



# The difference we made

April 2022 – March 2023



DIY Theatre Community Interest Company  
Impact Report 2022–2023

[www.diytheatre.org.uk](http://www.diytheatre.org.uk)



Celebrating success in gaining Arts Council England NPO status – there was cake!



**Our 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.**

## Who we are

DIY is an established Learning Disability Theatre Company based in Salford. We are a Community Interest Company, member-led and our Board comprises mainly disabled people. We have been creating accessible and thought-provoking theatre and creative projects for almost 30 years!

## We make a difference by:

- ★ Challenging preconceptions and barriers through high quality performance, education projects and research.
- ★ Celebrating diversity and creativity in all areas of our work.
- ★ Promoting the achievements of performers and theatre-makers with learning disabilities and sharing good practice.

DIY is a Community Interest Company Reg. N° 07128047  
Registered address:

DIY Theatre Company  
The Angel Centre, 1 St Philip's Place, Salford M3 6FA

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Four by Eight session exploring conducting volume and pitch using a variety of different instruments and switches.

## Introduction

This Impact report covers a very important period at DIY Theatre Company. It's been a time of connecting with nature following our experiences of the pandemic, with an outdoor performance of our original show 'Looking Back: Facing Forward' in Peel Park, as part of a city-wide Salford Re:Discovered event. We have also been developing our new, original sensory show 'Hanging by a Thread'. Both projects have enabled DIY artists to focus on our own health and wellbeing as well as connecting our audiences with nature and encouraging them to care for our environment.

DIY's Leaders with Lived Experience have been leading the way once again as we established two ground-breaking inter-linked leadership programmes called 'Gamechangers' and 'Leading Edge'.

DIY heard in November that we were successful in our application to Arts Council England to become part of its National Portfolio. This three year programme starts in April 2023, so lots of ambitious plans and exciting new developments ahead!

# Some highlights from the year:



We took audiences on a journey to look back on Salford's history and face forward to all our Futures.

**'Looking Back, Facing Forward'** was developed when many Covid restrictions were still in place, meeting indoors was still known to be risky. DIY actors took up the challenge to develop an outdoor promenade performance which was included in the Salford Re:Discovered Event in Peel Park and later in the year, helped to launch a major exhibition at the Peoples' History Museum.

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Evaluation found that DIY are "pioneering new leadership models".

**'Four by Eight'** was DIY's unique training and development opportunity for musicians wanting to develop their inclusive music skills. An external evaluation found a number of key strengths including:

- ★ Developing, strengthening and pioneering new leadership models which promote inclusive practice, led by DIY Young Leaders and emerging music leaders, through working in pairs and in small group activity.

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## Our ambitious new programmes to support Creative Leadership began.

In September we launched 2 new programmes **Gamechangers** and **Leading Edge** which support our mission to help leaders with learning disabilities to become valued as part of the rich diversity of our cultural sector.

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## We provided opportunities for sensory learners to engage in environmental issues.

We started developing our new show **Hanging by a Thread** which invites intimate audiences to connect with the natural world. Interactive theatre, songs, live music, puppets and sensory props combine to create a magical experience for each audience member.

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## DIY reached more young people through new partnerships.

In September 2022 DIY began two year-long partnership projects with local special schools; Oakwood Academy and Chatsworth Futures which are opening up new opportunities with children and young people with learning disabilities in Salford.

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# Our Creative Programme

DIY's productions are based on our own ideas and experiences. We use lots of different art forms and try to make our work as accessible as possible.



Performance of Looking Back: Facing Forward at the Salford Re:Discovered Event



# Looking Back: Facing Forward

Learning from history to help us in the future.

“ I loved this piece. It was happy and sad and hopeful.”

Audience feedback

DIY's core company created Looking Back: Facing Forward as an original piece of outdoor promenade theatre. It was designed so that audience members would accompany DIY actors on a journey where they could take time to Look Back on Salford's history and then Face Forward to all our Futures.

The performance was developed and performed in Salford's beautiful Peel Park. It incorporated live music, props, puppets, music and installations. Company members expanded their skills through working with some fantastic practitioners in Outdoor Arts including Sonya Moorhead, Whalley Range Allstars, Beka Haigh and Global Grooves.

Original music was composed with musician Sarah Atter, including the opening song:

Looking Back, Telling the Tale

Facing Forward, Follow the Trail!

