

Dragon Hall Annual Report



Delivering a wide range of social, educational & recreational activities & events, developed & delivered in partnership with users, to serve the needs of our diverse communities.

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2020 - 2021



Chair of Trustee's REPORT

Sue Vincent Chair of Trustees

This has been a tumultuous year. The emotional and financial strain of Covid-19 remains and the uncertainty of what lies ahead is a worry for many of our users and communities. Young people have particularly faced a tough time, missing school and social gatherings, as has an older generation of people who have faced isolation and loneliness.

This year has made us appreciate more than ever that the partnership work we do day in and day out with other local charities is vital, not only in making the most of our scarce resources but ensuring no one falls between the gaps in getting the support they need. We are grateful for the hard work and focus our Dragon Hall Trust team and its community partners gave: providing people of all ages constructive, enjoyable and engaging activities to strengthen relationships, give hope and help us get through this extraordinary time.

Suffice to say, our usual room hire income plummeted during this year, indeed returning deposits held for future bookings left us in dire financial circumstances. However, our amazing local organisations, local councils and businesses really stepped up to help us support those in need and join the strategic co-ordination in response to the pandemic. It is a tremendous honour to acknowledge the kindness and integrity of so many people and organisations who really did step up to meet the many challenges of the pandemic:

Supporters and funders include: Camden's C4 group, Voluntary Action Camden, VCC, Calthorpe Community Garden, Kings Cross Bloomsbury Neighbourhood Association, Holborn Community Association, Phoenix Garden, CAPCO, Shaftesbury PLC, Covent Garden Area Trust, South Bloomsbury Residents and Tenants Association, CBRE, Northbank BID, London Borough of Camden, Westminster City Council, HM Government in partnership with The National Lottery Fund, London Community Foundation, Young Camden Foundation, St Giles & St George Charity, Mercers Trust, City Bridge Trust, Peabody Trust, London Community Response Fund, Covent Garden Housing Co-operative, Seven Dials Housing Co-operative, Aver PR, John Lyons Foundation, Children in Need, Ageing Better Camden,

London Sport, London Youth Digital Fund, Jack Petchey Foundation, Covent Garden Community Centre, Felix Project, Councillors in Holborn & Covent Garden, St James and West End wards.

The financial and voluntary support was directed to our Covid19 response for local communities. This included: our After School Club activities 'going virtual' and where needed, students were supported with laptops and tablets to enable them to do their homework (and play games!); those in our 55+ Club who were not seasoned 'Silver-Surfers' were encouraged to use tablets and dongles we provided, giving 1:1 training sessions on how to get online, use videoing apps and other platforms to see and communicate with friends and family, receive health advice, contact their doctors and check benefit entitlements. A weekly Phone Bank was set up calling shielding and vulnerable neighbours, young people and parents to combat isolation, chat about the week and check that they had all the essentials needed. Daily Newsletters were distributed, and doorstep help was initiated including deliveries of medicine, laundry and other household tasks for those who were unable to leave their homes. Phoenix Gardens partnered with us to provide a Covid19 safe space for local young people and residents to garden, take Yoga and Pilate classes and enjoy the beautiful green oasis looked after by local volunteers. During this time the Covent Garden Food Bank had distributed 3,032 food parcels and 14,572 ready meals. Three hundred and twenty-seven residents were registered, 60% from Camden, Westminster 32%, with Islington and other residents at 8%.

Throughout this period all Covid-19 safe initiatives and risk assessments were undertaken and all the government guidelines were followed as best we could – a huge thanks to the teams who managed to understand the sometimes conflicting government guidance given out and made users feel safe and secure.

We start the coming year with hope and a strengthened community. When restrictions allow, we will gather together, celebrate and commiserate, make future plans to ensure no-one in our communities gets left behind and build on our strengthened relationships.

Sue Vincent
Chair of Trustees and Local Councillor



Sue Vincent

Chair

Holborn & Covent Garden ward Councillor for LB Camden and local resident



Jeff Hopwood

Treasurer

Former Camden council officer and supporter of the voluntary sector.



Tim Lynn

Trustee

Sound Engineer in West End Theatres and former resident of Covent Garden.



Alex Lloyd

Trustee

PhD student in Psychology at Royal Holloway, University of London researching when and why teenagers take risks.



Claude Asgill

Trustee

Experienced fundraiser and mental health advocate working in the construction industry.



John Quigley

Trustee

A data protection lawyer advising companies of legal obligations on personal data and an experienced independent mediator.



