

# The Baring Foundation



## CREATIVELY MINDED AND RESOURCEFUL

Resource and income mobilisation for arts  
and mental health organisations

By Mark Robinson



## CREATIVELY MINDED AND RESOURCEFUL

### About the Baring Foundation

This report was commissioned by the Baring Foundation.

The Baring Foundation is an independent foundation which protects and advances human rights and promotes inclusion. We believe in the role of a strong, independent civil society nationally and internationally. We use our resources to enable civil society to work with people facing discrimination and disadvantage and to act strategically to tackle the root causes of injustice and inequality. More can be found in *A History of the Baring Foundation in 50 Grants*, available on our website.

Since 2020, the Foundation has focused its arts programme on creative opportunities for people with mental health problems.

### About the authors

Mark Robinson founded his consultancy Thinking Practice in 2010, to write, facilitate, coach and advise across the cultural sector, having previously been Executive Director, North East at Arts Council England. Since then Thinking Practice has worked with 200 organisations and individuals from artists to funders. Future Arts Centre published his book, *Tactics for the Tightrope: Creative Resilience For Creative Communities*, in 2021. Mark has also directed festivals, poetry publishers, arts organisations and worked in adult education. He is a widely anthologised poet: the title poem of his 2024 collection, *The Infinite Town*, is carved onto a plinth on Stockton High Street, out of which emerges an animatronic steam train by the artist Rob Higgs, every day at 1pm.

### Acknowledgements

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This report was edited by Harriet Lowe, Communications and Research Manager at the Baring Foundation, and the report designed by Alex Valy.

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Photo courtesy of Company Chameleon

## SECTION 1

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# Introduction

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## ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report is a practical and pragmatic one, for use by arts and creative health organisations working with and alongside people with mental health problems. It aims to show approaches and inspire action by sharing a sample of what's been shown to be possible by organisations thinking about how to maximise their use of available resources or how to generate new ones or pass resources onto others.

### SECTION 2:

#### **Making the most of your resources**

Introduces the key resources those working in arts and mental health are using to drive business models that support and strengthen their activity. It includes a non-exhaustive list of the kinds of resources you might have or develop. (Page 07)

### SECTION 3:

#### **24 ideas for using your resources**

Builds on Section 2 by providing 24 specific ideas for using resources, with examples. (Page 12)

### SECTION 4:

#### **Case studies**

A suite of 14 Case Studies that illustrate aspects of resourcefulness. They cover represent a wide span of sizes, artforms, creative practices and situations, and a range of solutions and approaches to sustainability. You may want to read the case studies before thinking about your own resourcefulness. Equally, you can use the case studies to explore how others have approached similar challenges or opportunities to your own. (Page 15)

### SECTION 5:

#### **10 potential starting points**

Assessing your own potential for being even more resourceful in a sustainable way. (Page 47)

### SECTION 6:

#### **Tools, etc.**

This section contains a variety of tools to help organisations think how they might use the resources they have, or can get, in their own contexts. Editable versions of tables in this section are available to download from the [Baring Foundation website](#).

## WHY NOW?

The field of arts and mental health has always been resourceful, which is one reason there are so many organisations working creatively at different scales in communities across the UK. Many were founded with no funding but much commitment from people sharing a strong creative practice and a desire to serve particular communities. Over time, they developed mixed models of earned and contributed income.

Today, these resources are even more vital. The health sector is stretched and undergoing major restructuring, affecting local commissioning and relationships. Local authorities face financial pressures and expenditure increasingly focussed on statutory services. Meanwhile, costs for energy, premises and staffing have risen. Competition for grant funding has intensified: several longstanding funders have reduced or paused programmes, and success rates from major lottery funders have fallen.

Organisations are not attached to grant funding for sentimental or ideological reasons. Grants and grantlike contracts remain essential to many because they provide trust, continuity, flexibility and time. Even those with high levels of earned income often retain a stable amount of grant income while growing trading activities around it. Simplistically seeking to replace grants with short-term trading or campaign-driven philanthropic donations can reduce stability and risk the quality required to work effectively with people experiencing mental health problems.

However, one can also say that most organisations ‘trade’ in some way. What distinguishes them is how realistically they assess the cost of trading in time, energy, risk and organisational complexity. Trading works best when it flows naturally from and reinforces core practice and relationships. Think of it as a strategic option, not a moral imperative.

Being resourceful in the arts and mental health field is demanding work undertaken in precarious conditions. The aim of this publication is not to add pressure but to recognise the capabilities organisations already possess, and to increase awareness of potential strategies.

Resourcefulness as we urge you to consider it in this report is not about “doing more with less” or “being less grant-dependent”. It is about doing what matters most to you, using everything you have, and keeping a firm hold of your why.

## METHOD

The research for this report included the following elements:

- analysis of published accounts of 30 organisations working in arts and mental health, identified primarily from the list of organisations funded by the Baring Foundation;
- case studies based on interviews with key personnel, analysis of annual reports and other material in the public domain. Interviewees have fact-checked and approved them for sharing. Organisations were invited to reflect a range of characteristics and locations;
- an online survey completed by 44 organisations (sent to 245) to inform overview analysis of survey results, case studies and sector snapshot;
- rapid survey of available tools and creation of the Resourcefulness Canvas and associated tools. Tools were tested by a small group of volunteer organisations.

## THANKS

Particular thanks are due to everyone who generously gave their time to inform and fact-check the Case Studies. Thanks also to the people who tested the tools. Finally, thanks to David Cutler and Harriet Lowe of the Baring Foundation for their insight and support, and for their ongoing support of the field of arts and mental health.

## A NOTE ON LANGUAGE

We have followed the Foundation’s approach to language in this report. The Foundation uses the term “mental health problem” but recognises that others may wish to use other terms such as mental health distress, mental illness, mental health challenges and survivor. Mental health problem is chosen as a phrase in common usage, including by organisations such as Mind.

## SECTION 2

# Making the most of your resources

## FOUR TYPES OF RESOURCE

How organisations work, how they create and retain value, is sometimes called their business model. (Even if they are not-for-profit and value for them means something other than money, such as community wellbeing or improved mental health for participants.)

When designing or reviewing a business model, there are three fundamental areas to consider:

- **Who you are**, who and what you are working for, what your values are
- **What resources you have** to apply to this purpose
- **What you do** with those things: what are your activities and offers, and what do you need to spend to deliver them?

This report concentrates on the resources part of the model, for the reasons explained in the introduction. We have focussed on four typical types of resources that serve purpose and delivery:

**Resource 1: People and their skills: creatives, volunteers, peers, staff and governance;**

**Resource 2: Relationships, networks and partners;**

**Resource 3: Physical resources;**

**Resource 4: Income: revenue streams.**

These cover the key things that can help those working to serve people with mental health problems. The case studies in Section 4 show effective and often innovative ways of working with each of those first three types of resource to create income streams that generates the fourth: financial income. Not all income is the same: project grants create income (and workload) but rarely create financial surplus which can be held in reserve to do what you

decide with. Some trusts and foundations (such as the Baring Foundation) do offer grantees support beyond grants, such as peer learning or technical support, which creates additional value from successful grant applications. Including development time and CPD in bids should also be explored.

## INCOME GENERATION

Non-core activity income generation or trading, in one form or another, is usually more useful in terms of creating unrestricted income.

Trading for charities can sometimes require a separate-but-linked company to be set up, often known as a trading company. Technical advice should be sought if you feel income generation takes you far from your charitable purposes.

Trading to create earned income that can be used as unrestricted funding can be energising, empowering, and serve your mission. It can arise naturally from how you serve people with mental health problems – think of membership schemes, subscriptions and donations. It can draw on and share the expertise you have built in your practice through consultancy and training offers, or by sharing intellectual property online or via publications. It can be complementary to your main care or support offer, e.g. by selling artistic products or hiring out spaces. Or income generation activity can be quite separate from your purpose except that the unrestricted income it generates helps you in your mission. No organisations found in this study existed to promote marriage, for example, but several venues could be hired for weddings, because that was a good use of the building that brought in commercial levels of fee.

When thinking about income generation, remember that unrestricted income comes from generating a surplus: i.e. an activity brings in more income than it costs to deliver.

(Activities that don't do this can still create social or creative value through their impact on people or places, of course, but this is a different kind of result from trading than unrestricted income.)

## EXAMPLES OF EACH KIND OF RESOURCE

The table below gives *examples* of the kinds of resources organisations have. You might find them helpful when considering your own

resources, thinking about what you might do to mobilise them or generate income, or if completing the Resourcefulness Canvas on [page 50](#).

But remember: this list is illustrative, not comprehensive, and definitely NOT prescriptive. You need to develop resources and ways to use them that suit you, your purpose and values, and your situation. Use this list as a prompt only – and add your own examples as you create them.

<p><b>Resource 1:</b> People and their skills: creatives, volunteers, peers, staff and governance</p>	<p><b>WORKFORCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative leaders</li> <li>• Programme managers</li> <li>• Development/fundraising</li> <li>• Operations and finance</li> <li>• Comms and marketing</li> <li>• Artists/facilitators</li> <li>• Freelance specialists</li> </ul> <p><b>VOLUNTEERS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Front-of-house support</li> <li>• Community connectors</li> <li>• Corporate volunteer teams</li> <li>• Trustees</li> </ul> <p><b>GOVERNANCE</b></p> <p>Board members with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS connections</li> <li>• Arts leadership</li> <li>• Business/enterprise</li> <li>• Lived experience</li> <li>• Property or capital expertise</li> <li>• Advisory Board</li> </ul>	<p><b>CREATIVE PRACTICE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual arts facilitation (painting, printmaking, ceramics, et al)</li> <li>• Music production, songwriting, choir leading</li> <li>• Movement, dance and somatic practice</li> <li>• Spoken word, writing, zine-making</li> <li>• Digital arts, animation, film</li> <li>• Outdoor arts practice</li> </ul> <p><b>LIVED EXPERIENCE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-production groups</li> <li>• Peer mentors and facilitators</li> <li>• 'Alumni' participants</li> <li>• Service user advisory panels</li> </ul> <p><b>MENTAL HEALTH-INFORMED PRACTICE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma-informed facilitators</li> <li>• Co-production experts</li> <li>• Mental health support specialists</li> <li>• Risk-aware but non-clinical spaces</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resource 2:</b> Relationships, networks and partners</p>	<p><b>HEALTH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NHS Trusts</li> <li>• Community mental health teams</li> <li>• Social prescriber</li> <li>• Primary Care Networks</li> <li>• Hospital charities</li> <li>• Recovery colleges</li> </ul>	<p><b>ARTS AND CULTURE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial galleries</li> <li>• Museums</li> <li>• Creative partners</li> <li>• Arts councils</li> <li>• Touring networks</li> <li>• Cultural consortia</li> <li>• Artist estates and gifts</li> </ul>

	<p><b>ACADEMIA AND RESEARCH</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Universities (research partnerships)</li> <li>• Knowledge exchange programmes</li> <li>• National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) collaborations</li> <li>• Student placements</li> </ul> <p><b>CORPORATE AND BUSINESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local businesses</li> <li>• Business Improvement Districts</li> <li>• Corporate CSR teams</li> <li>• Philanthropic networks</li> </ul>	<p><b>COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local family centres</li> <li>• Housing associations</li> <li>• Faith groups</li> <li>• Refugee support organisations</li> <li>• Disability groups</li> </ul> <p><b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PLACE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Health teams</li> <li>• Combined Authorities</li> <li>• Regeneration partnerships</li> <li>• Community foundations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resource 3:</b> <b>Physical resources</b></p>	<p><b>SPACES, BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building/venue/studio space (owned/rented)</li> <li>• Office space</li> <li>• Gallery space</li> <li>• Host venues and pop-up spaces</li> <li>• NHS settings</li> <li>• Café area</li> </ul> <p><b>EQUIPMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kilns, print presses, music studios, etc</li> <li>• AV and digital editing equipment</li> <li>• Exhibition infrastructure</li> <li>• Mobile art kits</li> <li>• Online learning platforms</li> </ul>	<p><b>DIGITAL ASSETS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• E-commerce platform</li> <li>• CRM system</li> <li>• Online training portal</li> <li>• Strong social media presence</li> </ul> <p><b>STOCK AND MERCHANDISE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited edition prints</li> <li>• Art materials boxes</li> <li>• Publications and zines</li> <li>• Branded resources</li> </ul>
<p><b>Resource 4:</b> <b>Income: revenue streams</b></p> <p><b>Contributed income:</b> Money given to support your purpose, not to buy a specific service ('non-exchange' in Charities SORP terms)</p>	<p><b>PUBLIC SECTOR FUNDING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts funder project grants or regular funding</li> <li>• Department of Health or Public Health innovation grants</li> <li>• Government community renewal funds</li> <li>• NHS national programmes supporting creative health</li> </ul>	<p><b>LOCAL AND COMBINED AUTHORITIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local Authority Public Health commissioning grants</li> <li>• Community prevention budgets</li> <li>• Small grants from borough councils</li> <li>• Combined Authority investment</li> <li>• Youth services or early intervention funding</li> </ul>

	<p><b>PLACE-BASED FUNDING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community or place-based funds</li> <li>• Neighbourhood renewal or regeneration grants</li> <li>• Town Deal or High Street Fund type programmes</li> <li>• Local anchor body partnerships</li> <li>• Funding tied to a specific estate, ward or locality</li> </ul> <p><b>CHARITABLE AND FOUNDATION FUNDING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Lottery Community Fund</li> <li>• Trusts and foundations</li> <li>• Health-focused charities</li> <li>• Thematic funds (e.g. racial justice, youth, men's mental health)</li> <li>• Multi-year unrestricted grants</li> </ul> <p><b>RESEARCH AND INNOVATION FUNDING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HE research partnerships</li> <li>• NHS R&amp;D funding</li> <li>• Innovation grants for pilots</li> <li>• Knowledge exchange funding</li> </ul>	<p><b>DONATIONS AND INDIVIDUAL GIVING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 'Named' donors</li> <li>• Corporate sponsorship</li> <li>• Charity auctions and artwork sales</li> <li>• Donations related to rate reliefs</li> <li>• Crowdfunding</li> <li>• Pro bono professional support</li> <li>• Corporate volunteers</li> <li>• Donated venue, materials or kit</li> </ul> <p><b>SOCIAL INVESTMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social enterprise loans</li> <li>• Community share offers to refurbish a creative hub</li> <li>• Impact investment for scaling a trading arm</li> <li>• Blended finance packages combining grant + loan</li> <li>• Revenue-based repayment loans</li> </ul> <p><b>BANK LOANS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-term overdraft facilities</li> <li>• Loan for building refurbishment</li> <li>• Asset finance (e.g. for equipment or vehicles)</li> <li>• Bridging loans while awaiting confirmed grants</li> </ul>
<p><b>Income: revenue streams</b></p> <p><b>Earned income:</b> Someone is paying for something specific from you ('exchange' in Charities SORP terms)</p>	<p><b>DIRECT EARNED INCOME (i.e. paid by the user or customer)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Subscriptions and memberships</li> <li>• Workshop fees</li> <li>• Ticket sales</li> <li>• Paid training in trauma-informed creative practice</li> <li>• Mental Health First Aid training</li> <li>• Consultancy to health trusts</li> <li>• Room hire</li> <li>• Rental of studio space</li> <li>• Sale of artwork, prints or publications</li> <li>• Digital art school subscriptions</li> <li>• Corporate away-days</li> <li>• Retreats or wellbeing days</li> </ul>	<p><b>INDIRECT EARNED INCOME (i.e. not paid by the end user – usually commissioned or funded by a third party)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with NHS Trusts</li> <li>• Social prescribing referrals from Primary Care Networks</li> <li>• Personal Health Budgets</li> <li>• Local Authority contracts</li> <li>• Housing association contracts</li> <li>• Prison or probation service programmes</li> <li>• School wellbeing contracts</li> <li>• Community mental health pathway delivery</li> </ul>

## DIGGING DEEPER

In Sections 3 and 4 you will find brief specific examples of resource-use and income generation ideas, and then a set of Case Studies.

