



# Curious Minds

## Curious Minds' Registered Office:

Studio 15, The Old Courts  
Gerrard Winstanley House  
Crawford Street  
Wigan  
Greater Manchester  
WN1 1NA

Curious Minds is a Company Limited by  
Guarantee and a Registered Charity

Registered Company	Registered Charity
Number: 06775402	Number: 1130988

## Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 to  
31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

# Contents

Company Information.....	2
Chair's Statement.....	3
Trustees' Annual Report.....	5
Our Commitment to Equality, Inclusion and Diversity.....	6
Our Commitment to Quality.....	6
Our Commitment to Climate Change .....	6
Our Values - The 7 Cs.....	8
Review of our Achievements and Performance in 2023/24.....	10
Methodology.....	10
Activity .....	11
Organisational Development.....	23
Our Plans for the Future.....	27
Financial Review .....	29
Structure, Governance & Management .....	31
Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities.....	33
Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees of Curious Minds .....	35
Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024.....	
.....(Including income & expenditure account)....	40
Balance Sheet as at 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024.....	41
Statement of Cash Flow for the Year Ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024.....	42
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024.....	43

# Company Information

---

## Incorporation

The charitable company was incorporated on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and commenced trading on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. Curious Minds became a registered Charity on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2009.

---

## Trustees

Mrs. Karen Crowshaw – Chair (Retired 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023)  
Ms. Kathy McArdle – Chair (Appointed 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023)  
Mr. Jonathan Robinson – Vice-Chair (From 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023)  
Ms. Samira Al’Obaidi  
Ms. Eleanor Chapman (Died 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023)  
Mr. Mustafa Hassan  
Mr. Jaffer Hussain (Resigned 24<sup>th</sup> August 2023)  
Ms. Janet Madden (Appointed 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024)  
Ms. Kara Orford (Appointed 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024)  
Ms. Alicia Smith  
Ms. Abby Symonds (Appointed 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024)  
Mr. David Wearing

---

## Executive Management Team

Chief Executive Officer	Derri Burdon
Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Kelly Allen
Chief Operating Officer	Sue Langfeld

---

## Statutory Auditors & Accountants

Mitchell Charlesworth (Audit) Limited  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 44 Peter Street  
Manchester  
M2 5GP

---

## Bankers

CAF Bank Limited  
25 Kings Hill Avenue  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
Kent MA19 4JQ

## Solicitors

Counterculture Partnership LLP  
Unit 115  
Ducie House  
Ducie Street  
Manchester M1 2JW

# Chair's Statement

---

It is with great pride and optimism that I present the Chair's statement for Curious Minds' 2023-24 Trustees Annual Report. This year marked a significant milestone as our first year as a new Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO). Having been funded by Arts Council England as the North West Bridge since 2012, this transitionary year has been both a period of reflection and forward planning.

Securing our core funding until March 2026 provided a welcome foundation of certainty, enabling us to engage in robust long-term planning. However, knowing that a general election was on the horizon, the Curious Minds team were working in an external climate of uncertainty tinged with hope that the next government will place greater value on the role of creativity and culture in children's lives.

I am delighted to have joined the organisation in November 2023 as Curious Mind's new Chair of Trustees. I am passionate about the value that cultural and creative experiences play in shaping the lives of children and young people and hope to bring my experience in that area and a fresh perspective to our board. I have also thoroughly enjoyed working with the fantastic staff team who are the beating heart of the organisation and will no doubt power it forward into its next phase of development locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to Karen Crowshaw, our outgoing Chair, for her invaluable contributions over the past six years. Karen's leadership has been instrumental in guiding Curious Minds through significant growth and change.

We are also delighted to welcome three new Trustees to our board: Janet Madden, Kara Orford and Abby Symonds. Their diverse skills and passion for our mission will undoubtedly enhance our strategic direction and governance.

Looking ahead, we are thrilled to announce that our application to become the ITAC England Hub has been successful. We eagerly anticipate the launch of the Hub later this year, which will further our mission to support and develop teaching artists and cultural education.

Additionally, we are excited about our partnership with Wigan Council to establish a new base for Curious Minds. This new national centre of excellence for Cultural Education and Teaching Artists will be a beacon of innovation and collaboration. We will be focussing our minds on establishing the centre in the latter part of 2024 and 2025.



As we navigate these changes and opportunities, the future remains bright and full of potential. The spirit of curiosity that drives our work continues to inspire us, and we look forward to another year of growth, creativity, and impact.

The future remains Curious!

**Kathy McArdle**  
**Chair of the Board of Trustees**

# Trustees' Annual Report

---

## Our purpose and activities

The purposes of the charity are to advance for the public benefit the education of children and young people within England to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals, in particular by:

- supporting them to become successful learners and responsible citizens by working with others to extend the range, amount, quality and scope of formal and informal learning opportunities in the areas of creativity, arts, media, culture, heritage, humanities and science;
- supporting teachers, practitioners, carers, performers and artists in developing the necessary skills and knowledge to assist them in enabling children and young people both inside and outside formal education to develop and apply their skills and talents and to open up to them cultural and creative activity;
- developing programmes, where appropriate, in partnership with others to deliver positive learning outcomes and encourage the recognition, enjoyment and use of culture, media and heritage;
- empowering them to be involved in the promotion of cultural and learning activities and enhancing their skills, capacities and capabilities; and
- encouraging them to visit, experience, participate in, initiate and engage in cultural activities, places and performances.

Curious Minds aims to improve the lives of children and young people in the North of England through facilitating access to arts and culture for all. It promotes cultural education and enables creative innovation and collaboration between the cultural, educational and youth sectors.

In shaping our objectives for the year and planning our activities, the Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including the guidance 'public benefit: running a charity (PB2)'. Our main beneficiaries are schools, local authorities, cultural organisations and creative practitioners and we are mindful that they all continue to work within a challenging social, financial and policy climate.

## Our Vision and Mission

**Our Vision** is for a future where being creative and experiencing brilliant culture is a regular part of every child's life and learning.

**Powered by curiosity**, we work to tackle unequal access to creativity and culture for children and young people who are often excluded by social and economic inequalities.

## Our Commitment to Equality, Inclusion and Diversity

---

We want all children and young people to enjoy and contribute to the cultural life of society. We are ferociously committed to identifying and removing barriers to engagement for children and young people from marginalised backgrounds. We recognise this can only be achieved by a more diverse, resilient, and better-connected workforce. We commit to playing our part to bring about these changes – starting with ourselves. We are a Real Living Wage employer.

## Our Commitment to Quality

---

We believe that quality and equality go hand-in-hand. Raising the quality of the creative and cultural learning experiences all children and young people have access to, at school and in the community, is fundamental to 'levelling up' opportunity.

Developing the workforce is key. Overcoming preconceptions and barriers to engage with previously excluded children and young people is highly skilled work, yet most practitioners learn on the job with little support. We commit to creating new and clearer pathways that lead to the professionalisation of the Cultural Education workforce.

## Our Commitment to Climate Change

---

The global pandemic which struck in 2020 led to a year in which Curious Minds, and the wider world, changed. Our Action Plan and supporting Policy have been developed as we emerge from the pandemic and seize the opportunity to build on these changes to develop our environmental practices for the better.

We commit to redoubling our efforts to reduce the carbon footprint of our day-to-day operations and be more environmentally responsible. We seek to influence, educate, and

advocate for a post carbon future through our day-to-day work and programmes; including doing whatever we can to ensure children and young people see themselves as global citizens and develop the creative skills they will need to access opportunities arising from the transition to a low carbon economy.

# Our Values - The 7 Cs

---

The 7C's are seven words beginning with the letter C by which we hold ourselves to account and invite others to do the same. They continue to guide our planning, recruitment and self-evaluation, and provide a framework for performance management.

- **We are CURIOUS**

We are hopeful for a fairer future. We explore new possibilities and seek out best and next practice, listening and responding to the opinions and ideas of others, especially children and young people.

- **We COLLABORATE**

Partnerships and collaboration are fundamental to how we work. In these times of change and uncertainty we understand the importance of listening to build meaning and grow collective impact.

- **We are COURAGEOUS**

We are relentless in our pursuit of fair access to creativity and culture for all, and work to disrupt the status quo. We accept and deliver challenge, especially concerning diversity, inclusion, quality and relevance.

- **We are CREDIBLE**

We are evidence driven and always learning. We draw expertise from across education and culture to skilfully navigate and connect both worlds. We seek out and build alliances with experts in their field.

- **We are CONSCIENTIOUS**

We take our leadership role seriously and never take for granted the privilege of being trusted by our funders and partners to do the right thing with the resources we hold. We practise Host Leadership, knowing when to step forward and when to step back.

- **We CARE**

We care deeply about children and young people, the adults who support them and the places where they live and learn. We embrace, celebrate and champion diversity in all its forms.

- **We CELEBRATE**

We celebrate and champion creative and cultural education, the diverse professionals championing and delivering it, and the children and young people it is for.

## Charging Considerations

Our main beneficiaries/stakeholders are schools, local authorities, cultural organisations and creative practitioners, all of whom are working in a challenging financial and policy climate. Affordability and access to our programmes is important to us and remains a key consideration when we are planning our activity. Wherever possible, we provide places on our events and training programmes at low or no cost to participants using the grants we receive as subsidy. The decision whether to provide a service, place on training or at an event or conference is carefully balanced to ensure cost does not act as a barrier, but also taking into account our experience of drop-off when offering places for free (e.g., people register but don't turn up). We cost all our traded offers on a full cost recovery basis.



