

Training for Equality



Use **Guide 3** to assess your organisation's disability training needs and choose the best trainer for the job.

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The Portfolio is published as a result of collaboration with a working party, which includes specialist consultants, and aims to support the elimination of discrimination in service provision. The views expressed in these guides are not necessarily those of Resource.

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Front cover:

Building on the skills and experience of disabled trainers:
Anna Jackson running a staff training programme
for Cheshire Libraries. Photo: Jonathan Goldberg

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Training changes levels of awareness: most blind and partially sighted people have some vision. © Metropolitan Museum of Art

Introduction

Training staff in disability issues is a valuable tool for positive change. It plays a vital role in the development of equal access for disabled people to museums, archives and libraries. Disability training has been referred to as "*perhaps the most effective action any service provider can take*"¹ towards improving provision for disabled people.

The *Survey of Provision for Disabled Users of Museums, Archives and Libraries*, commissioned by Resource in 2001, shows that nine out of ten high performers were committed to organising disability training for staff.

Training raises the level of awareness, responsiveness and resourcefulness of staff. It can lead to substantial improvements in accessibility and encourage the organisation to adopt "*an holistic and cross-disciplinary approach that informs everything from the director's office, by way of the trustees, through the galleries to a warm welcome at the barrier-free front door.*"²

Disability training should form part of any training policy and plan. It can bring a user-focused perspective to the work of your organisation and help you meet the requirements of disability legislation. This Guide is designed for all those involved in the planning, design or delivery of training in museums, archives and libraries.

1 Good reasons to provide disability training

Giving staff confidence

Training will help to give staff the confidence to make disabled people feel welcome as users and employees. This can be achieved by following guidance on who disabled people are, and advice on how to communicate by taking disability etiquette into account (see Guide 2).

Surveys show that staff attitude is one of the most important factors for customer satisfaction. They also show that disabled people are on the whole less satisfied with the quality of customer care than are non-disabled people. Staff training will result in higher levels of user satisfaction among disabled users.

Confident, friendly and helpful staff will find a way of welcoming all users, including disabled people.

Developing a user-centred perspective

Not all training is delivered by disabled people, but that which is can give you a valuable insight into how disabled people experience your organisation and the service they need and ought to receive. A visually impaired person said:

"I have been in situations when I've stood at reception and people haven't said anything. I didn't know people were there. There was no rapport, no communication. These places provide a public service, so for people on reception, their first reaction should be: 'Hello, how can I help?' "³

Changing long-held ideas

There are many misconceptions about disability. These tend to prevent museums, archives and libraries from responding adequately to user needs.

Wrong assumptions about disability will result in inadequate provision of service. For example, visual impairment was frequently equated with blindness and thus little attention was paid to colour or tone contrast as a means of easing orientation, while lack of knowledge has inhibited the development of services for people with mental health issues, and misconceptions about the high cost of providing good communications for people who are hard of hearing means that their needs are sometimes ignored.

Well-trained staff will be more resourceful in developing access solutions and in tailoring services to meet the needs of specific groups of disabled people. Training will thus also reduce the likelihood of complaints being made by service users.

Increasing user numbers

Training is a starting point for increasing the number of disabled people who use your services and therefore is likely to improve the public profile of a museum, archive or library. Disabled people will tell each other about improvements in your practice. One happy customer, it is said, introduces seven more by word of mouth.

Supporting funding bids

You may be asked to give evidence of staff having been trained in Disability Awareness or Equality Training when making bids for funding. Evidence of training will strengthen your bid.

Becoming an inclusive organisation

“Training in disability issues for all staff, not only front of house staff, is an essential step in improving provision – undertake it at the start of any access developments.”⁴

Training can enable staff at all levels to realise the proactive role they can play in the development of an organisation which is inclusive of disabled people. Specialist training can be provided to give staff a practical understanding of how to implement your access plan, for example using consultation effectively (see Guide 11) or commissioning an access audit as a tool for change (see Guide 4).

Fulfilling your legal duties

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) makes employers and service providers responsible for knowing and meeting the requirements of disabled people (see Guide 5). The DDA Code of Practice “Rights of Access; Goods, Services and Premises” cites the provision of training as evidence that an organisation is meeting this duty:

“Service providers are more likely to be able to comply with their duties under the Act and prevent their employees from discriminating against disabled customers if they consider:

- *training staff to understand the service provider’s policy towards disabled people, their legal obligations and the duty of reasonable adjustments;*
- *providing disability awareness and disability etiquette training for all staff who have contact with the public.”*

2 What is disability training?

Disability awareness and disability equality

These have different approaches. You need to establish what you want to achieve and what is on offer before commissioning training, as the title of the trainer or course may not always reflect what is actually being provided.