Simon Breugger

Trustee

Local resident, merchant banker. Used to be a teacher & continues to support young people.



Kate Matheson

Secretary

A local resident in Covent Garden, member of West End Women's Institute, retired.



Francis Go

Trustee

VP of Engineering at Distributed Ltd, a Technology Startup changing the future of work.



About Us

Dragon Hall Trust

Delivering a wide range of social, educational & recreational activities & events, developed & delivered in partnership with users, to serve the needs of our diverse communities.

Aims

To benefit the inhabitants of Inner London by associating local authorities, voluntary organisations and such inhabitants in a common effort to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure-time occupations with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants.

To promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the said inhabitants and in particular the advancement of education & skills (with particular but not exclusive reference to technology & the arts).

To educate the public in the geography, history, natural history and architecture of the area and to secure the preservation, protection, development and improvement of buildings or features of historic or public interest in London to enable them to be enjoyed by the public.

To establish or secure the establishment of community centres and to maintain and manage the same in furtherance of the above objects.

Covid 19 Response

Covent Garden Food Bank

Dragon Hall Trust & Covent Garden Community Centre responded to a call to assist with food distribution in April 2020 and within 10 days had established the Covent Garden Food Bank. This was supplied with surplus food by a partnership between LB Camden and The Felix Project, run by staff, and distributed by local volunteers. Daily contact was established with the older members of the community and help organised for food shopping, medicine collection and doorstep well-being checks. A daily newsletter was sent out covering Covid-19 information, well-being advice & online activities and a support telephone was established.

Referrals came via our online form and external referral agencies including LB Camden, local schools, Holborn Community Association, KCBNA, Calthorpe Community Garden & The Phoenix Garden, housing providers, local GP practice and lots of word of mouth.

Nicole Furre



The Voluntary and Community Sector responded to the pandemic and local lockdowns quickly. Food Banks were set up in community venues, distributing parcels and ready meals to people shielding or sick or those in food poverty, in the 'gig' economy, on short term contracts or self-employed - the ones that didn't fit with any furlough or support scheme.

We all learnt how to access Zoom and moved activities and support for our users online. Dragon Hall Trust supplied laptops, tablets, dongles & one-to-one telephone training for those without digital access, plus a friendly ear, regular telephone and doorstep support for local people.

The voluntary sector came together with local authorities to develop strategic responses to the growing need, isolation and hardship. Funders stepped up and opened 'Covid Relief' funds, and senior staff spent long hours developing budgets and writing applications to secure funds to cover the costs of the necessary responses. The 'normal' routes to generate income had stopped and the demand on services and increasing need was growing.

Even now, in August 2021 the level of need is not 'back to normal' and the removal of furlough will, perhaps, see an increase in need once again.

I am proud of my staff, trustees and all the volunteers, partners and local organisations, business and residents for their responses and help for those in real hardship and need.