# Review of our Achievements and Performance in 2023/24

---

Curious Minds continues to punch above its weight to achieve significant impact with limited resources. We choose to support the sector rather than directly working with young people and it is this strategic approach that enables us to have substantial regional, and more recently, national and international reach and influence as honest brokers and advocates for cultural and creative education.

We target our work to benefit children and young people living and learning in some of the most socio-economically disadvantaged areas of England. We continue to support the cultural and education sectors to collaborate so that these children and young people can enjoy larger, richer cultural lives.

We are proud to be part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio, **acting as a Field Catalyst Organisation for Cultural Education:**

---

*"We are 'field builders' for cultural education; creating the conditions and catalysing action to bring about organisational and systemic change – one teacher, one youth worker, one creative practitioner at a time."*

---

In 2020 we worked with Social Value Lab to uncover a **distinct methodology**, which continues to inform how we work and who we work with to achieve our charitable objectives:

## Methodology



# Activity

Since April 2023 we have been using the following **Strategic Framework** to plan and deliver activity:

Our Mission	Our Theory of Change	Our 2023–2030 Priorities	Our Activity	Our Vision
In order to...	We will...	By focusing on...	Through the delivery of...	To achieve...
tackle unequal access to creativity and culture for children and young people	<b>INNOVATE</b> in the field of creative and cultural education	<b>1</b> Purposeful Inclusion & Relevance	learning and leadership <b>PROGRAMMES &amp; PARTNERSHIPS</b> that bring about individual, organisational and systemic change, <b>IMPACT Social Justice</b> outcomes and 'level-up' opportunity.	a future where being creative and experiencing brilliant arts and culture is a regular part of <b>EVERY</b> child's learning and life.
	<b>INVEST</b> in a diverse cultural education workforce	<b>2</b> Workforce & Leadership Development		
	<b>INFLUENCE</b> cultural education partnerships and policy	<b>3</b> Learning & Advocacy		
		<b>4</b> Quality & Creative Pedagogy		

## 1. Innovate

We innovate in the field of creative and cultural education by collaborating with multi-sector partners to explore and test new approaches to the delivery of cultural learning and leadership programmes.

### 1.1. AFTEC Cultural Leadership Programme

We were delighted to be approached by Hong Kong based AFTEC (Arts for Transformative Educational Change) to collaborate on their Jockey Club funded cultural exchange programme for teachers. Throughout the year we navigated the time difference to meet online with the team at AFTEC to plan a hybrid programme of leadership CPD with the Hong Kong based teachers for the 2024/25 academic year, including them visiting London in the Autumn of 2024.

### 1.2. #BeeWell GMCA Youth Health Champions Programme

Between January and October 2023, Curious Minds were contracted by GMCA to co-ordinate their #BeeWell informed Children in Need funded 'Youth Health Champions' Programme. 17 schools from 5 Greater Manchester Boroughs: Rochdale, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford & Bury were involved in the programme. 17 teachers Completed Youth Health Champions Training to train and support participating young people in their schools to act as #BeeWell Youth Health Champions for their schools. Using participatory

budgeting practice, the young people had access to a commissioning pot of £5k per school which they used to commission activity with local providers, either on site or in local neighbourhood venues. Curious Minds delivered 'Commissioning with Confidence' training for both school staff and participating young people, and we worked with TiPP to develop and implement youth-led commissioning safeguarding models. We worked with the Royal Society of Public Health to write a Creative Health Module that forms part of the Youth Health Champions qualification.

### 1.3. BeeWell Artsmark Schools

We were appointed by the Arts Council England to deliver a pilot project focusing on the impact arts-based activity can have on the health and wellbeing of secondary school students.

We supported 7 Greater Manchester based secondary schools who took part in the #Beewell survey to use their BeeWell data to identify areas of wellbeing priority, then plan and commission creative activity to respond to this need, whilst also meeting the Artsmark criteria.

Staff from participating schools took part in a range of training opportunities including:

- Young Health Champions RSPH Creative Health module 'train the trainer'
- Commissioning Cultural Partners
- Arts for Wellbeing
- Neurodiversity

They also received ongoing support from the Curious Minds team to deliver the key milestones of this project: delivering Youth Health Champions Creative module to 5 pupils; a micro-commission; neighbourhood commission of creative health activity.

#### School Quotes:

*"It means a lot to have excellent support to do this form of work."*

*"Brilliant and supportive as ever - appreciate the depth of understanding of my personal practice and setting and how this is factored in to the progression of discussions and plans."*

### 1.4. Curious Citizens Programme

Inspired by our successful 2017 Cultural Citizens pilot, Curious Citizens supported 4 schools in Wigan and 5 schools in West Cumbria to create compelling cultural learning experiences for Key Stage 3 pupils who would not normally have access to them. With a budget and support by specially trained Club Leaders, Key Stage 3 students worked in groups of ten to plan and experience five cultural trips. Along the way they engaged with inspiring creative professionals and experienced incredible cultural venues, developed essential life-skills, discovered new creative talents, and boosted their cultural capital.

The in-house evaluation reported positive outcomes for students:

- increased confidence to engage with cultural activities
- a greater sense of agency
- better social networks, and perseverance.

...and for teachers:

- greater understanding of pupil barriers to cultural education
- harnessing student leadership
- increased confidence to lead cultural education activities and trips
- increased understanding of how cultural education benefits the school.

**Teacher/Club Leader Quote:**

*“Last weekend, they were comfortably navigating walking to places they hadn’t been to before, town squares, walking into a gallery without asking if they were allowed first, some led by the more confident students but feel more comfortable that they can be somewhere like that and not waiting for an adult to show them.”*

### **1.5. Early Years Creative Co-labs**

Between January and October 2023, Curious Minds worked in partnership with researchers at Manchester Metropolitan University to develop a co-laboratory to explore how arts-based practices can be used to develop skills for playfulness in the early years workforce. Each co-laboratory was made up of a multi-professional team: artist/cultural organisation; specialist early years artist mentee; nursery practitioner. The project created 3 mentee artist placements. The model supported and built multi-professional capacity in the early years’ workforce.

The co-labs were based at Manchester Art Gallery’s Platt Hall site, where a lead and mentee artist worked alongside Martenscroft Children’s Centre and Stay & Play, Rusholme. Primed for Life dance company worked with a mentee artist at Sandcastles Nursery School, Morecambe. Horse + Bamboo Theatre and a mentee artist collaborated with Bacup Family Centre in Rossendale. Each co-lab was able to undertake individual research, around playful practice and explored how mentee artists can benefit from such experiences.

Practice was shared during and at the conclusion of the programme through events at Horse + Bamboo, Platt Hall and Manchester Metropolitan University, enabling a wider field of practitioners in arts and early years to benefit.

A network has evolved from these events. Hosted by Curious Minds, artists, researchers and early years practitioners meet online four times a year to continue to share practice and opportunities. The researchers in the MMU Children and Childhood Research Group will publish their report as book chapter in early 2025.

The work with Manchester Metropolitan University has contributed to one of our own team beginning a PhD in Education Research.

## 1.6. Goldsmiths University of London Partnership

A bracingly exciting year for the partnership between Curious Minds and Goldsmiths during which an application for a Knowledge Transfer Partnership provided the bulk of two further applications resulting in a long term substantial collaborative project to co-supervise a PhD in Creativity Curiosity and Professional Artists in Schools. The opportunity attracted a strong field of 22 applicants.

The successful candidate, Saul Argent, will conduct innovative research in the field of educational psychology that will advance Curious Minds' understanding of the special qualities of Teaching Artists' pedagogy and the impact and outcomes this achieves for children in the classroom. The year ahead will involve defining the research question, compiling an extensive and comprehensive review of the existing canon on the subject of Teaching Artists and drafting a research methodology. Curious Minds' Head of Evaluation and Learning Steph Hawke and Goldsmiths' Dr Omigie have plans for further enquiries into the world of creativity in education and plan to submit further proposals and grant applications in 2024-25.

## 2. Invest

We INVEST in a diverse cultural education workforce to develop, celebrate and professionalise the field of cultural education.

### 2.1. ARG (Anti-Racism Group)

Curious Minds' ARG was established in 2020 to support our long-term goal:

---

*"Our permanent and extended workforce will be full of diverse individuals we have nurtured, and people who are very comfortable instigating sophisticated external conversations about inclusion and anti-racism. Our workplace will celebrate diversity and be a proud anti-racism role model for the sector and a conduit for change."*

---

The ARG met throughout the year to support our operational planning and recruitment processes. They played a valuable role in:

- Supporting the development of the Curious Creatives Network through targeted outreach to their networks
- Sitting on the recruitment panels for the new Head of Digital Innovation and Director of Relationships and Marketing



- Delivering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training for teachers as part of Leading the Arts in Your School
- Facilitating sessions at our Cultural Education Summit in Wigan
- Taking part in judging panels for the Northern Cultural Education Awards

The ARG has given members the confidence to step up into strategic roles within the cultural sector, with members now sitting on the boards of The Everyman and Unity Theatre.

#### **Participant Quotes:**

*"It has given me the confidence to talk about change and anti-racism with other organisations" (Amina Atiq, Poet & Freelance Artist, ARG member)*

*"Connecting to artists from different cultural backgrounds from my own, and seeing how other groups do things, has been really useful" (Zi Lan Lao, Pagoda Arts, ARG member)*

*"Curious Minds are creating safe and welcoming spaces for artists of colour, which is really important at this moment in time" (Mahboobeh Rajabi, Creative Producer & Freelance Artist, ARG member)*

*"It's important to keep anti-racism at the top of Curious Minds agenda and the ARG is modelling this for other organisations" (Niparun Nessa, Teacher & Freelance Artist)*

## **2.2. Artsmark Award**

This year marked the end of our strategic role supporting the delivery of Artsmark Award with North West schools following Arts Council England's decision to tender for one central provider. Following deep consideration, we decided not to bid for the opportunity.

