60,000 of the first 100,000 Covid deaths. Television and ableist portrayals need to take some responsibility for that.

¹ Section 5: Disability, Department for Work and Pensions (25 March 2021), Family Resources Survey: financial year 2019 to 2020, <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2019-to-2020/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2019-to-2020#disability-1> [accessed 24 November 2021]

² pgs. 6, 8, 6, 11, Dr Marie Tidball, Catherine Bunting (June 2021), Interim Report on Doubling Disability, CDN, <https://creativitydiversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Interim-Briefing-Report-on-Doubling-Disability.pdf> [accessed: 22 November 2021]

A BSA Survey found that 36% of respondents said they didn't know any disabled people. So what is seen on screen, the authorship that takes us into a story - by on and off screen talent - is vital. The sort of cardboard portrayals we see on our box - whether it be the brave friend or the anxious victim - prevent people from understanding the disabled experience, and if they don't understand, they have little chance of caring.

In 2018, the Creative Diversity Network announced in partnership with all major UK broadcasters to set a target of doubling disability representation in front and behind the camera by 2021. Their interim report stated that by 2020 instead of seeing the sort of rapid change that was required for this, the growth was only 0.9% and so it is "unlikely" the target will be reached by end of 2021 and that target, as the report itself states, is not enough to make representation truly proportional. According to the CDN, it will take until 2041 at the current rate of growth for disability in off-screen roles to truly reflect the make-up of the UK. We cannot wait that long.





Change is happening but far too slowly. The ground is littered with good intentions but none of them break the surface.

Diversity is a much spouted word but disability is rarely heard in its company. Television has an Underlying Health Condition and we are calling it out.

This is not a campaign made in anger but rather a campaign made in hope. We believe television wants to improve itself, and we think if it does then the changes to society will be profound. The constant ableism we all experience day in and day out can be questioned, and should be questioned, and with the right authors telling the right stories on our screens, the empathy box that we all work in and for, can fight for a brighter future.

³ 30,296 of the 50,888 deaths between January and November 2020 were people with a disability, Office for National Statistics (ONS), (11 February 2021), <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/articles/>

⁴ p. 17, Simon Dixon, Ceri Smith, Anel Touchet, The Disability Perception Gap Policy Report, Scope, report PDF linked in paragraph 2 <https://www.scope.org.uk/campaigns/disability-perception-gap/> [accessed: 24 November 2021]

⁵ p. 12, Dr Marie Tidball, Catherine Bunting (June 2021), Interim Report on Doubling Disability, CDN, <https://creativediversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Interim-Briefing-Report-on-Doubling-Disability.pdf> [accessed: 22 November 2021]

Which brings us on to the second thing, why is this report called “Everyone forgot about the toilets”?

Because when it comes to representation, disability is a complicated nut to crack. Intent will not be enough. Most questions around representation revolve around changing the make-up of the professionals telling the stories. But when it comes to disability it is the make-up of the spaces within which we tell those stories that need to change too. This includes the toilets. A basic human right. As Deborah Williams, Executive Director of CDN says,

“if you can’t sort a basic human right for 19% of the population, then you cannot say you’re fit for purpose.”

Many people reading this report will know about The Social Model of Disability. But for those that don’t, it’s worth explaining. The Social Model states that disabled people are not disabled by their impairments but rather by the attitude and geography of the society in which they live. It is society itself that’s disabling, when it makes transport impossible to share, when it shows little flexibility in the workplace, when it is built around the needs of certain people rather than the needs of all.

This report will demonstrate how the television industry has failed to meet the requirements of The Social Model, and how it now can seek to do so.

As such, it has many authors. Genevieve, Holly, Jack and Katie from Underlying Health Condition. Cherylee, Laurence and Melissa from DANC. Deborah from the CDN. Caroline and Bryony from DDPTV. Kate Ansell, author of the Lenny Henry Centre report: "Career Routes and Barriers for Disabled People in the UK TV Industry." Eryn and all of the 1IN4 Coalition. All have branches of concerns that meet to form this report. Whether it's best practice in a writers room, the need for a talent database, the ableism and prejudice faced in our industry, or the accessibility of the spaces. It is very important to us that we stand here united, holding hands together to explain that the answer is always the same – television needs root and branch reform. We need to look at our basic building blocks and question them.

No more can questions around disabled casting can be resolved by “well, we’ve put in a call to Graeae.” No more can questions around ableism be resolved by “well, bite your lip and feel grateful to be here.” No more can questions around representation be resolved by “the thing is we don’t expose someone who’s not ready for our way of working.” And no more can disabled people be expected to compromise over the need to use the toilet.

Throughout this report, as well as contributions from our many authors, you’ll see quotes taken from interviews with highly experienced disabled creatives in the industry. Actors, Directors, Producers and more. There are years of experience in these pages. Years that are reflected in the diversity of response. But the hope unifies us: a new world, in which British television can be an industry leader in correcting the mistakes of broadcasting.



“What access barrier would I remove?”

Underlying Health Condition

It would just be having a toilet on set!”

Bryony Arnold



“I think we really need to take this moment in a way that we can find sustainable change rather than it just being a conversation that is hot for the time.”

Rosanagh Griffiths

“The world needs to be better designed to incorporate everybody with all their differences and when that happens perhaps disability, as I understand it in the social model, might melt away.”

Mat Fraser

References from previous page

⁶ Inclusion London, The Social Model of Disability, <https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/disability-in-london/social-model/the-social-model-of-disability-and-the-cultural-model-of-deafness/> [accessed 28 November 2021]

⁷ A note on language: Different contributors employ slightly different language when discussing disability. Some of these differences are due to individual preference, some are political, cultural or geographical. We respect their views so have kept their language throughout.



Deborah Williams

Executive Director of the Creative Diversity Network Doubling Disability

Five years is a long time in television. I say that because of where we are right now. Doubling Disability has been five years in the making, from the day I started in this role disability was nowhere to be seen on the CDN or wider diversity agenda. There was no awareness, there was no interest, there was not really any acknowledgement that it was something that needed to be worked on.

I knew that there had to be a way to do this, that was not about the individual, that was not about the personal, that was not about one person only at a time, But about the whole industry, looking at itself and acknowledging that it was time it changed the world. My background in the social model of disability meant that I came with an enormous amount of knowledge, understanding and expertise. I applied this to disability in television and set out to create a disability inclusive industry.

As you are aware CDN is based on data, it is based on evidence, it is based on the idea that in order for things to happen they have to happen at a structural, systematic level and it is not about any one person. But there was no model, nothing to base this enormous challenge on. I mean how do we go about getting the evidence?

We did this in two parts:

First was obviously Diamond. Collecting and analysing the data and getting an understanding of where we were demographically within our industry around disability on-screen offscreen and in terms of perception. The second part was to back it up and give it context.

⁸ Diamond is a single online system used by the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, ViacomCBS, UKTV and Sky to obtain consistent diversity data on programmes they commission. <https://creativitydiversitynetwork.com/diamond/> [accessed 26 November 2021]

So secondly, we contracted a research partner. Working collaboratively with the then CAMEo team based at the University Of Leicester, who do this for a living; they look at data, they look at the creative industries, they look at the screen industries, they look at the creative economy and they offer solutions to what sort of interventions might be appropriate. That was what we needed, now there were three points on the triangle: research, diamond, and expertise.

That gave us Doubling Disability. A commitment from all the then Diamond Broadcasters, PACT and ITN to double the percentage of disabled people working in off screen roles from 4.5% to 9% as monitored through Diamond. All these together gave us a great opportunity, of innovation, of collaborative working, of collective understanding across all of our membership, not just the Diamond Broadcasters, it went across the industry. We designed the programme with these things at heart, to collaborate, to be open, to be transparent, and to change an industry. We started in gusto in 2018 and did the first piece of research, with the industry, we got an understanding from them of where they were and what were the barriers and the things that they were worried about, which resulted in 10 recommendations, all presented in the key findings report and animation.

We then did a survey of disabled people in the industry. We got responses from them about their experiences, what they were looking for and what would make the industry inclusive for disabled people. The foundations were in place.

Then the pandemic struck. We were not able to continue that work as originally designed and planned, but what we did do as CDN was we had the template of the findings. We had started the work in 2019 around all of the interventions that were possible, so we decided to work with two or three of them and make sure that we were focused, that we were intentional and deliberate about what we were going to do. The broadcasters were tasked with creating schemes and programmes where they could commission contract disabled and deaf people where they would get credit on a transmitted programme, and we would see the results through Diamond. So there were two things happening in parallel. One was monitoring Diamond and one was making sure that the research practice was embedded.

Earlier this year, 2021, we had a reflection point, and commissioned an interim report. Essentially it was a thematic literature review and an opportunity to better contextualize disabled people and the barriers that exist in the industry compared to other industries. We also included stories of disabled people and really looked deep into what had happened, what people had experienced to find out what was the truth of what was going on within our industry. And sorry to say that the report made stark reading.

First the data. In terms of the programme of work from the broadcasters, it didn't really happen. With an increase of 0.9% between 2017 - 2020. Some of it was obviously because of Covid, but where that is true, it means the work hadn't started when it should have – in 2018/19. It meant the commitments that were made in 2018 were never going to happen in the two year period that we had originally identified. The two year period our members committed to.

So none of the broadcasters have managed to develop a programme of work and identify disabled and deaf people in offscreen roles. The work that was transmitted is identified as part of Doubling Disability.

If we continue at that rate, meeting the target of 9% will take until 2028 - and that's just to double that small percentage. That's not even to get us into double figures, let alone be actually representative

If it carries on at that rate, and we want to meet the actual target which is 20% of the UK population (assuming that population figure does not increase further) then we would hit that target in 2041. That's 20 years. Two whole decades. I feel ashamed that we haven't managed to penetrate and make any real progress in this area, and this is just offscreen. These are production roles, this is writers, directors, costume, make up, cameras, grips, everything that you can imagine that's offscreen – all those roles, all that possibility and no progress. 0.9% that's less than a percentage point increase.

“ Those are the headlines. I for one am embarrassed by them.



In terms of the culture change work CDN has been doing in parallel, we've been slightly more successful. We've delivered the first Trainer cohort, which means that there are disabled people in the industry, available now and ready to deliver an understanding of disability for the contemporary world, which contributes to the goal of a disability inclusive industry. We were the accessibility partner for Edinburgh TV Festival, which meant that for the very first time ETVF was accessible, a bit. It has never supported access previously in the way that we did, with all content having subtitles and BSL interpretation. We are looking forward to developing our relationship with the festival.

We commissioned a video about disclosure, so we have a video made by disabled talent, featuring on and off-screen disabled talent, talking about disclosing and explaining why it's important to be part of the solution by completing the Diamond form when you get it. We are here as part of this conversation with Underlying Health Condition and are excited to be building a cohort of disabled people in the industry challenging a lot of the perceptions and a lot of what's happening and saying "I'm sorry, this isn't on. This is unacceptable". Disability inclusion is critical and vital to the survival of this industry and if people can't, and won't, and don't want to get their heads around it, then the industry is going to suffer as a result. The headlines for our 5th Cut report are yet to be finalised, and will be available in early 2022, but I have no doubt it will say that we are flatlined around disability, and there is still an inordinate amount of work to be done. Which is why it's critical that we continue to publish our annual report, as that will keep disability as part of our prioritised work over the next three years.

As a call to action, the recommendations that came out of our interim Doubling Disability report will be turned into an industry wide roadmap. Modelled on the work that has been done within Doubling Disability. Its aim is for people to access them as they are able to, from where they are in their disability inclusion journey, not where we want them to be or expect them to be.

Essentially there will be recommendations, there will be themes, there will be small, medium, large things that you can do for anyone from an individual in a production office, or as a receptionist at a building, or as a booker, or as a casting agent, or a VP, a DP, whoever you are, you can do something as an individual, or right up to all of our members organisations, leaders in the space, leaders in the industry.

When the industry started Diamond, you said you wanted to know. Well now you do. It's over to you.

⁹ Dr Marie Tidball, Catherine Bunting (June 2021), Interim Report on Doubling Disability, CDN, <https://creativiversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Interim-Briefing-Report-on-Doubling-Disability.pdf> [accessed: 22 November 2021]



“People who make decisions, who hold those purse strings I think they should hear things like this....they should feel uncomfortable and bad and they should sit in that and then use that to fuel change because that is what it takes.”

Ruth Madeley

”

“We have rights and our voices need to be heard, and the voices of the characters need to be heard as well.”

Sarah Gordy

“I’ve been in the industry thirteen years now, and I’ve encountered one other disabled director in that time.”

Jordan Hogg

Laurence Clark

Chair of TripleC & DANC Inclusive Writers' Room Guidelines



TripleC is a Community Interest Company led by deaf, disabled and neurodivergent creatives. Our mission is to drive up the role of disabled people in the arts and media; and the role of the arts and media in the lives of disabled people, changing the lives of disabled people for the better. We are based in North West England, but provide work and professional development opportunities across the whole of the UK and beyond.

