



# Members Showcase

**#CLOA26**

## Culture Companions



- Culture Companions is a group for older people who experience social isolation and other barriers
- The group meets weekly, calling Experience Barnsley Museum 'our second home'
- Activities are mostly themed around local heritage, the museum's exhibitions and collections.
- We work with local artists, specialist freelancers, local charities and the museum team.
- Aligned with the Barnsley 2030 Vision of community co-production and Arts Council NPO delivery plan.

# Group Benefits?



*Michelle has limited mobility and suffers from a severe anxiety, but this week was the first time since her illness that she felt able to go to the cinema.*

*Some group members now have the confidence to deliver activities in group or even perform songs and poetry.*

*Doreen, 85 is partially sighted and now losing all her sight. But with her growing confidence, and that of the group, she led a portrait drawing session for all members.*

*A young carer who began supporting the group for work experience, has now become a paid member of the team supporting the group.*



## Arts and cultural engagement 'linked to slower pace of biological ageing'

Research from UCL suggests visiting art galleries or museums, singing and painting can help improve health outcomes

# Why it works?



Partnership working and realising that groups are not silos

Museum professionals and freelancers are skilled and deliver high quality engagement.

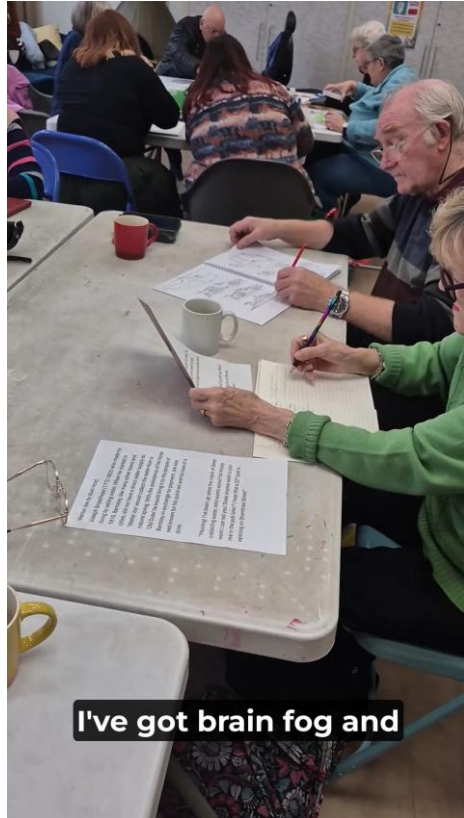
Culture Companions interact with other museum groups

Being flexible – the group's needs and dynamics change

Realising that culture and sense of place is intrinsic to a well lived life

But it is all down to the special people who make up the group.

# Mary's Poem 'Brainfog'



There was some very honest and heartfelt sharing during the evaluation... tears, laughter, hugs, and supportive hand-holding as people shared their reflections on the importance of the group. They explained that being part of the Culture Companions brings about a sense of belonging, purpose, and connection – **Katrina Whale, Independent Evaluator, Summer 2025**





## We Made it Up!

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- Well, our children and young people did...
- In 2017 they dreamed that Rotherham would become the world's first Children's Capital of Culture.
- In 2025 we supported them to make their dreams come true.



# Children's Capital of Culture in Numbers



Across 2025 we hosted hundreds of events and activities, that have had **516,735 participations** from children, young people, families and residents from across the borough and wider region.

Crucially for Rotherham, where participation tracked at 10% below the national average in 2019 when the programme began, more than **120,299 children and young people have actively participated** in activities since the beginning of 2023.

Supported **350** young people to achieve **Arts Award** qualifications

The Festival Year has supported **21** young people aged 16-25 to undertake a paid traineeship across **12** host organisations. This figure rises to **138 trainees** across **41 host organisations** since the traineeships were first piloted in 2022, 75% of all trainees are now in employment or education.



