



How Has Discrimination Against Performers with Disabilities Developed Within the Creative Arts Industry Over the Last 50 Years?

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Chapter 1: Introduction.

1:1 What is the creative arts industry?

The creative arts industry encompasses many fields that use creative techniques to produce entertainment or art. “In 2025, there were over 2,4 million people employed within the creative arts industry, and 30% of those people were self-employed” (Smith,2025). The creative arts cover a wide range of disciplines, such as theatre, film, author and design. (Weir, 2025).

1: 2 Discrimination Against Performers with Disabilities Within the Creative Arts Industry

Performers with disabilities have historically been discriminated against since the 19th century. Because of this, 94% of disabled performers have said they struggle to work on their career within the creative arts, and 22% of all disabled performers are in debt, ” (Keith,2024).

Over the past 50 years, we have seen discrimination progressing positively through representation, for example, the comedian Lost Voice Guy, who won Britain's Got Talent in 2018 (Morris, 2024). I also analysed that “67% of the British public feel uncomfortable talking to a disabled performer, according to the 2014 Scope research” (Bowdidge,2022). Because of this, I will investigate how discrimination within the creative arts industry has developed over the past 50 years, or whether it’s still stuck within its old ways.

I am a type 1 diabetic who is about to graduate into the creative arts industry, with an interest in answering this question to have a better understanding of whether I will be protected against discrimination or be discriminated against.

Prior to researching, I personally believe there hasn’t been enough representation within the creative arts, and because of this, the public can be negatively influenced and uneducated on disabilities.

1:3 Performers with disabilities within training for the creative arts

As an aspiring performer with a visible disability, I conducted research into how many performers disclose their disability within the industry. While investigating, I found that “only 1% of graduates from drama schools declare a physical disability. The government figures of 2016 declare that 11% of performers declare a physical disability and 3% declare vision impairment” (Masso,2018). As for a lot of other performers, this

information is worrying, because this statistic shows that I may have to hide my disability to get ahead.

I will investigate how representation and inclusivity are important today for all members of the public. “67% of the British public feel uncomfortable talking to a disabled performer, according to the 2014 Scope research” (Bowdidge,2022). I have experienced people reacting negatively towards my condition; therefore, I hope to bring awareness and education on why discrimination against performers with disabilities cannot be tolerated in society today.

1: 4 Discrimination against performers with disabilities within the creative arts over the last 50 years

Throughout, I will be focusing on the history of discrimination against performers with disabilities. While conducting research, I analysed many legalisations of disability discrimination acts throughout the past 50 years. I will argue that the disability rights movement over the past 50 years has had a positive effect on the disability community within the creative arts. I have chosen to focus on the last 50 years, because the Disability Rights Act didn't come into effect until the 1970s. This will help me investigate whether it has had a positive or negative effect on performers with disabilities.

Throughout the years, there has been loads of support for performers with disabilities, especially from theatre companies, training, and workshops. The main theatre company I'll be researching is Hijinx Theatre in Cardiff, Wales, who aim to promote and produce opportunities for performers with learning disabilities and autism.

1:5 My contribution towards discrimination against performers with disabilities

My aim in the dissertation is to investigate how discrimination against performers with disabilities has developed over the past 50 years. I want to identify the barriers that performers with disabilities face and whether there is sufficient support to address them. I will explore whether there is sufficient representation and stereotypes of people with disabilities across the creative arts. This will help guide me into the industry as a graduating student by helping me identify the barriers I will face.

Chapter 2: Literature Review.

2:1 Introduction to my Literature Review

This literature review will explore discrimination against performers with disabilities within the creative arts over the past 50 years. Through the exploration of the history of this discrimination, I will analyse how discrimination against performers with disabilities has developed within the creative arts industry.

Throughout the 50 years of discrimination against performers with disabilities, there have been many legislative acts taken by the government to end discrimination against performers with disabilities. The main legislative acts were the Disability Discrimination Act and the Equality Act 2010. I will analyse these disability acts and evaluate whether they have helped or hindered performers with disabilities.

When investigating the past 50 years of discrimination against performers with disabilities, I will thoroughly analyse each legislation act for discrimination against performers with disabilities to produce an accurate and unbiased report.

Throughout the analysis of various disability discrimination acts, this will examine whether performers with disabilities have been fairly represented in the creative arts over the past 50 years.

In my Literature Review, I will use credible sources to gather qualitative research from websites, articles, magazines, videos, and books.

Overall, this literature review will demonstrate whether progress has been made in dismantling discrimination against performers with disabilities through various anti-discrimination Acts.

Historical Context of Discrimination Against Performers with Disabilities Within the Creative Arts Industry Over the Past 50 Years

2:2 Discrimination of performers with disabilities within the creative arts, pre 1970s

Discrimination against disabled performers reaches back to circus shows. The circus was originally founded by Philip Astley, a military horseman who performed the first circus show in 1768. (Tait, 2017, p. 2). As the circus grew, they began a show called the “*Freak Show*” (Tait, 2027), which became increasingly popular over the 19th and 20th centuries.

The “*Freak Show*” (Tait, 2027) consisted of disabled people travelling around the world, performing their ailments. This encouraged stereotyping people with disabilities as

entertainers by portraying them as comedic caricatures of themselves instead of serious and professional performers (Szydluk,2023). P.T. Barnum used “*Freak Show*” in his circus, the most famous being the “*Bearded Lady*” (Tromp and Valerious, 2008, p.9). Even though many audience members complained that he was tricking them into believing a woman could grow a beard, it became known that he had forged many of the “*Freak Shows*” to generate revenue. (Tromp and Valerius. 2008, p.9).

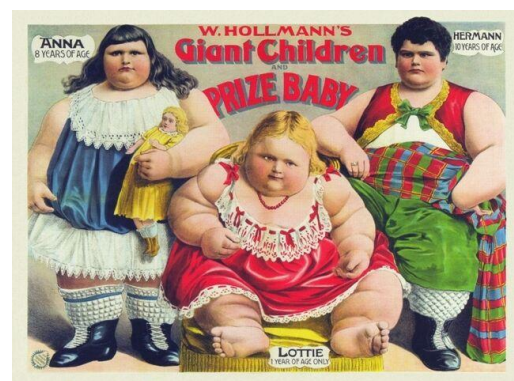
P.T Barnum is well known in the 21st century because of Hugh Jackman's portrayal of him in the successful musical film “*The Greatest Showman*” (2017). In the movie, they made him look like a “lovable, smooth-talking character” (Mansky, 2017), but one article states that the real P.T. Barnum would hire people with disabilities for his circus's “*Freak Shows*” to entertain audience members. (Mansky,2017). However, another article states that P.T. Barnum wouldn't use the term “*Freak Shows*,” as he would include them in his circus acts to make his cast members feel included. (Chemers, 2019).

Victorian “*Freak Shows*” were very popular in the 18th century. They would generate profit and revenue by exhibiting disabled performers with abnormal physical appearances. To gross more revenue, the circus would create an exhibit, such as a museum, for performers with visible disabilities to parade their disabilities in front of the public. This had a negative effect on the performers with disabilities as it made them insecure in themselves. In 1850, the circus dismantled the exhibit for performers with disabilities but continued the “*Freak Shows*” within its circus act, because the public complained that it was an embarrassment and made them feel ill by looking at them (Tromp,2008, p.23).

Circuses would hang crude posters up to advertise their “*Freak Shows*”, but on their posters would be exaggerated features of their disabilities (The Sun UK,2017). Below are examples of posters created to exaggerate their disabilities. The poster of “*The Giant Children*” is a false advertisement, as the individuals depicted were grown men and women who suffered from a medical condition called dwarfism. The rise in shows like this meant parents would sell their children at birth if they had a disability. (The Sun UK, 2017).



Credit: rex Features



Credit: Vintage Poster Shop UK

2:3 The “Ugly Law” (pre-1970s)

In the United States, they enforced the law called “*The Ugly Law*”, which enforced against people with visible disabilities from being seen in public, which meant it was illegal for them to leave their houses. This meant that people with disabilities had significantly limited access within the creative arts industry as performers.

The “*Ugly Law*” was in effect from 1867 to 1974 (Pierce, 2024). The “*Ugly Laws*” were created because, in their words, “people with disabilities are standing in the way of our city's greatness, health, and its beautiful scenery” (Schweik, 2009, P.69). The consequences of people with a visible disability being seen was to be brutally assaulted by police. For example, in 1936, Ben Lewis, an amputee, was assaulted by the police because he was in the sight of these policemen. They “kicked Ben Lewis’s good leg until Ben was in agony on the floor.” (Hawthorn,2024).

The “*Ugly Law*” was the beginning of the dehumanisation of performers with disabilities. Within America during the “*Ugly Law*”, there weren’t any disabled performers out in public, as the law stated they had to be hidden (Kellgren- Fozard, 2024). Many circus producers took advantage of this and used these performers as a marketing scheme.

In 1881, the politician tightened the act of the “*Ugly Law*”, which stated:“ Any person who is diseased, maimed, mutilated or in any way deformed so as to be an unsightly or disgusting object, or an improper person to be allowed in or on the streets, highways, thoroughfares or public places in this city shall not therein or thereon expose himself or herself to public view under penalty of one dollar for each offense. On the conviction of any person for a violation of this section, if it shall seem proper and just, the fine provided for may be suspended, and such person detained at the police station, where he shall be well cared for, until he can be committed to the county poor house” (Phelps,2010).

This statement that American politicians wrote enhanced the discrimination towards performers with disabilities, as they stopped employing disabled performers. Many disabled performers within the “*Ugly Law*” were physically disabled due to the Civil War. Veterans of war who suffered physical disabilities were also ostracised and couldn’t be seen within social settings due to the “*Ugly Law*” (Phelps, 2010). This meant that men who were performers with disabilities who fought within the Civil War couldn’t earn money because they weren’t allowed employment within the creative arts industries.

The “*Ugly Law*” was repealed in 1974 because people were rebelling and pushing for the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990). This strengthened the chances of employment and representation of performers with disabilities within the creative arts industries (Shweick, 2011, p. 2), thereby decreasing discrimination against people with disabilities.

2:4 Discrimination against performers with disabilities within the creative arts in the 1970s

Before the 1970s, many adult and child performers with disabilities had to live in institutions to protect the public from social embarrassment. As disability policies went into action at the beginning of the 1970s, they demolished putting performers with disabilities within an institution, such as an asylum, where they were being tortured for being different. In 1970, performers with disabilities were able to live in the community rather than be hidden in an asylum (Scior & Werner, 2015).

The 1970s were a pivotal time for disability policies. The 1970s Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act promised to provide money and services to performers with disabilities. But as the 70s progressed, the disabled community in the creative arts industry wasn't given what the government had promised. Disabled performers became radicalised by public reaction to this new act (CSDP). During the 1970s, the unemployment rate was increasing, which meant income was decreasing. Because of this, the public opposed performers with disabilities, since the government promised to give disabled performers money that the public didn't have, as unemployment was rising. However, amid all the negative feedback, the government never went through with the policy. This resulted in the unemployment rate increasing for performers with disabilities. (Hampton, 2020).

In 1977, Beaumont College in Lancaster offered residential and day programmes for aspiring performers with disabilities, aged 18 to 25. This is the first time an educational sector has offered education for performers with disabilities within a public education system. This opened the way for future educational sectors within drama schools to be more inclusive and understanding of performers with disabilities (Slaughter, 2015, p.1)

In the 1970s, a crucial and pivotal movement began, called "The Disability Arts Movement" (Brehme, 2020), which wasn't named that until the 80s. The movement began when performers with disabilities sought to dismantle the negative association with the word 'disabled' and demanded better access to public services and spaces (Brehme, 2020).

