

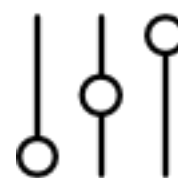


**Trustees' Annual Report and Financial
Statements
For the year ended 31 December 2024**

Rooted in community, inspired by music

Grounded Sounds works at the intersection of music education and music industry. We aim to connect young people in South London and beyond to creative and supportive opportunities that are too often not provided to them, and facilitate spaces for growth, development, support and community.

Why we exist



The power of music

Music-making has many personal and social benefits for young people including wellbeing, confidence and self-discipline. *(Sue Hallam, 2015).*

Crisis in youth services

Since 2011, many of London's youth centres have closed. Young people need safe, positive and engaging opportunities now more than ever.

Music education under threat

Music is often underfunded and sidelined in schools due to pressure on Maths and English results. Fewer students are choosing to study it.

A challenging industry

There are many barriers and pitfalls within the music industry. Grounded, sensible and relevant advice for how to navigate it can be hard to access.

What we do

Grounded Sounds provide a safe space and a nurturing community, which supports participants and facilitates potential for growth, creativity, artistry and professional development.

Our work is unique in its close networks with the music industry, and this alignment offers young people, who would not otherwise have access, the opportunity to be heard, celebrated and supported in their musical and creative endeavours by professionals at the top of their game.

We offer a distinct pathway through our interconnected programmes as young people can:

- attend [School Ground Sounds](#) as part of our after-school programme
- develop musical knowledge and skills at [The Bridge](#) summer holiday music programme
- join our in-depth artist development programme and showcase, [Spotlight](#)
- work with us and industry partners to produce and record a solo EP with our [Accelerator](#) programme.

Reflections on 2024

2024 saw us celebrating the 10th year of Grounded Sounds. We used this year to concentrate on the delivery of our work and really understanding the stories of our young people and how our programmes impact the journey of young people's lives.

We operated our three core programmes, SGS, Spotlight and EP Accelerator and piloted a new summer holiday programme – The Bridge.

The Bridge was developed directly as a result of feedback from our young people which showed that they wanted more arts opportunities in teenage years, bridging the gap between our schools' programme and Spotlight programme, and something to do in the lengthy summer holidays after exams.

More detail on the programmes and their impact is further on in this report.

We held a celebration event for our tenth anniversary with performances from some of our alumni and attendance from many of our supporters and community.

The funding environment has been challenging in 2024 and we are very grateful to our supporters. We cannot do what we do without our incredible team of staff and freelancers, the community around us and our generous donors. Thank you.

As the year closed, we also began a new chapter of leadership. In September, our CEO Anthony announced his departure for a new opportunity. His time with us has left a lasting legacy, and we're incredibly grateful. In response, the trustees restructured our leadership model in close consultation with staff, setting us up for stability and growth.

In January 2025, Sharon Noble stepped into the newly created Managing Director role, building on her work in fundraising. And in March, following a robust recruitment process, we welcomed Jess Loveless as Creative Director, bringing a wealth of experience in the creative industries and youth development.

Learning and Looking Ahead

Listening and adapting is at the heart of Grounded Sounds. Each year, we shape our programmes based on what our young people tell us they need.

In 2025, we're excited to be:

- Building on learning and evaluation of the first 10 years of the charity
- Developing an alumni engagement programme to maintain connections and amplify youth voices
- Continuing to seek and strengthen partnerships that expand access and deepen impact
- Listening carefully to the voices of our young people and learning how our programmes are shaping their journeys.
- Improving the evaluation of our impact, including on a long-term basis rather than just after the end of each programme

SCHOOL GROUND SOUNDS

SGS is a 10-week programme, delivered one afternoon a week after school with up to 15 participants per session.

Sessions focus on the creation of original music and development of songwriting and musicianship skills, including visits to a local studio to record the group's music.

During 2024, we successfully delivered our programme in three secondary schools over three terms, working with 95 participants in total. A lot of our participants join the programme each term to keep developing their skills.

Each participant received an average of 31 hours of creative contact time with our staff and workshop leaders.

