

# **IMPACT REPORT**

**Year ending: 5 April 2024**



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## Our Mission Statements

## Transforming Lives Through Interactive Theatre

At our charity, we are dedicated to enriching the lives of children and young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties, acquired brain injuries, and sensory impairments. Our interactive theatre experiences are designed to break down barriers and create inclusive environments where everyone can thrive.

## Empowering Through Engagement

Many of the young people we support face exclusion due to their disabilities. We provide them and their families with opportunities to engage in a variety of interactive educational shows and workshops tailored to their unique needs. Our goal is to create safe spaces where they can build confidence, develop independence, and connect with others.

## Building Life Skills and Confidence

We focus on helping our beneficiaries develop essential life skills such as managing stress, feeling good about themselves, working in teams, and enjoying activities with their families. By involving children and young people in planning and decision-making, we empower them to take control of their experiences and futures.

## Supporting Families

Having a child with a physical disability can be isolating. We aim to alleviate this by offering support, solidarity, and friendship through regular events at our community hub. Many families describe us as a lifeline, especially in the early stages, when connecting with other parents who understand their journey can make all the difference.

## Celebrating Diversity and Inclusion

████████████████████ is proud to create unique, life-enhancing experiences for participants with special and additional needs. We celebrate diversity and strive to increase skills, confidence, and well-being through fun and engaging activities. Our work raises awareness and opens up new opportunities for children and young people with learning disabilities.

## Looking Ahead

We are ambitious and committed to building on our achievements over the past [REDACTED]. With [REDACTED] nearing completion, we are excited to expand our services. Our next project is [REDACTED].

# Our New Home, [REDACTED]: A Journey of Transformation and Hope

In December 2021, we took possession of a single-storey, 1950s milking parlour, purchased with a loan from Charity Bank. Their unwavering support has been instrumental in our journey, [REDACTED]

The original building was energy inefficient and badly in need of updating. With funding from [REDACTED] we installed double-glazed windows and suspended ceilings. We replaced oil-fired heaters with Green, energy-efficient heating & cooling systems and are proud that, thanks to our new energy-saving solar panels, on a sunny day we are exporting to the National Grid.

## Fully Accessible

Our [REDACTED] now proudly offers:

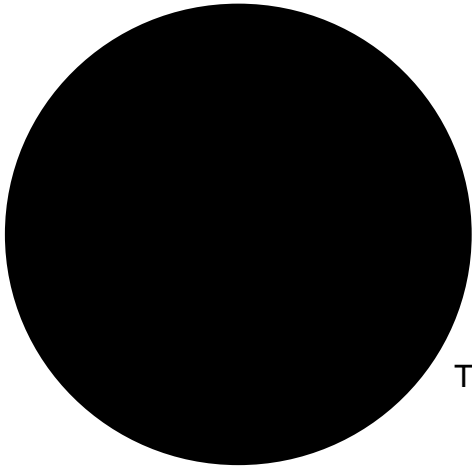
- Studio Theatre
- Sensory Room
- Hygiene Room
- Wardrobe & Changing Area
- Café
- Library (with our own volunteer Librarian!)
- On-site parking

In addition to being a home for our charity, the [REDACTED] provides:

- Meeting space for health & wellbeing groups
- Performance space for disability groups
- Drop-in Centre for families of children with disabilities

- [REDACTED]

# Creating Inclusive Spaces



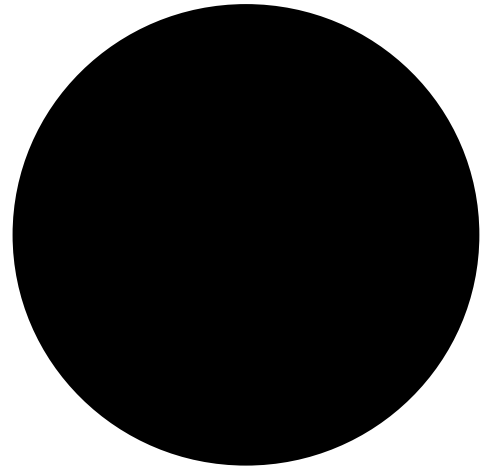
## The Hygiene Room

With equipment funded by the [REDACTED] we created a state-of-the-art Hygiene Room. It is now listed on [REDACTED], ensuring wheelchair users in the area can access our facilities with dignity and comfort.

