

Supporting Inclusion

Taking positive action in your organisation



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Introduction

This document was created to enhance discussions within organisations to create a strategy and positive action for progress and change, in the context of Inclusion and Disability Equality*. It is aimed at people with strategic responsibilities within the organisation who are working on and leading the process of holistic, system, structural and strategic change across their organisation.

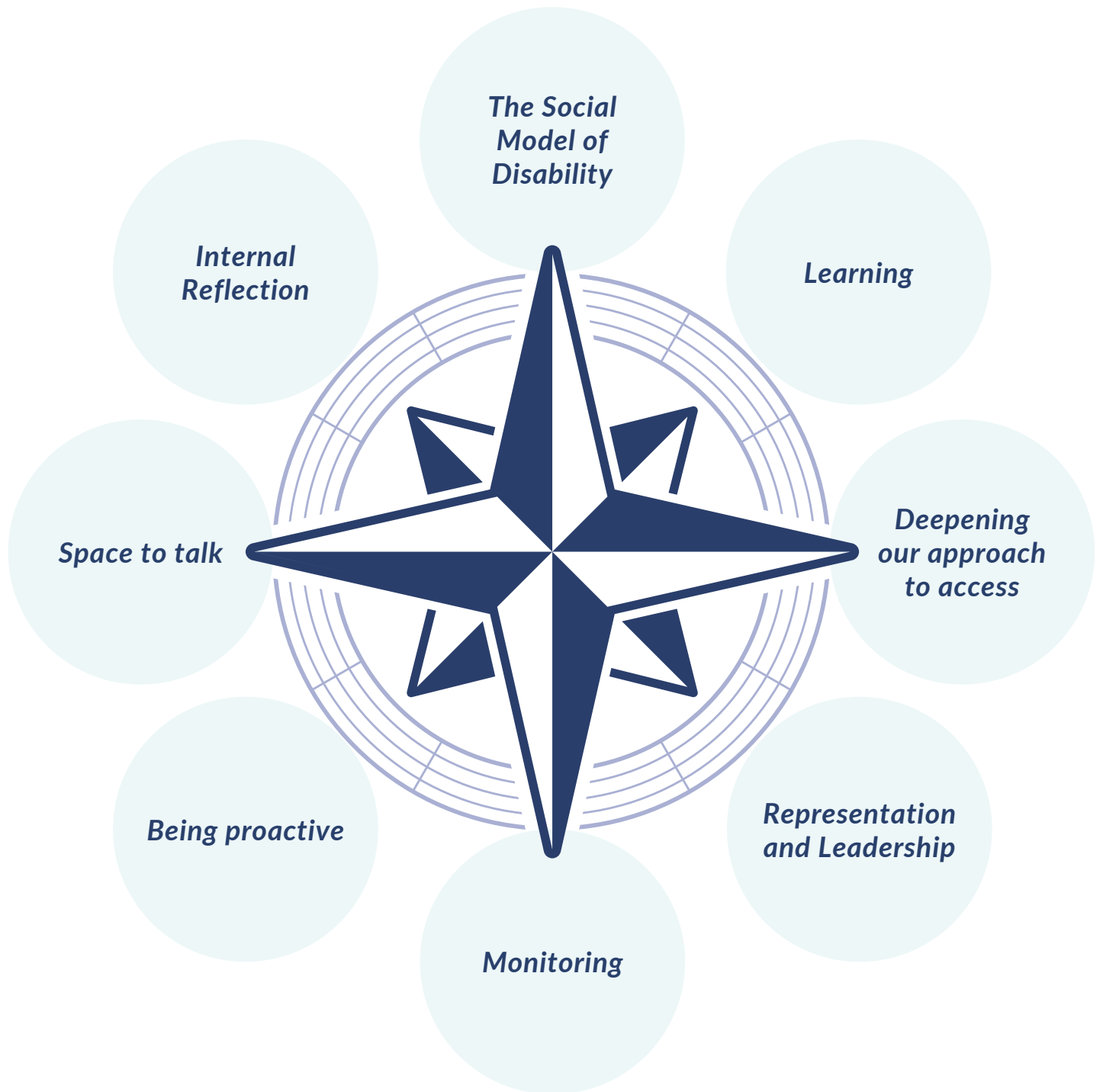
It includes 8 approaches for taking positive action in your organisation with examples illustrating each one. We highlight some of the thought processes, stages and actions we have explored at Drake Music to progress change within our organisation.