Disability briefing

These sessions have also been used in some museums, archives and libraries as a helpful introduction to the planning and implementation of an access strategy. They do enable staff to have some knowledge of the DDA, basic disability etiquette and sources of support but these sessions are not a substitute for training.

Specific training such as Deaf Awareness

This focuses heavily on practical knowledge with a view to incorporating this into service provision. It may also cover etiquette and language. This training may be useful to increase the confidence of non-disabled staff when providing services to disabled people. It will not always, however, cover the challenging of assumptions and attitudes necessary to support a fully inclusive organisational culture. If awareness training is impairment-specific and emphasises medical conditions, it may inadvertently reinforce the medical model of disability (see Guide 1). It is sometimes provided by a non-disabled person, but a majority of respondents to the Resource disability survey in 2001 felt that training is more effective when the trainer is a disabled person.

Disability equality training

This may include issues common to awareness training such as customer care, etiquette and language. It is likely to encourage exploration of the social model of disability (see Guide1) in greater depth. This would cover how people are disabled by attitudes and barriers present in society and institutions. It might include, for example, an examination of media images of disability and how they contribute to society's views and attitudes. From this standpoint, the course can positively demonstrate what an organisation needs to do to change attitudes to disabled people and to remove barriers to access for them. A disabled person is best placed to provide this training.

Simulation exercises

In awareness training, simulation may be used. This involves participants using a wheelchair or blindfolds, distorting glasses or ear defenders. This is intended to give non-disabled people a perspective on the experience of disability and sometimes focuses on practical work in pairs, for example, how to guide blind people and how to communicate effectively with D/deaf people.

A good trainer will insist that simulation is only temporary and does not give anyone an experiential understanding of disability and will use the exercise to enhance the delegates' awareness of barriers. Used without this proviso, it has been seen to promote stereotypical assumptions and lead delegates to the misguided belief that they 'know it all'. Simulation is not likely to be used in Disability Equality Training. It may have limited impact in changing social attitudes and there is debate about its value among disabled people.

Training keynotes

- Incorporate Disability Awareness Training or Disability Equality Training into your overall training policy/strategy.
- Ensure provision is made under relevant budget headings for funding it.
- Seek out trainers who will design and deliver courses to meet your expressed requirements.
- Use disabled trainers who will provide a professional service.
- Seek references from previous clients.
- Evaluate the training and monitor action planning resulting from training.
- Provide induction and refresher training.

3 What training should cover

The content of a training programme should address the training needs of the staff groups for whom it has been designed. All staff groups and board members will benefit from training. A comprehensive disability training programme covering disability briefing, awareness and equality could cover the following:

- The context of disability today, including history, politics, society, health, education, media, family, cultures.
- Both social and medical models of disability.
- The legal requirements: the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA); the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act; the Human Rights Act (see Guide 5).
- Barriers: sensory, physical, intellectual, institutional, attitudinal.
- Customer care, including language and etiquette, acceptance of diversity and how to provide a non-threatening welcome.
- Some information on specific impairments with a focus on identifying access needs and how to meet them.
- How to provide access to information, ICT, buildings, services, staff, meetings and events, consultation processes and employment, including voluntary work and board membership.
- Sources of information and support, including organisations both of and for disabled people.

All staff groups will benefit from knowing about customer care, the context of disability, models of disability, barriers to access and solutions. These topics usually provide the core content of disability

training. The level of depth at which topics are addressed depends on the requirements of each staff group and the context in which the training is being commissioned.

Specific training needs

Implementing improvements in access for disabled people is an ongoing process and training needs to keep evolving. Examples of specialist training needs that could arise include:

- planning an inclusive exhibition
- reflecting diversity and disability access in stock acquisition policies
- making archive material available to disabled people
- describing objects for visually impaired people
- making ICT accessible
- meeting the information and communication needs of D/deaf people
- developing and marketing services
- the Disability Discrimination Act

A combined consultancy and training package may be considered.