Looking Back Through the Smoke

Facing Forward, Seeds of Hope.



“ Well done. Very entertaining, informative and inspiring.  
Courageous performing in a public park – keep it up!”

Audience feedback

On 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022, DIY Theatre performed *Looking Back: Facing Forward* as part of a free event called *Salford Re:Discovered*. This proved to be a lively day of celebration showcasing Salford’s artists, stories and green spaces.

“ First time I’ve seen DIY in Action. Thought it was great – thank you!”

Audience feedback

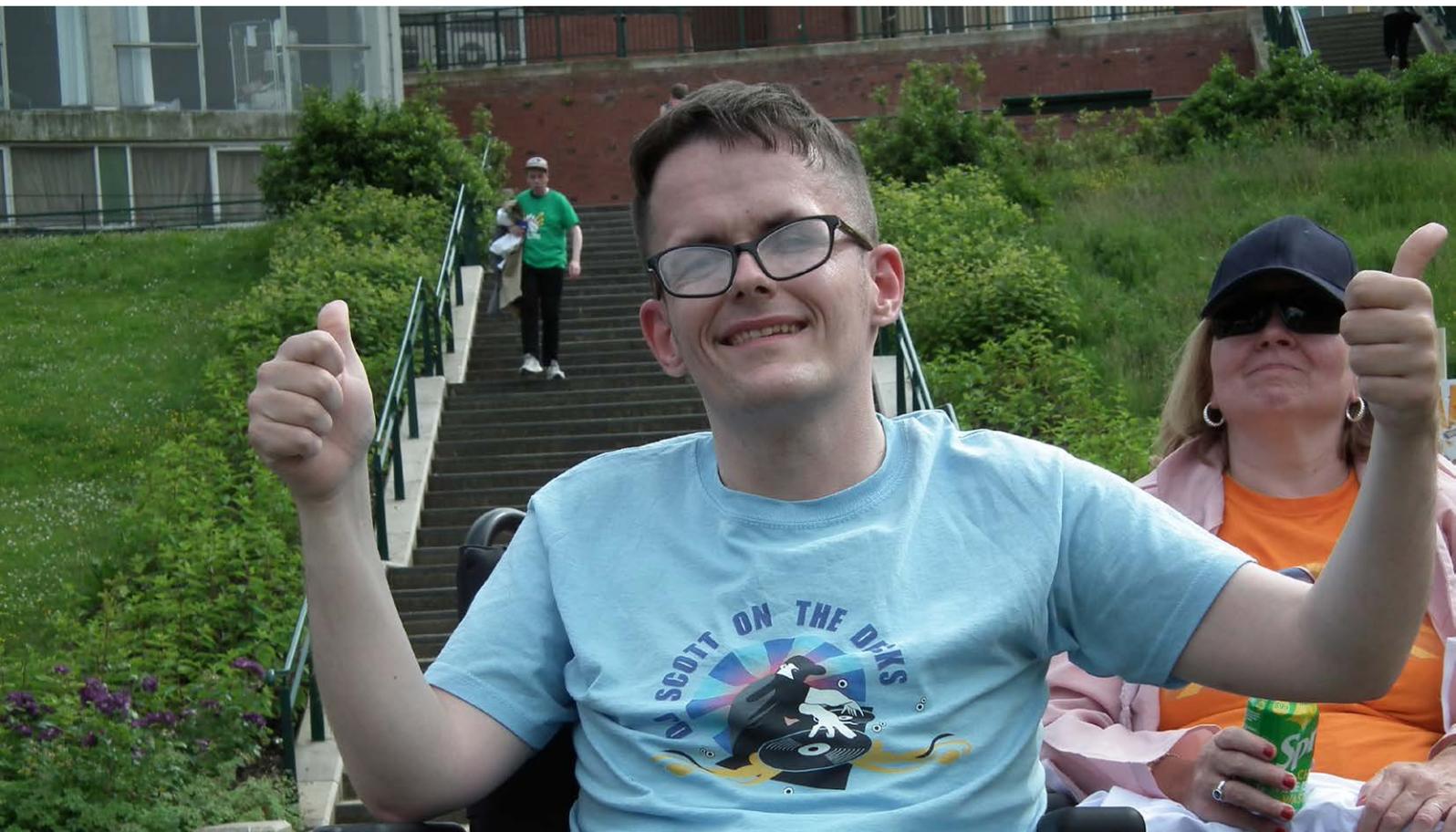
**11 volunteers with learning disabilities** gained an increased understanding of the Social History of Salford and environmental issues of the past and present.

