

STUDIO UPSTAIRS

ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2025





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WELCOME TO OUR ANNUAL REPORT!

A warm hello to every artist, member, supporter and friend who makes Studio Upstairs what it is. This year has asked a lot of us. Rising costs, the long shadow of the pandemic's aftermath, and the energy it has taken to settle into our new South London home have tested resilience across our community.

Yet in the middle of all that noise, something remarkable has kept happening: people walk through our doors and find space to breathe, make, connect and simply be.

That space doesn't exist by accident. It is held open every day by your generosity, by the courage of everyone who shows up with their difficulties and their gifts, and by a team that refuses to let financial or logistical hurdles become barriers to care.

In studios and online, in one-to-one support and in the quiet moments when someone picks up a brush for the first time in years, we keep seeing creativity do what it has always done here: turn chaos into meaning, isolation into belonging, and despair into possibility.

None of this would be possible without you: those who give monthly, those who remember us in legacies, those who spread the word, and those who simply believe that mental health recovery deserves the dignity of real artistic community. So, thank you, truly, for standing with us again this year. The work feels more urgent than ever, and your trust gives us the strength to keep going.

With deep gratitude from the Studio Upstairs team and community!

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Charity Name	Studio Upstairs
Company Registration Number	32324178 (Incorporated 6 August 1996)
Charity Registration Number	1058590 (Registered 10 October 1996)
Website address	www.studioupstairs.org.uk
Registered Office & Operational Address 1	82 London Road London CR0 2TB
Address 2	Unit E3 Dalston Culture House 3 Bradbury Street London N16 8JN
Address 3	Units 1&2, Albion Dockside Estate Hanover Place Bristol BS1 6UT
Directors and Trustees	Mr Keith Miller Mr Alex Holmes Mrs Pernilla Rosendahl Ms Grace Sims Ms Dianne DeFreitas
Managing Director Company Secretary	Mrs Zlatinka Hristova
Accountants	Shorish Barzinji & Co Ltd 108 High Street Croydon CR0 1ND
Independent Examiner	Mr Nabeel Qureshi TAXACCOLEGA Chartered Certified Accountants 187A London Road Croydon CR0 2RJ
Bankers	Santander UK PLC 2 Triton Square Regent's Place London NW1 3AN
X Facebook Instagram	x.com/Studio_Upstairs www.facebook.com/StudioUpstairs www.instagram.com/studioupstairs

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE CHARITY

What we're here to do

Studio Upstairs offers a long-term, non-clinical alternative to traditional mental health services, rooted in creative practice and community.

Who we serve

We work with adults living with serious mental health challenges, many of whom have struggled to find sustained support through existing services. We meet people wherever they are, with whatever they're facing, and walk alongside them for as long as they need.

How we do it

Our studios in London and Bristol are open every week. Members drop-in, pick up materials, and make art alongside trained artists and art therapists in an atmosphere of respect, curiosity and zero pressure. Some come for a few months, some for longer. Some sell their work, some never show anyone until they are ready.

Our members help to shape the programme. They run monthly forums and help plan exhibitions. This isn't 'service delivery'. It is a long-term artistic community where relationships, trust and mutual care are central.

Looking after the money and the mission

We know funding can be shaky. That's why we've deliberately diversified our income, more sources, more confidence, so that one lost grant can never close our doors.

Public benefit

The trustees keep the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit at the heart of every decision. Our work reduces reliance on acute mental health services and supports long-term recovery. The evidence is in the stories on these pages and in the thousands of studio hours we give each year, hours that can contribute to reduced crisis presentations and reliance on acute services, and quietly rebuild lives.

We will continue to strive for a future where creativity, community, and courage are the cornerstones of mental health recovery.



STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Studio Upstairs is both a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. A board of trustees, passionate people with lived and professional experience, steers the ship. They meet regularly, challenge us when we need challenging, and protect the soul of the place.

Day-to-day running is in the hands of our Managing Director, Zlatinka Hristova, and a brilliant team of studio managers, artists and therapists.

Reserves: why we keep a safety net

We aim to hold six to eight months of running costs in reserve. That's not hoarding — it's common-sense protection for the people who rely on us. If a big grant ended tomorrow, we could still pay the rent, keep the studios warm, and give staff and members proper notice and support. It's the responsible thing to do, and it lets everyone sleep a little easier.