The "*Disability Arts Movement*" started because disability arts is an art form that needed to be shared with the public. As films, music, and cabaret shows became popular in the 70s, the disability arts movement emerged as a space where performers with disabilities could come together to create a safe environment to share and explore the arts (Cameron, 2009, p. 3). The disability art movement aims to challenge the societal barriers that performers with disabilities face every day through the creative arts. (Reynolds, 2022).

The struggle to change policies and laws for performers with disabilities began in the 1970s, but as time went on, politicians finally agreed to adopt these laws in the 1980s and continue to do so today.

The discrimination against performers with disabilities is captured in the “*National Disability Arts Collection and Archive*” (NDACA). NDACA makes sure that the information and voices they provide are from disabled performers. NDACA created a documentary film on the struggles of artists with disabilities. The film captured the voices of disabled performers, including Deborah Williams, Barbara Lisicki, and the artist Steve Cribb (Heaton, 2021).

The National Disability Arts Collection and Archive (NDACA) started when Paul Hunt, a disabled resident living at Cheshire Homes, wrote a letter calling for a national struggle by disabled performers. The letter was published in the Guardian and had a significant impact within the disabled community in the creative arts.

In 1974, the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) was founded by Vic Finkelstein. The UPIAS, along with NDACA, established the basic principles of the social model of disability within the creative arts. This describes disability as a form of social oppression, focusing on the barriers it creates for performers with disabilities.

In 1976, *Shape Arts* was founded by the dancer Gina Leveté. By the end of the 1970s, *Shape Arts* was travelling around the UK, visiting schools, prisons, colleges, and art centres to help people acknowledge and understand disabilities and create a community within the creative arts industry where performers with disabilities aren't being discriminated against. (National Disability Arts Collection and Archive Team, No date)

There was no theatre company developed in the 1970s; the earliest development of a theatre company was in the 1980s, which accounts for the absence of disabled performers 50 years ago.

2:5 Discrimination against performers with disabilities within the creative arts industry in the 1980s

In the 1970s, people with disabilities rebelled and came together to protest discrimination, which, in the 1980s, shifted into performers with disabilities forming a movement to drive change in the political world.

Performers with disabilities didn't have any theatre companies to go to for the creative arts. In 1980, Nabil Shaban, an aspiring actor and Richard Tomlinson, an English lecturer, co-founded the Graeae Theatre Company. It was the first deaf- and disabled-led professional theatre company in Britain. The co-founders opened the Graeae Theatre Company because of the lack of access and opportunity in the creative arts for performers with disabilities (Irving, 2022).

To break the stigma that performers with disabilities can't perform professionally, The Graeae Theatre Company created its first all-women production, *A Private View*, in

1987. It toured the UK and internationally, including Malaysia. Although the play was written by a non-disabled woman. The production was performed by four disabled women performers. The performers were Jenny Sealey, who's deaf; Merry Cross, who is physically impaired; Kaite O'Reilly, who is visually impaired; and Letty Kaye, who's in a wheelchair (Irving,2022). This paved the way for performers with disabilities to showcase their talent within the creative arts industry and helped to inspire up-and-coming performers with disabilities.

Throughout the 1980s, TV and Film grew knowledge and understanding of the representation of performers with disabilities. In the 1980s, NBC was looking for an actor to play a wheelchair-bound detective. NBC cast Jim Byrnes, who was wheelchair bound because both of his legs were amputated in 1972 in a traffic accident. In an industry that only works with "good-looking" characters, the network soon realised that having a true representation of disabled performers delivers natural, realistic performances (Walker,1989). By showcasing performers with disabilities in the Film and TV industry, this reduced the stigma that performers with disabilities couldn't act as well as able-bodied actors.

The Disability Arts Movement grew rapidly in the 1980s, culminating in the legalisation of Disability Rights in 1995. It started as a movement where disabled performers could come together to share their passion for the arts, but it grew into a political movement to change the stigma around disabled people. The Disability Arts movement wanted to challenge the problematic process of consistently staring at performers who are different. This became a pivotal moment for performers with disabilities to see that the public is challenging the general normality of staring uncomfortably at disabled people (Eisenhauer,2007, P.12)

2:6 Discrimination against performers with disabilities within the creative arts in the 1990s

In the 90s, the Disability Arts Movement kept growing and became so powerful that, in 1995, the Disability Act illegalised discrimination against performers with disabilities within the creative arts.

Even though we started seeing disabled performers on screen in the 1980s, throughout the 90s, there became fewer performers with disabilities within the creative arts; the only roles disabled performers would get were stereotypical roles. Many theatres and studios in the 1990s still haven't become physically accessible for performers with disabilities, which means disabled performers are struggling with employment within the creative arts.

As I've mentioned, the Graeae Theatre Company was the first theatre company accessible to performers with disabilities. In 1990, the Graeae Theatre Company created a writers' project that enabled aspiring writers with disabilities to access

professional training in writing, theatre, and drama. (National Disability Arts Collection and Archive Team, No published date)

Performers with disabilities became angry with “people staring at them as a charity case” (NDACAT, no published date), and because of this, they fought back. In the spring of 1995, there was a protest in Cardiff Queen’s Street Train Station, where a young man jumped out of his wheelchair and handcuffed himself onto a handrail on a train. This action helped performers with disabilities succeed in their protest against discrimination, as their goal was to disrupt public services to highlight the disruptions performers with disabilities face each day (Rose, 2026).

In 1990, Sue Elsegood, a disabled woman, took part in a disability protest in Cardiff Queen Street. They knew that transport within Wales and the rest of the UK was not accessible; if people with disabilities wanted to use public transport, they’d have to give the employees several weeks’ notice. Sue Elsegood and a few others blocked roads to cause traffic to protest for better accessibility within public transport for people with disabilities (Rose, 2026). Not having accessibility within public transport for performers with disabilities meant that performers with disabilities couldn’t get to auditions, which meant no employability within the creative arts. Not being able to find work without accessibility to public transport for a performer with disabilities can cause stress, which can negatively affect their health and wellbeing.

2:7 Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (UK)

In 1995, there was a pivotal moment in the disabled community within the creative arts when Prime Minister John Major approved the legalisation of the Disability Discrimination Act, the first of its kind. As I’ve already acknowledged, in the early 90s, disabled performers took to the streets of the UK to protest discrimination against disabled performers. Performers with disabilities didn’t want the notions of charities; they wanted it from parliament. (Lewis, 2020)

Baroness Jane Campbell always brought up the discrimination against disabled performers within parliament for many years before the act became legalised. She always addressed the nation on how discrimination against disabled performer is affecting their lives in a negative way. The Labour Party, which was in parliament at the time, agreed with the act but had its doubts, quoting, “It is so nearly a good bill. The bill is unduly restrictive in its definition of disability. If a person has a disability that falls outside the definition in the bill, even though it gives rise to discrimination, there is no redress. Therefore, courts will have to take difficult decisions about diagnosis, definition and prognosis.” (Lewis, 2020)

By analysing the parliamentary quote on the Disability Discrimination Act, performers with disabilities must disclose their disability to the government to determine whether

they're protected from discrimination. This heightens the fear for performers with disabilities because certain performers with disabilities will still be discriminated against without legal action.

The act defined disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal daily tasks. The act provided protection against discrimination in the workplace, education, transport, and public settings. The Disability Discrimination Act strengthened performers with disabilities' chances of success in the creative arts, because it helped them become employed and be treated as equals. It meant that if they got discriminated against during an audition, they could take legal action against the creative team. It also gave aspiring performers with disabilities the chance to train at prestigious drama schools across the UK.

2: 8 Discrimination against performers with disabilities from 2000 to 2010

The Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 became an intervention in employment for performers with disabilities. Because of the Disability Discrimination Act, employment for performers with disabilities increased by 54.1% (Department of Health and Social Care, 2020). Because the employment rate increased in the early 2000s, the representation of performers with disabilities in the creative arts increased.

In 2000, a theatre company called Back-to-Back was created to showcase the talents and skills of actors with intellectual disabilities. This included Down Syndrome. He created the theatre company because the artistic director, Bruce Galdwin, received news that there was a decrease in the number of performers with Down syndrome because of the increased rate of abortion of Down Syndrome babies. Bruce Galdwin has stated that, after 2000, the visibility of performers with disabilities has increased, and ticket sales for their shows have increased (BBC News, 2017).

In the 2000s, performers with disabilities were showing the public that they could perform as well as non-disabled performers. Back-to-Back Theatre Company paved the way for the employment of performers with disabilities in the creative arts industry by treating them as professional artists and paying them for their artistry (BBC News, 2017).

2:9 The Equality Act 2010

The *Disability Discrimination Act* was replaced by the *Equality Act* in 2010 to eradicate discrimination against performers with disabilities, especially visually impaired performers. The biggest change in the *Equality Act* was the requirement that visually impaired performers be provided with braille, enabling them to access scripts, notes, and sheet music to accommodate their needs for braille or large print, thereby increasing the employability of performers with disabilities (Starr, 2025).

The Equality Act of 2010 requires adjustments to public spaces to ensure that disabled performers have the same experience as non-disabled performers. From 2010, they introduced captions, BSL-interpreted shows, and hearing loops for live theatre, to accommodate visually and hearing-impaired performers and audience members. Introducing live theatre shows to disabled audiences reached more communities, and musical theatre shows felt more versatile towards performers with disabilities (Starr, 2025).

The *Equality Act* had a positive effect on disabled communities in the creative arts, especially by increasing acceptance in live theatre shows, but it also had downsides. The biggest one was that if a disabled performer felt discriminated against in their place of work, it takes a lot of money and time, which performers with disabilities don't have because of how competitive the creative arts industries are. By making a legal action towards a colleague, a high percentage of disabled performers experience further harassment for taking legal action towards work colleagues (Starr, 2025).

The Equality Act of 2010 is to help performers with long-term physical and mental impairment who struggle with the ability to perform normal daily tasks. It helps prevent discrimination from performers with disabilities in public settings and in education (Disability Rights UK, 2025). Being an aspiring performer in education, I personally think that lecturers and heads of departments within drama schools should abide by the *Equality Act* more thoroughly, as many aspiring performers with disabilities within the education sector suffer from discrimination. I know this from my experience through creative arts education. I've had lecturers who didn't know I am a Type One Diabetic, which meant there hasn't been a discussion with the head of department about students with disabilities and what health and safety policies the university should undertake.

The Equality Act has strengthened the experiences of performers with disabilities through training and opportunities to work within the creative arts. It has given performers with disabilities the opportunity to work flexible hours to accommodate their needs, including doctors' appointments, as they need to attend their appointments. This prevented fear for performers with disabilities, as before the Equality Act, performers with disabilities would fear losing their jobs. (Disability Rights UK, 2025).

Even though *the Equality Act 2010* brought positive outcomes in addressing discrimination against performers with disabilities, it also had flaws in its legislation. The *Equality Act 2010* doesn't specify which disabilities qualify a performer for protection under the act. This makes performers with disabilities unsure and unsafe about whether they're being protected against discrimination within the workplace (Peal & Lawson, 2015, P.1)

The Equality Act 2010 has failed to clarify that performers in training can claim under the Act if they feel they're being discriminated against by lecturers. Because of this, only 8% of university students in 2012 claimed to be disabled as they weren't sure of their rights.