The **Resourcefulness Canvas** (page 50) is a way of sketching a self-portrait of your organisation and its resources, a single page canvas to think about three central questions:

- Who are you and how do you want to work?
- What resources do you have to use?
- What are your activities and what do they cost?

The **Trading Decision Tree** (page 53) talks you through a process to determine what role trading could play in your income generation strategies. We think these tools can be useful for ensuring you take a holistic view of resources and income generation.

Elsewhere in Section 6, you will find further tools to help think through particular areas where you want to dig deeper after you have read the ideas and case studies.

The table below suggests some tools to begin with, depending on your focus.

There are many other toolkits and methods around, so we have listed useful ones on page 70.

IF YOU WANT TO FOCUS ON...	START WITH THESE TOOLS
<b>Resource 1:</b> People and their skills: creatives, volunteers, peers, staff and governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creative Health Sustainable Choices Canvas</li> </ul>
<b>Resource 2:</b> Relationships, networks and partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leveraging Funding And Partnerships</li> <li>• Partnerships Mapping</li> </ul>
<b>Resource 3:</b> Physical resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making the Most of Spaces, Equipment and Physical Assets</li> </ul>
<b>Resource 4:</b> Income: revenue streams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trading Decision Tree</li> <li>• Leveraging Funding And Partnerships</li> <li>• Holding Onto Your Why: Mission Drift Check</li> <li>• Cultural Tax Reliefs</li> </ul>

## SECTION 2

## 24 ideas for using your resources

**THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO BE RESOURCEFUL, DEPENDING ON WHO YOU ARE, WHERE YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU'VE GOT.**

The case studies in this report are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of the inventiveness of people working in the field.

In this section we list 24 specific ways organisations are mobilising resources, generating income or simply making the

most of what they have. These are not prescriptions, but pointers that might inspire an idea for your own organisation. This is not an exhaustive list. We've highlighted some examples in the case studies and beyond.

	IDEA	MAY SUIT IF...	EXAMPLES TO LOOK AT
01	Contracts with NHS Trusts and Public Health, etc	You can navigate health systems and offer recognised wellbeing outcomes	<a href="#">Hospital Rooms</a> <a href="#">Space2</a>
02	Personal Health Budgets (PHBs) and similar models (e.g. Section 117 aftercare)	You can navigate health systems with and for individuals and offer recognised wellbeing outcomes	<a href="#">Chilli Studios</a> <a href="#">Core Arts</a>
03	Social prescribing pathways	You have link worker relationships and can provide a consistent offer	<a href="#">Arc Stockport</a> <a href="#">Space2</a>
04	Corporate sponsorship	You have local business links and a clear social story about your impact	<a href="#">Mental Fight Club</a> <a href="#">Arts 2 Heal</a> <a href="#">Hospital Rooms</a>
05	Cultural Tax Reliefs	You create exhibitions or performances and have capacity and skills to manage the process	<a href="#">Bethlem Gallery</a> <a href="#">See also page 71.</a>
06	Membership and subscription schemes	You have a strong community identity and regular activities/ services people value	<a href="#">Chilli Studios</a> <a href="#">Choirs for Good</a>
07	Education wellbeing offers	You can translate your practice for schools and colleges and have capacity to deliver	<a href="#">Blind Tiger</a> <a href="#">Company Chameleon</a>

	IDEA	MAY SUIT IF...	EXAMPLES TO LOOK AT
08	Training and consultancy	You can shape a method or expertise into an offer and have credibility with peers or customers	<a href="#">Soundcastle</a> <a href="#">Belfast Exposed</a>
09	Volunteer / peer-led delivery	You can train and support participants and have a strong culture you can pass on	<a href="#">Arts 4 Wellbeing</a> <a href="#">Compass Community Arts</a> <a href="#">Mental Fight Club</a>
10	Student placements	You can offer meaningful learning opportunities within capacity and can connect to academic partners	<a href="#">Arc Stockport</a> <a href="#">Arts 2 Heal</a>
11	Creative commissions	You can deliver to brief without losing identity and have strong commissioner relationships	<a href="#">Blind Tiger</a> <a href="#">Company Chameleon</a> <a href="#">Hospital Rooms</a>
12	Set up your own publishing imprint	Your work generates material or talent networks and have capacity for sales	<a href="#">Comics Youth: Marginal</a>
13	Building management/ rental	You own, rent or otherwise control space and have spare capacity	<a href="#">Skippko</a> <a href="#">Space2</a>
14	Hiring of equipment and facilities – from kitchen space to recording studios	You can raise funds for equipment or facilities you can rent out and have staff capacity to service the offer	<a href="#">The Art House Sheffield</a> <a href="#">Raw Material Music and Media</a>
15	Space sharing partnerships (long-term or pop-ups)	You can offer social value to hosts and can be flexible in how/where you deliver your work	<a href="#">Arc Stockport</a> <a href="#">Compass Community Arts</a> <a href="#">Mental Fight Club</a>
16	Skill and resource pooling alliances	You trust peer organisations and are open to sharing either specialist skills or 'back office' functions	<a href="#">Company Chameleon</a> <a href="#">Blind Tiger</a>
17	Place-based consortium bidding (e.g. combined authorities)	You share values and focus communities, groups or places with partners and can work well with them	<a href="#">Space2</a> <a href="#">GM Creative Health Place Partnership</a>
18	HE (university) research partnerships	You are open to research and learning and can connect to academic partners	<a href="#">darts</a> <a href="#">Space2</a>

IDEA	MAY SUIT IF...	EXAMPLES TO LOOK AT
<p><b>19</b></p> <p>Grants as game-changers or for testing</p>	<p>You think long-term and can invest in development of people, offers or physical resources</p>	<p><b><u>Choirs for Good</u></b> <b><u>Skippko</u></b> <b><u>darts</u></b></p>
<p><b>20</b></p> <p>Philanthropy / individual giving</p>	<p>You can have evidence and data to tell compelling stories and have networks of supporters</p>	<p><b><u>Arc Stockport</u></b> <b><u>Hospital Rooms</u></b></p>
<p><b>21</b></p> <p>Crowdfunding and match funding campaigns</p>	<p>You have work programmes with clear cases for support and active supporters to promote campaigns</p>	<p>Explore examples at: <b><u>crowdfunder.co.uk</u></b> <b><u>Big Give</u></b></p>
<p><b>22</b></p> <p>Sales of publications, prints, limited editions, books etc</p>	<p>You generate or are donated primary artworks and spaces/events to sell at (eg a shop or fundraising auction)</p>	<p><b><u>Belfast Exposed</u></b> <b><u>Hospital Rooms</u></b></p>
<p><b>23</b></p> <p>Set up an online shop</p>	<p>You work closely with artists or have archival material and a strong digital presence</p>	<p><b><u>The Art House Wakefield</u></b> <b><u>Bethlem Gallery</u></b></p>
<p><b>24</b></p> <p>Add a Donations page or button to your website</p>	<p>You have a website and don't want to miss possible donations</p>	<p>Two examples: <b><u>Creative Response</u></b> <b><u>Everybody Arts</u></b></p>

SECTION 4

# CASE STUDIES



Susie Hamilton, Central Staircase.  
Photographer Damian Griffiths.  
Courtesy of Hospital Rooms

## SECTION 4

## About the case studies

The case studies aim to give brief introductions to a diverse range of organisations at different scales, in different contexts and at different points in their development. Their resourcefulness is not put forward as necessarily better than other organisations that could have been included.

As these case studies themselves show, sustainability and resourcefulness are qualities or behaviours one can develop but they are not boxes to tick as “done” and then move onto something else. Things can improve further, and new challenges can arise.

For all the traits in common, and the patterns one can see in a sample, organisations are as unique as people. What works, or not, for one organisation may not work for you. Bring your own creativity and context to applying lessons from these case studies to inform your future strategies and actions.

The 14 organisations described here show a myriad of ways to be resourceful. None relate to just a single area, so you can dive into any and all of them and you’ll find something of use and interest. The table below suggest some potential starting points related to the four areas of resource set out in the Resourcefulness Canvas (page 50).

IF YOU FEEL STRONG IN THIS AREA, OR WANT TO DEVELOP IT...	... START WITH THESE CASE STUDIES
<p><b>Resource 1:</b> People and their skills: creatives, volunteers, peers, staff and governance</p>	<p><a href="#">Belfast Exposed</a> and <a href="#">darts</a> to see how investing in staff capability builds long-term organisational resilience.</p> <p><a href="#">Company Chameleon</a> and <a href="#">Soundcastle</a> to see approaches to investing in and supporting team members.</p> <p><a href="#">Arts 4 Wellbeing</a> and <a href="#">Compass Community Arts</a> to see how peer support shapes a model.</p> <p><a href="#">Arc Stockport</a> and <a href="#">Mental Fight Club</a> to see volunteers as key part of delivery models.</p>
<p><b>Resource 2:</b> Relationships, networks and partners</p>	<p><a href="#">darts</a> and <a href="#">Space2</a> to see examples of consortium working to access larger scale funds.</p> <p><a href="#">Blind Tiger</a> and <a href="#">Mental Fight Club</a> for examples of working with larger organisations to share resources.</p> <p><a href="#">Company Chameleon</a> and <a href="#">Hospital Rooms</a> to see partnerships rooted in artistic production.</p>

**Resource 3:**  
Physical resources

[Arc Stockport](#) and [Compass Community Arts](#) to see examples of mutual benefit from use of space.

[Chilli Studios](#) and [Space2](#) to see membership and community involvement drawing on a long-term studio base.

[Belfast Exposed](#) and [Skippko](#) to see how property can generate unrestricted income through hires and rentals.

**Resource 4:**  
Income: revenue streams

[Belfast Exposed](#) and [Hospital Rooms](#) to see layering and leverage of arts and health match funding and trading income.

[Choirs for Good](#) and [Skippko](#) for examples of using grant funding to test models and build evidence data.

[Soundcastle](#) and [Chilli Studios](#) to see examples of managing the results of fluctuations in income.

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# Arc Stockport

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“ We are very emotionally connected to our work, and that’s what we need. Our donors need to feel that they have helped change or save somebody’s life. And we are not going to be embarrassed about asking for money or support to make that possible. ”

**Jacqui Wood, Chief Executive, Arc Stockport**

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## FROM LONG-TERM MEMBERSHIP TO TIME-LIMITED PROGRAMMES

Arc Stockport began in 1995 as the MIND Arts Project Stockport, or MAPS. It was initially part of the local MIND branch, becoming independent in 2005.

After 10 years of working with the original focus of people long-term mental health problems, Arc faced funding challenges as several grants ended and redesigned its model. It now combines three-month, time-limited programmes with clear progression routes, supported by long-term drop-ins and social spaces. This structure aligns better with social prescribing and referral systems, while protecting capacity and supporting participants’ needs.

Arc continues to adapt to the need of potential participants. Post-Covid, some programmes had to be redesigned, and the process of reinvention still continues, including developing training offers for business and health sectors.

## VOLUNTEERS AS A STRATEGIC RESOURCE

With around 80 volunteers, supported by a dedicated coordinator, Arc treats volunteering as a structured pathway with training and progression. Roles meet diverse needs – from

building confidence to improving employability – and the café provides a supported work environment for neurodivergent young people and people developing English skills.

A team of volunteers has also been trained to deliver a 12-week programme in the local mental health hospital. Help sheets and activity plans, alongside support from a worker and hospital staff, ensures quality experiences. Arc’s commitment to volunteers is recognised through the King’s Award for Voluntary Service.

## SPACE AS CATALYST

Relocation into Stockport’s Hat Works museum transformed Arc’s visibility. Sharing space with a heritage site created new footfall, partnerships and accessibility. Arc now has studios, offices and a café. They share welcome to the building with the museum team, as well as spaces for events and activities, making best use of resources. The café, gallery and workshop spaces generate modest income but significant indirect value: visibility, community presence and engagement.

There has been benefit to the museum from the partnership in terms of increased visitor numbers and income from hire of their spaces. As a heritage setting it also opens up new grant-fundraising opportunities for Arc for heritage-related activity.

## FUNDRAISING WITH CONFIDENCE

Arc historically brought in only small amounts through donations, but they have developed a fundraising and income generation strategy in 2024 which is now bearing fruit. By telling powerful participant stories and having a very clear ‘ask’, Arc raised over £30,000 during a campaign to mark its 30-year anniversary.

The lesson was not about one campaign, but about the importance of confidence and a very clear message about the organisation and the difference it makes in people's lives. Stories now inform how Arc describes its impact. The emotional connection staff feel to, say, an individual's progress from participant to volunteer now leading photography sessions can be passed on to encourage donors.