**7 children & young people with learning disabilities** learnt more about history and the environment by taking part in DIY Youth Drama sessions based on the themes of this performance.

**Over 50 people watched *Looking Back: Facing Forward* at the ‘Salford Re:Discovered’ event on 16 June.** According to data gathered by the Festival Coordinators, 880 people attended during the day. Out of those surveyed, 70% had never attended events at Peel Park but 97% said they would want to attend more.



Visit our Show Page for more on *Looking Back: Facing Forward*.



## Making a difference: Health & Wellbeing

DIY participants evaluated how the Looking Back: Facing Forward project contributed to all five health and wellbeing outcomes (nef):

**KEEP ACTIVE:** we were active by waving the fabric; walking and wheeling around the park; marching in the Factory Scene; dancing in the ballroom scene; heavy hand, spin, point, swivel and pull actions in Factory Scene; walking around the triangles in the institution

**CONNECT:** we connected with Jess from the Rangers Service, Walk the Plank, Sarah, the musician, Riley & Dorian the volunteers, Nerissa the designer, Sophie the emerging artist, Andrea who did the photos, Bill who did the care support, Sarie from the Culture & Place Partnership, Working Class Movement Library, Marta from the University.

**TAKE NOTICE:** we needed to focus and concentrate on the show – if we went wrong we had to keep going; we were looking out for obstacles and hazards to keep safe on the paths in the park; we were listening for music cues and keeping in rhythm with the music; we had to be aware of where the props, costumes and puppets were and make sure they were in the right places.

**GIVE:** we moved people – we made people sad because of the institution and we made people happy because of the “freedom” at the end; we gave a good show; we gave our audience enjoyment, excitement and happiness; the music moved people – the audience learnt about the history of the institutions and the history of Peel Park.

**LEARN:** Participants learnt: how to do big actions and use a big voice when working outdoors so people can see and hear you; how to use different spaces in the park; how to use placards – to get our messages across and back up what we were saying; how to use fabrics and puppets in a performance; how to create sound effects with instruments; about conditions in the factories and about the history of Peel Park – how and why it was opened as the Peoples’ Park.



## Looking Back: Facing Forward at the Peoples' History Museum

DIY Theatre Company were proud to contribute to Nothing About Us Without Us an empowering landmark exhibition at the Peoples' History Museum.

The exhibition opened in November 2022 with a launch to mark the start of Disability History Month. It explored disabled people's rights and activism and was co-curated by four disabled community curators.

One of DIY's mini-installations, created with artist Nerissa Cargill Thompson for our Looking Back: Facing Forward performance project was displayed as part of this major exhibition.

DIY also performed for an invited audience at the launch event on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> November. The evening began with DIY performing a series of moments from our Looking Back: Facing Forward performance. After the launch speeches, as invitees moved around the museum, DIY members celebrated the achievements and identities of disabled people with a rendition of our song 'We Have a Voice!'

We have a voice  
The power to choose  
What we do  
And who we are!

An audience of **over 40 people attended the launch event of Nothing About Us Without Us** at the Peoples' History Museum

# Hanging by a Thread

A magical journey into the forest



Puppets large and small were created for this sensory performance.

We started work on Hanging by a Thread our new third show specifically designed for sensory audiences. The performance is based on environmental themes and highlights the importance of connecting with nature.

The show invites intimate audiences to connect with the natural world. Interactive theatre, songs, live music, puppets and sensory props combine to create a magical experience for each audience member. The performance takes the audience on a journey into magical woods, where they are invited to connect with nature and to play their part in protecting our precious environment.

In line with our Environmental Sustainability Policy, costumes and props were re-purposed or made



from recycled materials with designer Nerissa Cargill Thompson. Nerissa also created a magic tree and magical threads for our journey into the woods, again using recycled materials.

Puppeteer Beka Haigh worked with us to create some wonderful puppets for the performance. Musicians Sarah Atter and Sophie Coward worked with the team to create original music including a beautiful song to accompany our big bird puppet:

Fly High,  
Up in the Sky  
Teach us all how to fly

We were excited to share our scratch performance with two very young audiences at Springwood School as part of their Arts Week. The children loved all our props and really enjoyed the live music.