At year end, reserves were in line with this policy.

Designated funds are money we've ring-fenced for a reason.

They include:

Geoff Mack Fund, which we aim to replenish and which pays for places for members who can't afford even our small contributions.

Facilities Fund keeps the roofs from leaking and the lights on.

These funds are set aside from unrestricted donations, so we can plan ahead.



Every year the trustees review the biggest risks we face (funding gaps, rising costs, a sudden surge in demand) and make sure we have sensible plans in place. We keep proper financial controls, authorise spending carefully, and talk openly about money at every board meeting.

How trustees join us

Whenever we need new blood we advertise openly, run a proper skills audit, introduction meetings and shortlist fairly. Current trustees interview and vote. Every new trustee gets a full induction and ongoing support so they can contribute from day one.

OUR IMPACT

Creativity, Community, and Recovery

This year, Studio Upstairs not only maintained its vital support but expanded its reach, demonstrating the resilience and dedication of our community. Our studios remain safe, vibrant, and non-judgmental spaces where individuals living with serious mental health challenges can find stability, belonging, and a path to recovery through creative practice.

Studio Upstairs measures success in ‘lives steadied’, offering a long-term alternative to clinical models. We measure sustained positive change through regular reviews and surveys. The trustees consider that the charity has met its objectives for the year.



Key Metrics

Year 2025

Supported service hours	4,800
Individuals supported	188
Volunteers	9,180 hours
Value of Volunteer Time	£137,700

Financial Overview

This year we brought in £326,268 (last year £318,135) and spent £324,728 (last year £317,965).

The Evidence of Change

Unlike time-limited interventions, many members remain engaged for several years. This continuity is associated with fewer crisis episodes and reduced reliance on acute services.

Our internal and external evaluations consistently prove the efficacy of the studio model:

- **90% of our members** report a sustained, positive change directly resulting from their membership. This includes a documented reduction in stress levels, fewer crisis episodes, a lowered need for mental health services, or a diminished reliance on medication.
- We specialise in engaging and retaining individuals who are often considered "hard-to-reach", those who have struggled to find sustained support elsewhere by offering a family-like community where their voice matters.

- Members consistently report increased personal achievement, greater self-expression, and an improved sense of choice and control over their well-being. This is evidenced by increased engagement in mainstream opportunities, volunteering, and employment pathways.
- Members consistently describe the studio as a place of belonging and stability, often after years of fragmented or short-term support.

Other highlights of the year



We were delighted to be chosen as one of just eight organisations across the UK to be profiled in *Creatively Minded 2025*, the beautiful new publication from the Baring Foundation, curated by David Cutler.

The eight-page feature celebrates Studio Upstairs as a living example of what long-term, artist-led, therapeutic community can achieve when it is allowed to put creativity and dignity at the heart of mental health recovery.

Being included alongside some of the country's most respected arts-and-health projects felt like a proper milestone, thirty years into our journey, and the piece has already opened new conversations with trusts, NHS partners and artists who want to learn from the model we've quietly built together. You can read the full profile on the Baring Foundation website



- Launched a bolder online presence – short films, honest conversations, reaching over 140,000 people with messages that mental distress and brilliance live in the same person.
- Worked with corporate partner to deliver better mental health awareness through workshops and exhibition 'Life on My Terms'.
- Built new partnerships with arts venues, universities, NHS trusts and grassroots groups, because real change happens when the mental health world and the art world stop talking past each other.

REACHING OUT AND CHALLENGING STIGMA

We refuse to let mental health remain the last acceptable prejudice. This year we took that fight further than ever – not just inside our studios, but into galleries, streets, screens and conversations across the country.

What we did

Opened exhibitions that put our members' work centre stage that drew hundreds of first-time visitors.





What actually changed

Strangers walked into an exhibition expecting “mental health art” and left understanding that this is simply powerful art made by people who happen to live with mental health conditions. Young people messaged us saying, “I saw your posts and finally told someone I’m struggling.” Artists who once hid their diagnoses sold work under their real names and stood proudly at private views.