The need for TripleC arose out of a recognition that, traditionally the TV industry has repeatedly run one-off schemes aiming to further the careers of disabled creatives, but with no ongoing legacy. In order to address this barrier, we created the Disabled Artists Networking Community (DANC) which provides networking events, ongoing professional development and a strong, united voice for disabled creatives within the industry.

Earlier this year, a couple of disabled screenwriters approached us with the idea of developing best practice guidance for how writers' rooms could better include us. The nature of our industry means that most screenwriters are freelance, which makes it difficult to speak out against poor treatment. By having this guidance as an anonymised, central resource, hopefully screenwriters will be able to direct production companies to it in the future rather than always having to self-advocate. They are intended to help production companies ensure that the screenwriter they are employing is able to focus on their job without shouldering the extra (often invisible) burdens of self-advocacy, educating the room and overcoming access barriers. We hope they will prove useful to disabled screenwriters who may not feel confident about providing feedback on workplace practices on an individual level.

The guidelines were developed by us with the support and endorsement of the TriForce Creative Network and the Writers' Guild of Great Britain. They have been written by a small group of disabled screenwriters, in consultation with a wider group of disabled writers and other off-screen professionals, all of whom have worked in non-disabled spaces and wish to use these experiences to create positive change.

I'm not going to tell you what the guidance says here because I really, really want you to visit our website and read it for yourselves! You can do this by going to triplec.org.uk/resources/

Instead, I want to give you a flavour of some of the experiences our deaf, disabled and neurodivergent screenwriters spoke about in our focus group. I believe these illustrate why these guidelines are so important.



There is a danger that the current impetus to hire disabled writers leads to an unpleasant experience or them not being able to do their jobs properly through lack of reasonable adjustments.”



Many screenwriters spoke about not getting their reasonable adjustments met:



At the moment, it feels like the approach is let's just invite them all in and not do anything differently. But we need additional things if we're to have the same opportunities. It's something I feel strongly about. I don't want to have to do special pleading to make a thing out of it."

There is a very simple solution to this though:



It would be a good idea for companies to ask everybody coming into a writers' room if they've got any access requirements, whether or not they appear to be disabled. This might capture the people that feel a bit reluctant to come forward. But generally, I'm not asked."

Even when a reasonable adjustment is provided, there may need to be changed to how the writers' room is operated:

When I'm using a sign language interpreter in a story conference, there's mental fatigue that comes from having all of the communication coming through just one person and the information is second hand.



One time I had a Palantypist and another time I had a sign language interpreter. Both times there's a delay whilst those people are typing out or translating what others were saying. It was impossible to have an input as I was getting everything five seconds later."

Other screenwriters may need more time to prepare:

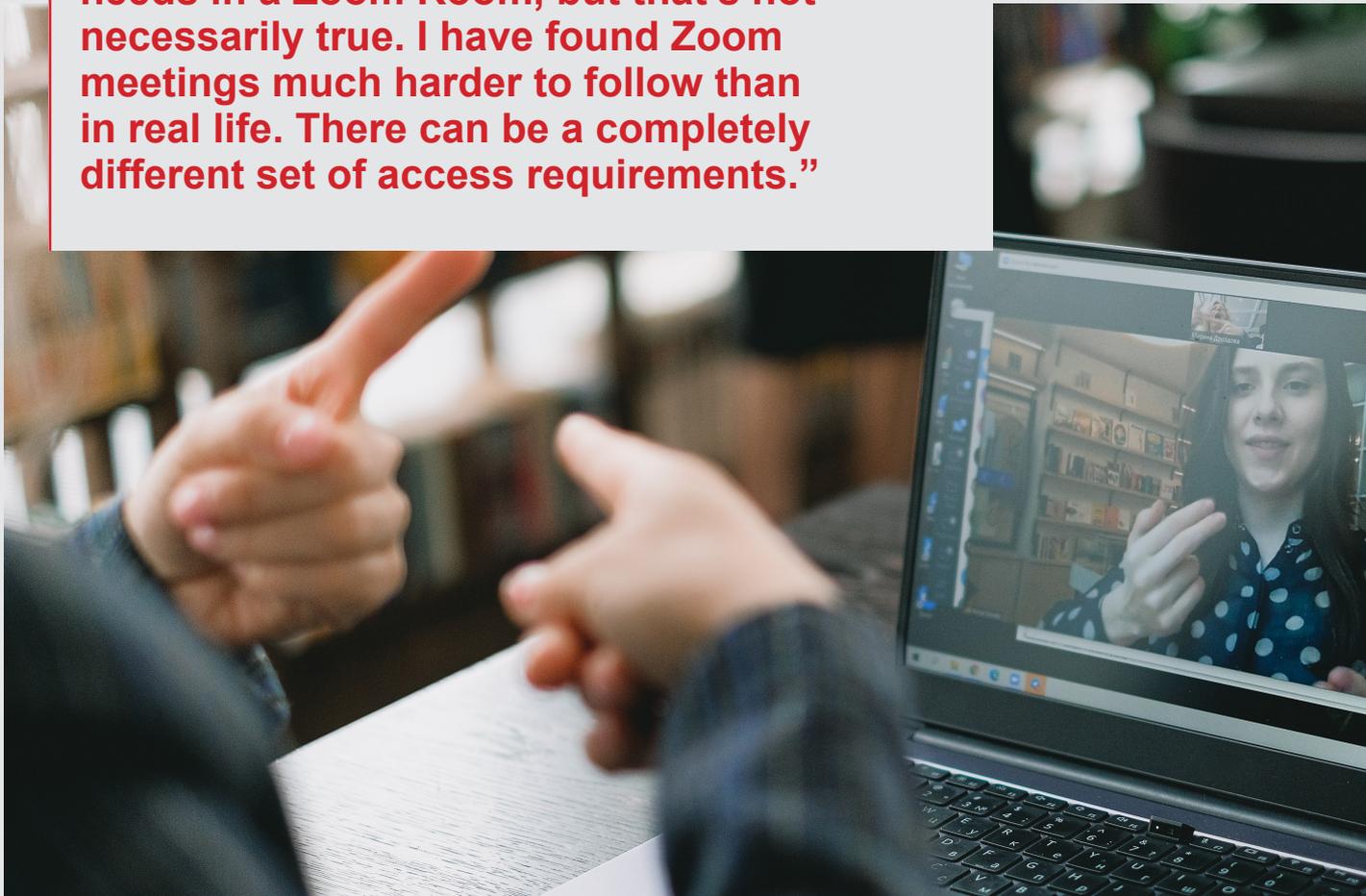


For my most recent writers' room, I had to go the day before and do my own recce. I did it all off my own back because I was stressed about the space. And then I had to get access to work to pay for taxis there and back because I just couldn't do the public transport. I ended up funding that all myself and then having to wait a couple of months to get it back. And I just did it uncomplaining and smiley because, you know, we don't want to cause problems."

The recent innovation of online writers' rooms has thrown up more issues:



I think there is an assumption that if you have access needs in real life then you're likely to have less access needs in a Zoom Room, but that's not necessarily true. I have found Zoom meetings much harder to follow than in real life. There can be a completely different set of access requirements."



There is a particular issue with deaf, disabled and neurodivergent screenwriters being steered towards advisory roles:



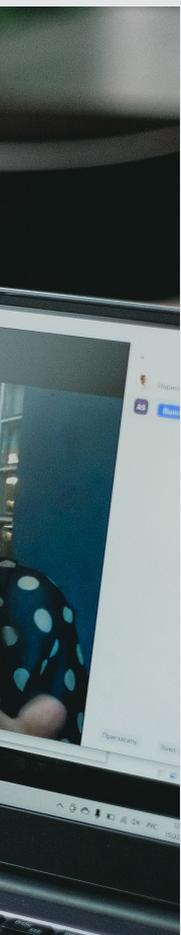
I was recently talking to [a medical drama] and it was suggested I could be an advisor. But I'm a writer - that's not the job I want to do. Advisors are better if they're not writers as it gets confusing. That's not our job. Would this option be suggested to non-disabled screenwriters?"

There is a particular issue with screenwriters being pigeon-holed:



Sometimes I get the feeling that the people I'm pitching things to expect me to pitch nothing but things about disability. I'd really like them to stop thinking of me as just the disabled writer. The ideas I bring to the table don't necessarily all have to be something to do with disability."

Our guidance concludes that television needs stories. And our stories are relatively unexplored territory for television. However, the only way to tell our stories in an authentic, powerful way is to make sure we are sat in the room.



“We need to have our voices heard and tell our stories. Ultimately the productions are going to miss out on these stories and this unique perspective that we have.”

Jordan Hogg





Cherylee Houston and Melissa Johns

Artistic Directors of TripleC & DANC Nurturing and Promoting Talent

Four years ago, we launched DANC – the Disabled Artists Networking Community for deaf, disabled and neurodivergent creatives.

For decades we'd all been feeling pretty isolated and, at times, like we were the only ones. But we knew that others must be feeling the same way too. We decided the way to change this was to bring disabled creatives together so that they weren't facing individual challenges and continually reinventing the wheel. Instead, we would share our collective knowledge about the barriers we encounter in the industry and focus on creating solutions.

We wanted to create a network from all areas of the industry, strong in talent, so that what we learnt in one area could be shared and replicated in others. We wanted DANC to be led BY Deaf and disabled artists FOR Deaf and disabled artists. A place where we can network, attend masterclasses and webinars, showcase our work and develop our careers. At the same time, we wanted it to be a place where the industry can be invited into conversations and given the confidence to champion change. A place where theatre, TV, media and the arts can access supportive, friendly training, source talent, ask questions and open their minds. legacy. In order to address this barrier, we created the Disabled Artists Networking Community (DANC) which provides networking events, ongoing professional development and a strong, united voice for disabled creatives within the industry.

DANC now has over 1200 deaf, disabled and neurodiverse members, comprising of actors, writers, directors, dancers, musicians, visual artists, tech, crew, photographers, poets and anyone else involved in the creative process. Each week our members receive two mailouts: one advertising our upcoming DANC events and masterclasses; and a second filled with industry opportunities such as castings, commission call outs, crew ups and shadowing opportunities.

One of things we've repeatedly heard for years is that age-old saying "we wanted to employ disabled creatives but we just didn't know where to find them." Well, here we are!

Sticking to our solution-focussed ethos, we wanted to do something about sourcing talent, as we realised nothing could really change without a central resource. So, for the last 18 months we've been developing the DANC Talent Finder, an online database of Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent talent both on and off screen and stage, which can be accessed via our website. It's a bit like LinkedIn for disabled creatives. Artists from all areas of the industry create their online profile page and fill it with their experience, skills, previous jobs, links to work, access requirements, agents details and contacts. The industry can then use the search engine to find the right people they need.



It's a bit like LinkedIn for disabled creatives.



The Talent Finder will launch early next year, but you can register your interest now by creating a profile at <https://triplec.org.uk/talent-welcome-page>. You will receive an alert with the launch date in the new year. If you are Deaf, Disabled or Neurodivergent you can go to the same link to create your profile.

One important area where we hope our Talent Finder will make an impact is casting. In our experience, casting directors are on our side, they're just waiting for producers to give the go-ahead for disabled actors to be seen for ALL roles. We have many nuances of humanity alongside disability, so it's imperative that we don't just get offered disabled parts, as literally any character can be disabled. Disability needs to stop being seen as a character trait. Freedom in casting will finally ensure inclusion; and both the creative process and storytelling will be all the richer for it. Representation matters. Oh, we know how true this is. It matters. A lot.

But we've heard this so much recently that we disabled artists have started to believe the only thing we offer is representation. This couldn't be further from the truth. We offer a different perspective, we offer the same perspective, we're universal and we're individual. We're talented, we have stories to tell, characters to create and messages that the whole world needs to hear. We need to change the narrative so this kind of thinking becomes the driving force and representation merely a side issue.

Over the last few months, we've been thanked by many, many organisations within our industry which is a lovely thing to hear. But whilst a thank you is always appreciated; these words do not seem to translate into financial support and, therefore, don't help our sustainability. The need for what we do arose out of a recognition that, traditionally the TV industry has repeatedly run one-off schemes aiming to further the careers of disabled creatives, but with no ongoing legacy. In order to address this barrier, DANC provides networking events, ongoing professional development and a strong, united voice for disabled creatives. We are a not-for-profit organisation and the money we receive goes directly into the running of our programmes. We are developing a new generation of disabled talent. If the industry is to become more inclusive, it needs deaf, disabled and neurodivergent creatives to help identify solutions and put them into practice. The only way the systemic change we need will be effective is if the industry works in partnership with us. As history shows, it just won't work without us.

