

Covent Garden Dragon Hall Trust & SoapBox Islington

Annual Report 2023 to 2024



Table of Contents

02

Chair of Trustee's report

03/04

Trustees & About Dragon Hall Trust

05/08

Youth Project

09/10

Food & Advice Service

11/13

Over 55s Project

14

Staff

15/20

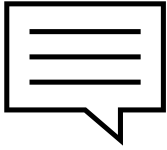
SoapBox Islington

21/22

Funders

23

Contact



Chair of Trustee's REPORT

Sue Vincent Chair of Trustees

It is with great pleasure I present the Covent Garden Dragon Hall Trust Annual Report. This year, our first thanks go to people involved in making a difference to the lives of others and the marvellous and dedicated team of volunteers, staff and supporters.

On behalf of the Trustees, our sincere gratitude goes to Nicole Furre, who retired at the end of this year leaving the Trust on financially firm foundations and with a robust succession plan in place with a step up of responsibilities for the team, led by James, as our new CEO, alongside Keeley (Dragon Hall Manager) and Nick (Manager at SoapBox). We wish Nicole a lengthy retirement.

As you will read in the report, the work Dragon Hall undertakes is focused on people and this work would not be possible without the generous help of our supporters. The Trustees would specifically like to thank Shaftesbury Estates for the lunch clubs, Richard for the over 55s project, our Senior Youth group who support the Junior Youth group, our UCL students for supporting the after-school club and all volunteers for regular support for our Tech Club.

Our firm financial status is entirely due to good planning, generous funders and regular users of our amenities. Huge thanks to: Camden Council, Islington Council, GSK, the Greater London Authority, John Lyons Charity, Mercers, UK Youth, London Youth and the Young Camden Foundation. We are grateful for the continued support from our users: Theatre Academy London, ICC Missions, Mandarin Evangelical London, London International Choir, Tango Amistoso and Drury Lane Tap! Great to see so many artistic and active classes.

Alongside this our project activities have substantially increased with the Over 55's Project Membership up 27%,

274 additional activities and 4,658 additional attendances, perhaps somewhat to do with the highly sociable lunch clubs, with over 3000 lunches served in partnership with Covent Garden Community Centre.

Our Children and Young People Project has 352 members, an increase of 20%, with 42 young volunteers, over 410 activities and 11,636 attendances from young people. The young volunteers were particularly helpful and played a crucial role in creating a supportive and inclusive community environment.

Our SoapBox project now has 824 members, with an attendance over the year of 7,892 - its STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Maths) Mentoring programme supported over 500 young people aged 9-25, working with partners and 50 industry professionals. Soapbox organised the 4th consecutive Whitecross Street Party Main Stage, with 30 acts entertaining thousands of festival-goers.

These activities would not be possible without the partnerships forged this year with: Islington Council, GSK, National Youth Agency, UK Youth, London Youth, SoundSkool, Think Forward, Elatt College, Royal Mencap & 5 primary schools (Prior Weston, St Peter & St Paul's, St Luke, Hugh Myddleton and Morelands).

You will see from the report that the annual accounts set out a robust financial situation. We are delighted that commercial bookings have also increased this year which has helped address the increase in overheads and outgoings, mainly due to higher energy costs. We look forward to the coming year, consolidating our community offer and strengthening links with supporters and partners.

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

Secretary

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.



Gerrard Knowles

Trustee

Local resident, NHS practitioner, has a special interest in the strategy and development of partner organisation - The Phoenix Garden



Simon Breugger

Trustee

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



Kate Matheson

Trustee

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.

Covent Garden 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.

Youth Work

Keeley Reed - Youth Manager

Building on our work from the previous year, we maintained a strong focus on STEAM-based activities, homework support, and arts and crafts.



Youth Programme

What a remarkable year it has been for the Youth Team at Dragon Hall! This period has been filled with exciting new activities and opportunities.

In April 2023, we returned with a host of fantastic activities that the young people thoroughly enjoyed. When designing our programme of activities we run planning and feedback sessions with the group, which helps create the programme. Young people are actively involved in creating their own programmes, making the experience even more engaging and personalised.

Our work has different focuses, based on the needs of the community and the young people. We have included new families, new community members and new schools.



After School Club

The After School Club operates three days a week in close collaboration with two local primary schools, with activities for young people aged 8-11. All activities remain free, providing wide ranging opportunities for involvement for young people in the local community.

Building on the previous year, we maintained a strong focus on STEAM-based activities, homework support, and arts and crafts. A standout project saw young people design their own shoes! They were given materials and some guiding information and techniques. They unleashed their creativity, producing innovative designs that highlighted their growth and development.

