**Access Forum / Notes**

Access is a process starts at the beginning – it shouldn’t be an add-on

It’s part of the creative process, but for the audience it starts from the minute you see a poster.

Are the symbols big enough to be noticed, for example?

Sometimes it feels like a bolt-on – esp. and audio described performance

Often it’s a Tuesday matinee – not much use to us! Or when the rugby’s on.

Can we share kit and expertise in Cardiff to bring down the costs?

An app is in development for visually impaired audiences – v exciting.

Next session – let’s talk about a specific element.

Dates for programming, booking – we should make sure there aren’t clashes, as happened to our Christmas show (SK was same day as WMC’s).

LM – Shape has an access performance clash list. Might not still be doing it, but it might be worth checking.

The companies and venues should be sharing resources, equipment and information a bit more.

Practically, Wales should be doing better at sharing resources.

Being able to choose which performances will have access provision earlier on.

It takes us a bit of time (when working on site-specific shows), but we need to make choices earlier in order to meet print deadlines etc.

It would be better to be able to give more than one option to our audiences.

The dream is for all performances to be fully accessible, but maybe we can provide ipads to all, or find some other way to get there.

Relaxed performance – what is it?

If we’re aiming to make them accessible to children on the autism spectrum rather than just (ahem) more boisterous children, maybe we should be more specific.

Let’s think more carefully about what language we’re using – does the term ‘access performance’ mean what we think it means to our target audiences.

Finding a wider audience is a major challenge. It’s not necessarily seeing people coming through the door in the right numbers yet. How can we make it more exciting and inviting to disabled audiences?

Backstage areas in venues, and making them more accessible for performers with disabilities. A lot of work goes into programming and FoH, but we need more thought about backstage.

Cost is a big issue and is the main barrier. Sharing kit can be useful, but if you’re putting on multiple performances, the costs are massive, so is there a way of sharing funding too?

V important not to make it an add-on – e.g. if you’re going to caption, do it every perf.

Some access issues conflicts with others – e.g. the needs of an audience with dementia might be different from people with wheelchair access needs.

There are a lot of apps being developed or are available now – it’s hard to keep up.

Making buildings accessible to audiences.

Making the script accessible eg on larger print script

There aren’t enough opportunities for disabled actors.

Theatre companies need to be aware of their obligations for audio captioning, audio described etc – not just their options.

We must take them into account without sacrificing the intent of the show.

We need to bring theatre to Deaf community more, and bring them to us!

We need to train FoH BSL more.

Anecdotes about a Deaf crew couldn’t hear warnings – needs to be addressed.

Importance of budgeting for access from the start, so that it’s not an add-on, it’s part of it all.

This process needs to be sustainable – how can we develop this work and make sure it’s lasting.

DAC has a regular bulletin on when access performances are – but they rely on companies to tell them when they are.

23% of the population of Wales are disabled (and most of them have a carer), so they’re a massive target audience. All the more reason to make sure they’re all well-represented.

DAC is doing a survey – please take part!

What happens next?

Specific topics would be good, and to know in advance what they are

2 hr sessions next time?

Move them around if we can – Chapter are happy to offer a space, NTW will pay for interpretation, Caerphilly?

Future meetings

Key Themes to discuss:

* Funding
* Programming
* Sharing of resources & technology
* Scheduling and Clash Calendar facilities
* Front of House – Training, support, facilities
* Backstage and production
* Marketing and Communications to people with access needs

- Language we use, how we communicate
- Symbols – what do we use, phrasing

Actions:

* Rhian to write up a suggested agenda template for future, including what’s on, what’s been seen, what’s coming up, then key theme
* Rhian to create Community group
* Rhian to invite suggestions of what theme to start with, any additional themes – post on community group
* NTW to suggest next dates, and poll group
* Rhian to invite key individuals / companies to talk at next session
* Promote next session