**26 children with learning disabilities** experienced the show on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2023.

“All the children absolutely loved the whole day!”

Teacher, Springwood Primary School



## Making a difference:

DIY is helping ensure that everyone is offered opportunities to engage in environmental issues

DIY is interested in exploring the ways in which people with learning disabilities can be supported to engage in the urgent environmental issues of today.

DIY asked themselves what role they could play in ensuring that everyone – representing the myriad different ways that people experience the world – is offered opportunities to engage in environmental issues and to move towards environmental activism.

## Evaluating the effectiveness of the work

We evaluated the effectiveness of the Hanging by a Thread project using a “nature connectedness” framework developed by the University of Derby Nature Research Connectedness Group. This proposes that a new closer, healthier and more sustainable relationship with nature comes through the pathways of noticing, feeling, recognising beauty, celebration and care.

**We ran three workshops at Springwood School on 30<sup>th</sup> March. 33 children with learning disabilities took part in workshops exploring the themes in the show.**

Hanging by a Thread supported adults and young people with learning disabilities to connect with nature.

### ● **Noticing – Nature Connectedness through the Senses**

“The children follow the lights – they like the lights on the birds and on the big tree when they go through the forest”

“They like to touch the fabrics – they like touching the silks – it feels nice to touch”

“They like listening to the birds – the switches with the bird sounds”

“They like the bells and the sound of the music – all the different instruments – the chimes and the stringed instruments”

“They like moving through the trees, when Woolly invites them into the forest”

### ● **Feeling – Nature Connectedness through the Emotions**

“It makes people happy hearing the birds and seeing the big bird”

“The movement of the wings up and down when the bird is flying - Cathy is directing which way it will go - it's a relaxing movement”

“It makes the children happy to see us all dressed up – they like to feel the costumes – feel the fabric”

“Singing the songs makes us feel happy and it makes them feel happy”

“They were smiling when the birds were tweeting”

“Chopping the tree down makes them feel miserable and sad”

“It makes us angry because the tree's been cut down:”

### ● **Recognising and Celebrating beauty – Nature Connectedness through Beauty**

“The beauty of the birds makes the children happy”

“The lights on the birds are beautiful – the children track the lights – if they can't follow the sounds, they follow the lights”

“The colours are beautiful – the orange birds are like the sunset”

“The movements of the big bird are beautiful – it moves around smoothly, gently, calming”

### ● **Caring – Nature Connectedness through Compassion**

“The children feel sad about the wildlife and the birds in the tree”

“It's sad because the birds have got no home – that's why we need the trees – we need to bring the trees back to life again”



## Exhibition of artworks made in response to the Covid Pandemic

During June and July 2022 Eccles Community Art Gallery exhibited two inter-linked works which captured DIY's responses to the Covid Lockdowns of 2020-21.

**Together in Our Separateness** is an artwork made by DIY Associate Artist Claire Hignett. It is her response to the Covid-19 lockdown of 2020-21 and represents all the people from DIY who were in isolation at home. The keys included were used as a symbol that one day they would be able to unlock lockdown and meet up again. The sister piece, **Back Together**, is a participatory artwork created by members of DIY Theatre Company working with Claire. It originated in the need to maintain hope during the long periods of isolation caused by Covid-19. When restrictions were relaxed, company members and some DIY freelance artists met with Claire in Peel Park. Here they shared, in drawings and statements, what it meant to them to meet in person after such a long period of separateness. Claire then combined all these elements to create Back Together – a textile hanging celebrating the joy of reconnecting.

“It was really interesting. I liked how DIY's exhibition was like a spider's web – it was like the doctors stopping you getting out during lockdown”

Charlotte

# Creative Leadership Programmes

Making a difference by increasing opportunities for creative leaders with lived experience of learning disability.

## DIY Young Leaders

### DIY Young Leaders supported the development of a new kind of inclusive music training

Four by Eight was DIY's unique training and development opportunity for musicians wanting to develop their inclusive music skills. It was developed with the Young Leaders Group and took place on Monday evenings.

6 fantastic musicians: Jodie, Anna, Sophie, Joe, Awen and Benji took part in three training sessions facilitated by DIY's Lead Musician Sarah Atter; an introduction to 'Sounds of Intent', Sensory music making and an introduction to Intensive Interaction.