In the first quarter of the year, Arts Council England continued to fund us to provide a suite of support options for schools in the North West working towards their Artsmark Award. Working with our freelance Artsmark Associates, we delivered online Development Training and support sessions to help schools progress with the next milestone in their individual journeys.

Our Artsmark Associates also provided 26 schools with 1-1 bespoke support on SOC & SOI documents between April and July.

#### **School Quotes:**

*"Thank you so much for your generosity with your time."*

*"All your advice was very thorough and I'm extremely grateful for your help."*



*"I want to thank you and Curious Minds for all your support while we completed our Silver mark. You were amazing - great advice and always at the end of an email or zoom call if needed."*

Curious Minds' contract for Artsmark support came to an end in July 2023, with the transition of the support offer to the National provider Goldsmiths.

### 2.3. Curious About Seminars

Across the year we continued to deliver our Curious About sessions with a focus on responding to the professional development needs of freelance practitioners, grassroots, and smaller cultural organisations. We delivered 9 Curious About sessions, working with leading experts and responding to sector and CYP priorities.

- 4th October 2023 - Wellbeing Dominoes with Cartwheel Arts
- 18th and 20th October 2023 - Neurodiversity with Starling CIC
- 3rd, 9th and 15th November 2023 - Arts and Wellbeing with Cartwheel Arts
- 7th March 2024 - HAF (Holiday Activities and Food) with Louise Roberts (DfE) and Louise Hesketh (Curious Minds)
- 11th March 2024 - Writing a Successful Funding Bid with Dr Steph Hawke and Louise Hesketh (Curious Minds)

We engaged 143 participants from across the cultural education sector, 25% of these from NPO's across the North and 75% freelancers & grassroots organisations.

In March 2024, Curious Minds co-hosted a briefing on the Holiday Activities & Food (HAF) programme, with the HAF Team at the Department for Education for freelancers and arts and cultural organisations. 16 individuals attended the online session, from Liverpool, Sheffield, Greater Manchester, Doncaster, Rotherham and Lancashire.

#### Participant Quote:

*"The session clarified what things to take into consideration when making a funding bid. I feel more confident in actually writing a bid. I didn't know where to start before."*

### 2.4. Curious Creatives Network

In November 2023 we launched our monthly online Curious Creatives Network, bringing together a wide range of creatives working in creative and cultural education.

The network has diversity and inclusion at its heart, featuring diverse speakers who share their valuable experiences and practices with the sector, creating engaging discussions and networking opportunities.

Curious Creatives Speakers 2023/24:

- Sameed Rezayan, Head of Learning at Factory International

- Keith Saha, Artistic Director and Co-CEO at 20 Stories High
- Adrian Jolly, Research Lead at Collective Encounters, exploring Trauma Informed Practice
- Sophia Newton, Anti-Racist Cumbria, exploring Arts and Activism

We engaged a total of 138 participants, approximately 40% were black, brown or ethnically diverse. 10 participants were from NPO's, 20 from grassroots organisations and 108 freelancers.

#### Participant Quotes:

*"Inspirational speakers and great energy".*

*"I enjoyed hearing about all the creative opportunities in the northwest".*

*"It was great to see such a diverse range of creatives come together".*

*"I enjoyed the relaxed feel and the speaker's passion shone through".*

## 2.5. Hyperlocal Partnerships

Curious Minds' approach to place-based working has evolved to a preferred approach where we work with partners in a distinct place to improve access to creativity and culture for children and young people there.

This year we engaged in hyperlocal partnerships in four places across the North of England:

- Allerdale & Copeland (West Cumbria)
- Ellesmere Port (West Cheshire)
- Rotherham (North Yorkshire)
- Wigan (Greater Manchester)

In **Allerdale & Copeland** we supported FRAME (the West Cumbria LCEP) to connect with secondary schools to deliver the pilot Curious Citizens Programme.

In **Ellesmere Port** we continued to work in partnership with the Ellesmere Port Cultural Learning Exchange and the C-Change Creativity Collaborative, including supporting a range of work-experience placements for local young people.

In **Rotherham** we worked in partnership with Rotherham Council and ROSIS (Rotherham School Improvement Service) to deliver a series of free online taster sessions which took place between April and July. We will continue to liaise with partners in Rotherham as they plan towards 2025 and their Children's Capital of Culture year but will direct our resource to where it is more needed.

In **Wigan**, our home borough, we are a key member of Culture Unlocked (Wigan's LCEP) and our CEO is Chair of Wigan's Cultural Partnership Board and part of the writing group

for the refresh of Wigan's Cultural Manifesto and we began to explore options for a permanent base in Wigan. Wigan schools were prioritised for places on our training and programmes, including the Curious Citizens and Peer Tutor Training pilot programmes.

## 2.6. LCEP's Networking

Developing a new role with LCEPs (Local Cultural Education Partnerships) and engaging with partnerships across Yorkshire & Humber has been key to our work this year. In May, all partnerships were sent a welcome email, outlining Curious Minds' new role as an NPO and our offer to LCEPs, including a termly newsletter, resources Padlet, and online network.

In July, we hosted a Partnership Agreement workshop, which was attended by representatives from 4 North West and 9 Yorkshire & Humber LCEPs.

We convened in-person gatherings for LCEP Chairs and Coordinators in September and December, with 29 LCEPs represented. Subjects under discussion included youth voice, events for schools, collaboration across LCEPs and communication methods. Feedback from meetings has been very positive, with the opportunity to connect and share ideas and information widely appreciated, and Curious Minds' support highly valued.

We invited contributions from across the North to our first LCEPs Connect newsletter, published in September and focusing on inclusion. Articles came from Sheffield, Greater Manchester, Pendle and Cheshire. The Spring issue focused on Youth Voice, with contributions from Wakefield, Warrington, Sheffield, Burnley, and Bolton. The newsletters have been viewed by over 1000 individuals. 69% of active North West & Yorkshire & Humber LCEPs have attended an online event or meeting.

### Feedback from LCEPs:

*"Being connected in to others through a central organisation makes me feel less adrift and isolated. Our LCEP feels connected to others in a more meaningful way."*

*"It is good to know that Curious Minds are supporting LCEPs and to feel there is someone we can go to with questions. Louise has been helpful in discussing funding options with us and is really supportive of our work."*

*"Appreciate the extension to Yorkshire LCEPs - would love this to continue."*

## 2.7. Leading the Arts in Your School

Between December 2023 & June 2024, we delivered one cohort of our arts leadership development programme, extending the opportunity to schools in Yorkshire & The Humber.

16 teachers based in schools across the North-West & Yorkshire successfully completed the course, which involved an online induction, three in-person training days, four online themed sessions and self-led learning via our online learning platform.

**Participant quotes:**

*"An excellent journey that has supported and enhanced my leadership of the Arts in my school setting. Well-resourced and organised, excellently delivered."*

*"The whole course has empowered and motivated me to improve the Arts in my school. It's given me so many exciting ideas that I have been able to put into place over the last few months. The chance to meet new, likeminded people who are in the same position as me has been fantastic. It has been great to learn about partnerships, how to set up a pupil voice group and how to increase diversity. Thank you!"*

## **2.8. Let's Craft**

As part of the national Let's Craft partnership, led and supported by Crafts Council, Curious Minds received two despatches of craft packs from sponsors Hobbycraft in 2023-24. In spring 2023 we partnered with FRAME, the West Cumbria LCEP to distribute 480 boxes across Allerdale & Copeland. 14 organisations leading HAF activity were able to share boxes with children in receipt of FSM and a further 6 organisations, including Family Action shared boxes with the families they work with.

In summer 2023 Rotherham LCEP partner, Rotherham United Community Sports Trust led the distribution of 480 packs across the city through their faith network connections, to community centres and to Barnados, targeting families and children most in need. Church groups were able to lead craft sessions using the craft materials and provide participant families with boxes to take home.

## **2.9. Liverpool's Royal Court, Theatre Mentoring Programme**

We continued to develop our partnership to support young creatives from Black, Asian and other ethnic communities to gain insights into the creative industries, both on and behind the stage. Plans are in place for 6 young mentees to work with 6 professional mentors, extending the partnership to involve Shakespeare North Playhouse and Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse Theatres.

## **2.10. Ready Generations Partnership**

Curious Minds collaborated with Ready Generations to develop a 'Creative Inter-generational Curriculum' at the end of 2022. Based in a residential care village in Chester, Ready Generations have cultivated a unique approach to intergenerational learning.

A programme of activity in 2023/24 led to the development and testing of a pioneering and creative intergenerational curriculum called the Mirrored Curriculum Framework, this offers a broad and rich curriculum design that can be used to plan, monitor and evaluate the impact of intergenerational work for use across professional disciplines e.g., education, social care, health, libraries, museum and creatives.

The curriculum design included input from children, elders and their families linked specifically with the Belong Care Village and has been tested and trialled through a bespoke creative programme named the Harmony Wheels Programme and hosted under the intergenerational banner of Living Lives Together.

A range of spoken word and dance groups have been established and are continuing at Belong Chester.