Over the last 18 months, DANC has run screenwriting programmes and showcases, pitching workshops, acting masterclasses, general auditions with some of the UK's leading casting directors, focus groups to look at the intersectionality within our community and a project developing the lived experience leaders of the future. We are nurturing the talent which will fill the jobs you want to create, ready for the changes the industry is making. But we also need your help. Please come and talk to us about how you can support us as we support you.

Disabled campaign groups are vastly underfunded in comparison to many long running counterparts pushing for other forms of representation. We, like many of the allies you're hearing from today, don't receive funding for our work in television and film, whilst we always appreciate being acknowledged for the services and expertise we provide, in order to sustain this vital work, we need financial support as well as recognition from the wider industry. You can help fund the work we do by emailing contact@triplec.org.uk or use the donate button on the main page of our website: www.triplec.org.uk

You can sign up to DANC's mailing list here:

<https://mailchi.mp/faa519b87864/danc>

Bryony Arnold, Caroline O'Neill, Charlie Pheby and Shari De Silva

Deaf & Disabled People in TV (DDPTV) The Lived Experiences of Disabled TV Professionals



Deaf & Disabled People in TV (DDPTV) connects deaf, disabled and neuro-divergent people from across the industry via an exclusive Facebook group. It acts as a protected space to unpack the systemic ableism and other intersectional “isms” without fear of repercussion.

The beauty of DDPTV is that our members have access to peer support from other disabled professionals – many of whom are better able to weigh in and offer advice compared to a non-disabled professional. For some members, it’s the first time they’ve been able to openly ask questions about Access to Work, disclosure, reasonable adjustments, or even what to expect on site as a disabled runner.

More than anything, what we provide is visibility – of those operating at senior levels - as series producers, commissioners, and executives. It offers up hope to our entry level members that a career in television is attainable. Currently DDPTV has over 1000 members. Most are UK based but we have members from all over the world.

DDPTV also engages with indies, broadcasters and other stakeholders, funnelling job advertisements and opportunities through to the group. Our members know when they see a job that we have checked directly for access. We advocate to ensure that hiring is accessible and inclusive – push back against the demand for driving licences and provide support for members who are being bullied. Through DDPTV we use our considerable lived experience to help influence current working practices and push for positive change, both in direct conversation with prospective employers, but also as part of the Coalition for Change.

You can easily find us on Facebook – just search “Deaf & Disabled People in TV” and make sure you fill in the membership questions! We don’t allow non-disabled allies within the group but we do love an ally and we’re always open to conversations on how to help instigate change.

Earlier this year, DDPTV in association with Bectu UTVU, Equity and Bournemouth University ran a survey, Disability by Design, 223 people responded. The aim of the survey was to shed light on the lived experiences of disabled professionals within the TV industry. Here is what we found:

60% of participants reported some form of ableism or discrimination whilst working or seeking work in the industry.

“I experienced a lot of microaggressions, including once having to hear my supervisor ignorantly support eugenics, telling me that disabled people should stop having children so that eventually it dies out like natural selection”.

“On my most recent contract, an employee claimed I could be cured [of autism].... and began following me around, speaking to my colleagues about what I needed to do to cure myself....”

¹⁰ Christa van Raalte, Richard Wallis and Dawid Pekalski, Disability by Design: Representation in TV, Bournemouth University (August 2021), https://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/35896/1/BU_Disability_by_Design_2021%20%281%29.pdf [accessed 28 November 2021]

**“Be part of the solution,
not part of the problem.”**

Cherylee Houston



**“I was once told by a senior series editor
‘I’m not having any cripples on my show’”.**

**Of our survey respondents, only 11% held
a Senior Management position. Of this,
95% are white.**

**“[I was] told that I should change
vocations because in the real world my
disability and skin colour will always be a
barrier.”**

**“[A] series that is meant for disabled people
had four out of five stories about white disabled
characters and these four were directed by white
directors.”**

Many respondents reported that employers failed to ask about access needs, failed to make reasonable adjustments or even removed reasonable adjustments that had been put in place.

Access to Work was particularly problematic, many respondents said that freelance and short contracts meant by the time their support package was put in place, they had moved on. There was also a recurring theme where respondents said that Access to Work did not understand their line of work and the scheme was clearly not designed to support those in television.

Other areas of serious concern flagged were over disclosure, transparent hiring, lack of awareness and training and lack of knowledge of the Equality Act 2010.

“Assuming disability is a black and white issue with no shades of grey; either you can do the job or you can’t. And perceiving adjustments as inconveniences. For many reasons, TV takes the path of least resistance.”

Out of all our respondents, 64% reported that working conditions affected their physical and mental health. Many leave the industry as a result.

“Leaving television was like leaving an abusive relationship. I am still in psychotherapy two years later”.

DDPTV believes that the industry is primed and ready for change, but that it needs to be deaf, disabled and neuro-divergent people leading the charge. For far too long we have all been working in silos and we need to be presenting an united front – after all isn’t the message from our community, “Nothing About Us Without Us” – just think how powerful “us” would be if we came together.

We stand in alliance with Underlying Health Condition and we believe that key priorities that require immediate focus include:

Uniting broadcasters and other industry stakeholders to tackle one of our biggest hurdles – Access to Work – and making it fit for purpose.

Disabled people featured within D&I teams – and regular pan-industry check-ins taking place every three months including key industry grassroots campaigners such as DDPTV, DANC, UHC and CDN.

A key focus on increasing disabled representation in senior roles. We would like broadcasters to identify mid to senior-level disabled talent and make a long-term commitment to developing disabled talent, we have suggested this could be done via a structured Fellowship.

At the Edinburgh TV Festival 2021, the Coalition for Change charter was launched. We would like to build on this by creating a separate, but complimentary Disability Charter to create best practice across the industry.

With ambitious, outward thinking we can build a brighter future for all disabled talent but it requires resources, support and collective action now. So let's not pay lip service any longer - this is a call to action to create not just a diverse industry but a more inclusive one for all.

“You don't want to be a burden. You don't want to be seen to be difficult. Particularly when you're starting out.”

Bryony Arnold



Eryn Brown, Sara Fischer, Elaine Hall, David Kurs, Andraéa LaVant, Stephen Letnes, Jim LeBrecht, Ryan O'Connell, Natasha Ofili, Kaitlyn Yang



1IN4 Coalition
The need for an Accessibility Coordinator

We are a grassroots coalition of disabled creatives currently working in Hollywood focused on long-term institutional shifts to increase employment and representation of disabled people. We understand that our industry is the most powerful exporter of entertainment and that storytelling changes attitudes and laws. We push for the hiring of disabled people on both sides of the camera. The inclusion creates authenticity and innovation, which is good for business and culture.

Even though people with a visible or invisible disability are 1 in 4 of the US adult population, only 2.3% of the speaking characters in our most popular movies have a disability. Just 12% of disabled characters are played by disabled people. Disabled crew in the U.S. are so scarce, the numbers don't even rate as a statistic.

One of our founding members is Jim LeBrecht, the co-director of the Oscar nominated documentary CRIP CAMP. The movie sparked a greater discussion about marginalization and systemic discrimination, which led Eryn Brown, a talent manager at Management 360, to assemble a group of disabled

We call on employers to add disability to their diversity policies, to hire disabled people at all levels, and to create more content about disability by and with disabled people. We ask that employers require an Accessibility Coordinator for productions and that talent representatives work with disabled artists.

Elaine Hall, another co-founder, is one of them: on the next page she tells her story about how she went from supporting disabled actors to becoming an Accessibility Coordinator sought after by film and series productions.

“Nothing about us, without us.” Our stories are rich, varied and entertaining but have been either absent or inauthentically told by non-disabled people. This has led to harmful portrayals, widespread misunderstanding and prejudice about disability. We can change that by employing disabled people in all facets of Hollywood. When we increase jobs, representation grows, stories start to change and culture follows. As awareness and mindsets shift, so do standards, opportunities and laws.

Accessibility is a mindset, and it is also physical. We aim for all environments, including offices and sets, to be accessible. If it's not accessible, it is not inclusive. Making a set accessible does not have to be hard or expensive. With increased consciousness and intentional thought, an inclusive set creates an environment that is better for everyone. Access ramps for wheelchairs can also be used to transport equipment, saving time and expense. Routing cables differently reduces accidents. Including sign language interpreters for Deaf cast and crew compels everyone to make eye contact, fostering clear and direct communication on set.

The industry of creating content is more global and connected than ever. We work on all continents, connect daily with each other and share an international language of production. If we work together to standardize access, representation and inclusion, we will change the understanding and experience of the 1.3 billion disabled people around the world.

“Disability is an art. It's an ingenious way to live.” Neil Marcus



“Disabled people naturally, we don’t want to make a fuss, because it’s just instilled in us from being tiny, don’t want to make a fuss, we’re really happy to be here, we’re really grateful for the opportunity...it’s such a toxic mentality.”



Ruth Madeley

¹¹ CDC, Disability Impacts All of Us, <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html> [accessed 28 November 2021]

¹² p. 3, USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative (September 2020), Inequality in 1,300 Popular Films: Examining Portrayals of Gender, Race/Ethnicity, LGBTQ & Disability from 2007 to 2019, https://assets.uscannenberg.org/docs/aai-inequality_1300_popular_films_09-08-2020.pdf [accessed 28 November 2021]

¹³ Ruderman Family Foundation (2018), The Ruderman White Paper on Authentic Representation in TV, https://rudermanfoundation.org/white_papers/the-ruderman-white-paper-on-authentic-representation-in-tv/#_ftn3 [accessed 28 November 2021]

Elaine Hall

Accessibility Coordinator

In 2018, the producers of the Netflix show *Atypical* contacted me, as they were looking to cast authentically for a Peer Group social skills scene for their second season. They were also looking for background actors with disabilities to be in doctors offices and in classrooms. This was the first time the show had created a storyline that specifically revolved around actors with autism. Many of my students from The Miracle Project auditioned for and were cast in the show. For most of them, this was also the first time they had ever been on a TV set. I knew that they would benefit by having support, so I volunteered my services to be on set with them.

Immediately I played 'translator' helping the actors understand what was needed from them, helping the PA's and AD's understand sensory sensitivities, food sensitivities, how to communicate most effectively to curb anxiety, the importance of asking for permission before fixing wardrobe or switching out a prop. The neurodiverse and disabled actors did so well that the Peer Group became regulars on the show. This is the first time I was officially hired as a 'technical advisor' aka Accessibility Coordinator.

Attitude is the most critical component. When a production company is willing to make its set accessible, everyone from the Executive Producers to the PA's need to buy into the concept that what is good for someone with a disability, is ultimately good for all.

When I provide support for neurodiverse cast and crew, I will be the first to go on to a set to observe the challenges and offer suggestions. That can be pertaining to a lit path from the door to the stage, as making the adjustment from outside lighting to a dark stage can be difficult, and unsafe. Often, this minor adjustment ends up helping the grips and electric too.

Many of the minor adjustments are easier than we think. Check with an actor if they would prefer Velcro or non-lace shoes. Or if they need a quiet space near set when they are not needed. Another one is the 'bell' ring, when a scene is over or being filmed again. This sound can cause tremendous anxiety, or even pain and dysregulation to someone who is sound sensitive. I often request the bell to be turned down, or noise reduction headsets for the actors, or eliminate the need for a bell at all.

It is beneficial for the Accessibility Coordinator to also be an on-set Advocate. The cast and crew who are neurodivergent or disabled can confide in them about their challenges and request getting specific needs met. The role requires sensitivity and nuance. This person must be understanding and communicative to the crew in a way that does not humiliate or cause emotional distress to the disabled actor or crew.

Accessibility Coordinators must be willing to let go of their own bias towards what is considered "normal" behavior, and allow the person to be 'autistic' or disabled with them, so that they can do what is needed of them on set. This is extremely important. A person with a disability should not be expected not to have a disability in order to be successful in production. The Accessibility Coordinator's job is to ensure that the actor/crew member receives the accommodations that are needed so that they can fully execute their job.

Film and series are increasingly seeking to be more authentic in the casting, crewing, and hiring of executives with disabilities. We are asking that the industry standardise the hiring of Accessibility Coordinators on every production so that we are proactive, instead of being reactive. There will be fewer surprises during shooting and, with the right adjustments, we will empower each cast and crew to be their best, most productive self.

What is good for disabled people ultimately benefits everyone else. If we can be curious, mindful, and respectful together, then we have done our job as artists. Please join us in this change.

“When you’re the disabled person going to a job the first time, you’re the educator, the responsibility is on you to make everybody else feel comfortable with you, put them at ease. And that’s before doing your job.”

Cherylee Houston

“I have someone to help me on set... To make sure I don’t get hurt, he holds my arm and I hold his arm and step over the wires on the floor, I feel safe with him.”

Sarah Gordy

“If I can’t get there, the Dolly can’t get there.”

