



Trustee Welcome Pack

Registered Charity Number 1159797

Ambitious Community Passionate Creative Respectful Collaborative



Forward by Dr Ian Chapman, Chair

Prism Arts is a very special place. For more than 35 years, our charity has been driven by passion, using inclusive arts to empower people with learning disabilities and / or autism in Cumbria and beyond.

We will continue to create opportunities for participants to make excellent art, develop skills, and showcase their talents, all while boosting their confidence and wellbeing.

While disability is common in the UK, there remains a significant inequality of opportunity for the 14.1million people living with physical or learning difficulties. In Cumbria alone there are more than 100,000 people living with a disability, yet services and support for these people is few and far between.

Despite the growing knowledge that access to cultural activity can deliver huge benefits such as increased wellbeing, reduced isolation, skills development and confidence building, cultural provision in Cumbria (and across the UK) is very limited.

At Prism Arts we work hard to counter these challenges by providing a meaningful route into cultural participation so that everyone can enjoy the wellbeing, community, and skills development that art provides.

I am delighted to be able to lead the board over this exciting time as we work to expand our Trustee membership. We are looking for forward-thinking and enthusiastic individuals who are passionate about the arts and supporting equality of access. As Chair, I am committed to developing Prism Arts as a truly inclusive organisation at every level.

We hope you enjoy reading this summary of our work and impact, and that it might inspire you to get involved.



Dr Ian Chapman
Chair of the Board of Trustees



About Prism Arts

Prism Arts was established in Carlisle in **1987** by a group of five artists committed to developing opportunities for excluded people to participate in the arts. Prism Arts has since developed into a leading inclusive arts charity that is embedded in the communities of Carlisle and Cumbria.

For more than **35 years**, our charity has created opportunities for participants to make excellent art, develop skills, and showcase their talents, all while boosting their confidence and wellbeing.

In the last year, we helped more than **2,800 individuals** define their own goals and ambitions through a series of creative projects across a range of artforms, leading to a growth in independence, confidence, and improved wellbeing.

Our Vision

ART WITHOUT BARRIERS

Our Mission

We create spaces that empower people with learning disabilities or autism to make excellent art, allowing them to drive their own creative journey as artists, leaders, and advocates for change.

Covid-19 prompted a period of significant **reflection** for Prism Arts, as we sought to identify how we could **adapt** our programme so that it is more informed by need and directly addresses the ongoing challenges faced by individuals with learning disabilities and autism.

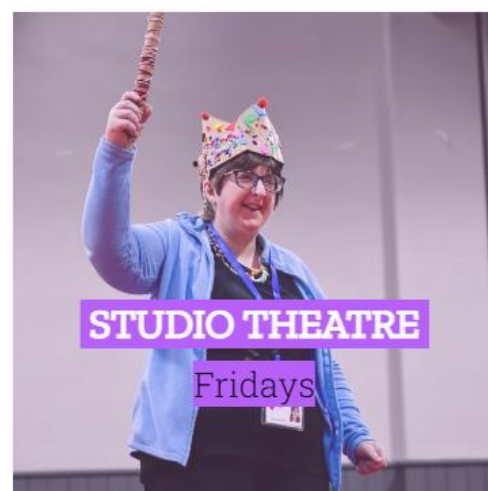
As such, we have recently launched a new strategy - **Art Without Barriers** - which will combine organisational development with the delivery of strategic projects that do more to support our communities.

This strategy will see us consolidate our activity by **expanding** the core programme and conducting extensive community consultation across Cumbria; and then change and grow by applying learning from community consultation to launch new strategic **projects** that better serve local need.

OUR PROGRAMMES

There are two main strands of core activity

Regular Programme: Prism Arts' Studio Programme comprises of weekly creative arts programmes that provide regular engagement with visual or performing arts, the creation of new work, and the development of friendships and community. These Studio sessions develop new skills, foster communication, and reduce isolation.



Special Projects: Prism Arts also works in partnership with local organisations to offer one-off or long-term special projects that respond to local need. Recently this has included projects connecting people to local heritage, supporting progression beyond school, and empowering access to inclusive higher education.

Read more about our projects on our [Events](#) page.

These programmes are delivered for adults with learning disabilities and / or autism across Cumbria.

OUR IMPACT

While Prism Arts plays a significant **local** role, we also have a **national** impact. By sharing expertise through online case studies, networking, mentoring, and at conferences, as well as working with partners to address the lack of opportunity for disabled people in society, we showcase best practice for supporting artists and audiences with additional needs.

“When I say how I feel, others here actually understand what I mean”
— Prism Arts Participant

In 2021/22:

**4 performances
and 2 exhibitions
that reached
9,300 people**

**2,800
artists took
part in 515
workshops**

**We EXPANDED
our programme
to 3 days
a week from 2**

OUR PARTNERS

To deliver our programmes, we have several key partners including arts organisations and museums (Dove Cottage, Carlisle Cathedral and Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery), which support direct delivery, as well as strategic partners such as the Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership, Carlisle City Council University of Cumbria and Theatre by the Lake, amongst others.

