

DASH



Cultivating spaces for extraordinary artists.

Guide to becoming a DASH Trustee

Welcome!

Disability Arts in Shropshire (DASH) is a thriving Disability Arts organisation, based in Shrewsbury and working regionally, nationally and internationally to commission new work by Disabled visual artists. We also run Disability Arts workshops; provide mentoring for Disabled Artists, develop and run Disability Arts and equality training, and develop and manage a range of major Disability Arts projects. These include major international development work to bring Disability Arts into the mainstream and to engage the wider arts world in an understanding and appreciation of Disability Arts.

DASH was set up in 1992 as part of the then Shropshire Disability Consortium, and in 2002 we were established as an independent company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. Since then we have developed an international reputation for the excellence of our work and expertise, to the point where we are now widely recognised as a major leader in our field.

DASH does all this with a very small, highly experienced and amazingly committed staff team, who have an international reputation for the excellence of DASH's work. We receive funding from - among others - Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation, Shropshire Council, Arts Council Wales and QC Data Ltd.

We are always looking for new Trustees to broaden the experience of our Disability-led Board and to bring new ideas, enthusiasms and commitment to the way we run DASH.

This guide sets out:

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Summary

This Guide explains the process we use to recruit and select new Trustees.

It describes what DASH expects from its Trustees and what they can expect from us, and gives a flavour of what it's like to be a part of our Board.

We are looking for people who have:

- An enthusiasm for DASH's work and a commitment to carry out the duties of a Trustee.
- A commitment to equality, anti-discrimination and DASH's core values.
- To be respected members of one or more relevant communities, such as Disabled people, the arts, legal, business people, or other appropriate groups.
- The ability to work as an assertive and tolerant team members, accepting and supporting majority decisions.
- The ability and willingness to communicate effectively.
- Preparedness to support the work of DASH staff members.

We are looking for Trustees with skills in one or more of:

- The visual arts, ideally within Disability Arts.
- Fundraising for 'niche' voluntary sector organisations.
- Marketing and/or social media work.
- Professional arts work, including curating.

DASH Trustees are expected to spend a reasonable amount of time on Trustee activities, which includes some work outside Board meetings.

We hope you find this Guide accessible and informative, and that it encourages you to think about becoming a Trustee. If you'd like to ask any questions or discuss any aspect of the Guide, please contact Jonathan, Mike, Paula or Carrie.



Jonathan Hyams
Chair
chair@dasharts.org



Mike Layward
Artistic Director
01743 272 939
mike@dasharts.org



Paula Dower
Operations Director
01743 272 939
paula@dasharts.org



Carrie Slawinska
Admin Assistant
01743 272 939
carrie@dasharts.org

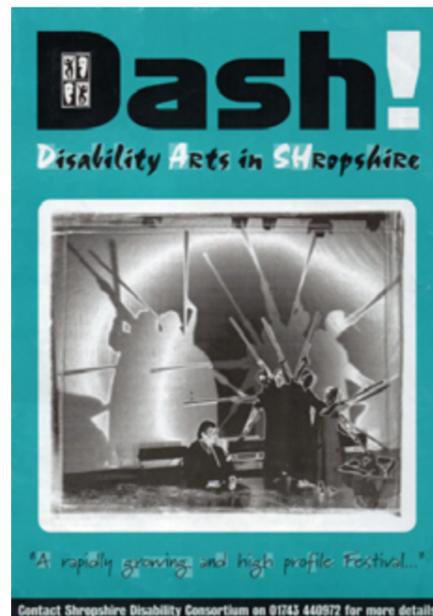
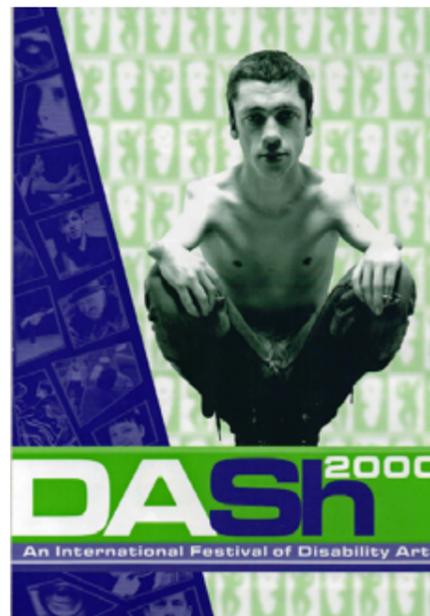
A Brief History of DASH

Early Days

1992 - DASH set up as a project of Shropshire Disability Consortium (SDC).

1996 - 2000 - DASH developed and produced an Annual Disability Arts Festival.