These include:

- a spoken word history group,
- Intergenerational choir called the Sankofa Songsters, Sing-a long rambles, Intergenerational Repair Shop, storytelling sessions and an intergenerational Stay and Play Session,
- freelance creative artists have been involved throughout the project and one has now been commissioned by Ready Generations as a musical director.
- Richard O'Neill, freelance storyteller is now the resident storyteller at the Nursery and is co-constructing intergenerational stories based around life in the Nursery with the Ready Generations Team.
- Ready Generations were shortlisted for the Nursery World Creative Communities Award.

In October 2024, Ready Generations hosted an intergenerational creativity and learning conference at Theatre Porto in Ellesmere Port, supported by funding from Curious Minds. With over 70 delegates from across the UK, including academic researchers and leaders of intergenerational practice, workshops and sessions were hosted by a variety of settings, exploring the challenges and possibilities of intergenerational working, with a creative focus.

### **2.11. Young Associates**

This year's Young Associates programme saw 7 diverse early career Cultural Educators take part in our bespoke training and professional development programme. Between January and March 2024, they took part in 5 in-person sessions and 10 online sessions focussing on topics such as facilitation skills, health and well-being, and safeguarding. All of this was through the lens of changemaking and leadership as they are next generation of the cultural education workforce.

Progression and paid work opportunities included: being a Judge on the Northern Cultural Education Awards, Facilitators at the Cultural Education Plan consultation event with the LGA and forming a funding panel for the Chance to See Fund. We also saw a member of Cohort 1 returning as a Facilitator for this year's cohort.

**Participant quote:**

*"I've learnt that I have the tools, knowledge and intuition to facilitate and lead in the cultural sector".*

**Facilitator quote:**

*"I can't stress enough how important I feel it is that leaders are able to handle nuance and subtlety in order to successfully negotiate the complexities of the world and the Young Associates demonstrated a flexibility of thinking that left me feeling positive and hopeful for the future of the sector."*

### 3. Influence

We INFLUENCE cultural education partnerships, plans and policy by engaging with practitioners, leaders and politicians to galvanize cultural education partnerships and shape the debate about the importance of creativity and culture in childhood and adolescence.

#### 3.1. Case- Studies and Evaluation

This year 9 case studies of good practice were shared with the sector in a variety of ways. Our successful 5-year National Lottery Heritage Fund 'Hope Streets' project was featured in English Heritage's report into Young People's Engagement with Heritage. Our evaluation of the Superheroes project for Liverpool-based arts organisation 'Writing on the Wall' was shared online and we produced an impact report for regional infrastructure organisation 'Youth Focus North West'. Our work with schools to generate arts interventions in response to the BeeWell wellbeing survey was shared in the local press. Chester Zoo commissioned us to develop their evaluation practice and a case study of the inclusive evaluation work delivered by Associate, Dr Sue Caudle was shared online and with the Local Cultural Education Partnerships via the newsletter we produce on their behalf.

#### 3.2. Cultural Education Summit

On 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023, Curious Minds collaborated with the Local Government Association, and Wigan Council to host the North West Cultural Education Summit at The Edge Arena, Wigan.

This summit brought together 122 delegates from across local government, education, the cultural sector and children's services to discuss the findings of the [Commission on Culture and Local Government](#), and to consider how local government can collaborate with



education providers and the cultural sector to support the government's proposal for a national [Cultural Education Plan](#).

- Speakers on the day included:
- Alison McKenzie-Folan – CEO, Wigan Council
- Steve Moffit – CEO, A New Direction
- Sally Bacon – Co-chair, Cultural Learning Alliance
- Joanna Casson – Senior Policy Advisor, DCMS
- Clive Fischer – Senior Executive Officer, DfE

*“How can we NOT invest [in arts and culture] if we really want to do something about people’s health and wellbeing or enrich the lives of children and young people.” [Alison McKenzie-Folan]*

### 3.3. Northern Cultural Education Awards

Throughout the year the Curious Minds team were busy behind the scenes planning and gathering nominations for the Northern Cultural Education Awards to be held in Wigan on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2024. More than 150 nominations were received across 8 different categories.

### 3.4. The Culture Hub

Curious Minds continues to manage The Culture Hub online portal, a legacy from our NW Bridge organisation role. As technology moves on at a pace the site is beginning to look tired and outdated. Its future is being considered within our Transition & Transform programme as part of a wider review of our digital assets and development plans.

### 3.5. Thought Leadership & Public Affairs

Our partnership with the specialist education team at PR and public affairs agency PLMR continued this year with a focus on positioning the charity as a thought leader in the field of cultural education and increasing its profile with relevant politicians. This led to us publishing thought leadership articles in key specialist publications, including: Teach Secondary, Teaching Times, Teach Primary, Education Journal, Basic & Workplace Skills Bulletin, 14-19 Learning & Skills Bulletin. The articles covered a range of topics including: the role of arts and culture on young people’s mental health; the importance of school trips and visits; closing the skills gap by building cultural capital.

# Organisational Development

## Transition and Transform

Leaving behind our Bridge organisation status to join Arts Council England's National Portfolio proper, meant we were simultaneously grappling two significant challenges. As we adapted our plans and programmes to deliver our new role and secure the charity's future:

- **TRANSITIONING** from being a Bridge organisation (appointed by Arts Council England to deliver 'sector support' across the North West) to become an NPO (delivering services and programmes across the wider North and nationally). This process requires us to shift deeply ingrained perceptions about what we do, how and where we do it [see table below].

---

*A key challenge is to maintain and grow our status as a strategic backbone organisation now that we are no longer an Arts Council England appointed Bridge organisation.*

---

- **TRANSFORMING** our business model and operational structure to manage the 40% cut to our Arts Council England (ACE) regular grant funding; having been funded at a similar level since 2012.

---

*A key challenge is to diversify sources of income to support our charitable objectives. We need to attract new funders and sponsors, and increase income through trading our training, evaluation and facilitation services.*

---

We are delighted to have been awarded £503,800 Arts Council England Transform Funding from 1 August 2023 to 31 March 2026. We are matching this directly with £140,000 from our free reserves and have designated an additional £160,000 as a strategic development fund across the three-year period.

### 2023-24 was Phase 1 of a 3-year Transition and Transform Delivery Plan.

During this seven-month 'explore and test' phase we laid strong foundations to be able to deliver the next two phases of this important change programme:

Phase 1	1 <sup>st</sup> Aug 2023 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024	EXPLORE & TEST
Phase 2	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2024 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025	MARKET & DELIVER
Phase 3	1 <sup>st</sup> April 2025 – 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2026	REVIEW & EMBED

The programme comprises 5 interdependent activity strands:

- STRAND 1 Creating Capacity for Transformation
- STRAND 2 Digital Transformation
- STRAND 3 Developing New Products & Services
- STRAND 4 Leveraging Value from Existing IP
- STRAND 5 A New Approach to Fundraising

Progress made this year includes:

### STRAND 1 – Creating Capacity for Transformation

- a. We created a new senior post ‘Director of Relationships and Marketing’.
- b. We facilitated the learning and professional development of our staff team. This included the whole staff undertaking the SAIL Carbon Literacy Training, and operational managers completing ICA Facilitation Training. Individual team members engaged in role specific professional development opportunities, including:
  - Saphena Aziz, Director of Inclusion & Workforce - Clore, Leadership Pulse
  - Teresa Baggaley, Cultural Education Manager – CIPD Level 5 Associate Diploma in Organisational Learning and Development (with Development Processes Group Ltd).
  - Derri Burdon, CEO - National Arts Fundraising School.
  - Tom Edwards, Digital Marketing & Campaigns Co-ordinator – Clore, Emerging Leaders

### STRAND 2 – Digital Transformation

- a. We created a new senior role ‘Head of Digital Innovation’ and were delighted to welcome Bill Lam into the role in March 2024.
- b. Following Bill’s appointment, we commenced the design and build of a new CRM. We commissioned the expertise of Time Technologies who guided us to scope a new system that will meet the needs of the organisation now and into the future.
- c. We began the process of scoping a new website, working in partnership with consultants at Creative Nation.

### STRAND 3 – Developing New Products & Services

- a. We successfully applied to become the ITAC (International Teaching Artists Collaborative) England Hub.
- b. We worked with former UFA Regional Manager Manjit Shellis to redevelop the UFA **Peer Tutor Training** materials by injecting our expertise in cultural education and curiosity-driven pedagogy. Between December 2023 and March 2024, 5 partner schools in Wigan and West Cumbria took part in a peer tutoring pilot programme based on the UFA model. Across 2 primary schools and 3 secondary students, 55

students received two days of training in peer tutoring methods, to support tutees within their schools. Subject foci included reading, maths, culture and personal achievement, life skills and social skills. Peer tutors began a twelve-week programme with their tutees in April 2024.

#### **Teacher feedback:**

*“The programme is excellent for placing students out of their comfort zone. It was a privilege to watch them grow and develop in confidence.”  
(teacher, secondary school)*

*“Most tutors are eager to work with their partners and a general ‘yes’ sounds out when we have asked the children to get their books out for a session!” (teacher, primary school)*

We plan to further develop the course materials to be able to offer an arts & culture specific Peer Tutoring course that will embed student leadership into curriculum and enrichment offers in primary and secondary schools.

### **STRAND 4 – Leveraging Value from Existing IP**

- a. **I'm a Teenager Get Me Into there!** is our ground breaking training programme aimed at the staff teams of cultural and heritage venues and libraries and developed as part of our 5-year £1m National Lottery Heritage Fund project 'Hope Streets'. It aims to support public-facing staff to feel more confident in their interactions with young people and better able to create a welcoming, inclusive environment for the young people they invite into their building. This year we have delivered 7 'in-house' training sessions resulting in 22 venues receiving this training across the country. We have delivered 1 'train-the trainer' session to 1 venue, and 1 'public' training session engaging 9 different venues from across the country.

