



*Creating brighter futures
for young people*

SOCIAL IMPACT REPORT 2012/13

Our first social impact report outlines the steps we are taking to prove and improve our effectiveness as a charity which aims to create brighter futures for young people.



1 SOFT TOUCH AT A GLANCE

Soft Touch Arts is a charity which was established in 1986. We use arts, media and music activities to inspire and engage young people to help them develop creative, social and employability skills. Soft Touch Arts provides a programme of projects and activities that encourage and enable participation in the arts throughout Leicester and Leicestershire. We have worked in partnership with MPs; the police and fire service; schools; youth, health and social services; and local authorities to develop and deliver our work to the hardest to reach and most disadvantaged young people.

Our strategic aims for 2012/13 were to:

- Strengthen our position as a key arts and community development agency which delivers participatory arts projects, programmes and initiatives and advocates for the arts in a range of settings and services, locally, nationally and internationally.
- Achieve financial sustainability through a diverse income generation portfolio and pursue enterprise development opportunities which enable resilience and investment in long-term social and economic return.
- Place the empowerment of communities and individuals at the core of our business, using the arts to enable people to reach their full potential and achieve positive life outcomes reflecting the needs of Leicester's diverse population.
- Operate as an effective and sustainable social enterprise underpinned by co-operative and environmental principles.

Basic facts and figures

During the financial year 2012/13:

1. 1004 people living in 19 different areas of Leicester and Leicestershire took part in our creative projects and activities.
2. We worked with 28 partners to deliver our projects.
3. 78% of participants were aged between 10 and 19.
4. We delivered 68 projects over 769 sessions, with 6,817 attendances overall.
5. Volunteering opportunities were provided to 50 young people and adults.
6. We employed our first apprentice under the Government's National Apprenticeship Service.

Addressing local needs

We identify the people, communities and issues most in need of Soft Touch's projects through a needs assessment which is reviewed on an annual basis. Fourteen such needs were identified for 2012/13, thirteen of which were addressed through our projects.

The one need which was not addressed was 'people with dementia' and it was agreed that although this is a priority need we do not have a track record in this area and should seek to develop a project in partnership with an organisation already working on this issue.

Case study: Gypsies and Travellers STAR project

Supporting Gypsies and Travellers was identified as a priority in the 2012/13 needs assessment.

The STAR service provides housing support to the Gypsy and Traveller community in Leicestershire. They commissioned Soft Touch to work with a group of three service users over one year to design and develop some practical tools for people with limited literacy, to help them with planning and keeping appointments. The group designed a calendar, in the shape of a traditional 'vardo' caravan, that highlights key appointments in an accessible way, eg using recognisable logos such as those for the NHS and local councils. The calendar has been very well received by the local community. The project also aimed to increase the confidence, self esteem and skill levels of the project members and was very successful in achieving this aim. One group member couldn't read at the start and through the project was supported to start reading and is now really proud of her achievement. All of the participants asked for support to move on to training courses, for example in child protection and creative arts.



How we have measured our impact

For the first time Soft Touch set a series of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to enable us to measure our impact and set targets for improvement. Some of these KPIs responded to the requirements of Arts Council England, as we are a National Portfolio Organisation.

We have treated this year as a pilot and an opportunity to set baselines to measure progress in future years. We found that we were able to successfully gather and analyse the data to report fully and set baselines for all but one of the KPIs – we have commented below on the reasons and what we are doing to address this.

In drawing up this first report we have been guided by 'Inspiring Impact', the code of good impact practice published by NCVO in June 2013 (www.inspiringimpact.org). The code lays out a set of eight principles:

1. Take responsibility for impact and encourage others to do so.
2. Focus on purpose.
3. Involve others in your practice.
4. Apply proportionate and appropriate methods and resources.
5. Consider the full range of the difference you actually make.
6. Be honest and open.
7. Be willing to change and act on what you find.
8. Actively share your impact plans, methods, findings and learning.