Katie Player



Genevieve Barr, Holly Lubran, Jack Thorne & Katie Player

Underlying Health Condition Our Proposition

Thanks to our co-authors, we believe there is a strong picture of representation of disabled people on and off screen in the television and film industry. The deficit is clear, and their contributions to this report are invaluable in pointing out some of the measures that need to be taken to address this. We will point you to more of their resources at the end of the report.

Where UHC have focussed is in accessibility. The physical spaces that enable disabled people to work in every position in this industry - do they allow for targets of on and off-screen representation to be achieved? Do they enable disabled people to get a foothold in this industry and sustain themselves there?

Our feeling is no.

Our position is that the industry needs to come together and rebuild from the ground up - in order to permanently shift gears, and ensure that the practical problems are not standing in the way of genuine and good intent. In the same way that inclusivity means everyone, the responsibility has to be shared across the many and not the few - not only because it requires investment but also so that the benefits are felt by all.

We hope that this is the start of a helpful conversation - and as such - this report ends with a roadmap of what we hope will be the next steps in this journey.

“A lack of access is something that most disabled people have had to get used to. But it is a pressure and it is a burden.”

Katie Player

“Having a disabled loo as my green room, as the green room was up two flights of stairs... led to “So we thought we’d put a mat down here in the toilet.”

Cherylee Houston

“If people had a more empathic, compassionate attitude and invested in making the built structures accessible then my disability issues are vastly reduced”

Julie Fernandez

”





“The lift broke, and I ended up having to work on the ground floor with a completely different department. The lift took two months to fix. Ultimately I felt ostracised and segregated.”

Bryony Arnold

It is clear that if we want to achieve greater on and off screen representation we need to look at the accessibility of the spaces in which we work. To gain a better understanding of just how accessible the industry is at this moment in time and to learn where improvements need to be made.

To do this we designed two surveys relevant to the two types of spaces our industry tends to occupy. Fixed and temporary.

Fixed Spaces:

Fixed spaces are all Studios and structures with Sound Stages that are used for filming. This includes both those long established, larger scale studios and those newer, smaller spaces that are continuing to be built as a result of the unprecedented demands on the UK Film & TV industry.

Many have ancillary spaces attached to the sound stages such as offices, prop and costume stores, and workshops in addition to backlots and car parks.

Temporary Spaces:

Temporary spaces refer to the Facility Vehicles that make up a Unit Base. Generally they are large, mobile units, many as large as 18 tonne articulated lorries, that are moved between locations by HGVs cabs.

Directors, Costume and Hair & Make Up departments as well as a full time base crew who maintain the facility vehicles.

UK Facilities and Studios Survey



**Underlying
Health
Condition**

These Facility vehicles travel with the shooting crew to each new location and provide a base where all Cast and Crew park, eat and get ready before travelling to the filming location, usually via a unit car or minibus.

A Unit Base is designed to be an entirely self sufficient package. It will generally consist of a production offices, catering kitchens, dining buses, costume and make up trailers, artists dressing rooms known as 2 Ways 3 Ways, technical trucks for camera and lighting, and toilets, more commonly referred to as honey wagons. Unit bases are even powered by their own generator that travels with the unit.

Unit Bases are not the locations or sets where the action is filmed but instead a base nearby that facilitates the filming.

There is often also a crew that remains at Unit Base whilst filming takes places to prepare for the shooting day(s) ahead. This predominantly comprises members of Production, Assistant. Directors, Costume and Hair & Make Up departments as well as a full time base crew who maintain the facility vehicles.



The Survey Methodology

When designing the survey we tried to include as many areas of accessibility that covered as wide a range of disabilities as possible. For the avoidance of doubt we want to make clear that we do not consider ourselves to be experts in the field of accessibility however, we consulted widely when we created the survey and we spent 6 months reaching out to a range of studios and facilities companies across the whole of the UK, England, Wales, Scotland & Northern Ireland. The surveys were completed independently by people who work for or on behalf of the studios.

There is no definitive list of every studio in the UK but we reached out to every studio we could find contact details for, ranging from long standing household names, recently adapted warehouses to those still being built. In total, we contacted 72 UK studios. Of these, 45.85% responded to our survey. They were a diverse group, with no outstanding trend grouping them. A diverse mixture also failed to respond, despite extensive chasing - including some notable household names.

There are far fewer facilities companies in the UK servicing the film industry than there are Studios, with only a handful of companies servicing the majority of the industry. In total we contacted 15 facilities companies from across the UK to complete our survey. 66.67% responded.

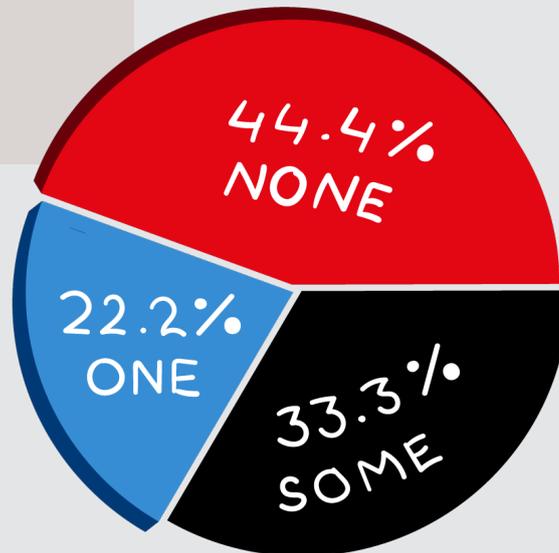
We have no way of verifying the data collected. But with the best of intentions from all who partook in the survey, there are some compelling conclusions to report.

THE STUDIOS SURVEY

We first established the size of fleets of the companies we surveyed. 33.3% of those asked had over 100 vehicles, and 11.1% had over 300 vehicles. 22.2% have between 1-20. 33.3% have between 51-100.

Results Facilities

Accessible Vehicles In Fleet:

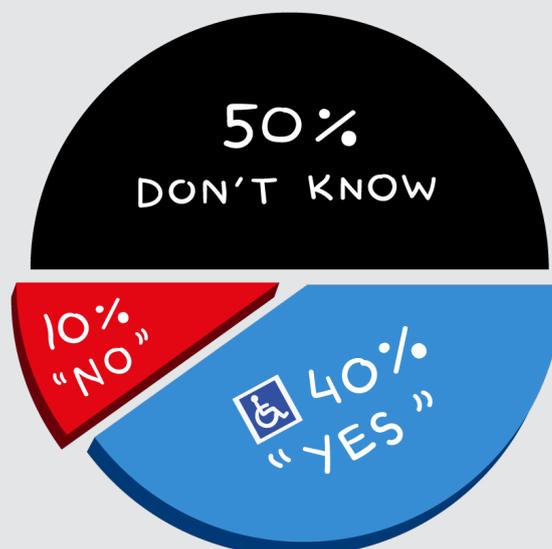


When asked how many vehicles within the fleet had step free access, 44.4% of those surveyed had no step-free access to any of their vehicles.

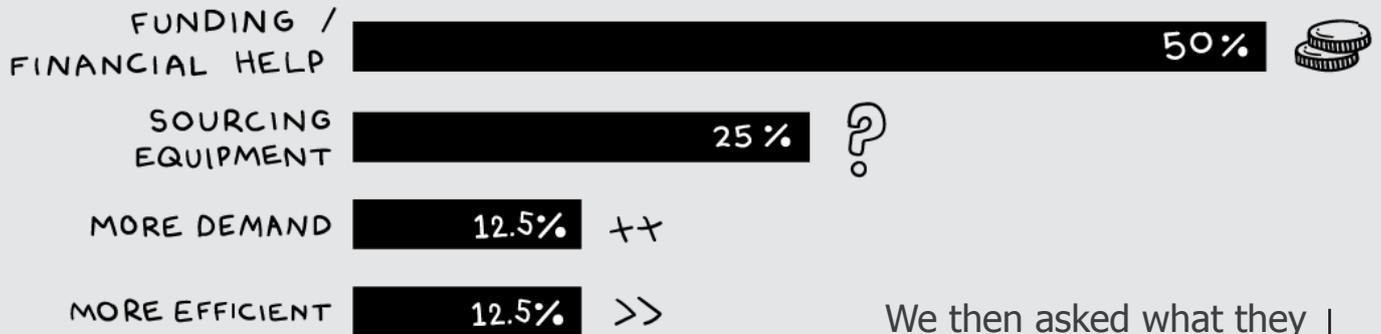
There is a small provision of some wheelchair accessible vehicles. However, not one company is able to provide accessible vehicles to facilitate an entire unit base. (One company has a single artist trailer with a lift, another an accessible costume, another with a 4 position accessible make up.)

When asked if they could facilitate making their vehicles accessible should a Production require it, 50% did not know.

Could you provide step-free if required?



What support would you need to make your vehicles accessible?



We then asked what they would need in terms of support for making their vehicles accessible, 50% of those replied "funding/financial help." Others cited more demand for accessible vehicles, more efficient accessible equipment, and help with sourcing equipment.

When asked who they would expect to cover the costs of the adjustments, 66.7% believed it should be a combination of both Production & Facilities companies.

This indicates a real willingness by facility companies to share the financial responsibilities for making their fleets more accessible.

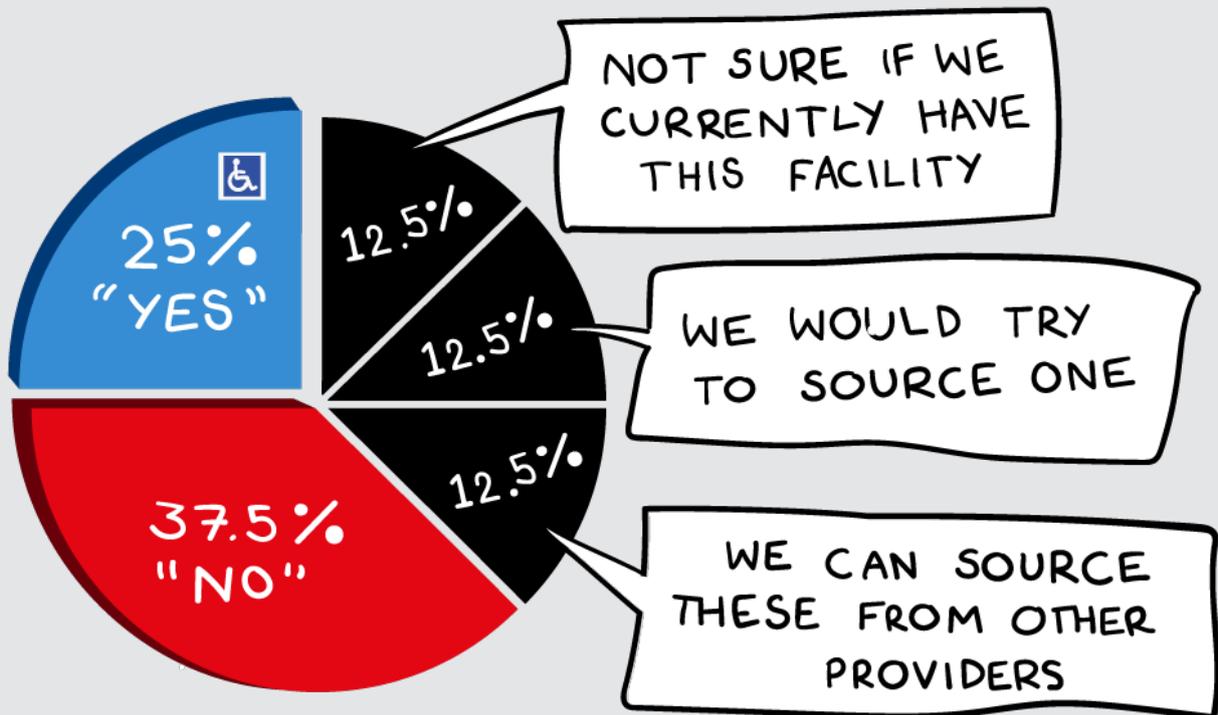


Facilities

Could you offer an accessible toilet facility?

Only one facilities company has a wheelchair accessible honeywagon.

Those who don't have any accessible honey wagons - the majority - were then asked if they could offer an alternative, such as an accessible portaloos.