In total we have directly reached 32 venues nationally including; Birmingham University, National Museums Liverpool, The National Theatre, National Trust, YMCA Leicester and various museums and heritage sites across Yorkshire, East Midlands and the East of England. The training has been written into 2 funding bids. We have had 454 downloads of the free self-facilitation packs from 335 different users of the online platform.

#### **Participant Quotes:**

*“The team from Curious Minds provided a masterclass in how to engage teenagers and tackle unequal access to creativity and culture for children and young people. Their insightful workshop covered a range of areas and*

*activities that built empathy, understanding and provided a wealth of knowledge to work on making practical changes to our practices.”*

*“This is a session relevant to all museum and gallery workers. This session ensures that staff can approach teenagers, engage successfully with them and use an understanding of their development to ensure spaces are safe for this audience.”*

*“Will be brought up at SMT, will lead to change and internal training.”*

*“I don't think teenagers have been specifically considered before at our venue, I will share this knowledge and bear it in mind for future planning.”*

*“Hopefully will offer some staff/vol training, using the free training online or some of the activities we have done today.”*

- b. At the start of the year we commissioned NW based designer Noe Baba to refresh our suite of sub-brands to complement our new brand guidelines and logo.

## **STRAND 5 – A New Approach to Fundraising**

- a. This year marked the launch of the Chance to See Fund – an exciting collaboration between successful indie band The Lathums and Curious Minds. The partnership aims to bring joy, hope and positivity to the lives of financially disadvantaged children and young people who live in the Wigan Borough.

Inspired by a lyric from The Lathums’ 2021 single ‘How Beautiful Life Can Be’, the fund was created in response to the cost-of -living crisis and inspired by the band’s own successes having had access to music education as teenagers.

Through various fundraising activities at their gigs and festivals, the band raised £20,000. Funds have started to be distributed in the 2024-2025 financial year.

# Our Plans for the Future

The Trustees, Executive Management Team and staff of Curious Minds remain ambitious for the charity's future, knowing that our work is still urgent and very much needed.

However, we are hopeful that the change of government will create more favourable conditions for our work and charitable purpose. Speaking at the Labour Party Conference 2024, Lisa Nandy, Secretary of State for DCMS, spoke passionately about the important role creativity and culture play in the learning and lives of children and young people:

---

*"We're going to reignite the imagination of the next generation. Because a complete education is a creative education."*

---

But we know that pressures on public finances mean we will continue to operate in a climate of austerity. While we are ambitious about increasing levels of generated income into the organisation through selling our courses and services, we are resolved to depending on grant funding from public and charitable sources to be able to deliver our work and programmes for the foreseeable future.

Later this year we will apply to Arts Council England (ACE) to extend our NPO grant to March 2027 and, looking further ahead, will apply to secure our place within ACE's National Portfolio long-term. We will continue to nurture relationships with a wider range of funders and supporters and place a greater focus on securing philanthropic support and individual giving.

It is vital therefore that we continue to improve how we measure the impact of our work and how we tell the story of the difference we make for children and young people, their schools and communities. To this end, we will take necessary steps to strengthen our approach to marketing and communications and enhance our systems for monitoring and evaluation. This will include the implementation of a new CRM system and trialling the 'Most Significant Change' approach to evaluation.

We will use our new role as the ITAC England Hub to amplify Curious Minds' position as a centre of excellence for creative and cultural education on the national and international stage. At the same time, our hyperlocal work in neighbourhoods across the North, including our home borough of Wigan, will ensure that we remain rooted in our region and connected to the grassroots providers and diverse freelancers who form the bedrock of the cultural education workforce.

Most crucially, we need to keep listening to, learning from and ensuring our work and plans are influenced by children and young people. We are grateful to our partners Youth Focus



North West for sharing their expertise with us to embed The Lundy Model as a framework to underpin our approach to Youth Voice & Leadership. As well as improving our own practices, we will use the model (Space, Voice, Audience and Influence) to inform how we work with external partners or commissioners to advocate for children and young people to have the best experience possible through the creative and cultural offers we are involved in shaping and delivering.

# Financial Review

---

## Financial Results

The Trustees are pleased to report an increase in free reserves to £621,869 (2023: £500,968) keeping the Charity in a stable financial position for meeting our plans for the future. We continue to plan for a new base and have therefore set aside further funds towards the cost of establishing this in the coming year.

Additional funding sources during the year derive from restricted grants, with a total of £219,788 (2023: £145,060) funds carried forward at the year end to meet the associated programme plans.

## Core funding

From April 2012 to March 2023, Curious Minds was in receipt of National Portfolio Funding and Department for Education funding from Arts Council England in respect of its status as a Bridge organisation. From April 2023 we were awarded National Portfolio Organisation status by Arts Council England, securing £2.4 million of funding over three years.

## Project funding

We delivered the Hope Streets project through National Lottery Heritage funding which commenced in 2018 and ran until March 2023. Total funding for the project was £1,127,000.

The Charity continues to aim for further diversify in incoming resources in future periods.

## Financial Risk Management

Within the wider risk management process, the Board of Trustees monitors and assesses financial risks to which Curious Minds may be exposed and assesses their potential impact on the Charity.

## Reserves policy

The level of unrestricted reserves has been set to meet the costs of retaining sufficient staff and covering overhead costs for six months in order to continue to pursue our objectives, given the planned investment in transforming our business model to become more sustainable over the period 2023 - 2026. The target was reviewed in 2024 and the unrestricted reserves needed to meet these costs remained at £500,000 (2023: £500,000). During the current year, this target was met and at the year-end the free reserves stood at £621,869 (2023: £500,968). At the discretion of the Trustees, the surplus above target can be designated to development work. The Trustees review the reserves policy annually.

## Investment policy

Our cash assets, over and above those required for day-to-day working capital, are invested in appropriate fixed-term and notice cash deposit accounts that yield a greater return than our instant access current accounts. This investment policy is reviewed with reference to a detailed cash-flow analysis and assessment of future funding opportunities; however, the scheduling of cash outgoings (including grant claims) remains difficult to predict with accuracy, as this is largely in the control of our partners and therefore timing is unknown.

## Financial control and audit

The organisation's finances are overseen by the Finance and Operations Team. They use Xero Accounts software for financial processing and adhere to finance systems which were developed in partnership with our Auditors and are reviewed annually. Relevant staff receive appropriate training for day-to-day financial systems and consistently process financial information in an accurate and timely manner.

To ensure effective financial management within the organisation, management accounts are produced on a quarterly basis for the Executive Management Team and the Board of Trustees. The COO oversees core budgets, whilst programme budgets are reviewed between the Finance & Operations Manager and individual budget holders to ensure that all transactions are posted accurately and according to the principles of accruals-based fund accounting.

The Board of Trustees have a comprehensive overview of audit requirements, financial policies and procedures, including accounting policies and compliance with statutory requirements, risk management and financial planning. The Board continues to appoint the external Auditors and approve their remuneration and terms of engagement and responds to any relevant matters relating to annual financial statements raised by the External Auditors as a result of their audit work.

# Structure, Governance & Management

---

## Governing Document

The Charity is a company limited by guarantee and is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 17th December 2008, as amended by special resolutions dated 3rd March 2009, 25th June 2009 and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022. The Company is registered as a Charity with the Charity Commission.

## Trustee recruitment

Transparent procedures are an important element of good governance. All new Trustees to the Board are appointed through a transparent open recruitment process when skills and knowledge gaps in the Board are identified. A thorough induction to Curious Minds is given to all newly appointed Trustees and they receive a governance pack which includes the organisation's business plan and current financial budget, the organisation's memorandum and articles of association, the Trustee role and description and sub-committee terms of reference, the Charity Commission document 'The Essential Trustee', and the publication 'Good Governance: A code for the voluntary and community sector'.

Curious Minds' Board of Trustees is fortunate to contain a mixture of skills ranging from arts, culture, heritage, public services and education through to human resources and accountancy. This enhances the placement of the organisation as a key player within the arts and cultural sector, regionally and nationally.

Trustees are encouraged to attend events and project activity throughout the year to gain first-hand knowledge and experience of the work of Curious Minds, and they are required to attend an annual Board away day with the management team to develop their skills within the Board environment and to discuss key strategic issues for Curious Minds, which in turn informs the business planning process for the organisation.

## Related Parties and links with other organisations

None of our Trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity. Trustees and members of the Curious Minds paid staff team are required to declare any interest - when considering what interests to declare, the principal rule is that if members of the general public could reasonably conclude that the interests might have an influence on an approach taken by Curious Minds to an application or contract awarded, to funding received by Curious Minds, or general organisational decisions taken by Curious Minds, then they must declare them.

Due to Curious Minds' recruitment of experienced sector leaders, it is inevitable that Trustees and Executive Management will have declared interests arising from either executive or non-executive appointments with Public, Cultural and Education Sector organisations. Where Curious Minds engages with a partner organisation in which a declaration has been made, the interested party must be excluded from the decision making processes. It is considered that these transactions do not represent 'related party transactions' for reporting purposes.

## Decision making

The Board of Trustees have delegated the day-to-day management and decision making of Curious Minds to the Chief Executive. Significant decisions that impact on, for example, staff employment, business planning, financial stability and the sustainability of the organisation, are brought to the Board for approval prior to action taking place.