The After School Club experienced a transition, at the end of 2023, after reaching full capacity within the first two months of the new school year—an impressive achievement for the charity, accomplished without any promotion. Following this success, we decided to divide the club into

smaller focus groups based on feedback from the young people. We established a Drama group on Mondays, led by Michaela; a Film Club on Tuesdays, led by Ebika; and a quiet space on Fridays. These three clubs have provided unique opportunities for the young people to engage in activities they are passionate about, fostering new relationships and skills. The Drama Club's performances have been particularly impressive, with the young people creating their own plays, including characters, scripts, dances, and staging. Watching their improvement from performance to performance has been incredibly rewarding, and we eagerly anticipate their future endeavours.

Holidays

We had great Easter and Summer holiday schemes as part of the Holidays Activities and Food Scheme (HAF), funded by the Young Camden Foundation. We worked with 35 young people who are recipients of free school meals (FSM). This Summer we ran offsite trips to local parks, visits to

Urban Farms, Thorpe Park, visit to local museums & galleries, Phoenix Gardens, Bloomsbury, St James Park, Changing of the Guard, sports sessions and enriching activities like coding, gardening, board games and robotics.

During the Easter and Summer Holidays we provided young people with 516 hot meals, 86 a week for a duration of 6 weeks.

Intermediates

Our intermediates (young people transitioning to secondary school) have been a highlight of our year, and we retained a high number of our year 7's who went into secondary school. Supporting young people with the change, and ensuring that they knew they could continue to attend Dragon Hall, develop their friendships and relationships in their community.

Our intermediates meet every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, Monday - Boys Club, Tuesday - Girls Club, Wednesday - Transitions youth club and Intermediates youth club, Friday - Intermediates youth club. We run 1-2-1 needs led sessions, supporting CV development, signposting, Interview help and homework support.

Our group has undertaken numerous projects centred on life skills development, following the outcomes set by the Young Foundation Framework. They've engaged in cooking projects which involved menu development, creating shopping lists,



and doing the shopping themselves.

Additionally, we have organised group games to enhance self-awareness, teamwork, and communication skills. Our focus also extends to supporting young people's mental and physical health. We created self-care booklets, held workshops on mental health, and established mindfulness spaces within the building. Furthermore, we emphasised sports, offering a variety of activities such as badminton, four square, table tennis, basketball, football, and cricket. By providing such a diverse range of activities, we ensure there's something for everyone!



I just can't say thank you enough, Keeley runs a fantastic service that we would really struggle to manage without. We feel very lucky to have found it and are very grateful. Thanks to all at Dragon Hall.



Drama

Michaela Crivello - Youth Worker

Young people have developed their drama skills and communication with the audience...



This year has been a great year for Dragon Hall. In September 2023 we began small break-out clubs within our After School Club and my focus was a weekly Drama club.

This was created through voluntary participation, anyone could come and join what we were doing. This was very free flowing and young people led on the direction and choices of the club. The Drama group gave young people the opportunity to create a supportive environment that was very creative.

Through discussion with young people and staff, we decided to put on a Christmas play. We had done something similar previously but this was the first production created by the Drama Club.

The weeks running up to the Christmas play were very interesting, we got to see the enjoyment that the young people experienced from the process as well as the level of commitment they had towards our new group. The play was a huge success. We invited all parents and young people to watch. This process and performance inspired some

fantastic new ideas, so we decided to incorporate the Drama Club as a permanent fixture in our programme and the group continues to expand in 2024.

Since the start of 2024 we have had 35 young people involved in Drama Club, and the club is still expanding. Since the start of the year, the club has worked to develop their Drama Skills, using small activities at the start of the session to develop the young people's communication with the audience, their confidence on stage, their acting skills and their stage presence.

The final performance of the year was an Easter Play based on the Easter Bunny stealing everyone's Easter eggs, this was a performance created by the young people for just the After School Club. This was a fantastic opportunity to see how the young people had developed since the first performance in December 2023. New young people were involved, they all spoke so clearly, kept their bodies toward the audience and ensured they engaged with the audience and supported each other throughout the whole creative process.

We cannot wait to share what we have been up to since March 2024, as there has been so much growth and progress already!



Youth Volunteering

This year we have experienced more young volunteers coming through the organisation, initially being users of our services to joining as youngvolunteers. Youth volunteering is a powerful force for positive change, supporting the sense of community and personal growth, perfect reasons to offer the opportunity to the young people we work with.

We have witnessed, through volunteering, young people develop essential skills including leadership, teamwork, and communication, while, at the same time gaining a deeper understanding of social issues, especially effecting their community.

