

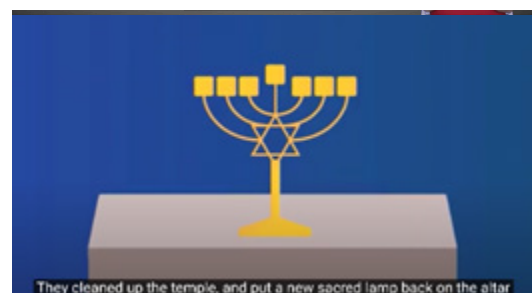
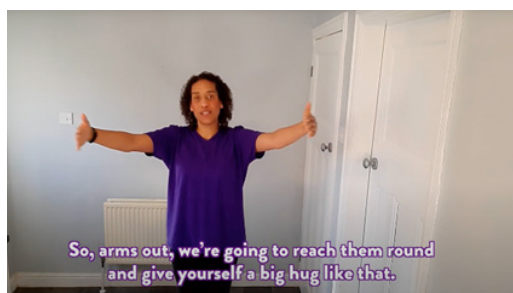
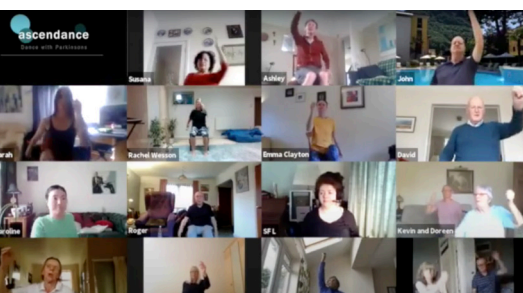
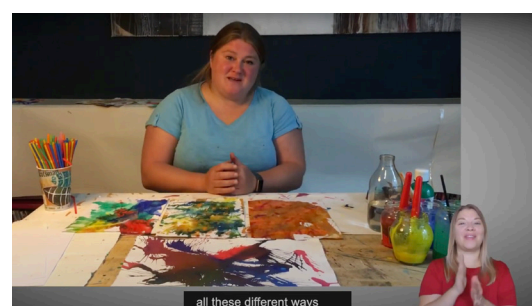
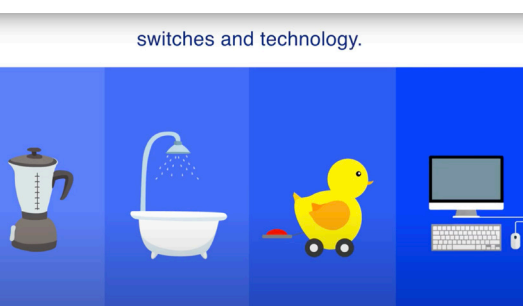


International Day of Disabled People, Leeds For All

1st December 2020 - 4th December 2020

Event Report

Created by William Merritt Centre & Forum Central





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Background

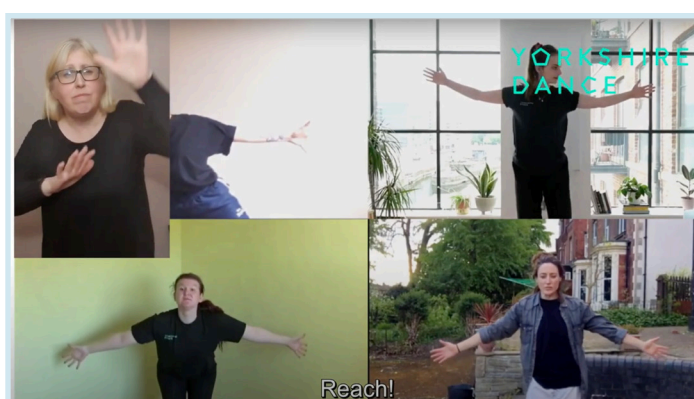
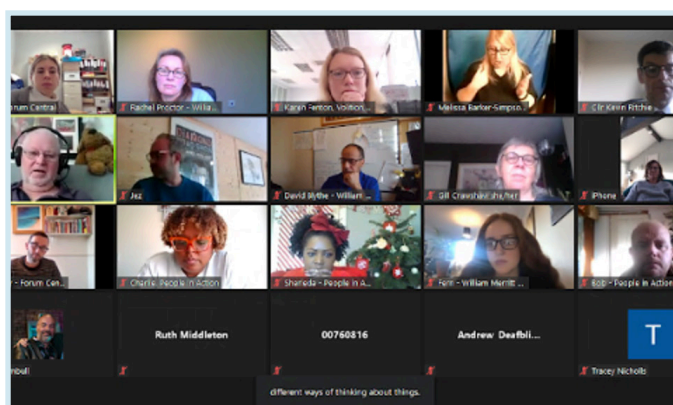
International Day of Disabled People (IDODP) is an annual awareness day. In Leeds, the event ran a bit differently in 2020. Due to the unprecedented challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, we were unable to host a face to face event. For some the pandemic has given us the chance to become more connected, for others we've never felt more isolated. So William Merritt Centre (WMC), Forum Central (FC) and the planning committee arranged Leeds For All - a week of accessible, online, live, on demand and at home activities to keep people connected. From discussions to dancing, boxing to baking, there was something for everyone.