The central idea behind the programme was that musicians interested in developing their inclusive practice would work collaboratively with DIY leaders with learning disabilities.

Musicians and DIY Leaders learnt from each other's experience and knowledge through piloting collaborative workshops in Special Schools.

DIY commissioned an evaluation of Four by Eight from Dr Rosalind Hawley, a music leader, trainer and researcher specialising in delivering music education, training and evaluation projects in health and disability contexts.

### The external evaluation found that the Four by Eight Training Programme:

- ★ Pioneered and explored, through action learning, a new inclusive model of creative leadership, bringing together young leaders with learning disabilities and non-disabled young leaders for the first time.
- ★ Gave DIY Leaders opportunities to develop new musical skills, build confidence in music-making and gain new experiences in creative leadership.
- ★ Enabled emerging music leaders to develop their understanding of inclusive practice by learning from, and working collaboratively and co-creatively with DIY Young Leaders.



A musician and DIY Young Leader work together to plan a music workshop, Four by Eight project.

- ★ Enabled cross learning opportunities to take place exploring models of drama and music workshop practice and delivery.
- ★ Enabled DIY Young Leaders to lead workshop activity for young disabled people in their community, and to become role models in creative leadership for disabled children and young people.

Key strengths of the programme were:

- ★ Developing, strengthening and pioneering new leadership models which promote inclusive practice.
- ★ Creating honest and open spaces throughout the project for gaining feedback to help improve future practice.
- ★ Giving valued feedback to project teams to support project delivery with partner organisations.
- ★ Creating an authentic, inclusive leadership style through co-creation and collaboration.
- ★ Undertaking collaborative exploration of music and drama models of practice to enable new organisational and personal learning.

“As a musician on this 4x8 project I have learnt a lot from the experience and would love to continue music making in future DIY projects. It was great to get to meet and work with young professional musicians in Manchester and the experience has makes me excited for future opportunities working with trailblazing organisations like the DIY Theatre Company in the future.”

## Young Leaders campaigned for young people with learning disabilities to be heard.

DIY Young Leaders were invited by Salford CVS to contribute to Seldom Heard an annual event, held this year at Eccles College on 26<sup>th</sup> May. The purpose of the Seldom Heard event was to enable young people, who feel they do not have a voice in the city and little means of accessing the main city leaders, to meet with and discuss with them, what their issues are.

The theme for this year's event was Poverty and Inclusion. DIY Young Leaders were one of a number of groups from across the city presenting ideas and issues of importance to them. The Young Leaders created a presentation about the importance of communication – what makes good communication and what makes poor communication. They raised a number of important issues, including the high cost of BSL training and the inaccessibility of a lot of the information about activities in Salford.



DIY Young Leaders at the Seldom Heard Event

To help get their message across DIY Young Leaders worked with Sarah Atter to write a song especially for the Seldom Heard Event:

Open up, don't shut us out  
The excluded have had enough  
Give us Space, Give us Time  
Include, Communicate.  
Access for people  
Salford is for All  
The time to change is now  
This is your action call!

# Gamechangers & Leading Edge

“Most of the time people get the word as ‘no’ if you’ve got a disability or you’re in a wheelchair or you’ve got to use a walking frame or something. Whereas a normal person who doesn’t have a disability will get the word ‘yes.’”

DIY member

Historically, people with learning disabilities have been routinely excluded from professional careers, with only 6% of learning disabled people and 30% of autistic people in paid work in the UK. In theatre, TV, and film, people with learning disabilities remain dramatically under represented on our stages and screens, and disabled experiences are often absent from the stories we tell in our culture.

In September 2022, DIY launched two programmes to increase access to training and employment in the creative sector:

- ★ Gamechangers – our innovative Leadership Training programme for leaders with lived experience of learning disability.
- ★ Leading Edge – an ambitious Employability and Community Engagement programme.



DIY Leaders planning the content for the Gamechangers sessions.



Becky created a scrapbook about what she has learnt about being a Creative Leader, Leadership and DIY.

**A weekly full day Gamechangers Leadership session was regularly attended by 10 participants.**

**A half-day weekly Gamechangers Emerging Leaders session for those with less experience was regularly attended by 6 participants.**

Gamechangers is for adults with learning disabilities who want to explore creative leadership skills in an accessible and supportive space. Gamechangers uses drama to allow each person to explore their own unique leadership identity and to see how people can lead in different ways.