Through volunteering young people are able to apply their talents and passions in meaningful ways, whether through arts and crafts, teaching a sport, tutoring peers, or participating in community projects. Through their dedication and enthusiasm, these young volunteers play a crucial role in creating a supportive and vibrant community environment.

After School Clubs

370 Sessions

11,636 Attendances

352 Number of Young People

35 Young Volunteers

4 Jack Petchey Winners



Food Provision & Advice Sessions

Dragon Hall in partnership with Covent Garden Community Centre continued to deliver food and hygiene support to residents who were finding things difficult - either because of the cost of living crisis, delays in benefit claims or ill health. In addition we have continued our Advice Service - this is in partnership with Mary Ward Legal.

Between April 2023 and March 2024 we accepted and engaged with 94 referrals for advice from Camden Council via the advice referral network. Of those 94, we saw 57 in person. 25% of the in-person appointments were for Covent Garden Pantry users who we signposted to the advice service.

It's common for users to either forget, cancel or not attend an appointment and this can lead to gaps in the appointment schedule. However, we understand that the people we are supporting often find even reaching out for help to be a stressful situation and we endeavour to support them, whatever stage of their advice journey they might be at. Our tone is always, as with the Covent Garden Pantry, one of understanding and kindness.

Generally we're noticing that the advice sessions are for debt related issues caused by the cost of living crisis and housing advice.

The Covent Garden Pantry remains busy and whilst our primary role is food provision we find that we have also become a support mechanism in other ways. Clients come to ask us advice about all sorts of things aside from what they might eat that week. Recent examples are how to charge a new ipad (client bought in ipad and leads and was very relieved when we could help to show where the lead connected!); discussing health problems is very common and also feelings of social isolation. Between April 2023 and March 2024 we saw 905 individual users at the Pantry and this equates to approx 3620kg of food distributed. To make these figures more accurate, if we take an average week of 16 regular Pantry users and their family units (of which we are very familiar) that 16 becomes 40 actual family members being helped. When we multiply this number by the 905 attendances we realise that in reality over 3,600 meals, cups of tea or breakfasts are being provided by the Covent Garden Pantry.

In terms of donations we are already seeing new emails from organisations in the local area who supported us with their 2023 Christmas Food Drives, asking if they can help us again this year. In November and December 2023 we accepted



winter donations from around 40 different companies in Covent Garden and the local area. Where possible we invite those organisations to visit the Pantry and we talk about our work with the local community. We often have offers of volunteer time; funding and regular food donations and we look after these relationships carefully to ensure the sustainability of the Pantry.

Just recently a pantry and advice service user let us know that her circumstances had taken a turn for the better and she is now hoping to become a regular at lunch club instead of Pantry.

This user, we will call her Pantry 1, has been coming to us for a food parcel every week for the past year. She has an unusual circumstance for us, in that she had no cooking facilities or a kettle. There was no way for her to heat up food or cook, and no way to even add hot water to a packet of noodles or a cup a soup.

Pantry 1 is not an internet or phone user and prefers to stay under the radar of conventional communication. Therefore we had to agree a specific time that she would come each week as there was no way to contact her in between. In addition it was a challenge to find useful food items for her that needed no cooking or hot water. We gave things such as cooked tinned potatoes; tuna; mayonnaise; cooked veggies; cleaning items; toiletries; packets of cooked lentils or grains; cereal and milk.

Pantry 1 also told us that she was diabetic meaning we had to carefully monitor sugar content in food items. Pantry 1 often talked about her past and how she had felt threatened at times in her own home. We signposted her to the Mary Ward Advice sessions and also chatted to her each week to check in and make sure all was well.

Pantry 1 told me in October that she had been very happy to find us. She felt that she was slipping through a sort of post code abyss. The Euston food bank is too far for her to walk, but Islington would not accept her even though she felt they were her nearest place for provision. She said that if she hadn't found the Covent Garden Pantry she wasn't sure how she would have coped.



"You've helped me through a very difficult patch in the past few months and have been kind and non-judgemental, for which I'm very grateful. Please pass on thanks to your generous donors and the trustees of the charity".

Pantry User 1

Over 55s - 2023 to 2024

John Hayes - Community Development Manager



2023-2024 was another year of growth for our over-55s project. Membership surged to 789, and attendance at our 715 events soared to 9,267. This increase in demand underscored our commitment to providing essential services, classes, and activities that support older people's health, well-being, and social connection.

By expanding our timetable of activities, including during weekends and evenings, we ensured that our offerings met the diverse needs of our growing membership. Our programmes, ranging from fitness classes to social events, helped older people stay active, connected, and engaged.