Methodology

We used a variety of different ways to gather the data to enable us to measure our social impact, which are summarised below. The information was entered into our Views database to enable us to quantify and analyse it.

Collection methods:

- Project registers which capture the names, ages, postcodes and ethnic origin of participants.
- Participant self evaluation questionnaires.
- Semi-structured interviews with participants.
- Evaluation questionnaires from referral agencies and project partners, eg schools.
- Surveys of a representative cross-section of stakeholders.
- Staff observation, including diaries and photos.
- Young people's accreditation folders, eg for Arts Awards.
- Feedback from family members.

2 HOW DID WE DO?

KPI: The number of young people engaged on projects which target personal, social and educational progression who are known to have progressed.

The relevant projects for this KPI included: five strands of the BIG-UP New Parks programme; two Youth Music programmes (Baseline and Back on Track); the STAR Gypsies and Travellers project; and the Youth Offending Service Summer School

We aimed to set a baseline during 2012/13 but this KPI has proved hard to measure because we did not have a standardised system in place to capture and record progression. Also, this is quite difficult to do on some projects as the young people who participate do not respond to being asked to complete questionnaires or self-assessments.

We feel this is an important measurement because progression is a significant outcome of the work we do and has a big impact on the lives of many young people. We have therefore reviewed how we can capture and interpret the relevant information with the aim of being able to report more fully during 2013/14 so that we can set a baseline for future years. For example, we have set up a way of entering information about progression into the Views database.



We measured progression in detail on one project with young people which was part of BIG-UP. We worked with a group of students with a wide range of physical, sensory and learning disabilities to put on the school's Christmas show in December 2012 (A Christmas Carol). 20 students took part and we measured their progression with a range of nine outcomes, each of which had one or more indicator. The evidence was gathered through observation and feedback from the teachers. The table overleaf shows the outcomes we measured, the indicators used, and the percentage of participants who progressed with each outcome:

Outcome	Indicators	Percentage who progressed
New skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used glue gun • Used craft knife • Drawing for scenery 	65%
Improved confidence and self esteem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying new things • Speaks more • Asks about future sessions • Seems more confident 	15%
Improved working with and respect for others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked in groups together • Finished panels and props • Behaviour much improved 	35%
Meeting new people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met student trainees 	95%
Improved behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better behaved 	5%
Helped others/volunteered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ticket prep • Panel prep • Moved panels from van 	80%
Contributed ideas – raised aspirations, leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to do more artwork, learn new skills • Wants to do more drama • Wants to do work experience at Soft Touch • Would like to be involved in painting the Beatsmobile 	20%
Contribution to final product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked on sets • Worked on panels • Painting the backgrounds 	100%
Contribution to event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performed • Sang songs • Did well at dress rehearsal 	100%



Case study – Westgate School

Ruth took part in ten sessions making scenery, props and tickets for the Christmas Show. At first Ruth seemed to lack the confidence to try new things and she was worried about using the craft knives and glue. However, with support she used these tools well and then wanted to do more. She was one of the students who did the most work on the props and scenery and was always willing to help out. She did two hours of volunteer work unloading the van and cleaning up the scenery panels ready for painting. Ruth is very sociable and enjoyed talking through the ideas for the props. She did not want to perform but made an excellent contribution to all the behind the scenes work needed for the production.

Matthew is very able and had the lead role in the show, which was a huge challenge for him. However, he also did nine sessions making scenery, props and tickets and did two hours volunteering. Matthew has good listening skills and has the confidence to try new things. With support he is capable of working a challenge through to its conclusion. He is also interested in music and wants to form a rock band and be the drummer. He asked to come to visit Soft Touch and then went on to do his work experience through Remploy with us.



KPI: The number of young people who engage with a positive, creative out of school activity three or more times

We were able to record this information using our session registers and entering the information into our Views database.

- We recorded a regular engagement (3+ attendances in the year) of 35%
- Additionally we recorded a high engagement (5+ attendances in the year) of 20% overall, 56% of those who were regularly engaged.