Covent Garden Food Bank

Covent Garden Community Centre @ 7 Dials Club & Covent Garden Dragon Hall Trust

Statistics 31/03/2021

Food Bank opened 30/04/2020

Registered Users 327

Registered Users

327

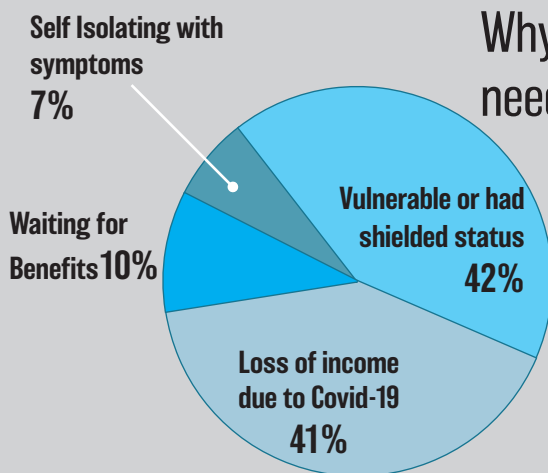
Food Parcels distributed

3,032

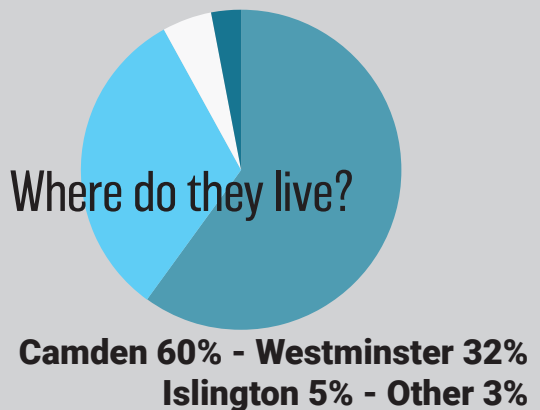
Ready Meals distributed

14,572

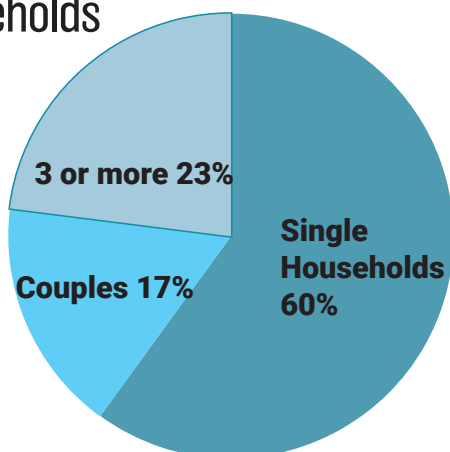
Why is help needed?



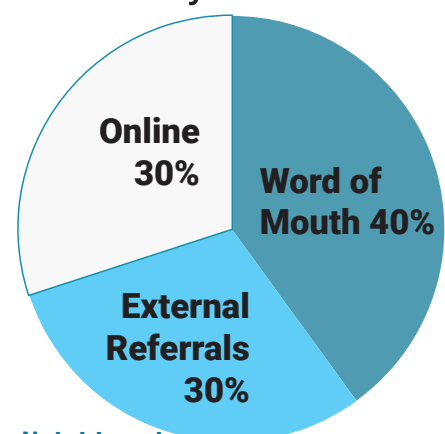
Where do they live?



Households



How did they find out about it?



Food donations: The Felix Project / LB Camden, Local residents, M&S via Neighbourly

Funding Support: CAPCO, Northbank BID, London Community Response Fund, Shaftesbury PLC, Westminster CC, LB Camden, Covent Garden Area Trust, South Bloomsbury Residents & Tenants Association, CBRE, HM Government in partnership with The National Lottery Community Fund, 7 Dials Housing Co-op, Covent Garden Housing Co-op, The Mercers' Company & individual private donators.

After School Clubs

Young People

Covid-19 caused us to rethink the way we work, how to support more young people and their families, and how to utilise technology and online sessions more effectively.

Keeley Reed



When April 2020 arrived we were in new territory, we had been working from home for 1 week, and we were working out how to engage with young people and families in this unfamiliar environment. The move online required us to think outside the box to provide opportunities for young people, consider how we could best support the families and young people we work with, and what was needed to access online services.

Whether you are a young person, parent, carer, teacher or youth worker, 2020 affected us all in so many ways. We tried to support families and young people, to make things easier for them and their day-to-day experiences less disrupted. Our biggest challenge was the lack of technology at home. Young people had no access to the internet or laptops. We loaned out all our laptops and tablets to both Primary and Secondary school-aged young people to help them engage in schooling and youth activities. We bought dongles - then started fundraising to get hold of more.

The activities we provided came from conversations with young people, we started online homework support, 1-2-1 sessions for homework, wellbeing sessions and games nights. During a time when they had little autonomy over what was going on it was vital they had ownership over our online sessions and enjoyed what they were doing.

The online sessions and activities were making the year easier for the staff as well. They still had a routine, regular engagement with young people, planning activities.

Due to the lockdown young people reported a deterioration in the quality of their school work and their attitude towards education changed. This was further impacted as only 2 of the 18 schools the young people attend ran online classes from March to July 2020.

We worked with young people to help with ICT homework, Python and Maths. 5 GCSE students ran homework clubs

and 1-2-1 sessions to ensure they were happy with the work they were submitting to the school, the session ideas had come from the young people being unhappy with the work they were doing.

We had some positives coming out of 2020. We were working with more people online than ever before, and we developed relationships with parents that were previously not established. There existed a shared experience, being at home all the time, struggling to stay positive and missing out on so much. The activities we were offering were different to anything we had previously done, which led to young people developing new skills and knowledge.

We were lucky to be able to reopen during the summer of 2020, utilising Pheonix Gardens for 15 young people who had signed up ahead of time, in line with the government and National Youth Agency guidance. This was so different from our traditional summer schemes, introducing socially distanced activities, risk assessments and control of the environment. Everyone was so happy to have a different space to go to, to have activities that were enriching and fun as well as being with their friends in a safe and secure environment.