As a result, aspiring performers with disabilities didn't feel safe training in drama schools, as they had no support against discrimination (Cameron, Coleman et al., 2018).

2: 10 Discrimination against performers with disabilities within modern-day.

As we've established over the last 50 years, the legalisation of disability acts has reduced discrimination against performers with disabilities, as the policies of these acts have provided protection for disabled performers. In modern times, we still need improvement in employment for performers with disabilities. I know this from my research and found that only 17% of performers in the industry are disabled, 77% are non-disabled, while 6% prefer not to disclose their disability (Tran, 2019, p. 103).

In 2019, only 7% of performers with learning disabilities had paid employment in the creative industries, compared to 76% of paid performers. Mencap, an organisation that wants to demolish discrimination against people with disabilities, created a survey to determine whether the public thinks that disabled people are less productive than the average person. The survey found that 32% of non-disabled performers agreed that disabled performers aren't as productive in the workplace. Even though the percentage is below 50%, it's still high at 32%, which is concerning (IoE London, 2014).

With many modern laws protecting performers with disabilities, it's still hard for disabled performers to secure venues or book tickets for theatre shows. In 2018, Mike Scarlett, a disabled performer, tried to book a show but had to send classified information to the theatre venue to prove he is disabled. Through my research, I came across that many concession tickets for major theatre venues require confirmation of disability. In my opinion, I would personally feel that giving classified documents is a breach of confidentiality, and I personally wouldn't feel comfortable giving my medical records to prove that I am a type 1 diabetic. BBC London also conducted a survey to understand how many performers with disabilities also face this discrimination, and over 80% agreed with Mike Scarlett that they find it disrespectful that they must give their medical records to an unknown person within a theatre venue (McGill, 2018).

Throughout conducting research, I found that in modern times, there have been many misleading representations of performers with disabilities within the industry. I know this from a YouTube video by Amrit Mann interviewing performers with disabilities. Elizabeth Birch, a disabled performer, said in the video, "I only get jobs because the industry needs to employ a certain number of performers with disabilities to make the industry look inclusive" (Birch, 2025). Elizabeth Birch also stated that, within the industry, she's been called a "Poster girl," which means she's only employed for disability work. Elizabeth Birch stated, "Being known as a 'poster girl' makes her feel insecure and vulnerable within the industry" (Birch, 2025).

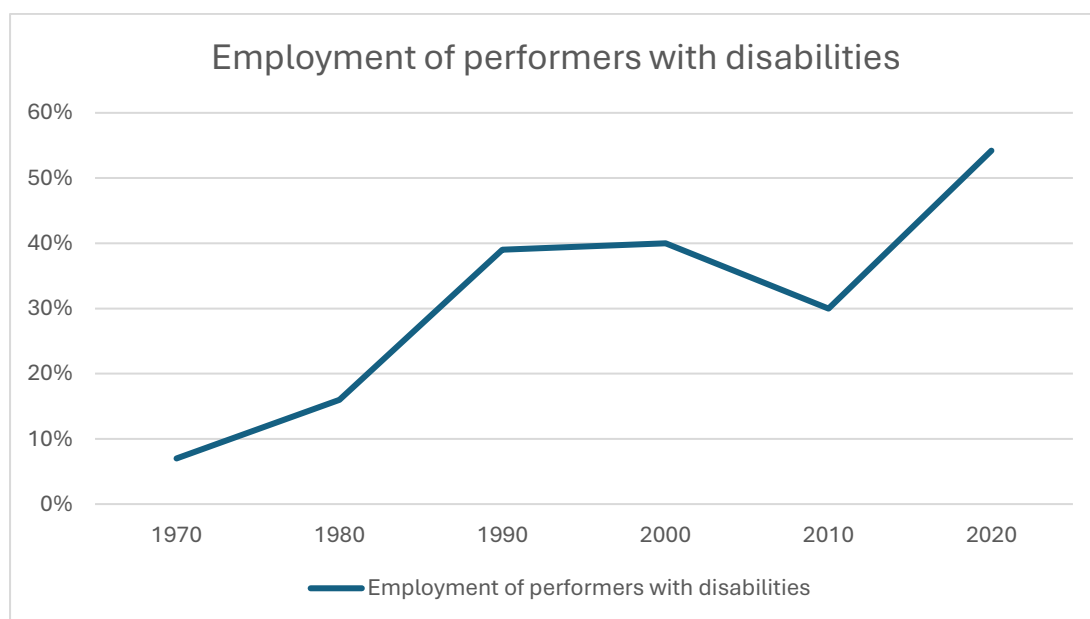
I've investigated the rise of ableism within the creative arts industries. Ableism means defining someone by their disabilities. In my research, I found that ableism is increasing

within drama schools. (Eisenmenger, 2019). The biggest downfall with the discrimination of aspiring performers in training is the lecturers' not understanding a student's disabilities. I've personally experienced this with different lecturers within my training, and lecturers have not been made aware that I have a serious medical condition. By reading Eisenmenger's blog on ableism within the industry, it's made me realise that the discrimination within the creative industries hasn't developed tremendously, and there is still a long way to go with demolishing discrimination against performers with disabilities.

As the film and TV industry thrives today, more films are being made about disabilities, such as *Purple Hearts*, *CODA*, and *The Theory of Everything*, a biopic of Stephen Hawking. Aimee McCabe, Jessica Secmezsoy-Urquhart, Ross Wilcock, and Julie McElroy, performers with disabilities, discuss issues with casting non-disabled people in disabled roles. Ross Wilcock said, "Most disabled characters are being portrayed by able actors, which makes him feel unseen and his disability being represented in the wrong way". Aimee McCabe said, "Disabled performers need to be known for their skills and talent, not for their disability, which she experiences throughout each audition and employment she's had through the industry" (BBC The Social, 2019). Having the right representation gives the public the correct information that disabled performers are suffering every day with their disability, but still have the strength to be seen and face discrimination against their disability.

2: 11 Statistics of the employment rate of performers with disabilities within the workplace over the last 50 years?

I've created a line graph to illustrate the percentage of employment rates for performers with disabilities within the creative arts industry over the past 50 years.



Throughout my research, I investigated the employment rate of disabled performers in the creative arts. As demonstrated, employment rates of performers with disabilities have increased through the workings of the Disability Discrimination Act in the 1970s.

In 2010, there was a dip in employability rates due to a lack of educational opportunities for performers with disabilities. 19.2% of employed performers with disabilities lack the qualifications to support employment in the creative arts. 14.9% of performers with disabilities hold degree-level qualifications (GOV.UK,2014).

The graph evaluates how the discrimination against disabled performers has improved the employment rates for disabled performers over the past 50 years, but it has not stopped discrimination through ableism and representation. Through investigating with research, I realised that representation, accessibility, support and ableism are still enhanced through discrimination against performers with disabilities. The graph shows that progress has been made through employment, but discrimination remains prevalent across the creative industries.

- 7% in the 1970s (Jameel Hampton, 2020)
- 16% in the 1980s: (TUC,2019)
- 39% in the 1990s (Pope, 2005)
- 40% in 2000s: (Hollomotz et al.,2025)
- 30% in the 2010s: (GOV.UK,2014)
- 54.2% in the 2020s: (Office for National Statistics,2021)

2:12 Conclusion

Overall, my findings have suggested that performers with disabilities are still being discriminated against in the creative arts industries. Discrimination within the creative arts industries has evolved over the past 50 years because of the different legislation on disability acts, especially with statistics showing an increase of employment of performers with disabilities within the creative arts industry have increased over the past 50 years.

I've concluded that through my research, discrimination of performers with disabilities started within the Victorian era of "*Human Freak Shows*" within the circus. Because of this, it made the public stereotype all performers with disabilities and lacked representation of performers with disabilities, which continues into the 20th century. Through the "*Freak Show*" it implemented the "*Ugly Laws*" within America, which affected the way Britain saw performers with disabilities, as Britain saw how Americans treated performers with disabilities.

Over the last 50 years, legalisation has positively changed public attitudes towards performers with disabilities, increasing visibility and awareness. The literature review has suggested that performers with disabilities still face discrimination. The Equality Act of 2010 increased support for visually impaired performers but had a negative effect on aspiring performers with disabilities within training.

While legalisation over the past 50 years has aimed to reduce discrimination against performers with disabilities, there is still debate on how effective these legislations are in practice.

Chapter 3: Methods and Methodology.

The research I've conducted to answer my question, "How Has Discrimination Against Performers with Disabilities Developed Over the Past 50 Years," includes a mixed-methods approach, including interviews, a survey, and a group discussion to collect data. Each interview and focus group focused on representation and support across the creative arts industry. The survey focused on support for employment for people with disabilities and whether representation within the creative arts industry has had a positive impact on performers with disabilities.

Throughout each interview, survey, and group discussion, I ensured that I had their consent to use their research in my dissertation.

I interviewed current Musical Theatre degree student Ella Fostersmith, who is in her graduating year at the Wales Academy of Voice and Dramatic Arts. I interviewed Ella Fostersmith on her experience training while juggling additional learning needs. This allowed me to analyse discrimination against aspiring performers with disabilities within training. It also gave me insight into support for performers with disabilities in training. I interviewed Ella Fostersmith because, while conducting research, I found that "only 1% of graduating students in drama schools declare a physical disability, 11% declare a physical disability, and 3% declare vision impairment" (Masso, 2018).

I interviewed Alice Merivale, a performer with Type 1 Diabetes. This method allowed me to analyse and evaluate the representation of non-visible disabilities within the creative arts industries. It gave me an insight into how the creative arts industry represents performers with disabilities. I interviewed Alice Merivale because research suggests that performers with non-visible disabilities are less likely to receive support than those with visible disabilities (Disability Unit, 2020).

To learn more about support for performers with disabilities in the creative arts industry, I interviewed Hijinx Theatre. Hijinx Theatre is a theatre company dedicated to producing and creating opportunities for performers with additional learning needs and autism (Hijinx Theatre, 2025). Hijinx Theatre helped me evaluate the support given to performers with disabilities within the creative arts industry and how that support enhances their representation in the arts.

I conducted a group discussion with the public of diverse ages to examine discrimination against performers with disabilities over the past 50 years. I interviewed Kelly Parker, born in 1974, and Gwen Parker, born in 2002. This analysed changes over the past 50 years in the support, representation, and discrimination of performers with disabilities, and how they were perceived through Film, TV, and theatre.

I conducted a survey to give the public the chance to share their opinions on discrimination against performers with disabilities over the past 50 years. This helped me gain insight into the public's views on representation in the creative arts industry and what they perceive as support in employment.

3:1 Thematic Analysis

Qualitative data collected through my interviews, surveys and focus groups were analysed using thematic analysis. The thematic analysis method is used to identify patterns within findings or themes. The three main themes that emerged from my interviews, focus groups, and survey were support within employment and representation of performers with disabilities within the creative arts industry. The last theme was typecasting within the creative arts industry. This indicated common patterns that the participants have been dealing with within the creative arts industry.

I will explore the themes of support, representation and typecasting of performers with disabilities in Chapter 4, which will present the study's findings and identify key themes emerging from the data analysis.

Chapter 4: Findings.

4:1 Participant interview: Ella Fostersmith

The Support Within Training

Ella Fostersmith, a graduate student with additional learning needs studying BA Theatr Gerddorol (Musical Theatre) at Wales Academy of Voice and Dramatic Arts.