Case study: Erica

"I'd struggle to become a chef if I wasn't at Soft Touch." After participating in the Well Cool project, which encourages young people to look at health and nutrition, Erica continued with the group cooking at different events. She is currently working on becoming a Soft Touch volunteer, as she feels it will be good experience in her aspiration to be a chef.

When the Well Cool group first started, Erica felt a little lost in the large number of young people, and her attendance was sporadic. However, as time has gone on and as one of her friends showed an interest in joining, her attendance became regular and she was very keen to get involved. Erica gets on well with others, and she said since doing work with us she has got to know a lot more people in the community. She added: "I like when I go in the library because the families I've worked with say hello to me."

Erica's confidence has grown and she has worked with a variety of people. "I feel more confident now coz of working in the community and working with people I'd never worked with before." Helping people try new foods and sharing the group's recipes on printed recipe cards has been exciting for Erica. "I feel like I'm helping people and they try the food even if it's different. It's a new experience and my parents trust me more to be out of the house with other people on my own. It makes me feel more responsible."

She added: "Dad lets me be more responsible for cooking too. We used to have microwave meals a lot but now we cook which is a nice family thing to do."

Erica & Leona from New Parks working with Maiyango to make a Soft Touch tart - now on sale in their Deli!



Checking out the deli * Designing & making an autumn fruit tart with Maiyango Chef Jameela * On sale next day

KPI: The number of people who contribute to the cultural life of the city

We counted the number of people out of our 1004 participants who had taken part in a performance, had work in an exhibition, had been involved in a film, contributed towards a publication or who had otherwise been involved in a project whose results were seen by the public.

- 198 people contributed to the cultural life of the city

Case study: Aaron

For the last six months, Aaron has called Soft Touch to arrange studio time and made his own way to the workshop on his bike. This is a big step forward for Aaron, who finds doing new things very challenging because he has Asperger's syndrome. He started coming to Soft Touch in 2009 as part of the MASH-UP sessions for young people not accessing mainstream youth provision. Since then he has demonstrated a very good understanding of music and performed to over 100 people at an event at the Guildhall in 2011. "He would never have been persuaded to do this in the past," his mum said.

KPI: The number of people from the most vulnerable groups who participate in a Soft Touch project or activity

We identified these vulnerable groups as being: looked after young people; young carers; young people needing extra emotional and behavioural support; people with physical and learning disabilities; people suffering mental health problems, offenders and ex-offenders; teenage single parents; pregnant teenagers; Gypsies and Travellers; young people not in employment, education or training; people living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods; new arrivals (including refugees & asylum seekers). Identifying these vulnerable groups was informed by our needs assessment as reported on above.

Whether people fell into one or more of these groups was recorded on a project by project basis.

- 92% of participants came from the most vulnerable groups

Case study: Millie

"I used to get so bored, now I'm experimenting all the while and I am 65." Millie lives in a deprived neighbourhood and started coming to Movers & Makers, suffering from depression and bereavement. She was very quiet but right from the beginning said how helpful she found it coming to the group, which invited together women of all ages who had an interest in craft activities. Millie was encouraged to progress to On the Make, a group teaching people how to run their own craft project and apply for funding. It was a big move for her, but she has blossomed and now runs a local group with several other people. "We've learnt many new crafts that don't cost a fortune to create. Every time I do something new I get such a buzz. It would be lovely if we as a team can get others inspired," Millie said. She added that participating in the groups has helped with the grieving process. Someone who worked with Millie at Movers & Makers met her again toward the end of the On the Make project and said, "She was so enthusiastic and animated - like a different person!"

KPI: Measure the number of participants who access and use the internet and digital technologies/new media and set a baseline

This information was recorded on a project by project basis.

- **62% of participants accessed and used the internet and digital technologies/new media**

Case study – David

When you are the disabled kid in a family of high-achievers and you've found it hard to push on, it's maybe not surprising if you show a bit of attitude.