## Risk management

The Trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which Curious Minds is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error. Curious Minds has a thorough risk management procedure wherein risks to which the organisation may be exposed are monitored and assessed as to their potential impact and likelihood. Appropriate controls are then identified and put in place to provide reasonable assurance against their occurrence.

The executive management team, led by the Chief Executive, monitor the risks associated with the organisation regularly and the updated risk register is presented to the Board of Trustees quarterly for discussion and approval.

## Internal policies

Curious Minds have a range of internal policies that have been written in consultation with appropriate professionals and that are reviewed annually and amended more frequently according to new legislation as appropriate. These include (but are not limited to) the following areas:

- Employment (including wellbeing)
- Inclusion
- Pay policy (see note 5)
- Fund Management and Financial Controls (including procurement)
- Health & Safety (including Covid-19)
- Safeguarding
- Environmental sustainability.

# Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

---

The Trustees (who are also the Directors of Curious Minds for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Company law requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period.

In preparing those financial statements, the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- state whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The Trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

## Statement as to disclosure of information to Auditors

In so far as the Trustees are aware at the time of approving the Trustees' annual report:

- there is no relevant information, being information needed by the Auditor in connection with preparing their report, of which the charitable company's Auditors are unaware, and
- the Trustees, having made enquiries of fellow Directors that they ought to have individually taken, have each taken all the steps that they are obliged to have taken as a

Director in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the charitable company's Auditors are aware of that information.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

**On behalf of the Board of Trustees:**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathy McArdle'.

**Kathy McArdle**  
**Chair of the Board of Trustees**

23/10/2024



# Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees of Curious Minds

---

## Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Curious Minds (the 'charitable company') for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Statement of Cash Flow, and the related notes. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

## Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

## Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the Trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.



Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the Trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

## Other information

The other information comprises the information included in the Trustees' annual report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. The Trustees are responsible for the other information contained within the annual report. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon. Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

## Matters on which we are required to report by exception

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 require us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- the information given in the financial statements is inconsistent in any material respect with the Trustees' report; or
- the charitable company has not kept adequate accounting records; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

## Responsibilities of Trustees

As explained more fully in the Trustees' responsibilities statement the Trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the Trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless

the Trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

## Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with regulations made under section 154 of that Act.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. This risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

### **Extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud**

We identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and then design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, including obtaining audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### **Identifying and assessing potential risks related to irregularities**

In identifying and assessing risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we considered the following:

- the nature of the sector, control environment and charitable company's performance;
- results of our enquiries of management about their own identification and assessment of the risks of irregularities;
- any matters we identified having obtained and reviewed the charitable company's documentation of their policies and procedures relating to:
- identifying, evaluating and complying with laws and regulations and whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance;
- detecting and responding to the risks of fraud and whether they have knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud;
- the internal controls established to mitigate risks of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations; and
- the matters discussed among the audit engagement team regarding how and where fraud might occur in the financial statements and any potential indicators of fraud.

As a result of these procedures, we considered the opportunities and incentives that may exist within the organisation for fraud and identified the greatest potential for fraud in relation to the timing of the recognition of income, and the recognition of grants payable. In common with all audits under ISAs (UK), we are also required to perform specific procedures to respond to the risk of management override and we identified a risk in relation to the posting of unusual journals and the manipulation of accounting estimates.

We also obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks that the charitable company operates in, focusing on provisions of those laws and regulations that had a direct effect on the determination of material amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The key laws and regulations we considered in this context included the reporting requirements of the funding bodies and the charity commission regulations.

In addition, we considered provisions of other laws and regulations that do not have a direct effect on the financial statements but compliance with which may be fundamental to the charitable company's ability to operate or to avoid a material penalty.

### **Audit response to risks identified**

In addition to the above, our procedures to respond to risks identified included the following:

- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and testing to supporting documentation to assess compliance with relevant laws and regulations described above as having a direct effect on the financial statements;
- enquiring of management and members of the Board of Trustees concerning actual and potential litigation and claims;
- performing analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships that may indicate risks of material misstatement due to fraud;

- reading minutes of meetings of those charged with governance and reviewing correspondence with relevant authorities where matters identified were significant;
- in addressing the risk of fraud through management override of controls, testing the appropriateness of journal entries and other adjustments; assessing whether the judgements made in making accounting estimates are indicative of a potential bias; and evaluating the business rationale of any significant transactions that are unusual or outside the normal course of business.

We also communicated relevant identified laws and regulations and potential fraud risks to all engagement team members and remained alert to any indications of fraud or non-compliance with laws and regulations throughout the audit.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: [www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities](http://www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities). This description forms part of our auditor's report.

## Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's Trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's Trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

*Mitchell Charlesworth*

01/11/2024

Jamielee Johnston CA  
 Mitchell Charlesworth (Audit) Limited  
 Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditor  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
 44 Peter Street  
 Manchester  
 M2 5GP

Mitchell Charlesworth (Audit) Limited is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

# Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 (Including income & expenditure account)

	Note	2023/24		2022/23		2023/24	2022/23
		Unrestricted	Restricted	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
		Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds	Funds
		£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>							
Incoming resources from charitable activities	2	895,491	406,739	58,156	1,938,678	<b>1,302,230</b>	1,996,834
Investment income	2	36,846	-	16,368	-	<b>36,846</b>	16,368
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>		<b>932,337</b>	<b>406,739</b>	<b>74,524</b>	<b>1,938,678</b>	<b>1,339,076</b>	<b>2,013,202</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>							
Expenditure on charitable activities	3	826,567	317,312	374,856	1,650,225	<b>1,143,879</b>	2,025,081
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>826,567</b>	<b>317,312</b>	<b>374,856</b>	<b>1,650,225</b>	<b>1,143,879</b>	<b>2,025,081</b>
<b>NET INCOMING / (OUTGOING) RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR BEFORE TRANSFERS</b>							
	6	105,770	89,427	(300,332)	288,453	<b>195,197</b>	(11,879)
<b>TRANSFERS BETWEEN FUNDS</b>	11	14,699	(14,699)	620,372	(620,372)	-	-
<b>NET INCOMING / (OUTGOING) RESOURCES FOR THE YEAR AFTER TRANSFERS</b>							
		<b>120,469</b>	<b>74,728</b>	<b>320,040</b>	<b>(331,919)</b>	<b>195,197</b>	<b>(11,879)</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>							
<b>BALANCES BROUGHT</b>	11	1,020,073	145,060	700,033	476,979	<b>1,165,133</b>	1,177,012
<b>BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD</b>		<b>1,140,542</b>	<b>219,788</b>	<b>1,020,073</b>	<b>145,060</b>	<b>1,360,330</b>	<b>1,165,133</b>

The notes on pages 43 to 55 form part of these accounts.

# Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

		2024	2024	2023	2023
	Note	£	£	£	£
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>					
Tangible Assets	7		-		-
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>					
Debtors	8	33,986		154,226	
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>1,386,376</u>		<u>1,232,926</u>	
		<b>1,420,362</b>		<b>1,387,152</b>	
<b>CREDITORS</b>					
Amounts falling due in one year	9	<u>60,032</u>		<u>222,019</u>	
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>			<b>1,360,330</b>		<b>1,165,133</b>
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>			<u><b>1,360,330</b></u>		<u><b>1,165,133</b></u>
<b>FUNDS</b>					
Unrestricted	11		<b>1,140,542</b>		<b>1,020,073</b>
Restricted	11		<b>219,788</b>		<b>145,060</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>			<u><b>1,360,330</b></u>		<u><b>1,165,133</b></u>

For the year ending 31 March 2024 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies but as this company is a charity, it is subject to audit under the Charities Act 2011.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

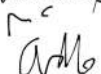
The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

The notes on pages 43 to 55 form part of these accounts.

Approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2024

And signed on their behalf by



**Kathy McArdle - Chair of the Board of Trustees**

**Company registration number 06775402**



# Statement of Cash Flow for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Cash used in operating activities</b>			
Net movement in funds		195,197	(11,879)
Deduct interest income shown in investing activities	2	(36,846)	(16,368)
Decrease / (increase) in debtors	8	120,240	(24,590)
Increase / (decrease) in creditors	9	(161,987)	89,354
<b>Net cash flow from / (to) operating activities</b>		<b>116,604</b>	<b>36,517</b>
<b>Cash flows from investing activities</b>			
Interest income	2	36,846	16,368
<b>Cash provided by (used in) investing activities</b>		<b>36,846</b>	<b>16,368</b>
<b>Increase / (decrease) in cash and cash equivalents in the year</b>		<b>153,450</b>	<b>52,885</b>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		1,232,926	1,180,041
<b>Total cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year</b>		<b>1,386,376</b>	<b>1,232,926</b>

## Analysis of changes in net debt

The charity did not hold any overdraft or loan facilities nor finance lease obligations at the start or during the period covered by these accounts or in the previous accounting period.

# Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

---

## 1. Accounting Policies

### 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 the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102 - effective 1 March 2018), Charities SORP (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2016.

Curious Minds meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s). The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

### Going concern

These accounts are prepared on the going concern basis. At the time of approving the financial statements the directors have a reasonable expectation that the company has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus, the directors continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements. The Charity has confirmed ACE grant funding to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026 and sufficient cashflow to meet its liabilities as they fall due.

### Incoming resources

Income is recognised in the accounting period in which it is receivable, except in the following circumstances, when the income is deferred and included in creditors:

- The income is unrestricted core funding for a specified future period.
- A sales invoice has been raised ahead of work being carried out and there is no contractual entitlement to the income until the work has been done.
- Not all the terms and conditions for the receipt of the grant instalment have been met.
- The project has been completed and the grant conditions are such that unspent grant must be refunded.

