



TO ENABLE

A Report on Access to the Arts in Ireland for People with Disabilities

by Martin Drury and Brian Morgan



Published by The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon

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Arts Council)

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for the Deaf and the National Council for the Blind
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managers of all the venues surveyed. Their
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research which underpins the present report.

Endorsements

TO ENABLE has received the official
endorsement of the Department of Health, the
Department of the Environment and the National
Rehabilitation Board.

Contents

1. Foreword	
2. Introduction	9
3. Venues Surveyed	11
4. Key Issues and Recommendations	13
5. Case Studies	20
6. Appendix I (Sample Questionnaire)	25
7. Appendix II (List of contacts)	38

Foreword

The Report which follows represents the second phase of a three-phased approach to developing a coherent policy for the Arts Council and its clients in respect of the accessibility of professionally-administered arts venues which are supported from the public purse. The report is directed primarily at those who administer arts venues and those who, by virtue of their professional occupation or their voluntary contribution on boards of directors, are charged with shaping policies within which arts venues operate. It is important at the outset to acknowledge two things:

- (i) the need for further research and planning in a range of issues beyond the primary one of access;
- (ii) the vital importance of beginning soon the third phase of the policy, thus enabling previously disabled citizens to have full access to artistic and cultural events.

The overall policy of the Arts Council in this important area of social development is shaped within the inspiration provided by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons which gives specific expression to the principles contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The objectives of this particular survey and report are to establish the present level of provision for people with disabilities in Irish arts venues; to measure that provision by criteria which are generally agreed to be reasonable; and so to establish an agenda for action by all relevant parties in the years ahead. The data-base now established on the 49 venues surveyed will be updated regularly and will form both a record of achievement and a reminder of what remains to be done.

We have deliberately laid the stress on the *enabling* potential of this Report because we wish to emphasise that it was conceived, researched and written in a positive spirit. It is that same spirit which must predominate in the years of action ahead. That is not to ignore the amount of work that needs to be done but rather to highlight the exceptional degree of commitment and will to change which we encountered in the course of the fieldwork research.

In December 1985, the Arts Council launched two important publications. One was the first phase of the present policy, a brochure outlining a code of good practice in relation to "the disabled". The other report was on the provision of music education. The point being made is that particular research in the area of the arts and people with disabilities is part of a larger policy of the Arts Council to enable all those who, by virtue of

their education, social class, geographical position or other factors, are prevented from being full participants in contemporary culture. We are all, to a greater or lesser extent, "disabled" and the Arts Council's statutory function "to promote and assist the arts" might be expressed in everyday terms as "to create access for all to the arts".

TO ENABLE is a beginning only and the quality of the Report will be known truly when it becomes clear what actions and new policies it has fostered. The Arts Council will not be found wanting in seeking active partnership with the appropriate bodies and agencies with a view to ameliorating the situation so thoroughly described in this Report and in the questionnaires on each of the 49 venues surveyed.

I wish to thank the Steering Committee of this project (they are named elsewhere). Busy people, they nonetheless gave unstintingly of their time and expertise. I would like, on behalf of the Arts Council, to thank, in particular, the National Rehabilitation Board for their sustained support of the survey and their contributions to various aspects of the present Report. I extend sincere thanks to the researcher Brian Morgan who, over twelve months and thousands of miles, courteously and thoroughly pieced together the exact picture of the present situation. Finally, a special word of thanks to the Arts Council's Education Officer, Martin Drury, whose involvement in this project has been of crucial importance.

Ar son na Comhairle Ealaíon, ba mhaith liom béim a chur ar thábhacht an leabhráin seo mar áis dóibh siúd atá ag iarraidh na healaíona comhaimseartha a chur i láthair an phobail uilig. Tá súil agam gurb é seo an chéad chéim ar agaidh agus, ar son na Comhairle Ealaíon, geallaim go ndéanfaidh muid ar ndícheall le feidhm a thabhairt do na moltaí agus na treoracha a chuirtear chun tosaigh sa leabhrán seo. Gabhaim buíochas le gach duine dár chuidigh linn le bliain anuas agus muid ag iarraidh an tuarascáil seo a chur i gcrích.

Máirtín McCullough,
Chairman, The Arts Council

Introduction

The present Report stands as a bridge between the vast databank of information on the accessibility of arts venues which now exists as a result of the survey and the programme of action which must be undertaken to address the problems which have been identified.

In adopting the Report the Arts Council was conscious of the responsibilities implied. The Council will seek partnership with a range of local and national bodies with a view to giving effect to the recommendations implicit and explicit in the Report.

The Council's remit runs only as far as venues and buildings in receipt of its grant-aid. For this reason the survey was largely confined to such places. It is to be hoped that other artistic and cultural venues will take the present opportunity and address the particular problems of their own spaces.

The survey concentrated deliberately on issues of access as defined by the questionnaire. The Arts Council appreciates that there are less tangible issues to be addressed as well. For example consideration needs to be given to the matter of the person with a disability as *maker of art* and not only as *receiver*. However the decision was made to circumscribe the survey's scope in order to make gains and leave other issues for another time.

The final report is slim but the truth is that the completed questionnaires are of little public interest and their function is rather to stimulate and measure progress. This present report, arising from the survey conducted, seeks to identify the key issues which emerged, time without number, and to point towards solutions. For this reason it was thought valuable to include three case-studies with a view to clarifying general issues by reference to particular situations. From the detailed information on the venues surveyed and the gradual emergence of certain common issues arose the recommendations which are at the heart of the Report.

The project sub-committee and the Arts Council were anxious not to list page after page of detailed recommendations which would have the effect of emphasising the problem rather than facilitating its solution. Instead broad recommendations of principle and practice are outlined. Their application to particular venues will be a matter for negotiation in the months and years ahead.