Fundraising via donations and gifts is thus tightly aligned with values: as Chief Executive Jacqui Wood puts it "We're not going to be embarrassed about it". Arc now has donation stations in their café, just as one would find at national museums. One school who chose to fundraise for Arc recently raised £3,000.

### **KNOWING WHEN TO STOP THINGS THAT NO LONGER FIT**

Arc also offers a cautionary lesson. Social work student placements once provided significant income, but changes to the financial model, the staff time needed and a commitment to the needs of its participants meant the scheme came to feel a bigger reputational and mental risk. Despite the income generated, the model was stopped and replaced with shorter placements for post-graduate students.

### **What this shows about resourcefulness**

- **Adaptation is a core capability.**
- **Volunteers are a strategic resource.**
- **Space can be leveraged for purpose and income.**
- **Powerful stories about impact unlock support.**
- **Knowing when to stop something is part of sustainability.**

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## Arts 4 Wellbeing

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“ We knew that the practice of being creative is the therapy. We’re not the therapists. It’s the creative process that does the work for people. ”

**Mike Hotson, Arts 4 Wellbeing**

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### A PRACTICE ROOTED IN STEWARDSHIP AND COMMUNITY CAPACITY

Arts 4 Wellbeing CIC was founded by Mike Hoston and Sara Wentworth following many years of collaborative practice across arts in health, community development and education. Their shared intention was to develop environments where creativity becomes a structured, relational pathway to connection, confidence and collective agency.

The organisation was built on the understanding that creativity, when held within trauma-informed, community-based frameworks, can support emotional regulation, belonging and participation. It is not the art alone that creates change, but the conditions around it: pacing, welcome, trust, shared power and reflective facilitation.

Over time, Arts 4 Wellbeing evolved from informal delivery to a Community Interest Company (CIC), strengthening governance and accountability while maintaining a practice-led ethos.

### A PHASED MODEL OF CAPACITY BUILDING

One of Arts 4 Wellbeing’s most resourceful moves is its phased development of a six month development framework designed to seed sustainable Social Creative drop-in services in villages across Ceredigion. This develops

community activity and leadership rather than dependency, using available resources to create capacity beyond Arts 4 Wellbeing itself.

Activity unfolds gradually: tasters, then time-limited creative courses, then open community-sharing events and eventually supported transitions to volunteer-led local groups.

Core groups of 10–12 participants are supported to grow in confidence, facilitation skills and collective responsibility. Over time, leadership shifts locally, with Arts 4 Wellbeing stepping back while remaining available for mentoring and quality assurance.

Seven hubs involving more than 45 volunteers have become trusted points of contact for GP referrals, Local Authority and social support organisations as safe, non-clinical spaces of connection. A resource lending library of donated tools and materials supports accessibility and reduces financial barriers to participation.

The model has expanded into towns through two new partnerships with health centres, social prescribing teams, and services for older residents. This structure shares power and respects the readiness within communities. Time is used intentionally to build trust, resilience and local ownership.

### WORKING WHERE PEOPLE ALREADY ARE

Arts 4 Wellbeing primary partners are Family Centres, village halls and community hubs, particularly in rural areas where transport and infrastructure can limit access. Working in familiar spaces lowers psychological and practical barriers. The first invitation is often “just for a cup of tea”, recognising that relationship precedes engagement. The model directs resources toward facilitation, time and materials rather than infrastructure.

This approach consciously redistributes power. Rather than creating dependency on external expertise, it nurtures local confidence and shared ownership.

### LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

Arts 4 Wellbeing works in a long-term, embedded way alongside people experiencing isolation, disadvantage and disconnection, particularly in rural contexts. They work relationally and incrementally to integrate creative process, trauma-informed facilitation, growth mindset thinking, embodied learning, personal development and asset-based community development.

Early programmes demonstrated measurable shifts in confidence and participation, with 80% of participants moving into volunteering, training or wider community engagement. Participants also described a stronger sense of belonging and agency.

Sessions are carefully designed to reduce anxiety and flatten hierarchies. Attention to welcome, pacing, consent, environment and shared food are treated as structural elements of practice. Participation is invited rather than compulsory. Autonomy and readiness are respected.

### INCOME FOLLOWS THE PRACTICE

As a CIC, Arts 4 Wellbeing operates with clear governance while retaining practice-led decision-making. Grant funding remains important, secured primarily for work aligned with community development, wellbeing and rural inclusion.

Crucially, grant funding serves the practice by supporting co-ordination, research, evaluation and capacity building, rather than distorting it to bring in money. Growth is not pursued for its own sake. The organisation is careful not to scale in ways that would dilute relationships or compromise facilitator wellbeing. Consolidation is understood as responsible stewardship.

#### What this shows about resourcefulness

- Treat time, trust and continuity of relationships as essential shared resources.
- Creative practice can support community capacity when power is gradually shared.
- Participation deepens when people are invited into familiar spaces at their own pace.
- Volunteering can support wellbeing and community.
- Sustainable growth requires restraint as well as ambition.

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# Belfast Exposed

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“I told them, ‘There were 2,000 people in the gallery the other night looking at your work.’ The pride in their faces was incredible.”

**Dierdre Robb, Director, Belfast Exposed**

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## BUILDING ON DISTINCTIVE PEOPLE-CENTRED PRACTICE

Belfast Exposed is one of Northern Ireland’s longest-established photography organisations. Founded in 1983, its mission is to enrich people’s lives through photography. Its city centre building houses five public galleries, an archive and bookshop. (The organisation has its own imprint and merchandising.)

Over time it has developed strong relationships with artists locally and internationally and a strong therapeutic photography programme. The therapeutic photography activity grew out of the people-centred approach, where artistic practice meets people.

What began as an response to isolation during COVID when staff adapted an online wellbeing course for the Northern Health Trust has grown into a major, sustainable area of work. The trust saw the quality and outcomes of the pilot and shifted from project funding to invited tenders, giving Belfast Exposed greater financial stability. Participants report reduced reliance on prescription medication, new career pathways, and meaningful improvements in mental wellbeing. The scale of the work has expanded from a handful of workshops to potentially 100 next year. Word has spread and other trusts in Northern Ireland are now interested.

## THE BUILDING AS PLATFORM

The gallery is an essential part of the organisation’s method, identity, and outcomes. Exhibitions are integral to the therapeutic process: they give participants moments of affirmation and visibility, offering a sense of pride, accomplishment, and public recognition that is deeply meaningful.

Operationally, the gallery is also a financial and strategic asset. Long-term peppercorn rent allows the organisation to maximise use of both floors, hosting three exhibitions at once, as well as workshops and training. The space attracts external hires including film and TV shoots, corporate events, cultural events, weddings, bringing in significant earned income. (One shoot brought in £10,000 in a week.)

Rather than treating these as separate strands, Belfast Exposed increasingly treats them as interconnected assets. Exhibitions build reputation; the archive builds authority; community programmes build local trust; the building attracts users. Together they strengthen funding cases and partnerships. Quality is not simply an input or an outcome – it is leverage.

## USING GRANTS ALONGSIDE TRADING GROWTH

Belfast Exposed continues to receive regularly funding from Arts Council Northern Ireland. It has also used grants to fund pilots and engagement with specific groups, such as working the Armed Forces Covenant Fund to work with veterans. However, grant funding in Northern Ireland has proved particularly volatile, with some long-standing funders now placing less priority on Northern Ireland. Especially post-pandemic, the organisation has focused on diversification and increasing trading to bring in unrestricted income.

Alongside grants, Belfast Exposed has been successful in increasing income from trading. These include print sales and image licensing from exhibitions and the archive, space hire and events within the gallery, and workshops drawing on its expertise.

Between 2021 and 2025, Belfast Exposed significantly diversified incomes streams and grew trading income at a much faster rate than grant funding. Trading income more than tripled to over £130,000 in 2025. Meanwhile grant income fluctuated. As a result, trading income rose from just 12% of grant funding in 2021 to 48% by 2025.

Income comes from trading based on the archives, photographic prints and books, but also on venue hires and training. Trading is pursued where it flows from or supports the mission and makes practical sense.

### **INVESTING IN SKILLS, PEOPLE, AND SHARED LEARNING**

The organisation has deliberately invested in the skills of its staff, freelancers, and participants. The development of therapeutic photography required a deeper understanding of wellbeing, trauma-informed practice, facilitation, and reflective methods. Recognising

a shortage of trained practitioners, the organisation created a “train the trainers” offer to build capacity while generating income in participant fees. This process has already identified new facilitators, some who began as members of the groups and workshops. Staff are encouraged to prioritise training and development, as it deepens the ability to create value and income.

#### **What this shows about resourcefulness**

- A clear artistic purpose strengthens funding, partnerships and income.
- Different grant types serve different functions.
- Trading works well when it flows from assets created through practice.
- Buildings can generate revenue and public value.
- Staff expertise is key and requires investment.

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## Blind Tiger

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“What artists need to remind themselves to be is general creative thinkers... don't focus too much on your creative skill. Focus on your creative mindset.”

**Mike McGrother, founder Blind Tiger**

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### FROM CREATIVE CATALYST TO COMMUNITY

Blind Tiger is an example of a creative founder working with an established arts organisation to create a partnership structure that facilitates and enables their own work, and that of the people they work alongside. Resourcefulness becomes a collective quality.

Musician and community activist Mike McGrother developed Blind Tiger to bring together a set of programmes tackling isolation, strengthen social connection and mental wellbeing by helping communities reconnect with who they are.

Blind Tiger is formally a Community Interest Company but acts as a central point around which other activities supporting mental wellbeing can orbit. It now works with a shifting circle of freelancers, volunteers and partners. From that, multiple strands have grown: choirs, walking groups, youth work, training, pop-ups. Each emerged from relationships and context.

### BORROWED INFRASTRUCTURE AS A STRATEGIC CHOICE

Blind Tiger shows how creative mindset, partnerships and light infrastructure can generate sustained activity without heavy organisational machinery. The infrastructure resources at play here can be seen as

distributed across three strands, held together by trust, with each strand strengthening the others.

Blind Tiger is the creative catalyst and development driver. It works in partnership with ARC, an arts centre in Stockton-on-Tees where Mike has an office base and where he regularly works and performs. ARC, on a retainer basis, holds the finance functions and provides marketing, space and management support. The arrangement reduces the need for Blind Tiger to build its own administrative apparatus. This makes positive use of ARC's capacity as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and an anchor institution in Stockton.

Alongside those two strands has grown volunteer activity instigated by participants in projects. The Infant Hercules choir is the most regularly visible part of the activity, meeting weekly in a local pub, which has increasingly made its mental wellbeing aspect more explicit. Men join to sing. Over time, singing builds confidence and belonging. Some then want to do things such as organise walks, start conversations, create new activity. Rather than centralise everything under Blind Tiger, volunteers have formed their own unincorporated association ("The Pals") to run projects. Blind Tiger provides light-touch support: risk assessment, safeguarding, occasional fundraising help, and some creative support as they generate offers such as karaoke in pop-up pubs in residential homes (mirroring in some ways its own relationship with ARC).

### CREATIVE SKILLS USED FLEXIBLY

Beyond this the team is mostly freelance and has grown naturally and incrementally. A mental health nurse who is also a magician. A former impact specialist who is also a scout leader. People are brought in because of the

strengths they carry, rather than traditional recruitment. This has allowed the organisation to strengthen its capacity for working with mental health.

The mental health nurse brings the ability to recognise triggers and manage risk in community settings, allowing work to happen in residential homes and other sensitive spaces without the founder always present.

### **CREATIVE MINDSET AS THE CORE ASSET**

With its roots in one artist's community and place-based practice, Blind Tiger illustrates a distinction between creative artform skills and mental health or wellbeing expertise, and broader creative and community development mindsets.

Mike McGrother argues that artists should focus more on creative mindset than artform skills, at least in the context of growing work like this. The task is not to ask others to adopt your artform logic or standards. It is to understand what people facing mental health problems, isolation or problems in their neighbourhood might want to change, or to understand what partners and commissioners like councils, prisons or universities are trying to achieve.

For Blind Tiger mental health sits in the context of community, and a fundamental curiosity about what happens when different groups meet. The singing and performance are in a way the space in which that community happens.

#### **What this shows about resourcefulness**

- Founders (and others) can borrow or share infrastructure and capacity instead of building it.
- Creative mindset (more than artform skills) as transferable asset.
- Mutual support can spread impact and create value.
- Applying your resources to others' situations and mindsets creates opportunity.

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# Chilli Studios

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“You can’t get too over excited about potential. You need to be entrepreneurial enough to try anything and grounded enough to stop when it isn’t working.”

**Bob Malpiedi, Chilli Studios**

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## A STUDIO BEFORE AN ORGANISATION

Chilli Studios was founded in 2004 to deliver access to a physical studio space in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and a belief that people experiencing mental health challenges needed somewhere consistent, safe and creatively serious to work. The organisation grew slowly from a base next to a church and homeless charity.

Chilli Studios was never primarily a project-delivery organisation. It is a place-based model, where continuity and long-term relationships are as important as any individual workshop or output.

## SPACE AS PRIMARY ASSET

The studio itself is Chilli Studios’ most significant resource. Renting a large, flexible space within a supportive landlord arrangement allows the organisation to offer dedicated studio areas, specialist equipment (including music and ceramics), and a stable environment participants can rely on week after week.

While the rent is a substantial fixed cost, it comes with inclusive utilities and caretaking, reducing volatility. The space also functions as a visible hub within a wider wellbeing ecosystem in Newcastle, increasing footfall, partnerships and informal referrals.

This reflects a strategic choice: accepting higher fixed costs in exchange for deep, long-term impact and a strong sense of belonging. In resource terms, the studio is both infrastructure and identity.

## MEMBERSHIP AS A MODEST BUT MEANINGFUL INCOME STREAM

Chilli Studios operates a membership model where participants contribute a subsidised monthly fee if they can afford it. While this income does not cover core costs, it generates unrestricted income and reduces dependence on grants.

For participants with personal budgets, higher fees are charged, though these are relatively rare. The organisation has consciously avoided over-investing in chasing personal health budgets, recognising the administrative burden and uneven access across mental health services.