A space for celebration, reflection, connection, acceptance and challenge.

Leeds for All gave organisations and individuals the opportunity to showcase and celebrate. It included films, performances, workshops and exhibitions. 300 people attended the live events, 1,144 people viewed our films, activities and workshops on YouTube and 612 individuals engaged in the offline/website activities. Leeds City Council ward Councillors and the LCC Equality Hub kindly part funded the programme of events.

The event was planned in 10 weeks by a core group made up of representatives from organisations supporting people with a wide range of impairments, both sensory and physical as well as learning disabilities and autism.

Planning Group Members	
Advonet	Leeds Disabled People Organisation (LDPO)
Arts, Health and Wellbeing Network	Leeds Hearing and Sight Loss Service
DeafBlind UK	Leeds Society for Deaf & Blind
Forum Central - Volition	MESMAC
Healthwatch Leeds	People in Action
Leeds City Council Museums & Galleries	William Merritt Centre
Leeds City Council - Equality Hub	



Activities and Events

Live Events – 13 Live Events

300 Delegates

Opening & Welcome - Watch >>
The official opening was led by Cllr Kevin Ritchie - Ward Councillor and Disability Champion, Geoff Turnbull - Equality, Communities, Leeds City Council and Phil Gleeson - Trustee of Volition & FC, with performances of music and dance from People in Action.
William Merritt Centre, Technology & Toys - Watch >>
An introduction and Q&A to WMC Technology and toys services.
People in Action, Stay Active
Online accessible fitness session.
Forum Central, Accessibility of Public Spaces
A round table discussion focusing on Public Spaces, Feeling Connected and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on disabled people in Leeds, held in partnership with Leeds Involving People and Leeds City Council.
Carers Connections, Introduction to Autobiographical Writing - Watch >>
Including discussions, shared experiences formally or creatively; encouraging disability awareness helping people feel seen and valued.
Sense, Boxing Fitness
Fundamentals of Boxing session, mixed with a cardiovascular workout.
Mesmac, Sing - a - Long with Sage
Tessa Smith from the Sing It Out Project hosted a wellbeing singing session that gave participants the opportunity to sing age old classics, with Jo from Age UK Leeds teaching Sing and Sign to celebrate IDODP.
Deafblind UK, Sensory Loss, Accessibility Workshop
Session aimed at encouraging providers to increase accessibility, empowering individuals to access services and social opportunities with success and confidence (Covid & beyond).
Purple Patch Arts, Disco
A fabulous Disco, playing upbeat classics that got everyone moving and grooving!
Forum Central, Employment Discussion - Watch Ella's Employment Story here >>
A round table discussion focusing on Employment, Feeling Connected and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on disabled people in Leeds, held in partnership with Scope and Department for Work & Pensions.
Advonet, Friendships Relationships and Sexuality Quiz
Accessible quiz to give a taster session of their self-advocacy workshops for LGBTQ+.

Jointly Hosted by Space and Sage, Poetry Event

LGBT Women's Space and Sage hold poetry evenings. Participants could choose to read their own poetry, to read poetry that inspires them or they find of relevance, or to listen to others and contribute.

LDPO, Strategies for Disability Activism in The Post-Covid World - Watch here >>

A panel discussion about what strategies for activism the disabled people's movement can develop going into a post-COVID world and how we can work with other activist groups such as Black Lives Matter.