This document will be useful to the music education sector more widely in exploring and plotting its own change pathway.

As each organisational context is unique, so will be the journey, but there will also be similarities and shared experiences along the way. We value learning from lived experience and expertise, so we are sharing the specifics of our organisational Inclusion journey to inform and support your own.

** The following words and phrases are capitalised as they represent a movement or community: Disabled People, Non-Disabled People, Disability Equality, and Inclusion.*

8 Approaches for Supporting Inclusion



Where to start?

A starting point for Drake Music was to ask:

- Who is not at the table?
- How do we bring in those who are not there?

It is often challenging to join a table that already exists and that has an established way of working. This led us to ask ourselves a series of questions that have supported us to change the way we work:



- How are people excluded by the things we do?
- What do we want to change?
- What do we have the power to change?
- How can we proactively involve people with lived experience and expertise to bring about that change?

This approach has put us in control of our organisational Inclusion journey in a manageable way. It is an ongoing process involving key stages and actions that support and bring about change. We keep it as an ongoing process through:

- An organisational commitment to allocating resources
- Continually reflecting on our own practice and the way we do things.

This has transformed our Inclusion journey from a set of daunting challenges to overcome, to a series of opportunities that have a huge positive impact on everything we do at every level: strategic, governance, organisational, programme design and delivery, operational, and creative.

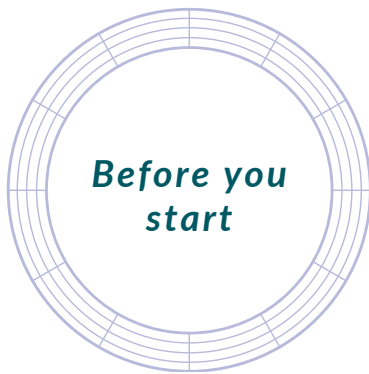
Start reflecting on your organisational practice by asking the Key Inclusion Questions above. This document will help you to:

- Understand the choices we made and what resulted from them
- Reflect further on your organisation and support your organisational choices
- Take ownership of the steps you will take, adding and changing to meet your own unique context.

Our Inclusion Journey

Actions and Outputs

Our journey has been long, so we won't cover every step! We will start from the point at which we realised that Inclusion was being *added on*, rather than being *embedded into* our programmes, systems and structures.



- Take each point and see how it is, or can be, relevant to you
- Shape each point so that it works for you
- Remember your context will be different, so the steps may need to change
- This isn't an exhaustive list. You will find other areas that will lead you in new directions.



Approaches leading to actions

We are sharing 8 approaches below, with each one in **bold** followed by examples of practical steps that we have taken towards implementation. These are not exhaustive or prescriptive; we have done other things and you will find things you can do within your own organisation that are specific to your people, programmes, structure, strategy, etc.



The Social Model of Disability *At the heart of everything we do*

The Social Model of Disability* is central to our practice and is implemented in many ways. Fundamental to this is the Disability Movement's call-to-action of "*Nothing about us without us*", which led to a shift in the learning we needed to do and share with others. This led to:

- **Inclusion and Music Tech in Practice Training**

Our evaluation showed that when we connected Social Model theory with active musical practice, the training became much more impactful for participants. So, we developed this training day as a starting point for that approach. It is aimed at individuals and organisations working in music education with Disabled children and young musicians. It combines the Social Model with accessible music technology practice (e.g., using iPads in lessons). It is developed and delivered by Disabled and Non-Disabled trainers.



**The Social Model of Disability says that disability is not about an individual's body, but is instead about the physical, attitudinal and societal barriers which affect our ability to take part in the daily life of a community on an equal level with others. Read more in Nim Ralph's [Understanding Disability](#) blog series or watch Kris Halpin's [10-minute introduction](#).*



Internal Reflection

How do Inclusion and Disability Equality manifest in our organisation?

- What is Inclusion? Making Music is the Key

We take a rights-based approach to our campaigning and advocacy for Disability Equality, representation and Inclusion. With this, and our work to progress the Inclusion journey for ourselves and others in the music education sector, we felt that it was important to understand what we mean by the word 'Inclusion'. We developed 4 key principles that underpin everything we do. We also explore these when working with our stakeholders and partners.