The first wheelchair user's reaction was simply, *"Wow!"*

## The Sensory Room

Supported by [REDACTED] we created a Sensory Room equipped with a mobile hoist, allowing wheelchair users to enjoy the electronic stimuli on padded platforms. The room features fidget wall boards, [REDACTED] which took five months to arrive!



## Supporting Parents and Carers

Having a child with a physical disability can be an isolating experience. Not only are there so many medical issues to learn about but so many activities become difficult to access and inappropriate for the disabled child. We aim to help parents feel less isolated, providing support, solidarity, and friendship to families through regular events at our community hub.

Many families have described us as a lifeline, especially in the early stages, describing how talking to other parents who genuinely understand how they feel has helped them to get through some tough times. Often parents will get advice from fellow parents that they could never get anywhere else – those little tips to get through normal everyday life that no one else can teach you.

# Our Dedicated Staff

Despite the current cost of living crisis and the shortage of candidates since the pandemic, our charity thrives thanks to the loyalty of our staff.

██████████ is a shining example of a cost-saving charity, achieving so much running on the equivalent of 1.25 full time staff, with just a few part-time professional staff supporting our loyal band of volunteers. Their dedication and energy have been pivotal in progressing the work of the Charity, extending its reach and expanding its services to children and young people with special needs and their families, and supporting our loyal band of volunteers.

## Volunteers: The Heart of our Charity

Our charity is led by passionate volunteers who are committed to making theatre accessible to all. After 18 years, we remain volunteer-led, with Chief Executive duties undertaken by our Founder. Eighteen regular volunteers support our part-time staff, providing invaluable skilled hours.

“It is so exciting to be a part of the wonderful things that are happening here at ██████████. This is an incredible space and has so much to offer people. The energy and commitment of those responsible for this development is quite awe-inspiring, and the ethos of inclusivity and empowerment is inspiring.”

- ██████████ Workshop Leader

“I am really happy to work alongside ██████████ in fundraising for ██████████, especially with the support we secured for upcoming building works to the ██████████. I am looking forward to finding further funding as we move into 2025 and beyond.”

- ██████████, Fundraising Manager

### From our volunteers:

- ██████████ support in-kind
- 3,000 hours of unpaid work

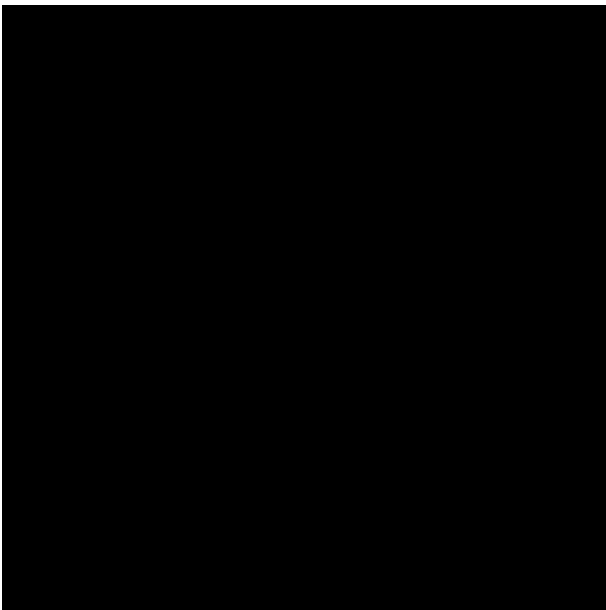
“I have always been committed to giving back and making a difference for something I believe in. Equity, diversity and inclusion are at the heart of everything I do for ██████████”

- ██████████ Financial Controller

# Corporate Volunteers

We are grateful for the support of corporate volunteers from [redacted] [redacted] These 30 corporate volunteers have carried out a wide range of tasks, including administration, gardening, DIY, cleaning, and sorting of props.

From our corporate volunteers [redacted] support in-kind and 200 hours of unpaid work.