Stigma doesn’t crumble in a day, but every sold painting, every shared post, every new visitor who says “I get it now” is a crack in the wall.

In our Members’ own words:

“Coming here means my mental health isn’t something that has to be cured. It’s just part of me, and that’s finally all right.”

“The studio gave me a reason to get out of bed, people who understand, and the best therapy I’ve ever had – and it doesn’t come in a bottle.”

“Studio Upstairs has kept me steady all year. The art, the people, the feeling of belonging, it’s stopped me falling into crisis more times than I can count.”

“This place handed the reins back to me. I choose what help I want, my voice matters, and I feel worth something again.”

“It’s not just somewhere to paint, it’s where I’ve learnt new skills, grown, and found a proper home.”

“I honestly never thought I’d achieve half the things I have here. Making art has given me back my confidence and my sanity.”



LOOKING AHEAD – OUR PLANS FOR 2026 AND BEYOND

As we walk into our fourth decade, Studio Upstairs is not standing still. We are growing, adapting and doubling down on what works: real art, real community, real recovery.

Here's what the next chapter looks like:

Strengthen the foundations

Lock in diverse, long-term funding – more corporate partners, individual giving circles and earned income streams – so we are never again one rejected grant away from closing the doors.

Keep refining our three-year funding roadmap, always with one question in mind: how do we stay here for the next 40 years?

Deepen and widen the work – CREATE | BELONG | GROW

- **CREATE:** Richer, braver creative programmes in London and Bristol. We will continue to protect and expand long-term places for members who need years, not months, to rebuild their lives.
- **BELONG:** New satellite projects and stronger links with local communities, because isolation doesn't stop at the studio door.



- **GROW:** Take the Studio Upstairs model to new towns and cities, and shout louder nationally about what creative community recovery can achieve.

Reach further, without leaving anyone behind



- Keep the studios at the heart of everything, nothing replaces the magic of turning up, picking up a brush and being met exactly where you are.
- Grow our digital and outreach work so that someone in a rural village or on a locked ward can still feel part of this community.
- Pilot low-cost, high-impact partnerships with NHS trusts, universities and employers who want to learn from what we do.

Stay restless

Every year we will ask: Are we still the safest, bravest, most useful place for people living with serious mental distress? If the answer is ever “maybe”, we change. For us, recovery is not measured in discharge dates, but in paintings finished, friendships made, hospital admissions avoided and lives quietly reclaimed one person, one artwork, one day at a time.



INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and reporting accountants

The Trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under the Charities Act 2011 and that an independent examination is needed. Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under the Charities Act 2011;
- follow the procedures laid down in the general directions given by the Charity Commission under the Charities Act 2011;

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention: 1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that any material respect the requirements: to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of the section 396 of the Companies Act 2006 and the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met. 2. To which, in our opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Independent Examiner's Details

Name: Nabeel Qureshi, FCCA, ACCA

Taxacolega Chartered Certified Accountants

187 A London Road, Croydon, CR0 2RJ

Date: 30th December 2025

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT 2025**

		31st March 2025 Restricted Funds £	31st March 2025 Unrestricted Funds £	31st March 2025 Total Funds £	31st March 2024 Total Funds £
<u>Incoming Resources</u>	Note				
Service income	2	-	223,131	223,131	240,156
Voluntary income	3	98,323	3,110	101,433	76,620
Investment Income	4	-	1,704	1,704	1,359
Total		98,323	227,945	326,268	318,135
<u>Resources Expended</u>	5				
Charitable activities costs		102,173	211,873	314,046	307,265
Governance costs		-	735	735	615
Costs of generating funds		-	9,947	9,947	10,085
Total		102,173	222,555	324,728	317,965
Net income (expenditure)		(3,850)	5,390	1,540	170
Total funds brought forward		47,591	146,819	194,410	194,240
Total funds carried forward		43,741	152,209	195,950	194,410

Movements in funds are shown in Note 13 to the financial statements.