# Children's Capital of Culture in Numbers



In total since planning began in March 2019 **324** children and young people have benefited from **33 Go See visits** to diverse cultural experiences including Les Giraffes Street Opera in **Bradford**, Contact Theatre in **Manchester** and seaside trips to Bridlington and **Scarborough**

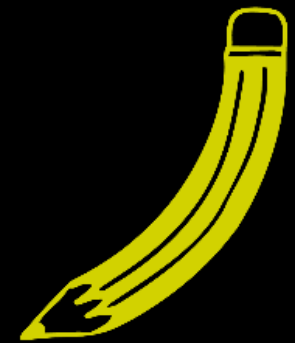
Across the Festival Year programme our Creative Learning Team **supported 120 schools** across the borough to participate in creative learning programmes enabling **5,006** children and young people aged **5-15** to participate in in-school creative learning activities

The programme worked alongside **994** artists to deliver the programme of which:

**40%** were artists and organisations based in Rotherham

**35%** were artists and organisations based in the wider South Yorkshire Region

**75% of all artistic commissions were awarded to artists and organisation based in South Yorkshire**





# Introducing: Grace Bower

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- Presenter in Residence
- Engagement Assistant
- Storyteller in Residence
- Heritage Producer
- Radio show host
- Associate Creative Producer
- Haaaaaaaay Festival presenter
- To be continued...



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# POPPIES

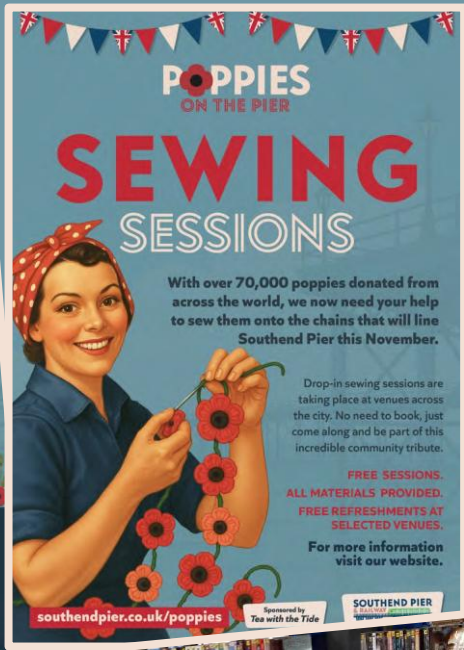
## on the Pier

A community-led event transforming  
Southend Pier into a poignant tribute  
for Remembrance Day





# our strategy



- Working with partners was key, we worked with organisations like libraries, museums, crafting groups and veterans' organisations and care homes.
- Partners shared the campaign through their social channels, mailing lists, communities, and physical spaces.
- We built the campaign around participation - we invited the public to actively take part by knitting poppies, crocheting chains, sharing stories, or volunteering. This sense of involvement turned audiences into contributors and advocates.
- We focused on making participation simple and accessible. Clear patterns, free supplies, workshops, and easy drop-off points removed barriers and helped people get involved quickly. By lowering the effort needed to join in, we enabled more people to take part - and kept the momentum growing naturally.



# the impact

The impact of our campaign was extraordinary. For a campaign that started with a promotion budget of just **£2158**, we achieved...

## SOCIAL MEDIA REACH



767,409

people saw one or more of the 48 *Poppies on the Pier* posts on Southend Pier Council social media channels

23,205

people actively engaged with one or more of our posts

## WEB TRAFFIC



46,479

people visited the *Poppies on the Pier* webpages on www.southend.gov.uk from 27th May to 23 November 2025

87%

of website users were from out of the city

## MEDIA REACH



110,471

Poppies donated

4,000+  
volunteers that donated poppies/chains and helped sew and install



Total number of visitors during the display period 5 - 23 November:

33,681

275%  
increase in visitors compared to the whole of November 2024





# human impact

The most powerful outcomes were the stories behind the poppies we received.

