

Becoming a DASH Trustee



Cultivating spaces for extraordinary artists.



Contents

Chair's welcome	3
About our organisation	4
Our plan for 2023-26	8
Who we'd like to join us	10
What it means to be a Trustee	11
Induction, support and training	12
Application process	13



Chair's Welcome

As DASH prepares to begin a new chapter, this is an incredibly exciting time to join our remarkable Disabled-led organisation and help cultivate space for extraordinary visual artists.

Since 2001, we've chalked up two decades of important work supporting Disabled, d/Deaf and Neurodivergent artists through commissioning, mentoring and professional development programmes that break down barriers to participation in the mainstream visual arts sector.

With representation and collaboration at our heart, we've built inspirational and long-lasting partnerships with some of the UK's leading galleries and museums, fostering leadership and confidence in working with Disabled, d/Deaf and Neurodivergent artists and arts professionals.

I'm proud of what we've achieved over the years, particularly the commitment and resilience DASH has shown since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic; over the past two years we have continued to develop programmes that respond to the needs of our community and drive change at the national level.

As we look ahead to our third decade, the need for DASH's work remains urgent and the opportunity for creative growth is great. We're looking for new members to join the Board of Trustees to help realise the full potential and objectives of the Charity.

Building on our strong governance and a culture of radical inclusivity, we want to widen our perspective as a Board and more fully reflect the communities we represent. Working together, we want to be ambitious in setting DASH's vision for the next 10 years.

Thank you for your interest in DASH and the work we do – we hope you will consider joining us. This document serves as an introduction to DASH, the role of Trustee, and how to apply. If you would like further information or an initial conversation, please do get in touch.



Craig Ashley
Chair of Trustees, DASH
chair@dasharts.org



About our organisation

Founded in 2001, DASH is a thriving Disabled-led visual arts organisation based in the UK – a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Cultivating spaces for extraordinary artists, our work is committed to establishing Disability art in the mainstream.

We are an influential voice for equality and antidiscrimination in the sector, working in partnership with other organisations to challenge inequality and implement change.

DASH works with the wider arts and cultural sector to shape opportunities for Disabled, d/Deaf and Neurodivergent artists to develop their creative practice. These opportunities take many forms, from high profile commissions and exhibitions to artist mentoring programmes and training for young Disabled, d/Deaf and Neurodivergent people.

DASH is led by Mike Layward (Artistic Director) and Paula Dower (Operations Director), supported by a small team of staff, freelancers and volunteers. We are one of Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations and provide access support for individuals applying to ACE for funding.

DASH has received recent support from partners and funders including the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Garfield Weston, Shropshire Council, Art Fund and National Lottery Community Fund.

We are a member of the Plus Tate Network and recipient of the prestigious Ampersand Award 2021 with £150,000 awarded to realise an ambitious project and associated publication in 2022.



Our vision, mission, values and aims

DASH's Vision

A society in which Disability Art is core and equally valued in the arts sector.

DASH's Mission and Values

DASH is a Disability Visual Arts organisation whose mission is to develop Disability Arts practice.

DASH works with artists, audiences, communities and organisations to challenge inequality and implement change. Our values upon equality of opportunity and the Social Model of Disability.

DASH's aims are:

- To engage with Disabled, d/Deaf and Neurodivergent artists and people interested in the arts
- An innovator for talent development for Disabled, d/Deaf and Neurodivergent artists
- To work in partnership with organisations to support Disabled, d/Deaf and Neurodivergent people as an arts audience
- To increase community and organisational knowledge and awareness of Disability Arts practices
- To engage and actively support young Disabled, d/Deaf and Neurodivergent people to become artists
- To work in partnership with arts organisations and artists, regionally and nationally, to incorporate Disability Arts in their programmes and culture
- To develop and deliver a broad range of equality and accessibility training programmes
- To strengthen our resilience as an organisation

DASH achieves this by:

- Provoking debate and developing best practice
- Creating new work and ways of working
- Facilitating the exchange of skills and knowledge
- Cultivating opportunities for participation
- Supporting the visual arts sector to develop diverse audiences



Recent programme highlights include:

Future Curators – leadership development

Developed to address issues of access and representation with the visual arts workforce, this programme embeds Disabled, d/Deaf and Neurodivergent curators into visual arts organisations.

From 2022 the Future Curators network expands to include Newlyn Art Gallery & Exchange (Cornwall), John Hansard Gallery (Southampton) and Arts Catalyst (Sheffield) who join longstanding members Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art (Teeside), Wysing Arts Centre (Cambridge) and Midland Arts Centre (Birmingham).