During that period we ran a Holiday hunger project to support 25 young people with two meals a day, including cooked meals and dinner to take home to siblings. We continued our online delivery during the summer to ensure no young people were left behind - some couldn't attend the sessions due to lack of space or the distance they had to travel. There were opportunities for online cooking sessions, where we all followed the same recipes, yoga sessions led by an instructor and craft sessions.

Digital technology played a vital role in our ability to work over the last year. **In total there were 145 sessions** for

zoom_0.mp4



0:01 / 0:18

our intermediates compared to the 84 sessions we ran last year for the same age group, (utilising the laptops and tablets we loaned out to families), online tools like Zoom, online games like GeoGussr, boggle, Pictionary and Kahoot.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused us to rethink the way we work, as a staff team and with the young people who attend the sessions.

We will now remain online at least twice a week, running online weekly wellbeing sessions which allows for tutors or workshops to happen, as well as weekly games nights for our intermediates.

Our After School Club was able to experience face to face work more regularly due to the way the guidance was set out, so they have had **65 online sessions, and 51 face to face sessions, for 2 schools.**

Every time we have reopened we have reached our capacity and currently have a waiting list for young people to join in September.

Michaela Crivello:

It was challenging not being able to connect with the young people in person, but we managed to build a solid community for them with regular activities on zoom.

We were not sure how this would engage the young people but it felt like we created a safe space where they could connect during a time of such solitude for many people, including myself.

I personally very much enjoyed keeping some structure in place with the daily zooms and having the activities to look forward to. I felt that we were able to create a special bond with the young people who were also committed to the zoom calls, often some of them would join even if they were not partaking in activities just for some company and it was those moments that felt very special.

We managed to keep the community centre spirit alive throughout all of the lockdowns, so much so that we have continued with the zoom calls for intermediates on Fridays and all the original participants from the start of 2020 still join in with us.





Over 55s - 2020 to 2021

John Hayes - Community Development Manager

The impact of the lockdown hit home quickly. No sooner had Boris Johnson taken the country into lockdown, Bloomsbury Church (our partner organisation for Tuesday activities) informed me that they would be suspending services with immediate effect. It was Monday 16th March 2020. Not all our members had seen the announcement or understood the ramifications, so we went to speak to anyone who had come in.

On average, the lunch club would welcome between 30 and 50 members, as well as supporting a number of the homeless. The vast majority of people were aware of the new restrictions and stayed at home. Those that did come in were in a state of shock and disbelief that they were being 'ordered to stay at home'. It was a surreal day.

Over the next days we took dozens of calls, some wanting confirmation of the suspension of services, many just wanting to talk. I decided to write a daily newsletter, providing basic information and letting people know that Amber and I were available by phone if people needed to talk.

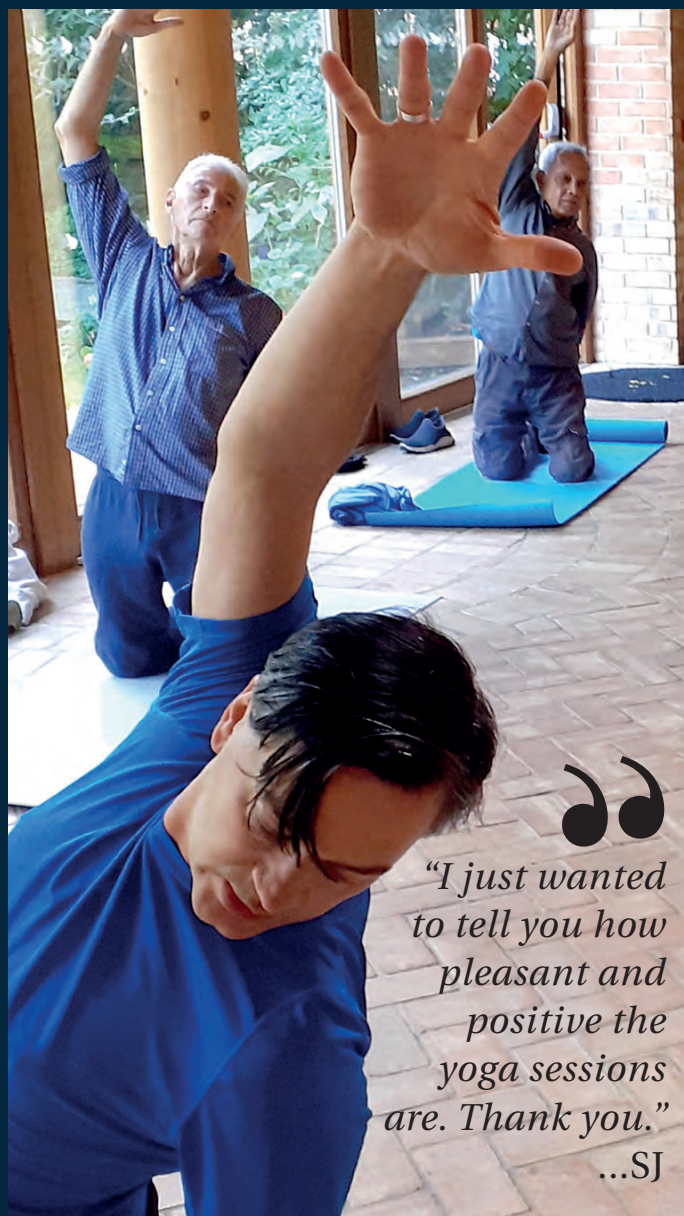
As lockdown continued and daily deaths increased the impact on our members became obvious. Shops had large queues and food stocks were low. Our members were told to isolate themselves as they were the most vulnerable.