## PEOPLE AS LONG-TERM ASSETS

Chilli Studios’ work depends heavily on long-standing relationships with artists, facilitators and participants. Many people stay involved for years, gradually developing skills, confidence and informal leadership.

The organisation has formalised this through “therapeutic enabler” roles, where participants who are ready are paid to support delivery. This reduces reliance on external freelancers, embeds lived experience within delivery, and creates progression pathways that feel safe and achievable.

These roles are often funded through grants framed around employability, progression or peer support, demonstrating how existing practice can be reframed to unlock resources without changing its essence.

## TRADING EXPERIMENTS (AND KNOWING WHEN TO STOP)

Chilli Studios has experimented with trading activities, including a café, creative products and subscription boxes post-pandemic. Some of these generated income and visibility but others proved labour-intensive and difficult to sustain.

What stands out is the organisation's willingness to stop activities that no longer made sense. Rather than persisting out of pride or sunk cost, Chilli Studios treated these experiments as learning opportunities. Trading remains part of the mix, but not at the expense of core studio work.

## GRANTS AS LONG-TERM STABILISERS

For many years, Chilli Studios benefited from repeated National Lottery funding, providing a degree of stability. When that funding ended, however, the organisation faced a sharp adjustment, including redundancies and a reduction in turnover.

In response, it diversified modestly and secured several smaller health grants. It also strengthened membership income, and restructured its staffing, with a number of redundancies. This period reinforced the importance of not allowing any single income stream to dominate the model entirely.

### What this shows about resourcefulness

- The value of studio-based models where place and continuity are central.
- How physical space, modest contributions and long-term relationships can combine the value of membership income as a cultural as well as financial tool.
- The importance of membership models rooted in trust and mutuality.
- Permission to experiment – and to stop.

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## Choirs for Good

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“If you’re really clear on your why, it’s okay to treat it like a business.”

Ruth Haugen, Choirs for Good

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### BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE ARTS AND MENTAL HEALTH OFFER WITHOUT LOSING YOUR VALUES

Choirs for Good is a Wales-based social enterprise founded in 2020 by five experienced community choir leaders. Before forming the organisation, each had worked extensively in arts and health, running choirs for people affected by cancer, neurological conditions and long-term physical and mental health issues. These groups were deeply valued, yet often financially fragile, being typically free or very low cost at the point of access or heavily reliant on donations. At the same time, the founders recognised that more commercial choir models, while financially stable, were often inaccessible to the very people who benefited most from arts-based wellbeing support.

The pandemic exposed this tension dramatically. Singing was halted, organisations paused, and freelancers saw work disappear. For the founders, it underscored a longstanding issue: community choirs delivering genuine social impact lacked sustainable structures. Choirs for Good emerged from a shared belief that a way was possible that balanced financial sustainability with social purpose and high quality delivery without pricing people out or relying indefinitely on grant funding.

### A MIXED MODEL BUILT ON MEMBERSHIP AND MISSION

Today, Choirs for Good runs 12 weekly community choirs across Wales and South West England, involving more than 500 participants. Eight freelance choir leaders are employed for 48 weeks of the year, creating dependable, regular work – an intentional departure from traditional term-based models. The artistic offer is simple and consistent: high-quality, inclusive choirs that support wellbeing, confidence and social connection.

Rather than using grants to subsidise free access, Choirs for Good uses a subscription model alongside strategic grant support. Members pay £16.99 per month – around £4.25 per session – with a 50% discount for people on Universal Credit. The team is clear that this pricing approach supports dignity and belonging: the choir is not framed as a charitable “free service”, but as a valuable activity that remains affordable.

Subscriptions are key to the organisation’s income, alongside income from one-off events, corporate work, charity partnerships and targeted grant funding. Together, these streams create a balanced model that supports day-to-day delivery while enabling innovation and development.

### USING MONEY AS A TOOL, NOT A DRIVER

A central mindset shift for the founders has been acknowledging that financial sustainability is essential to achieving their mission. Clarity about their purpose allows them to treat the organisation like a business without compromising values. This philosophy shapes their approach to income. Subscriptions generate relatively predictable, unrestricted income. This allows grant funding to be used to test and de-risk new ideas, not to keep

ongoing activity afloat. The founders' collective expertise is a resource in its own right, and their networks and relationships lead to partnerships that support experimentation.

### **PARKINSINGS: GRANTS FOR GAME-CHANGING**

This approach is best illustrated by *ParkinSings*, a programme developed with Parkinson's UK Cymru. The project began not with a funding bid but with a simple question: Was there an existing offer for people with Parkinson's in Wales, and could a choir be sustained long-term without becoming reliant solely on grants?

A £15,000 Arts Council Wales Arts & Health National Lottery grant funded a "test and learn" phase with a strong evaluation component creating valuable data. Participants were asked not only about wellbeing outcomes but also about their willingness to pay. All participants said they would pay for a future choir, suggesting price points between £2.50 and £10 per session, validating Choirs for Good's existing model. This evidence helped secure a second development grant to run a longer programme exploring and helping transition toward a paid model.

### **WHAT THEY ARE STILL WORKING ON**

Choirs for Good are clear that they are still developing. Only one person is currently paid to work on development and impact, with directors contributing significant unpaid time. While subscriptions are working, building the remaining 40% of income takes time, skills and upfront investment.

#### **What this shows about resourcefulness**

- Skills and confidence and proven demand are important resources.
- Charging can support inclusion, but market-testing is crucial.
- Grants can be used to test and de-risk new offers.
- Evaluation and user data (such as willingness to pay) can inform strategic decisions.
- Diverse income takes time to build.

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## Company Chameleon

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“ [Movement For Mind] brings money into the organisation, but it goes straight back out into delivering the project. But where it adds value is it allows my team to be upskilled. It allows my team to be supported. These kind of things might sound a bit intangible, but maybe they're not. ”

**Kevin Edward Turner, Artistic Director,  
Company Chameleon**

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### MOVEMENT FOR MIND: DANCE EXPERTISE PLUS LIVED EXPERIENCE

Company Chameleon is a contemporary dance company based in Manchester, founded in 2007 by Kevin Edward Turner and Anthony Missen. Alongside national and international touring, the company runs a dance hub offering opportunities for professional dancers, young people, and local communities.

A key strand of its work is *Movement for Mind*, a programme rooted in artistic practice and in Turner's lived experience of mental health challenges.

Through a private partnership with the Cooperative Academies Trust in Greater Manchester, the company was commissioned to make its first creative health project in schools. Two performance works, “Witness” and “Witness This” were created in response to a crisis Turner experienced as a young man, the latter commissioned by Without Walls. Creating these pieces revealed the potential of dance to initiate conversations young people were otherwise not having.

Turner became determined to offer something he lacked growing up: honest, supported spaces where young people could explore mental health safely with trusted adults. The resulting programmes bring dance and mental health-focussed discussions into schools through a series of workshops and optional performance sharings.

### USING RELATIONSHIPS TO ENHANCE TEAM EXPERIENCE AND GUIDE DELIVERY

As Movement For Mind developed, Turner faced a key question: “What training do my team need to do this safely?”

The team were not mental health professionals. Artistic skill and goodwill alone could not safeguard participants or protect staff wellbeing. Recognising this gap, Turner sought specialist collaboration, forming a partnership with 42nd Street, a Manchester youth mental health organisation with whom they already had good working relationships. From that partnership grew robust systems of clinical supervision, reflective practice, and access to counselling built directly into project budgets. Every session has a mental health professional present.

As *Movement For Mind* expanded, the team used data from Greater Manchester's “Be Well” survey to identify 10 schools across 10 boroughs where the programme could have the most impact. But relationships, not just data, shaped delivery. Company Chameleon invested time in building trust, working collaboratively with staff, and tailoring activity to the specific wellbeing needs of each school community.

Company Chameleon's long-term partnerships with schools, health providers, local authorities, arts organisations, and international collaborators generate repeat opportunities, early invitations to new projects, shared

understanding of values and methods, and ultimately better processes for young people. They are built on consistency, openness, and reliability.

## AN INTERNATIONAL OUTLOOK AND MARKET

Although its core relationships and its roots are in Greater Manchester, Company Chameleon has always worked national and internationally. In fact, nearly 70% of performances in 2024-25 took place outside the UK.

These global partnerships naturally expanded the reach of *Movement For Mind*. An early pilot was delivered with Munich-based partner Focus Tanz, followed by a week-long compressed version of the programme in Bogotá, Colombia in 2025. International delivery was not driven by ambitions of scale but by relationships of mutual trust. This has also contributed modestly to income growth.

## HIDDEN ASSETS: PRACTICE AS EXPERTISE

Over time, Company Chameleon has reframed itself as not a provider of “dance sessions” but as a partner offering insight, facilitation skills, and reflective capacity within complex systems. These intellectual and relational assets may not appear on a standard balance sheet, but they significantly shape what the company achieves and how it does it.

The company blends grant income, including core Arts Council England NPO funding, with earned income from training, consultancy and facilitation. *Movement For Mind* has also been supported by the Baring Foundation and others. Importantly, the company has avoided over-commodifying its work or scaling beyond the team’s capacity. Traded activity is shaped around what the team can deliver sustainably, protecting quality and staff wellbeing.

### What this shows about resourcefulness

- Intellectual and relational assets can diversify income without compromising values.
- Time invested in articulating and protecting core practice pays off.
- Expertise is a valuable and renewable resource.
- Grants and trading can coexist when grounded in a clear practice.
- Sustainability can be strengthened by intentional growth.

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# Compass Community Arts

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“Time is the absolute critical thing with this.”

Fenya Sharkey, Compass Community Arts

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## AVOIDING THE GAPS OF A FAILING SYSTEM

Based in Eastbourne, Compass Arts is an intergenerational artist-led organisation for people vulnerable to social isolation, trauma, mental illness and hidden disabilities. Founded in 1998, Compass was initially influenced by the disability arts movement and began its focus on mental health with a specific insight informed by that background. Many people fell through gaps created by time-limited projects, clinical pathways and short-term funding. They needed time, continuity and a place to belong without pressure to “move on”.

Rather than designing a programme better suited to existing funding structures than their users, Compass shaped its work around this need. Currently nine interdisciplinary artists deliver a weekly programme across several sites, free of charge to participants.

## TIME AS A RESOURCE

Compass treats time as its core resource. It is open year-round with weekly rhythms and predictable activity. Participants can attend for years, not weeks or months, without being discharged or reclassified. This challenges conventional funding logic to create a different form of value. Compass does not measure success by throughput, but by sustained engagement and gradual change as people build trust, agency and creative identity. This means Compass constantly has to create

time by managing costs, sharing spaces, and building internal capacity rather than buying it with grant-sustained budgets.

## SPACE WITHOUT OWNERSHIP OR RENT

One of Compass’s striking and radical design choices is how studio space is central to activity, without the burden of long-term overhead costs. Instead, the strategic approach builds on relationships and partnerships with host community organisations, landowners and partners who provide space in exchange for creative contribution, aesthetic enhancement or social value. This protects flexibility and enables delivery despite any ups and downs in funding. When the Turner Prize was hosted in Eastbourne at the Towner Gallery, Compass were sponsored by The Beacon shopping centre to be part of an associated programme across the town.

This arrangement turns space into a relational resource rather than a liability requiring regular investment. It also allows Compass to design environments that feel like real studios, not mental health service rooms, reinforcing artistic identity and dignity.

At times this has meant operating as a nomadic organisation, moving studios when necessary. Compass has judged this element of instability preferable to being locked into overheads which require constant fundraising.

## PEER LEADERSHIP AS INTEGRAL

Compass’s model includes trained peers with lived experience of mental ill health who co-deliver activity, support others and shape the organisation’s direction. These roles are vocational positions within a protected system, not stepping stones to employment.

By investing in peer training in mental health, neurodiversity and supervision, Compass reduces reliance on external professionals while embedding knowledge within the organisation. This allows Compass to operate year-round on comparatively low financial turnover. Human experience and trust function as a core resource.

### **EXCHANGING VALUE, NOT EXTRACTING IT**

Compass has developed a reciprocal model of value exchange. In return for free or low-cost space, participants contribute creative work to host communities through public art, exhibitions, or environmental enhancements.

This is not volunteering in the traditional sense. It is framed as mutual value creation, avoiding the stereotype of disabled or ill people being forced into unpaid labour while reinforcing agency and dignity.

The organisation has extended this approach into galleries and exhibitions, creating a high level of public visibility without owning venues or paying hire fees. Since 2021, funding has come from East Sussex County Council to develop co-production with participants that generates data to better inform policy makers and partners.

### **OPERATING BETWEEN SYSTEMS**

Compass draws on asset-based community development, peer-led practice and systems thinking. By rethinking time, space, labour and value, the organisation has built a model that survives on relatively little grant funding but much trust, skill and mutual commitment. It shows that resourcefulness can include redesigning the system you operate within.

The structural boundaries of funding systems for arts, health and community development systems, however, can make it difficult to achieve investment. Compass work between and across those systems, to serve people with mental health problems, and the model could expand and develop with greater investment. As Project Director Fenya Sharkey puts it: “survival is not sufficiency”.

#### **What this shows about resourcefulness**

- The courage to design around people’s needs rather than funding norms.
- The power of reciprocal relationships over transactional ones.
- The importance of peer leadership as infrastructure.
- Partnerships as a means to reimagine common ways of working that don’t work for you.

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# darts

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“We’ve spent years building trust and being generous with our time. That’s why, when opportunities emerge, people think of us. That’s what unlocks the funding.”

**Lucy Robertshaw, darts Director (Creative Health)**

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## DEPTH, NOT SPEED OR SPREAD

darts is a long-established arts organisation based in Doncaster, with a 35-year history of programmes across creative health and learning. It has deliberately invested in deep relationships, learning, credibility and infrastructure and then used those assets to unlock funding, influence systems and stabilise delivery.

A critical move was narrowing focus. At one stage darts ran more than 100 different projects in a single year. After reviewing where they were having most impact, they reduced to eight core programmes concentrating on scaling what worked best to reach more people, rather than proliferating new initiatives. Each programme became weekly, year-round, not stop-start, and evidenced its impact so that learning was easy for health professionals to refer into where appropriate.

## ARTISTS AS CORE INFRASTRUCTURE

Unlike many organisations that rely heavily on freelancers, darts employs a core group of artists on PAYE contracts, alongside a wider freelance pool.