From cultural outings like museum visits and film clubs to recreational pursuits like indoor gardening and flamenco, there's something for everyone. These sessions not only provide entertainment but also encourage social interaction and a sense of community.

One of the most significant benefits of our activities is their ability to foster a sense of belonging and connection. Many of our members have shared that participating in these programmes has helped them combat feelings of isolation and loneliness. By providing opportunities for social interaction and shared experiences, we create a welcoming and supportive environment where older individuals can thrive.

Dragon Hall has continued to foster strong partnerships with Phoenix Garden & Covent Garden Community Centre this year. At Phoenix Garden we offered a variety of 'Back to Nature' themed activities. Our extremely popular Friday Lunch Club at CGCC continued for another year providing a 2 course lunch for 60 older people per session. Other activities took place in the dedicated Community Room and included Tai Chi, Chair Exercise, Digital Sessions, Jewellery Classes & Bridge, Whist and Dominos among many others.

Our nature-based activities have provided numerous benefits for our members, including improved physical and mental health, enhanced social connection, and cultural enrichment. Spending time in nature has been shown to reduce our members' stress levels, improve mood, and enhance overall mental health. Additionally, group activities and outings



have provided opportunities for members to socialise, make new friends, and strengthen existing relationships. Finally, celebrating Chinese New Year and exploring local parks and farms has offered members the chance to learn about different cultures and appreciate the natural world.

Loneliness remains a significant issue for many older people. Our community programs, designed to bring together individuals with shared interests and hobbies, offer a valuable solution. By fostering connections over a cup of tea or coffee, we help members reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness while also providing opportunities to meet old friends and make new ones.

Through our collaborative efforts with various partners, we have successfully organised a diverse range of community programs that have facilitated meaningful connections and strengthened our sense of community.

Collaboration is a cornerstone of our work, and partnerships are essential for building stronger and more vibrant communities. By working together with other organisations, Dragon Hall can leverage our collective resources, expertise, and networks to achieve a more substantial impact toward

our shared goals.

These partnerships shape the work that we do, offering new opportunities for joint efforts, and expanding our reach. By working closely with other organisations, we can access new resources, gain valuable insights, and learn from best practices. This enables us to enhance our own programmes and services, ultimately improving the lives of the people we serve.

Over the course of the year, Dragon Hall have worked with Kew Gardens, Live Music Now, Museum of London Archaeology, Vodafone, ENO, Vera the Diva, 2 Temple Place, British Museum, Royal Historic Palaces, Royal Collection Trust, Camden Adult Learning, 7 Dials Club, London Zoo, Garden Cinema, Camden Council.

Partnership Work

Working with **Vodafone**, Dragon Hall was able to provide free SIM cards to 40 of our members. These pay-as-you-go SIM cards included 40GB of data per month, along with unlimited calls and texts for five months. This initiative, made possible through Vodafone's Charities Connected programme, aimed to address digital exclusion and emphasise the importance of staying connected. By providing free connectivity, we helped our members stay in touch with loved ones, access essential services, and participate more fully online.

Through our partnership with the **Royal Historic Palaces**, we were able to offer free entry and support to over 100 of our members through their Community Access Scheme. This invaluable initiative provided our members with the opportunity to visit and explore iconic landmarks such as the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, and Kensington Palace.

By offering free entry and support, we were able to make these historic sites accessible to members who may have otherwise been unable to afford or navigate these attractions.

Our partnership with the **Royal Collection Trust** continued to flourish throughout 2023 and 2024, offering our members a series of exclusive and enriching experiences. These special events provided a unique opportunity to explore the Royal Collection Trust's offerings in a more intimate and personalised way.

One of the highlights of our partnership was a guided walk and talk tour of the Royal Mews. This exclusive experience allowed our members to gain a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the stables where the Royal Mews horses are kept and cared

for. The tour provided fascinating insights into the history and traditions of the Royal Mews, as well as an opportunity to learn about the care and training of these magnificent animals.

Another memorable event was a private preview of a new exhibition. This exclusive opportunity allowed our members to be among the first to experience a new and exciting exhibition, before it opened to the public. The exhibition featured a stunning collection of art and artefacts, providing a glimpse into the rich history and culture of the Royal Collection.

In addition to these special events, we also offered our members a mindfulness workshop designed to enhance their appreciation of the exquisite art on display. The workshop encouraged members to adopt a slower and more contemplative approach to viewing the art, allowing them to fully immerse themselves in the experience and appreciate the finer details of each piece.

In early 2024, Dragon Hall partnered with **Beyond Equality** to offer three workshops specifically designed for our male members. These workshops focused on critical topics such as

- supporting men's mental well-being,
- promoting healthy masculinity,
- building supportive communities.