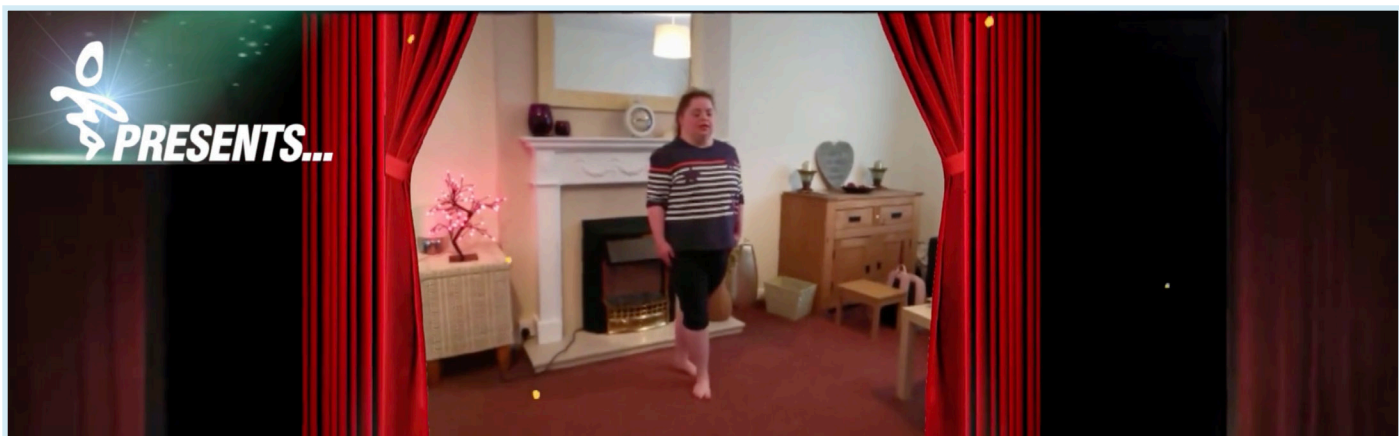


Pre-recorded Activities – 25 on demand videos available on YouTube

1,144 views

Ascendance, Dancing with Parkinson's	Watch >>
Cranmer Scheme Cooking Guidance	Watch >>
Driving Mobility Introduction	Watch >>
Forum Central ALaDDIN Film	Watch >>
Leeds Directory Introduction	Watch >>
Leeds Hearing & Sight Loss Service Yoga Session	Watch >>
Leeds Mencap Imagine if	Watch >>
Leeds Mencap, The Great Big Sing Along	Watch >>
People In Action, Pia Presents..	Watch >>
Purple Patch, Dance Move Workshop	Watch >>
School of Rock And Media, Britain's Got Talent	Watch >>
Sense Arts, Ink Blowing	Watch >>
Sense Arts, Making Sounds at Home Workshop	Watch >>
Sense Arts, Poetry Workshop	Watch >>
Sense Arts, Seated Inclusive Dance Workshop	Watch >>

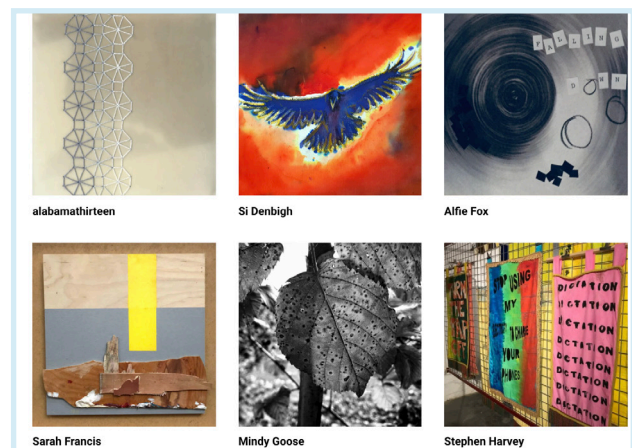
Sense Arts, Sound Bath Workshop	Watch >>
Specialist Autism Services, Autism Mythbusting!	Watch >>
Specialist Autism Services, SAS Art Exhibition	Watch >>
Specialist Autism Services, Snake and Mouse	Watch >>
The Advonet Group, Citizen Advocacy Film	Watch >>
The Advonet Group, People's Parliament Film	Watch >>
William Merritt Centre, Introduction	Watch >>
Yorkshire Dance, Dance Class	Watch >>
Association of Blind Asians, Visually Impaired Young Service User Story	Watch >>
Association of Blind Asians, Story of Migrant Visually Impaired	Watch >>



Website/Offline activities - 6 activities

612 Engagements recorded

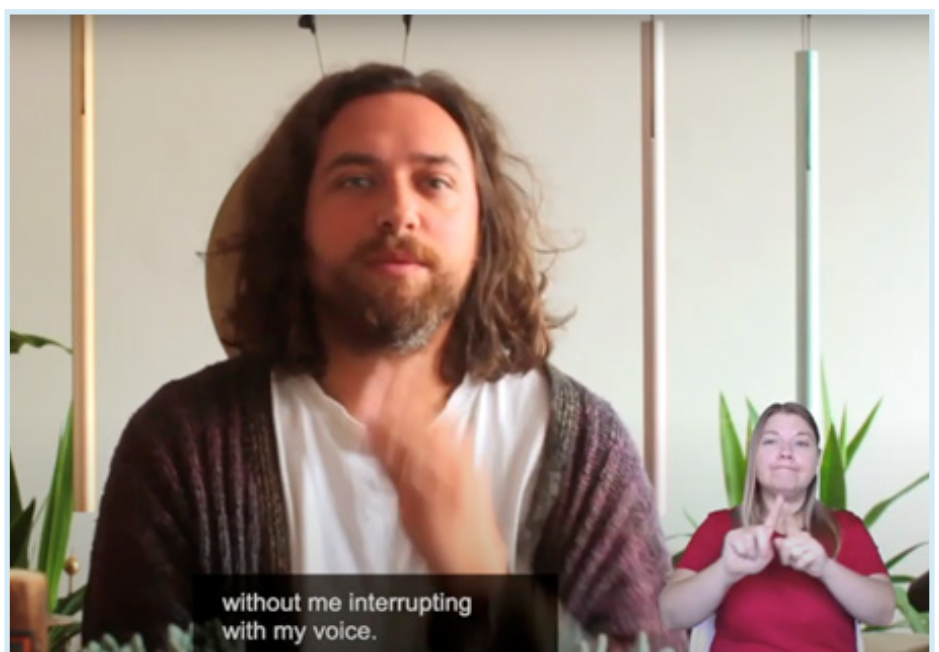
Advonet, Colouring Activity	Access >>
Healthwatch Leeds And Leeds Museums and Galleries, Day In The Life	Access >>
Leeds Autism Aim - The Advonet Group, Coronavirus: Autistic Stories	Access >>
Leeds Society for Deaf & Blind People, Activity Baking Pack	
Love Arts, Love Arts Exhibition	Access >>
POSSIBLE ALL ALONG - Online Exhibition by Disabled Artists In Leeds	Access >>



