



DIY Theatre Community Interest Company

Impact Summary



What we did in January to December 2017



Who we are and what we do

DIY is an established Learning Disability Theatre Company based in Salford. We are a member-led Community Interest Company and most of our Board members are disabled people. We have been creating accessible and thought-provoking theatre and creative projects since 1994.

DIY's vision is a world where performers, theatre-makers and arts leaders with learning disabilities are valued as part of the rich diversity of our cultural sector and our society.

"Drama did help me in my job because when I went to Salford Royal I used to just stay out of the way of people and keep myself to myself. And then when I started drama I talked to the patients and the porters who go down the corridors...It's important because if you don't you'll just be alone - you wouldn't talk to no one - you would just stay alone."

Participant, Silver Arts Award pilot at You Can Community Club

We aim to:

Challenge preconceptions and barriers experienced by people with learning disabilities through high quality performance, education projects and research.

Celebrate diversity and creativity in all areas of our work.

Promote the achievements of performers and theatre-makers with learning disabilities and share good practice.

We offer:

- Original performances which tour schools, colleges and theatres.
- Drama projects with schools, colleges and youth organisations including accredited Arts Award projects at Discover, Explore, Bronze and Silver levels.
- Regular creative workshops and courses for adults with learning disabilities.
- Training for Arts Award advisers, universities and practitioners.
- Bespoke consultancy and training.

2017 Highlights

We welcomed our new patron
and launched our Elevate Programme with
our successful 'Blast Off! event.

see page 10



**DIY helped to organise the
Creative Minds North
conference.**

see page 10

**We piloted a partnership project
working with young people in
transition to adulthood.**

"It's like passing on a kind of
baton, where you learn all skills
and you just pass it on to someone
else... It makes me feel happy
because it's like I'm showing them
how to be - like a role model."

see page 9



**We devised and piloted our new show
which connects with children with PMLD.**

"We've given the children support
- affection - thanks..."

see pages 4 and 8



**DIY members performed at
The Royal Exchange Theatre,
Manchester, to audiences of over 1,000.**

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Working with adults with learning disabilities

DIY's Main Company comprises 12 performers with learning disabilities. This core group are at the centre of everything we do. They create and perform our original, high quality shows which tour to young audiences with learning disabilities across the region.

DIY's current production is 'Give Me Space!' – an original sensory performance specially devised for audiences with PMLD.

Following the success of 'Following the Thread' which toured special schools in 2016, DIY was keen to develop our sensory, immersive practice and to introduce live music into our performance work. 'Give Me Space!' was piloted successfully during 2017 and we will tour the piece across the North West during 2018.

DIY projects are good for you!

DIY evaluated our 'Give Me Space' pilot to find out how successful the project was at enhancing health and wellbeing. Using drama exercises, based on nef's Five Ways to Wellbeing, we found that the project made a contribution to each outcome, as the following comments illustrate:

Connect ~

We've connected with the children, we've been talking to them. We've been using signing to welcome them - shaking hands; eye contact; if they can't see us we have to communicate by touch.

Be Active ~

We've been moving around exploring all the different planets; when I've got space clothes on I do big strides; It keeps us a bit physical.

Take Notice ~

You've got to concentrate when you're working with the props with the children; if they don't speak then you have to see if they're smiling; you have to pay attention and focus.

I have to concentrate on listening to other people; getting things in the order they need to be in for the show; thinking - getting your brain working;

Keep Learning ~

We've learnt about different planets - all about space. About getting on with new people; learning how to help people out.

Communicating with people - speaking in front of people; the songs; learning a script; talking as an alien - learning a different language; learning the names of the children; planning.

Give ~

We've been sharing with the children; We've given the children support - affection - thanks - welcome; We've given them opportunities - we've invited them to join in; We've given them happiness.





During Spring 2017, a team of five actors from DIY's main company performed at The Royal Exchange Theatre.

DIY performed as part of Graeae Theatre Company's 'House of Bernada Alba', directed by DIY's new patron Jenny Sealey.

DIY actors created a piece of strolling theatre, based on a funeral procession, which they performed at all 7 matinee shows to audiences of over a 1,000 people.

"I realise I have never thanked you all enough for being so wonderful setting the scene of sadness and grief in the great hall, for sharing your stories and helping to introduce the characters in the play."

Jenny Sealey, Artistic Director, Graeae

DIY's Friday Group plays a central role in achieving our aims

DIY's Friday Group plays a central role in challenging barriers whilst celebrating and promoting the achievements of performers and leaders with learning disabilities.

DIY's Friday Group is made up of 9 people who meet weekly to plan and organise our education and outreach programme. The group designs, delivers and evaluates DIY's Arts Award projects at Discover, Explore, Bronze and Silver levels with young people with learning disabilities.

The Friday Group also plans and co-leads regular DIY BUDS sessions with adults with learning disabilities.

DIY runs weekly outreach workshops. The group has named themselves DIY BUDS

30 outreach sessions with DIY BUDS.

- 20 people regularly attended DIY BUDS sessions.
- The group worked on the theme of 'Holidays' and created a short piece which was performed at Langworthy Cornerstone in June. The BUDS performance attracted an audience of 15 people.

50 training sessions for adults with learning disabilities.