We are also affiliated with a number of local and regional networks, including Carlisle Culture, Creative Minds Network North, Thriving Communities, West Cumbria Creative People and Places, and Cumbria Arts and Culture Network.

Harvey's Story

"Over the past five years at Prism Arts I have spent more and more time drawing and developing my own style. Since the Studio Arts programme began in 2016, I have chosen to focus more on the visual arts. [I've] found out about new facts and cultures, finding different designs for buildings, having fun and doing my artwork. And it has given me something to focus on during lockdown."

Prism Artist, Harvey



Harvey is a young adult who attends our Studio Arts and Studio Theatre programmes. He has a life limiting condition and joined the programmes to grow his love of theatre and visual arts in an inclusive environment.

The team at Prism Arts works closely with Harvey to help him realise his aspirations. He has acted in several productions which have toured the main theatres in Cumbria, and his artwork has been enjoyed by over 10,000 people in regional exhibitions, boosting his confidence and developing his creative skills.

Recently, Harvey and another Prism Artist worked with curators at Tullie House to create work around the museum's collection, which became the year-long exhibition *Culture Collide* in 2019. Harvey's success was repeated again in 2022 with another collaborative exhibition, *Travelling Stories*.

In October 2022, Harvey will have his **first solo exhibition** in the Fraternity, Carlisle Cathedral.

Our Team

At the heart of Prism's success, you'll find a committed and dedicated team who work hard to bring joy to the lives of others through arts projects. We are all passionate about our work and believe that arts should benefit everyone in the community.

Prism Arts has a core team of eight staff members, including:

- **Catherine Coulthard**, Creative Strategic Director
- **Dan Campbell**, Participant Support Lead & Facilitator Artist
- **Emma Turner**, Marketing Coordinator & Facilitator Artist
- **Jane Dudman**, Project Manager
- **Katie Lock**, Visual Arts Lead Artist
- **Rebecca Hamilton**, Participant Support Lead
- **Stefan Escreet**, Theatre Lead Artist
- **Steve Telford**, Finance & Operations Manager

Our work is led by an executive team who are experts in inclusive arts, as well as a Board of Trustees who collectively bring expertise in inclusivity, the arts and charity sectors, strategy, and the local community.

The Board is currently comprised of four Trustees, who have experience in further education, business and research:

- **Dr Ian Chapman (Chair)**, Academic, University of Cumbria
- **Sonny Smith (Treasurer)**, Director at Always Another Way CIC
- **Vincent Walden**, Director and Graphic Designer at Studio Walden
- **Sarah McGrath**, Principal of Carlisle College

To find out more about us, please visit [our website](#).

Finances

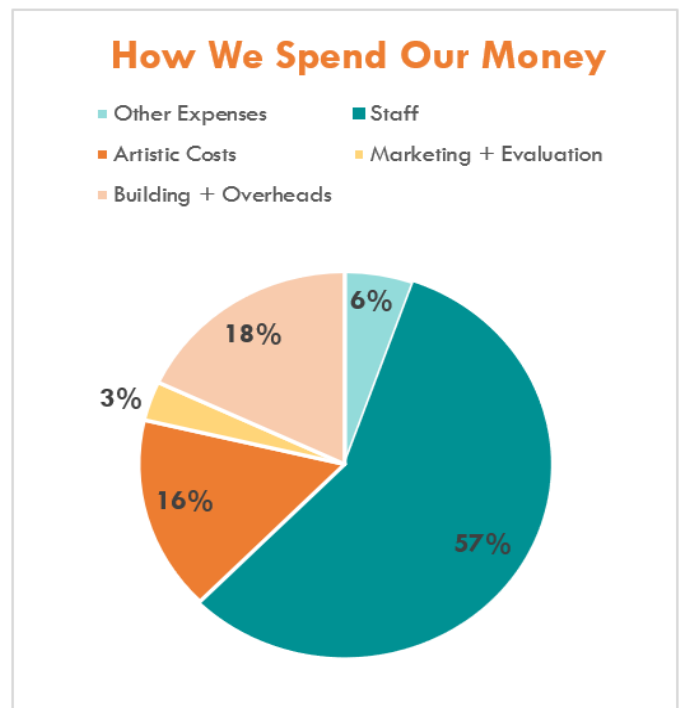
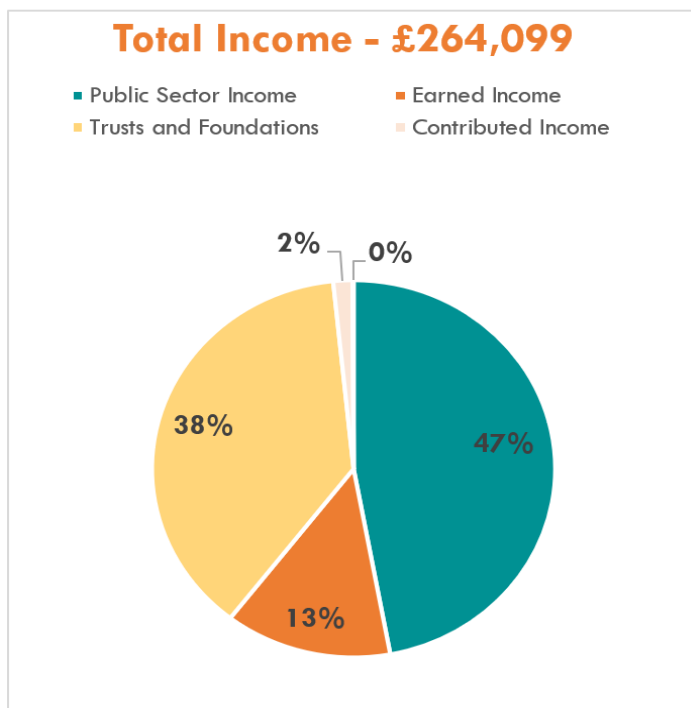
Prism Arts is an independent registered charity that relies on generous donations, funds from Trusts and Foundations, earned income and support from the public sector, including Arts Council England, National Lottery, and Cumbria County Council, to deliver these vital programmes.