David's brothers had gone to university, while his own progress was delayed by dealing with his Multiple Sclerosis. Despite his clear talent for working in IT he hadn't always done himself favours at school, and when we met him he was getting very depressed about being NEET.

He was referred to Soft Touch by a local youth worker and we set up a bespoke IT course for him. Over a series of 10 sessions our worker, Joe, was able to persuade him to focus on an achievable quick win in the form of a Bronze Arts Award, but was also keen to push David to achieve beyond this.

As Joe explains: "Though he was initially focussed on the 'award' element, the real agenda was for David to be familiar with real world, industry standard software to a level where it could benefit him".

David says of his experience at Soft Touch; "Joe enhanced my knowledge a great deal in explaining some of the technical terms. I would like to thank him and Soft Touch for their kind support and in-depth knowledge of IT".

KPI: Implement internal key performance indicators, and produce quarterly statistical reports and a social impact report based on these and other monitoring information, and share the methodology and results with at least 250 arts and non-arts organisations

Quarterly, detailed statistical reports were posted on our website.

The social impact report for 2012/13 is the current document and will be circulated to our full mailing list of 1047 contacts.

KPI: Capture stakeholder feedback to include evaluation of the overall quality of the experience, and quality of Soft Touch's participatory work, aiming to achieve an evaluation level of at least 75% good and excellent

We defined stakeholders to include participants, professional artists, audiences, funders, family members and project partners. We devised a survey asking just three questions – about the overall quality of the experience, quality of Soft Touch's participatory work, and whether people had any other comments. We picked four weeks during the year (in June, September, February and March) to survey everyone who we came into contact with during those weeks, with a view to avoiding duplication and surveying a good cross section of stakeholders.

- 96% of people surveyed rated the overall quality of experience with Soft Touch as excellent or good
- 92% of people surveyed rated the overall quality of experience with Soft Touch as excellent or good



Selection of comments from the surveys:

“Due to the company and staff I have fought depression and now I’m a strong self-employed full-time single mum”. Soft Touch volunteer

“An excellent organisation. Sensitive to participants’ needs, endless patience and understanding. Help at every level, activities for all”. Project commissioner

“Very flexible and accommodating - young people focused”. Participant's tutor

“I would like to do more spraying. I would like to try lots of different things - everything so far is good. Spraying was best. I took my t-shirt home”. Young participant

“I’m very proud to work for Soft Touch”! Staff member

“Would like to see them more often”. Young participant

KPI: Indicate the organisation's expected amount of contributed (non-Arts Council) income

We aimed to generate the following amount of contributed income: 2012/13: £259,000. Our actual contributed income was £382,311.

BIG-UP NEW PARKS

BIG-UP is our largest programme of work funded by the Big Lottery's Reaching Communities Programme to deliver creative projects on the New Parks estate, which is one of Leicester's most deprived areas. The programme started in August 2011 and will run for five years.

The programme overall is working towards four outcomes which are being delivered through a number of inter-linked strands, each of which has targets. The summary below provides a flavour of the success of the project between August 2012 and July 2013.

Outcome one: Over five years 1,200 young people and their parents will become aware of, and knowledgeable about, factors adversely affecting their physical and emotional health and wellbeing, and will be able to make more informed choices about their future health and lifestyle.

Highlights:

- 49 people (against a target of 30) attended the healthy eating family cooking projects;
- 550 packs of recipe cards with recipes tried and tested by the cooking groups were distributed in New Parks;
- One group of parents have set up their own after-school family healthy eating cookery club;
- Five young people are being mentored by local restaurant Maiyango to produce food for different New Parks and Soft Touch occasions.

Quotes

"I thought the food was excellent . It has also been great to see the children so enthusiastic about what they have done and the children and parents eating together".

Participant at a healthy eating event

"I love cooking, this is great. I didn't realise we'd be making meals, or so much food, it's really great ". Parent on healthy eating project

"On the nutritional side it was good. The project encouraged everyone to share – there was a real variety and everyone tried everything". Teacher involved with healthy eating project

Outcome two: Over five years, 1,205 children and young people (aged 9 to 19) will increase their engagement in positive activities, leading to a reduction in reported incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour including a better understanding of the effects of bullying, and more resilience and confidence for those who have been bullied.