“I am 97 years old and I haven’t done any knitting for about 55 years. I hope my small contribution helps.”

“Having spent many happy hours on Southend Pier as a child in the 60’s and 70’s, I can’t think of anywhere better to send my poppies!”

“Sending poppies from Vancouver. I grew up in Benfleet and the pier was a popular place for me to visit, with great memories.”

“As a veteran, I’m really honoured to see the incredible Poppies on the Pier.”

“Thank you for giving a bedbound great grandmother purpose over the last few months.”



“I go to the woolshop every Wednesday morning, crotcheting and knitting poppies with lovely women. It’s been a joy to do this, can’t wait to see them on the pier!”

“My dad was brought up in Southend, and he met my mum at the Kursaal, so knitting these poppies for the pier has been very special to me.”

“My mother lived in Southend until her passing, and the pier was her favourite place. Many thanks for doing this.”



# event legACY

- **Enduring community impact:** Built lasting connections through 4,000+ volunteers, ongoing craft groups, and continued participation beyond the event.
- **Stronger cultural identity:** Repositioned Southend as a cultural destination, attracting national attention and audiences beyond the city.
- **Proven campaign model:** Demonstrated how low-cost, community-led campaigns can achieve significant reach, engagement, and real-world impact.
- **New ways of working:** Strengthened partnerships and collaboration across council teams, organisations, and community networks.
- **Deeper emotional engagement:** Transformed remembrance into a participatory, story-driven experience with personal meaning for contributors.
- **Tangible economic and visitor impact:** Delivered a 275% increase in off-season visitors, proving the value of cultural programming.



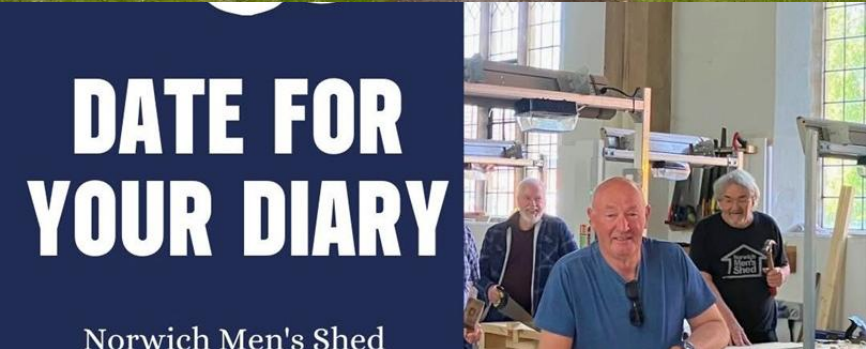


# Carrow House, Norwich



- Norwich Town Deal - £25million and 8 projects
- East Norwich Masterplan – gateway to 50 hectares
- Grade 2 Victorian mansion & adjoining 5 storey office block
- Former home of Colman family
- A lack of studio, creative and affordable space in the city
- Development of Norwich Unity Hub





# A warm welcome

We are a community for people, place and purpose under a shared roof in Norwich. By sharing space we also share our ideas, expertise, equipment and costs



- Three-year, meanwhile-use tenancy starting December 2024
- Thriving, affordable and collaborative base for Norwich's VCSEs
- Shared home for 26 organisations, 28 artists and a growing network of community groups
- Moving from launch to long-term sustainability