This means learning stays inside the organisation. Artists carry insights across programmes – for example, adapting approaches developed for Long Covid into work on chronic pain. Skills and knowledge become

renewable assets rather than disappearing at the end of a contract. It also builds trust with commissioners. Health partners know darts will still be there next year, delivering consistently.

The trade-off is financial risk: salaried staff must be paid whether contracts are won or not. darts manages this through careful programme planning and by using Arts Council England and City of Doncaster Council core funding to protect development time. Although only 15% of turnover, this core funding helps unlock larger contracts and research income by giving the organisation capacity to plan, learn and build relationships.

## NETWORKS AS RESOURCE

One of darts’ most distinctive contributions is hosting the Doncaster Creative Health Board. The Board holds no money and commissions nothing directly. Its value lies in relationships which generate learning and opportunities.

The Creative Health Board brings together senior health professionals, commissioners, council officers and arts organisations to act as a collective advocacy mechanism, and to build shared language and narratives. Emerging informally after the All Party Parliamentary Group on Creative Health published a major report in 2017, the Board now includes 19 strategic leaders and meets monthly. darts also helped establish the South Yorkshire Creative Health Board and an online Learning Network. darts invests staff time to convene and chair the Board because it creates long-term strategic opportunities.

A tangible outcome has already emerged: Doncaster Council has begun shaping public health tenders to require a percentage of creative or physical activity. This slow, relationship-based work builds long-term change rather than one-off wins.

## RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

darts works with universities including Leeds, Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam. Long-term relationships allow research questions to be shaped jointly, with learning translated directly into programme design.

Crucially, research funding pays for staff time. Currently two days a week of the Creative Health Director role is paid for from UKRI research funding, as part of a UKRI Creative Health Board programme with the Universities of Sheffield and Sheffield Hallam.

This has been transformative: research is no longer an added burden but part of core work, generating networks, credibility and future income. Learning from research strengthens future bids, improves delivery and builds commissioner confidence.

## BUILDINGS AS COST AND OPPORTUNITY

darts owns its building, The Point, in central Doncaster. This is a major asset and a large responsibility. It provides visibility, accessibility and a base for partners, but also requires ongoing investment.

Recent capital funding to decarbonise the building has reduced long-term running costs and aligned with environmental goals. Parts of the building are rented to aligned organisations, generating income and shared value.

The building is infrastructure that supports programmes, partnerships, reputation and financial resilience. It also gives darts the space and ability to test and develop approaches to Creative Health and Creative Learning.

### What this shows about resourcefulness

- Long-term presence in networks and communities leads to opportunity.
- Employing artists as core staff retains learning and builds trust.
- Research partnerships can generate both insight and income.
- Insights can be applied across programmes, turning experience into transferable knowledge.
- Small amounts of unrestricted funding unlock much larger sums by protecting time for development and relationship building.

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# Hospital Rooms

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“I think the key to success is leverage: get one grant or donation in... don't be too grateful. How can I make that 20? How can I make that 50? ”

**Niamh White, Co-founder and CEO,  
Hospital Rooms**

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## STARTING SMALL, LEARNING FAST

Tim A Shaw and Niamh White founded Hospital Rooms after being shocked at the environments a friend experienced when admitted to a mental health hospital. Since 2016 they have collaborated with NHS trusts and major artists to transform mental health environments with high-quality artworks.

As Co-founder and CEO Niamh White reflected, they started with “a lot of spirit” and a belief that they would never receive Arts Council funding. Yet over ten years they moved from a £13,000 project grant to prove the concept to National Portfolio status and nationally significant grants. Turnover is expected to pass £2 million in 2025-2026.

What changed was not simply income level. It was their ability to understand, sequence and combine different kinds of resources – financial, relational, reputational and intellectual – without losing control of their core purpose. Demand, ever since that first project, has been a foundation of growth.

Rather than leaping to scale, Hospital Rooms used each layer of funding to build organisational capacity: fundraising and income generation knowledge, administrative infrastructure, relationships with artists and galleries, and governance maturity. Strategic

use of grant funding helped strengthen systems and core staffing at key points, rather than simply enabling delivery.

## LEVERAGE DEMAND AND FUNDING

At the beginning, some NHS trusts told them directly: “You will never get a penny from us”. Over time, though, something shifted. Hospital Rooms noticed a supply-and-demand imbalance. Trusts were approaching them with serious environmental and cultural problems in mental health settings. Demand was growing; their capacity was limited.

Rather than chasing opportunities, Hospital Rooms inverted the typical model: Trusts must apply to them and make a financial contribution (often from estates or capital budgets, or from hospital charities, rather than revenue funding) to every project. This flipped the power dynamic. The organisation stopped acting like a supplier in search of customers and started acting like a specialist partner.

Over time, income from NHS trusts grew from zero to six figures. That was used to leverage in other funds and partners. A leverage mindset runs through the approach: “How could this money multiply?”

## TRADING USING CULTURAL CAPITAL

The pandemic threatened the organisation's survival. In response, they developed a trading model inspired by artist Wolfgang Tillmans' print sales during the pandemic. Early poster releases raised around £50,000 quickly. They later worked with world-class artists such as Anish Kapoor and Cornelia Parker.

The model is simple but strategic. A highly-regarded artist makes work which Hospital Rooms sell at an accessible price point via a simple e-commerce route with efficient fulfilment.

Importantly, trading adjusts to market changes. When sales slow, Hospital Rooms tighten scarcity by removing editions that do not sell quickly. They are conscious of the risk of relying on commercial trading. When their annual auction began to represent 40% of income, they recognised the vulnerability and budgeted to reduce dependency.

Intellectual property, relationships and reputation are vital assets to the organisation. Hospital Rooms' access to major artists, and their understanding of art markets, help the model work. They understood not only how to ask artists, and why they want to support the cause, but the reputational and market risks artists face – and addressed those risks directly.

### **A MIXED MODEL, AT SCALE**

Hospital Rooms have not abandoned grants or turned wholly to trading, or philanthropic support from artists and collectors via the annual auctions of donated work, or corporate partnerships such as that with Hauser and

Wirth. Their NPO grant was 7% of turnover in 2024-2025, with other grants forming around 40% of income. They combine grants, health contributions, trading, philanthropy and are adjusting constantly. Their resourcefulness lies not in a single innovation, but in disciplined evolution.

There is no expectation that income streams will continue unchanged. Instead, they rebalance depending on the external environment, tightening health sector messaging when the system weakens, strengthening philanthropy or trading when markets allow.

### **What this shows about resourcefulness**

- Agency built on demand and skill increases control.
- Sequencing of growth is strategic.
- Scarcity and clarity create value.
- Leverage multiplies money for mutual benefit.
- Crisis can accelerate evolution if governance and leadership are steady.

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# Mental Fight Club

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“ We are a small charity and work to maximise impact, we want to empower people, not create something they’d rely on five days a week and didn’t take on a building as we use community spaces. ”

Grace Smith, Mental Fight Club

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## REMOVING BARRIERS

Mental Fight Club began with a simple but radical idea: that people living with mental ill health needed access to creative, social spaces without diagnosis, referral or payment. From its earliest pop-up events through to the long-running Dragon Café, the organisation has prioritised openness. Anyone can turn up, take part and belong.

This starting point has shaped every resource decision Mental Fight Club has made. Rather than building a service that people must navigate, it has focused on removing friction: no buildings to manage, no fees to pay, no clinical thresholds to cross. That choice creates funding challenges, but it also unlocks distinctive forms of resourcefulness.

## POP-UP DELIVERY AS A DELIBERATE MODEL

Mental Fight Club has never sought to own or lease permanent premises. Instead, it operates through pop-up delivery in libraries, community venues and partner spaces. This is not a temporary compromise but a strategic choice.

By working in spaces like public libraries, Mental Fight Club avoids fixed overheads and benefits from existing staffing and infrastructure. Operating in everyday civic

environments also reduces stigma. Participants can say they are “going to the library” rather than attending a mental health event.

## PARTNERSHIPS THAT REDUCE COST AND INCREASE REACH

Partnerships are the backbone of Mental Fight Club’s model. Relationships with libraries, community centres, borough-based organisations and faith groups provide space, staff support and local credibility. Partners may lead on grant applications where eligibility requires local presence, with Mental Fight Club delivering activity.

This approach turns partnership into a cost-efficient strategy as well as a funding pathway. Rather than duplicating infrastructure, Mental Fight Club plugs into what already exists. The organisation remains flexible, with just a handful of part-time staff because much of the operational load is shared.

## GRANTS AS STABILISERS

Mental Fight Club continues to utilise grant funding, including long-term funding from a small number of funders with whom good relationships have developed. These grants provide stability but are deliberately structured to taper over time, pushing the organisation to diversify rather than become dependent.

What’s notable is how grants are used: not to scale up activity dramatically, but to stabilise delivery, extend audiences and participation, and invest in relationships that will outlast the funding. This reflects a mature understanding of grants as time-limited enablers rather than permanent solutions.

## CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP ROOTED IN PLACE

Mental Fight Club arguably benefits from its geography in terms of attracting corporate support, being based in central London. This gives access to business improvement districts, livery companies and corporates with a clear interest in visible, local social impact.

The organisation's sponsorship ask is modest and specific: a small number of corporate partners contributing manageable sums. This clarity makes the proposition realistic and reduces dependence on any single donor.

## VOLUNTEERS AS ACTIVE CAPACITY

Volunteers play a significant role in Mental Fight Club's delivery, supporting activities and helping create a welcoming atmosphere. Importantly, volunteers are not used to replace paid roles or mask underfunding. Instead, they add capacity where appropriate, allowing paid staff to focus on coordination, safeguarding and partnership development.

This careful use of volunteering avoids common pitfalls around burnout and exploitation, while strengthening community ownership of the work.

## STAYING SMALL TO STAY ACCESSIBLE

Mental Fight Club is ambitious to maximise its impact through its model. With just a few part-time staff, it has maintained a model that is responsive, relational and cost effective. Scaling up has been through developing relationships, collaborative working and partnerships.

The organisation focuses on consistency: showing up every week, in community places, over many years. That reliability is itself a resource for people living with long-term mental ill health.

### What this shows about resourcefulness

- The power of pop-up models as ongoing strategies.
- Using civic spaces to reduce stigma and cost.
- Treating corporate sponsorship as relationship-building, not fundraising theatre.
- Prioritising cost effectiveness over growth can help sustainability.

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# Skippko

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“For an organisation that doesn't have a recent track history of subsidy, the idea of having a fund that gives us £130,000 a year... makes a huge difference.”

**Arthur Stafford, Skippko**

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## POP-UPS AS LOW-COST INTELLIGENCE ENGINE

Founded in 1988 by two artists in Holbeck, Leeds, Skippko began as a visual arts organisation working with people often excluded from mainstream cultural provision. It continues to develop experimental projects that foster deep participant engagement. Pop-up projects are central to Skippko's resourcefulness. These small, low-risk interventions allow the organisation to test new approaches, reach different communities and gather robust qualitative and quantitative data.

Crucially, this evidence is actively used in funding bids to major funders such as the National Lottery Community Fund where detailed local insight strengthens credibility. In this way, pop-ups operate as research and development, funded through modest project income rather than dedicated R&D budgets.

## ARTISTS AS A CORE OPERATIONAL RESOURCE

Another defining feature of Skippko's model is its relationship with artists. Skippko works with 12 highly experienced practitioners who are both strong artists and skilled facilitators. They are trusted to self-manage much of their delivery, enabling a very small core staff team to oversee substantial activity.

Artists are paid for meetings and planning time, which increases costs but builds long-term commitment and quality. They contribute directly to shaping projects and funding applications, strengthening both artistic and social credibility. This approach turns human relationships into a strategic asset, reducing the need for heavier management structures.

## DATA, DETAIL AND CREDIBILITY

Data about local deprivation, health inequalities and participation is actively researched and woven into applications. This blend of creative ambition and forensic detail lifts applications “off the floor”, contributing to a funding success rate of around 70%.

Grants have been used as gamechangers. In 2023 Skippko was awarded three years of funding from the National Lottery Community Fund. This provided around £130,000 a year of which £32,000 was full cost recovery which made a big difference financially. Postcode Neighbourhood Trust have recent given £50,000 in unrestricted income.

## PROPERTY AS AN INCOME-GENERATING ASSET (WITHOUT OWNING BUILDINGS)

One of Skippko's most distinctive resources is its use of empty commercial properties through meanwhile-use arrangements. Acting as an intermediary between landlords and artists, Skippko takes buildings, enabling landlords to benefit from mandatory charitable rate relief. In return, landlords make a financial contribution to Skippko in the form of a donation. It currently has properties in Harrogate, Knaresborough, Norwich, York, Shipley, Bingley and Northallerton.

The “Blank Canvas” scheme generates funds that are not tied to specific projects and can support core costs and experimentation. In recent years this has been up to £60,000.

However, this income is deliberately treated as volatile. It rises and falls with availability and property markets and relies on negotiation skills and careful due diligence. Skippko does not mistake it for guaranteed revenue but uses it as a flexible supplement to grants.

Here, legal knowledge, confidence in negotiation and understanding of property systems sit productively alongside artistic skills.

### **BALANCING RISK AND RESILIENCE**

Skippko’s resilience rests partly on its acceptance of uncertainty. Pop-ups, short-term property licences and project funding all carry risk, but the organisation mitigates this by avoiding high fixed costs. With a very small core team and flexible delivery structures, Skippko can scale activity up or down without destabilising the whole organisation.

Trustee support has also been critical, particularly during the pandemic, when reserves were deployed to sustain activity rather than retreat. This highlights governance as another often invisible resource: boards that understand risk, trust leadership and support bold but considered decisions.

Skippko’s experience illustrates that sustainability is rarely about a single strategy. It is about layering multiple resources such as skills, trust, data, relationships into a model that can flex as conditions change.

#### **What this shows about resourcefulness**

- Use small or pop-up projects deliberately to generate data and evidence.
- Investing in artists as long-term partners.
- Treat grants as tools for growth and development, not simply project activity.
- Explore mechanisms such rate relief creatively but cautiously.
- Stay small enough to remain agile.