### **Making a difference: new opportunities offered to creative leaders included:**

- ★ In February 2023 our Gamechangers members undertook training in How to Safeguard Young People.
- ★ We began the process of getting DBS checks to work with children and vulnerable adults.
- ★ We worked with photographer, Audrey Albert, to create images that represent individual Gamechangers members as leaders.
- ★ We launched a brand new logo to represent the friendly and inclusive space that Gamechangers is.



Click to visit the Gamechangers area of DIY's website to find out how the programme is progressing.

The members of Gamechangers were centrally involved in the appointment process for our new Leading Edge Coordinator in early 2023.

**12 Leaders were involved in planning and co-running an information session with all of the candidates.**

**3 DIY Leaders were involved in planning the interviews, asking questions at interview and making the final decision.**



## Leading Edge

During Autumn 2022, Associate Artist Jenny Harris undertook a piece of research to help us establish the Leading Edge programme. She contacted a number of organisations with experience of setting up volunteering and employment opportunities with and for people with lived experience of learning disability to ask them: What's worked? What's been challenging? What skills will a development worker need? Jenny's findings have been very useful in shaping the programme and appointing the Leading Edge Coordinator Mary O'Neill.

During its first 6 months, DIY's Leading Edge programme has offered many opportunities for developing positive relationships with Special Schools and local community organisations.

## Burnley Youth Theatre

**3 DIY Leaders co-led two training / support sessions for staff at Burnley Youth Theatre in November and December of 2022.**

“DIY Theatre delivered 2 fantastic training sessions with Burnley Youth Theatre. One for our whole team around inclusion, accessibility, language and awareness, and one for our workshop leaders specific to a funded project that aimed to upskill freelancers delivering work with children and young people who have learning difficulties, disabilities and access needs.

“Both sessions were professionally planned, coordinated and delivered. The facilitators delivered high quality training and made it accessibly to all staff and freelancers involved. The involvement of disabled co-facilitators enabled us to gain a deeper understanding of disability led work and how this works in practise. I would recommend DIY Theatre to any organisation – artistic or not – as a way to better understand the needs of people with disabilities but also on how to make your space more inclusive to everyone's needs.”

Rachael Bamber, Engagement Manager, Burnley Youth Theatre



DIY Leaders with students at the University of Salford.

## Salford LCEP

3 DIY Leaders co-led a sensory theatre workshop for school staff as part of Salford LCEP's Creative Directions CPD Programme in January 2023.

## University of Salford

DIY Leaders co-led 4 sessions for Occupational Therapy Students in February 2023 as part of a 'Communication' module at University of Salford.

**We worked with over 60 Occupational Therapy students across two full days.**

DIY leaders really enjoyed their visit to University of Salford in February. The students all joined in and came up with really interesting ideas around good communication and barriers to communication.

“I think the sessions were great and really useful in helping the students think about barriers to communication and feel what it is like to be led in an activity that is challenging and hopefully inspiring.”

Rowan Morris, Teaching and Learning Intern, Subject of Occupational Therapy, School of Health and Society, University of Salford

“Thank you. It was a powerful and engaging session clearly related to the module”

Student Feedback, Communications Module University of Salford.

# Our Community Education Programme

DIY are committed to playing our part in ensuring that everyone has access to a variety of opportunities that will help them learn new skills, make new connections and reach their potential.

## DIY's Community Education programme enables people to:

- ★ Collaborate and create with others in a fun, non-judgemental environment.
- ★ Improve their creative skills and art-form knowledge.
- ★ Develop communication, group-work and other essential skills.
- ★ Explore and express themes and ideas that are important to them.

During the year DIY ran 5 community education courses that helped learners to develop creative skills.



Taking Time to Look & Draw session, June 2022.

## Outdoor Performance (First Steps)

**10 people attended this course which took place in Peel Park.**

During the course learners

- ★ learnt about the natural environment and the importance of green spaces
- ★ learnt to adapt drama skills to working outdoors
- ★ developed skills in creating songs for an outdoor performance
- ★ developed puppetry skills and learnt how to use puppets & props as part of an outdoor performance

## Taking time to look and draw (Next Steps)

**12 people attended this course which took place at Langworthy Cornerstone.**

Participants worked in an environment that encouraged quiet concentration. People were encouraged to look carefully at objects and images to observe shape and line. They learnt how to make interesting backgrounds using collage and how to draw with a variety of drawing tools.