The workshops were designed to address the unique challenges faced by men in today's society.

Mental health is a critical issue that affects men of all ages. The workshop on supporting men's mental well-being provided participants with information about common mental health challenges, strategies for coping with stress and anxiety, and resources for seeking help. By addressing this important topic, the workshop helped to break down stigma and encourage men to prioritise their mental health.



Dragon Hall partnered with **Camden Council** on a 12-week campaign called "Active for Life", designed to encourage individuals over 60 in Camden to adopt a more active lifestyle. This comprehensive campaign, which ran from March to June, featured a series of weekly walks led by licensed fitness instructor Christine Coker.

Each week, a small group of ten members would gather at Green Park for a mindful walking meditation. Under Christine's expert guidance, participants engaged in walking meditation, a practice that seamlessly blends physical activity with mindfulness techniques. This innovative approach not only helped participants improve their overall well-being but also reduced stress, enhanced their connection to nature, and fostered a sense of community.

Beyond the individual benefits, the Active for Life campaign also fostered a sense of community among participants. By walking together and sharing experiences, members were able to connect with like-minded individuals, build friendships, and create a supportive network. This sense of community can be particularly important for older adults who may experience feelings of isolation or loneliness.

Overall, the Active for Life campaign was a resounding success, providing participants with a valuable opportunity to improve their physical and mental health. By combining physical activity with mindfulness techniques, the campaign offered a unique and effective approach to promoting healthy ageing in Camden.

Our popular Lunch Club in partnership with CGCC continued during the year, able to accommodate 60 people for a 2 course meal each Friday - supported by Shaftesbury PLC with

funding and volunteers.

The monthly Tea Dance also continued led by Vera the Diva, providing tea, cake and a wide range of dance styles to participate in!

Our work is centred around promoting health, mental well-being, lifelong learning, and social connection. Keeley Reed, Natalie Moor and Elliot Hughes at Dragon Hall and Phil Walls at CGCC have been instrumental in expanding our project and making a positive impact on our members' lives. Their dedication and expertise have helped us develop innovative programs and activities that improve our members' well-being and foster a sense of community.

Volunteers

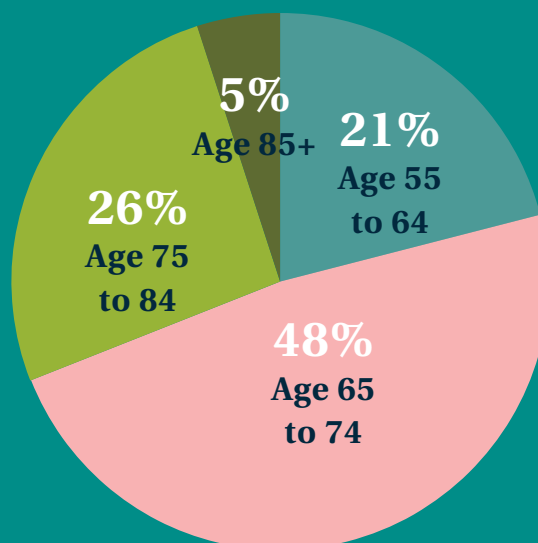
Dragon Hall Trust offers a wide range of activities, with nearly 60 options available each month. Our ability to provide such a diverse and engaging programme is largely due to the our dedicated volunteers, Richard Wilson, Katherine Clements, Ida Brigatti, Stephen Lowe, and Chris Malyn. Their countless hours of service over the past year have been instrumental in planning, organising, and delivering our activities.

Without the support of our volunteers, Dragon Hall would not be able to offer the same level of programming to our members. Their contributions have allowed us to expand our offerings, reach a wider audience, and provide more opportunities for our members to engage in meaningful activities.

We are incredibly grateful for the time and energy that our volunteers have invested in Dragon Hall. Their commitment to our mission has made a significant difference in the lives of our members, and we are honoured to have them as part of our team.

Over 55s Project Statistics

- 851** Members
- 867** Activities
- 10,916** Attendances
- 22,346** hours of delivery



Covent Garden Dragon Hall Trust

Covent Garden Dragon Hall Trust also runs SoapBox Islington on a 15 year contract with Islington Council to deliver youth services for the young people of Islington, sharing strategy, resources and staff members, administration tasks, maintenance and fund raising initiatives.