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# Soundcastle

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“When you start something as a founder and it gets bigger and bigger, there is that sense that it’s just going to keep getting bigger. It’s really hard to look at it and be like, oh yeah, we do have to shrink for a bit. I feel a lot of sadness, for individuals that I care about, but I really do see that for the business, this is a positive moment. Whilst it’s a challenging one, it does feel lighter and full of possibility. ”

**Rachael Perrin, Soundcastle**

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## STRONG PRACTICE, GROWING AMBITION

Soundcastle is a music-making charity based in Hastings, East Sussex, that uses creative music projects to build confidence, connection, and wellbeing across the South East of England. Its work is grounded in high-quality facilitation, long-term relationships with participants, and a belief that music can support resilience, connection and recovery in ways that clinical services alone may not.

Soundcastle operated primarily through project funding and quasi-grant contracts for services, and in recent years experienced significant growth, with income reaching £350,000 in 2023-24.

Soundcastle had created the conditions to think seriously about income generation beyond grants and that ambition became a defining feature of its recent journey.

## DELIBERATE INVESTMENT INTO CAPACITY

Soundcastle invested grant income into building internal capacity. By expanding the core team, Soundcastle aimed to free up

leadership time to focus on earned income: consultancy and accredited offers such as Mental Health First Aid training.

The organisation did not treat grants simply as money to deliver with. Instead, it used them to design offers, build systems, and test routes to sustainability. This aligns closely with how grants can function as catalysts for organisational change rather than just delivery funding. However, a major reduction in grant funding in 2025 has necessitated a period of contraction which illustrates a common cycle in many business sectors.

## TRADING CLOSE TO THE MISSION

Soundcastle’s Mental Health First Aid training offer stands out because it connects clearly to the organisation’s existing expertise. Rather than inventing something entirely new, Soundcastle chose a nationally recognised qualification that aligned with its mental health focus, had proven market demand, and could be delivered across sectors, not just within arts and culture.

The training grew steadily, with strong feedback and repeat bookings, particularly from universities, music hubs and peer organisations. However, growth was slower than anticipated. Delivering training well takes time, marketing capacity and networks, particularly when trying to move into corporate spaces where prices are higher, but relationships are harder to access.

This highlights a recurring tension: earning income is not just about having a sellable product, but about having the financial runway to let it mature.

## WHAT GOES UP MAY COME DOWN

As the funding environment became more competitive, Soundcastle’s grant success rate fell sharply. This exposed a structural

vulnerability: the organisation had increased fixed costs in anticipation of diversified income that had not yet fully materialised.

The result has been a painful but carefully managed contraction. The team had been 16 people at its largest, and is currently six, following a mix of fixed term posts coming to an end, staff leaving to pursue other opportunities, and redundancies following the closure of the London programmes and a staff restructure. Strong board and management leadership, transparent internal communication and a commitment to supporting staff through the process have been vital.

Soundcastle's story illustrates that resourceful sustainability is neither static nor linear. Progress involves cycles of expansion, learning and consolidation. Organisations that survive move through those cycles without compromising their purpose and practice.

## REFRAMING SUSTAINABILITY AFTER CONTRACTION

Post-contraction, Soundcastle has refocused on maintaining delivery levels in continuing programmes while reducing administrative complexity. Community music sessions continue, while leadership returns to more hands-on coordination and capacity-building roles.

At the same time, Soundcastle has not abandoned its income diversification efforts. Mental Health First Aid training continues to grow, albeit more cautiously, alongside smaller traded offers. Individual giving has been introduced as a new income stream. This is not yet transformative but adding resilience and reducing reliance on large grants.

### What this shows about resourcefulness

- Use grants intentionally to build capacity, not just deliver activity.
- Design earned-income routes that align closely with existing expertise.
- Trading offers can take time to mature so budget with this in mind.
- Plan for periods of consolidation as well as growth.
- Care for the team is part of good governance and leadership.

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## Space2

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“Having our own space is really important... it's infinitely easier than trying to book out community buildings or church halls.”

Sarah Tolkin, Space2

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### STARTING POINT: GROWING FROM PLACE AND RELATIONSHIPS

Space2 began in 2003 as arts activity within a primary school and gradually grew outward into the surrounding community in East Leeds. That early embeddedness shaped the organisation's trajectory: Space2 developed not as a mobile project-based organisation, but as a locally grounded one, with long-term relationships at its core.

Over time, Space2 moved into a permanent base at nearby Gipton Fire Station, a community-owned building with a café and shared spaces. This shift did more than provide a roof. It positioned Space2 as part of a wider local ecosystem, sharing infrastructure, visibility and informal support with other organisations. The building itself became a resource. Although it is not owned, it is actively leveraged.

### PREMISES AS A PLATFORM

Space2's use of space is a good example of how physical infrastructure can be a resource without becoming a liability. Renting from a community enterprise rather than a commercial landlord allows the organisation to access affordable, stable space. This creates opportunities to hire out rooms and sublet office space to other organisations.

This generates modest earned income and offsets overheads, but just as importantly, it embeds Space2 within a network of mutual reliance. The building functions as a shared asset rather than a cost centre. This aligns closely with thinking around infrastructure as a form of social capital.

### CONSORTIA AS A ROUTE TO SCALE AND STABILITY

One of Space2's most significant resources is its participation in the Orion Consortium. This partnership enables several similarly sized organisations to bid collectively for public health contracts that would be out of reach individually.

The consortium model spreads risk, increases credibility with commissioners and allows each partner to focus on what they do best. Importantly, it operates largely as a back-office structure: service users experience continuity of provision without needing to understand the consortium itself.

This approach illustrates how collaboration can substitute for growth. Rather than scaling up internally, Space2 scales through partnership, maintaining its organisational identity while accessing larger funding streams.

### PUBLIC HEALTH CONTRACTS AS WORKFORCE INFRASTRUCTURE

Space2's public health contracts are a critical stabilising resource. Unlike short-term project grants, these contracts support staffing costs and provide multi-year income. Around half of the organisation's workforce is aligned to this funding, creating a core of relative security within an otherwise project-funded environment.

However, this stability comes with complexity: KPIs, reporting requirements and retendering cycles introduce ongoing uncertainty. Space2 manages this by accepting fluctuation as normal and consciously resisting pressure to grow beyond what it can realistically sustain.

For Space 2, resourcefulness lies in using contracts to underpin capacity rather than to drive expansion.

### **PARTNERSHIPS AS KNOWLEDGE AND FUNDING PATHWAYS**

Beyond formal contracts, Space2's relationships with universities, cultural institutions and health bodies function as informal resource pipelines. Partnerships with the University of Leeds, for example, provide access to research expertise, funding intelligence, and advocacy within funding systems.

These relationships do not always result in direct income, but they increase Space2's visibility and credibility, making future funding more attainable. This kind of relational resource is slow to build but highly durable.

Space2 demonstrates that resourcefulness can be collective. Instead of relying on individual ingenuity alone, it shows how shared

infrastructure, pooled credibility and long-term relationships can unlock resources that no single organisation could access independently.

### **RIGHT-SIZING AS A STRATEGIC CHOICE**

Space2 now has 10-12 staff. Rather than seeing this as a limitation, Co-Director Sarah Tolkin is comfortable with this size: "We like being a small organisation. What we do suits us... The size we are now is the biggest it's ever been in 20 years". Growth would increase management complexity and exposure to funding volatility without necessarily improving impact.

#### **What this shows about resourcefulness**

- Buildings can be platforms for collaboration and income.
- Consortia can help access larger-scale funds without losing identity.
- Public health contracts as capacity-building tools.
- "Right-sizing" as a legitimate strategic position.



The Men's Music for Wellbeing Programme, photo courtesy of Arc Stockport .

## SECTION 5

# 10 potential starting points

BY WAY OF EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/CONCLUSION, HERE ARE 10 POSSIBLE STARTING POINT ACTIONS TO LEAD TO YOUR OWN IDEAS AND PLANS FOR MOBILISING AND GENERATING RESOURCES.

01

**Start with what you already have**

Start with “what are we already rich in?” List your (perhaps hidden) assets: trusted relationships, regular space, a distinctive method, a loyal group. Then think of something new to do with it.

02

**Make one partnership more intentional**

Pick one existing partner and ask: how could we deepen our work together, so it reduces costs, creates income or increases shared value? Or ask this of your participants and communities.

03

**Turn demand into leverage**

If people offer you work or opportunities, pause before saying yes. Pilot a model where they contribute financially or in-kind, even if modestly to begin with. Collect evidence of what works.

04

**Protect your core offer**

Be explicit about what you won't bend. Several organisations grew because they retained agency rather than chasing every tender or reshaping themselves to fit every brief.

05

**Pilot small, then grow**

Run something as a pop-up or a pilot. Test it. Gather evidence and data, to make (or deny) the case for continuation. Refine it. Let confidence build in participants and partners before scaling.

06

**Charge for something**

Even small membership fees or contributions can change how people value the work and diversify income. Ensure alignment with values and participant needs. Test willingness to pay.

07

**Invest in one income experiment**

A book based on your archive. A ticketed event. A corporate sponsor. A training offer. A touring exhibition. A gallery donations point. Design one experiment well and monitor success.

08

**Build one story that travels**

Develop a compelling narrative about your work and why it matters, what's distinctive. This helps with press, partnerships, fundraising and trading.

09

**Put simple governance around growth**

If something starts working, pause and ask: what would happen if this income dropped? Spread risk early rather than after a crisis. Review regularly at team, management and board levels.

10

**Keep your eyes on your why**

Check regularly that activity to diversify income and use of resources is still serving your purpose and is in tune with values. Adjust plans if you start to feel mission drift.



Photo courtesy of Space2,  
Heart to Art programme.

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SECTION 6

**TOOLS, ETC**

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# The Resourcefulness Canvas

## WHAT THIS CANVAS IS FOR

This canvas can help you:

- clarify your distinctive model and how it works;
- distinguish between core practice and things that can change;
- understand which income streams, organisational offers and capacities, and partnership models fit you best;
- name what you need to protect, and where you can adapt;
- have grounded conversations with staff, trustees or partners.

It is not a map to a “correct” model. There are many ways to be resourceful, and resilience or sustainability in arts and mental health work is as much about care and judgement as it is about income.



**You can download an editable ‘Canvas’ from the [Baring Foundation website](#).**

There is an example overleaf on page 52.

## HOW TO USE IT

You do not need to complete every section at once. You might:

- work through it slowly on your own;
- use sections in team discussions or away days;
- revisit it at moments of change or challenge (new funding, growth, contraction);
- use it as part of strategic planning, so your strategies are rooted in your purpose and business model.

Use the questions below as a guide but feel free to adapt and add your own that relate to the themes. Note keywords and phrases only – this is not the space for essays.

You can start anywhere, but we suggest beginning in the left hand side, defining your practice, who you want to work with or for, and your values.

Some sections may feel easier to complete than others. That’s normal – and might tell you something in itself. If something feels hard to answer, ask yourself what might be behind that difficulty. Be honest and creative, rather than wildly optimistic. Remember, the aim is not to create a perfect model, but to understand how your organisation currently works, and how it might become even more resourceful.

## THE QUESTIONS

### Core purpose and practice

- Who and what is this organisation for?
- What kind of creative practice do you offer to serve those with mental health problems?
- Which groups or settings do you work in/serve, and what are their care needs?

### Values

- What are the values or principles that guide your work and shape your purpose?
- What are your ethical and practice red lines?
- What do you protect at all costs?

### People and their skills: creatives, volunteers, peers, staff and governance

- What are your key structures and processes for leadership, management and governance?
- What role do volunteers have in your work?
- Who are your core team (may include freelance artists, mental health workers etc)?

### Relationships, networks and partners

- Who are your key partners? What do you give/receive from the partnerships?
- Who are the people, bodies or places you have strong, positive relationships with?
- What networks are you part of (or could be) that provide support, help or resources or help achieve your mission?

### Physical resources

- What physical spaces do you need to do your work, and will they be owned, rented or borrowed/shared (e.g. via a partnership)?
- What equipment do you need to do your work, and do you own any of it?
- What spaces and/or equipment can you make use of for income or partnership generation, and how would you do that?

### Income streams

- Where does your income come from? (e.g. grants – project, developmental or core, contracts, trading or donations)
- How well does each income stream fit with your values, practice and available capacity?
- What intellectual property, knowledge, formats or data do you have that could generate income (e.g. brand identity, evaluation, sales, training, consultancy)?

### Offers and activities

- What kinds of activities do you offer/develop?
- What work is needed to deliver them?
- What other activities are essential to you: e.g. trading, training, consultancy?

### Costs: money/time out

- What do you need to spend money/time on? (Include 'hidden expenditure' such as unclaimed time-off-in-lieu or unpaid hours worked)
- What can you shrink or expand if needs change?
- How do you invest in the skills and capacity of your people?

## FROM PICTURE TO ASSESSMENT TO ACTION

Once you have a picture of your business you can step back and think about strengths and weaknesses. Here are some useful questions to ask:

- What does this show you about your resourcefulness?
- How well does this model leverage income and other resources?
- Where are you strong and can build or expand?
- Where are you fragile and need to strengthen or change?
- What do you need to invest in next?
- What would you protect if resources shrank?
- What should you stop, start or carry on doing?

From reflection on those questions you can move to action planning or exploring possibilities using the other tools in this section.

## THE RESOURCEFULNESS CANVAS

See 'the questions' on previous page.



An editable version of this table is available to download from the [Baring Foundation website](#).

WHO ARE YOU AND HOW DO YOU WANT TO WORK?	WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU HAVE TO USE?		WHAT ARE YOUR ACTIVITIES AND WHAT DO THEY COST?
Core purpose and practice	People and their skills: creatives, volunteers, peers, staff and governance	Relationships, networks and partners	Offers and activities
Values	Physical resources	Income streams	Costs: money/ time out

# The Trading Decision Tree

## INTRODUCTION

For arts and mental health organisations, decisions about trading are rarely purely financial. They can affect pace, power, care, capacity, identity and relationships.

This tool aims to help you decide what role trading could play in your overall approach.

Remember: there are no right and wrong answers or one-model-suits-all solutions.

## THE TRADING DECISION TREE

### STEP 1:

#### Why are you thinking about trading right now?

Which statement feels closest to your view currently?