When to provide training

Part of audits and consultation

A disability access audit (see Guide 4) may be useful in identifying the need for staff training, or it may be that staff training results in an audit commission. Training can be used as part of a process of preparing an access policy. If you carry out a consultation exercise with disabled people (see Guide 11), you may need to provide staff training to meet any specified needs of those participating.

Keeping staff skills current

Disability training should be part of induction training for all new staff at all levels in the organisation. Keeping your trustees, councillors and others less involved in day-to-day service provision up to date on disability issues will ensure their continued support for organisational development. Refresher training may be very useful.

Supporting new initiatives

Training to meet a particular need will support new developments, such as buildings, collections, services, projects, events etc., or a specific area of work – ensuring ICT is accessible; providing outreach services; exhibition design; employment, etc. When you are planning a new project that targets a specific group, knowledge relating to that group will help the project's success. For example, a project to improve services for people with impaired hearing may benefit from consultation or interaction with the local Deaf club or a group of people with learning difficulties.

Involving external consultants and freelancers

When external consultants and freelancers are working with you, you can offer them places on your organisation's disability training courses or make it a requirement of the contract that they undertake training. In this way you actively take responsibility for disability access in all aspects of your organisation's work.

4 Choosing your trainer

Where to start

From November 2003, the websites of the Regional Agencies for museums, archives and libraries will hold regional databases of disability trainers and auditors. The databases are being developed in collaboration with Resource. They are designed to help museums, archives and libraries meet a variety of training needs. Trainers can record their specific experience of museums, archives or libraries on the database. Some trainers will be highly qualified and experienced; others will take a semi-formal approach. You can use these databases to contact potential trainers who appear to match your requirements, once you have specified them.

Using disabled or non-disabled trainers

The core components of disability equality and awareness training should always be led by disabled people. This view is reflected in the response to the Resource disability survey:

“When providing specialist training (e.g. outreach; marketing or policies) both disabled and non-disabled people with the right skills and experience will be able to do this. Resource believes, however, that the most effective training programme always involves disabled people.”

The person or people you choose (training may be provided by two co-trainers) need to demonstrate the ability to provide a training package that will meet your specification.

Selecting the right trainer

A trainer who can design a tailored programme is much preferable to one who delivers a standard 'off the shelf' package. You can test this out in the initial interview or tender process by noting whether they ask for details of your expectations, your training policies, the number of staff to be trained and the group's access needs.

The trainer should provide a clear plan with objectives for each individual module and supply an evaluation form (unless your organisation supplies these). It is very worthwhile to include action planning into the training programme, to ensure that issues identified are followed up by changes in practice. You will need to decide who will monitor the progress of the action planning.

Good communication and interpersonal skills should be evident, as should the ability to relate well with the staff groups the training is designed for, as well as a clear awareness of group dynamics.

The most effective trainer will have an interactive style; be able to uncover assumptions and attitudes that need to be challenged; and do this without being critical or condemnatory and encourage responses from everyone in the group.

Decide how important it is for the trainer to have local knowledge or to know about your particular field of work, or be happy to work alongside someone with that knowledge. Use of case studies can help inform discussion. Trainers ought to be able to provide you with contacts and sources of information.

Trainers should be able to demonstrate a track record which is relevant to your specification. In case of doubt, it is worthwhile following up references to support this.

If you are quoted a very low price for training or it is offered free, it is important to ask why. The quality of the service provided is crucial.

It is generally accepted that training with smaller groups is more personalised, interactive and effective. Many trainers do not train groups of more than 15–20 people.

Cascading training

You may decide that for reasons of time, money and staff numbers you need a training package that is provided to one group of staff who then deliver it to others. In this case ensure that the training package covers all the elements you want staff to learn and that the 'cascaders' will be able to pass on the training effectively.

They will need to be able to demonstrate the principles of disability equality and be confident as trainers to facilitate group responses. Cascading is most effective with a group of between six and 12 people. The disadvantages of cascading are more diluted exposure to the specialist expertise and experience of the trainer. Assess if it is not a false economy.

Conclusion

Well informed and trained staff will develop and provide more inclusive events, activities and services. They will contribute to building your organisation's profile, when coming into contact with disabled people. A wide range of services and issues, from staff attitudes at the reception point through information design to the management of premises and employment procedures, have the potential to affect positively or negatively the experiences of a disabled people.

An ongoing commitment to training adds value to your organisation's access policy and plan. It is most effective if it includes staff training at all levels and if you have chosen the right trainer to meet your expressed needs.

