



# About Cartwheel Arts

Cartwheel Arts is one of the leading participatory arts companies in North West England. The company is a registered charity, established in 1984 and based in Heywood, in the borough of Rochdale. Cartwheel staff and Trustees are passionate about the role which the company can play in providing opportunities for development in low income neighbourhoods, making a positive impact for both individuals and groups, and in bringing about a socially just society. This is our mission:

*Cartwheel is committed to promoting social inclusion, cohesion, diversity and regeneration through community participation in vibrant, innovative, high-quality arts projects building healthier, stronger, safer communities.*

## **We call this Art for a Reason.**

Led by an experienced board of eight Trustees, we operate currently with a team of 5 staff (2.3 FTE). Our work is supported by a large pool of freelance artists and volunteers who assist in delivering projects which bring communities together, break down barriers, build capacity in the neighbourhoods we serve and promote a sense of ownership and pride, through community publishing, celebratory events, new media, environmental projects, exhibitions and conferences.

We work with all age groups, except very young children, in a wide range of settings. In 2017/18 we ran 295 activity sessions, with 1,690 participants, who participated on 3,383 occasions with audience figures of over 31,000.

## **The work**

We have an impressive track record of working collaboratively with partners to develop vivid, highly acclaimed and successful projects with some of the most disadvantaged communities in the North West. We do not shy away from addressing difficult and unpopular issues. The Trustees have determined that all the company's projects must demonstrate impacts in one or more of the following areas:

*More cohesive communities; Skills, employability and worklessness; Improving health and wellbeing; Involved and engaged young people*

We involve people actively, aiming to build their confidence, to raise self-esteem, to develop ambitions and widen horizons. We design projects which challenge prejudice and promote community cohesion, both within and between communities.

Some projects benefit whole communities in low income neighbourhoods, while others are targeted at particular groups. Darnhill Festival involves many hundreds of people on a deprived estate in Heywood, and Art for Wellbeing serves children, young people and adults with mental health problems in Rochdale and Wigan.

We aim to ensure that longer term projects are developmental, sustainable and leave a legacy, for example an independent group controlled by local people which will take the project forward.

We group our work into four strands:

- **All Well & Good**, a series of arts and health initiatives including **Art for Wellbeing** promoting wellbeing, increased confidence and independent living.
- **Stronger Communities**, which is the largest strand and includes Overspill and Darnhill Festival.
- **Youth & Diversity**, a programme of work with young people, promoting inclusion and cohesion.
- **You Live & Learn**, which focuses on learning through doing.

### **Our EDI policy**

Cartwheel Arts aims to create an environment for learning and working that is accepting and respectful of differences and encourages all Cartwheel participants/staff and partners to value diversity. Through the application of our policies, processes, procedures and practices, Cartwheel projects are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and fair treatment for all who work for and with us, use our services and facilities.

We are proud of the diversity of our participants and we work with staff, Trustees and partner organisations to achieve our aim of being an inclusive place for learning and work.

### **Our reputation**

The company has built a strong reputation in the communities we serve, from predominantly white former Manchester overspill estates, to areas in central Rochdale and Oldham with majority South Asian populations.

We aim to be an outstanding organisation, widely recognised for the consistently high quality of our work by participants and stakeholders and demonstrating our impact in disadvantaged communities across the region. We have a talented and committed team of people who are learning all the time. We base our work on identified needs and do the groundwork necessary to ensure the widest possible participation.

We are a highly resilient organisation. We lost our RFO status with Arts Council England in March 2008. Since then we have received three substantial awards from Big Lottery Fund for Tell Us Another One, delivering creative writing projects with diverse communities. We have also received project funding from ACE and a wide range of foundations, most notably Tudor Trust and the Henry Smith Charity, both of these for our successful Art for Wellbeing project. We have also seen a substantial increase in commercial income through commissions and sales of training packages, particularly those involving our successful creative wellbeing 'game' Wellbeing Dominoes.

### **The Cartwheel team**

We are a small staff team, and all members must play an active part in the life of the company. We share tasks and responsibilities in running the company, from housekeeping to strategic planning. Practical experience is more important to us than formal qualifications. Although you will need to work on your own initiative, you will have the chance to collaborate with all members of staff.