Anxiety increased, how to get the basic staple foods and medication? Local people started offering support, more offers of help were being posted online and soon (through Trial and Error) members were getting the help they needed on a regular basis.

The newsletter grew and took shape, members shared tips, ideas, links on how to remain connected, healthy and sane through these difficult days. Everyone agreed that routine and structured activities were the key to get through this time. Most of our members were adapting, but many were facing days of loneliness. We became concerned for a number of people. Our telephone conversations were taking up most of our days and it was clear that regular befriending was needed.

The Dragon Hall youth team stepped in to help. Genia and Michaela phoned people each week. Leah from The Phoenix Garden joined in and at our peak we were phoning between 50 - 70 people a week.

During April and early May the newsletter continued.



“I just wanted to tell you how pleasant and positive the yoga sessions are. Thank you.”
...SJ

The weather was good, people were still going for walks in local parks, and the deserted streets were part of the everyday conversation. Getting to the shops was nearly impossible for many and the food bank, set up by Dragon Hall and Covent Garden Community Centre, was a lifeline. More volunteers helped deliver food parcels and meals.

One word kept coming through the emails, the news outlets and conversations. That word was ZOOM, and it was about to change our lives and have a huge impact on how we communicated with each other. Our first zoom activity took place on Sunday 17th May, Amber hosted a quiz. Everyone was so excited and it was wonderful to see some of our members for the first time in nearly two months.

Zoom became a topic which divided our community. A large group welcomed the new technology and the opportunities that it could create. Others were keen but did not have the digital skills or equipment to access this brave new world. Others turned their backs, not wanting anything to do with it.

Over the next few weeks confidence grew (for both users and staff alike), zoom sessions started to sprout everywhere, from small coffee interactions to advice sessions and creative workshops. Our timetable of zoom sessions increased. Yoga and Meditation were the first, soon followed by Flamenco and French Conversation. As members' awareness increased so did our adventurous spirit - guitar lessons, bellydancing, Spanish and Bollywood. The first open community session took place on 3rd September and attracted over 70 people. At the time it was the biggest Zoom session that we had ever attended and was a tremendous success, everyone involved in the project was overwhelmed by the attendance and support.

Amber and I started working closely together with the Queens Gallery and we were instrumental in their community project. The QG started providing pilot workshops with our group and from there the "Learning in Lockdown" project which was a great success.

During this period, there were a number of successes that meant a lot to the team. I recall a Sunday at the British Museum. I had arranged a small group to attend a special preview. One of the attendees, Liz, had not been out of the house or seen anyone for five months. It was a mixture of shielding, feeling anxious and she had just moved to her new flat, and there was no opportunity to meet her new neighbours. Liz and I walked around the museum together chatting and talking about the exhibition, suddenly she burst into tears. Liz explained the relief that she felt, just having someone to listen to was too

overwhelming for her. For Liz this was the motivation that she needed.

On the 14th August 2020, Dragon Hall and Phoenix Garden organised a social distancing afternoon tea party. The event was attended by 16 members, with tables dotted around the garden, providing a safe space for everyone to sit, chat and have loads of tea. It was a wonderful afternoon and as one member stated to me; *"I just want to say a big thank you to you and your team, for providing the tea event today. It was really good to be able to meet up with people, and enjoy a good chat"* - GB

Between June and August as the restrictions eased, there was a sense of relief, in person sessions were reintroduced. The most successful was the lunch club at 7Dials in a controlled, social distanced environment. Not everyone felt confident and comfortable with the restrictions, and continued to shield. Our Zoom programme continued and thrived and we extended our programme to include classes with the Mary Ward Centre, Wallace Collection and Two Temple House and started to offer Saturday talks. Between September and November, with the crisis resurfacing, we continued monitoring members and increasing our volunteer base.