Dragon Hall Staff Team



Nicole Furre
Director



Chris Farrant
Finance Manager



Keeley Reed
Centre & Youth
Manager



James Dellow
SoapBox Manager



John Hayes
Community
Development



Nicholas Crivello
SoapBox Deputy
Manager



Eugenia Da Silva
Girls Club
Coordinator



Michaela Crivello
Youth Worker



Rachael Jagroop
Youth Worker



Bea Furre
Bookings Admin



Lucas Lane
Youth Worker



Elliot Hughes
Youth Worker



Muhammad Bello
Premises Officer



Yosias Desta
Youth Worker
Music Support



Natalie Moor
Pantry & Advice
Coordinator



Pickle
Therapy Dog

SoapBox Islington



Overview

SoapBox has had another remarkable year, supporting over 800 young people aged 9-25 from diverse backgrounds through a wide range of initiatives. The introduction of STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Maths) in recent years has opened up a world of new opportunities, sparking innovation and creativity. Our work with after school clubs has been instrumental in fostering a love for STEAM subjects among younger people.

We've established four key areas of support: a weekly internal programme offering advanced digital skills, funded mentorship schemes in collaboration with organisations like the Greater London Authority (GLA) and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), strategic partnerships with groups such as Sound Skool and Think Forward, and a strong focus on wellbeing and youth worker support alongside employability.

All of these initiatives are underpinned by youth work norms and values at their core. Our dedicated staff play a crucial role in providing guidance, mentorship, and tailored support, helping young people develop critical skills, build confidence and create pathways to future careers. The impact has been profound, with many young people reporting increased self-esteem, greater employability, and a stronger sense of community and purpose, empowering them to thrive in today's digital world.

Young Women's Group

The Young Women's group has continued to grow throughout the year, providing a supportive space for personal development and skill-building. The after schools club girls group has had the opportunity to learn new skills through cooking, as well as producing music and creating their own songs on topics that matter to them. Both the younger and older girls groups participated in a sports consultation at a local sports centre, where they collectively contributed ideas for the centre's development. This experience allowed them to voice their concerns regarding safety and suggest ways to create a safer environment for young women.

The transition group has engaged in support and wellbeing sessions, exploring important topics such as identity, confidence, and the influence of social media on young people. These discussions have enabled members to gain a deeper understanding of themselves and appreciate diverse perspectives. The Young Women's group has thrived through partnerships and collaborations with various organisations and local schools, enhancing the experiences and opportunities available to its members.

After School Clubs

The Soapbox After School Club was an exciting and vibrant space for Year 5 and 6 students from three local schools throughout the year, running from September 2023 to July 2024. With a variety of engaging activities, the club provided an outlet for both active and creative minds.



Football sessions were a major highlight, giving students the chance to improve their skills, build teamwork, and enjoy friendly competition on the field. Alongside sports, the club's STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) activities encouraged curiosity and creativity through hands-on activities

Creative thinking games kept minds sharp, as young people worked together and thought outside the box. Additionally, they delved into the world of game design using Scratch. Over a few sessions, they explored the basics of building their own games—designing characters and crafting storylines. Although they didn't complete their projects, the groundwork was laid for exciting future development, with plans to continue this project in the upcoming year. Gaming sessions also brought fun and camaraderie, as young people bonded over friendly competition. The Soapbox After School Club was a fantastic mix of fun, learning, and teamwork, making it a highlight of our year's work.

Music, Media & Technology

With a continuing focus on providing access to socially excluded young people, as well as those from the local area, we have noticed an increase in participation from young people associated with our partner organisations. Notably, young people from partners like SoundSkool have started using our music and media facilities after their lessons, with a significant rise in the number of young women making use

of these resources — not only on Mondays but throughout the week.

During the summer holidays, we also saw a steady stream of young people utilising our music spaces, including regular SoapBox users and others from partner organisations.

Our media collective has also experienced growth, attracting young people from diverse backgrounds, with a consistent weekly turnout throughout the year. As the media collective resumes for the 2024 academic term, we anticipate an even greater turnout, culminating in an end-of-year showcase that will highlight the hard work and dedication of the entire team.

Gaming Night

Our gaming night has become one of the most popular activities for secondary school-aged young people at SoapBox. It provides a safe space for them to spend time with friends and enjoy gaming together.

The positive feedback from participants has been overwhelming, with many bringing their friends along to join in. Beyond gaming, the night has helped young people develop social skills through in-person interactions, allowing them to build relationships and grow in confidence. Additionally, they have access to healthy snacks and can engage in physical games like ping pong and foosball, promoting a balanced mix of physical activity and online gaming.



GLA STEAM Programme

The STEAM Mentoring programme at SoapBox successfully supported over 500 young people aged 9-25, working with six key partners and more than 50 industry professionals. It provided a mix of 1-2-1 life coaching, mentoring from industry experts, group coaching, and bootcamps. These opportunities helped participants develop crucial skills in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Maths (STEAM).