Accessibility

Throughout the planning process, there was a focus on making the online programme of events as accessible as possible. It was an event organised by disabled people, for disabled people, which aimed to set a 'new norm' standard and awareness of digitally inclusive public events. **Steps taken included:**

- A detailed programme of events was created accessible for screen readers and autistic individuals. **Programme >>**
- Plain text, braille and audio description versions of the programme were available for individuals with additional needs. **Plain text >> Audio description >>**
- All pre-recorded films on YouTube had subtitles, 10 had British Sign Language (BSL) and 1 video had audio description.
- There was a dedicated individual available offering technical and event access support to both delegates and exhibitors throughout the week.
- The event team were fully briefed and had an information pack each.
- Completion of an Accessibility survey was requested when booking live events to ensure everyone's needs were catered for.
- Subtitles were available on all live zoom sessions and 9 live sessions had BSL.
- Exhibitor packs were circulated to all live exhibitors including hosting guidelines and guides on communication tips for talking to people with visual impairments, people who are deaf or hard of hearing and people with autism.



Event Promotion


The event was promoted widely using email, websites, Eventbrite, bulletins and social media via FC, WMC, member and partner organisations. A press release by Leeds City Council and WMC was sent to the disability press and an article was published in the Yorkshire Evening Post, **Read article >>**. We were unable to supply any printwork due to the Covid-19 pandemic so we relied heavily on digital promotion.

An event was created on Eventbrite to promote and manage live event bookings, which reached 2,965 page views and 261 bookings. 300 people attended the live events in total (not all live events were promoted via Eventbrite). There was also a dedicated IDODP webpage which had 1,049 views. A highlights video is also being created so we can continue promotion of the event throughout the year.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF DISABLED PEOPLE 2020

#LeedsForAll

The William Merritt Centre and Forum Central are bringing together a series of online, accessible, inclusive performances, stories, exhibitions, discussions, information and activities to celebrate International Day of Disabled People 2020!



LEEDS FOR ALL
International Day of Disabled People
#LeedsForAll

Hello everyone! I am here to share some very exciting news!

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE TO ATTEND

So join us between the 1st and 4th of December 2020 to celebrate International Day of Disabled People in Leeds 2020.

A SPACE FOR CELEBRATION, REFLECTION, CONNECTION, ACCEPTANCE AND CHALLENGE.

Leeds City Council ward Councillors and the LCC Equality Hub have kindly part funded the programme of events

[DOWNLOAD FULL EVENT INFORMATION HERE >>](#)

ACCESSIBLE VERSIONS

[DOWNLOAD TEXT VERSION](#)

Braille copy, BSL or Audio Description on CD available upon request.
Please contact fwarwick@wmdlc.org

Tuesday, 1st December

9:30 - 10:30 - OPENING & WELCOME, BSL

Join us on Zoom for the official opening of the event with Cllr Kevin Ritchie, Geoff Turnbull - Equality, Communities, Leeds City Council and Phil Gleeson - Trustee of Volition, Forum Central as well as some talent performance of music and dance from People in Action.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO AND TO BOOK](#)

11:30 - 12:00 WILLIAM MERRITT CENTRE, TECHNOLOGY AND TOYS, BSL

Introduction and Q&A to WMC Technology and toys services.

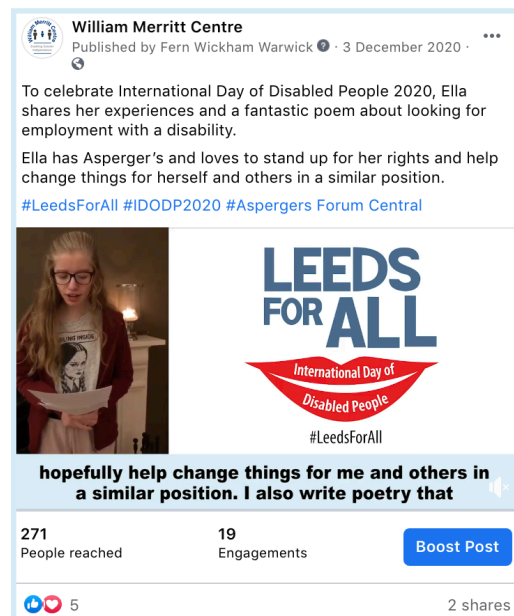
[CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFO AND TO BOOK](#)

An advert for the event was displayed on the big screen in Millennium Square on the content loop, twice hourly between 9am and 10pm for 2 weeks prior.