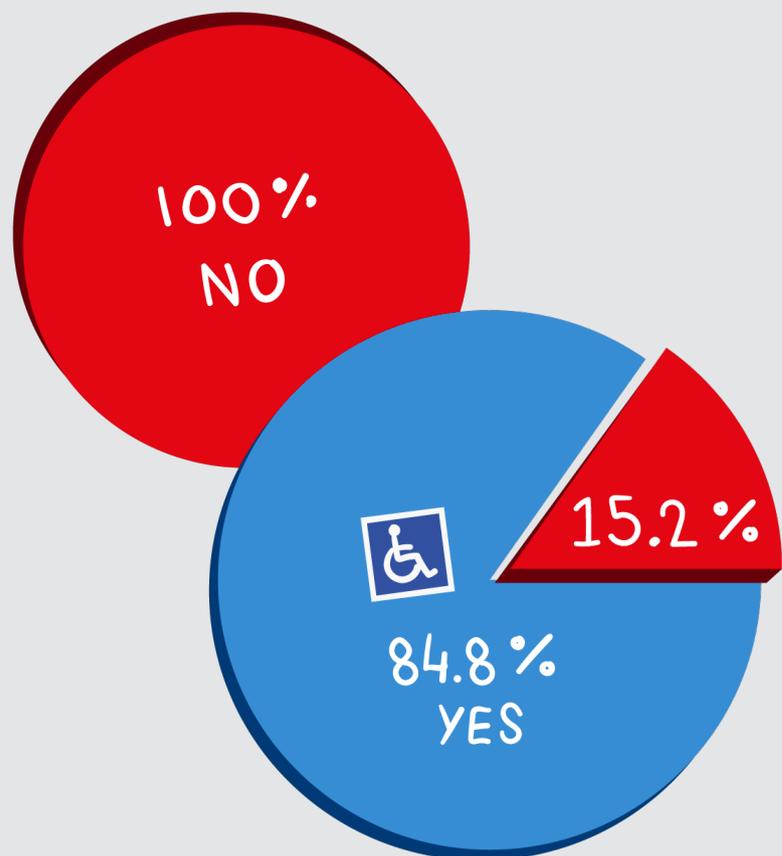
The majority of those surveyed, 62.5%, are either not able or unsure if they can source an accessible alternative should this be requested.

Induction Loops & Closed Captioning:

When asked whether any vehicles in the fleet were fitted with induction loops or closed captioning technology, we feel the results need no further explanation beyond the graphic below.

Are any of the vehicles in the fleet fitted with induction loops or closed captioning technology?

Prior use of fleet by a disabled person:



We asked companies if, to the best of their knowledge, they have ever had a disabled person using their facility vehicles. 60% responded yes, 30% of respondents were unable to say, and a further 10% said no.

A 60% Yes response also highlights that there is an existing demand within the industry for accessible facility vehicles.

The fact that 40% of respondents either didn't know or said illustrates the need for accessibility to form part of the general and wider conversations from the outset. Allowing both productions and facility companies to properly plan, implement and support additional access requirements.

The overwhelming conclusion following the survey is the sheer lack of any accessible facilities available. Half of those that replied have fleets with hundreds of vehicles and have no, or just one, accessible trailer to offer.

In the entire survey, we found one company that is able to offer one wheelchair accessible honey wagon. One honey wagon cannot service an entire industry and surely the stories in this report alone show that a demand far greater than this already exists.

It is also clear that a dramatic change in the provision of accessible vehicles needs to happen. No longer can it be acceptable to have a single accessible trailer and nothing else. 20% of all fleets need to be accessible. This means to be 20% of all costume and make up trucks, offices, 2 ways, 3 ways and honey wagons. All areas of a Unit Base need to be accessible, not just one or two.

Currently, making a Unit Base accessible would require the cross-hiring of multiple vehicles from multiple companies. This is simply not practical from a financial or logistical view point.

Much of the high end television made today is filmed across multiple locations. It can involve moving dozens of times (with most moves taking place on evenings or weekends) to be ready for the

THE FACILITIES SURVEY

Conclusions

next day's filming. Due to the size of Productions, the unit requires 24-hour on site service and maintenance. Many companies, citing insurance purposes, will only allow their vehicles and facilities to be moved and maintained by their own company drivers and staff. Even renting more accessible facilities from general events hire companies is not a viable alternative, for the same reason.

The design of these accessible trailers also needs careful consideration. From the very start of the process, the approach must be shifted to one of integration by design not as an add-on or cumbersome afterthought. To do this properly, consultation will need to take place, so designs are improved, facilities easier to use, and specialist equipment more easily sourced as required.

These companies will need support in purchasing new and customising existing vehicles in their fleet, but they also need to look at a permanent shift towards purchasing accessible trailers when the time comes to replace or expand their existing fleet.

All of that said, we had a good uptake in the facilities survey and were particularly pleased with the number of the larger UK facilities companies early and proactive engagement with us. 66.67% of all those contacted responded to our survey.

The majority of those who completed the survey answered every applicable question and were positive and engaging in the process. There were only a handful who were resistant or refused totally to participate citing that it either wasn't their responsibility or that they were too busy to take our brief survey.

50% of responders also answered the final question where they were invited to provide additional comments as well as further information about future plans that may have an impact on accessibility. Some of these comments below clearly show a willingness to engage in the conversations around greater accessibility and to change.

¹⁴ Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all people with a disability. Over ¼ million people in the UK with a disability need extra equipment and space to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortably.

These needs are met by Changing Places toilets, which have more space, and the right equipment, including a height adjustable changing bench, a peninsular toilet and a ceiling hoist.

<https://www.changing-places.org>
[accessed 28 November 2021]

¹⁵ Equality and Human Rights Commission, Equality Act 2010, <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/equality-act/equality-act-2010>
[accessed 28 November 2021]

¹⁶ According to the Equality Act, 2010: "reasonable adjustments may be required where premises, working arrangements or the lack of auxiliary aids put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage compared to others". More information can be found here: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/20> [accessed 28 November 2021]

“This is definitely something we would look into when upgrading our vehicles.”

“We would love to increase our accessible fleet... So we can consider all requirements, not just access lifts.”

“We do not usually get asked for much accessible units, however this is something that we would be happy to develop.”

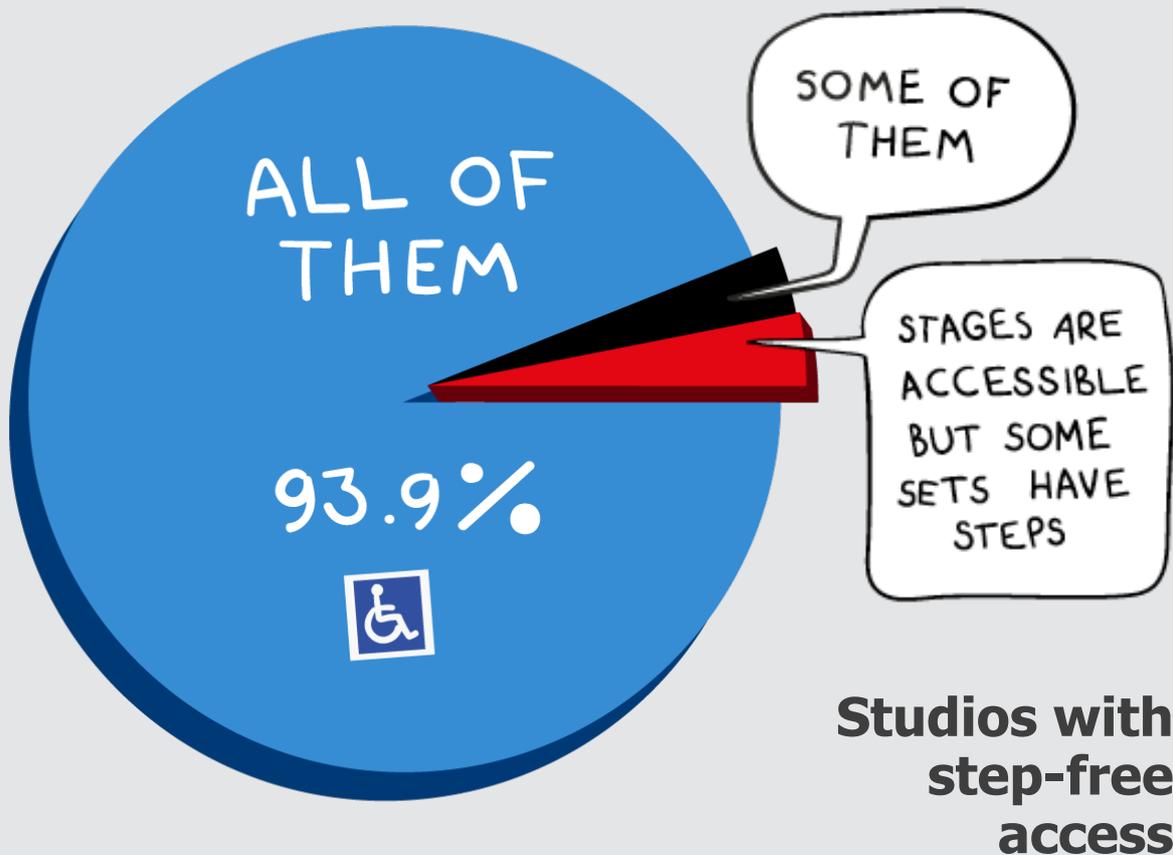


THE STUDIOS SURVEY

Results Studio Space

The majority of those studios who completed our survey, 65.6% stated they have between 1 to 4 sound stages. 21.9% stated they had between 5 to 8 stages, and 12.5% had more than 9.

Of these, the vast majority consider themselves to have step free access. This is of course, not surprising as most sound stages will have the capacity to have large vehicles drive up to and, in some cases, into them, in order to unload sets, props and so on.



When asked about step free access to ancillary spaces, the response was less unanimous.

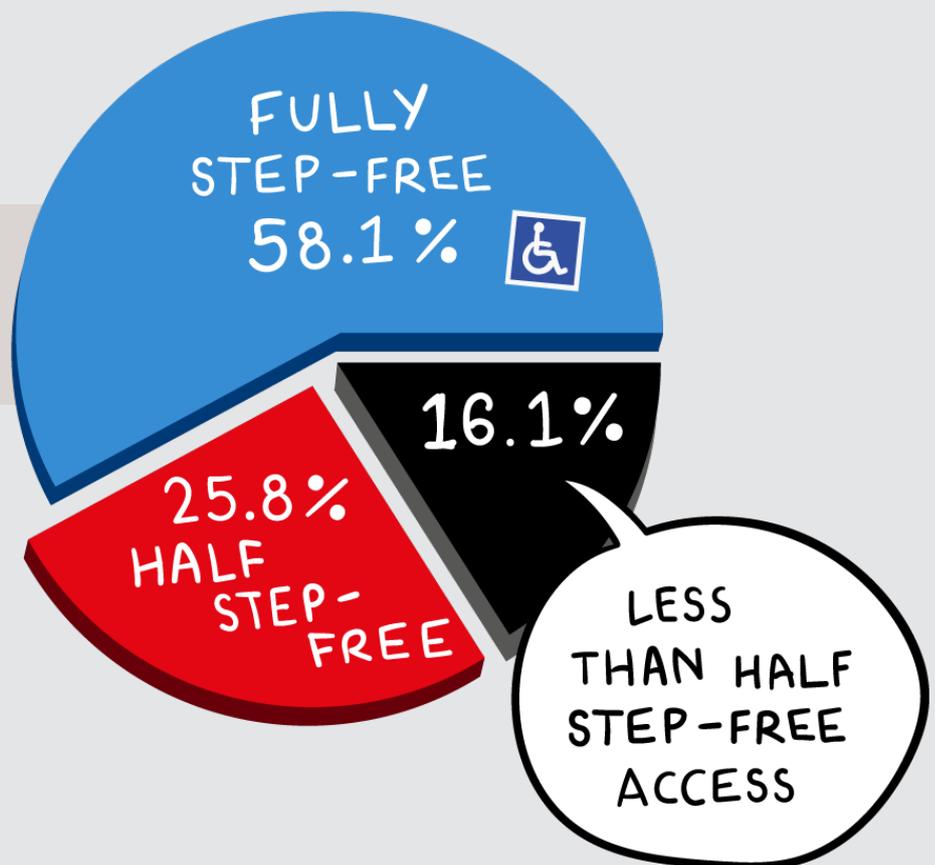
Although 58.1% stated that 100% of their ancillary spaces had step free access, 16.1% of respondents have step free access to less than 50% of their ancillary space.

