

# DanceXchange Disability Access Policy



DanceXchange is firmly committed to enabling all its customers to participate in its events equally and with dignity and respect. For the purposes of this policy, "disability" is to be understood in the broadest sense of the word and covers all disabilities coming within the scope of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

## Key Aims

The key aims of this policy are to ensure that:

- all our customers are able to access and enjoy live dance performance and take part in our dance class programme and projects
- all reasonable steps are taken to prevent any of the physical features of DanceXchange (or indeed our practices, policies and procedures) from making it unreasonably difficult for disabled patrons to make use of our services
- all reasonable steps are taken to provide auxiliary aids and services to enable and assist disabled patrons in making use of our services
- disabled patrons feel as valued and experience the same high levels of satisfaction with our services as our other patrons

Set out below are some of the ways in which we have sought to realise our key aims.

## Our Staff

The DanceXchange Executive Director has overall responsibility for looking after our disabled patrons' interests and should be customers' point of contact for any queries regarding this policy.

All members of DanceXchange staff are provided with regular basic training in disability awareness and etiquette, are aware of this policy and are able to assist patrons with queries regarding disabled access to DanceXchange.

Contact details for the best person to help with specific areas of our work are provided below.

## Access to The Patrick Centre, our theatre

There is wheelchair/level access to The Patrick Centre via the Stage Door entrance on Thorp Street. Disabled toilets are also available on the same level within the Hippodrome. The Patrick Centre can also be accessed through the main Hippodrome entrance, using the lift to level 3.

Patrons who require particular seating arrangements in order to accommodate difficulties they may have in attending performances should inform the Box Office at the time of booking.

Wheelchair users can be accommodated in the front row or back area of The Patrick Centre seating, subject to availability. Additional seating is provided adjacent to most of these spaces for a companion.

Patrons and their companions are welcome to visit The Patrick Centre prior to attending a performance in order to familiarise themselves with the theatre's layout. These visits can be arranged by contacting the DanceXchange Reception on 0121 689 3170 or by emailing [info@danceexchange.org.uk](mailto:info@danceexchange.org.uk)

Warning notices advising of any use of stroboscopic lighting effects and pyrotechnic explosives are displayed in all entrances to The Patrick Centre on the day of the performances concerned.

While every attempt will be made to accommodate all our customers, DanceXchange reserves the right to refuse admission to anyone, where it is believed by the Duty Manager that, at such time, admission would contravene the conditions of the license and/or pose a higher than acceptable risk to public safety.

### **Access to the DanceXchange Studios**

- The DanceXchange studios are accessed via the Stage Door entrance on Thorp Street and a lift to the 5<sup>th</sup> Floor and the DanceXchange level
- All DanceXchange facilities are accessible without any steps
- With advance notice, tutors can ensure that their class is entirely accessible
- All DanceXchange changing rooms contain an accessible toilet and shower area

Further details can be provided by the DanceXchange Class Coordinator, at [info@danceexchange.org.uk](mailto:info@danceexchange.org.uk) or on 0121 689 3170.

### **Access to our Class Programme**

Making our Class Programme as accessible and inclusive as we can is of great importance to us – all our classes are inclusive. If a customer is disabled and has special access needs, they are advised to call in advance of their attendance. This will enable our tutors to plan their sessions so that everyone in the class is well catered for; this is something they are all trained in. The Hippodrome building and our studios are completely wheelchair accessible.

If a customer feels unsure about visiting DanceXchange for the first time (or visiting a new class for the first time), we also offer an informal buddy system to pair them up with one of our regulars who will show them the ropes and help them settle in.

Further details can be provided by the DanceXchange Class Coordinator, at [info@danceexchange.org.uk](mailto:info@danceexchange.org.uk) or on 0121 689 3170.

### **Access and Inclusion Projects**

The aims of making dance accessible and inclusive underpin all that we do. As well as our Class Programme and shows in our theatre, The Patrick Centre, we also deliver projects that help us to involve underserved communities in the benefits that dance can offer and have developed expertise in this field of work. Our recent projects have included a focus on people with disabilities and on young people with mental health issues.

Further information about specific projects can be found on the Access and Inclusion section of our website, or by calling 0121 689 3170.

### **Further assistance for those with impaired hearing**

The Patrick Centre is equipped with an infra-red audio enhancement system. Both infra-red headphone receivers and necklace-style induction loop transceivers are available and can be requested from Box Office or the Hippodrome Duty Manager prior to a performance. These work in tandem with an existing hearing aid set to "T" if appropriate; digital aids are automatically linked into the infra-red system. Please note there is a £5 refundable deposit to use the receivers.

The system is regularly checked to ensure that it is operating correctly. However, in the unlikely event that a customer experiences any difficulty, they are advised to report this to a member of staff.

### **Further assistance for those whose sight is impaired**

We welcome guide/assistance dogs. Please advise the Box Office at the time of booking, so that suitable arrangements can be made.

### **Facilities for customers who are blind or have visual impairments**

To request an Audio CD, Large Print or Braille version of the performance season brochure or class programme, customers should email [info@dancexchange.org.uk](mailto:info@dancexchange.org.uk) or call 0121 689 3170.

### **Parking and Transport**

DanceXchange regrettably has no on-site parking, however, parking is available opposite the Stage Door entrance on Thorp Street and there is a larger car park nearby within the Arcadian complex.

Please note that, for health and safety reasons, DanceXchange staff are unable to assist disabled patrons in and out of their transport or mobility equipment.

### **Accessibility at other external venues**

DanceXchange frequently makes use of other venues for performances, projects and workshops, and uses its best endeavours to ensure accessibility. For example, during International Dance Festival Birmingham, Town Hall Birmingham and Birmingham Repertory Theatre are performance venues; they have their own access policies, details of which are available on their websites. We also strive to ensure that any performances we present in public spaces are accessible.

For activity in other theatres, customers are advised to contact the individual venue to discuss their specific access needs. For projects in other locations, where no specific contact has been provided, further guidance can be obtained by calling DanceXchange on 0121 689 3170.

### **Feedback**

We greatly appreciate any suggestions about how we could improve our customers' access to and enjoyment of DanceXchange and its facilities. These can be left at our Reception desk or emailed to [info@dancexchange.org.uk](mailto:info@dancexchange.org.uk)

Comment cards are available from our staff upon request and are also available in large print. Should a customer require assistance to complete a comment card, our staff would be happy to help.

MOD/PB/KD/CL/AC      April 2010/updated November 2010

With thanks to the Mayflower Theatre, Southampton, for use of their accessibility information as an initial reference point.