Social Media:

Due to the coronavirus pandemic and government restrictions, we relied heavily on social media to promote the event as we were unable to use normal means like displays in public spaces and printwork. In total we reached 118,034 individuals with 1,743 engagements across WMC & FC social media channels.



Please find further social media stats below:

(Promotion took place: 1/11/2020 to 31/12/2020)			
Twitter:	FC	WMC	WMC + FC
Number of IDODP posts:	39	40	79
Total Engagements on all IDODP Posts:	1,090	262	1,352
Average Engagements per post:	27	6	17
Total Impressions on all IDODP Posts:	75,628	34,596	110,224
AVG Impressions per post	1,939	865	1,395
Total New followers during promotion:	80	46	126
Facebook:	FC	WMC	WMC + FC
Number of IDODP posts:	7	43	50
Total Engagements on all IDODP Posts:	92	299	391
AVG Engagements per post:	13	7	8
Total Reach on all IDODP Posts:	1,550	6,290	7,840
AVG Reach per post	221	146	157
Total New likes during promotion:	49	21	70
Facebook Event Page:			
Reach	82		
Engagements	12		
Facebook Advertising:			
Forum Central Facebook Page likes	37		
Reach	6047		
Engagements	213 engagements (up 38%)		
Link clicks	58		
Spend	£100		

Key Themes & Learning

Positives:

- Host more sessions and promote regular sessions that are available throughout the year, people really enjoyed the opportunity to be social and connect during the pandemic. Delegate feedback: “Please do more, this community has been extremely isolated under covid-19, events like these help them reach each other”
- People were really pleased with the steps we took to ensure the event was accessible. Delegate Feedback: “It was as accessible as it could be, given the circumstances” “It was still tiring for me as it was virtual but it’s the first time I have seen BSL available which was great. The live captions always need a bit of thought but I am used to that :D”
- The on-demand content and event recordings on YouTube give us the opportunity to continue sharing useful films and promote IDODP throughout the year.
- With limited time and resources we pulled together a varied, accessible programme of events and content with 45 activities and sessions available for people to get involved in both online and offline.
- Through the help of the planning group, we learnt a lot about creating accessible artwork and set a standard for accessible marketing materials.
- The event gave all parties involved the opportunity to raise awareness of their important services through promotion and creating partnerships within the planning group. Hosts of sessions gained an average of 6 contacts.
- The extra support from Forum Central’s Member Support Worker Daisy really helped in bringing together the event.
- The Employment discussion led to a response to the disability enquiry creating tangible strategic recommendations.
- The technology worked well with only one person having difficulty accessing a session.
- A member of the WMC/FC team available to support sessions and arrange bookings really helped to relieve pressure from hosts and keep the sessions running smoothly.

Delegate Feedback:

“A good balance between serious points and more light-hearted, entertaining content. A good showcase for disabled performers”

“Radical anti-capitalist messages from the disabled community were incredibly inspiring”

“Amazing. The speakers were fantastic and so inspirational”

“Great variety and so inspiring”

“It was very informative but had a relaxed atmosphere which was nice”

“Great mix of events, something for everyone”

Exhibitor Feedback:

“It was a great event. Despite Covid-19 - thank you to all the organisers”

“Thank you, a wonderful event with great marketing behind it. Very well organised and really enjoyed being part of it. Always tricky to get engagement on film work - perhaps live stream events would attract more people but harder to coordinate. A platform to host the films could be explored in the future. I wonder how we could engage our own groups more? So has a wider public engagement. Brilliant festival thank you and we really loved being part of such strategic work”

“Fern, Rachel and co were really easy to get hold of and communicate with”

“Great foundation for future events, engagement and developments.”

“A varied audience attended my session and all were new contacts”

“Lots of great publicity. Contacted International Relations Officer at LCC – made a connection to involve international partners of Leeds 2021 next year.”

“Loved all the events – wish I could have given them more support and spotlight. Members were super interested in it. 100% Digital Leeds sessions online arts and culture engagement”

“Purple Patch Arts – Zoom disco’s - lots of people have said they want things to continue”

Exhibitor Recommendations:

“Online is much more possible for another range of people with disabilities – whereas for others it isn’t.”

“how inspirational are we being to the wider community – outside of the disabled community. Wider promotion could reach outside of the disability spectrum. Facebook advertising to wider audience. Promotion we relied on WMC. – Though we did have YEP article and we did have the millennium Square and LCC promotion. Earlier wider promo the better to increase wider promo.”