The programme's focus on personalised mentoring, both through individual sessions and group activities, offered targeted guidance, helping young people explore career pathways. Industry experts played a key role in giving practical insights and inspiration. The mentoring framework ensured consistency and quality across all interactions, helping young people receive tailored support.

Overall, the STEAM Mentoring programme had a lasting impact by equipping young people with valuable skills, boosting their confidence, and helping them envision future career possibilities in STEAM fields.

Looking ahead to 2024 - 2025, the STEAM Mentoring programme is set to continue building on the successes, with plans to engage even more young people. By maintaining strong partnerships and expanding access to industry professionals, SoapBox will offer new opportunities for growth and skill development. The focus will remain on personalised mentoring, group coaching, and bootcamps, providing young people with hands-on experiences and career insights. With the programme's solid foundation and commitment to empowering young people, 2024 - 2025 promises to be another impactful year for the next generation of STEAM leaders.



SoapBox Led Events, April 2023 - April 2024

Over the past year, Soapbox has been at the forefront of several impactful projects, fostering youth talent and community engagement through live events and performances. Here's a summary of the exciting initiatives we've led and supported.

Whitecross Street Christmas Lights

In December, Soapbox provided young performers and sound services for the Whitecross Street Christmas Lights event. This festive celebration not only brought holiday cheer to the community but also showcased the talent of emerging young artists, offering them a platform to perform at a high-profile public event.

Soapbox Live Events

Throughout the year, Soapbox organised a series of Soapbox Live events, providing young musicians with the opportunity to perform their original music in a safe and supportive environment. These live shows have been a key part of nurturing talent, giving performers hands-on experience and a chance to connect with a growing audience.

New Sounds Festival

In collaboration with Guildhall School of Music and Music Education Islington, Soapbox played a major role in the New Sounds Festival. Soundskool students curated the event, showcasing 20 acts in a stunning concert hall that held 200 attendees. The festival brought together young talent from Islington and surrounding boroughs, with a diverse lineup that included orchestras, solo acts, and bands. This event highlighted the richness of youth talent and provided a professional stage for them to shine.

Whitecross Street Party

For the fourth consecutive year, Soapbox took the lead in organising performances for the Whitecross Street Party. This year's event saw 30 acts take the stage, entertaining thousands of festival-goers across the weekend. The atmosphere was electric, as musicians, dancers, and performers captivated the crowd, creating an unforgettable community celebration.

From festive events to major concerts, Soapbox has consistently provided a platform for young talent to grow and shine, strengthening community ties while empowering the next generation of artists.



SoapBox Partnerships

The invaluable support from our partners and corporate collaborators has significantly enhanced the work we do at SoapBox. Organisations including SoundSkool, Chance UK, Mencap College and Think Forward have provided essential resources and expertise, helping us create tailored programmes that meet the diverse needs of young people.

The young people from our partner organisations have actively participated in our programmes. Their involvement has fostered a vibrant and inclusive community, enriching the learning experiences for everyone. By collaborating in various activities, workshops, mentorship sessions, and events, these young people not only gain valuable skills but also build lasting friendships and networks.

This engagement has led to increased self-confidence, improved teamwork, and enhanced communication skills among participants. Furthermore, the diverse backgrounds of these young people create a rich range of experiences that contributes to a more dynamic and empathetic environment, ultimately empowering all young people to thrive.

The 2023-2024 period has been a transformative year for SoapBox, with significant strides made in empowering young people through education, creativity, and personal development. Our commitment to fostering innovation through STEAM initiatives, supporting young women, and offering a safe and inclusive environment has led to tangible positive outcomes for the 800+ young people we engaged.

The support of our partners, dedicated staff, and corporate collaborators has been crucial in expanding opportunities and ensuring that every young person has the resources they need to grow, succeed, and thrive.

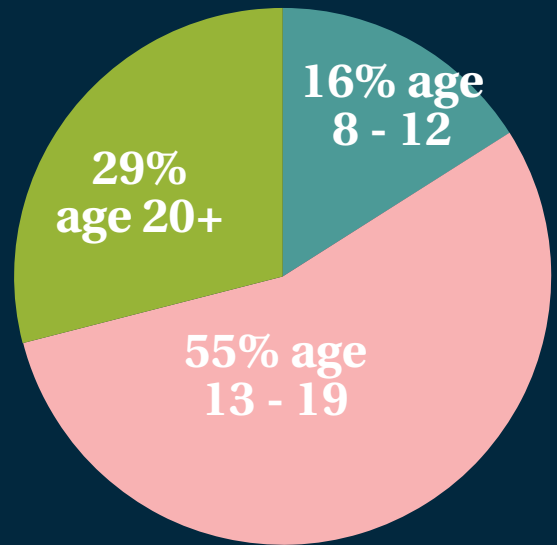
As we look to the future, SoapBox remains dedicated to creating lasting change in the lives of young people, continuing to build strong partnerships, and providing spaces where their voices are heard, skills are developed and ambitions are realised.