**DATE FOR  
YOUR DIARY**

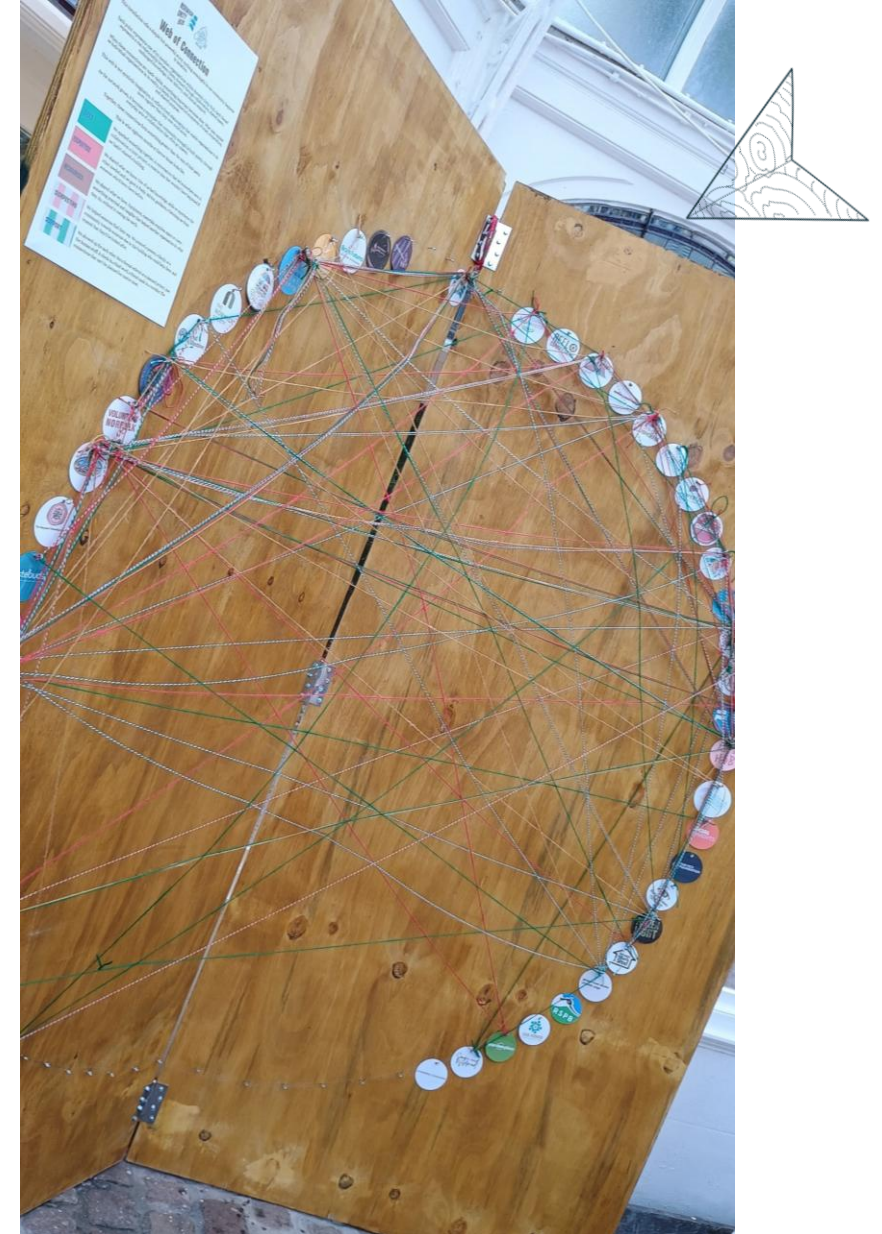
Norwich Men's Shed

# Making an impact

- Rippleacts report that **74%** of participants progress into volunteering, training, education or employment – delivering around **£12,000** public benefit per person into work
- More than **12 tonnes** of clothing diverted from landfill
- **72** children who have experienced sexual abuse received support
- **4,500** hours supporting social supermarkets and SMEs
- And much, much more...