## Making Stories – Visual Arts Sessions (First Steps)

**12 people attended this course which took place at Langworthy Cornerstone.**

This course enabled learners to develop concentration skills by working at their own pace and in their own way in a quiet and contemplative group learning environment.

Participants made stories using pictures and words. They used a range of visual arts skills to create a newspaper about themselves

## Making Theatre Inspired by Movies (First Steps)

**7 people attended this course which took place at Langworthy Cornerstone.**

Participants made theatre based on different film genres. They explored lots of different styles including Romance, Comedy & Horror!

## Making Stories – Visual Arts Sessions (Next Steps)

**11 people attended this course which took place at The Angel Centre.**

Learners used a range of skills, including drawing and writing, to create a Lifestyle Magazine about the things they liked. The magazines were all very different – for example, bowling, skating and fashion. Participants learnt loads of interesting facts on topics from ice-skating to Eggheads!



Exploring lighting techniques in a Youth Drama Session

## Youth Drama

DIY's Youth Drama Group met throughout the year on Tuesday evenings to explore theatre techniques, lighting, sound design and music. Early in the year, Youth Drama Group members were successful in an application to the Salford Youth Wellbeing fund. As part of the application process Youth Drama members created a film about what they had done and what they wanted to do in the future. The young people created a drama piece based on "Life of My Favourite Toy". The group learnt about how lighting and sound could be used within the performance and recorded their own sound effects. Members also worked with musician Sarah Atter to create a song lyrics as part of the performance.

**On 5<sup>th</sup> July 2022 DIY's Youth Drama Group performed their show 'Life of my Favourite Toy' to an invited audience of friends and family of DIY Theatre Company. After the show they got some great feedback from the audience.**

“Great team work!”

“Was really fun”

“Absolutely brilliant”



Audience applauds Youth Drama members after their performance of 'Life of my Favourite Toy'

## Youth Drama members achieved awards

Two members of DIY's Youth Drama Group, Ben Fletcher and Siddharth Bhandari (Simi), gained their Explore Arts Awards through this project.

To achieve their Arts Award Explore Simi and Ben:

- ★ Took part in drama and music activities to extend their experience and understanding of the arts.
- ★ Explored the work of DIY artists and DIY as an arts organisation.
- ★ Create a piece of theatre.
- ★ Communicated their enjoyment and achievements through the performance.

“What I really enjoyed was learning making music for the train scene in our show and learning how to use the lighting effects.

Ben

“What I really enjoyed was learning how to write lyrics and making the 'Space is all around us' music.

Simi



DIY BUDS exploring the theme of 'post' through story-making.

## DIY BUDS – Connecting and exploring

DIY BUDS is a free weekly drop in drama group for adults with learning disabilities.

BUDS sessions ran throughout the year on Thursday afternoons.

In the first part of the year the Re: Connect project supported participants to reengage with each other in a gentle, supportive setting through exploring friendship, community and environment.

Firstly, they explored the theme of 'post'. They created a character called Lauren and built a giant post box as part of their story-making. They moved on to investigate the theme of mystery with the starting point of a mystery key. Further exploration took the group on a journey towards treasure! BUDS members created their own maps and brought some of the locations to life through drama.



Our partnership work in schools is opening up access to high quality cultural education for sensory learners

## Sector Development & Working in Partnership

Through working strategically and building strong partnerships we increase DIY's impact and reach and progress towards our vision of a world where performers and arts leaders with learning disabilities are valued as part of the rich diversity of our cultural sector and our society.

“DIY theatre has had a positive effect on our learners in Discovery this academic year; 5 young people who each have complex and additional needs. Through sensory stories this has given the learners a chance to practice engaging in social interactions with others and also provided sensory stimulation, increasing their self-esteem and confidence as it enables them to communicate when they do not have a voice.”

Feedback from staff at Chatsworth Futures

# Working in Partnership with Schools

In September 2022 DIY began two year-long partnership projects with local special schools; Oakwood Academy and Chatsworth Futures.