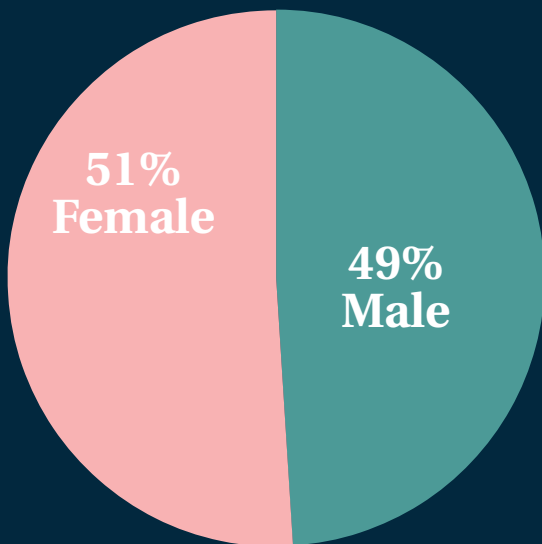
Soapbox Users

824 Individuals

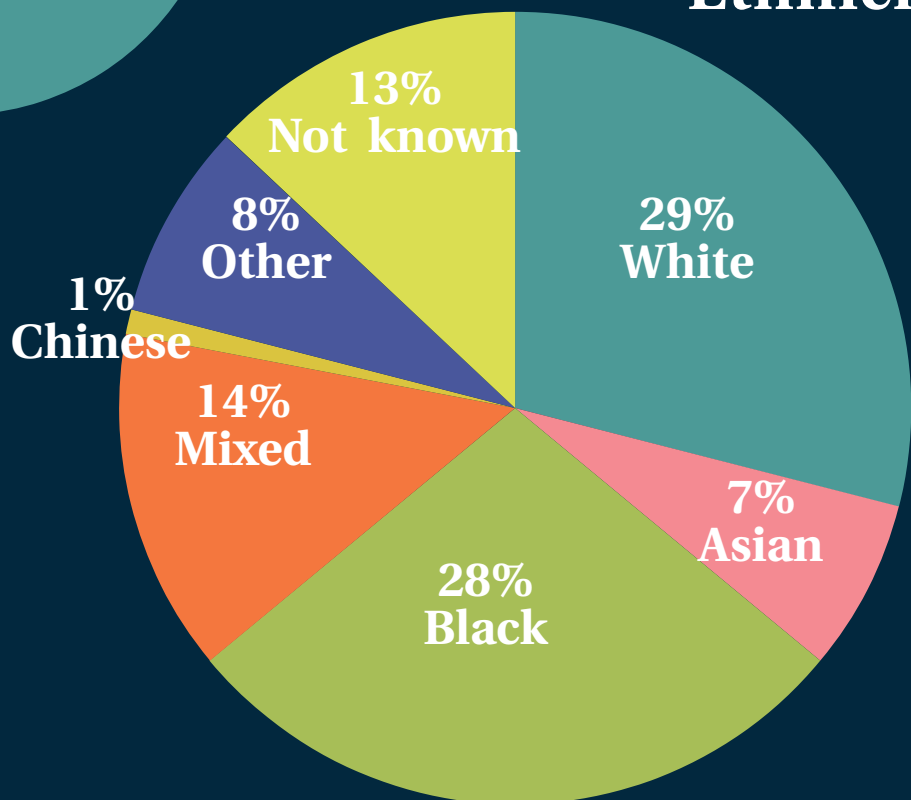
Age Group



Gender



Ethnicity



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, in past years and, hopefully, in future years.



COVENT GARDEN
capco

Shaftesbury

THE
JULIA AND HANS RAUSING
TRUST



THE
MERCERS'
COMPANY



UK YOUTH



**YOUNG
CAMDEN
FOUNDATION**

THE CLOTHWORKERS'
FOUNDATION

SHAKE  SHACK

 Peabody

The London
Community
Foundation

DERWENT

Contact Us



Dragon Hall Trust
17 Stukeley Street
London WC2B 5LT

Soapbox Islington
69-85 Old St,
London EC1V 9HX



020 7404 7274



www.dragonhall.org.uk
info@dragonhall.org.uk
@dragonhall
www.soapboxislington.org.uk
info@soapboxislington.org.uk
@soap__box