The report begins with a record of all the buildings surveyed and in an appendix at the back is to be found a sample copy of the questionnaire used as the analytical tool of the survey. In between lies the catalyst for future action: a summary of the information and issues revealed by the survey.

Let the enabling begin!

Venues Surveyed



*Foras Na bPíobairí Uilleann, Culturlann na hÉireann, Irish Film Institute, Film Base, Poetry Ireland, Galway Theatre Workshop.

Venues Surveyed

Location	Name	Type of Venue
Cork	Triskel Arts Centre	Arts Centre
Cork	Cork Opera House	Theatre
Cork	Firkin Crane	Theatre/Arts Centre
Cork	Crawford Gallery	Gallery
Cork	Everyman/Palace Theatre	Theatre
Co. Cork	West Cork Arts Centre	Arts Centre
Dublin	Project Arts Centre	Arts Centre
Dublin	The City Centre	Arts Centre
Dublin	Temple Bar Gallery and Studios	Gallery/Studios
Dublin	Douglas Hyde Gallery	Gallery
Dublin	Gallery of Photography	Gallery
Dublin	Guinness Hop Store	Gallery
Dublin	Abbey Theatre	Theatre
Dublin	Peacock Theatre	Theatre/Gallery
Dublin	Gate Theatre	Theatre
Dublin	Gaiety Theatre	Theatre
Dublin	Olympia Theatre	Theatre
Dublin	Focus Theatre	Theatre
Dublin	Poetry Ireland	Readings/Library
Dublin	Black Church Print Studio	Studio
Dublin	Graphic Studio	Studio
Dublin	New Art Studio	Studio
Dublin	Visual Arts Centre	Studio
Dublin	Foras na bPíobairí Uilleann	Performance
Dublin	Irish Film Institute	Film
Dublin	Film Base	Film
Co. Dublin	Culturlann na hEireann	Performance
Galway	Nun's Island Arts Centre	Arts Centre
Galway	Galway Theatre Workshop	Theatre Workshop
Galway	Druid Theatre, Chapel Lane	Theatre
Co. Galway	The Town Hall, Tuam	Theatre
Co. Galway	The Synod Hall, (St. Mary's Cathedral), Tuam	Theatre/Gallery
Co. Kerry	Siamsa Tíre, Tralee	Arts Centre
Co. Kerry	Castleisland Arts Centre	Arts Centre
Kilkenny	Butler Gallery	Gallery
Kilkenny	Kilkenny Theatre	Theatre
Co. Leitrim	Old Barrel Store Arts Centre	Arts Centre
Limerick	Belltable Arts Centre	Arts Centre
Limerick	All Plus Ten Sorts	Gallery/Studio
Limerick	City Gallery	Gallery
Co. Mayo	Castlebar Exhibition Centre	Arts Centre
Co. Monaghan	Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Annahmakerrig	Artists' Studios/Residence
Sligo	Yeats' Memorial Building	Gallery/Readings
Sligo	Hawk's Well Theatre	Theatre
Waterford	Garter Lane Arts Centre Phase 1	Arts Centre
Waterford	Garter Lane Arts Centre Phase 2	Arts Centre
Waterford	Theatre Royal	Theatre
Wexford	Wexford Arts Centre	Arts Centre
Wexford	Theatre Royal	Theatre

Key Issues and Recommendations

1. Information

There is only one thing more frustrating than "not knowing" and that is "finding out the hard way" by arriving at an arts venue to discover you cannot enter or, having entered, that you cannot see or hear properly. We all have experienced the frustration of being placed behind a pillar in a theatre or the annoyance when an actor is not projecting lines adequately. In the former case at least we expect the management to inform us about the pillar and we expect the box-office theatre plan to show the exact positions of pillars and other obstacles. The experience of someone with a disability is similar in nature though perhaps of a greater degree. And so emerges the obvious need for a greater degree of information.

1.1 Information should be accurate and updated constantly. Information on access should be available in two forms:
(a) synthesised as part of the general information on the venue

(b) specialised detailed information for patrons with disabilities, local organisations of/for "the disabled", special schools etc.

1.2 There is need for a common coding system for all Irish arts venues — and in the long-term for some international code — which will have a straightforward visual message supported by text with finer details where possible (see Section 2 below).

1.3 There is need for co-operation between arts organisations and organisations of/for "the disabled" to facilitate the design and dissemination of such information.

2. Full Access — Developing an Action Plan

When people think of "access" they almost invariably have a mental image of someone in a wheelchair negotiating a ramp. What is required is a notion of "access" that is more comprehensive and thorough-going to match an equally comprehensive understanding of disability. Such an understanding would include sensory disabilities or disabilities arising from a range of medical conditions as well as from injuries and even social responsibilities — have you ever tried to take a child in a buggy through a revolving door?!

2.1 Access to arts venues begins with transport to the venue and works its way through the eight key points listed below. From these emerges the **TO ENABLE** code described in section three.

(a) **Transport:** public (nearest bus-stop), car-parking (reserved spaces?)

(b) **Outside:** paths and approaches (ramps, lighting, signposting)

(c) **Entrance and exits:** location, type of door, alternatives, emergency exits

(d) **Notification:** advance notice (required?), booking procedures, pricing policy including concessions

(e) **Areas of Venue:** description of venue and clear indication of quality of access within venue

(f) **Bars and restaurants:** locations, alternatives, ordering procedures

(g) **Loos/lavatories:** locations, special facilities, special arrangements for use, alternatives

(h) **Extras:** special facilities and descriptions of location and procedures (loop system; large-print catalogues/programmes/title-cards; play synopses; sub-titles; interpreters; special events etc.)