Highlights:

- 100% of participants in sessions for young people with multiple and complex needs learnt new creative skills;
- 218 young people engaged in mobile street-based sessions, more than twice our target of 100;
- The Police reported no anti-social behaviour call-outs in the area and during the time Soft Touch was working there;
- 25 young people took part in a drama about healthy relationships and of 20 of these completing follow up questionnaires, 17 reported more understanding of the nature of abusive relationships and 17 felt more confident in dealing with sexual bullying or abuse.

Quotes

"It has been good to see T change from being very quiet and unsure, to being a lively, active and interested teenager". Feedback from referral agency

"They seem to be enjoying themselves and they don't make noise. It's a good idea as it keeps them off the streets and you know where they are". Feedback from local resident about on-street sessions

"Activities [...] have given provision for many under privileged youngsters to engage with their peers in worthwhile social activities and to meet new friends, to inspire youngsters and to alleviate anti-social behaviour". Chair of the New Parks Panel



Outcome three: By the end of year five 350 young people and parents will have increased skills, capacity and confidence to deliver activities and projects within their own community and to progress with personal, social and educational goals.

Highlights:

- 27 unemployed adults (our target was 30) took part in three 'On the Make' courses, two focused on craft and one on cooking;
- The course participants created two sets of craft cards and one set of cookery cards;
- Four of the participants went on to become Soft Touch volunteers.
- One group of participants set up their own parents crafting group at a local school;
- 10 young people who were not in education, employment or training signed up as Creative Mentors and contributed to two projects in the community;
- We ran three income generation workshops with people from the local community which resulted in a £1,000 grant for the Arty Farties, a new self-organised craft group, an application to the Community Panel for a cooking club at a primary school, and a successful application by a young person to run a summer scheme;
- 47 young people and adults volunteered doing an average of 14 hours per person.

Quotes

"This course has improved my confidence, I think in the future I can do my own business." - P (who went on to volunteer at the two subsequent projects)

"I've built up more confidence since I started the course and would like to volunteer in the future." - C

"This course helped give me the confidence to take my maths and English assessment. I am planning to take both subjects in September." - K

"I think the [craft] cards are very good and the day was very great and I would like to do it again." - young participant at sharing event

"I'm doing a lot better with my music and am getting more confident. I've also learnt how to design my own t-shirts and artwork." Creative mentor

"This event has restored my faith in the young. How lovely to see them take to the dance floor and dance with us." Participant in tea dance catered by young volunteers

Outcome four: Over five years 1,000 young people and adults will report an improvement in relationships and more understanding of people from different age groups and areas of New Parks and other Leicester neighbourhoods.

Highlights:

- 80% of the 139 people surveyed at events in the community organised said that they agreed that BIG-UP was helping to bring people together from different parts of the community and 71% that BIG-UP was bringing together people of different ages. 10% were unable to answer the question as it was the first time they had been in contact with BIG-UP and BIG-UP activities.
- BIG-UP aims to organise one event per year to bring young people from different areas of the city together. In July 2013 we put on 'The Big Jam' afternoon music festival in the city centre which showcased live music by young people from New Parks as well as from other areas of the city. 72% of people surveyed at the event gave 5 out of 5 to the question 'do you think bringing people from different communities together is a good thing?' and 64% to the question 'do you think bringing people together of different ages is a good thing?'

Quotes:

"Normally I'd see those boys in hoodies and be a bit nervous but now I've seen them volunteering and they were really good." – New Parks resident

"It was lovely to see parents and children working together." - Head Teacher
Braunstone Frith Infant School

In answer to the question 'is BIG-UP helping to form links between older and younger people' Cllr Malcom Unsworth, City Councillor for New Parks responded;

"Considerably so, I would like to see BIG-UP doing more, especially with older people. The programme should be replicated through the city with cross city activities."