Income includes grants in respect of revenue and capital items.

## Resources expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings, they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Grants offered subject to conditions which have not been met at the year-end date are noted as a commitment but not accrued as expenditure.

## Allocation and apportionment of costs

Support costs have been allocated between the cost centres: salaries; travel and subsistence; learning, development and recruitment; marketing and publicity; premises related costs; and office, sundry costs and depreciation.

Central costs are charged to unrestricted funds with contributions to overheads levied to individual programmes as appropriate. Contributions to overheads are charged to programme funds, as agreed with funders and where funds are restricted, these are shown within fund transfers along with relevant permissible recharges for specific programme work.

## Grants payable and grant making policy

Curious Minds issues grants in accordance with the requirements and objectives laid out within the various funding agreements we receive. The Charity does not have its own funds for grant making purposes.

In meeting our strategic objectives (and requirements of our funders where applicable), the nature of the investments committed determines grant making as the legal form to achieving this, as they do not constitute contracts for services.

Grant commitments are recognised when the legal agreements are signed and control of the grant funds is passed to the recipient or lead partner in a partnership.

Direct grant costs are allocated directly to the grant funds. Where agreed with the funder, a management charge is levied for central overheads, administration and contribution to reserves (this is credited to unrestricted funds, where associated costs are charged).

Where agreed with the recipient, grant repayments during the year are shown as a reduction in grants payable.

## Tangible fixed assets

Single asset purchases, not forming part of a related series of transactions, costing less than £2,000 are not capitalised, but are written off as a revenue expense in the year of acquisition.

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its estimated useful life:

Office Equipment / Furniture & Fixtures at 25% on cost

## Taxation

The Charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

The Charity is not registered for VAT and therefore all its input VAT is irrecoverable. Expenditure is analysed inclusive of VAT where this has been incurred.

## Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme which pays 6% of gross salary. Contributions payable to the employees' personal pension schemes are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate. The Charity' staging date for auto enrolment was 1/4/2017 and the scheme is compliant.

## Operating leases

Payments under operating leases are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

## Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the Trustees. Restricted funds 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. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in this note to the financial statements.

## Designated Funds

- **Curious Stories**

Funds generated from sale of the Curious Stories book, sponsorship as well as fundraising to enable disadvantaged children to better experience high quality arts and culture.

- **Curious Space**

Following closure of our Preston base in 2020, we have designated costs saved as set up funds towards a new base as we emerge from Covid-19 restrictions and home working.

- **Development & Transformation Fund**

Funds set aside to support development of income generation activities and international opportunities and towards Transformation of the business model from 2023, in conjunction with ACE Transform funding.

- **Dialogic Teaching & Learning**

A trial project to explore the impact of dialogic teaching and pedagogy.

- **Hope Streets Fund**

Additional funds to cover the required match contribution to the NLHF programme and cover ongoing legacy requirements.

## Restricted Funds

- **ACE Artsmark Projects**

- **ACE BeeWell**

Grant from Arts Council England for an Artsmark pilot project across Greater Manchester.

- **ACE Bridge Organisation**

Grant from Arts Council England for the delivery of the Bridge role for the North West of England (Cumbria, Lancashire, Merseyside, Greater Manchester & Cheshire).

- **ACE Coronation Bandstands**

Funding from Arts Council England to support projects centred around Bandstands throughout England and engaging children and young people in music and the arts to celebrate the King Charles III's coronation.

- **ACE DfE Extension**

Grant from Department for Education, paid by Arts Council England, for Bridge network expansion activity.

- **ACE Transform**

Grant from Arts Council England towards organisational development working towards greater sustainability and less reliability on ACE.

- **Cultural Citizens**

A balance of grant funding remaining from a previous Cultural Citizens programme and used to support a refreshed delivery.

- **Erasmus+**

European Commission grant funding for a partnership project to explore arts-based youth work.

- **DWP Kickstart**

Grant funding from DWP contributing to short term employment opportunities for young people.

- **NLHF Kick the Dust Hope Street**

Grant received from National Lottery Heritage Fund for delivery of the 'Kick the Dust' Programme.

- **The Lathums – Chance to See Fund**

A fund inspired and supported by the band The Lathums to improve access to musical instruments and opportunities for children in Wigan.

- **University of Manchester**

Funding from Children in Need awarded to the University of Manchester for the GMCA BeeWell project used in full to commission artists working alongside schools.

## 2 INCOME

Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities:		2024	2023
Restricted Grants		£	£
Funding body	Purpose		
Arts Council England	Artsmark projects	30,000	-
Arts Council England	BeeWell	20,000	25,000
Arts Council England	Bridge Organisation	-	1,359,893
Arts Council England	Coronation Bandstands project	17,329	200,400
Arts Council England	Transform	220,521	-
British Council as National Agency for the European Commission	Erasmus+	-	1,439
Cultural Citizens	Cultural Citizens	3,984	-
Department for Education	Bridge Extension	-	82,612
Department for Work & Pensions	Kickstart Scheme	-	46,903
National Lottery Heritage Fund	Kick the Dust - Hope Streets	-	221,776
The Lathums fundraising	Chance to See Fund	16,715	655
University of Manchester	BeeWell	98,190	-
		<b>406,739</b>	<b>1,938,678</b>
<b>Unrestricted Income</b>			
Arts Council England	National Portfolio 2023/26	800,000	-
Bank Interest		36,846	16,368
Donations		2,028	-
Fees received		92,463	57,305
Other Income		1,000	851
		<b>932,337</b>	<b>74,524</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,339,076</b>	<b>2,013,202</b>



### 3 EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

#### a. Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	2024		2023		2024	2023
	Direct	Support	Direct	Support	Total	Total
	costs	costs	costs	costs	£	£
	£	£	£	£		
Grants payable	16,735	-	494,570	-	16,735	494,570
Project delivery	825,696	292,498	1,187,843	334,842	1,118,194	1,522,685
Governance costs	-	8,950	-	7,826	8,950	7,826
	<b>842,431</b>	<b>301,448</b>	<b>1,682,413</b>	<b>342,668</b>	<b>1,143,879</b>	<b>2,025,081</b>
% of total expenditure	73.6%	26.4%	83.1%	16.9%	100.0%	100.0%

Charitable expenditure is allocated between unrestricted and restricted funds as follows:

	2024		2023		2024	2023
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Grants payable	750	15,985	5,000	489,570	16,735	494,570
Project delivery	816,867	301,327	362,030	1,160,655	1,118,194	1,522,685
Governance costs	8,950	-	7,826	-	8,950	7,826
	<b>826,567</b>	<b>317,312</b>	<b>374,856</b>	<b>1,650,225</b>	<b>1,143,879</b>	<b>2,025,081</b>
% of total expenditure	72.3%	27.7%	18.5%	81.5%	100.0%	100.0%

#### b. Grants payable by programme

	Number of grants to institutions		2024	2023
	2024	2023	£	£
Programme				
Arts Council England - Bridge	2	23	16,235	394,165
Arts Council England Department for Education	-	4	(250)	33,705
NLHF Kick the Dust - Hope Streets	-	9	-	61,700
Curious Minds	1	1	750	5,000
	<b>3</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>16,735</b>	<b>494,570</b>

### 3 EXPENDITURE ON CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

#### c. Analysis of institutional grants

Grantee	Purpose	2024	2023
		£	£
<b>ACE - Bridge grants</b>			
Blackpool Grand Theatre	LCEP Development	-	5,750
Bury Arts Museum and Sculptures Centre	LCEP Development	-	675
Circus House	LCEP Development	-	3,000
Collective Encounters	CASE Leadership Programme	-	870
Community Arts NW	Pushing Boundaries	-	10,770
Creativity Works Preston	LCEP Development	-	1,000
Cumbria Music Service	FRAME Project PI	-	50,000
Factory International	CASE Leadership Programme	-	600
Falinge Park High School	Pushing Boundaries	600	-
Festival of Making CIC	LCEP Development PI	-	10,000
GMCA	Culture & Transport in GM PI	-	5,000
Gorse Hill Studios	LCEP Development	-	3,000
Lancashire Youth Challenge	Our Place in the World PI	-	1,000
Liverpool City Region	Generations of Change PI	-	5,000
Manchester Metropolitan University	Intergenerational pilot	(1,694)	13,000
Music for Youth	Coronation Bandstands	17,329	200,000
Pendle Leisure Trust	LCEP Development PI	-	10,000
Ready Generations	Creative Curriculum	-	4,500
Robert F Kennedy Human Rights UK	Poetic Universal Declaration of Human Rights PI	-	5,000
Royal Court Liverpool Trust	Mentoring Programme PI	-	12,000
Theatre Porto	Ellesmere Port Hyperlocal Development PI	-	25,000
Tullie House Museum	LCEP Development	-	3,000
Young Manchester	Youth & Play Cultural Partnerships PI	-	15,000
Z Arts	Creative Curriculum PI	-	10,000
<b>Sub total</b>		<b>16,235</b>	<b>394,165</b>
<b>Sub total number of grants</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>ACE DfE Extension grants</b>			
		£	£
Anchorsholme Primary Academy	SLiCE Programme	-	10,000
Blackpool Sixth Form College	SLiCE Programme	-	11,705
Hawes Side Academy	SLiCE Programme	-	7,500
United Learning Trust	SLiCE Programme	(250)	4,500
<b>Sub total</b>		<b>(250)</b>	<b>33,705</b>
<b>Sub total number of grants</b>		<b>-</b>	<b>4</b>