Where to find trainers

The following are examples of organisations which provide training on disability equality and awareness and the Disability Discrimination Act, or who can advise you on finding a suitable trainer.

British Council of Disabled People

Litchurch Plaza

Litchurch Lane

Derby

DE24 8AA

Tel: 01332 295551

Fax: 01332 295580

Minicom: 01332 295581

Email: general@bcodp.org.uk

www.bcodp.org.uk

Changing Faces

1-2 Junction Mews

London

W2 1PN

Tel: 020 7706 4232

DeafblindUK

National Centre for Deafblindness

John and Lucille van Geest Place

Cygnets Road

Hampton

Peterborough

PE7 8FD

Tel: 01733 358100

Fax: 01733 358356

Email: info@deafblind.org.uk

www.deafblind.org.uk

Mind

Tel: 020 8519 2122

www.mind.org.uk

RNIB

Tel: 020 7388 1266

www.rnib.org.uk

RNID

Tel: 0808 808 0123

Textphone: 0808 808 9000

www.rnid.org.uk

Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation

12 City Forum

250 City Road

London EC1V 8AF

Tel: 020 7250 3222

www.rador.org.uk

Further information

Association for Heritage Interpretation

Cruachan

Tayinloan

Tarbert

PA29 6XF

Email: ahi@heritageinterpretation.org.uk

www.heritageinterpretation.org.uk

Diversity UK

The Diversity Directory

Lists equal opportunity trainers. A copy of the Directory can be obtained by writing to: Mary Gray, Diversity UK, 3 Abbey Square, Turvey, Bedford, MK43 8DJ or by calling: 01234 881 380.

Disability Discrimination Act

Code of Practice on rights of access to goods, facilities, services and premises for disabled people

This statutory Code, agreed by Parliament, provides detailed advice on the way the law should work, together with practical examples and tips. Its status means it must be referred to for guidance in court when deciding on DDA Part III cases. Available from The Stationery Office: Tel 0870 600 5522, online via www.thestationeryoffice.com or through bookshops. ISBN number 0117028606. Price £13.95.

Disability Rights Commission

Guidance and briefing notes on aspects of legislation (DDA 1995) including the provisions implemented in October 2004.

Also information on training programmes.

(details overleaf)

DRC Helpline
Freepost MID 02164
Stratford-upon-Avon
CV37 9BR
Tel: 0845 762 2633
Fax: 0845 777 8878
Minicom: 0845 762 2644
Email: ddahelp@stra.sitel.co.uk
www.drc-gb.org

Employers' Forum on Disability

Nutmeg House
60 Gainsford Street
London
SE1 2NY
Tel: 020 7403 3020
Fax: 020 7403 0404
Minicom: 020 7403 0040
Email: website.enquiries@employers-forum.co.uk

National Disability Arts Forum

Can provide contact details for organisations run by disabled people in your region, through whom local contacts with auditors and trainers may be made.

Mea House
Ellison Place
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8XS
Tel: 0191 261 1628
Fax: 0191 222 0573
Minicom 0191 261 2237
Email: ndaf@ndaf.org.uk
www.ndaf.org.uk

Notes

- 1 *Survey of Provision for Disabled Users of Museums, Archives and Libraries*; Resource, 2001.
- 2 *Disability Directory for Museums and Galleries*; Resource, 2000.
- 3 *Talking Images Guide: museums, galleries and heritage sites improving access for blind and partially sighted people*; RNIB/Vocaleyes, 2003.
- 4 *Disability Directory for Museums and Galleries*; Resource, 2000 (page 88, Section 4, Training). Quote taken from an article by Alison Coles, 'Museums for Everyone' in *Interpretation*, the journal of the Association for Heritage Interpretation (AHI), February 1998.

- 1 Disability in Context
- 2 Meeting Disabled People
- 3 **Training for Equality**
- 4 Audits
- 5 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)
- 6 Inclusive Information
- 7 Using Technology
- 8 Access on a Shoestring
- 9 Accessible Environments
- 10 Outreach and Partnerships
- 11 Consulting Disabled People
- 12 Employment at Every Level

The **Disability Portfolio** is a collection of 12 guides on how best to meet the needs of disabled people as users and staff in museums, archives and libraries. It gives invaluable advice, information and guidance to help overcome barriers and follow good practice.

The Portfolio is available in 12 point clear print or 15 point large print formats, braille, audio cassette and on the website. Please contact 020 7273 1458 or info@resource.gov.uk

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