Further information can be found on the [project page](#) of our website.

The Incurrigibles – publication

Featuring the work of fourteen Disabled visual artists alongside essays from leading professionals and academics, The Incurrigibles provides perspectives on Disability Visual Arts in the 20th and 21st centuries.

“The Incurrigibles is both a testament to the resilience of artists making work in the face of disabling obstacles and the commitment of artists dedicated to making work about the experience of disability.” Colin Hambrook, Disability Arts Online

Further information can be found on the [project page](#) of our website.

Awkward Bastards – symposia on diversity in the arts

DASH’s first Awkward Bastards symposium in March 2015 was one of the first to engage with the spectrum of diversity from disability, ethnicity, sexuality, to gender and class. Since then, Awkward Bastards has continued to reflect upon the ways in which so-called “diverse” artists and practices have been, are, or could be, reframed.

The latest iteration ‘Awkward Bastards At Home’ responds to COVID-19, five commissioned films reflecting on life as a Disabled artist during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Further information can be found on the [project page](#) of our website.



Free Medicine - creative skills development for young people

Beginning in July 2018, Free Medicine has enabled young Disabled, d/Deaf and Neurodivergent artists (YDAs) in Shropshire to develop creative skills through tailored workshops and ongoing mentoring and support.

Improved confidence, communication skills and mental health well-being are among the benefits of this programme.

During the pandemic, DASH have been able to support young Disabled, d/Deaf and Neurodivergent artists by providing art packs, with benefits to mental wellbeing as well as encouraging artistic development and confidence during lockdown.

Further information can be found on the [project page](#) of our website.

Cultivate - mentoring programme

DASH identified the need for a robust formal mentoring programme for emerging Disabled artists across the West Midlands, to enable access to opportunities and practical specialist support. Between 2015 and 2018, sixty artists accessed a total of 360 hours of tailored professional development support over a three-year programme.

During the pandemic, mentoring provided much need support to those most impacted by pandemic. To date we've delivered 630 sessions online to 121 mentees based across the UK.

Further information can be found on the [project page](#) of our website.

Please take a look at our website to explore our projects – past, present and future.
Visit www.dasharts.org



Our plan for 2023-26

In preparation for significant change at DASH, we are in the middle of a period of organisational development. Our longstanding Artist Director Mike Layward will retire in 2022 and we will recruit a new leadership role to build ambitiously upon a remarkable track record in Disability arts.

Driven by new and serving Trustees, this organisational development work will continue to contribute substantively and integrally to our business and strategic planning for the period of Arts Council England's next National Portfolio round (2023-26). It will ensure we embed our core funder's Outcomes and Investment Principles, evidencing the value of our work and celebrating our achievements.

The aims of the organisational development are to:

- Review and refine our vision – ensuring our core mission and values are shared and embedded across the organisation for the next decade (2021-31)
- Determine our future priorities – reviewing our current scope and activity alongside our future ambitions and direction to establish clear objectives for DASH for 2022-27
- Establish ways of working – shaping our organisational structure and identifying the resource needed to achieve our objectives and core funded activity for 2023–26
- Map a route for change – shifting from our current position to embed the refined vision, priorities and activity, and new ways of working by April 2023.



Our plan for 2023-26 continued

Underpinned by a model for growth – multiplying the impact of our work across the sector –our guiding themes for this period are:

National Provision – supporting Disabled artists and arts professionals through ambitious partnerships with sector leading organisations, building confidence in centring Disability Arts practice and widening access to opportunity in the mainstream

Talent Pipeline – sustaining a creative practice development offer for Young Disabled Artists, providing pathways to progression beyond our own programmes of activity, and activating the capacity and potential of the sector

Coalition Building – equipping and enabling our Disabled-led community to be advocates in the mainstream visual arts, campaigning for equality and antidiscrimination, and effecting sector leadership and change in the UK and internationally

Expertise Bank – growing the skill-base of our workforce to extend beyond the staff and Board, retaining the talent and perspective of those benefitting from our programmes, and creating paid opportunities for Disabled people in the visual arts sector



Image left:
Anna Berry's exhibition 'Art and Social Change: The Disability Arts Movement' at mac Birmingham, 2019. The exhibition was part of the Curatorial Commissions programme.

Photo by Kate Green.