Ella Fostersmith, an aspiring performer in training who has dyslexia, dyspraxia, neurodiversity, and ADHD, has stated, “For my dyslexia, I read on green paper, and in my 1st year of university, I wasn’t supplied any green paper for my work”. (Fostersmith, 2026).

Fostersmith also stated that she felt overlooked and was perceived differently from other students (Fostersmith, 2026). Foster Smith mentioned that she had a support advisor who helped with her written work, but throughout her 1st year, she didn’t have as many meetings with her support advisor as she would have liked (Foster Smith, 2026). This shows that teachers need to improve their support of students with disabilities.

These statements by Ella Fostersmith analyse that support within training isn’t sufficient to instil hope in aspiring performers that they can succeed in the creative industries. It also demonstrates that more attention is needed to provide additional support for assessments and coursework for performers with additional learning needs. By doing this, performers with additional learning needs can elevate their chances of succeeding within the creative industries.

Ella Fostersmith countered her claims on support by also stating, “First production at university, the creative team required the cast to complete an Access Rider, which helped the creative team provide help for Foster Smith throughout the production” (Fostersmith, 2026). An Access Rider is a request form for cast members to complete, providing the creative team with what they need to do their jobs efficiently (Musicians’ Union, 2025). Having access to an Access Rider highlights the industry’s progress in supporting performers with disabilities. It demonstrates that listening to the needs of performers with disabilities can create a positive environment for the disabled community within the creative industries.

4:2 Interview with Alice Mervale, performer with Type One Diabetic

Representation of performers with disabilities within the creative arts

Alice Mervale is a performer in the creative arts industries with Type 1 Diabetes.

Alice Mervale, a Type 1 Diabetic within the industry, stated, “ I did a panto job that involves me wearing a vest that made my insulin pump visible, and so many parents/teachers that were watching got in contact to tell me their child was watching, who also is a diabetic” (Mervale, 2026)

Alice Mervale also stated, “There was word of mouth that I am a diabetic, and because of this, I was contacted to talk at a Diabetes conference”. (Mervale, 2026).

These two statements suggest that seeing performers with disabilities within the theatre can have a positive effect on representation. By analysing Alice Mervale's statements, it is evident that representation has a powerful impact on audience members with disabilities. This gives a positive attitude towards disabilities.

Alice Merivale stated that medical admin on long tours isn't supportive enough because they don't understand how important hospital visits are for performers with disabilities (Merivale, 2026). This highlights the lack of knowledge of legislation that allows performers with disabilities to attend their routine hospital check-ups. This also analyses that within the creative arts industry, there is a lack of care for health and wellbeing for performers with disabilities, as medical admin on tours isn't following government legislation with the *Equality Act of 2010* to provide access to hospital appointments.

Alice Mervale: Representation of invisible disabilities within training

Alice Mervale stated that within her training at Drama School, lecturers are less represented of chronic illness/invisible disabilities and “teachers don't understand the severity of type 1 diabetes” (Mervale, 2026). This analyses the misrepresentation of visible disabilities within the creative arts, because a lack of knowledge about visible disabilities can limit support in training, and this lack of knowledge suggests a lack of understanding of how performers with visible disabilities struggle with physical activities, especially during training. These statements can also highlight the limitations of acceptance into drama schools for aspiring performers with disabilities, as lecturers don't understand the severity of disabilities, and because of this, drama schools can't accommodate performers with disabilities appropriately.

Alice Merivale suggested that there is no representation of non-visible disabilities within the industries, which contributes to a lack of support towards performers with non-

visible disabilities, who are not being supported as much as those with visible disabilities within the creative arts. (Merivale, 2026). Alice Merivale's argument, stating, "turned up to my singing lesson late because of low blood sugar, and when I explained this to my singing teacher, she said, 'Oh... is blood sugar something that's particularly important to you?'" (Merivale, 2026). Merivale's claims of lack of support for non-visible disability performers haven't changed over the past 50 years, as research indicates that 1 in 8 performers with non-visible disabilities in the creative arts industry wait up to a year to receive the support they need (Business Disability Forum, 2023).

Alice Mervale: The representation of the "Poster girl"

Alice Merivale noted that, in the industry, she has heard that theatre companies have cast performers with disabilities in their shows to appear inclusive in their advertising and marketing, these are called "Poster Girls" (Merivale, 2026). Following Merivale's statement, I conducted further research to evaluate the statement. I concluded that some theatre companies cast performers with disabilities to secure government funding, estimated at 7.25 million per year, to support people with disabilities within the theatre company (Pring, 2022). Graeae Theatre Company saw a profit increase of £750,000, from £575,000, due to using government funding to employ performers with disabilities (Pring, 2022).

4:3 Hijinx Theatre Company

Casting within the creative arts industry

Hijinx Theatre is an inclusive theatre company that creates performances featuring performers with disabilities, ensuring that every performer has access to theatre.

Hijinx Theatre stated, "disabled performers are often overlooked within casting" (Hijinx Theatre, 2026). This suggests that typecasting is still having a negative effect on performers with disabilities, as they are still being typecast in certain roles instead of being cast in a leading role.

Representation of disabilities within drama schools

Hijinx Theatre suggests that major drama schools are not accessible to people with physical disabilities, and that their teaching approaches are also not accessible to those with additional learning needs (Hijinx Theatre, 2026). Hijinx also stated that teachers' assumptions about performers with disabilities fail to recognise their professional capabilities (Hijinx Theatre, 2026). This shows that theatre companies such as Hijinx Theatre have analysed their experiences of discrimination against performers

with disabilities and found that representation has not developed over the past 50 years.

Hijinx Theatre also commented on the lack of representation within drama schools, saying “Many mainstream drama schools are not accessible, either physically or in terms of their teaching approaches, which limits entry into the industry” (Hijinx Theatre, 2026). This indicates that drama schools don’t provide facilities for disabled performers, that lecturers do not adapt teaching methods to support performers with learning disabilities, and that the educational sector is less accessible to performers with disabilities.

Hijinx Theatre throughout the years

The most notable finding related to my question is “Hijinx Theatre began in 1981 as a small-scale touring company because, at that stage, there wasn’t a specific focus on learning disabled or autistic artists” (Hijinx Theatre, 2026). This highlights the discrimination against performers with additional learning needs in the 1980s, as this statement from Hijinx Theatre suggests there was no learning support within the creative arts industry for them.

Hijinx Theatre analysis stated, “The creation of Hijinx Odyssey in 1999 marked an important shift, opening up a space for inclusive participation and bringing in many of the performers who would go on to become part of the Hijinx Actors Community” (Hijinx Theatre, 2026). This statement argues that, in Wales, Hijinx Theatre has transformed the creative arts industry's view of performers with disabilities in a positive way. Hijinx Theatre created a positive community within the creative arts industry in Wales to raise awareness of the lack of representation and support for performers with disabilities in the 1980s, when the company was formed.

4:4 A group discussion with the public, Gwen Parker and Kelly Parker

Typecasting within the creative arts industry

A group discussion with Gwen Parker, a performer within the creative arts industry, and Kelly Parker, born in 1974, who grew up watching film and TV.

Whilst conducting a group discussion, Gwen Parker, a recent graduate from a leading performing arts college, stated that representation of performers with disabilities through typecasting in the modern times within the creative arts industry have somewhat improved, stating, “The lead character in Paddington the Musical, Arti Shah, has dwarfism, and the creative team behind Paddington the Musical is being praised for their representation of performers with disability”. This statement analyses how musical theatre shows have created an environment for performers with disabilities in which they feel included within the industry.

Gwen Parker suggests representation typecasting of performers with disabilities in modern-day film and TV, stating, “I think representation and inclusivity in Film and TV have taken massive strides, for example, Strictly Come Dancing including participants who have physical disabilities and Britain's Got Talent with the lost voice guy” (Parker, 2026). This statement suggests that representation has developed through TV and has directly had a positive effect on performers with disabilities.

Kelly Parker stated that “ in the 80s, the only thing I can remember that included disabled actors within films and TV when I was growing up was dwarves within fantasy films, and in James Bond films, the villains always had some sort of a disability, and I don't think there were many films and TV shows that featured wheelchair users”(Parker, 2026). This analysis shows that typecasting 40 years ago suggested that casting directors would cast performers with disabilities only for their disabilities, not for their talent and skill.

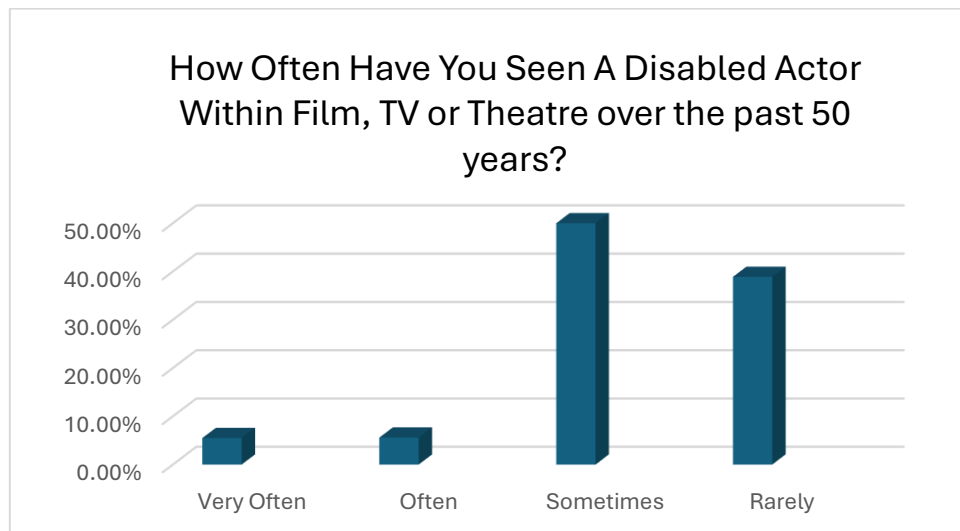
Gwen Parker stated that while being cast for the company RWS at Alton Towers Scarefest, she encountered a performer with a learning disability and an amputee, and the company cast the performer with disabilities as an actress in the scare maze (Parker, 2026). As the performer didn't audition for the role in the scare maze and only auditioned for the company RWS, this strengthens the argument for typecasting in the industry, as the statement suggests that theatre companies still typecast performers with disabilities.

Support for performers with disabilities within Training

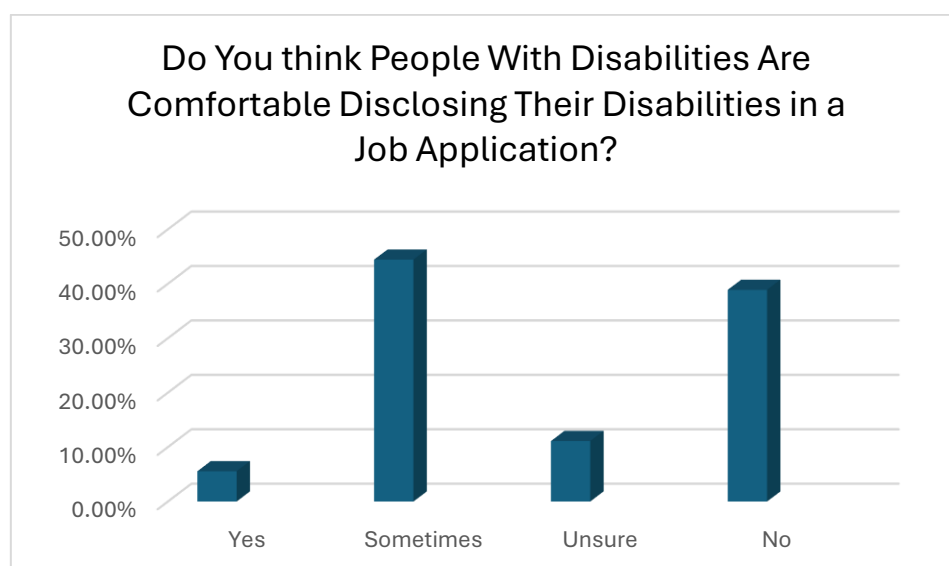
Gwen Parker suggested that support within training for performers with disabilities has developed over the past 50 years, arguing that, “during my training, they provided additional learning resources and that people with additional learning needs had extra time on their assessments and coursework. Back 50 years ago, I don't think support for performers with disabilities in training would have received the same level of support or even been accepted into drama schools” (Parker, 2026). This indicates that support in training has developed over the last 50 years, but representation within training for the creative arts industry still needs to be developed.