2.2 Quality of access depends upon the facilities and features being well designed and easily available. Special attention needs to be given to the provision of well-located and properly equipped toilets. A ramp with too steep a gradient or a loop-system installed upstairs in a building without a lift will handicap a person with a disability rather than enabling him/her to enjoy the arts. Thus each venue should start by examining its completed questionnaire and, in conjunction with the N.R.B., the venue's architect(s) and executives should design and cost an action plan which, on a phased basis, would remove the disabling obstacles identified by the 1987/88 survey.

2.3 There are many people with sensory disabilities and it is critical that venue managements should pay attention to their needs. This is particularly true when small architectural changes, furnishing alterations and any adjustments to lighting, decor, signposting and general presentation of programme activities are being planned. Such considerations should form part of the general action-plan prepared by the venue (see 2.2 above).

2.4 Expertise exists in Ireland and there is also a deal of published material which advises on relevant issues such as lighting of circulation routes and of exhibits; texturing of floor-surfaces to indicate different areas; labelling; tape-guides; signposting, notices and printed material; induction loop systems; sign-language interpretation and preparation of play synopses.

2.5 The Arts Council should continue to have a sub-committee on the issue of access for people with disabilities. This committee should be charged with overseeing the development of individual venue action plans and of co-ordinating such planning so that it influences the decisions of relevant government departments, statutory and voluntary bodies, and of other possible sources of financial support.

3.A Coding System:

TO ENABLE

Bearing in mind the points made above about information being coded (1.2) and about the need for an understanding of what is constituted by full access (2.1) the present report proposes the following code. The intention is to establish a system which is instantly recognisable, which can be "read" visually, which allows for detailed information to be included and which codes in a positive manner calculated to reinforce good practice. It should be emphasised that the code is presented here as a working model and will be altered on the basis of advice and experience.

3.1 The code is known as the **TO ENABLE** code because each of those letters corresponds to an aspect of access which is considered important. Thus **TO ENABLE** stands for:

T for Transport

O for Outside

E for Entrance and exits

N for Notification

A for Areas of venue

B for Bars and restaurants

L for Loos

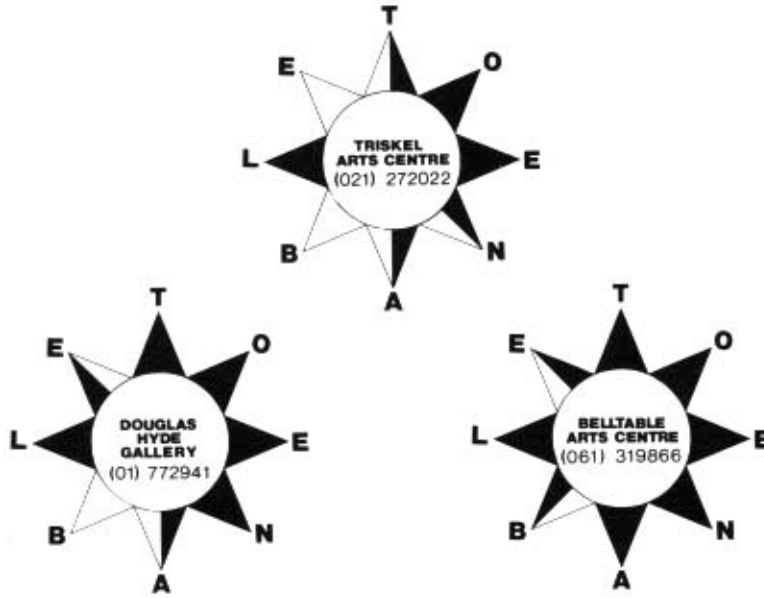
E for Extras

3.2 These eight key points are more fully described in Section 2.1 and the visual symbol of the code is an eight-point star.

Each point corresponds to one of the eight aspects described above. If that aspect of access is well provided for then that point of the star is filled in; if there is limited provision it will be half-black, half-white; if there is no provision at all or extremely limited provision that point of the star will be left blank.

3.3 In any specialist handbook or brochure it would be possible to support the visual symbol by some text but quite an amount of detail can be gleaned from the symbol, once the code is understood, and even a glancing look will give a quick impression of the level of access provided i.e. the blacker the star the greater the access; the whiter the star the more needs to be done.

3.4 Here are some examples reflecting the information obtained in the 1987/88 survey of venues. The final decision as to how a venue should be coded would rest with either the National Rehabilitation Board or the Arts Council sub-committee on which the N.R.B. would be represented (see section 2.5). Such coding should ideally be on an agreed basis with the relevant venue management.



3.5 In a specialist handbook (see 3.3) Triskel Arts Centre might be treated in more detail by virtue of the star symbol being accompanied by a complementary text or legend.



Triskel Arts Centre (as of May 1988)	
T	Public transport close; car-parking distant;
0	Level access outside;
E	Good foyer entrance; one step to theatre from outside;
N	Booking/pricing policies require clarification to patrons;
A	Step(s) to theatre; galleries upstairs (18 + 18 steps);
B	Restaurant up 2 flights of stairs (18 steps);
L	Excellent toilet at ground-floor level;
E	No loop system; Print-size requires attention;

3.6 The code is intended to reinforce good practice by implying solutions. Thus in the Triskel Arts Centre example above the solution necessary to creating full access is a lift which would allow the restaurant and galleries upstairs to become available to all. This is acknowledged by those who run Triskel, people only too anxious to install a lift, and indeed there is a lift-shaft already in place in the arts centre.