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

The notes on pages 17 to 21 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEET

		<u>31st March</u> <u>2025</u>	<u>31st March</u> <u>2024</u>
	Note	£	£
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	7	3,294	4,392
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	8	8,084	37,986
Stocks & work in progress		8,416	-
Prepayments		10,000	-
Cash at bank and in hand		178,930	164,451
		205,430	202,437
CREDITORS			
Amount falling due within one year	9	(12,774)	(12,419)
Net Current Assets		<u>192,656</u>	<u>190,018</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		<u>195,950</u>	<u>194,410</u>
CAPITAL AND RESERVES	10		
Restricted Funds		43,741	47,591
Unrestricted Funds		<u>152,209</u>	<u>146,819</u>
TOTAL		<u>195,950</u>	<u>194,410</u>

The accounts were approved by the Board on:

12/01/2026

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS**1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES****(a) Basis of preparation:**

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with FRS 102, the Charities Act 2011, and the Companies Act 2006.

(b) Incoming resources:

All incoming resources are included in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy. The following specific policies are applied to particular categories of income:

Income from charitable activities is received by way of grants, donations and gifts and is included in full in the Statement of Financial Activities when receivable. Incoming resources from charitable activity are accounted for when earned.

Grants, where entitlement is not conditional on the delivery of a specific performance by the charity, are recognised when the charity becomes unconditionally entitled to the grant. Income resources from grants, where related to performance and specific deliverables, are accounted for as the charity earns the right to consideration by its performance.

Income from donations and legacies are included at the value to the charity where this can be quantified. The value of services provided by volunteers has not been included in these accounts. Grant of a general nature provided by government and charitable foundation which are not conditional on delivering certain levels or volumes of a service or supply of charitable goods are recognised as income from donations and legacies.

(c) Resources expended:

Expenditure is recognised on an accrual basis as a liability is incurred. Expenditure includes any VAT which cannot be fully recovered, and is reported as part of the expenditure to which it relates: Expenditure on raising funds comprise the costs associated with attracting income from donations and legacies.

Expenditure on charitable activities comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. It includes both costs that can be allocated directly to such activities and those costs of an indirect nature necessary to support them.

Governance costs include those costs associated with meeting the constitutional and statutory requirements of the charity and include the independent examination fees and costs linked to the strategic management of the charity.

All costs are allocated between the expenditure categories of the SOFA on a basis designed to reflect the use of the resource. Costs relating to a particular activity are allocated directly; others are apportioned on an appropriate basis, such as consultants, estimated usage or space occupied. Material allocations of costs made within the accounts are:

Cost function	Office expenses	Senior Management
Services		
Basis of allocation	Estimated Usage	Time spent
Charitable Activities	95%	75%
Governance Costs	1%	10%
Generating Voluntary income	4%	15%

(d) Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of an asset, less its estimated residual value, over the useful economic life of that asset as follows:

- Plant & Machinery @ 18% reducing balance basis
- Equipment @100% over the period of one year (First year allowance)
- Assets costing less than £500 are not capitalised

(e) Fund accounting: funds held by the charity are either:

- **Unrestricted** general funds – these are funds for use at the discretion of the trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity.
- **Designated** funds – these are funds set aside by the trustees out of unrestricted general funds for specific future purposes or projects.
- **Restricted** funds - these are funds which can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.
- Transfers between funds are made to cover deficits on individual restricted funds and to recognise fixed assets acquired with restricted income, but with no further restriction on use.

(f) Operating Leases: Rentals are charged to the income and expenditure account in equal annual amounts over the period of the lease.

2. CHARITABLE INCOME

	31 st March 2025	31 st March 2025	31 st March 2025	31 st March 2024
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	<u>Funds</u>	<u>Funds</u>	<u>Funds</u>	<u>Funds</u>
	£	£	£	£
Therapeutic Art Studio				
Fees for Funded Places	-	157,243	157,243	173,378
Members contributions	-	56,555	56,555	58,115
Workshop Fees	-	4,650	4,650	6,921
Artwork Sales	-	2,592	2,592	-
Other income	-	2,091	2,091	1,742
Total	-	223,131	223,131	240,156

3. VOLUNTARY INCOME

	31 st March 2025	31 st March 2025	31 st March 2025	31 st March 2024
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Grants	76,146	-	76,146	65,011
Donations	22,177	3,000	25,177	11,477
Friends Scheme	-	110	110	132
Total	98,323	3,110	101,433	76,620