4:5 Survey

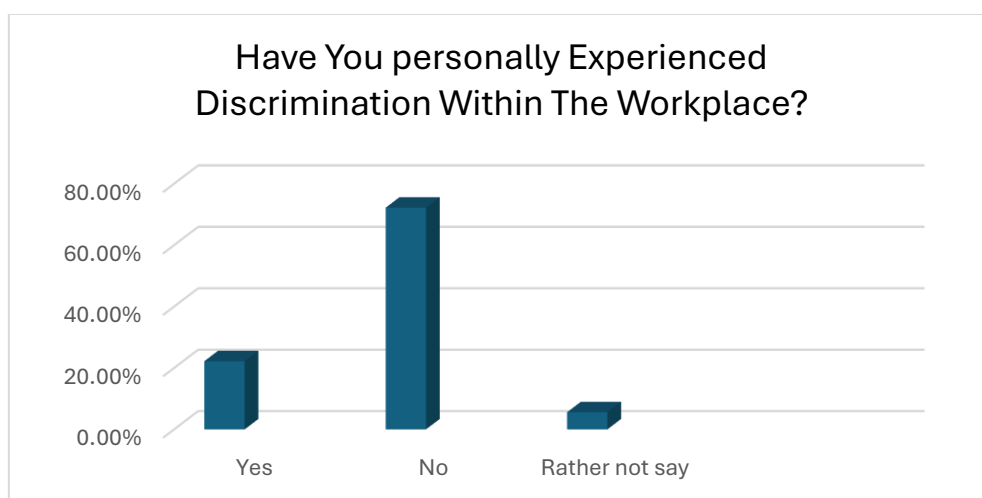
I conducted a survey to gauge public opinion on whether discrimination against performers with disabilities has decreased over the past 50 years.



This suggests that the general public's opinions on the representation of performers with disabilities within the creative arts industry haven't developed sufficiently. The graph states that 50% of the public have seen disabilities within Film and TV sometimes, while 5.6% of the public have seen performers with disabilities within media often. This demonstrates that the creative arts industry needs to show greater representation of disabilities in the media, as this can foster greater awareness of disabilities in Film and TV.

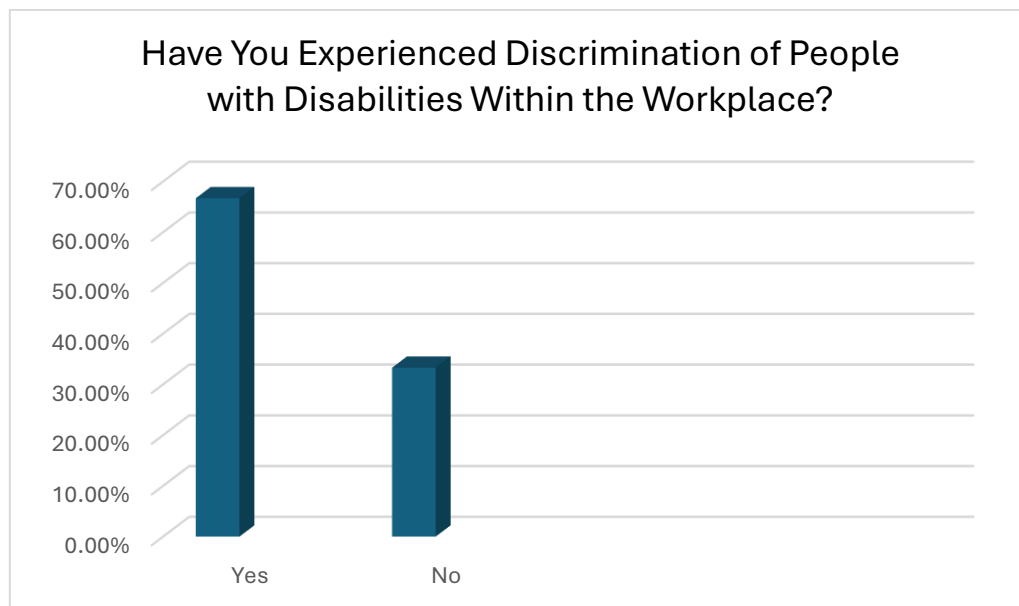


I asked the public whether they were comfortable disclosing their disabilities within a job application. 38.89% of the public stated they would not disclose their disability on a job application, and 5.5% stated they would. This indicates that performers in the creative arts industry aren't comfortable disclosing their disabilities, as someone suggested in the survey, stating "being called names in work due to my disability". This suggests that over the past 50 years, discrimination has occurred within the creative industries, especially in employment.



As the survey was anonymous, I can't clarify whether the 77.7% of the public who voted no on this question have disabilities.

The 22.22% of the public who have experienced discrimination against themselves within the workplace have stated that they felt overwhelmed with the disorganisation of the workplace, with sorting out support for employees with disabilities, and also suggested that they've heard other employees making jokes about their disabilities.



The most notable finding in relation to my survey question was the question, "Have You Experienced Discrimination of People with Disabilities Within the Workplace?" The study found that 66.7% of the public had experienced workplace discrimination, and 33.3% said they hadn't. This evaluates that performers with disabilities still face discrimination within the creative arts industry, as 66.7% of the public has stated that they experienced discrimination against people with disabilities within their workplace, which suggests that there has been discrimination against performers with disabilities within the creative arts industry over the past 50 years, as discrimination is still persistent within normal workplaces.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion.

5:1 Why I chose the question of How Has Discrimination Against Performers with Disabilities Developed Within the Creative Arts Industry Over the Past 50 Years?

Prior to starting my research on “How Discrimination Against performers with Disabilities has Developed Within the Creative Arts Industry Over the Past 50 Years”, I believed discrimination hadn’t had a positive development from the 1970s to now.

Being a Type One Diabetic about to enter the creative arts industry, I always wonder how performers with disabilities are treated in casting and the workplace. Having an invisible disability, I worry about this, especially with representation and/or support needed to survive the day. Prior to conducting research, I had the knowledge that there wasn’t any representation for performers with disabilities, are therefore a lack of support. Because of this, I wanted to investigate the topic further to help other performers with disabilities feel at ease entering the creative arts industry.

Whilst analysing the historical context of my research on discrimination against performers with disabilities over the past 50 years, I found that progress toward abolishing discrimination against performers with disabilities has decreased slightly. However, analysing my findings through my methodological approach reveals that representation and support within the creative arts industry still need improvement in modern times.

5:2 My evaluation of research and methodology findings

1970s

As the research states, the development of abolishing discrimination began in the 1970s, with the abolition of the “Ugly Law” and the end of requiring performers with disabilities to live in institutions, such as asylums (Scior & Werner, 2015). However, this did not change the public’s perception of performers with disabilities. This was due to the government’s proposed plan to give performers with disabilities extra support through funding, but the public reacted negatively, indicating discrimination against performers with disabilities (Howards, 2025). This research has shown that positive progress was being made to abolish laws against performers with disabilities, which would allow them to work on an even playing field alongside performers without disabilities.

The research also suggests that in the 1970s, the creative arts industry sought to combat discrimination against performers with disabilities by providing greater support, especially in training, and by creating a safe environment in which they could share their creative skills and talents within a performance space.

The evidence supports the argument that discrimination has developed within the creative arts, as the research suggests that performers within the creative arts industry became more accepting of disability with creative safe environments within theatre and creating support for aspiring performers with disabilities within training.

In my opinion, I've evaluated that 50 years ago, in the 1970s, the creative arts industry had progressed in its development of abolishing discrimination against performers with disabilities, but because of the legislation against disabilities before 1970, the public was still stuck in its old ways of discriminating against performers with disabilities.

1980s

Research finds that, in the 1980s, theatre companies supporting performers with disabilities became popular, with the opening of the Graeae Theatre Company (1980) and Hijinx Theatre Company (1981). In my opinion, this is an incredible example of a positive development in support and access for performers with disabilities. Alongside this, these theatre companies received additional government funding to support disabled performers. Alice Mervale, in an interview conducted by me, suggests that performers with disabilities are cast only as a "Poster Girl" (Mervale, 2026) in a show so the show and theatre company can secure extra government funding (Mervale, 2026). Although my opinion stands firm on taking massive positive strides in support and access for performers with disabilities, my interview with Alice Mervale has opened my eyes to the possibility of producers and theatre companies manipulating their way to additional funding by casting visibly disabled performers, which is disgraceful, in my opinion.

In a group discussion, Kelly Parker, a 52-year-old Welsh female, stated that in the 80s, she recalls films and TV shows featuring performers with disabilities were typically cast as villainous characters rather than in leading roles (Parker, 2026). I believe typecasting within the creative arts industry still occurs today, as it did in the 1980s, because in the 2016 film, *Me Before You*, the protagonist, who suffered a fatal accident that left him quadriplegic, is portrayed by a non-disabled actor. As a performer with a disability, I strongly believe that casting a non-disabled performer for a disabled role limits inclusivity. This makes me believe that performers with disabilities are not considered suitable for leading roles within the creative arts industry.

In the same group discussion, Gwen Parker, a 23-year-old Welsh woman, suggested that on stage and in theatres, there's been a significant increase in the number of performers with disabilities. An example of this is in the brand-new West End musical "Paddington", where a performer with dwarfism leads the show. Whilst I also believe that theatre companies are dominating in casting performers with disabilities, my belief is that film and TV shows still need improvement in casting performers with disabilities, as I've witnessed non-disabled performers play characters with disabilities, which has given a negative representation of those disabilities. For example, a film that resonated with me negatively as a Type One Diabetic was "Purple Heart" (2022), where the leading

character, who is a musician, struggles with Type One Diabetes. In this film, the disability is portrayed incorrectly. I know this from personal experience. In scenes where the lead is struggling with low blood sugar, the editing and direction have glamourised the situation, when in reality, it is far worse.

Also, the lead character is played by an incredible actress and singer, Sofia Carson, who isn't a Type One Diabetic; the casting has proved how insensitive production companies can be when casting performers in roles that include portraying disabilities.

1990s

While gathering research on discrimination against performers with disabilities in the 1990s, I concluded that discrimination against performers with disabilities was decreasing within the creative arts industry. My research suggests that in 1995, the government made it illegal in all workplaces, including the creative arts industry, to discriminate against performers with disabilities. I personally believe that this created a sense of relief for the disability community within the creative arts industry, as it suggests that the employment rate of performers with disabilities increased from 16% in the 1980s to 39% in the 1990s (Pope, 2005).