2002 - With funding from Arts Council England, DASH became an independent Disability Arts organisation with a Disabled user-led Management Board.



Developing DASH

2002 - 2007 - Ludlow Inclusive Carnival - Week-long carnival camp to create costumes, music, song and dance, concluding in the Ludlow Carnival parade at Whitsun.

2003 - 2009 Inclusion of work by Disabled filmmakers and Disabled actors in Borderlines Film Festival.

2003- 2006 - Digital Now I and II - developing Disabled Artists' digital arts skills regionally.

2006 - 2008 - ADTeam - professional development of Disabled Artists arts practice.

Photos (left) are from ADTeam exhibition launch.



Focussing on Visual Arts

2008 - DASH's Arts Council funding doubled. DASH moved to new premises at Hartley Business Centre, Shrewsbury, providing office, art and work space.

2008 - Barriers 2008 Multimedia Project - seven Disabled Artists from across the UK and Ireland producing collaborative work on the theme of Barriers.



2008 - Outside IN - a pioneering arts development programme, based on the question "Why is there a lack of Disability Art in mainstream galleries?". DASH worked in partnership with the New Art Gallery Walsall, Wolverhampton Art Gallery and Oriel Davies Gallery, mid Wales, commissioning work of three Disabled Artists; Sean Burn, The Disabled Avant Garde and Noëmi Lakmaier. The artworks were displayed in the partner galleries. The commissions also included artist-led workshops, 'artists in conversation' events and concluded with a seminar evaluating the project.

2010 - The first UK Disability Film Festival led by DASH showing in 20+ venues nationwide.

2010 - 2012 - Extremely popular Visual Art Workshops at the DASH Space for Disabled and non-disabled people. Included life drawing, the Abstract, using narrative and classic art practices.



Barriers 2008

2012 - DASH move to the Hive, Belmont, Shrewsbury.

2012 – 2015 - 'in' project - the new name for 'Outside IN', reflecting the impact and lessons of the initial Outside IN programme and running to 2015. The new partner galleries for 'in' are Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery, The Arnolfini, Bristol, The Herbert, Coventry, the Public, West Bromwich, and mac birmingham.

2013 - Artists' Workshops on Disability Arts and Equality - provide participants with a grounding in Disability Arts and Equality, enabling them to gain further paid employment through DASH, other arts organisations, schools, community groups and other organisations.

2014 - 2015 - Art Express a pilot project taking Visual Arts workshops to rural locations across Shropshire.

Current and future work

2014 - 2017 DASH awarded three years' National Portfolio Organisation funding from Arts Council England. This secures DASH's work bringing high-quality Disability Artist commissions to mainstream galleries, and provides a solid foundation for many other DASH initiatives and projects through to 2017.

2014 - 2017 D2ART and Redact - DASH is working with Dr. Christopher Creed to research the impact of digital tools on increasing accessibility for Disabled Artists in creating digital artworks. d2art.org

2014 - 2017 Tu Fewn - an exciting new partnership with Disability Arts Cymru, developing opportunities for arts organisations across Wales to commission high-quality work by UK and international Disabled visual artists. It aims were to increase the number of Disabled visual artists exhibiting in mainstream galleries in Wales, enable Disabled artists to develop curatorial skills with mainstream Welsh galleries and to work within Welsh arts organisations.

2015 - 2018 'inside' - developing from the 'in' project and Tu



Sound Canvas at The Public
Zoe Partington and Andre j Bako
Photo by Graham Peet



Art Express pilot workshop
Carding Mill Valley



Fewn, 'inside' is partnering with QUAD in Derby and the New Art Exchange in Nottingham to commission two new works for exhibition. The 'inside' brief called for these partners to extend their networks and bring in additional partners for the programme, they are: DLab, Junction Arts, Level Centre and the Attenborough Arts Centre.

2015 - 2018 Cultivate - a three year mentoring programme for Disabled visual artists in the Midlands. Each mentee can receive up to 6 hours of 1-2-1 support from our team of mentors.

2016 - The Incurrigibles - Disability Visual Arts in the 20th and 21st Centuries. This beautifully designed, hardback book contains the work of fourteen Disabled visual artists, accompanied by three essays from leading professionals and academics.

This list covers only part of DASH's progress over the years, and cannot represent all of our work, events or milestones. DASH's considerable practical knowledge and experience of the barriers to involvement and participation faced by Disabled people, and of different ways to challenge and overcome them will continue to inform our future work. We intend to carry on developing leading-edge projects and ways of working with Disabled Artists to bring Disability Arts into the mainstream, develop wider public understanding and appreciation of



'From a young age the cracks had started to appear' by Dale Vn Marshall
DASH and The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum - IN commission



DASH's Core Values

DASH's work encompasses all aspects of the visual arts, and has regional, national and international significance. It is built on the principle of equality for all, and ensuring that Disabled people and Disabled Artists are able to take their rightful place in the arts and society.