We delivered 5 ten-week courses:

- Sound and Voice in Theatre ~ attended by 8 people
- Next Steps Sound and Voice ~ 8 participants.
- Volunteering in Action ~ attended by 8 people
- Next Steps, Volunteering in Action ~ 9 participants.
- Soundtracks 1 course ~ 10 people.





Working with young people with learning disabilities



Taking original accessible theatre to young audiences with PMLD

During 2017 DIY devised 'Give me Space!' – an original sensory performance designed for audiences with PMLD. We piloted the show in Firwood High School and Bury College. We will be touring the North West during 2018.

"The timing was just right. It maintained students' interest for the full performance"

"One of our students who can be anxious with unfamiliar people was engaged for the full session. He must have felt comfortable with the actors..."

Carol Tennant, Firwood School

With the first 6 performances of our new show, **we connected with 40 young people with PMLD.**



Our educational projects celebrate and promote the achievements of young people with learning disabilities.

During 2017 DIY has been working with young people in transition into adulthood.

DIY developed a partnership project with You Can Community Club and delivered a Silver Arts Award project to 8 young people there. We also worked with Oakwood Academy running a Bronze Arts Award Project.

Two of the young people who took part in our Silver Arts Award project have become members of DIY's Friday Group and gone on to run a Discover Arts Award project themselves, working with young people at You Can Community Club. As a result of this project, 7 young people with learning disabilities have achieved a Discover Arts Award certificate.

A group of 9 Post 16 learners at Oakwood Academy are working towards their Bronze Arts Awards. The moderation will take place in January 2018.

7 young people with learning disabilities in transition to adulthood achieved their **Level 2 Silver Arts Awards** qualification.

"DIY has made me into a caring person. I didn't know I had it in me. When I was in school I used to be bullied. But now I'm a better person because I can help people through drama"

Participant, Silver Arts Award pilot at You Can Community Club.

"I liked doing it because it gave me more confidence working with young people. Like getting 'A' out of his shell - when he started doing the project he was shy like I used to be. But now he's not nervous - he likes doing it now"

Angela, DIY member involved in co-leading the project



Events in 2017

Blast Off!

DIY has received 3-year Elevate Programme funding (Arts Council England) for organisational development and to increase capacity. To celebrate and launch our plans we opened our doors for the Blast Off! event.

Sparkly compères Anthony and Samuel introduced our new patron Jenny Sealey MBE. The audience was taken on a journey through DIY's current work and exciting plans for the future. There were contributions from members of DIY's different groups, films of DIY's current show, Arts Award Projects and a partnership project. Afterwards, there was a choice of activities and time for attendees to network.

I really enjoyed the event. The film was amazing. The acting so good. Everyone is so nice and friendly too. Brilliant job guys!

Anonymous feedback

72 people attended DIY's Elevate launch event.

Creative Minds

DIY member Angela was a key member of the steering group planning the Creative Minds North conference which took place at Home in Manchester. The conference considered How is great art created? What does the term professional mean? How can the work of learning disabled artists be best talked about? How can we help the wider arts world to commission the work?

A team of four DIY actors / facilitators with The Lawnmowers Theatre Co, planned and led two workshops.

For Creative Minds' fourth and penultimate conference, planning and delivery was placed entirely in the hands of the artists... the resulting event may have been lower on thematic rigour and soundbites. But it was stronger in atmosphere and ethos.

Bella Todd, Disability Arts Online

200 people attended the event and **80 took part in our workshops.**

Working with Arts Award

Arts Award is a nationally recognised range of qualifications that supports young people to develop as artists and arts leaders. DIY is a national leader in Arts Award delivering training and support at all levels and are one of only three organisations nationally delivering specific Discover/ Explore and Bronze/ Silver training to people working in SEN settings.

Increasing access to the arts for young people with learning disabilities.

DIY delivers a programme of Arts Award adviser training over the year supporting others to deliver Arts Award projects and programmes at all 5 levels.

DIY trained **109 people** across all five Arts Award levels at **13 Public Training Courses**.

Additionally, **107 Arts Award Advisors** were supported to develop their practice across all Arts Award levels through **12 In House* Training Courses**.

Organisations who have received our training include:

- Hull Music Hub.
- Bury Arts Museum.
- Edge Hill University, Lancashire.
- Carousel, Brighton.
- Baltic Centre, for Contemporary Arts, Gateshead.

"Very useful training - probably one of the best I've been on."

"Left feeling comfortable and confident. Very impressed with quality of training."

* In House training takes place within establishments such as schools or cultural organisations seeking to develop Arts Award strategically.



DIY has run 3 Arts Award surgeries during 2017 supporting 13 Arts Award advisers.

Cultural and educational organisations have been supported with **20 one-to-one visits**.

Organisations who have benefitted from DIY individual support include:

- Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
- Brouhaha, Liverpool.
- Burnley Youth Theatre, Lancashire.
- Firwood High School, Bolton.
- Park Community Academy, Blackpool.
- Collective Encounters, Liverpool.
- Gorse Hill Studios, Trafford.

I definitely feel like I've got a solid plan for moving forward now and feel much more confident with it than I did before. Thank you so much for making the trip over to see me and for all your help and advice.

Feedback from Bolton Central Library



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DIY Theatre Company

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Participant, Silver Arts Award pilot at You Can Community Club.



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Salford Clinical Commissioning Group



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