To analyse further, I evaluated that the support for performers with disabilities within the creative arts industry was also increasing. I investigated this by interviewing Hijinx Theatre and found out they created Hijinx Odyssey in 1999, marking an important shift in the creative arts industry. It created a safe space for inclusivity within the creative arts industry and brought many aspiring actors with disabilities into the industry (Hijinx Theatre, 2026). In 1990, the Graeae Theatre Company also created a writing project for aspiring writers with disabilities within the creative arts industry, focusing on gaining access to professional training in writing, theatre, and drama (National Disability Arts Collection and Archive Team, No published date).

In my opinion, the 1990s were a massive turning point for performers with disabilities, as support and employment rates skyrocketed, which suggests that the illegalisation of discrimination against performers with disabilities has had a positive effect within the creative arts industry.

However, I personally believe that while support and employment rates increased in the 1990s, the creative arts industry never progressed in terms of accessibility in theatre, film, and TV. Audience members with physical disabilities couldn't access a theatre as many theatres didn't have ramps or lifts. In my opinion, this creates barriers for aspiring performers with disabilities, as there is no access to shows, which works in a domino effect, as young aspiring performers will struggle to seek inspiration. This will have a direct negative effect on interest and, therefore, a desire to attend drama schools.

2000s

To answer my question, I conducted research on the discrimination faced by performers with disabilities over the 2000s. I found evidence that support within the creative arts industry increased in the 2000s. The emergence of companies such as Back To Back Theatre Company shifted the creative arts industry by recognising performers with disabilities as professional artists. Notably, this played a positive role in advocating for equal pay and opportunities (BBC News, 2017). In my opinion, this shift is very encouraging, and as someone with a disability entering the creative arts industry, I feel a sense of relief because I'm assured that I will get equal pay.

2010 till now

To further evaluate my personal views on modern discrimination against performers with disabilities, I analysed Alice Mervale's statement about touring, noting that, in her experience, touring companies aren't sufficiently supportive of performers with disabilities in attending doctors' appointments (Mervale, 2026). In my opinion, this creates fear for me as a performer with a disability, as I have many doctors' appointments throughout the year, and not attending a doctor's appointment can deteriorate my health, which can affect my employment within the industry.

Under the Equality Act, enacted in 2010, performers with disabilities have the right to attend doctors' appointments, and any employee who interferes with access to health care is breaking the law (Starr, 2025). In my opinion, the Equality Act of 2010 has brought peace within employment conditions for performers with disabilities in the creative arts. However, Alice Mervale, a performer with Type 1 Diabetes, has stated that she missed her hospital appointments due to touring demands, highlighting that these legal protections are not always consistent with obeying the law of The Equality Act of 2010.

Ella Fostersmith is an aspiring performer with disabilities in training for the creative arts. Currently in her graduating year, she states, "During rehearsals for production of *And the World Goes Round*, I was given an access rider to complete, which made me feel safe and understood by the creative team" (Ella Foster Smith, 2026). Ella Fostersmith's statement aligns with my own experience through the same production. While rehearsing for *And the World Goes Round*, I felt supported knowing I had completed an access rider, which reflects positively on the creative team, and made a conscious effort to understand and acknowledge the extra support I need to navigate my Type 1 Diabetes.

Gwen Parker, a graduate student from the prestigious Addict Dance Academy, stated during our focus group discussion that the Addict Dance Academy did support dancers with additional learning needs, but there was no accessibility for performers with physical disabilities who required a wheelchair as there's no lift within the building (Parker, 2026). My opinion on Gwen Parker's statement is that Addict Dance Academy

is the biggest dance academy in Britain, and that not having adequate accessibility for wheelchair users is disgraceful. To me, this indicates that dancers who have a physical disability can't access the best training within Britain, as there's no accessibility for them.

5:3 conclusion

To answer my question: How Has Discrimination Against Performers with Disabilities Within the Creative Arts Industry Developed Over the Past 50 Years?

To conclude my research and findings on my question of how discrimination against performers with disabilities has developed within the Creative Arts Industry over the past 50 Years, I believe there have been clear leaps in progress through the Equality Acts. However, in modern day, performers with disabilities are still facing barriers, such as representation, that production companies could easily overcome. Overall, the research suggests that legislation over the past 50 years, including the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 and the Equality Act of 2010, has increased support and employability for performers with disabilities within the creative arts industry. However, analysing my interviews, I concluded that, in modern times, barriers and inequality persist in the creative arts industry through the lack of personal support in training and representation for performers with disabilities.

50 years ago, when legislation came into effect to reduce discrimination against performers with disabilities, it had a positive impact on workplace safety, especially in the creative arts industry. However, I evaluated each decade over the past 50 years and concluded that three themes have repeatedly emerged and shown no progress: a lack of support systems for performers with disabilities in training, a lack of representation, and insulting typecasting in film and TV.

As a performer with Type 1 Diabetes, it resonated deeply when hearing that other students haven't been granted the support needed to even the playing field. For example, in an interview with Ella Fostersmith, a dyslexic musical theatre student states, "In my first year, I was denied the basic needs of green paper for reading scripts and sheet music." (Fostersmith, 2026). Although my needs are different from Fostersmith's, my medical condition is severe, and a basic understanding of my life-threatening condition could potentially save my life, and without that education, I could easily have been another disabled aspiring musical theatre performer to leave the industry. In my opinion, if a student has a severe medical condition or allergy, every teacher should be trained to support that student and their needs. I've also encountered misinformation from lecturers on multiple disabilities and conditions, including Diabetes, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and Amputees, which increases my belief that there isn't enough representation within the creative arts industry.

Analysing the research in 'How Has Discrimination Against Performers with Disabilities Within the Creative Arts Industry Over the Past 50 Years' led me to believe that change is needed going forward in the creative arts industry.

Appendix

Alice Mervale: performer with Type 1 Diabetes within the creative arts industry

1. How do you manage working in the industry with type 1 diabetes?

It's been helpful to me to figure out exactly what performing/rehearsals does to my blood sugars - I've worked out that doing a show often makes my blood sugar run high, unless it's opening night and then my blood sugar runs low! Really annoying. I have hypo treatment sweets on the prop table and I usually let everyone know in advance that that's what they are for.

I tell everyone that there's a possibility that my pump might beep (and if that happens, I'm fine) but it's rare that a pump beeping can be heard by the audience over everything else. If I'm filming something then I take my pump off and switch to pens, because I don't want a beep to ruin a take - maybe if I was a bit more high profile and less keen to make a good impression then this wouldn't be a problem. Really it should be accommodated and understood no matter how well-known an actor you are, but it's something that I'm a bit paranoid about.

Medical admin on long tours is really tricky - I find that hospitals/GPs in general aren't hugely understanding of jobs that aren't 9-5 in one place. They also don't understand how important auditions are, so the lack of flexibility around hospital appointments means that I have to cancel a lot.

2. Have you ever missed out on jobs because of type 1 diabetes?

Not to my knowledge!

3. Do you tell your employers that you are a type 1 diabetic when you get a contract for a job?

Yes - I usually mention it in an audition if my pump is visible, and I usually flag that it can be moved in case of costume etc.

4. Can you describe a moment in your career where you felt that your diabetes got in the way?

I was working for a small scale Shakespeare company doing a one off production of Macbeth which we didn't have time to rehearse. I ran out of insulin because a vial smashed and I was really ill - it was late at night and the guy playing Macbeth had to drive around trying to find an emergency chemist that was open and that stocked insulin whilst I was being sick out of the window!

He was lovely and really helpful - we are close friends anyway which helps - but I still felt awful about it. We could have used that time to get a line run in or something!

5. Have you experienced lack of audition opportunities from casting directors because of your condition?

Not to my knowledge!

6. Do you think discrimination against performers with disabilities is still happening today and if you experienced this, could you describe what happened and how that made you feel?

Yes - I haven't experienced much of it because managing my condition means that I don't have many access needs that I can't sort out myself.

However, from speaking to other disabled performers who need more access adjustments, I have heard that there have been a lot of instances where companies have wanted to cast disabled actors, but despite featuring these disabled actors in their marketing etc etc there is still a lack of willingness to provide and accommodate proper access needs on a day-to-day basis in rehearsals/performances despite claiming that they want to represent deaf/disabled actors in their programming.

7. Do you think there is a lot of support in the industry for performers with type 1 diabetes?

Not specifically, but most companies I have worked with have been very understanding when it comes to hypo sweets backstage, making sure that costumes can accommodate my pump etc.

I've also had theatre companies delay curtain up for a few minutes whilst I recovered from a hypo which was really appreciated.

8. How flexible are contracts when it comes to medical condition?

Not necessarily flexible but I've had to have hospital appointments and miss rehearsals and it's always been accommodated.

9. How were you supported through training for the industry with type 1 diabetes?

When I was training, I felt that I had to hide it as much as possible. This wasn't something that was encouraged by my drama school or anything, but there was much less representation of chronic illness/invisible disabilities at that time. I developed a really unhealthy attitude towards weight-loss - which is of course a very common issue in musical theatre in particular - which meant that I would regularly turn up to classes hypo due to over exercising and skipping meals.

I don't think a lot of teachers understood the severity of type 1 diabetes - this isn't drama school specific, I think there still is a lot of ignorance around it!

I had comments like - why don't you try acupuncture instead of insulin?

Also I turned up late to a singing lesson once because of low blood sugar, and when I explained this to my singing teacher she said "Oh...is blood sugar something that's particularly important to you?" and seemed very confused!

10. Could you explain what an audition process is like for a person with type 1 diabetes?

If I'm running high with adrenaline, I'm very dehydrated which is a bit of a nightmare for singing. If I'm running low with nerves I go very weak and dizzy and can forget my lines, which is also a nightmare! I always make sure that my pump is new on, in case of any problems with it, so I can just focus on making sure that my performance is my main priority. It's not very healthy and I do not officially advise this, but I often aim to run just a little bit high - like 13-14, so that there's no risk of me going hypo mid-audition.

11. Have you ever thought that you didn't get a job because of your type 1 diabetes?

Not to my knowledge.

12. Were you scared to enter the creative arts industry as a person with a long term medical condition and why?

No, but it was initially something that I thought I should keep secret because I thought it would make me a liability. I've yet to go hypo or be ill in the middle of a show, but it very much could happen and it's something that I worry could affect me being cast again.

13. Have there been moments where you felt you wanted to leave the industry because of the discrimination against yourself?

No

14. Have you experienced hurtful comments made about your type 1 diabetes in the industry?

Not hurtful, just ignorant!

15. Do you wear a visible diabetes pump? If so, have you had people stare or made comments to you about your pump in rehearsals/audition room?

Yes, and yes, but never anything rude. More just asking questions as to what it is and how it works - I think developing medical tech is dead interesting and important so I quite like talking about it! I often bring it up myself first because when it comes to stage combat, dance or hugs/other intimacy, people can either be a bit rough and pull it off by accident - which I reassure is fine, I have spares, easily solved - or can be reluctant to touch anywhere near it in case they damage it, so I show them that it's quite sturdy and fine.

16. Do you think there could be more representation in the creative arts industry of people with long term medical conditions?

Always! Would love to see visible pods/pumps/sensors on people. I did a panto job that involved me wearing a vest and I left my devices on, and so many parents/teachers etc would get in touch with the theatre to say that their child was watching and was also diabetic, and it was wonderful to see. One show, a large community group of T1D teenagers, families, and young people all came to see the show as a Christmas outing, and someone who worked for a T1D charity in the north-west invited me to talk at Talking About Diabetes conference. She said that so many of the parents present on that night were quite emotional, as their children were newly diagnosed, and it was comforting to see a T1D adult doing a very fun and active job!