“The pupils have significantly benefited from our links to develop performing arts at Oakwood.... we are very proud of the project to develop this key area of the school curriculum. From 2 years ago, engaging in the Performing Arts project that culminated in the amazing performance at the Lowry, to establishing a qualification pathway at Key Stage 4 to now, being able to lead this curriculum in house at school is brilliant! We could not have done this without you and your amazing team. Hoping our links can continue so that many more young people can benefit from the arts”

Staff feedback to a recent project in Oakwood Academy

## Oakwood Academy

**DIY worked with a group of 7 Year Ten learners every Wednesday afternoon at Oakwood Academy.**

DIY supported the group members to work towards their Bronze Arts Awards. The group learnt lots of new drama games and researched their own arts inspirations.

## Chatsworth Futures Specialist College

At Chatsworth Futures – we worked with a group of five sensory Post 19 learners every Wednesday afternoon during the Autumn and Spring terms. During the Autumn we explored the theme of identity and visited different sensory planets. During Spring 2023, our focus was the colleges' theme of the Material World. We used drama, music and visual arts to explore lots of natural materials and environmental themes inspired by our 'Hanging by a Thread' project.

**During the Autumn term all 5 young people from Chatsworth Futures successfully completed their Discover Arts Awards.**

To achieve their Discover Arts Award students:

- ★ Took part in drama and music activity which extended their experience and understanding of the arts.
- ★ Found out about DIY artists and their work.
- ★ Shared what they enjoyed and learnt with others in the group.



DIY Leaders on stage at the Lowry, part of the Stage Directions Performance event.

JMA photography.

# Sector Development

## Stage Directions

Two DIY Leaders gave a presentation at the Stage Directions Performance event at The Lowry on Thursday 14th July. This Festival Event included performances by children & young people from DIY partners Springwood Primary School & Oakwood Academy. Amy Carter and Charlotte Little were interviewed on stage and introduced DIY's Lex Leadership film.

“DIY as a local organisation as specialist in inclusive and accessible practice were (beyond the schools themselves) best placed to offer advice and guidance for ensuring that the Stage Direction model adapted to the needs of our participants. As part of the delivery, DIY were highly valued by the schools practitioners and added capacity to the programme. As a supportive partner, DIY offered important advice and feedback on our careers event and more.”

Steph Green, Stage Directions Manager



**The difference we made** April 2022 to March 2023

DIY Leaders working with students from the University of Manchester. Picture taken by Jake, a student from Manchester College who did a placement with DIY to learn more about photography.

## Enhancing the education of Medical Students

During the Summer 2022 term, DIY's Friday Leadership Group ran a series of sessions for medical students from University of Manchester. We shared some of our games with them and they learnt about the social model of health and lived experience leadership.

## Supporting accessible delivery of Arts Award:

During the period April 22 - March 23 we held 4 Arts Award Support Sessions which supported organisations their Arts Award delivery:

★ St Peters CE Primary School, Wigan Youth Zone, Portland Inn Project CIC and Southall SEN School.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> June DIY's Artistic Director, Sue Caudle, hosted Trinity College London's Webinar: 'Delivering an accessible Arts Award'.

## Increasing LEx leadership in education.

DIY hosted a placement for a student from Manchester City College and building on our positive relationship with Chatsworth Futures, two students from there attended Gamechangers sessions.

# Many thanks to our Freelancers



Thanks to the brilliant team of creative Freelancers who have worked with DIY during this period:

Georgia Affonso

Audrey Albert

Sarah Atter

Nerissa Cargill Thompson

Tracey Cartledge

Sue Caudle

Sophie Coward

John Doyle

Hilary Easter Jones

Andrea Fanchette

Niamh Feeney

Global Grooves

Beka Haigh

Roz Hall

Philip Harland

Jenny Harris

Claire Hignett

Kate Kelly

Nikki Mailer

Sonya Moorhead

Daisy O'Brien

Mary O'Neill

Simon Ruding

Bill Skeer

Molly Stedman

Elizabeth Todd

Whalley Range Allstars

Jade Williams

In addition thanks to

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We worked with Mosaic-artist Tracey Cartledge. The artwork for Islington Park will be completed in 2023.

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**Salford City Council**

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Clinical Commissioning Group



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**YOUTH MUSIC**



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**COMMUNITY LEARNING**  
AT SALFORD CITY COLLEGE

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