Who we'd like to join us

As we embark on our next chapter and emerge from the immediate impact of the global pandemic, we want to take the opportunity to reimagine our work in a changing world. To enable this, our current Trustees and the team now wish to transform our Board. By broadening the skills, knowledge and living experiences of our trustees, we will ensure DASH's board is representative of the work we do and the people we make work with and for.

Due to the end of tenure of some of our Trustees and in wanting expand our Trustee numbers, we are looking to recruit three new Trustees. We expect our collective Board of Trustees to hold knowledge and experience across the following areas:

- Transforming leadership in the arts and wider cultural sector
- Understanding the development needs of artists and freelance arts professionals
- Policy-making, diversity and inclusion, social activism and human rights
- Establishing and growing partnerships with communities
- Managing organisations including but not limited to: finance / charity finance / accounting, HR, marketing and communications

In particular, we are looking for new Trustees who hold knowledge and experience in the areas of HR, finance / charity finance / accounting and environmental responsibility to help support and expand our current collective knowledge and experience.

The living experience of our Trustees is of equal importance to knowledge and experience. We want our Board of Trustees to represent and give a voice to the collaborators we work with, our communities and our audiences. We believe that a Board that is representative of the UK's population, with a range of living experiences will lead to stronger and more effective governance.

We recognise that currently our Board of Trustees is not representative of the UK population, that we have gaps in our living experiences and would like to change this. We are actively looking for people to join our Board of Trustees who:

- identify as Disabled d/Deaf or Neurodivergent
- are people of the Global Majority (Black, Asian, Brown, dual-heritage, indigenous to the global south, and/or have been racialised as 'ethnic minorities')
- are aged between 18-30 years of age who identify as Disabled, d/Deaf or Neurodivergent

We also recognise the need for our Board to have the perspectives of people with living experiences of the complexity of intersectional identities, where identities overlap with one another, and there are effects of multiple forms of discrimination.

What it means to be a Trustee

As defined in our governing documents, our trustees have a legal responsibility to ensure that DASH fulfils its charitable objectives, remains financially solvent and always meets its statutory requirements.

The Board meets six times a year with the senior management team to discuss key decisions, have oversight of the organisation's finances and ensure that we are delivering our aims and objectives.

Trustees usually serve for a term of three years, with potential to serve a total of two terms.

Our Trustees also act as a sounding board and bring constructive support and advice on a range of strategic issues for the organisation, and may provide additional, specific support to senior management or take part in subcommittee meetings.

We also ask that you act as an advocate for DASH and champion our work, and to proactively seek out and broker opportunities that may benefit the organisation. Board meetings are held in person and online, and we'll hold an annual away day and Annual General Meeting (AGM) once a year.



Image left:
The launch of Anna Berry's exhibition 'Art and Social Change: The Disability Arts Movement' at mac Birmingham, 2019. The exhibition was part of the Curatorial Commissions programme.

Photo by Kate Green.



Induction, support and training

New Trustees onto our Board will receive an induction and training so that we can create an effective, inclusive and dynamic Board for the years ahead.

We'll meet with you and the chair, Craig Ashley to discuss what support and training you might like to help you fulfil your role effectively, and what types of development opportunities the board might do together.

DASH's new "Board buddies" approach will mean you'll have a point of contact to help you familiarise yourself with the organisation, and to discuss outside of formal board meetings those areas of development you would like to see across the organisation

Being a Trustee is a voluntary role and is unpaid, however we will reimburse you for all reasonable expenses, including travel and childcare costs if required.

To enable d/Deaf Trustees to join our board, we'll ensure the required access needs for board meetings and papers are met, which may include BSL interpretation, captioning, etc or a hybrid approach.

We are active about creating a more diverse and representative arts sector and will work to provide any access support or arrangements that are required for you to undertake this role effectively.



Application process

Please send a letter which is no longer than two sides of A4, or a video in your chosen language no longer than five minutes, detailing why you would like to join us as a Trustee, what relevant knowledge and experiences and living experience that you can bring to the role and to our organisation.

Please send your application via email to our Chair **Craig Ashley**. Please also contact the Chair if you have any questions or you would like to chat about the role – we are happy to help.

Please also complete this **monitoring form**. This is anonymous and will not form any part of the assessment of your application process. As part of the interview process you will be asked to confirm that you are eligible to act as a Trustee for a charity and we will carry out Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

There is no specific deadline for your application, as we periodically enroll new Trustees on a rolling basis.

Following receipt of your application, you may be invited for an interview (usually online) with the Chair and Vice Chair of Trustees, along with a member of our team. We would aim to conduct your interview within four weeks of receipt of your application.