I underestimated how important representation of different disabilities was until that point, so it would be great to see more of it.

I would love to write a play/musical about the invention of insulin, it's a brilliant story!

17. Do you think there's more opportunities now for performers with long term medical conditions than 50 years ago and why?

Yes - medical tech has meant that, from my perspective, type 1 diabetes is so much easier to manage and control, meaning that it is much easier to live the erratic and

active life of a performer. The wider awareness of the importance of access needs means that there are many more opportunities in the process of putting on a production to discuss and share access needs as a group.

I've been to many auditions recently that have asked about access needs and it's very much appreciated.

18. Are you okay with me using your answers in my dissertation research?

Yes, of course!

Ella Fostersmith's interview on being a neurodiverse performer within training

Dee: Dee, do you consent to this interview being included in my research?

Ella: Yes

Dee: When were you diagnosed as being neurodiverse?

Ella: I found out at a young age, as I had tests done, but when I went into secondary school, I didn't have any support. I came to university and got diagnosed with ADHD, dyslexia, and dyspraxia. I found being told I have more disabilities hard in university, as I knew it meant being academic in written work. After being diagnosed with everything in university, I instantly felt different to everyone else. I felt I couldn't do tasks the way other people do, and I wasn't being seen or heard. All these hurdles left me feeling unmotivated.

Dee: After you got diagnosed with ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia and neurodiversity, was there any support given?

Ella: I had support, but there wasn't a lot. The support felt as if I had to do everything myself. I need someone to explain the written work to me in an easier way, instead of saying "Ella, you do this, and you'll be fine", I need a structure to my work. I also can't read on white paper, which means I need green paper, and in 1st year of training, nobody supplied me with any material for my disabilities. Throughout primary and secondary school, I always struggled with reading, but I now know it was because I was reading on the wrong-coloured paper. I felt that during secondary school, I was being looked at and treated differently from the other children, and if I could erase those memories, I would.

Dee: I know you have Linda, who works at the university, to support people with disabilities with written work. How many times a week do you see her for extra support?

Ella: In the first year, I didn't see Linda much, but she always answered my emails when I needed help with written work; she was there for support. I would see Linda a couple of times a week.

Dee: You are in your final year of university, entering the creative arts industry. How do you feel about going into the industry as a performer with disabilities?

Ella: I am scared, to be completely honest, that I'm not going to be seen or heard. I'm scared that I'm going to be left doing everything on my own and not having the support I need. I'm scared of being treated differently from other people. When I'm struggling to understand the work, I am expressive with my face, and when people ask if I need help, I feel nervous saying yes. I also don't get why I have to tell teachers all the time about my disabilities; they should know already. I find it hard when teachers tell me to do it myself, and then I just sit there stressing throughout the entire lesson, trying to do the work myself. For me, tasks take a while to sink in.

Dee: Do you think there's representation for neurodiverse performers in the creative arts industry?

Ella: No, because I've had teachers coming up to me and saying if I'm normal or "one of them" meaning neurodiverse. So, no, I don't think there's representation in the industry

Dee: For auditions, they can give you script work to do. Are you scared about the audition process?

Ella: Yes, because with neurodiversity, we don't like change. I'll prepare for the audition, and if the panel says do this monologue or scene instead, that will stress me out. Because of this, it makes me feel that the panel looks at me differently from non-disabled performers.

Dee: Have you ever thought about not being able to get a role within the industry because of your neurodiversity?

Ella: I think about that all the time. This is a very hard question because, when auditioning for this university, I didn't think I'd get in because I thought the audition panel found me difficult to work with. When I auditioned for our 1st production in my final year, I always thought low of myself and my expectations. It makes me question whether I'm right for the creative arts industry. That's what I want to change about the industry: to stop making neurodiversity people feel different from others. I'm scared of going into teaching because they might reject me for having lower grades than others and for being different. I want the industry to stop making us feel like "stupid" because we are human beings with feelings. I have been called thick and stupid, and I want to tell people to stop putting us down.

Dee: Going on from your answer, when I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes, my consultant asked me what I was currently doing and told her I'm studying performing Arts in College. My consultant said to me that I might have to stop performing arts in college and look into a different career path. I remember looking at my parents and saying, "I want to do Musical Theatre." I proved my consultant wrong. 9 years down the line, and I'm still doing Musical Theatre. I remember doing research on actors who are type 1 diabetic, and there are many such as Nick Jonas, James Norton and Ryan McCartan.

Ella: I've had a similar experience throughout my life where people like to tell us what we should do

Dee: And we proved those people wrong because we proved that we can. Yeah, there have been struggles along the way, but we proved to those people that we can do it. I have one last question, which is, when you go into the industry, what's one thing you'd like to change?

Ella: The values of how they treat people with neurodiversity. I would shorten the audition process for neurodiverse individuals. I'm very happy that, in my first production at university, we used Access Rider to help the creative team understand the support needed, but why do we need an Access Rider? I prefer to tell the creative team myself. I also find voice recordings of lessons easy to listen to.

Dee: Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed for my research. I appreciate it

Hijinx Theatre interview

1. What were the main reasons Hijinx Theatre was created?

Hijinx Theatre began in 1981 as a small-scale touring company, very much rooted in a "theatre for everyone" ethos, taking work into village halls, schools and community spaces across Wales. At that stage, there wasn't a specific focus on learning disabled or autistic artists. Over time, that evolved. The creation of Hijinx Odyssey marked an important shift, opening up a space for inclusive participation and bringing in many of the performers who would go on to become part of the Hijinx Actors community.

A major turning point came under the influence of now Artistic Director and Co-CEO Ben Pettitt-Wade, who introduced our Academy model. What started as a small group of six actors in Cardiff has now grown into a national training programme, with multiple academies across Wales supporting over 70 learning disabled and autistic actors each year. Today, Hijinx exists to address a clear imbalance in the industry. Learning disabled and autistic performers remain significantly underrepresented on stage and screen, not due to lack of talent but due to systemic barriers. Hijinx's role is to remove those barriers, provide high-quality professional training, and create platforms where these artists can thrive. This work happens across several strands: the Academies, which focus on long-term training and progression; professional productions, which place actors in paid, high-quality touring work; and international collaborations, which extend opportunities globally and position inclusive practice as a serious artistic approach, not a niche or outreach activity.

Ultimately, the aim is not just inclusion, but excellence. Hijinx is working towards an industry where learning disabled and autistic actors are visible and valued.

2. You are currently touring with Meet Fred, what forms of support do the performers have when touring with a company?

On tour, support is built into the structure of the company, rather than added on as an afterthought. One of the key roles is the Creative Enabler. Their job is to provide tailored, person-centred support to actors, ensuring they can do their best work both on and off stage.

This can include things like helping with travel and accommodation routines, supporting communication, managing fatigue, or simply being a consistent presence in what can be a fast-moving and unfamiliar environment. The level and type of support varies depending on the individual, but the principle is always the same: removing barriers so the performer can focus on their craft.

Beyond that, the whole company is set up with accessibility in mind. Schedules are carefully planned, expectations are clear, and there's a strong emphasis on wellbeing.

3. What's a rehearsal process like for a performer with a disability with Hijinx theatre?

Hijinx rehearsals are structured, clear, and flexible. There's a strong emphasis on creating a safe and supportive environment where actors understand what's expected of them. Practically, that might mean breaking material down into manageable sections, allowing more time for repetition, and using a variety of communication methods depending on the needs of the group. Visual aids, physical demonstration, and clear, consistent language are all commonly used.

Rehearsals are also paced carefully. Regular breaks, consistent routines, and clear daily structures help actors stay focused and confident.

At the same time, the artistic ambition is high. Directors work collaboratively with actors, building performances that play to their strengths while still challenging them to grow. Creative Enablers are present in the room, offering support where needed, but the focus remains on the actor as a performer, not as someone receiving care.

4. What's the opportunities and challenges of working with performers that has a disability?

One of the biggest opportunities is the richness and originality that learning disabled and autistic performers bring to the work. Their perspectives, instincts, and ways of engaging with material can lead to performances that feel fresh, honest, and unexpected. There's also a strong sense of ensemble and collaboration. Hijinx actors often train together over long periods, which builds trust and a deep understanding within the company.

The challenges are usually practical rather than artistic. They can include ensuring communication is clear, balancing different access needs within a group, and allowing enough time in schedules to support everyone effectively. Touring can also require careful planning to ensure consistency and wellbeing. However, these challenges are entirely manageable with the right structures in place. In many ways, they encourage better practice overall, clearer communication, stronger planning, and a more thoughtful approach to making work.

5. In your opinion, what barriers still exist for disabled performers in the creative arts industry?

There are still significant structural barriers. Casting is a major one, with disabled performers often overlooked or only considered for roles specifically written as disabled. Training opportunities are another barrier. Many mainstream drama schools are not accessible, either physically or in terms of their teaching approaches, which limits entry into the industry from the outset.

There are also attitudinal barriers. Assumptions about capability, professionalism, or the level of support required can prevent disabled performers from being considered in the first place.

Finally, there's a lack of infrastructure. Many companies don't have the knowledge or resources to provide appropriate support, which can make them hesitant to engage disabled artists. All of these contribute to a cycle where disabled performers remain underrepresented.

6. What is the impact that Hijinx Theatre aim to create for the creative arts?

Hijinx aims to create long-term, systemic change. That includes increasing the visibility of learning disabled and autistic performers in high-quality professional work, but also shifting perceptions of what inclusive theatre can be. By producing ambitious, touring productions

and international collaborations, Hijinx demonstrates that inclusive work is not separate from the mainstream, it is part of it.

There's also a strong focus on career pathways. The Academies provide training, but also progression routes into professional work, ensuring that talent is nurtured and sustained over time.

More broadly, Hijinx wants to influence the wider industry. By modelling good practice and building partnerships, the aim is to create an environment where other organisations feel confident and equipped to work inclusively.

7. In your opinion, has discrimination against performers with disabilities has improved since Hijinx theatre was founded in 1981?

There has definitely been progress. There is more awareness, more conversation, and more visible examples of disabled performers working professionally. Inclusive practice is more widely recognised and valued than it was in 1981. However, progress has been uneven. While there are more opportunities than before, disabled performers are still underrepresented, particularly in mainstream contexts. So while discrimination may be less overt, many of the underlying barriers remain. The work is far from finished.

8. Do you think there is enough support in the creative arts industry that supports performers with disabilities?

At the moment, no. While there are pockets of excellent practice, organisations like Hijinx being a good example, this level of support is not consistent across the industry.

Many companies want to be more inclusive but lack the knowledge, confidence, or resources to do so effectively. Funding structures don't always account for the additional support that may be needed, which can also be a barrier. What's needed is a more embedded approach, where access and support are considered standard practice, rather than something additional.

9. What advice would you give a performer who has a disability about to graduate into the creative arts industry?

Firstly, recognise the value of what you bring. Your perspective and experience are strengths, not limitations. Secondly, it's also important to be clear about your access needs and advocate for them where possible. That can be challenging, but it's a key part of sustaining a career. Finally, be persistent. The industry can be difficult to navigate for anyone, but building connections, continuing to train, and staying engaged with the work will open up opportunities over time.

10. Why is it important to show representation of performer with disabilities on stage?

Representation is about visibility, but also about equity. When disabled performers are present on stage, it challenges assumptions about who belongs in those spaces. It also creates more authentic storytelling. Disabled experiences are part of society, and they should be reflected in the stories we tell. For audiences, representation can be powerful. It allows people to see themselves reflected, sometimes for the first time, and can shift perceptions in meaningful ways. For the industry, it raises standards. It encourages more inclusive thinking, more diverse casting, and ultimately, better, more representative work.