One of our core commitments is to the 'social model' of Disability, which sees Disability discrimination as the result of attitudes and prejudices in society and institutions rather than Disabled people's impairments.

DASH recognises that people's lives are complex and constantly changing. Many people experience both multiple discrimination and different forms of discrimination at different times in their lives. We see all forms of discrimination as different but equal, with Disability discrimination being part of a 'web' that includes racism, sexism and homophobia among other forms of discrimination.

DASH's Charitable constitution commits us to:

- Engage with Disabled Artists and Disabled people interested in the arts.
- Promote and support Disabled people as an arts audience.
- Run arts workshops and projects, undertake research and deliver training.
- Promote and run events that include all members of the community.
- Work in partnership with arts organisations and artists regionally, nationally and internationally to incorporate Disability Arts in their programmes

We also work to increase public awareness and understanding of Disability Arts, and to encourage different arts organisations' engagement in Disability Arts.

What DASH expects from our Trustees

DASH is a company limited by guarantee (a non-profit organisation) and registered charity, with no share capital. DASH is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association and its charitable objects.

What do DASH's Trustees do?

Our Trustees are ultimately accountable for all decisions about DASH's overall purpose and direction. The Trustees are both company directors and charity Trustees, and the term "Trustee" is used in this Guide to include both meanings. Trustees are obliged to register with Companies House, after which their liability is limited to £1 for DASH's trading losses or debts. However Trustees may lose this protection if they are seen to behave irresponsibly in reaching their decisions.



In some cases DASH may delegate responsibility for its work to sub-committees, paid staff or volunteers. However, the ultimate responsibility for every aspect of DASH's operation still lies with the Trustees.

DASH Board Membership Policy

DASH's Board should comprise people who:

- Are able to offer the skills, knowledge, and experience required by DASH.
- Subscribe to and support DASH's values and commitment to diversity, equality and anti-discrimination.
- Support DASH's work and development.
- Collectively constitute a majority defining themselves as Disabled people.

DASH Trustees' duties

- To ensure that DASH complies with its governing documents, charity law and any other relevant legislation and regulations.
- To ensure that DASH pursues its charitable objects as defined in its governing documents.
- To ensure that DASH applies its resources exclusively to fulfilling its objects, no matter how worthwhile other activities may be.
- To contribute actively to the Board in giving clear strategic direction to DASH, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance against those targets.
- To safeguard the good name and values of DASH.
- To ensure DASH's effective and efficient administration.
- To ensure DASH's financial stability.
- To protect and manage DASH's property and to ensure the proper investment of DASH's funds.
- To appoint and support DASH's employees, and to monitor their performance and work.

In addition, DASH Trustees are expected to use their skills, knowledge and experience to help the Board reach sound decisions by:

- Scrutinising Board and other papers.
- Leading and taking part in discussions.
- Focusing on key issues.
- Providing advice as requested by the Board on issues relevant to DASH's work in which they have relevant expertise.

The qualities and experience DASH looks for in our Trustees

Personal attributes and values:

- An enthusiasm for DASH's work.
- A demonstrable commitment to diversity, equality, anti-discrimination and DASH's core values
- A commitment to carry out the duties of a Trustee.
- To be respected member of one or more relevant communities [e.g. Disabled people, arts, legal, business] preferably with good contacts which will support DASH's activities.
- Ability and willingness to work as a member of a team and to state personal convictions, accept majority decisions and be tolerant of the views of others.
- Ability and willingness to communicate with staff and fellow-Trustees about a range of issues.
- Preparedness to offer personal and work-based skills and experience to support the work of staff members when appropriate.

Skills

DASH's needs for different skills in Trustees vary from time to time. We are currently looking for new Trustees to broaden the experience of our Board and to bring new ideas and enthusiasms to the way we run DASH. We are particularly interested in expressions of interest from Disabled people and visual artists, preferably Disabled Artists.

We are looking for significant experience of one or more of:

- Fundraising for 'niche' voluntary sector organisations.
- Marketing and/or social media work.
- Professional arts work.
- Curating / visual arts administrative and development expertise.

Term of Office

DASH's Memorandum and Articles of Association require one third of the Board to resign by rotation every year with the provision for re-appointment . The Board may co-opt members if DASH would particularly benefit as a result.