With Christmas looming, it was becoming clear that another lockdown was in the air. Many of our members were looking forward to the holidays but now this was becoming unlikely.

We were planning a Christmas lunch, and, due to demand, had organised three events. The first lunch was held on Monday 14th December, which was a tremendous success. No sooner had the lunch finished then London saw new tougher restrictions and Tier 4 was introduced.

The next two lunches went ahead in June 2021.

The winter was perhaps the most difficult time for everybody, some members facing the prospect of spending Christmas alone. Between January and March, we saw an increase in members wanting a regular telephone call and support with food bank parcels.

The Government's vaccination programme has been welcomed by many of the over 55's group. This has provided some relief and 'light at the end of the tunnel'. For some, being with other people has been overwhelming and feelings have been extreme, many not able to cope with so many people around them. With restrictions lifting we are slowly starting face to face sessions again and are encouraging all of our community to be take part once again - and making sure that all precautions are in place and any health risks are kept to an absolute minimum.

"Thank you again. What you are all doing from Dragon Hall is wonderful, I had a good chat with Amber earlier today and it was great to air my concerns as I have a great many things I am trying to deal with right now"
...AB



Our Users

'Being given a laptop during quarantine has been a huge help, it has completely changed my attitude towards learning for the better- making it easier for me to access classwork and join zoom calls'. KK aged 14

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*'In these uncertain and destabilising times it has been so heartwarming to receive food from the community team. Food is a necessity so many of us are struggling to afford. Thank you all so much for keeping us afloat, a little healthier and being there for people in this community. You are all wonderful
All the best to you John'
Penny*

“

*'Dear Phil and Co - I just wanted to extend our thanks for all the work that goes on behind the scenes in assisting the local folk of Covent Garden with the food bank. The local business's generosity alongside the admin and help from you guys is greatly appreciated, - THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
Take care'*

The Mather Family

PS. kids were made up with the crisps!!

”



'I was sharing a computer with my sister for school work and I am in year 10 so it was making it difficult to do my GCSE work. Having a second computer has allowed us to keep up with our school work and we are arguing less as we have our own computer'. MI Aged 15

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**563**

Registered Members
for Over 55s
Activities

788
Activities

over
6,000
Attendances

“

‘Magnum Healing has been delighted to partner with Dragon Hall for over 3 years providing yoga classes for its clients. We have seen participants go from strength to strength and helped build a sense of community among them. The support and commitment from both parties has been the basis for a successful longterm partnership.’



YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/c/SoapboxOnline/featured>

Music production has been a long-standing staple of SoapBox's provision, but the pandemic brought a new focus on video production, culminating in the setting up of a YouTube Channel that has over 2000 subscribers and 210000 views of content since June 2021.

This online Channel is a window into our work and the incredible lives & potential of young people and, as the name suggests, SoapBox gives young people a platform to use their voice, share their stories and showcase their talents.

And if you visit, you can expect the following:

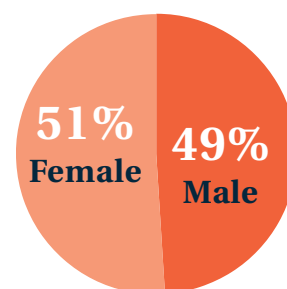
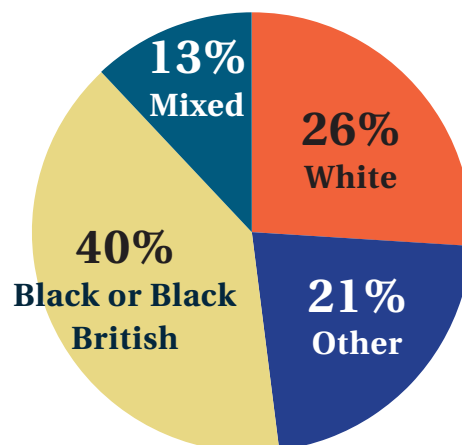
- Digital, media and tech tutorials
- Fixing electronics
- Making Music
- 3D Design
- Young People's creative content
- Case studies exploring the lives of the young people we work with
- Leading industry figures offering insights on how to get ahead



Soapbox Youth Centre Old Street, Islington

As we entered the final year of our 3.5 year contract with LB Islington to run Soapbox Youth Centre we reflected on the progress we had made:

- Soapbox plays an important part in the delivery of high quality youth work across Islington
- Soapbox is becoming embedded into the fabric of local communities in Bunhill & Clerkenwell
- Soapbox has excellent pan-borough partnerships with key local organisations, primary and secondary schools and Islington Council
- Soapbox engages a broad and diverse spectrum of socially excluded young people through our expansive network of specialist groups and schools
- A broad, impactful and growing programme of nonformal education, that was recognised externally, valued by young people and has identified expertise in Digital, Media & Technology.