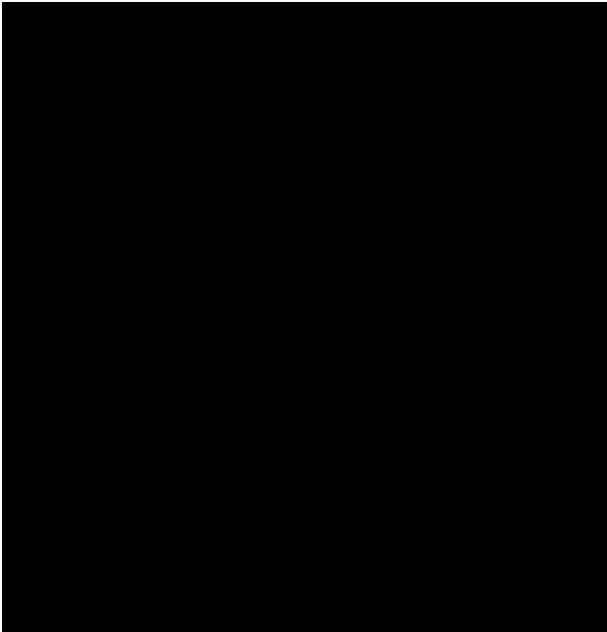


[redacted] **Project Management Team**

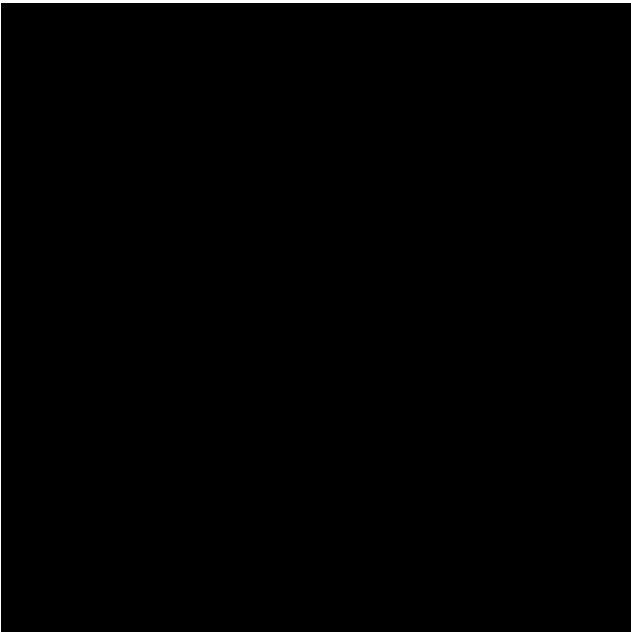
“It was a really rewarding day and to see the progress that’s been made with the building was incredible!”



“When can we come again?”



“Great to help a small charity.”



# Touring Productions

Our new Creative Team continues to plan, produce, and direct our content, ensuring our shows are accessible and engaging for all. Our performances are tailored to the needs of our audiences with a mixture of simple narrative, Makaton signing, and pre-recorded Voice Output Communication Aids, making them accessible to all.

## 665 Activities Across 138 Venues

throughout Surrey, Sussex, Kent, London, Norfolk, Bucks, Beds, Berks, Cambs, Suffolk and Sussex (East and West)

### Show: **Chicken Circus** (48 sessions, 24 venues)

During 2023 we re-produced this show in honour of our former patron, [REDACTED]. Adapted from a children's story in his book [REDACTED], the show retains much of [REDACTED] Monty Python humour with a fox training chickens to be circus performers. The show was shortlisted for an award at the Brighton Fringe Festival and performed to capacity audiences.

"The actors and the company really understood the needs of our children."

- [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

"Great! Cluck, cluck. Brilliant!"

- *Parent*

### Pantomime: **Beauty & the Beast** (60 sessions, 34 venues).

This pantomime, toured London and the Home Counties, Christmas 2023. For The first time children's hospices were included.

With the video featuring [REDACTED] as the voice of the Magic Mirror.

"All of the children absolutely LOVED the day and the Pantomimes! Some of our children have never experienced anything like that before so it was amazing to see them interacting and some even taking part in this sensory show. We will be recommending to all who ask!"