4. Education and Training of Venue Managements and Staff

Access — properly understood — is an issue which should inform all aspects of the running of an arts venue. From programming to pricing policies, from print-size to picture-hanging, from the position of toilet flushes to the parking arrangements, all staff and all directors of arts companies and organisations must place the needs of people with disabilities on their agendas as they consider issues of overall policy, of capital and revenue expenditure and of the day-to-day running of their venue. For this to become normal and even automatic there is need for a period of deliberate concentration on the education and training of those concerned. Such a programme might include workshops, seminars, exhibitions, videos and performances.

4.1 A disability awareness programme on a national and local basis should be designed for those involved in the making or implementing of policy in each venue. Such a programme should be imbued with a respect for the independence of the person with a disability.

4.2 Particular practical training needs to be given to box-office and front-of-house staffs who are those most likely to meet patrons with disabilities and to assist them, if requested.

4.3 In both of the cases above there should be co-operation between the Arts Council and the National Rehabilitation Board.

4.4 Boards of directors of arts venues and their chief executives should have due regard for the employment of persons with disabilities as workers within their organisations.

5. Fire/Safety Regulations

It is often the experience of a patron with a disability, particularly if he/she is a wheelchair-user or is visually impaired that the venue refuses entry or cannot accommodate the patron adequately on the basis that the person would constitute a fire-hazard. We have discovered too that local interpretations of laws and bye-laws vary greatly and this further confuses the issue.

5.1 A number of points needs to be made in this context:

(a) Often the fire regulations are used as convenient and plausible excuses for not facilitating the patron.

(b) Often the alleged risk relates not to the patron but to the inadequate facilities for the patron and the responsibility for addressing this is correctly that of the venue management.

(c) Often there are inaccurate assumptions about the likely behaviour of a person with a disability in a crisis situation. It is arguable that it is able-bodied people who behave and panic in such a way as to be a risk to themselves and to those who have a disability.

5.2 There is need for clarification and consistency as regards the interpretation of fire regulations insofar as they pertain to people with disabilities whether as spectators or as practising artists. Each venue, as part of its action plan (see 2.2 above), should seek specific clarification from the local fire officer as to the particular improvements he/she will require to be satisfied about fire/safety risks.

5.3 The Arts Council through its specialist sub-committee (see 2.5 above) should meet with the appropriate representatives of the Department of the Environment and of the Fire Officers Association to try and agree common procedures in relation to arts venues.

6.Pricing Policies

The price of a ticket is a token not alone of the value of the arts experience but also of the quality of access to that experience (e.g. cheapest seats are generally furthest from the stage) and of the economic strength of the purchaser (e.g. concessions for O.A.P.s, students and the unwaged).

6.1 The same criteria should predominate in any decision that relates to a pricing policy for tickets for patrons with disabilities. The onus for choice should be left with the spectator who may signal his/her desire to avail of a concession. There is need, of course, for a period of education and adjustment so that the phrases "normal concessions apply" or "concessions" are understood to include people with disabilities.

6.2 The issue of a pricing policy in relation to those who accompany patrons is also complex. It cannot be treated as a matter of principle isolated from the actual facilities in a particular venue. For example it does not seem just that a management should insist on a person with a visual impairment being accompanied and then charge full price for the seat occupied by the escorting partner. Again the economic measure should be to the fore while allowing for sensitivity and flexibility to be shown by box-office staff.

6.3 If managements and their staff are overbearingly sensitive or if patrons with disabilities abuse the trust of those who run arts venues nothing positive will be achieved.

6.4 There is need for each venue to clarify its pricing policy and for that policy to be communicated effectively to box-office staff and to patrons and potential patrons. This issue of *Notification* of venue policy in relation to pricing and seating arrangements is reflected in the N segment of the **TO ENABLE** star. While local conditions may affect details of implementation it is to be hoped that venue managements will adopt policies that are consistent on a countryside basis.

6.5 Some disabilities may not be apparent or the box-office and front-of-house staffs may have difficulties communicating with or understanding certain patrons. In such situations it is vital that the staff have discretion to make quick and sensitive decisions rather than having to call for advice and so risk embarrassing the patron.

6.6 A patron, by reason of the nature of his/her disability, may need to sit in a particular location so as to enjoy the arts event fully. In such a situation he/she may be economically disadvantaged and the management should offer to sell the seat at a standard rate. All such offers need to be respectful of the person's commitment to living as independent a life as possible.

7. Programming

Underpinning any policy at national or local level concerning the arts and "the disabled" should be the ethos of integration. People with disabilities are no less or no more capable of participating in and enjoying the arts than any other section of society.

7.1 It is also true that the nature of some disabilities affects sensory experience and that there are consequent limitations and complementary possibilities which have particular relevance for the artistic and aesthetic life of the person.

7.2 As a priority each arts venue should ensure that its regular programme of events is accessible to people with disabilities.

7.3 At certain times in the year managements might seek to provide events which are particularly suitable to those with a sensory disability. Such events however should be presented and promoted as being of interest to the full range of the venue's audience though a particular marketing drive might be directed at the specialist audience.

7.4 Venue managements should inform themselves of local special schools, communities of people with disabilities, organisations of/for people with disabilities with a view to integrating them into the regular programme and to discussing or promoting events of special interest.

Case Studies

The following case-studies are offered to illustrate in some detail issues that are probably common to a range of arts venues. The Arts Council appreciates the cooperation of the National Rehabilitation Board which conducted these studies and of the managements of the venues surveyed. Such cooperation in the future will be a *sine qua non* if all relevant parties are to be successful in addressing the issues and problems revealed by these and other similar case studies.