2020 - 2021

662 Attendees

6,094 Attendances



Stress on the Brain

In September, SoapBox was invited by The Peel Institute to be part of a partnership opportunity with New River College & CAMHS to deliver a 6-week audio-visual project for 9 students at New River College. This piece of work saw Mister Lees (Recording Artist and Music Producer) support young people to record a music track, before Mikey Bharj (Filmmaker) worked with the group to create an accompanying video.

Released on June 22nd 2020, *Stress on the Brain* has had 25,000 views on YouTube (as of March 2021) and a 795.2 watch hours and 85+ subscribers.



Life in Lockdown

By our Staff

This period has really tested the resilience and strength of everyone working at SoapBox, Dragon Hall Trust and our partner organisations.



Nick Crivello



SoapBox was at its peak at the start of 2020 working with hundreds of young people. Once the lockdown started that changed dramatically and we needed to react, so we did. We found we excelled in areas unfamiliar to us, and used this tragic and confusing period to our

advantage - working with more young people than we ever have before. Our biggest advantage was technology, the ability to use platforms and make connections. We found hidden talents and enthusiasms in our team we didn't know existed. We were fighting Covid-19 in our own way, by supporting young people.

This has been the most challenging experience in my 10 years at Dragon Hall. Only possible with the support from James, Nicky, trustees and volunteers. Working alongside a staff team dedicated to young people and working towards a common goal in difficult times.

2020, the most peculiar of years, with significant development taking place against a backdrop of loss and uncertainty. I have relished the chance to engage with the digital world in new ways and am immensely proud of our achievements. We embraced the new landscape - the staff team, allied to our close network of partners, ensured that young people received the best opportunities and support we could deliver. This is the more impressive when considering the fear, restrictions and challenges everyone had to overcome.

My life has been transformed by my puppy Pickle. Intended as the youth centre dog. He has been the best companion imaginable, giving me the sanity and security to deal with everything the year threw at me. Beyond this, the online staff party we had for UK

James Dellow



Youth's Inspiring Hope Awards Ceremony was an unforgettable moment to celebrate our successes and perfectly bookended this tumultuous year. Finally, I want to thank Nicky for being everything I needed, Chris for making SoapBox more financially robust and Nick, without whom none of the progress would have been possible.

Eugenia Kay



The lockdown enabled me to focus on the development of the Young Women's group. They received 1-1 support and the partnership with LVN has enabled young women to speak with professionals on specific careers they are interested in. The Black Girl Community Hub supplied the opportunity to express ideas through

music, lyric writing and podcasts. The Peabody Project for young women enabled a variety of topics to be discussed - women in business, women & mental health, domestic abuse, women's body image/confidence. The online Creative Art Gallery showcased their creativity and the employability sessions were an opportunity to hold conferences with young people and professionals. Thanks to James and Nick, Nicky and the trustees for the support throughout the pandemic.

Michael Mathura



Two main areas of work that have been standout for me during this time have been Podcasting with CADFA, which highlights the hardships currently being faced by Palestinians in Palestine & Case study videos which are created to motivate, support and showcase YP's success stories through our youtube channel.

Some of my main challenges during this time was working from home, time wise and managing risks that come with working online and picking up on new or potential risks to add to the risk assessments and engaging interest with young people to get them to join online sessions.

**Lucas Lane**

Lockdown has been tough on us all, a statement we all can agree with! But it's what you make of the tough times in life that can really make all the difference. Throughout lockdown I've been involved in many different projects. I have been running a weekly Instagram Live session where I try to diagnose and fix issues in technology. I have

been doing a weekly cooking show with a charity called eat club, the aim is to cook cheap, healthy food. I have also had some time to work on personal projects, involved in writing up a funding application with James to get some funding for one of my projects at SoapBox. The project is about reducing e-waste. Lockdown has been a journey, for me more of a positive journey than negative and I have SoapBox to thank for that, and for keeping me sane.