*This hub is a unique and magical place where infinite energy, creativity, passion and dedication comes together and multiplies in its social impact through togetherness and collaboration. It's a place that energises and strengthens us all to keep doing good for society, and a breeding ground for new and amazing*

*ideas'.*

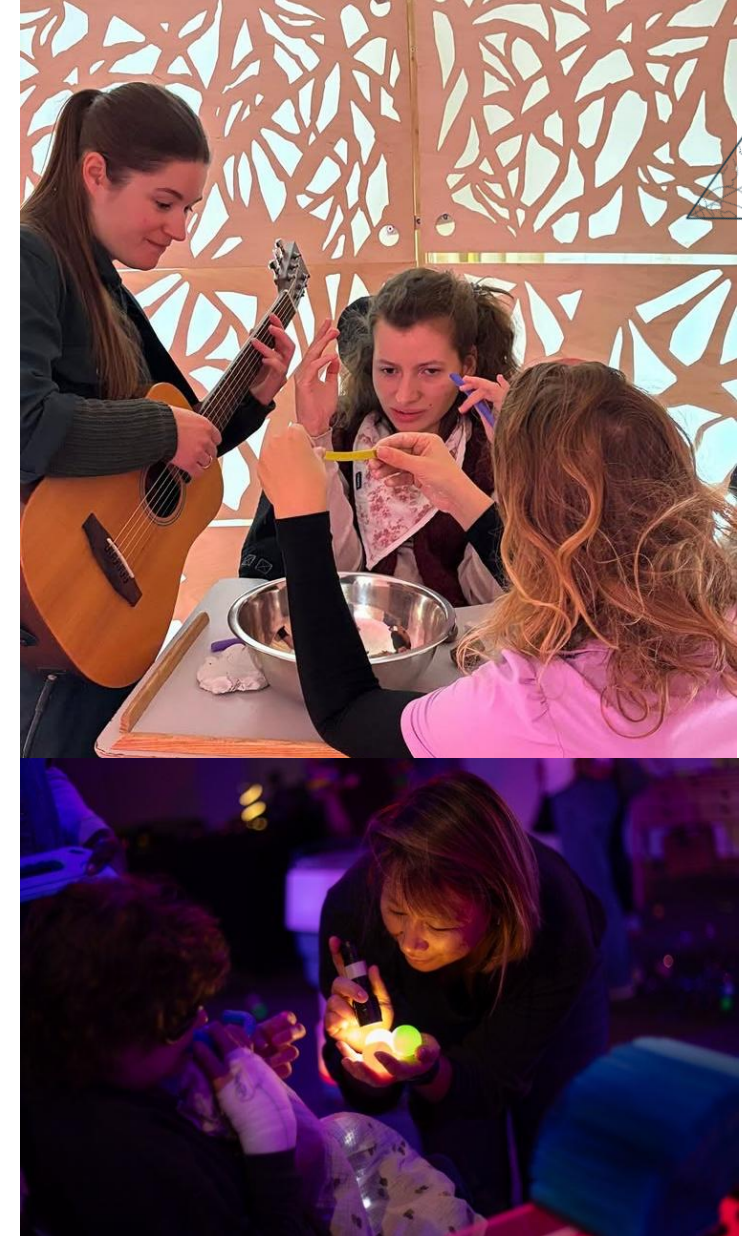


# Case study: Frozen Light

- The Sensory Home - a space for socialising, fun, creative enrichment and self-expression for people with PMLD
- 4 employed, local artists with PMLD
- Transformative for staff
- A hub of excellence & sector leadership

*'Genuinely radical', Lyn Gardner for The Stage*

*'Thank you for creating a place and community of belonging for people with PMLD', audience member*





## The future



- Carrow House has become vital civic infrastructure
- Enables investment in people, place, and purpose
- Strengthening Norwich's social fabric
- Need for more meanwhile space – 19 organisations on waiting list

# Whole Systems Approach to PA

## Ambition: Where we were

137,000 people in Oxfordshire (all ages) live with two or more long term conditions

Over 45,000 school aged children do not meet CMO guidelines for physical activity

13-year projected life expectancy gap for children born today (affluent v non affluent)

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**Abundance of individual funding streams with separate governance**

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**Physical activity a fringe issue, not part of the solution**

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**Evidence of impact was in different siloes not aggregated**

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**Investing in curing the symptom not the root cause**