The Abbey Theatre

Entrance to the Abbey is via a number of double doors, each half leaf being approximately 500 mm wide. The minimum clear opening width for all doors should be 750 mm. Where double leaf doors are used, a clear opening width of 750 mm should be provided by opening only one leaf. Entrance doors should normally provide clear opening widths well in excess of the minimum requirement. The entrance from the street is level except through the centre doors where there is a small step 75 mm high.

The reception/foyer which includes ticket office, cloakroom and enquiry desk is level and spacious.

Access to the stalls is level, via wide double doors to a level area at rear of stalls. There is adequate space for a small number of wheelchair users on this level area. The aisles are over 2 m wide and the floor is raked and free of steps. The emergency exit from the stalls gives direct access to the public footpath and is level throughout.

Access to the balcony and bar is by a wide stairs with excellent handrails both sides. The treads and risers are very comfortable and the foyer and bar area is level. Emergency egress is by way of enclosed stairs with handrails both sides leading to an emergency exit to Abbey Street.

A number of wheelchair users are regular patrons of the Abbey Theatre and have no difficulties in gaining access to the stalls but there is some apprehension about the correct procedures to be used in the event of fire or other emergency. Discussions with the appropriate Fire Officer would help and the National Rehabilitation Board would participate in or initiate these discussions if requested.

Improvements

Toilet blocks for ladies and gents are provided on the foyer level, adjoining the booking office/cloakroom. The provision of a toilet

for the disabled would involve the redesign of the area and would best be accomplished by the relocation of the cloakroom and/or the ticket office. The ideal solution would involve the provision of one or more unisex toilet (s) for the disabled which would also be available for non-disabled patrons.

Public Telephone

There is a public telephone available in the reception/foyer area. It is accessible but more modern types are available from Bord Telecom which are much more user-friendly.

Hearing Impaired Patrons

A loop system for the hearing impaired was installed in the stalls a number of years ago. It has not been fully satisfactory and was apparently causing some difficulties with the adjoining Peacock Theatre. The loop system has now been installed in the balcony area and this is being examined and tested at present. Until recent times, the loop system was the acceptable response to the needs of the hearing impaired but it should not now be seen as the only option. Consideration should be given to the installation of a radio system and/or a hard wire system in addition to the loop.

New design plans for the frontage, foyer and bar of the Abbey Theatre have been drawn up and will be the subject of discussion between the theatre's architect and the National Rehabilitation Board.

The Peacock Theatre

The location of the auditorium together with the very restricted space available, rules out any possibility of independent access for wheelchair users. The changes of level are so substantial that it would be necessary to arrange for a number of experienced helpers to carry a wheelchair user from the foyer to the auditorium. This would not be recommended.

Ambulant disabled persons can proceed with reasonable comfort and security through the entrance by way of double doors and a 50 mm threshold step. The foyer is level and very restricted. Access to the auditorium is by way of wide stairs to the lower ground floor through the canteen area which is very roomy. There are very good handrails on both sides. The auditorium is approached from this level by a further series of steps upwards. These are also provided with very good handrails both sides.

Ladies and gents toilets are accessible for ambulant disabled persons and the wall mounted telephone is accessible.

Case Study of The Douglas Hyde Gallery

Douglas Hyde Gallery, Trinity College, Dublin 2

Approach and Entrance

There are two approaches to the Douglas Hyde Gallery, (1) From Nassau Street and (2) from T.C.D. Car Park.

(1) Nassau Street

Approach from Nassau Street is by way of steps and ramp to the main reception area which is level throughout and roomy. This route presents no problems to the ambulant disabled or the wheelchair users.

(2) From Car Park

Vehicular access to the car park is by Lincoln Place entrance and there is a wide level approach from the car park by a route alongside the library and then by ten steps which lead on to the wide ramped area leading to the entrance door. A ramp — 80 mm wide — has been constructed to the side on these steps. There is a protective kerb on the exposed side of the ramp while the other side is unfinished. This approach is usable but safety and comfort would be improved by the widening of the ramp to 1,200 mm (minimum 1,000 mm) and the inclusion of a protective kerb on both sides. The existing kerb on the exposed side should be extended by a further 500 mm approximately along the edge of the paving slabs. The steps are very comfortable but ambulant disabled persons would find the comfort and safety improved by the provision of a central handrail of appropriate dimensions and at appropriate height.

There is a very wide ramp extending from the top of existing steps to the entrance. The gradient is suitable and there is a handrail on one side. A handrail on both sides is very desirable.

The external surfaces throughout are of excellent texture. The signboard at the car parking area does not identify "Douglas Hyde Gallery" and intermediate signposts and notices are desirable.

Gallery

The gallery is on lower ground floor level and access from the reception area is by way of a flight of stairs containing sixteen steps. There are very good handrails on both sides and there is a clear width of over 1,000 mm. There are open risers and these are not favoured by ambulant disabled persons or by stick/crutch users. Wheelchair users can be brought by lift to the lower ground floor. The lift is some distance from the reception area but this arrangement is considered acceptable. The lift is very

roomy and controls are suitably placed. The gallery floor has a split level with three steps on one side and a wide ramp on the other. Ambulant disabled persons and wheelchair users would benefit from the provision of suitable handrails on both sides of the ramp or in the centre. The three steps would be made more comfortable and safe by the provision of a central handrail and by use of contrasting colours to improve definition. A central handrail at this location might perhaps cause some restriction when mounting or dismounting exhibitions but this could be overcome by fitting a removable handrail.

Toilet facilities are located at ground floor level close to the lift. Two special cubicles are available outside the main toilet blocks. They are both excellent and fully accessible to all disabled persons including wheelchair users. The gents cubicle was open but the ladies cubicle was locked and there was some delay before a keyholder could be located. It seems the ladies cubicle is kept locked in order to prevent its use by non-disabled persons. We think that this practice should be discontinued as it represents discrimination against non-disabled persons and leads to irritation and resentment against disabled persons. It runs counter to the aim of full integration for everybody.