- [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

"Absolutely fabulous for the kids and, as a parent, first time I've felt relaxed at a public event in a long time."

- *Parent*



## Storytelling: **Squish Space at the Barbican** (12 sessions, 1 venue)

We continued our collaboration with the Barbican Performing Arts Centre, London, devising sensory storytelling for their 'Squish Space' school parties.

"Your thoughtfulness and delivery was perfect. Our pupils responded to you. No tears, no behaviours, just joy."

- [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

### Additional Storytelling Sessions:

- **Wizard of Oz** (44 sessions, 11 venues)
- **Captain Crabsticks** (12 sessions, 3 venues)
- **Amazing Tales** (114 sessions, 19 venues)

"Fun and engaging and you really think about how to integrate the audience. We love how you take into account their differences and work with their abilities."

- [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

"It was really lovely to see all the students so engaged, focused and reacting so well to the story and props."

- [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

"Such a lovely show with great ways to get my daughter involved when she usually doesn't participate in similar things."

- *Parent*

**70% of participants tried something new and challenging.**

**99% of participants felt happier and had a greater sense of wellbeing.**

[REDACTED]

The Charity's learning department, under the direction of Amy Rhodes, continues to develop our [REDACTED] products that are set within the school curriculum.

### Beachcombers & Mudlarking (40 sessions, 10 venues)

- "You are such a precious resource!" - *Parent*

### Ocean & Shore (64 sessions, 16 venues)

- This special theatre company allows us to do an activity as a family. It forces us out and is a safe environment to explore. The team are always supportive, kind and incredibly friendly." - *Parent*
- "Really enjoyable and fun, with lots of opportunities to participate while telling a serious message about litter." - *Parent*
- "So inclusive and we loved the interactive elements of it." - *Parent*

### Rainforest (44 sessions, 11 venues)

- "A lovely and well thought out workshop." [REDACTED]
- "The event was really wonderful, and our students had such a wonderful time. Fantastic. A wonderful interactive experience. Students were able to freely explore. All the students were acknowledged, and the leaders knew how to interact with them. Students appreciated the sensory aspect – the smells and sounds. Students who struggle with behaviour managed so well and came into the hall where they would normally struggle. We all felt that you interacted and managed our students beautifully. Thank you. We will be booking you again soon." [REDACTED]

### The Romans (life in Roman Londinium 400AD) - launched Summer 2024

- "Our group very much enjoyed your performance and it is so well suited for our group of children with disabilities. It was so great to see them all so engaged and having an enjoyable time! Your staff/performers are so fantastic, friendly and accommodating – it was a real pleasure working with you!" [REDACTED]

### The Tudors

- Launching Autumn 2024 with a choice of virtual or live workshops to underpin our charity's docu-film, [REDACTED]

# Workshops

## Sing-sign Workshops

A relaxing, unpressured way for children and their parents to learn new Makaton signs.

“Loved the social side of workshops. Improved his Makaton signing.”  
- Parent

## Drama Workshops

Accessible workshops for a wide range of ages. These include Drama, Arts & Crafts and, to be launched in August 2024, Lego Brick Building Therapy.

“An enormous ‘thank you’ for the wonderful family day today.”  
- Parent

“Wow! It’s one of the few times, if not the only time, that I’ve been able to sit with my son and enjoy something with him, rather than be on red alert the whole time. It’s one of the best things we’ve ever been to, and we will definitely be back.”  
- Parent

Over 58% of families said our events reduce social isolation.

Over 85% shared an inclusive activity as a family.

# YouTube Learning Channel

127 videos and over 90,000 views

Through this channel our charity reaches children throughout the UK who have Social Anxieties and/or Physical Disabilities that prevent them from attending live productions.

All our films include online resources supporting families to create a multi-sensory, interactive experience for their children while watching at home. A pause symbol encourages them to gather together their costumes and props to make the ensuing scene an interactive and sensory experience for their child. Makaton signing and close captioning assist those who have Hearing Impairments or Speech, Language & Communication Needs.