Focus group discussion with the general public, Kelly Parker and Gwen Parker

Dee: Do you consent to this discussion being in my dissertation?

Gwen Parker: Yes

Kelly Parker: Yes

Dee: Kelly, you were born in 1974. Can you remember seeing any performers with disabilities within a film or TV show?

Kelly: I can't remember anything in the 70s, but I can remember the 80s. The only thing I remember seeing growing up watching films was dwarves. You'd see dwarfs in a lot of fantasy films, such as *The Princess Bride*. I remember that disabled performers were always villains in James Bond films. I can't remember seeing anyone in a wheelchair in films or TV shows. The only film I've seen in the 80s that showcased learning disabilities was the film *Rain Man*, where Dustin Hoffman plays a character with Autism. The first time I learnt about Tourette's was in a documentary when I was 13.

Dee: Do you think Dustin Hoffman's character should have been played by a performer with Autism?

Kelly: Yes, as you'll have a more authentic feel towards the disability. That was another thing growing up in the 80s, there were a lot of disabled characters played by non-disabled performers.

Dee: Gwen, as you studied at the Addict Dance Academy, did you encounter any support within training for performers with disabilities?

Gwen: I had a friend in training who had dyslexia and dyspraxia, and the academy gave her extra time with coursework and extra learning resources. I can't recall anyone having a physical disability, but I know that for additional learning needs, my academy always supported performers who had additional learning needs. To add on to the answer It's about getting access, it's not their fault that they have a visible disability or learning disability so those extra steps in support is crucial for performers with disabilities.

Dee: Gwen. As you're currently in the industry, have you experienced discrimination against performers with disabilities?

Gwen: When I was cast as a dancer for RWS, they had an actor on the scare fest who worked in the scare maze who had Asperger's and had one eye. And she was brilliant at her job, but I did wonder if she was only cast for her disability, as she was cast as a scare maze actor and not cast in anything else, which is disappointing, really, as she was an incredible actor.

Kelly: To add on from Gwen about support, I remember growing up in school, there was no accessibility or access for disabled people. There were no ramps, lifts, disabled parking or disabled toilets when I was growing up.

Dee: It was the same in my school, the only lift was in the new building, which was built 2 years before I went to secondary school. People with physical disabilities couldn't have access to mainstream schools.

Dee: Can you both remember the time you went to see a theatre show that featured a performer with a disability?

Gwen: No

Kelly: I can't think of anyone either

Dee: I remember seeing an ensemble member who was an amputee in Hadestown on the West End and also first cover Eurydice, but other than that, I can't remember.

Kelly: I remember going to Snow White and the Seven Dwarves pantomime when I was a kid, and all the dwarves were played by actual dwarfs.

Gwen: I personally think Strictly Come Dancing is becoming more inclusive, like they've started to do with theatre, for example, Paddington the Musical. But I do feel that theatre can be more representative of disabled performers.

Dee: I personally believe that employers don't want to deal with the extra hassle

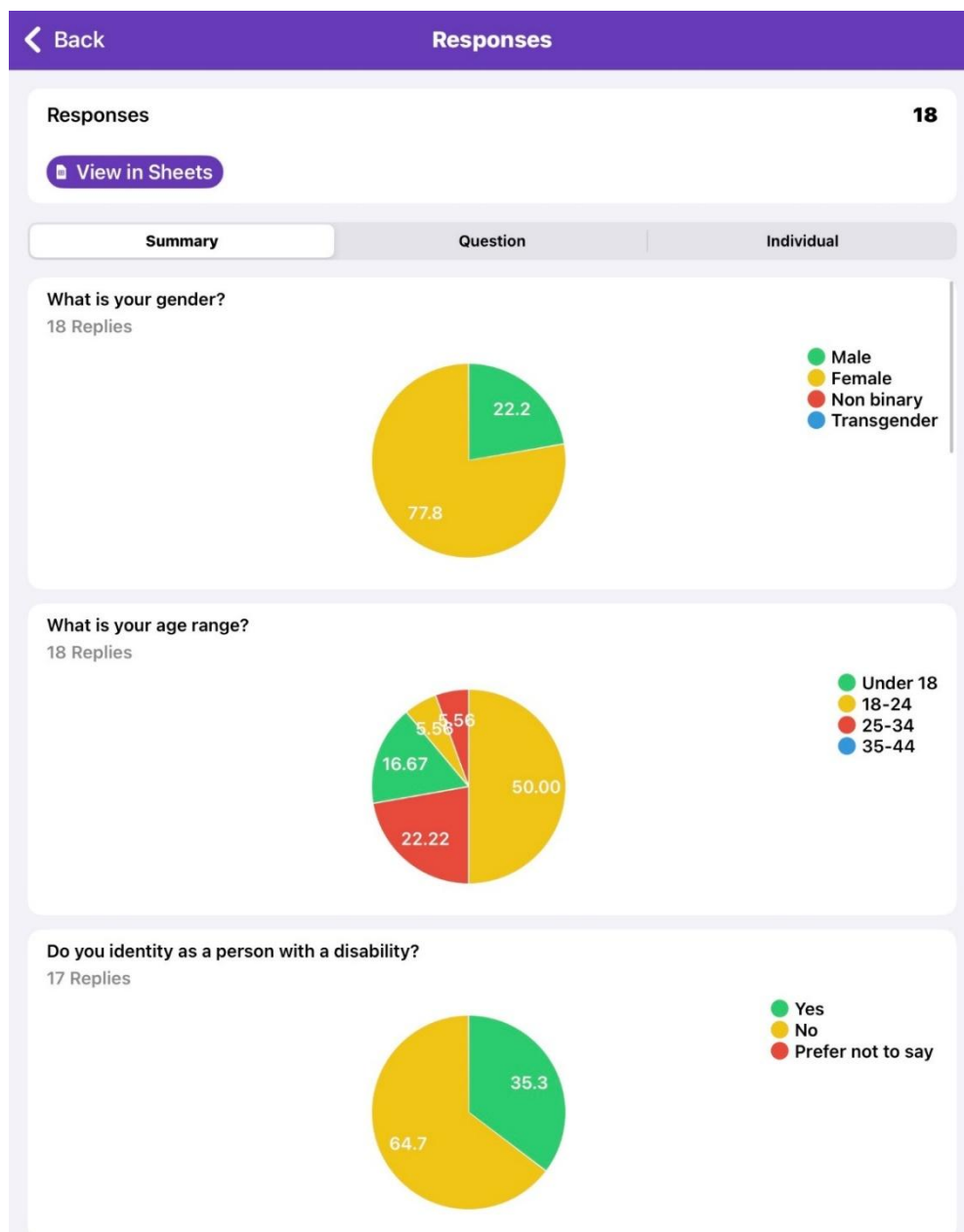
Gwen: But what hassle? What hassle is it to support people with additional learning needs? How long does it take to make sheet music or scripts on green paper for performers with dyslexia? I want to talk about Blake John Wood, who is an Australian amputee, and you wouldn't even notice because of how incredible a dancer he is. But if he didn't have the access or the support to push him to have the confidence to do what he's doing, he'd never be where he is now.

Dee: Last question, what do you think the industry should do to change their views of performers with disabilities?

Gwen: I think there needs to be more trust; this can start within training. By trusting performers with disabilities, casting will increase, which enhances visibility.

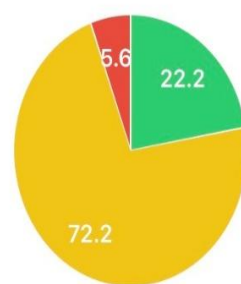
Dee: Thank you

Survey



Have you personally experienced discrimination against people with disabilities in the workplace?

18 Replies



Yes
No
Rather not say

If you answered yes to the previous question, please briefly describe the situation?

4 Replies

I was really overwhelmed and upset due to lack of organisation within my place of work and my feeling...

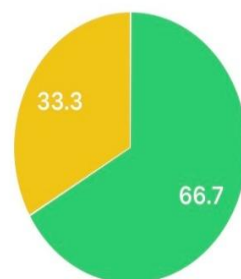
I have heard people making jokes about people with a visual disability

Not being trained on the condition, making hurtful comments that they think is okay, don't supply a me...

[Show more](#)

Do you believe that people with disabilities experience discrimination in the workplace?

18 Replies



Yes
No
Prefer not to say

Do you think people with disabilities feel comfortable disclosing their disability in their job application?

18 Replies



Do you believe workplace discrimination against people with disabilities has decreased over the last 50...

18 Replies



Do you know any public figures who have a disability?

18 Replies



How often do you notice performers with disabilities in movies, television, or theatre?

18 Replies



Do you believe that performers with disabilities are often given type casted roles?

18 Replies



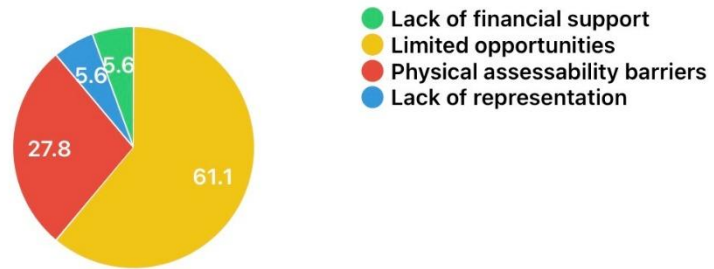
Do you believe that characters with disabilities should be portrayed by performers who have a disability?

18 Replies



What do you believe are the main barriers faced by performers with a disability in the creative arts?

18 Replies



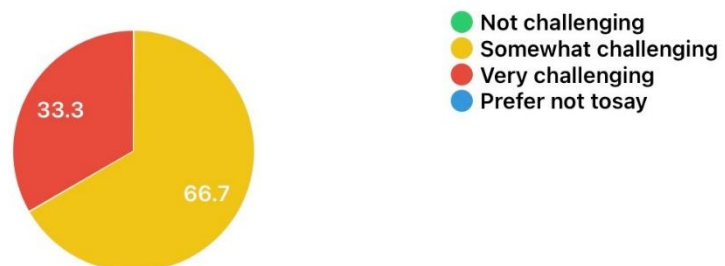
Do you believe that increasing visibility of performers with disabilities can have a positive impact on the...

18 Replies



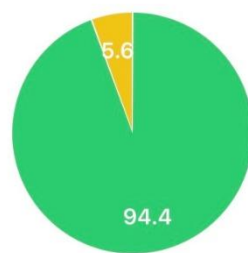
How challenging do you believe it is for a graduate with a disability to pursue a career in the creative arts?

18 Replies



Do you believe that discrimination against performers with disabilities in the past 50 years continues to...

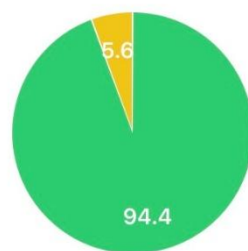
18 Replies



Yes
No
Prefer not to say

Do you believe that there are more performers with disabilities employed within the creative arts today t...

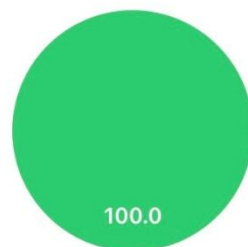
18 Replies



Yes
No
Prefer not to say

Do you believe that performers with disabilities have had a positive impact on the next generation of perf...

18 Replies



Yes
No
Prefer not to say

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