Case Study of The Cork Opera House

Cork Opera House

Approaches to the entrance are level. Entrance doors are of adequate width and the entire foyer which includes ticket office, bar and coffee shop are all substantially level and roomy.

Access to the stalls is via 8 steps, 2 m wide with excellent handrails both sides. There is level access from the landing to the rear of the stalls and there is adequate space for a number of wheelchair users.

Toilet blocks are provided on this level for ladies and for gents. Modifying either the ladies or gents toilets to accommodate wheelchair users would probably result in the loss of one cubicle in each of the blocks.

The emergency exit from the stalls gives direct access to the public footpath through two outward opening doors. This exit is used to admit wheelchair users. It has a 2" step at the threshold giving access to a protected porch. Two steps of 6" each give access to a side aisle.

Cork Opera House seems to have quite a number of regular patrons who are wheelchair users and the staff appear to be quite used to lifting them up and down steps. In some cases, weight is quite a problem and the greater incidence of powered chairs is becoming a problem.

Improvements

I understand that consideration is being given to having the coffee bar integrated with the main bar in the foyer. This could lead to dramatic improvements as the area at present occupied by the coffee bar would be an excellent location for a toilet for the disabled. There is more than adequate width between two structural walls and there is adequate space elsewhere to store the household goods which are at present stored behind the coffee bar.

Entrance to the stalls (previously mentioned) is close by the existing coffee bar and the installation of a suitable chair lift on the left hand side of the 8 steps would provide excellent access for wheelchair users. A folding type would be the most suitable as it would take up no room when out of use. This chair lift would give easy access to the stalls and would allow easy approach to the bar/coffee facilities and the toilet during intervals.

The emergency exit (previously mentioned) from the stalls should be examined in detail in order to eliminate the 2 steps and the lip at the threshold. The present layout could be a hazard in the event of an emergency.

Public Telephone

A wall mounted public telephone is provided near the entrance to the ladies toilet. It is of the older coin operated type and is difficult for disabled persons to use easily. Perhaps Telecom Eireann might be asked to install one of their modern pay phones which can be used easily by everyone including wheelchair users.

Hearing Impaired Patrons

The management might seriously consider the installation of special facilities for hearing impaired patrons. A loop system is generally recommended but radio aids or a hard wire system might be suitable alternatives. A detailed study with some experiments in the auditorium should be carried out with the technical service of the National Rehabilitation Board.

Appendix I

The Arts Council



QUESTIONNAIRE



DATE COMPILED

COMPILED BY:

ACCESS AND FACILITIES SURVEY FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AT:

TELEPHONE NO: BOOKING OFFICE.....

TELEPHONE NO: MANAGER.....

MANAGER'S NAME:.....

IS THERE A FACILITY OR AN AGREED PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH A
MEDICAL EMERGENCY ?.....

BOOKING AND VISITING ARRANGEMENTS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE:

Is special notice required?

Preferred:.....

Not required:.....

How long before start of performance should a disabled person arrive ? (for ease and comfort of access).....

How long before performance should tickets be collected?.....

Where should tickets be collected from?.....

Is ticket collect, ion point accessible with ease?.....

If not easily accessible can you suggest alternative arrangements?

CLOAK ROOM

Is cloak room accessible with ease?.....

If not easily accessible, can you suggest alternative arrangements".....

APPROACH TO VENUE

Distance from nearest bus-stop ?.....

Is bus-stop on same side of road as venue ?.....

Distance from nearest rail-station ?.....

Distance from nearest on-street parking area ?.....

Distance from nearest public car-park ?.....

Opening hours of car-park ?.....

Distance from venue's car park ?.....

Opening hours of car-park ?.....

Is there a drop-off area outside entrance ?.....

Are there parking-bays for the use of disabled people ?.....
(minimum width: 3.3 m/10 ft. 9^{3/4} in; length: 4.8 m/15 ft. 9 in.)

Are the bay areas substantially level ?.....

Are the bays clearly marked "Disabled Drivers and Passengers", and do they have the international symbol ?.....

How many parking-bays for the disabled are there ?.....

Is access to parking-bays clearly sign-posted ?.....

Location of parking-bays ?.....

Can you suggest a more suitable entrance-point from the car park to the venue ? (alternative to front).....

Are special arrangements necessary to use the alternative route?.....

Please give details.....

Is assistance available if required ?.....

Have your staff been trained to assist disabled patrons ?.....

Other Information:.....

ACCESS FROM MAIN STREET TO FOYER

- Is there level access from street to main foyer ?.....
- If "no" give number of steps [minimum NRB requirements: step-risers should not exceed 145 mm (5^{3/4} in), step-widths should not be? less than 320 mm (12^{1/2} in)].....
- Have steps got non-slip surfaces ?.....
- Are fronts of steps 'yellow marked' ? (for the benefit of visually impaired patrons ?.....
- Are sides of steps 'yellow marked' ?.....
- Hand Rails ? [minimum requirement regarding height 750-850 mm (2ft. 5^{1/2} in.-2 ft. 9^{1/2} in)]..... LEFT/RIGHT/BOTH
- Ramp? [minimum requirements: width: 1.2m - length: not exceeding 9m (29 ft. 6 in.) between different levels should not be steeper than 1 in 12.].....
- Does ramp have a non-slip surface ?.....
- Is front of ramp 'yellow marked' ?.....
- Are sides of ramp 'yellow marked'?.....
- Hand rails at sides of ramp ?.....LEFT/RIGHT/BOTH
- If ramp is longer than 9 m (29 ft. 6 in.) does it have a level platform for resting? [minimum required length of platform 1m (3 ft. 3^{1/4} in.)].....
- Entrance-door width when fully open?[minimum requirement 750 mm 2 ft. 5^{1/2} in.].....
- Type ? (Push/Pull, Revolving, Automatic).....
- Is entrance area free from potentially hazardous objects? (i.e. free - standing ad. boards etc.).....
- Is there a rest/seating area located in the main entrance area?.....
- Is this area easily accessible ?.....
- Is there a more accessible entrance ⁷ (alternative to the front).....
- Location
- Are special arrangements necessary for its use?.....
- Details of special arrangements necessary.....
- Is assistance available if required ?.....
- Are staff trained in assisting disabled patrons ? [this training can be organised through the N.R.B.]
- OTHER INFORMATION:.....