In 2021/22, our total income was £264,099. Our most recent annual accounts can be found [here](#).

The Charity's reserve policy is to hold reserves equal to between 3 and 6 months of its expected expenditure in a year as shown by the Budget and quarterly financial reports. The Trustees monitor the level of reserves quarterly.

In 2021/22, our sources of income were:

- Public Sector Income - £124,352
- Contributed Income - £4,056
- Trusts and Foundations - £100,096
- Investments - £221
- Earned Income - £35,374



Trustee Recruitment

Prism Arts is looking for forward-thinking Trustees who are passionate about inclusive arts to join our fantastic organisation. As a Trustee, you will play an essential role in shaping the future and direction of the charity, which is entering into an exciting new stage of its development. We are very keen to welcome new Trustees who can increase the diversity of our board, bringing a range of knowledge and experience to our charity. Our dedicated team are always on hand to support Trustees in delivering our core ethos.

We are particularly looking for Trustees who have an understanding of:

- **Lived experience** similar to those we support such as having a learning disability and / or autism.
- **Inclusive arts** or cultural engagement activities
- **Community participation** and engagement
- **Fundraising** with specific experience in community fundraising

Please note that if you do not have experience in the above specialisms, we are still very interested in hearing from how you could benefit our charity.

The successful candidate will bring a diverse range of experiences and skills, which may include:

- Being **passionate about inclusivity** and making a difference to those with learning disabilities and autism using art and culture
- Understanding **the local community** and area in which Prism Arts operates
- An ability to **work as part of a team**, whilst also showing strong independent judgement
- The ability to give **constructive feedback** and to challenge other board members and the charity
- Be willing to **take collective responsibility** for the governance of our charity

If this sounds like you, we would love to hear from you!

For more information about the details of the role and the recruitment process, please take a look at our **Trustee Role Description**, which can be found [here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

What do Trustees do?

Trustees are an essential part of the running of the charity. They guide and support the Prism Arts' team and make sure that, as an organisation, we are delivering our charitable objectives.

Trustees contribute to the organisation's annual planning. They also fundraise, network and, if they have specialist knowledge around a particular area, they can help take forward a specific piece of work. Trustees are responsible for helping Prism Arts to become a more representative charity and a more inclusive organisation all round.

What qualifications do I need?

We are more interested in your experience than qualifications.

Do I need training and will support be provided?

Induction and training may be required, but this will depend on your existing skills and experience. It's a really welcoming environment here at Prism Arts. As a Trustee, you can access plenty of training that will help you build skills in lots of different areas and there's always someone on hand to ask for support when you need it. The charity funds expenses and costs associated with attending meetings for all Trustees, and we also offer support to disabled people to attend and engage with board meetings.

How much time would I need to commit to being a Trustee?

Our board meetings are several times a year, but there are plenty of other opportunities to get involved depending on what time you have available. Trustees are often asked to attend key events or represent the charity at festivals and conferences. We also plan at least one

social gathering a year, enabling Trustees to meet staff and artists outside of board meetings.

Are Trustees paid?

Generally, no. Most Trustees are unpaid and must not benefit in any way from their connection with the charity. There are very rare exceptions to this rule.

What are the benefits of becoming a Trustee?

There are lots of benefits to being a Trustee - often things that you wouldn't automatically think of.

It's a great way to make connections and to develop skills in a specific area, such as understanding budgets, business planning, funding or creative planning. With easy access to training including First Aid in the Workplace, Safeguarding or Diversity and Equality Training, it's a great learning experience, and can also be a useful addition to your CV. At Prism you will also get the chance to collaborate with people across a range of abilities and there are regular opportunities to participate in workshops or attend events and exhibitions.

Are there any downsides to becoming a Trustee?

There is a time commitment, and you must keep up to date with issues relevant to the charity. It's also a terrifically tough time right now for both the charity and creative sectors so some of the challenges can be quite daunting – but that's also why you *should* get involved. There's never been a better time to put your skills towards helping a cause that you really believe in.

How do I register my interest in becoming a Trustee?

Simply get in touch with the team via the contact on the next page.



Ambitious Community Passionate Creative Respectful Collaborative

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Registered Charity No. 1159797 (England & Wales)