4. INVESTMENT INCOME

	31 st March 2025	31 st March 2025	31 st March 2025	31 st March 2024
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£
Interest received	-	1,704	1,704	1,359
Total	-	1,704	1,704	1,359

5. RESOURCES EXPENDED

	<u>Charitable Activities</u>	<u>Governance</u>	<u>Generating Funds</u>	<u>Total 2025</u>	<u>Total 2024</u>
	£	£	£	£	£
Staff Salaries and vol. expenses	180,277	-	9,488	189,765	180,644
Training & Supervision Costs	3,960	-	-	3,960	3,895
Team and Community Events	22	-	-	22	18
Employer N I Co	477	-	25	502	1,252
Pension Contributions	3,257	-	171	3,428	1,632
Rent and Utilities	86,738	-	-	86,738	81,394
Office Costs	5,543	-	-	5,543	4,056
Studio Art Materials	5,725	-	-	5,725	5,855
Artists Fees Sales	1,624	-	-	1,624	176
Shipping, Freight and Delivery	974	-	-	974	735
Equipment	119	-	-	119	1,293
Marketing and Communications	2,306	-	121	2,427	1,243
Accounts and Audit Costs	6,783	357	-	7,140	6,443
Legal Fees/ DBS Checks	3,256	171	-	3,427	2,500
Bank Charges	1	-	-	1	6
Insurance	2,984	157	-	3,141	2,355
Project and Exhibitions Costs	2,702	-	142	2,844	1,8608
Bad Debt Written Off	5,250	-	-	5,250	3,396
Depreciation	1,098	-	-	1,098	1,464
Independent examiner	950	50	-	1,000	1,000
Total Resources Expended	314,046	735	9,947	324,728	317,965

Staff employed

	<u>YE</u>	<u>YE</u>
	<u>31-Mar-25</u>	<u>31-Mar-24</u>
Gross salary	48,965	54,406
Employer's NI Contributions	5,502	6,253
Employer's Pension Contributions (SPS)	1,469	1,632
	<u>55,936</u>	<u>62,291</u>

6. TAXATION

The company is a registered charity and it is considered that its activities are such that no taxation liability will arise.

7. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

COST	Furniture	Plant & Machinery	Equipment	Total
		£	£	£
At 1st April 2024	970	47197	19704	67871
Total	970	47197	19704	67871

DEPRECIATION

At 1st April 2024	425	43350	19704	63479
Charge for the year	136	962	0	1098
At 31st March 2025	561	44312	19704	64577

NET BOOK VALUE

At 31st March 2025	409	2885	0	3294
At 31st March 2024	545	3847	0	4392

8. DEBTORS

	31st March 2025	31st March 2024
Trade debtors	6,000	29,751
Other debtors	2,084	8,235
Prepayments and accrued income	-	-
Total Debtors	8,084	37,986

9. CREDITORS

	31st March 2025	31st March 2024
Amounts falling due within one year		
Creditors	(12,774)	(12,419)
Accruals and deferred income		
Total Creditors	(12,774)	(12,419)

10. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	<u>General Funds</u>	<u>Designated Funds</u>	<u>Restricted Funds</u>	<u>Total 2025</u>
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	3,294	-	-	3,294
Debtors	6,000	2,084	-	8,084
Stocks and work in progress	1,340	7,076	-	8,416
Prepayments and accrued income	2,100	7,900	-	10,000
Cash at bank and in hand	1,094	134,095	43,741	178,930
Creditors	(12,774)	-	-	(12,774)
Total	1,054	151,155	43,741	195,950

11. CAPITAL

The company has no share capital being limited by guarantee. Each member undertakes to contribute £1 in the event of the company being wound up.

12. RELATED PARTIES

There were no related-party transactions during the year that need to be disclosed.

13. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1 April 2024	Incoming	Outgoing	At 31 March 2025
Restricted Funds	47,591	98,323	102,173	43,741
Unrestricted Funds	146,819	227,945	222,555	152,209
Total funds	194,410	326,268	324,728	195,950

None of the trustees received any payment or benefit from Studio Upstairs during the year, and no one claimed any expenses (same as last year).