ACCESS FROM MAIN FOYER TO PERFORMANCE/EXHIBITION AREA:

Is there LEVEL access ?.....

If there is not level access can you suggest n mare suitable entry-point ?.....

Please give details necessary for its use :.....

If there is no suitable alternative, please give information on the following:.....

	STALLS	CIRCLE	BOX	OTHER
No of steps to:				
Hand-rails:	LEFT RIGHT BOTH	LEFT RIGHT BOTH	LEFT RIGHT BOTH	LEFT RIGHT BOTH
Ramp to:	YES/ NO	YES/ NO	YES/ NO	YES/ NO
Hand-rails:	LEFT RIGHT BOTH	LEFT RIGHT BOTH	LEFT RIGHT BOTH	LEFT RIGHT BOTH
Other:				

BLIND OR VISUALLY IMPAIRED PATRONS:

Is there adequate lighting on circulation routes to ensure the safety of visually impaired patrons ?.....

Where LEVEL CHANGES occur are there bright contrasting colours to high-light them ?.....

Is the sign-posting at a suitable height ?.....
(suggested height for wall-mounted signs: 1.4 m-1.7 m/4 ft. 7 in.-5 ft. 6^{3/4} in.

Are guide dogs permitted into the performance/exhibition area ?.....

Is there an alternative area available for keeping them ?.....

Would prior notice be required of their arrival ?.....

Would you give consideration to occasional Tactile Exhibitions ? (where patron is allowed to touch exhibits).....

Do you have Guided Tours?.....

Do you have Taped information detailing exhibits?.....

Have you considered LARGE PRINT catalogues/programmes ?.....

Do you have LARGE PRINT labelling an exhibits ?.....

Are script synopses in LARGE PRINT available ?.....

Can blind or visually impaired patrons sit near the stage ?.....

What area (Rows and Seat Nos.) would you consider best suited to them ?.....

Are there any circumstances in which a blind or visually impaired patron MUST be accompanied by a sighted person ?.....

Do you have a policy on a concessionary price for a blind or visually impaired patron ?.....

Do you have a policy on a concessionary price for their companion?.....

Are your staff trained to assist blind or visually impaired patrons ?.....

OTHER INFORMATION:.....

DEAF OR HEARING IMPAIRED

Is there on 'Induction Loop' system available ? (where hearing aid turned to 'T' position eliminates background noises).....

What area does the system cover ?.....

Are head-sets available as an alternative ?.....

What Rows and Seat nos. are they in ?.....

Please give details of how one acquires a head-set

Is there a charge for its use ?.....

What area (Rows and Seat nos.) would you suggest as being most suitable to deaf or hearing impaired patrons ?.....

Is it possible to borrow scripts in advance?.....

Are play-synopses available?.....

Would you give consideration to having a sign-language interpreter for groups of deaf or hearing-impaired patrons? (for selected performances, exhibitions or guided tours).....

What is your policy on a concession rate for a deaf or hearing impaired patron ?.....

What would be your policy on a concession rate for their companion ? (In most cases their companion would be acting as an interpreter).....

Is your sign-posting (directional etc.) adequate ? (Bearing in mind the heavy reliance deaf and hearing impaired patrons have on visual aids).....

Are your emergency alarm systems visual and audible ?.....

Are your staff trained in assisting deaf or hearing impaired patrons?.....

OTHER INFORMATION:.....

AMBULANT DISABLED PATRONS:

(Walking-aids, Arthritic, Heart or Lung Disorders)

Is there adequate directional sign-posting to facilities (ramps, lifts, etc.) that would be of benefit to ambulant disabled people ?.....

Please state which section of the venue (Row and Seat nos.) you would consider best suited to a patron who was ambulant disabled.....

Do you have G. concession price for ambulant disabled patrons ?.....

Do you have a concession price for a companion of the ambulant disabled person (without whom it might not be possible for them to attend).....

Are your staff trained to assist ambulant-disabled people ?.....

OTHER INFORMATION:.....

WHEELCHAIR USERS:

Is there a wheelchair loan system ?.....

Please give details for use of this facility.....

Is there a special area designated for wheelchair users ?.....
(within easy access of facilities).....

Please give details of location of area you regard as being most suited to these patrons

How many spaces are there for wheelchairs ?.....

Please state location of companions's seat (when wheelchair user remains in chair).....

What means of access is there between floors ?.....

LIFTS: minimum measurements: clear opening 800 mm/2 ft. 7^{1/2} in
Depth 1.4m/4ft.7in; Width of cab: 1.1 m/3 ft. 7^{1/4} in;
Controls: 900-1400 mm/2 ft. 11^{1/2}in. -4 ft. 7 in. from floor)

Are there any circumstances when a person in a wheelchair MUST be accompanied ?.....

Please give details ?.....