Feedback:

Average survey responses have a 5-30% response rate. The delegate feedback response rate was 8.7% which is lower than we would have wanted and in future we would consider including feedback polls as part of live Zooms to encourage a richer response. Exhibitor feedback response rate was much better at 35.7%.

Delegates were invited to leave their feedback via a digital anonymous survey:
173 delegates were emailed and a link was shared on social media, 15 responded.

How would you rate the event overall?

4.7 out of 5

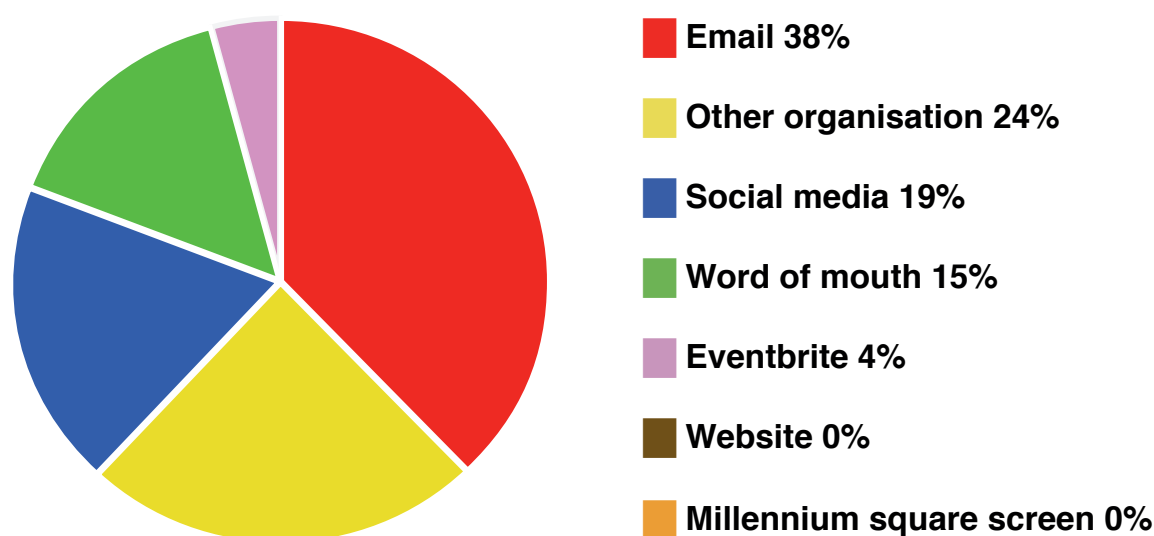
How likely would you recommend this event to friends, family, colleagues?

4.4 out of 5

How accessible was this event for people with additional needs?

4.5 out of 5

How did you hear about Leeds For All International Day of Disabled People 2020?



Exhibitors were invited to leave their feedback via a digital anonymous survey:
38 Exhibitors were emailed, 8 responded.

How would you rate the event overall?

4.1 out of 5

How would you rate the format of the Event? (E.g. Zoom, website, YouTube)

4.1 out of 5

How accessible was this event for people with additional needs?

4 out of 5

How would you rate the delegates (range, number etc.)?

Average contacts made: 6

3.4 out of 5

How would you rate the communication with William Merritt Centre & Forum Central?

4.3 out of 5

100% said they would take part in IDODP again.

General consensus from discussion based sessions:

As well as having a celebratory focus, Leeds For All gave us the opportunity to challenge and address some of the ongoing issues impacting disabled people in Leeds and nationally, and particularly to consider the impact of Covid and on isolation and connectivity.

With that in mind, we held 3 discussion based sessions throughout the event, hosted by, Forum Central which included:

Employment:

Organised by Forum Central in partnership with Scope and Workcoach Simon Cox from Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) in Leeds. This session featured the viewpoints of organisations working with people to provide employment, support and training. Highlighted some of the work being done in the City as part of the Employment Task Group for Learning Disabilities, led by Volition, Forum Central and members and the challenges people face. Summed up by Ella who pre-recorded her journey of seeking employment and poem which highlighted the impact of the challenges and struggles she faces. **Watch Ella's Poem >>**

This session then discussed the recent DWP inquiry into the Disability Employment Gap and formed part of the Collective response submitted to the Government in late December on behalf of Forum Central and its member organisations, which is looking at the follow questions:

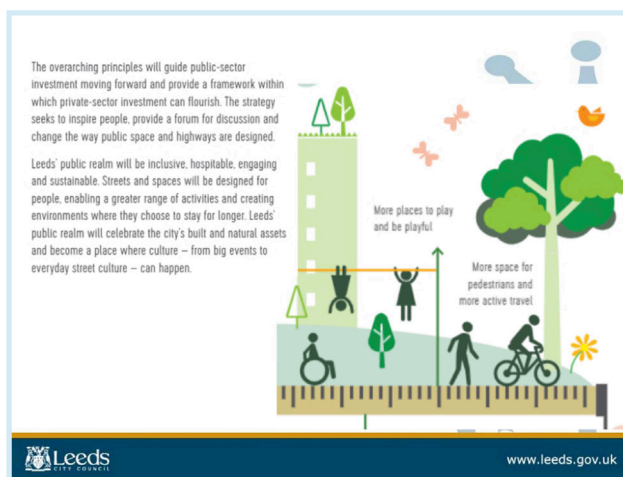
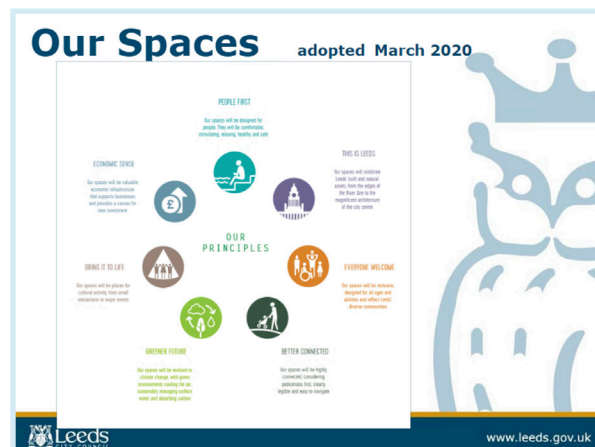
1. What has been the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on disabled people's employment?
2. What improvements could be made to support unemployed disabled people?
3. What would you hope to see in the Government's National Strategy for Disabled People?
4. How should DWP look to engage disabled people and the organisations that represent them in formulating the Strategy?



(Illustrator Tom Bailey captured these visual minutes during the Employment Discussion)

Accessibility of Public Spaces:

Organised by Forum Central in partnership with Leeds Involving People, who run the Access and Usability Group for Leeds and Leeds City Council Colleagues from Transport, planning, Connecting Leeds and access. This session included a tour of the current developments happening across the city, ways for people to get involved in ongoing engagement and consultation and a discussion based around the impact of Covid on accessibility.



Strategies for Activism:

Led by Leeds Disabled People Organisation, we had over 50 people in attendance and a 2 hour discussion based session with 7 key speakers from across the country. It was a really inspiring, thought provoking event which created lots of links and discussions which we plan to continue to build on across the Forum Central Specialism networks with members to highlight the intersectionality and issues so prevalent and important. **Watch here >>**

What next?

- Will shift to "everything online" be permanent?
 - Probably not: people are anxious for human contact
 - Need to keep accessibility improvements for home working etc.
- Newly disabled through COVID need support & solidarity
- Resources & money (austerity!) being tight, we need to work together & become visible – opportunities for better ME/CFS, Brain Injury and Cardiovascular condition support
- Need to continue to push against damaging policies



Key issues facing disabled people

- Austerity – COVID economic damage as a cover for more
- BLM & Wider issues of intersectionality
- Brexit & Human Rights in the UK (eg UN Investigation into UK treatment of Disabled People)
- "Long COVID" = Chronic Fatigue, Brain Damage, Cardiovascular Disease more disabled people – could this be positive for actions?
- Impact of COVID & everything online

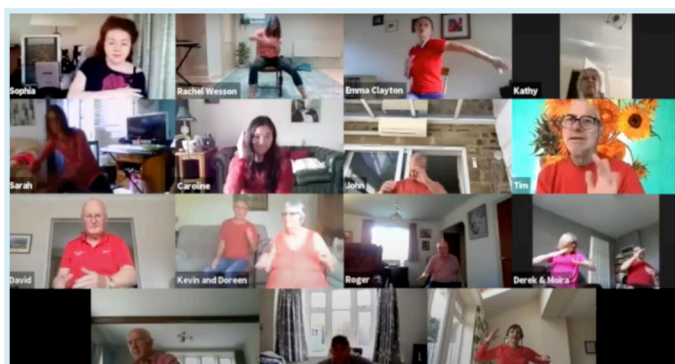
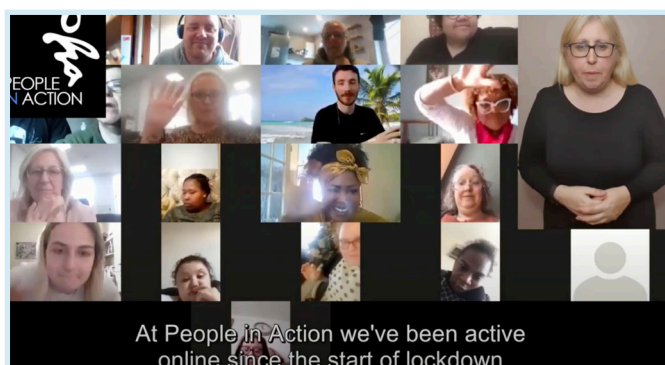
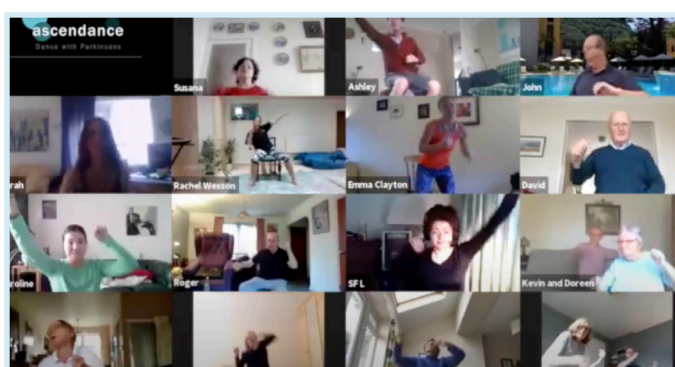