Trustee Role Specification: Duties & Responsibilities

Legal and Financial Duties

As a board member you will be expected to support the board:

- a) To ensure that DASH operates in accordance with Company and Charity law. This includes the filing of statutory returns at Companies House, returns to the Charity Commission and maintaining the Company Registers.
- b) To ensure the prudent financial management of DASH.
 - To exercise financial control.
 - To scrutinise statements of the financial position.
 - To discuss and decide on annual budgets and to review and revise the budgets if required.
 - To decide on and where necessary assist with major applications to funding bodies.
- c) To ensure that DASH keeps proper accounts and that audited accounts are produced annually and submitted to Companies House and relevant funding bodies.
- d) To ensure the payment of all taxes due.
- e) To appoint bankers and cheque signatories and to make clear decisions about staff spending powers.
- f) To ensure that DASH's assets are safeguarded, well managed and maintained.
- g) To ensure that DASH is adequately insured.
- h) Trustees have legal, financial and fiduciary duties under Company and Charity Law.
- i) Trustees are entitled to attend and vote at DASH General Meetings.

N.B: If DASH is not run within the limits of its financial resources and Trustees are not seen to have acted prudently, they could be held personally liable for DASH's debts and be disqualified from being a Director or Trustee. It is therefore essential that Trustees are kept informed of and monitor DASH's financial position.

Duties and responsibilities continued

Employment and Staffing

a) To define DASH's employment policies, including:

- Contracts of employment.
- Staff supervision and appraisal.
- Dismissal, grievance and disciplinary procedures.
- Equality policy and action plans.
- Expenses payments.
- Maternity and paternity leave.
- Health & Safety.
- Pay.
- Recruitment and Selection.
- Sickness and holidays.
- Training.

b) To make decisions about and participate in recruiting and selecting staff and renewing employees' contracts.

c) To agree job descriptions, person specifications and terms of employment for employees, and to review pay annually.

d) The Chair or an appointed deputy should act as the staff line manager, providing supervision, support, appraisal and access to grievance and disciplinary procedures.

e) To ensure the safe and efficient use of premises for staff and members of the public.

Policy & Planning

a) Although DASH's role is clearly set out in its mission statement, it is essential that the Trustees set policy priorities and create strategies to put them into practice. In particular, the Trustees should discuss and decide on DASH's Business Plan. All Trustees should have a good understanding of all DASH's policy documents.

b) The Trustees should regularly monitor all aspects of service delivery and policy implementation.

c) The Trustees should annually review and as necessary amend all policy and policy implementation documents.

Advocacy

a) To promote DASH and its activities and needs to the private, public and voluntary sectors.

b) To engage with outside organisations and communities to exchange relevant information.

c) To act as enthusiastic ambassadors for DASH.

Management

a) To maintain a cycle of meetings with appropriate papers to ensure the Board can function effectively.

b) To maintain delegated decision-making so that urgent decisions can be made and implemented between Board meetings.

c) To co-opt additional Directors with appropriate specialist knowledge and skills as required.

Attendance and availability

a) In general, DASH Trustees are expected to make a reasonable time commitment to their Trustee activities, and to carry out a reasonable amount of work beyond attending Board meetings. This may vary from time to time, depending on factors such as the level of DASH activity, the need for engagement with other organisations, and the need to promote DASH projects.

b) Any DASH Trustee who fails to attend more than 50% of Board meetings or other Board activities over a year may be asked by the Chair to resign.

Trustees are expected to:

c) Attend Board meetings, any additional meetings, and General Meetings which will normally be held to coincide with Board meetings.

d) Attend key events run by DASH, normally one or two a year.

e) Provide advice and support to staff if required.

Chair's duties

a) The Chair is the chief spokesperson for the Trustees.

b) The Chair is required to keep in close touch with DASH and its activities. Although this duty may be shared among the Trustees, the Chair is DASH's main representative at outside events where a Trustee's presence is appropriate.

c) The Board may delegate specific powers to the Chair or (an) other Trustee(s) to make decisions between Board meetings about matters in progress. However, the Chair is the primary decision-maker on anything that requires Board approval but which cannot wait until the next Board meeting.

d) All such decisions made by the Chair (or a delegated Trustee) must be within the agreed DASH policy framework, and brought to the next Board meeting for ratification.

e) In the Chair's absence her/his duties and powers will be assumed by the Vice-Chair, or in her/his absence by another Trustee chosen by the Board.

What can our Trustees expect from DASH?

We've said quite a lot about what DASH expects from its Trustees – a mixture of commitment, values, time and work. We recognise that our Trustees are volunteers, who deserve to feel engaged, valued, and respected, so there has to be a reciprocal deal. This section outlines what a Trustee – especially a new Trustee – can expect from DASH.