Our series [REDACTED] was created and developed for children and young people who are socially anxious meaning that simple visits to public places can often be unsettling and confusing. Our Sensory Squad series provides familiarisation through exploring and understanding a new experience before undertaking a real-life adventure outside familiar surroundings.

## Episode 2, 'Silly at the Circus'

- June 2023
- Filmed in association with Hikapee Circus Theatre

## Episode 3, 'A Dinosaur Tour'

- October 2023
- Filmed on location and in association with the Friends of Crystal Palace Dinosaurs.

"Thank you so much for providing [REDACTED]. My children are autistic and worry about new experiences but after watching, our family were able to visit a local farm because the YouTube video gave them the confidence to try out a new experience."

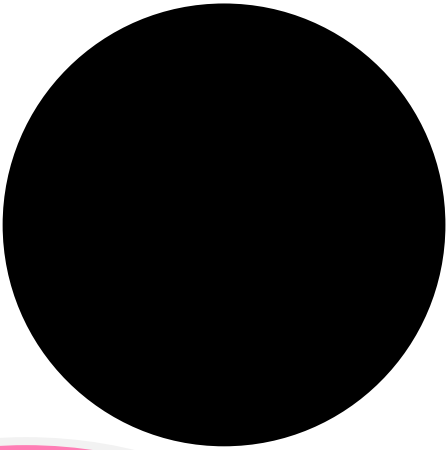
- Parent

# Programmes for Students Transitioning from Special Schools

20 students pass through this programme annually

## Work Experience

We provide experiences in all aspects of theatre craft: videography, stage management, directing, performance, front-of-house, merchandising and hospitality. We work with students transitioning from Special Schools and presenting with a wide variety of learning difficulties and disabilities.



"I enjoy all of it! So far, I have been writing down the times of each take and having lots of fun. Head2Head is one of the first steps on my journey towards film making."

"It was very interesting. I have seen people working Front of House at the theatres and cinemas, so it was a great opportunity to try it out. I really enjoyed the fixing backstage-set building and working with my hands is what I really enjoy. I fixed an oven prop for them. I really liked helping the get in and get out, setting up and packing away."

## Professional Placement Scheme

This scheme employs disabled young people to work alongside our professional actors on film sets. They receive parity pay while receiving mentoring and guidance. This scheme is being expanded into a Transitions into Employment Programme, supporting NEET disabled young people to find employment or permanent volunteer placements.

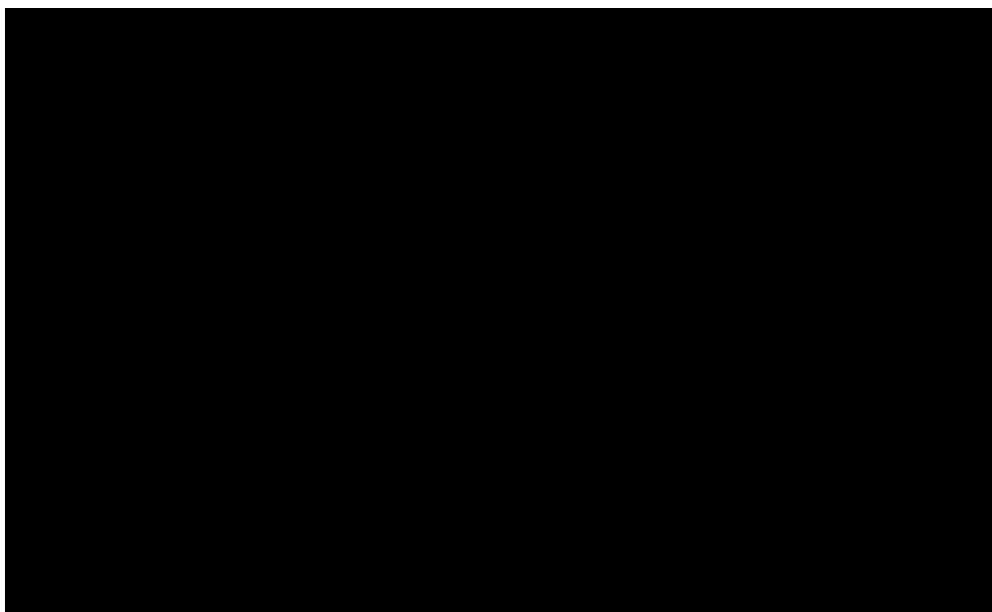


"It was exciting to hear my own voice on the recording and the cast introduced me as Athena which I was very proud of."