THE STUDIOS SURVEY

Results

Ancillary Space

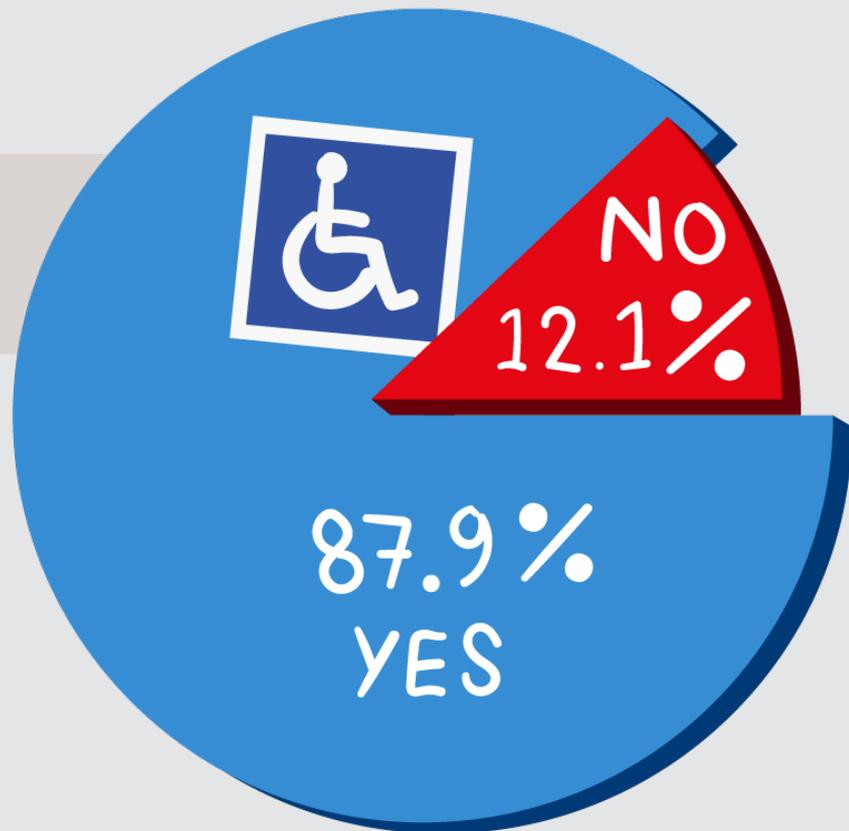
Ancillary Spaces with step-free access



9.3% of those surveyed chose not to answer this question which could suggest that none of their spaces are accessible.

Toilets

Accessible Toilets On Site:



When asked if there was a wheelchair accessible toilet on site 87.9% responded Yes.12.1% said No.

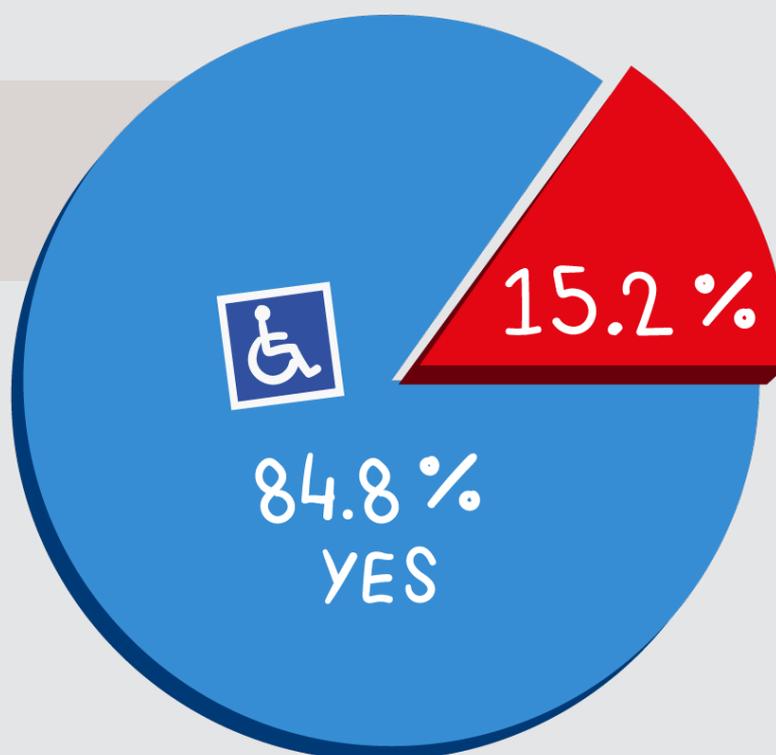
The follow up question, for those who responded 'Yes', yielded some results that were hard to analyse as some of the answers were not in a numeric format, for example: "unsure" or "several."

In summary, of those who did respond in a numerical form, 20% said they have 2 accessible toilets, 22% said they have 1, and 24.5% either entered no response or said they are unsure.

The question of parking yielded some interesting responses. When asked if the studio has dedicated disabled parking bays, defined as a minimum of 3200mm wide, and 6000mm deep (including a 1200mm rear transfer zone), 84.2% of those surveyed responded yes.

Parking

Dedicated Disabled Parking Bays



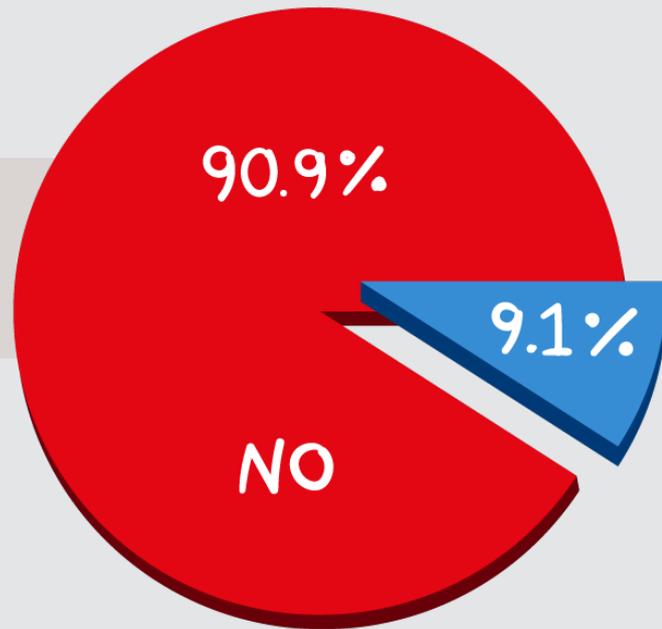
However, when asked how many spaces were provided that met the minimum, the responses varied widely, with some answering "unlimited," one stated that they: "have a large open area surrounding our studio with plenty of parking" and some said they had: "several."

Such responses indicate a general lack of knowledge about what requirements need to be met in order for a space to be considered a disabled parking bay.

Taking one aforementioned example about the open area surrounding a studio, there is no way to establish whether these are clearly marked out bays that adhere to the minimum requirements, or to ascertain the quality of the ground on which this parking would be established, nor their distance from the studios or ancillary spaces to which disabled people would need to navigate to.

Signage and layout

Accessible Signage eg. Braille



For those with visual impairments, neurodiverse disabilities or of reduced stature, the need for clear, easily identifiable and understandable signage is vital to help navigate spaces as independently as possible.

The survey asked if signage was in a logical position and easy to identify. For example with the use of large, clear font and positioned at waist height. 60.6% of responders answered No.

When asked whether the information on maps, signage, lift buttons and so on, were provided in a tactile format such as braille, 90.9% answered no.

78.8% of respondents have no hazard warning surfaces installed at the foot and top of stairwells, and 72.2% had no tactile flooring to indicate dropped curbs or changes in gradient, such as the base of a ramp.

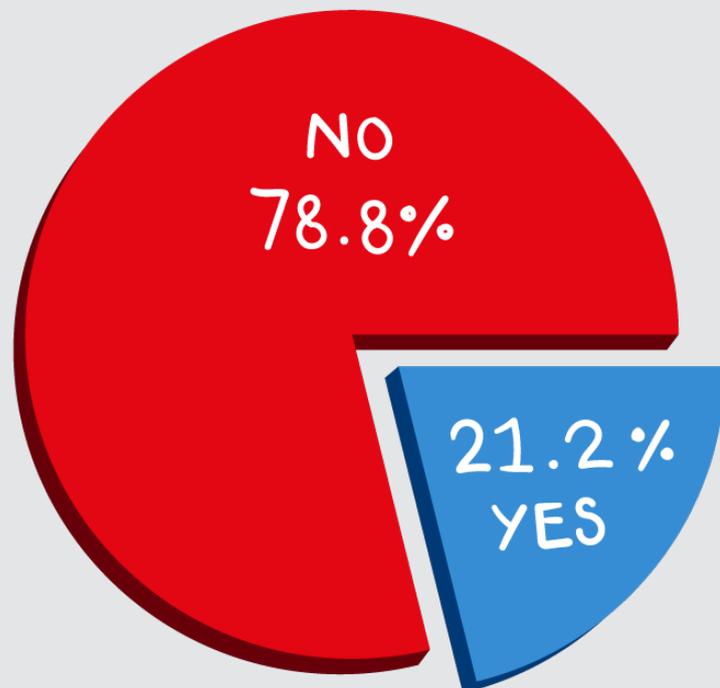
Induction loops and closed captioning technology

Are induction loops or closed captioning technology fitted anywhere on site

When asked if there are induction loops or closed captioning technology fitted anywhere on site, 78.8% answered No.

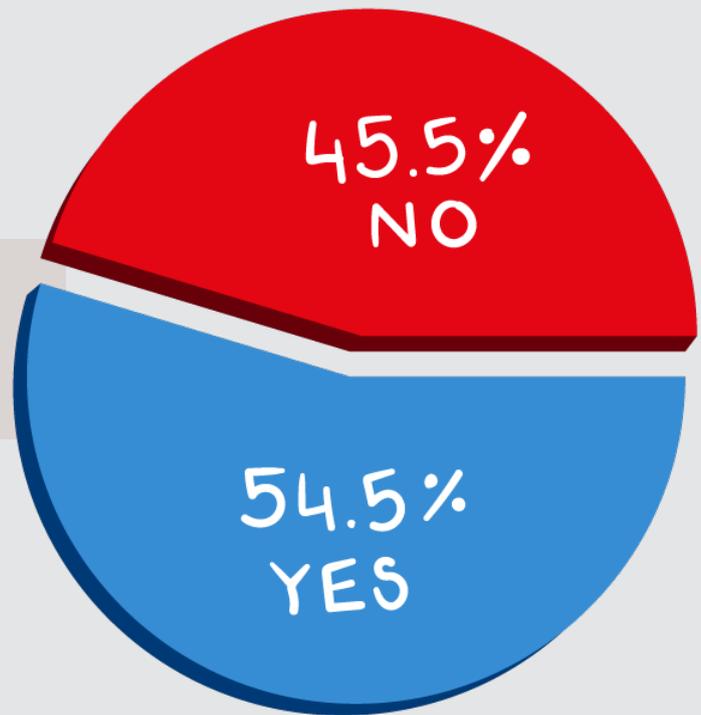
Of those that answered Yes, when asked where they were positioned, 2 contributed the answer: in the toilets & showers.

It is not clear why closed captioning and induction loop facilities were provided specifically for use in the toilets and showers.



Alarms & Emergency

Visual and Audio Fire Alarms?



When looking at accessibility in the event of an emergency we firstly asked if visual fire alarms were in use as well as more standard, audible ones. 54.4% answered Yes.

A promising number at first glance, however, that still leaves almost half of all of those surveyed without an alternative. For deaf and hard of hearing people, the inability to know when a potentially life threatening emergency such as a fire is taking place is both worrying and dangerous.

When asked if Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP's) were in operation on site, 65.6% answered Yes. A promising start, but a wheelchair user unable to evacuate from a building can be life threatening.

The lack of planning around emergencies only goes to further emphasise the importance of clear signage. If those who need additional support to exit a premises in the event of a fire are not catered for by appropriate alarm systems or PEEP's, it is vital that they can, at the very least, clearly find signage to Fire Exits.

Training

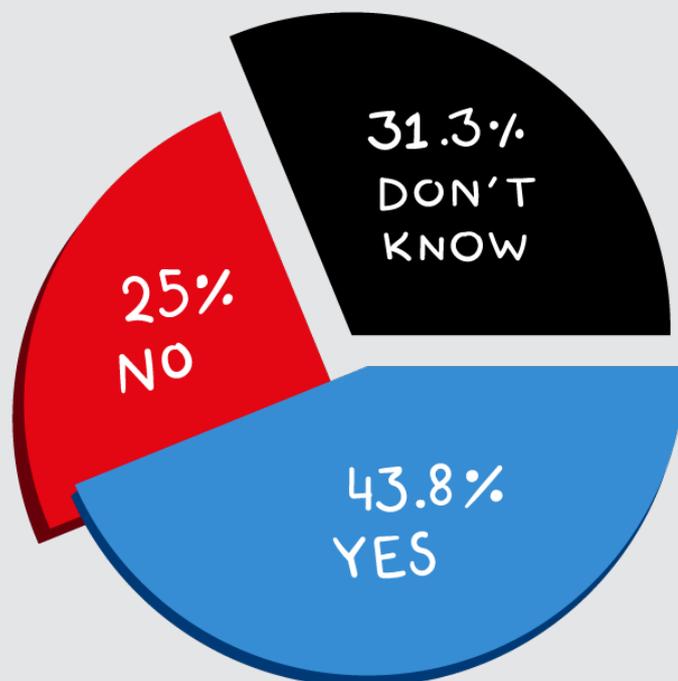
Disability Awareness Training

When asked about whether site staff are provided with any sort of training around Disability Awareness or Mental Health, 43.8% responded yes.