DASH will provide:

- An introductory session with one or more of our employees and an existing Trustee, to take you through DASH's values, policies, plans and procedures, how we work, and how a new Trustee can fit in to DASH's work and ethos.
- The offer of a co-Trustee to act as a DASH supporter or mentor both inside and outside the Board, especially for a new Trustee's first six months.
- Support to complete DASH's Trustee Skills Audit, and support to analyse any training or support needs in the Trustee role.
- An information pack, containing the key policy and planning documents that inform the role of a DASH Trustee.
- Reimbursements for travel expenses and refreshments at meetings.
- Support to develop a personal action plan to engage in DASH's work and policy-making.
- A meeting with our Chair and Secretary to get to know:
 - Who they are and what they bring to the Board
 - The important issues facing DASH, and the way the new Trustee can be part of dealing with them.
 - How the new Trustee feels DASH can best use their skills and experience. The process for Trustee training and development, both within the Board and individually.
 - The offer to go through either the minutes of the last Board meeting and /or the agenda for the next.

We are setting up a process of Board peer appraisals, in which Trustees will be able to discuss issues and areas of DASH work to which we have contributed in the last year, and to receive constructive feedback from other Trustees.

We are happy to provide references for our Trustees to enable them to access employment

The way the DASH Board works

DASH Trustees

DASH Board contains a mixture of people from very diverse backgrounds; from business, community work, equality and diversity, the public, private, voluntary, business and corporate sectors.

What unites us is a genuine love of DASH and what it represents; a powerful combination of a commitment to visual art and Disability rights.. We tend to work in a relaxed and very democratic way, with a clear agenda which allows for occasional diversions into political analysis and debate, passionate views, current affairs and philosophical musings....

Team work

DASH is small organisation, with few Trustees or employees. We all work together as a close-knit team, and we delegate elements of our Board work to individual Trustees and to Trustee/staff sub-groups, depending on the issue.

Board meetings

DASH Board usually meets every two months although meetings can be more frequent if there are particular issues to address. There are also occasional Board 'Away days' for training and major discussions on policy and strategy.

Meetings are usually held at The Hive in Shrewsbury, though if there is sufficient demand from trustees meetings can be held in Wolverhampton.

Board meetings reflect a parity of status and esteem between our Trustees and employees - a very small, highly experienced and amazingly committed staff team, who have a national reputation for the excellence of DASH's work.

Because we are an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, our ACE Client Manager usually attends part of our Board meetings, and advises us on ACE policy and practice as it affects DASH's decisions.

Issues are discussed in depth, and bring into the mix the different experiences and backgrounds of our staff and Trustees. We rarely need to vote; our discussion usually results in a consensus.

How we recruit and select our Trustees

As in many other small charities and voluntary sector organisations, DASH uses two basic methods for recruiting Trustees. One is by our staff or Trustees identifying people they know or know of whom they think might be suitable candidates to become DASH Trustees. These suggestions are then discussed in a Board meeting, and if there is a favourable consensus the person is invited to meet other Trustees and staff, and often to attend a Board meeting as an observer before either side makes a final decision.

This approach has the advantage of recruiting people who are likely to share DASH's values and priorities. However, it has the major disadvantage that over time it can produce a Board of like-minded 'clones', which may lack the necessary breadth of views and experience to be truly dynamic and productive.

The other method is to advertise for suitably qualified and experienced people to meet our current needs for skills, experience and values. This has the advantage of offering a potentially much wider field of candidates. However, it can also be time-consuming and may not produce a significant response, especially in times of economic downturn.

Trustee selection

DASH's Trustee selection process is based on good equality practice, and reflects approaches used in the public sector to minimise the impact of prejudice and treat all applicants fairly. However, it is neither as lengthy nor as formal as those procedures.

Stages:

Stage 1

Prospective Trustees are asked to submit a letter of interest and a CV outlining their skills, knowledge, experience and values, and reasons for applying. This allows us to make an initial decision whether to meet the prospective Trustee and progress their application.

Stage 2

If the Board decides to proceed, we invite the prospective Trustee to meet a small panel of Board members. This meeting has two purposes; to enable the prospective Trustee to find out more about DASH and what it means to be a DASH Trustee, and for the Board to find out more about the prospective Trustee and find out whether s/he would fit with our needs.

Stage 3

The prospective Trustee and the Board decide that they are both happy to proceed, the Board invites the prospective Trustee to attend their next meeting as an observer. If both are happy to proceed after the Board meeting, the appointment is confirmed and the new Trustee's induction begins.