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# Ambition: Key Priorities

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Systemic rather than interventions

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Collaborative not competitive

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Evidencing impact to system and people

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Culture shift in perception of physical activity

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Ambitious for our residents



WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



# Outcome: For the system

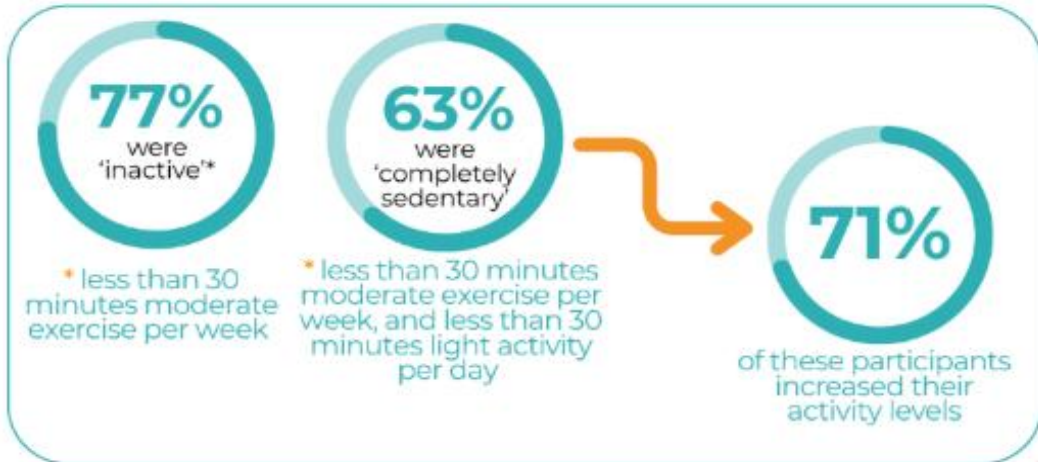
- Individual focus to whole system focus – *shared priorities and agendas.*
- Partnership of equals with the voluntary sector.
- Record level of investment for activity – *joint commissioning and pooling of resources.*
- Impact for 12,000 vulnerable residents - *expansion of activity provision to create a life course approach.*
- Marmot Place progression.

# Citizen Outcomes: Long-term conditions

In 2025/26, Move Together received a total of

**2,186**  
referrals

an increase of 250+  
referrals on the  
previous year



**72% of participants have more than one long-term health condition.**

**50% of participants have one or more disabilities.**

**30% of participants are from diverse communities.**

**16% of participants are from priority neighbourhoods.**



# Citizen Outcomes: Low-income families

## YOU MOVE

YouMove is now supporting **19,308 people from 5410 families.**

Who are YouMove children?

**8406** school-aged children

**2402** preschool-aged children

**5623**

children eligible for free school meals are registered with YouMove.

This is **35%**

of all children in receipt of Free School Meals across Oxfordshire.

**26%**

of children who registered in the last year report having a disability.

This is above the school average, where 15% of children are on the SEND register.

**49%** of families are using their YouMove card at least monthly.

**48%**

of adults have increased their activity levels by an average of

**64 mins** per week

**53%**

of children have increased their activity levels by an average of

**155 mins** per week

**20%**

increase in adults reaching recommended activity levels

**32%**

increase in children reaching recommended activity levels

**36%**

decrease in adults classed as inactive

**39%**

decrease in children classed as inactive

Social value gain of **£801,704**

across those participants who joined YouMove in 2025/26.

Economic value of WELLBY's\* gained by joining YouMove in 2025/26:

**£1.97 million**

**£2.58** return for every **£1** invested

\*Changes in life satisfaction can be converted to a standardised measure of wellbeing improvement called a WELLBY.

## Impact on health and wellbeing

**46%**

of adults reported improvement in how satisfied they are with life



**49%**

of children reported improvements in their happiness

**90%**

think YouMove is making a difference to their family's health and wellbeing