Do you have a policy on a price concession for patrons in wheelchairs ?.....

Do you have a policy on a price concession for a person accompanying a patron in a wheelchair ?.....

Are your staff trained to assist patrons in wheelchairs ?.....

OTHER INFORMATION.....

WOULD THE FOLLOWING BE FACILITIES BE ACCESSIBLE TO WHEELCHAIR USERS ?

WHEELCHAIR MEASUREMENTS:
 LENGTH : 1.1 m/3 ft. 7^{1/4} in.

WIDTH 675 mm/2 ft. 2^{1/2} in.

	BOX-OFFICE AND INFORMATION	MAIN PERFORMANCE EXHIBITION AREA	TOILET	CLOAK ROOM	SHOP/ KIOSK	CAFE/ REST	BAR
LOCATION (FLOOR)							
WIDTH OF ENTRANCE							
ACCESS: LEVEL NO OF STEPS RAMP LIFT							

Can refreshments be ordered in advance ?.....

If refreshment area is not accessible with ease:

Can refreshments be served in seats ?.....

Can you suggest a more accessible area ?.....

Is assistance available if required ?.....

OTHER INFORMATION

WOULD THE FOLLOWING FACILITIES BE ACCESSIBLE TO PHYSICALLY AND SENSORILY DISABLED PATRONS ? (other than wheelchair users)

	BOX-OFFICE AND INFORMATION	MAIN PERFORMANCE EXHIBITION AREA	TOILET	CLOAK ROOM	SHOP/ KIOSK	CAFE/ REST	BAR
LOCATION (FLOOR)							
WIDTH OF ENTRANCE							
ACCESS: LEVEL NO OF STEPS RAMP LIFT							

Can refreshments be ordered in advance ?.....

If refreshment area is not accessible with ease:

Can refreshments be served in seats ?.....

Can you suggest a more accessible area ?.....

Is assistance available if required ?.....

OTHER INFORMATION

TOILETS

Are there any toilets designed for use by physically disabled people ?.....

If 'No' please give location of nearest public toilet suitable for use by disabled people ?.....

Times of opening.....

If 'Yes' please give details of:

Floor:		
Type: Male Female Unisex		
Access: Level No of Steps Ramp Lift		
Hand Rails: Left Right Both		
Door Width To: (A) Toilet Area: (B) Cubicle: Min 750mm 2ft. 5 ^{1/2} in		
Cubicle: Length: Min 2 m/6 ft. 6 ^{1/2} in. Width: Min 1.5m/4ft. 11 in.		
Support Rails inside Cubicle: (for transferring from wheelchair) Mm. Height: 750 mm/2 ft. 5 ^{1/2} in.		

Height from floor of:		
Toilet Bowl: Suggested Height: 450 mm/1 ft. 5 ^{3/4} in.		
Wash Basin: Suggested Height: 800 mm/2 ft. 7 ^{1/2} in.		
Towel or Drying Unit: Suggested Height: 800 mm/2 ft. 7 ^{1/2} in.		

Are there 'Lever Type' controls in the wash-basin ? (which respond to hand with diminished power).....

Is there any means of summoning assistance within the cubicle?....

Is assistance available ?.....

Have your staff been trained to assist disabled people ?.....

OTHER INFORMATION:.....

Appendix II

Organisations contacted as part of the TO ENABLE Survey

Ireland

National Rehabilitation Board,
25 Clyde Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4. Tel: (01) 684181

Irish Wheelchair Association,
25 Lower Blackheath Drive, Clontarf, Dublin 3. Tel: (01) 338241

National Association for the Deaf,
25 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 763118

National Council for the Blind,
10 Lower Hatch Street, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 612032

St. Michael's House, Goatstown, Dublin 14. Tel: (01) 987033

Economic and Social Research Institute,
4 Burlington Road, Dublin 4. Tel: (01) 760115

University of Dublin, Trinity College Faculty of Health Sciences,
Rochestown Avenue, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.
Tel: (01) 852677

Social Integration Project,
Tullamore, Co. Offaly. Tel: (0506) 41204

Clashganna Mills Trust,
Earlsfort Lodge, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2. Tel: (01) 611332

Union of Voluntary Organisations for the Handicapped,
29 Eaton Square, Monkstown, Co. Dublin. Tel: (01) 809251

Britain and Northern Ireland

ARTS LINE,
5 Browndale Road, London NW1 1TU

ARTLINK,
4 Forth Street, Edinburgh EH1 3LD, Scotland

SHAPE,
1 Thorpe Close, London W10 5XL

Access and Information Group,
14 Roxborough Park, Harrow, Middlesex HA1 3BE

Centre on Environment for the Handicapped,
35 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BJ

Access Committee for England,
35 Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BJ

Arts Council of Great Britain,
105 Piccadilly, London W1V 0AU

Arts Council of Northern Ireland,
181a Stranmillis Road, Belfast BT9 5DU

Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation,
25 Mortimer Street, London WIN 8AB

Greater London Arts Association,
9 White Lion Street, London N1 9PD

Arts Access,
336 Brixton Road, London SW9 7AA

Europe
European Commission (INTERACT),
Square Ambiorix 32, b.47, B.1 040 Brussels

Rehab International,
BP30-6080, Charleroi, Belgium

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The Arts and Disabilities — A Creative Response to Social Handicap — Edited by Geoffrey Lord. (Edinburgh: MacDonald Publishers, 1981).

Needing a Push — How the Arts Neglect the Disabled. (London: Greater London Arts Association, 1979).

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Arts Centres — Facilities and Amenities for the Handicapped. Edited by S. Simpson. (London: The Royal Association for Disabilities and Rehabilitation, 1980).

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