- Belonging
- Understanding
- Participating and Contributing
- Value and Achieving

To learn more about these 4 key principles, explore the resource '[What is Inclusion? Making Music is the Key](#)'.



Learning

Developing the organisation, our board and our team

We see ourselves as a learning and developing organisation. We see Inclusion as a journey, not a destination. There's always more we can learn, do and change and we are keen to share our learning widely. We do this through:

- [Inclusive music teachers, leaders and community musicians network UK facebook page](#)

Now with over 1500 members, it is a place where ideas, questions, suggestions and support can be shared. We host this group and use it to advocate directly to the music education sector, as well as to listen and learn from our peers.

- [StepUp! Webinars](#)

These webinars offered an opportunity to share learning, knowledge, experience and practice in relation to inclusive practice and thinking, and created a platform for collaboration and change.



Space to talk

We hold space for conversations with individuals and organisations at different stages on the Inclusion journey

- **We All Make Music Event 2018**

A conference designed and delivered by Disabled and Non-Disabled people working together. The aim was to make an event that wasn't *about* Disabled People but centred Disabled People and their lived experience.

- **Drake Music News and Views Stories**

This is a platform for thinking and practice. We try to feature a range of different voices from within the organisation, including Disabled musicians and music leaders.

- **Collaboration and Communication**

Regular, safe, open meetings with Drake Music leadership and Core Partners*, to reflect on Key Inclusion Questions. Collaborating and communicating with our team and partners has enriched our understanding of Inclusion. We continue to have these conversations with leaders of organisations interested in working with us, encouraging them to centre their actions around Disabled People, instead of expecting individual Disabled People within their organisations to guide their actions.



*Our core partners were four Music Education Hubs: Essex Music Education Hub, Newham Music, THAMES (Tower Hamlets Arts and Music Education Service), and Coventry Music.



Deepening our approach to access

Access as a non-negotiable principle and a catalyst for change

- **Invest in access**

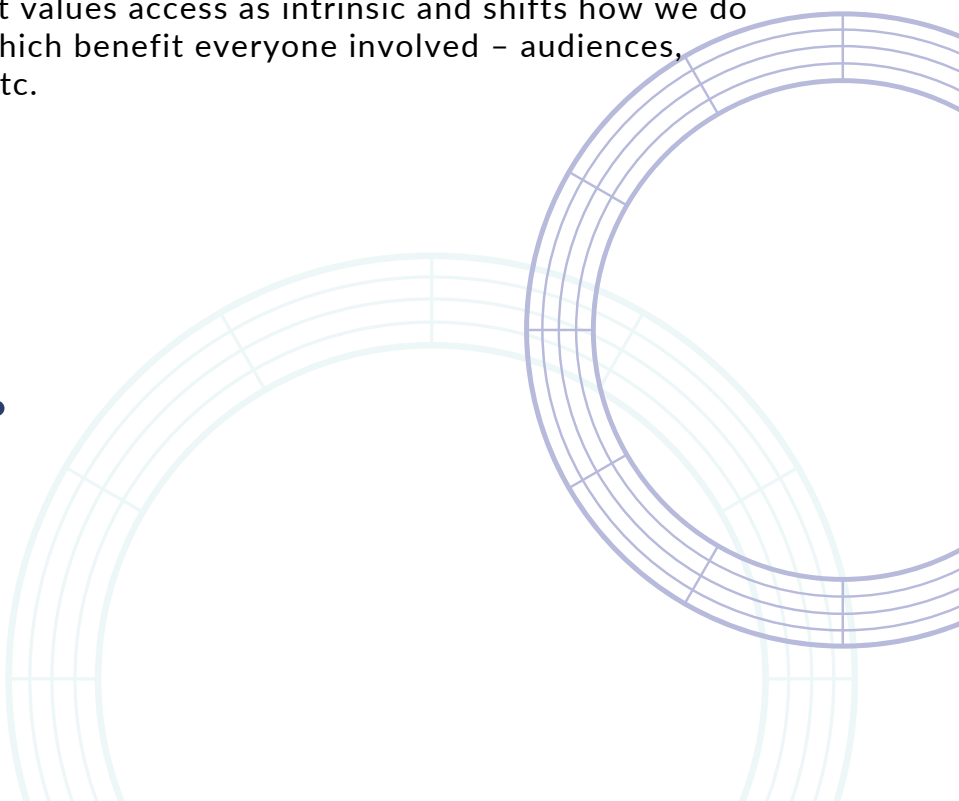
We began to make access an anticipatory consideration, as opposed to reactive. This meant putting in automatic lines in budgets, shifting events from a “tell us if you need access” to a “this event will be Relaxed, BSL interpreters are provided” approach. This helped to shift perceptions of our organisation among Disabled People and ensured that Disabled audiences, artists, team and participants know that we understand and value access – it won’t be something they have to fight for.