- A.** We need more unrestricted income urgently and trading looks a good way
- B.** We believe our practice could translate into a traded offer with little or no compromise
- C.** We already trade but it feels stressful or unstable, so we need to improve
- D.** A funder, partner or board is encouraging us to trade to “become less grant-dependent”
- E.** We’re not sure – it just feels like what we “should” be doing

→ If A, B or C move to STEP 2.

→ If D or E pause here. Before going further, revisit:

- What problem are you actually trying to solve?
- Is trading being used as a proxy for something else (stability, confidence, legitimacy)?
- Are you comfortable charging, pricing confidently and being a in supplier-customer relationships?

→ If still relevant, continue to STEP 2.

### STEP 2:

#### How well does trading align with your core purpose and care model?

Ask:

- Would trading reinforce or distort your core practice?
- Would it change who the work is for and how they access/experience it?
- Would it introduce pressure, pace or outcomes that undermine care?
- Would participants or communities experience this as exploiting their needs?

→ If trading clearly undermines purpose or care, identify how to trade less, or not at all.

Focus instead on grants with better fit, partnership working, cost reduction and protecting what already works. (You can do these as well as trading, of course.)

→ If trading broadly aligns, continue to STEP 3.

**STEP 3:****Do you have the potential to develop a trading offer?**

Consider how resources such as people, skills, products or spaces fit with trading activities.

→ **FILL IN THE TABLE ON PAGE 56**



An editable version of the table is available to download from the [Baring Foundation website](#).

(See also Section 4 for more examples.)

**Be careful of:**

- assuming willingness to pay because people praise the work;
- confusing social need with market demand;
- overestimating what partners can pay;
- under-pricing out of discomfort.

→ **If there is limited demand, weak networks, or no clear paying customer that can deliver a surplus, then trading may not be the right lever right now.**

→ **If there is genuine demand in one or more areas, and good fit with your resources, continue to STEP 4.**

**STEP 4:****Do you have the right kind of capacity for trading?****Ask:**

Do you have resources (or the ability to develop them) in the following areas?

- Marketing and sales
- Follow-up and relationship management
- Admin, contracts, delivery logistics
- Finances to invest in developing a trading offer (e.g. loans, grants, unrestricted reserves)
- Financial leeway for failure or slow growth

**Ask:**

- Who is doing this work *now*?
- What are they *not doing* as a result?
- Is this capacity funded, assumed, or 'borrowed' from goodwill?
- Are you able to carry the financial risks involved in trading (e.g. if income grows slowly)?

→ **If resources are over-stretched, trade differently or pause trading growth.**

This might mean narrowing the offer, stopping pilots or delaying development.

→ **If capacity exists or could be realistically built, then continue to STEP 5.**

**STEP 5:****What has your actual experience of trading been?****Be specific:**

- What have you tried?
- What worked, even partially?
- What didn't work and why?
- What did it cost you in money, time, energy or morale?

→ **If trading has consistently cost more than it returns, then trade less, change model, or stop this form of trading.**

→ **If trading has worked, even in limited, specific ways, then continue to STEP 6.**

**STEP 6:****Sense-checking your trading approach****Ask:**

- Are you trying to grow at a sustainable pace?
- How much are you expecting surplus income from trading to replace grants – and what is your risk tolerance/ability to subsidise if that surplus does not grow as planned?
- Are you comparing yourselves to organisations with similar resources or circumstances?
- If you traded **slightly less**, what would still improve and what would you miss?
- If you traded **slightly differently**, what might open up?
- If you traded **more**, what could be achieved financially and in terms of your mission, and what would be at risk?

→ From there, move to action planning for your specific trading approach.

**CONCLUSION**

It is always possible to trade more, differently or indeed less, depending on your resources, purpose, values and situation. There are few universally right or wrong answers.

**→ Trade more****When:**

- purpose is protected;
- capacity exists;
- learning is positive;
- growth is paced and intentional;
- unrestricted income (surplus) is generated.

**→ Trade differently****When:**

- alignment is good but delivery is costly (i.e. trading is not profitable);
- scale or structure needs adjustment;
- capacity needs protecting;
- learning suggests refinement, not expansion.

**→ Trade less (or pause)****When:**

- costs outweigh benefits and/or income;
- capacity is stretched;
- trading distorts care or practice;
- the organisation needs consolidation.

### THE TRADING DECISION TREE: TABLE FOR STEP 3

→ Fill in the table below when you reach STEP 3 in the Trading Decision Tree (previous page)



An editable version of this table is available to download from the [Baring Foundation website](#).

#### Common trading activities:

- Training (online or in person)
- Workshops (online or in person)
- Consultancy
- Saleable products including digital resources
- Space hires and rentals

<b>TRADING ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
Add your potential activities in the column headers						
Do you have something distinctive people are willing to pay for?						
Is there a clear customer/market in your geography or network?						
Do you have evidence, credibility or relationships to support your offer?						
Have others in similar contexts successfully traded in this way?						
Will this trading bring in more income than it costs to deliver? When?						

---

# The Creative Health Sustainable Choices Canvas

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## INTRODUCTION

Arts and mental health organisations will have ideas and opportunities that look attractive on the surface. It might be an invitation to be part of a project, a trading opportunity, a new space, or a grant scheme with a tight deadline for application or delivery.

This canvas helps you think through a choice before committing. The questions relate not just to finances or creative opportunities, but networks, assets, people and time.

For each area, consider the questions set out below, and note reflections using the blank spaces. Feel free to add further questions that feel pertinent to your situation.

Some areas may be more important to you than more others at different moments in time. For example, if you need to bring in money to balance the budget for the year, it may be worth some temporary strain on people. Alternatively, you may feel that adding to the workload of an already stretched team will create more issues than the money or the increased profile will solve. As ever, there are no universal right or wrong answers, but a balance of risks and benefits unique to your own situation.

## THE QUESTIONS

### Change

**Will this positively evolve how you work or pull you off track?**

- Does it introduce new ways of working that strengthen your creative health practice?
- Will it help you learn something you could not learn otherwise?
- Does it deepen trauma-informed, co-produced or inclusive approaches?
- Will participants or partners gain meaningful insight or capability?

### Practice

**What might this do to your creative practice?**

- Does it stretch your artistic approach in healthy ways?
- Does it build on what you know works?
- Will it allow experimentation, co-creation or innovation?
- Does it introduce you to new communities, artists or disciplines?
- Does it risk compromising quality?

### Networks

**Will this strengthen or strain relationships?**

- Will this deepen relationships with partners, funders or communities?
- Does it open access to new networks that matter?
- Are partners able to commit meaningful time or resources?
- Does it shift power in ways that affect your autonomy?

## Purpose

### Does this serve your core purpose?

- Do you know why you are doing this?
- Does it align with your values?
- Does it strengthen your long-term purpose, not just short-term output?
- Will this leave you more confident, credible or adaptable?

## Assets

### Will this generate assets you can reuse?

- Does it build knowledge you can carry forward?
- Does it strengthen your reputation in helpful circles?
- Does it use up goodwill, energy or trust (internally or externally)?

## Time

### Do you have the capacity to do this well?

- Whose time will this require?
- What will stop or reduce as a result?
- Is it short-term intensity or permanent load?
- Will it unlock future capacity?

## Money

### Is this sustainable and aligned?

- Are there viable income sources in future?
- Is this grant, contract or trading model realistic?
- Does the income cover the true cost (including time and overheads)?
- Might you become over-reliant on one source?
- Could you use money or time more effectively?

## People

### Will participants, staff or partners benefit?

- Will this benefit participants' wellbeing?
- Can you ensure it is inclusive?
- Do you have the right skills in the team, or can you develop them?
- Does it risk burnout or stress?

## DECISION SUMMARY

- What are the strongest positive factors?
- Where are the biggest risks?
- What actions would make this more activity more positive for your sustainability?

### → Based on all factors, the decision is:

- |                               |                               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Proceed | <input type="radio"/> Pause   |
| <input type="radio"/> Adapt   | <input type="radio"/> Decline |

## THE CREATIVE HEALTH SUSTAINABLE CHOICES CANVAS

See 'the questions' on previous page.



An editable version of this table is available to download from the [Baring Foundation website](#).

<b>CHANGE</b>	<b>PRACTICE</b>	<b>NETWORKS</b>	<b>PURPOSE</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>TIME</b>	<b>MONEY</b>	<b>PEOPLE</b>
<b>DECISION SUMMARY</b>		<b>DECISION</b>	
		<p>→ Based on all factors, the decision is:</p> <p> <input type="radio"/> Proceed      <input type="radio"/> Pause  <input type="radio"/> Adapt      <input type="radio"/> Decline         </p>	

---

# Leveraging funding and partnerships

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## INTRODUCTION

A leveraging mindset is the habit of looking at what you already have and asking, “How can this unlock something further?” A grant becomes match funding to draw in a new partner. A trusted relationship becomes a doorway to a new commissioner. A building becomes a trading asset. A successful project becomes evidence to influence policy.

This can help reduce the risks of squeezing every last drop out of your resources just to stand still or of burnout or financial deficits. Each resource can serve your purpose by bringing more to the cause than itself.

The simplest lever is often your existing relationships. How often do you ask funders, partners, and participants how you could grow impact together? Often sharing resources such as staff, marketing or spaces can be a powerful starting point.

As with other areas of “resourcefulness”, making sure that you remain connected to your core purpose, practice and values is important. To ensure this, and to assess how well you are using what you have to generate more impact, regular review can be beneficial.

The questions and table below can be used to simply map how you might leverage funding and partnerships.

## THE QUESTIONS

### Funding

#### Map what you currently have

- List all current grants, donations, contracts

#### Identify opportunities to leverage

- For each of the above, identify specific opportunities to leverage – e.g. extension from current or recent funders; corporate/ social investment in cash or kind

#### Evidence the ask/offer

For each opportunity, list:

- evidence of outcomes you have (or will generate)
- the particular value you offer funders and commissioners

#### Plan small experiments

- Identify 1-2 low-risk actions that would leverage some funding, along with a timescale and responsibilities

### Partnerships

#### Map what you currently have

- List your current partners/collaborators

#### Identify opportunities to leverage

- List specific opportunities: e.g. people/bodies partners introduce you to; how could you work together to influence the system?

#### Evidence the ask/offer

For each opportunity, list:

- evidence of potential for collaborative impact
- how joint work could influence the system

#### Plan small experiments

- Identify 1-2 new partners you could invite into your work, along with a timescale and responsibilities

**LEVERAGING FUNDING AND PARTNERSHIPS**

See 'the questions' on previous page.

 An editable version of this table is available to download from the [Baring Foundation website](#).

	FUNDING	PARTNERSHIPS
Map what you currently have		
Identify opportunities to leverage		
Evidence the ask/offer		
Plan small experiments		

# Partnerships Mapping Tool

## INTRODUCTION

The table below, and the questions set out, are designed to help you think specifically about partnerships. You can use it to think about new partnerships, or to map existing ones.

Draft a simple single page 'partnership agreement' to reflect what you agree to do together. Regularly review how well the partnership is achieving its purpose, what has worked well within the partnership and what could be improved. Bear in mind, too, that partnerships evolve over time, not least as each member will be evolving as individual organisations.

## THE QUESTIONS

### STEP 1:

#### Identify potential partnerships

##### Ask:

- Who shares a similar mission or audience? (e.g. health providers, community groups, arts organisations)
- Who has resources you don't? (funding, expertise, spaces, networks)
- Which partnerships could add value to participants, not just the organisation?

List 3-5 potential partnerships.

### STEP 2:

#### Clarify purpose and goals

##### Ask for each potential partner:

- What is the purpose of this partnership? (delivery, reach, income, learning)
- What does success look like for both parties?
- Are there shared outcomes you can agree on?

Define 1-2 clear objectives per partnership.

### STEP 3:

#### Map partner strengths and needs

##### Ask for each potential partner:

- What are they really good at (that you may not be)?
- What resources do they have (that you don't)?
- What would they need from us?

List key strengths and resources you would expect the partnership to draw on.

### STEP 4:

#### Be clear what you bring

##### Ask:

- What skills and other resources would you bring to this partnership?
- What limits are there to your involvement?
- How does this partnership serve your values and mission?

List key contributions and parameters.

### STEP 5:

#### Plan how to work together

##### Ask:

- What would be a good pilot project for this partnership?
- Who takes responsibility for what?
- How will you communicate and review progress?
- Are there funding or income opportunities together?
- What is the timeline?

Note practical actions, timelines and responsibilities. Keep it practical to avoid drift.

**STEP 6:**

**Taking stock and acting**

If you have mapped existing partnerships through these questions, take stock of what the picture shows.

**Ask:**

- How is partnership-working helping you serve people with mental health problems?

- Do you have an effective range of partners that enhance your own work?
- What potential partners are you missing, and how might you engage them?
- Are there any partnerships that have out-lived their usefulness?
- What should you do to develop key partnerships?

**PARTNERSHIPS MAPPING TOOL**

See 'the questions' on previous page.



An editable version of this table is available to download from the [Baring Foundation website](#).

<b>POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS</b>	
<b>PURPOSE AND GOALS</b>	
<b>PARTNER STRENGTHS &amp; NEEDS</b>	
<b>WHAT YOU BRING</b>	
<b>WORKING TOGETHER</b>	
<b>THE PLAN: ACTIONS</b>	

# Making the most of spaces, equipment and physical assets

## INTRODUCTION

This process is designed to help you make thoughtful, mission-aligned use of your spaces, equipment and other physical assets. Use the table below to note responses to the questions.

## THE QUESTIONS

### STEP 1:

#### What do you actually have?

##### List your physical assets:

- Spaces (e.g. rooms, halls, outdoor areas, kitchens, studios).
- Equipment (e.g. AV, tools, instruments, specialist kit).
- Other assets (e.g. vehicles, furniture, storage, gardens).

##### Prompt questions:

- Which assets are unused or under-used at certain times?
- Are there assets you only use seasonally or occasionally that others could use when you're not using them?
- What do people often comment on or ask to borrow?
- What would people have to pay for to access elsewhere?

### STEP 2:

#### Who might want this and why?

##### List the potential users/user groups, for example:

- local community groups;
- other charities or social enterprises;
- freelancers, artists, therapists, trainers;
- small businesses or public sector teams

##### Prompt questions:

- Who already comes through your doors or might if a suitable offer was available?
- Who struggles to access affordable space or equipment locally?
- Whose values align with ours?