Finance & Budget

The Coordination and Project Management of the Event was provided jointly by Volition at Forum Central and William Merritt Centre and part-funded by Leeds City Council's Disability Hub, Part of the Equality Hubs for the City, and by the Ward Councillors' Members Improvements in the Community and the Environment, money, which was gratefully received in support of this important event.

Costs incurred included: Project Management and Support, BSL interpretation for live and pre-recorded content, Captioning, Visual Minute taking, video editing and production and Facebook Live Advertising. The Planning Group gave their time for free in addition to their daily roles and jobs and all sessions on the programme and speakers in attendance were provided without cost. A considerable effort with mutual aid and goodwill on the part of individuals and public and third sector organisations in the city.

In total the events cost around £4,000 to put on, equating to approximately £90 for each of the 44 events and 0.51p cost per contact, which is incredibly good value for money.





Next Steps

Leeds For All was a great achievement - it was developed by a key group of enthusiastic and committed people and raised awareness of International Day of Disabled People during a year where we were all isolated and disconnected to some extent. Providing a varied calendar of events both on and offline allowed us to reach out to many people across the city and encourage celebration, connectivity and discussion. Volition, and the wider Forum Central team are keen to keep the momentum of this up with its members and build on the brand of Leeds For All.

In future we would like to:

Strategic Recommendations:

- Hold a rolling programme of regular events throughout the year under the #LeedsForAll brand, organised through Volition, Forum Central's specialism networks for Physical and Sensory Impairment and Learning Disabilities. This will help to highlight ongoing issues and challenges faced by disabled people as well as create opportunities for learning and connectivity amongst both individuals and organisations, with specific focus on Health & Care and related issues.
- Encourage and put into place regular mechanisms for feedback from sessions, co-production and design across topics of interest.
- Utilise learning from the events to highlight the need for accessibility and inclusivity considerations across all of our connections.
- Run regular facilitated engagements more proactively throughout the year to keep people moving forward and achieving their potential.
- Encourage wider participation and sign up from the wider population of Leeds and from members within facilitating organisations.

- Due to Covid- 19 we were unable to promote face to face through group sessions and had to rely heavily on digital promotion which some groups have difficulties engaging with. Utilise both online and face to face opportunities in December 2021 (within current government guidelines) to provide content which is accessible for all.

Operational Recommendations:

- The link between session hosts and potential new contacts for them as individual organisations was lacking. To improve this, hosts should share their contact details and information in the chat box to encourage delegates to follow up with session hosts after the session.
- Stream Zoom sessions onto Facebook to increase reach and awareness of the live sessions.
- The Event was a bit fast paced for some. To make the events more manageable we would send an agenda out for each session to delegates and spread the sessions out over a longer period of time rather than having 4 in one day. Delegate feedback: “Bit slower pace. Please” “Fast paced and intense for someone with chronic fatigue. A lot of information to take in.”
- Clear outline for accessible content needed and a designer with experience on how to make accessible content.
- Involve more members individually to increase awareness of event.
- Don’t accept booking forms if they are not completed and have a definite cut off point for content and booking forms.
- Increase delegate numbers through segmented messaging and a clearer communication plan.
- Send out a questionnaire to potential delegates of the event to see what content they propose and ensure the content chosen for the event reflects this. Jamboard or survey monkey could be used to gather this information.
- Create a list of the planning committee’s skills and knowledge (e.g. easy read, braille, audio description, BSL) to help the planning of the event run more smoothly and utilise everyone’s skills.
- More planning time with a minimum of 3 months to allow wider promotion of the event to attract more people.
- More images for promotion is needed to avoid repetition and if we have more time reduce social media posts to 1 a day rather than 3-4.
- There were no requests for a BSL or braille version of the programme. Next year we should work with partner organisations to increase interest from individuals with visual impairments.



Leeds
CITY COUNCIL



International Day of Disabled People, Leeds For All

1st December 2020 - 4th December 2020

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Created by William Merritt Centre & Forum Central