**NLHF Kick the Dust - Hope Streets**

	£	£
Bolton Museum	-	12,500
Blaze Arts	-	10,000
Lancashire Museums	-	9,350
Pinc College NW	-	5,000
Reform Radio CIC	-	1,100
The Atkinson	-	8,750
Tullie House	-	5,000
West Cheshire Museums	-	5,000
Youth Focus NW	-	5,000
<b>Sub total</b>	-	61,700
<b>Sub total number of grants</b>	-	9

**Curious Minds**

	£	£
Hawk Dance Theatre	750	-
Lowry	-	5,000
<b>Sub total</b>	750	5,000
<b>Sub total number of grants</b>	1	1
<b>Total Grants Payable</b>	16,735	494,570
<b>Total number grants</b>	3	37

#### 4 Analysis of governance and support costs

	2024	2023
<b>Governance Costs</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Audit fee	8,400	7,800
Support costs	550	26
<b>Total Governance costs</b>	<b>8,950</b>	<b>7,826</b>

	2024		2023		2024	2023
	Project Delivery	Gover- nance	Project Delivery	Gover- nance	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Support Costs</b>						
Salaries	170,692	-	252,500	-	170,692	252,500
Travel & Subsistence	9,366	47	8,483	-	9,413	8,483
Learning & Development and recruitment	13,266	-	5,599	-	13,266	5,599
Legal & Professional Services	36,648	-	19,542	-	36,648	19,542
Premises related costs	11,089	-	10,666	-	11,089	10,666
Office, sundry costs & Depreciation	59,837	503	45,852	26	60,340	45,878
<b>Total Support costs</b>	<b>300,898</b>	<b>550</b>	<b>342,642</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>301,448</b>	<b>342,668</b>

## 5 Staff Costs

The payroll costs of the charity were as follows:

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages & salaries	598,543	795,418
Social Security costs	57,415	75,989
Pension costs	35,272	44,897
Redundancy payments	-	32,417
<b>Total Staff costs</b>	<b>691,230</b>	<b>948,721</b>

One employee had earnings (excluding employer pension costs) over £60,000 during the year:

Number of employees	Band
One (2023: One)	£60,000 to £70,000

The remuneration costs during the year of the Executive Management Team as outlined on page 2 (inclusive of pension costs) was £115,882 (2023: £216,528).

The average monthly head count was 16 staff (2023: 24 staff) and the average monthly number of full time equivalent employees (including casual and part time employees) during the year was:

	2024	2023
Average FTE	14.4	24.3

## 6 Net incoming resources before transfer

This is stated after charging:	2024	2023
	£	£
Auditors remuneration - Audit fees	8,400	7,800
Director's (Trustees) expenses	47	26
	<b>8,447</b>	<b>7,826</b>
Number of trustees claiming expenses:	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>

## 7 Tangible fixed assets

### Cost

As at 1 April 2023

As at 31 March 2024

### Depreciation

As at 1 April 2024

### Net book value

As at 31 March 2024

As at 31 March 2023

Office Equipment	Furniture & Fittings	Total
£	£	£
16,474	3,887	20,361
<b>16,474</b>	<b>3,887</b>	<b>20,361</b>
16,474	3,887	20,361
<b>16,474</b>	<b>3,887</b>	<b>20,361</b>
-	-	-
-	-	-

## 8 Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade debtors	3,387	24,242
Prepayments	11,746	9,023
Grant and other income receivable	18,853	120,961
	<u>33,986</u>	<u>154,226</u>

## 9 Creditors falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	18,895	48,592
Contract commitments due and accrued	12,865	80,503
Accruals	28,272	53,710
Grants and income in advance	-	14,548
PAYE & Payroll deductions payable	-	19,486
Pension contributions payable	-	5,180
	<u>60,032</u>	<u>222,019</u>

Curious Minds pays all suppliers within 30 days of receipt of invoices due for payment.

Accruals include £17,250 (2023:£14,050), being the cost of staff annual leave due but not taken and carried forward at year end and £NIL (2023:£18,200) pay in lieu of notice for employees made redundant at the end of March 2023.

## 10 Deferred income

	2024	2023
	£	£
Chester Zoo	-	1,560
Cultural Citizens	-	3,983
GMCA BeeWell	-	9,005
	<u>-</u>	<u>14,548</u>

### Movement in deferred income

Balance as at 1 April	14,548	28,387
Amount released to income	(14,548)	(22,844)
Amount deferred in year	-	9,005
Balance as at 31 March	<u>-</u>	<u>14,548</u>



## 11 Statement of funds

	Balance		Income		Expenditure		Fund Transfers		Balance		Income		Expenditure		Fund Transfers		Balance	
	01/04/2022	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	31/3/2023 & 1/4/2024	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	31/03/2024	£
<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>																		
General Fund	481,491		74,524	(374,856)	319,809				500,968		932,337		(826,135)		14,699		621,869	
<b>Designated Funds:</b>																		
Curious Stories	6,193		-	-	-				6,193		-		-		-		6,193	
Curious Space	100,000		-	-	-				100,000		-		-		-		100,000	
Development & Transformation	44,287		-	-	300,000				344,287		-		(386)		-		343,901	
Dialogic Teaching & Learning	50,000		-	-	-				50,000		-		-		-		50,000	
Hope Streets	18,062		-	-	563				18,625		-		(46)		-		18,579	
	700,033		74,524	(374,856)	620,372				1,020,073		932,337		(826,567)		14,699		1,140,542	
<b>Restricted Funds</b>																		
ACE Artsmark projects	-		-	-	-				-		30,000		(25,221)		-		4,779	
ACE BeeWell	-		25,000	(662)	50,000				74,338		20,000		(23,496)		-		70,842	
ACE Bridge Organisation	476,979		1,359,893	(1,346,832)	(419,973)				70,067		-		(70,067)		-		-	
ACE Coronation Bandstands	-		200,400	-	(200,400)				-		17,329		-		(17,329)		-	
ACE DfE Extension	-		82,612	(61,959)	(20,653)				-		-		-		-		-	
ACE Transform	-		-	-	-				-		220,521		(94,481)		-		126,040	
Cultural Citizens	-		-	-	-				-		3,984		(3,984)		-		-	
Erasmus+	-		1,439	(3,579)	2,140				-		-		-		-		-	
DWP Kickstart	-		46,903	(52,566)	5,663				-		-		-		-		-	
NLHF Kick The Dust Hope Street	-		221,776	(184,627)	(37,149)				-		-		-		-		-	
The Lathums - Chance to See Fund	-		655	-	-				655		16,715		(1,873)		2,630		18,127	
University of Manchester	-		-	-	-				-		98,190		(98,190)		-		-	
	476,979		1,938,678	(1,650,225)	(620,372)				145,060		406,739		(317,312)		(14,699)		219,788	
<b>Total Funds</b>	1,177,012		2,013,202	(2,025,081)	-				1,165,133		1,339,076		(1,143,879)		-		1,360,330	

### Notes on Statement of funds

Fund Transfers include contributions to salaries and overheads charged to programmes within individual funds, as agreed with funders, along with relevant permissible recharges for specific programme work in accordance with the use of those funds.

The net transfer of £14,699 (2023: £620,372) between restricted and unrestricted funds during the year is made up of £NIL (2023: £397,612) agreed contribution to overheads and £17,329 (2023: £200,000) permissible programme costs, less a £2,630 contribution to The Lathums Chance to See Fund (2023: plus £563 contribution from the NLHF Kick the Dust programme, £2,140 to Erasmus+ and £5,663 to Kickstart projects).

The balance of restricted funds represents expenditure not due at the Balance Sheet date from grant funding received.



## 12 Analysis of net assets between funds

	2024		2023		2024	2023
	General Funds	Restricted Funds	General Funds	Restricted Funds	Total	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net current assets	<b>1,140,542</b>	<b>219,788</b>	1,020,073	145,060	<b>1,360,330</b>	1,165,133
	<b>1,140,542</b>	<b>219,788</b>	1,020,073	145,060	<b>1,360,330</b>	1,165,133

## 13 Operating lease commitments

The charity has no commitments under operation leases for premises (2023: NIL).

## 14 Corporation tax

The company is a registered charity and is entitled to claim annual exemption from UK corporation tax.

## 15 Related Party Transactions

Kathy McArdle was reimbursed travel expenses to attend trustee meetings of £46.70 during the year.

Derri Burdon, Chief Executive, was appointed as Co Chair and Trustee of the Cultural Learning Alliance (CLA) who were registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 10th May 2023.

Curious Minds provided the CLA with back office support from December 2023, for which fees of £1,100 were received in 2023/24 (2022/23 £NIL).

Derri was also a Co Chair of Trustees of Blaze Arts until resigning in November 2022. Blaze Arts was registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in July 2018 and received grant funding and project commissions during 2022/23 of £13,800.

Curious Minds also provided Blaze Arts with back office support until July 2023, for which fees of £1,000 were received in 2023/24 (2022/23 £2,000).

Blaze Arts also reimbursed Curious Minds for salary costs of a seconded staff member to 31st July 2023 of £5,053 (2022/23: £37,082).

Derri's daughter, Amy Burdon, was commissioned for programme support and facilitation, receiving fees and travel expenses of £1,500 in 2023/24 (2022/23 £3,980).

Amy Burdon also runs WigLe Dance CIC who have been commissioned for event performances, receiving sponsorship, fees and reimbursed costs totalling £3,633 in 2023/24 (2022/23 NIL).