- **A continuing conversation about access**

We proactively ask people we work with about access, rather than waiting for them to tell us. We keep the conversation open, by checking in regularly about what is/isn’t working in terms of access. We learn and change how we work as a project progresses and people’s access needs change. Organisations should be proactively asking about and implementing access requirements and/or access riders so it is clear that access will be taken seriously. Otherwise, the onus is on the performer or staff member to state their access needs.

- **Aesthetics of Access**

This is a key principle of practice that originated within Disability-led arts organisations and which we began to incorporate into our work. It says that there is an aesthetic to access: that when embedded, access brings new creativity and adds dynamic to our ways of working, organisational programmes and creative/artistic outputs. It values access as intrinsic and shifts how we do what we do in exciting ways which benefit everyone involved – audiences, participants, partners, artists etc.

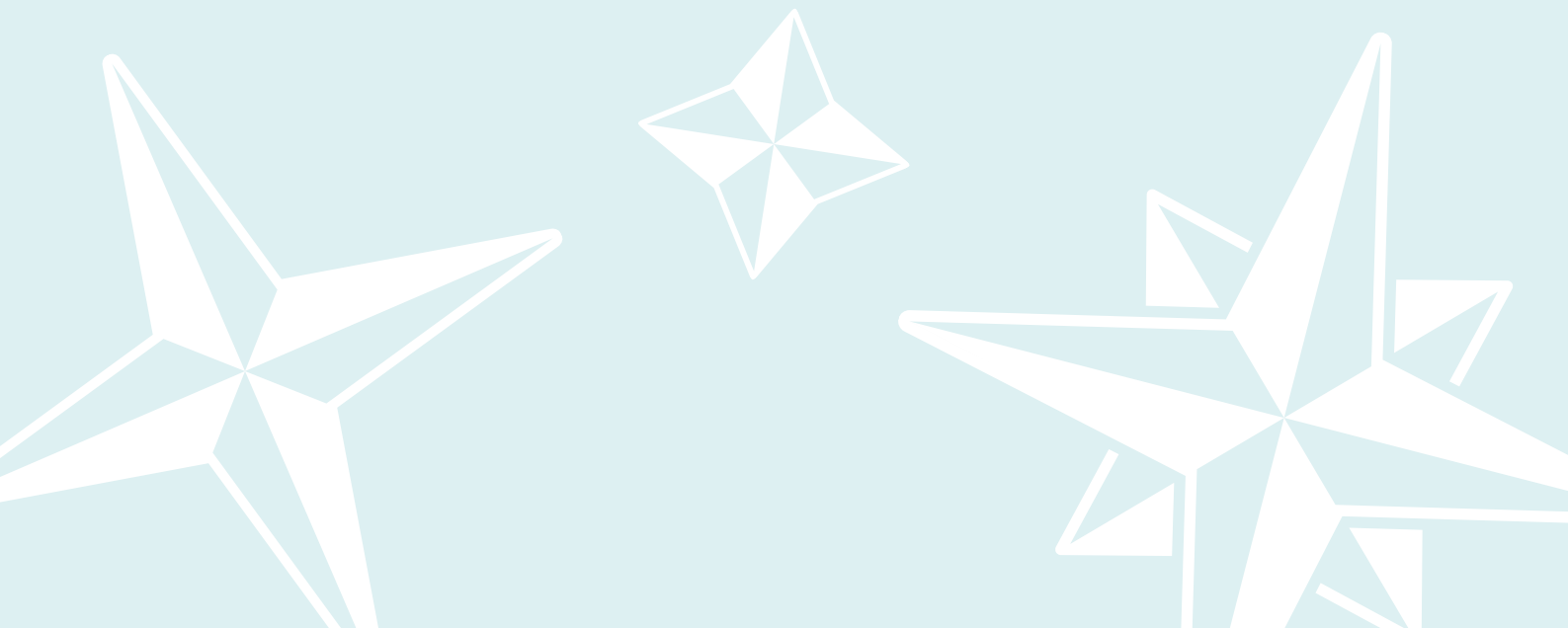




Monitoring

A positive feedback loop from evaluation to practice

We began working with an independent evaluation consultant to understand the difference we are making, what we need to learn from and improve on, and how it can shape what we do next. This led to the development of the Inclusion and Music Tech in Practice training day as a way of responding to the needs of Music Education Hubs.