### STEP 3:

#### Mission fit and red lines

##### List:

- acceptable uses;
- times and conditions;
- who makes final decisions if there's a grey area.

##### Prompt questions:

- How does hiring each asset support your mission (directly or indirectly)?
- What would feel like a misuse of your space or reputation?
- Are there activities or groups you would never host?

### STEP 4:

#### What does each physical asset really cost us?

##### List the areas of cost:

- Staff time (e.g. opening up, admin, supervision)
- Utilities, cleaning, wear and tear, maintenance
- Insurance, licences, safeguarding

##### Prompt questions:

- What does each asset cost if not used/when used?

- Where would staff time actually come from to increase use?
- What (if anything) would need to stop if this grew?

**STEP 5:****Pricing and access: what do you need to charge?****Consider:**

- full cost recovery as a baseline;
- unrestricted income as target;
- different rates (community / charity / commercial);
- discounts for mission-aligned partners.

**Ask:**

- What feels fair to users and to us?
- Are you subsidising price – and if so, why and for whom?
- Would a simple rate card help avoid awkward negotiations?

**STEP 6:****Risks and capacity check****List the key risks and mitigations:**

- What could go wrong (e.g. damage, complaints, reputational damage, burnout)?
- What systems do you already have to manage risks, and what's missing?
- What would make us stop this if it didn't work?

**STEP 7:****Start small, learn and iterate****Pilot – identify actions/plans:**

- Agree one asset as having the greatest potential.
- Target one or two user groups.
- Define a fixed trial period (e.g. 3-6 months) that would give you meaningful data.

**Some suggested key review factors:**

- Income/return vs effort.
- Impact on staff and beneficiaries.
- Unexpected benefits or problems.

## MAKING THE MOST OF SPACES, EQUIPMENT AND PHYSICAL ASSETS

See 'the questions' on previous page.



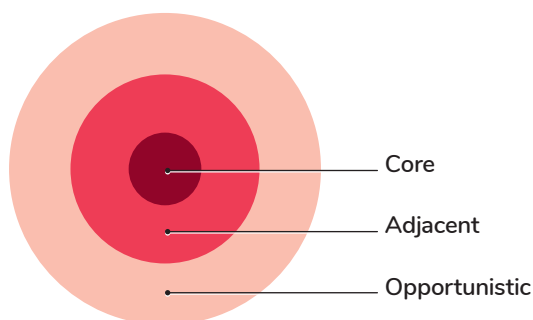
An editable version of this table is available to download from the [Baring Foundation website](#).

<b>ASSETS</b>	
<b>USERS</b>	
<b>USES</b>	
<b>COSTS</b>	
<b>PRICING APPROACH</b>	
<b>RISKS AND MITIGATIONS</b>	
<b>“WE WILL....”</b>	

# Holding onto your why: mission drift check

## INTRODUCTION

Mission drift happens when an organisation gradually shifts away from its core purpose. It's different from deliberate changes of strategy in response to changing needs or circumstances. It can generally emerge from a pattern of reasonable, pragmatic decisions, often in pressured funding or political environments, but which gradually pull you away from your core, your "why". A grant slightly outside your usual focus. A contract that pays well but reshapes your offer. A partnership that subtly changes who you are "for".



Adapting with integrity is a core element of resilience. Avoiding mission drift is not about being inflexible but about holding onto the "why" of your organisation, being in control of what you do as you adapt. Registered charities also need to bear in mind compliance, ensuring they operate within their stated charitable objects as agreed by the Charity Commission. The process set out here is designed to help notice the patterns within your organisation, and to make conscious changes and adjustments.

## THE QUESTIONS

### STEP 1:

#### Reaffirm what is CORE to your purpose, practice and mission

State in one sentence each:

- Who you are here for?
- What are you here to make happen?
- What do you do that few others can?
- What would be lost if your work stopped?

### STEP 2:

#### Map your activity

State in one sentence each:

Map your main programmes, contracts, trading strands and partnerships as either Core, Adjacent to core, or further away and Opportunistic.

→ USE A VERSION OF THE CIRCLES LEFT  
or

→ FILL IN THE TABLE ON PAGE 69



An editable version of the table is available to download from the [Baring Foundation website](#).

Reflect on the percentages that fall into each category. Is the bulk of the effort going into serving your core purpose?

**STEP 3:****Think about what could pull you into mission drift**

For activity that feels further from core, ask:

- How does this activity serve your mission? (e.g. raises vital unrestricted income although activity is not core)
- What systems and team capacity does it require? Are they pulled away from core?
- Might this change how others see you? (e.g. a studio provider not an organisation serving people with mental health problems)
- Could you build activity into a refreshed vision of your core?

**STEP 4:****Consider the pattern more than isolated projects or events**

Ask:

- Which areas of work feel most aligned and energising?
- Which feel like they are pulling you away from core purpose?

- Where do you feel most authentic as an organisation?
- If you continue with this pattern, what will you look like in five years?

**STEP 5:****Take steps to avoid mission drift and keep true to core purpose**

Reflecting on the overall picture from STEP 4, ask:

- What should you do to keep on mission and with purpose – e.g. do you need more ‘core activity’ or to rein in opportunistic projects and trading?
- Identify changes in the three categories below and lead responsibility.

→ FILL IN THE TABLE ON NEXT PAGE



An editable version of the table is available to download from [the Baring Foundation website](#).

**MISSION DRIFT CHECK: TABLE FOR STEP 2**

See 'the questions' on previous page.



An editable version of this table is available to download from the [Baring Foundation website](#).

CORE	ADJACENT to core	OPPORTUNISTIC (far from core)

**MISSION DRIFT CHECK: TABLE FOR STEP 3**

See 'the questions' on previous page.



An editable version of this table is available to download from the [Baring Foundation website](#).

	ACTION/CHANGE ACTIVITIES	HOW/WHO ACTIVITIES
One thing to stop		
One thing to protect		
One thing to strengthen		

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## Some other tools and resources

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### Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy

Arts Fundraising and Philanthropy has a range of resources to support fundraising and entrepreneurial approaches, including *How to create your ethical fundraising policy – a step by step guide*.

[artsfundraising.org.uk](http://artsfundraising.org.uk)

### Association of Cultural Enterprises

Association of Cultural Enterprises offers training resources and tools to boost commercial performance. Some are available to members only.

[culturalenterprises.org.uk](http://culturalenterprises.org.uk)

### Creative Health Toolkit

Produced by the National Centre for Creative Health toolkit to support Integrated Care Systems to embed creative health.

[creativehealthtoolkit.org.uk](http://creativehealthtoolkit.org.uk)

### Cultural Tax Reliefs

Cultural Tax Reliefs guidance from Arts Council England (see also Appendix 3)

[www.artscouncil.org.uk/cultural-tax-reliefs](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/cultural-tax-reliefs)

### Devos Institute

Devos Institute “The Cycle”: Michael M. Kaiser and Brett Egan, on fundraising and arts management.

[www.devosinstitute.net/the-cycle](http://www.devosinstitute.net/the-cycle)

### Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance

*From Surviving To Thriving: Building A Model For Sustainable Practice In Creativity And Mental Health*: Produced by Culture Health and Wellbeing Alliance.

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

### Future Arts Centres

Tools from Tactics for the Tightrope: Creative Resilience in Creative Communities: Mark Robinson, published by Future Arts Centres, features 50 tools for creative resilience.

[tacticsforthetightrope.com/tools-and-tactics](http://tacticsforthetightrope.com/tools-and-tactics)

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# Cultural Tax Reliefs

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## WHAT ARE CULTURAL TAX RELIEFS?

Cultural Tax Reliefs are UK government tax reliefs that allow some arts organisations to claim back a proportion of production costs for certain kinds of cultural activity. They are not grants.

They work through the tax system and usually involve being set up as (or working through) a limited company, and making a formal claim to HMRC, usually with specialist support.

Nothing in the Cultural Tax Reliefs system is designed with arts and mental health practice in mind. For many arts and mental health organisations, these reliefs will not be relevant but in a limited number of situations they can unlock meaningful additional income. Bethlem Gallery is one organisation which has benefitted, although amounts raised have varied significantly from year to year.

You don't need to know the rules in detail at this stage. You can find detailed guidance on the [HMRC website](#) and from [Arts Council England](#). The key question is whether any reliefs might apply to your activity, and whether it's worth spending time exploring them further.

## MUSEUMS & GALLERIES EXHIBITION TAX RELIEF

This is for temporary exhibitions in museums or galleries. It can apply even if the exhibition features a single artist or group, or the content is explicitly about mental health or lived experience. You might want to explore this if:

- you curate exhibitions (including participatory or co-created ones) in your own dedicated museum or gallery space, *and*
- they are presented as public exhibitions, even if audiences are small or targeted, *and*

- your organisation (or a partner) is a charity or charity-owned company, *and*
- you are responsible for producing, installing and deinstalling the exhibition.

It won't apply if:

- the main purpose is selling work or showcasing project outcomes, *or*
- the exhibition is mainly a live performance, *or*
- the display is not intended to be public from the outset.

## THEATRE TAX RELIEF

This is for live ticketed theatrical productions, including plays, musicals, opera and some devised work. Mental health-specific work is not excluded — but the framing matters. You might want to look further if:

- you create live performances with an audience (not just workshops), *and*
- the work is presented as a production, even if it has social or therapeutic aims, *and*
- audiences attend primarily to watch the performance, *and*
- performances are planned from the outset to be ticketed or for public or educational audiences.

You're *unlikely* to qualify if:

- the work is mainly for training or therapeutic delivery,
- the performance is primarily a by-product of a process, *or*
- it exists mainly to document or promote another service.

## ORCHESTRA TAX RELIEF

This one is even more niche for arts and mental health but could be useful for some. You might want to look further if:

- you produce live concerts with at least 12 instrumentalists, *and*
- instruments are mostly not amplified, *and*
- performances are for public or educational audiences.

Most community or therapeutic music projects won't meet the technical thresholds, but some larger-scale participatory or ensemble-based work might.

## WHETHER TO EXPLORE CULTURAL TAX RELIEFS

Actually getting Cultural Tax Reliefs benefits from specialist accountants or advisors and involves structuring projects carefully from the outset. Even if your work *might* qualify, it's important to be confident you have the time

and capacity to pursue tax reliefs. It is not a simple or certain process, and amounts raised can vary significantly from one year to the next.

It's probably *not* for you if:

- you're mainly grant-funded and stretched;
- your work is intentionally informal or process-led;
- you don't want to reshape activity to meet external definitions.

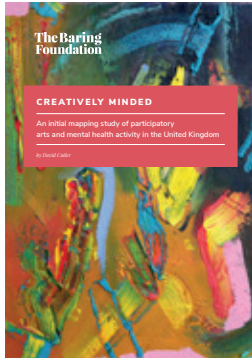
It *might* be worth exploring if:

- you already frame some work as ticketed productions or exhibitions;
- you partner with venues, festivals or galleries.

If you *do* want to go further:

- talk to another organisation that has claimed (or explored claiming);
- speak to an accountant who works with cultural tax reliefs specifically;
- think about one *bounded* project rather than a whole programme.

# Other Baring Foundation resources



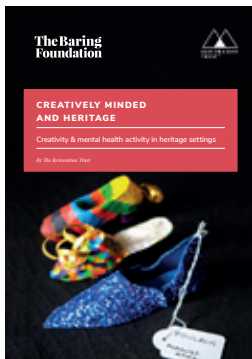
**Creatively minded**  
**David Cutler**  
 2020



**Creatively minded and young**  
**Harriet Lowe**  
 2020



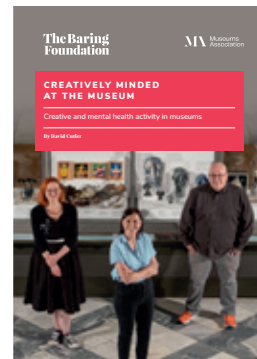
**Creatively minded and ethnically diverse**  
**Compiled by The Baring Foundation**  
 2021



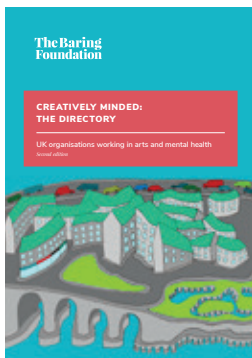
**Creatively minded and heritage**  
**The Restoration Trust**  
 2021



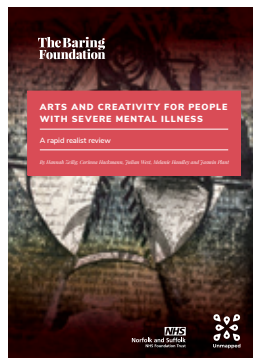
**Creatively minded and the NHS**  
**David Cutler**  
 2021



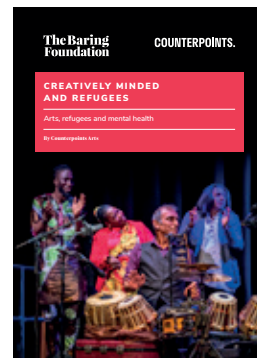
**Creatively minded at the museum**  
**David Cutler**  
 2022



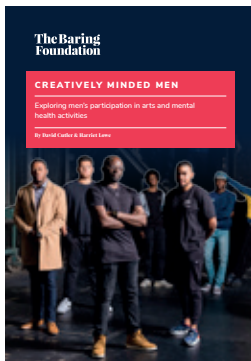
**Creatively minded: the directory**  
**The Baring Foundation**  
 2022



**Arts and creativity for people with severe mental illness**  
**H. Zeilig, C. Hackmann, J. West, M. Handley & J. Plant**  
 2022



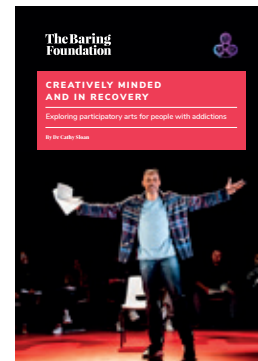
**Creatively minded and refugees**  
**Counterpoints Arts**  
 2023



Creatively minded men  
David Cutler  
2024



Creatively minded  
at the theatre  
David Cutler  
2024



Creatively minded  
and in recovery  
Dr Cathy Sloan  
2024



Creatively minded  
in the art studio  
David Cutler  
2025



Creatively minded and  
ethnically diverse revisited  
Sabra Khan and Daniel Regan  
2026



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