Jamil Mungul

I've learnt a lot from working in SoapBox within my own area which is the tech side and also the music side. I have been challenged to try new things and overcome them. For example, I never thought I would be teaching a group of 10 plus kids ages 9-10 how to 3D modeling using Tinkercad / Maya on Zoom, and actually enjoy it. During the lockdown

SoapBox has supported me to expand my skills even more by tasking me to create video content for our YouTube channel. Every Friday I have a 1 to 1 Game design session on Zoom with a special needs person and she taught me to never give up on your dreams no matter what happens, which I only understood because of our sessions. I feel like my journey hasn't even started yet and I can't wait to see what awaits.

Almost a full year in lockdown and pandemic has been tough, personally and professionally. Hence, the doors to reinvent, innovate and change have remained opened within the Soapbox team. The work in different time zones, sometimes lack of technical capacity due to different networks, with home being a new office, significantly challenged the mental capacity to navigate uncertainty. However, the result of the team effort was being nominees for the **UK Youth inspiring Hope Awards 2021**, this was truly inspiring and made me hopeful in difficult times. My biggest challenge and, at the same time, the biggest achievement within the team was staying connected.

This connection and care has motivated me to do the work, complete tasks and go forward, hoping that, truly, the young people can continue to use SoapBox as a means of connection, during times when it was challenged the most, in the same way I have.

Ivana Boskovic

Working with SoapBox during lockdown was a very good experience and I have had many challenges during this journey, but I have managed to overcome them.

I have delivered music production and Video editing sessions with young people via zoom - at first I didn't know how I was going to explain what to do or how to do it but as time went on I figured it out and have managed to overcome inexperience and doubt. I have also been working with other people such as Jamil and Mikey. Being in their sessions has helped me a lot because I observe their techniques and I try to do the same when I have a session. I have also opened a TikTok account for SoapBox and we are doing really well there. Now, with in-person sessions starting again I help out with cooking sessions and Instagram live that's happening in the building. The biggest challenge through this lockdown was my Wifi connection when working from home because it always used to cut out and have problems in the middle of my sessions, thankfully it has now been sorted out.

Yosias Desta

Funding Support

The work that we do at Dragon Hall Trust and Soapbox would not be possible without the support of all of our funders. We are very proud to be considered for their support - this year and in past years.





Awards

The Ben Kinsella Trust - A young person from SoapBox has received the **Ben Kinsella Award (2021)** in celebration of his positive actions as a young role model in leading the 'Stress on the Brain' project and the impact that has had on the local community, his peers and our organisation.



UK Youth's Inspiring Pioneer Award - SoapBox's online response to the pandemic was selected by UK Youth as one of 5 finalists for their 2021 'Inspiring Pioneer Award' in recognition of our *"impactful and forward-thinking work that harnessed new approaches, technology and collaboration to positively impact young people"*



Partners

Partnerships with other organisations are important to ensure a wide range of activities, opinions and viewpoints that cover all sorts of topics and subjects to engage and delight our users. We would like to thank all of our partners for their involvement and encourage new ones to contact us to see what we could do together.

Loud Futures - Jordan Sterling has become an irreplaceable figure at SoapBox, not only overseeing our music provision, but developing our accreditation work and securing invaluable external partnerships. And, as with many other people on this list, he has been a rock to rely on amongst all the chaos.

Richard Cloudesley & Courtyard Schools - These schools have been involved in standout work this year from the hosting of a year-long post-19 provision to weekly online activities.

Daniel Rainey & Mikey Bharj - two people who have been pivotal in developing our audio-visual programmes are Daniel & Mikey. At a time like this, what you look for is talented people who bring consideration and understanding to the table.

Emma Charlton & Joel McIlven - we met Emma & Joel through the Stress on the Brain project. But transformational though that work was, their personal and professional care, influence and support has been even more valuable.

Sally Rush - Sally is the calm in the storm, offering staff and young people clarity, wisdom and empathy at all times.

Eat Club - Eat Club have been instrumental in the development of our work over the last year, in particular our use of Instagram Live as a digital outreach tool.

Nerissa, Catherine and Paul - students from the University of East London have played a central role in the life and work of Dragon Hall. Nerissa, Catherine and Paul, three Master's Level students, have continued in that tradition, providing the injection of enthusiasm, commitment and ability just when we needed it.



"I wanted to pass on my thanks for the way you support the children. Our children are always keen to attend. I look forward to continuing to work with you next year"

St Josephs Primary School

"We have been very pleased to work closely with Dragon Hall helping to deliver their digital inclusion programme. More members have access to the programme. The relationship benefits both partners"

West End Community Trust