"[BIG-UP] activities delivered through the whole New Parks Ward have given provision for many under privileged youngsters to engage with their peers in worthwhile social activities and meet new friends." - Lindsay Peberdy, Chair of New Parks Panel

Recommendations for year three (August 2013-July 2014):

- Re-align resources to enable us to support volunteers to engage long term with the programme;
- Refine methods for collecting evaluation feedback at events;
- Review anti-bullying strand and possibly move to the primary schools (this strand has been working in the local secondary school and has struggled to reach its target).

3. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introducing key performance indicators has been a very useful way to enable better, clearer reporting on the outcomes Soft Touch achieves across all of our projects. However, to improve on the quality and robustness of the data collected, and therefore the analysis of results, plus wider reporting of the results, we need to implement the following steps for 2013/14:

1. Devise a better system to collect the data to enable full reporting against the KPI 'The number of young people engaged on projects which target personal, social and educational progression who are known to have progressed.'
2. More regular collection and writing up of case studies, for both individual participants and projects.
3. Post quarterly reports on our website and send these to key stakeholders in a timely fashion.
4. Report back on each of the eight Inspiring Impact principles.
5. Report back on economic impacts such as our contribution to the local economy.

4. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR 2013/14

Set a baseline for the number of young people engaged on projects which target personal, social and educational progression who are known to have progressed:

40% of young people engage with a positive, creative out of school activity three or more times.

225 people contribute to the cultural life of the city.

Operate a system to capture stakeholder feedback (eg from participants, professional artists, audiences and partners), to include evaluation of the overall quality of the experience and quality of Soft Touch's participatory work for stakeholders, aiming to achieve an evaluation level of at least 80% good and excellent.

Increase the engagement of people from the most vulnerable groups to 94% (a 2.5% increase from the 2012/13 baseline of 92%).

Increase the number of participants who access and use the internet and digital technologies/new media to 65% (a 2.5% increase from the 2012/13 baseline of 62%).

Review our impact measurement methodology, produce quarterly statistical reports and a social impact report based on the KPIs and other monitoring information, and share the methodology and results with at least 275 arts and non-arts organisations.

Aim to generate £329,000 of contributed (non Arts Council) income.

Accounts summary

STATEMENT OF ANNUAL ACTIVITIES APRIL 2012-MAY 13

INCOME	2013	2012
Core grants:		
Arts Council England	88000	73279
Leicester City Council	22600	22600
Arts activities	357272	237235
Other income	2439	745
TOTAL INCOME	470311	333859
EXPENDITURE	2013	2012
Arts activities	294047	292500
Governance	85046	81317
Fundraising	24322	24007
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	403415	397824
NET INCOME/EXPENDITURE	66896	(63965)
FUNDS BALANCES 1.4.12	184504	248469
FUNDS BALANCES 31.1.13	251400	184504
WHICH REPRESENTS:		
FIXED ASSETS	82184	92982
CURRENT ASSETS	191174	111118
CURRENT LIABILITIES	(21958)	(19596)
	251400	184504



Acknowledgement of funders and partners

Arts Council England, Leicester City Council, Leicestershire County Council, Big Lottery Fund, Home Office, National Foundation for Youth Music, The Mighty Creatives, New Parks Panel, New Parks Ward Fund, Tender, Melton Borough Council, Mellor Community Primary School, King Richards School, Crown Hills Community College, Leicester Youth Offending Service, An Indian Summer, Spark, Thomas Estley School, Reach, Inclusion Healthcare, Embrace Arts, Sir Johnathan North Community College, Victim Support, South Leicestershire College. Leicestershire Youth Offending Service, Tender, Connexions Leicester Shire, Hand in Hand, Queens Road Fair.

Soft Touch Arts Ltd, 120a Hartopp Road,
Leicester LE2 1WF
0116 2702706

www.soft-touch.org.uk

Facebook:
<https://www.facebook.com/SoftTouchArtsLeicester>



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



LOTTERY FUNDED