# Our Future

In 2024 [REDACTED] won the prestigious [REDACTED]. This Non-Profit Business Award was judged on [REDACTED] excellent achievements and passion for what we do within the Special Needs' sector.



We are committed to continuing our mission of transforming lives through interactive theatre. We will keep creating inclusive spaces where children and young people with profound and multiple learning difficulties, acquired brain injuries, and sensory impairments can flourish. Our innovative theatre experiences will remain central to our efforts, breaking down barriers and fostering a sense of belonging.

We are excited to introduce new initiatives like the [REDACTED] [REDACTED] broadening our support to a wider community. By developing new interactive educational shows and workshops, we aim to empower our beneficiaries, helping them build confidence, develop independence, and connect with others.

We recognise the challenges faced by families of children with special and additional needs and we will continue to enhance our support services to provide even greater solidarity and friendship. Many parents have described us as a lifeline, especially in the early stages, as connecting with other parents who genuinely understand their experiences has been invaluable. These connections offer not only emotional support but also practical advice that can make everyday life more manageable.

Our commitment to celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion will continue to guide us, as we create unique, life-enhancing experiences that raise awareness and open up new opportunities for children and young people with learning disabilities.

We are excited to build on our achievements and broaden our impact, ensuring we continue to make a positive difference in the lives of our beneficiaries, and we thank our trustees, dedicated staff, volunteers, friends, families, carers, and our students, for your continued support.

# Structure, Governance and Management

██████████ is a volunteer-led, charitable incorporated organisation, registered with the Charity Commission. Registered names for trading purposes are ██████████. Following its governing Constitution, its aim is to relieve the needs of persons of all ages and, where consistent with the aforesaid aims, the Charity will also support local and disadvantaged communities.


The activities of the Charity are overseen by a board of Trustees, each bringing an aspect of skill, experience and/or networking capability which contributes to fulfilment of the Charity's aims. Each Trustee is made aware of, and has due regard for, the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance and of the scope of the Charity's aims and activities. Training is offered to all Trustees. Applicants are selected for the value of their existing experience, with a view to providing the Charity with a suitably broad range of skills. The Charity's Trustees at the date of this report are ██████████.

██████████. Resignations during the year were received from ██████████. Pro bono Chief Executive duties continue to be undertaken by the Charity's Founder, ██████████. The charity is indebted to all for their support.

## Funding



- Earned Income rose by 54%.



- Grants increased by 136% due to refurbishment funding which lifted the Charity from Cash to Accruals Accounting.



- With a reduction in staffing and more reliance on volunteering the Charity lowered its wage bill by 18%.



- Filming, production and touring costs showed a slight increase, in line with inflation.

The core cost grant of ██████████, ceased in Spring 2024. Through this generous funding the Charity has been able to employ some part-time members of staff to assist in key positions, supplementing the work of volunteers and ensuring that ██████████ may continue supporting children with special needs and their families.





## Policy on Reserves

- The Trustees have agreed that, from unrestricted reserves, the Charity should maintain a contingency of [REDACTED] representing four months of fixed operating costs.

## Public Benefit

- It is a source of pride to the Charity that all its activities have continued to be achieved at relatively low administrative cost in financial terms with most of its income at the disposal of its beneficiaries. The Charity has an equal ratio of volunteers to paid staff with volunteers supporting most of its administrative departments. The Independent Examiner of the annual accounts provides his services free of charge. The Trustees are satisfied that the Charity's activities for the year were in line with its aims and have had public benefit, having regard to the guidance on the latter issued by the Charity Commission.

## Related Party Transactions

- During the year, production and performance fees amounting to [REDACTED] were paid to the Founder's daughter, [REDACTED], all at the Charity's normal remuneration rates for professional actors. [REDACTED] also provides the Charity with substantial amounts of pro bono production time.

This report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees by [REDACTED].