Being proactive

Creating leadership and creative opportunities for Disabled People

- **Relational Recruitment**

We identified a positive pattern in our recruitment and built on it: we create events and programmes that provide opportunities to meet and get to know Disabled People, allowing opportunities for further collaboration to be explored from a place of shared interest, understanding, and trust.

- **Commissioning work by Disabled Artists and recruiting Artists in Residence**

This is about developing talent through the creative process and having Disabled creative practitioners as part of the DM team taking part in the conversations, internally and externally, and commissioning [blog_posts](#). It brings the presence and voice of Disabled People into our work and develops both the artists, the organisation and the sector.

- **DMLabs**

We hold regular open accessible events exploring music tech. Disabled musicians can meet our team in a light touch way and see what we are about.





Representation and Leadership *of people who identify as Disabled on our board and in our team*

We recognised the need to be proactive and address barriers in our recruitment process in order to change power relationships within the organisation. We are still working on this but have made headway. Our goal is to ensure that our workforce reflects the world we are working to realise, and that the unique lived experience and expertise of Disabled People brings a critical perspective in the organisation's change process. A diverse workforce will challenge and confront, in real terms, the barriers that need addressing.

- **We All Make Music Guide**

This shares our learning on recruiting Disabled People to be part of the Drake Music team in order to support other organisations undertaking this journey.

- **Diversifying the board**

Our board did not represent our communities well enough, so we began a process of specifically recruiting Disabled People to join our team. We specified that we were looking for Disabled applicants and reached out to the Disabled community in as many ways as we could. This, combined with the work we had done to put access and the Social Model of Disability at the heart of our work, led to positive results.



Values in action

Actions and Outputs

These stages and actions have led us from principles, aspirations and themes to values in action.

Equality, Inclusion and diversity have evolved from being themes or activities (e.g., this year we are doing 'youth voice' or this session is about 'Inclusion') to core principles that inform and run through everything that happens.

We are not finished in this process. We have more things to learn and more underrepresentation that needs addressing, but we have learned something about what works.



The simple answer is to involve the voices and experiences of those you seek to include or who are excluded in the development and planning process, from now onwards.

So, now you've read about our journey, return to those Key Inclusion Questions at the start and think about where your journey goes from here.



- How are people excluded by the things we do?
- What do we want to change?
- What do we have the power to change?
- How can we proactively involve people with lived experience and personal expertise to bring about that change?

Think about:

- What steps can you take to bring about change?
- What pathway works for your team and organisation?
- And...

**Take
ownership
of that
change!**



Background

Think22, and its predecessor Think2020, were Youth Music funded strategic programmes of work that helped to bring inclusive practice to the fore in music education in England. They focused on:

- Advocacy and campaigning for inclusive practice and addressing underrepresentation of Disabled People*
- Workforce development across the sector
- Delivery of inclusive music sessions in schools and other learning settings for children and young people.

This document, one of a series of four resources, was developed as part of the Think22 programme, working with our four core partners: Essex Music Education Hub, Newham Music, THAMES (Tower Hamlets Arts and Music Education Service), and Coventry Music. These resources are a reflection of Drake Music's core organisational approach of Disabled and Non-Disabled educators, musicians, leaders, artists and practitioners working together.

In the music education sector, there is a need for Disabled leaders, musicians, and educators. Think22 and Think2020, started from the position that as we are working in an environment where Disabled People are underrepresented, there needs to be action to bring about change.

These resources were created to address these needs and ensure conversation and action continues in the music education sector.

Think22 resources to explore:

- [What is Inclusion? Making Music is the Key](#)
- [Supporting Inclusion - Taking positive action in your organisation](#) (this document)
- [9 Competencies of Inclusive Music Practice - What does Inclusive Music-Making look like in Practice?](#)
- [Let's Make Music - Fun musical activities for young musicians to learn about tempo, rhythm, melody, and turn-taking](#)

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