Of this 43.8%, 75% don't know how often this was provided.

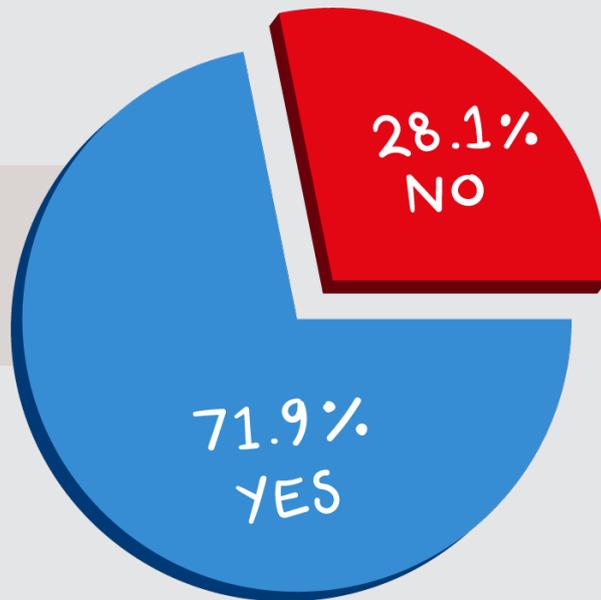
Without adequately trained staff, even to a basic level, questions need to be asked about how they expect to cater for those with disabilities.

Whether it be simply understanding a little of the challenges faced by disabled people in navigating our spaces, to understanding the importance of an accessible bathroom, the need for a quiet room, or one of the many other requirements listed in this report, that allow disabled people to carry out their job in dignity.



Quiet Rooms

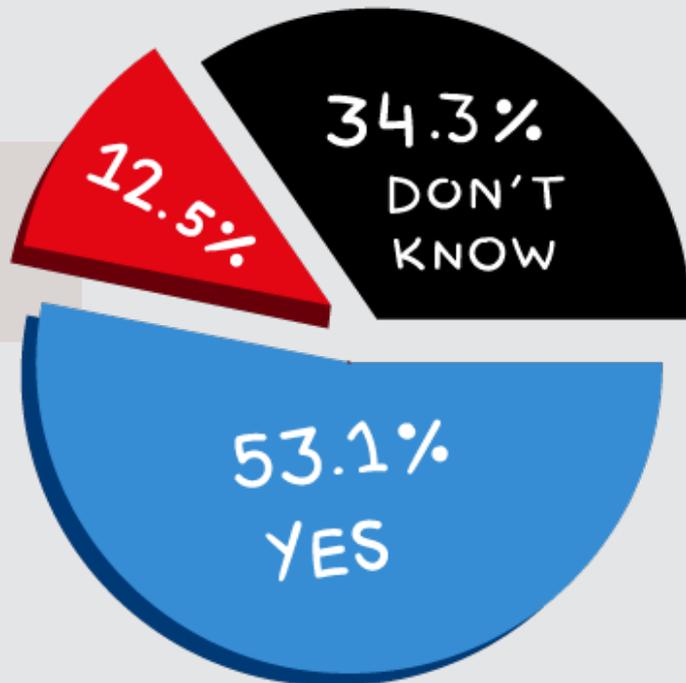
Quiet Rooms Available for Staff?



When asked if quiet rooms or zones are offered to those who may need to rest or have some time away from set, a positive 71.9% responded Yes.

Employment

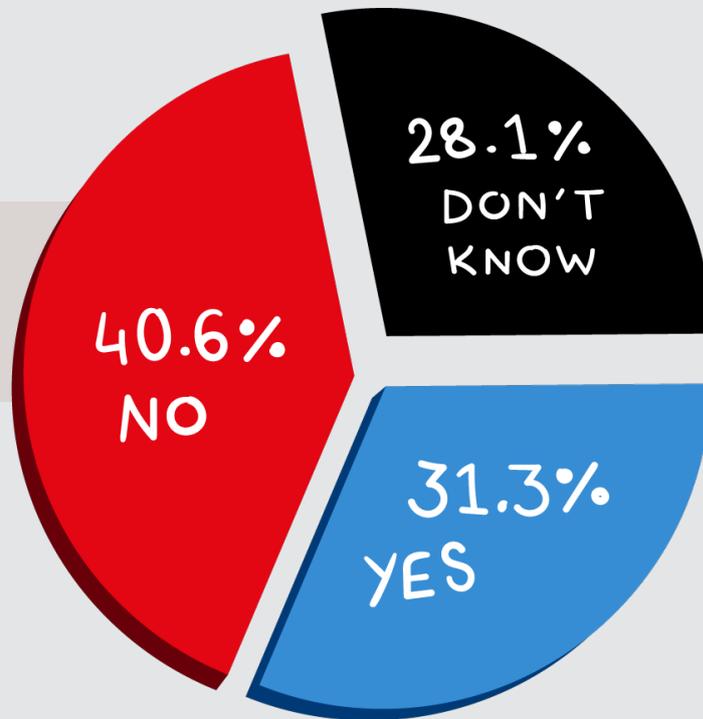
Was there ever a Disabled Person Working On Site?



Studios were asked if they currently have or have previously ever had a disabled person working on site, either employed directly by them or via a Production. 46.9% either said No or that they don't know.

Contact

Dedicated point of contact for accessibility



The survey asked if a member or members of staff were given the responsibility of liaising with disabled staff and freelancers on site. 68.7% either said No, or that they Didn't Know.

The studios survey showed that a relatively higher level of step-free access has been achieved in soundstages in particular. However, in these often sprawling spaces, more thought and consideration needs to take place, to ensure that the quantity of toilets and disabled parking bays are sufficient for the spaces. This requires full consultation - not only across the industry, but also with the spaces directly. Both to ascertain what level of changes are required, and how best to achieve this.

There is no doubt that a conversation needs to be had about what rules should be put in place for access. How many disabled toilets per soundstage, what standard these toilets need to be held to - should they, for instance, be a Changing Places toilet with a hoist? Disabled parking bays, visual fire alarms, and a whole litany of other issues need an industrial standard set. There is currently no standard.

There is also a need for a greater awareness and understanding of accessibility as a whole. From what a disabled parking bay needs to be, to what induction loops and closed captioning technology is, to the need for established and well managed emergency evacuation procedures. The knowledge gap here is glaring.

THE STUDIOS SURVEY

Conclusions

The story of the surveys was one of very little industry governance, and a lack of specificity. Most answers seemed to prompt a: "we think we have this" response. By setting a set of principals to be met, the industry can transform these spaces to be ones that are truly inclusive to disabled people.

The hesitancy of studios in participating was also a huge factor. In total, we contacted 72 studios. Of these, 45.85% responded to our survey. However, in many cases, soliciting a response was not an easy task.

To encourage participation, none of our questions were compulsory, and at various points in the survey the respondents were able to provide custom answers and additional information should they wish. Despite this, and reassurance that we would not reference studios or companies directly, the hesitancy was prevalent. In some, more sombre instances, it sparked

reactions ranging from deflection (accessibility is not our responsibility) to outright anger that we even dare asking these questions. We were glad these were a small minority yet important to acknowledge as it raises awareness of the environment in which we are advocating for change.

However, some positive comments at the end of the survey showed commitment to improved access across the studios, and across fleets owned by facilities companies:



“We have highlighted some areas as part of our future development of the site and our new proposed stages regarding better signage and more accessible/ auto doors for people to be able to better navigate around site”

“If granted planning by [name removed to ensure anonymity] our new sound stages would look at incorporating all of these measures”

“This is definitely something we would look into when upgrading our vehicles”

“We would love to increase our accessible fleet... So we can consider all requirements, not just access lifts”

Under the Equality Act 2010, employers and organisations have a responsibility to make sure that disabled people can access jobs, education and services as easily as non-disabled people. This is known as the 'duty to make reasonable adjustments.'

Our survey of the fixed and temporary spaces that our industry occupies gives us a clear idea of how the architecture of productions need to change. If representation targets are to be achieved in front of and behind the camera, all of the spaces need to enable people to do their jobs - from start to finish - whatever and wherever that job might be.

We have a series of recommendations that we believe will help achieve these desperately needed changes - and they are broken down to ensure they are financially efficient, considered and deliver the change we believe necessary. We have consulted far and wide in our efforts to be inclusive and to ensure that these are realistic and attainable.

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

"If you leave it until it becomes an afterthought, I'm always going to be the one who upsets your plans. Whereas if your plans involved me in the first place, I wouldn't need to be the one that upsets them. I wouldn't need to be the one that feels bad that you have to do something, apologise that you have to do something to accommodate me. You carry that burden for every single job you do." Sophie Stone

"There are so many things that would make disabled people's jobs and lives so much easier, and rather than having to fight for them, or beg for them, it'd be really lovely if they were just there as a given." Bryony Arnold

"We've got to make it accessible for all and that those little things, sometimes we don't realise, make a difference. They do make a difference." - Reece Pantry

A Line in every High End Television (HETV) Budget for Reasonable Adjustments

We are calling for all High End TV budgets to have an additional line added to cover general reasonable adjustments to make their productions more accessible both in offices, on sets, locations and unit bases. We suggest an initial figure of £5,000 but we invite those productions that fall into higher budget bands to increase this threshold and recognise that those in a lower budget band may need to adjust this figure.

The main purpose and motivation behind this recommendation is twofold:

Firstly, its purpose is to spark conversations during the early planning stages between Producers, Line Producers & key creatives. When doing a budget pass we want them to ask "what is a reasonable adjustment?" or think, "brilliant, we have a pot of money to spend for this purpose."

We hope that this will encourage them to think about accessibility from the outset when looking at production offices, studio spaces & scouting locations, to look at accessibility as a key part of the production planning process and not as a last minute afterthought.

| The Disabled Freelancers Fund

A great many disabled people struggle to enter or remain in our industry. We need to find a solution that allows them to access financial support to provide them with the equipment and reasonable adjustments they require without this burden falling to the production.

Building on the success of the HETV Skills Fund (created by the introduction of a 0.5% budget levy) we are calling for the introduction of a new levy of 0.1% on all HETV budgets to create a new, dedicated Disabled Freelancers Fund.

This new 0.1% levy would be capped in line with the existing 0.5% levy. Currently, productions with budgets of over £5M per broadcast hour are capped at £100,000. Based on a pro-rata'd principle, the Disabled Freelancers Fund levy for this budget band would be capped at £20,000. For those with budgets of less than £5M per broadcast hour the cap would be £12,200 - again pro-rata'd in line with this budget band's current £61,000 cap.

We believe it is vital that the Disabled Freelancers Fund is established as a separate, independent and self-sustaining fund - not cobbled together by earmarking existing funding pools. Disabled individuals need a dedicated place, separate from productions where they can go to access financial support.

For many disabled people the upfront costs of specialist equipment can be substantial but, once they have this equipment, they can take it from job to job. We do not think it is fair or reasonable to expect any single production to front these unbudgeted costs. The creation of this fund, contributed to equally by all, will be game changing. Empowering disabled freelancers to shed the fear of being a financial burden on production, taking away the anxiety and fear of where the much needed support will come from.

For clarity, this fund is not designed to replace Access to Work but rather to fix its failings for freelancers. Access to Work is paperwork heavy, and often lengthy to apply for, which does not suit the freelancer who is often offered work with little or no notice. It struggles to understand how a person can have multiple employers within the same year and often because of this, equipment for one project cannot always be taken and used on another. But more than that, heavy cuts to the allowances awarded mean that the support needed cannot always be afforded.

It is vital that Access to Work is not undermined by our fund. But it is failing to fix the key access barriers we have. The fund could therefore work in one of two ways:

by providing a stop gap before an Access to Work grant is made, and by supplementing the support that Access to Work supplies, which is inadequate for many freelancers in the industry.

Further discussion about Access to Work is needed amongst industry, broadcasters and disabled freelancers, as well as with both the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). But there is little doubt that currently it does not do enough to support disabled creatives to work independently in our industry.

“A lot of decisions are made for us, and about us, but not with us. And I think that’s the problem, because people can only make assumptions, and say “oh we can fix things, we can provide this, we can do this”, but nobody is actually listening to the feedback, nobody is actually including us from the start.”

Sophie Stone

“You end up having to worry about them worrying about you.”

Mat Fraser

“More ramps allows me to get on and do what I need to do and it doesn’t require another person to look at me and think “oh, does that person need help?”. Nah mate, I’m not your charity case.”

Reece Pantry



Accessibility Coordinator

Building on the work of the 1 in 4 Coalition in the US, we are calling for every High End TV production to have an Accessibility Coordinator (AC). Much like an Intimacy Coordinator, all productions must make a provision to hire an Accessibility Coordinator. The AC will be the main point of contact for all cast and crew wishing to discuss accessibility. They should be brought on in the early stages of production to assess the production base, studios and any locations as and when they are agreed upon and continue to work, as required, throughout the production period.

In the ambition for this role, we envision the Accessibility Coordinator to be an empowered individual who can be more than a provocation. There's a logistical demand for the role - and a knowledge and understanding of the broad range of disabilities that comes with it. They would also lead a culture change of inclusivity and behaviours of care that need to be integrated into the work environment, and that requires someone who is able to make people accountable for their actions.

Latest statistics show that 19% of all working age adults consider themselves to be disabled (DWP Family Resources Survey). We would like to see, as best practice, the requirement to ask all new cast and crew, after they have accepted a job on the production, one simple question:

"Do you require any reasonable adjustments or have any access requirements in order to do your job?"

This question highlights the need for an Accessibility Coordinator in several ways.

Firstly, we need to begin to break down the stigma attached to talking about disability, and empower everyone in the industry to get increasingly comfortable with this. Language around disability can feel awkward and can be ever changing. An Accessibility Coordinator would be there to help to guide these initial conversations and have follow up, one-on-one

conversations with cast and crew who have disclosed they have a disability to ensure their access requirements are met.

Secondly, it is our hope that the more we discuss disability, the more confident the cast and crew will be in disclosing their disability that they have previously hidden. There is a cultural shift, an attitudinal shift that needs to happen on the journey to a more inclusive industry. The industry needs to be ready to step up and support these individuals.

Finally, a large part of the Accessibility Coordinators' role will be to assist in organising logistics. Everything from ensuring scripts are provided in advance and in the correct format, to checking the accessible honey wagon is in place and much more.

Locations, for example, are often sourced before the full hiring of cast and crew. It can prove tricky if during production, a location is then found to be inaccessible - so it is important to recognise an Accessibility Coordinator is there to anticipate needs as much as support them.

Assessing the needs of both the individual and production, overseeing preparation ahead of filming, as well as being there on the day takes weight off two parties. It takes the burden away from disabled individuals. They are no longer solely responsible for communicating and organising their access needs, but are instead able to focus on the job at hand.

The role also takes the responsibility away from already very busy Production teams and Producers. No longer can one person be given the added responsibility on top of their day job. The changes needed are far too complex and important for this to be a viable option.

The amount of time an Accessibility Coordinator will be required to spend on each individual production will need to be assessed on a case by case basis. A number of factors will influence this, including the number of disabled cast and crew members, the level of support these people require and, of course, the storylines and content of the show.

It might also depend on the nature of disability. As the 1IN4 coalition have pointed out, for people with learning disabilities, neurodivergent people and many others, communication support is inherently valuable - clarifying, simplifying and interpreting instructions and conversation where needed. Every disability is different. Every production will be different.

It is our hope that Accessibility Coordinators can provide much needed support, guidance and reassurance to all disabled people working in High End TV productions. Screenskills have agreed, in principle, to establish and offer a training programme for Accessibility Coordinators. This would ensure that the role continues to evolve and that the right support exists to support them.

“If you can change their attitude, they will help you change the stairs.” **Cherylee Houston**



“You just want somebody to ask. You just want somebody to sit with you and say what can we put in place and what can we shift and change.” **Sophie Stone**

I’ve worked on multiple sets where there aren’t toilet facilities and I’ve had to be carried into honeywagons which are, politely put, piss laden, and I’ve had to bump along the floor in order to get into it. It doesn’t give you much dignity. But you don’t want to create a fuss. You are in the middle of nowhere so this is what you have to do.” **Bryony Arnold**

| Studios & Facilities Fund

The lack of access to the spaces that the High End TV industry operates in is clear and it is time for that to change. However, the financial burden to bring about this change cannot solely fall on the facilities companies or the studio spaces we operate in. Yes, they need to commit to making their spaces and equipment more accessible, but to do this they need financial support. We are calling for the establishment of a one off fund for studios and facilities companies to access, in order to build disabled toilets, quiet rooms, install ramps, purchase clear signage, build accessible 3 ways, honey wagons, costume and make up trailers.

Many have spoken about the increased demand that currently exists as a result of a growing High End TV industry in the UK and we appreciate this is creating a boom time for facilities companies and studios. Although this is likely to be contributing to increased profits for many of these companies, the surge in demand is removing any motivation for them to improve accessibility. There is always another job, a new production that perhaps doesn't have any access requirements that they can provide their services to instead. The industry needs to recognise this situation, there needs to be an industry-wide commitment and call for action to address the need for improved access.

Stringent rules will need to be agreed and implemented to ensure the facilities companies and studios receiving these funds (and the communities using them) are those most in need of our support. As such, a needs-based match fund could be most suitable here. This would help ensure that across the country, throughout all nations and regions in which filming takes place, all disabled freelancers have access to accessible spaces and facilities.

Better on and off screen representation in the High End TV industry can only be achieved with this sort of grassroots investment. It is vital that we are able to get actors who are wheelchair users dressed, through costume and make up, and to set everyday. To offer those who need a quiet room the space to step off set as and when they need to in order to deliver their best performance. To allow the visually impaired to navigate around the spaces independently knowing they can access all the information they require in a tactile format. It is these sorts of adjustments that will help to fundamentally change our industries' base level of accessibility. Not only will this help to make our industry far more inclusive but, these changes will mean far more disabled people will be able to enter our industry with fewer or no need for additional adjustments. It will all be there, as standard.

As our industry continues to grow, and as big streamers continue to enter the market and take over the larger, traditional studios, more and more space is being sought in converted warehouses, temporary stages and ad hoc spaces. As well as the work needed to vastly

improve accessibility in larger studios, it is vital that this fund is established so these new, emerging spaces who may not have the same financial backing as the larger studios are not left behind. They will often not have the capital behind them to fund these changes themselves but, as our industry increasingly relies on these spaces, we must support them to become accessible.

What these accessible standards will be requires further consultation and discussion. What a disabled toilet is and how it is defined is a complicated thing, and disabled access can range hugely from a bar beside a toilet to a Changing Places space. We are not laying out what these standards should be, because it will require an industry wide discussion, but it is vital these discussions happen quickly, and with the weight of the entire industry behind them.

¹⁷ Christa van Raalte, Richard Wallis and Dawid Pekalski, Disability by Design: Representation in TV, Bournemouth University (August 2021), https://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/35896/1/BU_Disability_by_Design_2021%20%281%29.pdf

¹⁸ Kate Ansell, Career Routes and Barriers for Disabled People in the UK TV Industry, The Sir Lenny Henry Centre for Media Diversity at Birmingham City University (August 2021), <https://bcuassets.blob.core.windows.net/docs/disability-in-tv-reportv3-132741800991883115.pdf> [accessed 28 November 2021]

¹⁹ Dr Doris Ruth Eikhof, Doubling Disability Research Report, CDN, University of Leicester (April 2020), https://leicester.figshare.com/articles/report/Doubling_Disability_Research_Report/12174168 [accessed 28 November 2021]

²⁰ Dr Marie Tidball, Catherine Bunting (June 2021), Interim Report on Doubling Disability, CDN, <https://creativitydiversitynetwork.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Interim-Briefing-Report-on-Doubling-Disability.pdf> [accessed: 22 November 2021]

**“Stop shunning things,
stop pretending that
they don’t exist and
hiding it. Celebrate us.
Hype us.”**
Sophie Stone

**“Disabled toilets are
always a massive thing
and, for me, it’s not a
hard thing, it’s a toilet.
That is what every
single person needs
on set, in life, in work,
in everything. I don’t
understand why that
seems to be a massive
issue for a lot of
productions.”**

Ruth Madeley

**“Trailers have steps, so
I can’t see an actor in
the morning whilst they
are in make up. I can’t
pop into costume to see
how they’re doing... I
physically am not able
to be present, part of
those conversations.
The most important job
of a producer is putting
out those fires. I need
to be part of those
conversations and hear
what’s happening, so I
know what needs to be
fixed.”**

Bryony Arnold

Conclusions & Next Steps

The campaign to change the status of disabled people in this industry has been long and hard fought. Our movement follows in the footsteps of, and holds hands with, our allies, long running disabled groups such as DANC, DDPTV, CDN, thinkBIGGER!, 1in4 Coalition in the US, and more. Our proposals have been informed by conversations with these groups, and reports and presentations they have created - in particular, "Disability by Design" report by DDPTV, Equity, BECTU and Bournemouth University, Kate Ansell's report for the Lenny Henry Centre, "Career Routes and Barriers for Disabled People in the UK TV Industry," DDPTV's industry presentation to the Coalition for Change earlier in 2021, CDN's "Doubling Disability Research Report" and their "Interim Report on Doubling Disability". You will find some shared elements to the recommendations, though our area of focus has been primarily on the accessibility of spaces, studios and sets.

What runs through all this work is that change is overdue and vital.

The Social Model of Disability states that disabled people are not disabled by their impairments but rather it is the society around them that is disabling. The lack of thought put into our societal architecture is often quite startling. The TV industry has been complicit in allowing this to happen. It is guilty of sitting on its hands, not addressing the needs of disabled people and excluding them from our screens for too long.

Quotas, targets, commitments are all well and good and we do not doubt the intentions behind them, but you cannot change the percentages of disabled people involved in television without looking at the physical access of our spaces.

The industry as a whole needs to sit together and decide minimum access requirements for every space and facility. We need to decide what proportion studios and facilities companies should spend themselves, and what proportion should be supported by the industry. Hopefully, some measures, like the Disabled Freelancers Fund and the line in the budget can be agreed quickly, but others will require detailed discussion.

Our recommendations have been designed as a wrap-around package - addressing the problem on multiple fronts. If we do this, not only does this bring about swifter change, but it also reduces the long-term dependency on the Studio & Facilities Fund - because those spaces will have become fully accessible. This, in turn, reduces the need for spending the Line in every budget because productions are already working with accessible facilities and studios. It's a domino effect, which isn't to undermine the importance that they all exist and continue to exist to support disabled freelancers - but the ideal is an industry where everybody is able to work - no matter who they are.

We by no means claim that our recommendations will mean the end to challenges to those looking to work in our industry but we believe it is an excellent place to start. We also know that our focus is very much on High-End TV, but we hope this will be a catalyst for change in other areas of our industry, such as film, unscripted, post production, VFX and beyond. We'd love to see similar surveys carried out across all areas, building a much needed comprehensive overview of the industry to ensure no sector falls behind - and no disabled employee gets left behind.

But, our recommendations are designed to act as a stimulus to these conversations.

We are not suggesting that our recommendations are the perfect answer to what is ahead for our industry.

But they are an answer, and we desperately need one.

We cannot keep working in the same way and failing to support disabled talent.

As Georgia Brown from Amazon said to Jack before the MacTaggart lecture - when Covid happened, the industry reacted, and a cross-industry discussion was able to take place. This is a similar level of crisis and requires a similar round table.

We are planning to establish a Steering Group comprising of pan-industry wide representatives across all genres, from broadcasters, SVODs, industry bodies, facilities companies, studios, disabled campaign groups, creatives and freelancers, and many more. We want everyone to have a seat at the table to help make our recommendations a reality, and to save our industry from being an exclusive and exclusionary space. Calls to unite the industry are not new, having been made before, by everybody we have spoken to. We echo their cry, to stand together as one, demanding change for all.

We also invite all broadcasters, production companies and indies to make a public commitment to implement all or some of our recommendations. We are happy to support any company wishing to pilot our suggestions in any way we can, and invite them to report back on the successes and challenges they faced.

Thank you for reading and listening.

This is just the start

Thank You

Thank you to our allies, fellow disabled campaigners, who took the time to contribute to our report and feedback on our proposals. Your time, energy and wisdom is hugely appreciated, and we owe where we are now, to you.

Thank you to all the participants of our film, whose testimony you have been reading throughout this report. They are all experienced and talented TV creatives working in front of and behind the camera. The quotes have been taken from the raw interviews. You can find the edited film available, directed by Justin Edgar of 104 Films, with Production by Ark Media, on our website.

Thank you to the many broadcasters, SVODs, industry organisations, groups and various freelancers, disabled and non-disabled, who took the time to meet with us, listen to our proposals, read our writing, and share their valuable input. We appreciate you, and look forward to working together.

The Authors

Genevieve Barr. Holly Lubran. Jack Thorne. Katie Player. We are Underlying Health Condition and we are the co authors of this report, along with our contributing allies, who we stand in unity with. We exist as a group of four as this report goes to print, but our approach is collaborative. We work as a collective, for transformative, radical justice and equity for disabled freelancers in the industry, disabled freelancers yet to enter the industry, TV viewers, and disabled people in other industries. Just like stories travel the world; our ambitions are global. We think - we hope - that this approach can be adapted, tweaked, amended to work to help make all industries more accessible for their disabled employees and freelancers, until the social model becomes a reality.

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| **Notes:**



Underlying Health Condition