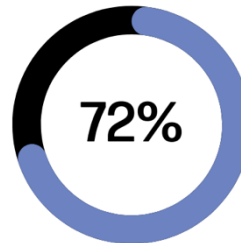
At the end of each term, we asked the participants to complete a survey based on their experience of the programme, covering our objectives. The results are great and have given us areas to work on for the 2025 SGS programme and beyond.

75% average increase in songwriting skills

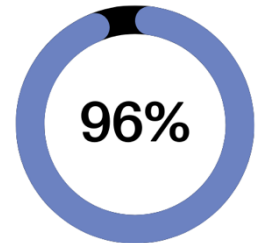
79% average in understanding how to record music

76% average increase in confidence in performing

77% average improvement in mood



72% of participants felt their voice was heard and they were able to contribute ideas



96% participants wanted to keep coming to SGS next term

“ Best thing I've done in secondary, no word of a lie ”

Quote from a 2024 SGS participant



Spotlight is an 8-week music industry and artist-development programme aimed at aspiring creatives aged 18-24 who are not in education, employment or training. The programme gives a behind the scenes look into the music industry by building creative and business skills whilst connecting young people to a professional network and shaping the next generation of the industry.

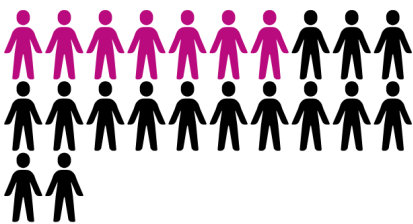
**SPOT
LIGHT**

Spotlight 2024 continued our commitment to nurturing emerging talent. We widened access this year by offering select masterclasses and experiences to our alumni, increasing our overall impact.

The participants learnt about how the music industry is set up, how to develop a brand identity, worked on artist development, songwriting and performance and learnt how to protect intellectual property and collect royalties

We had guest speakers from the music industry and universities which included vocal coaches, performers, managers and business coaches.

The programme culminated in a powerful showcase at the Ritzy in Brixton. The evening featured young performers sharing their original productions accompanied by the Grounded Sounds House Band. With around 75 attendees, it was a joyful celebration of creativity and community.



In total, the programme engaged 22 young people, including 7 young people who were NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)



Geographically, our reach stretched from Luton and Haringey in the north to Croydon and Horsham in the south.

🎥 Watch the highlight video here: [Spotlight Showcase](#)

🎥 Hear directly from the young people: [Instagram Reel](#)

“ I’ve made good friends and collaborators – I feel like I can perform anywhere now. ”

Spotlight 2024 participant



THE BRIDGE

The Bridge (Pilot, Summer 2024)

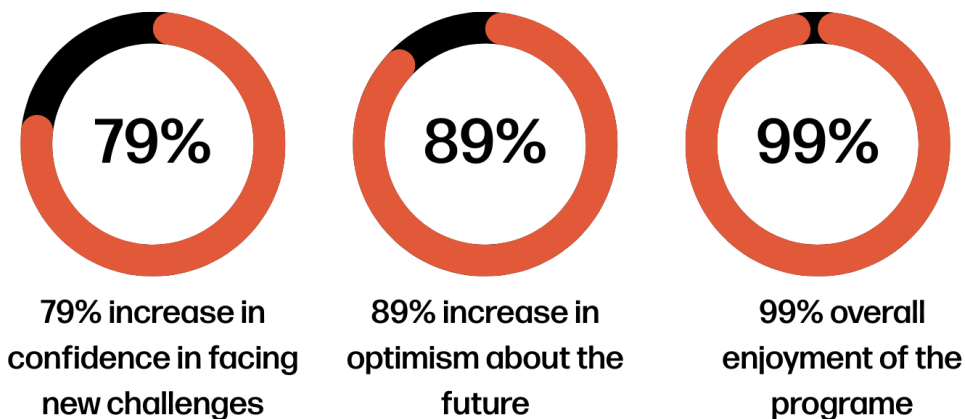
In response to feedback from young people, The Bridge was born – a new summer programme for 15-17-year-olds, designed to bridge the gap between the SGS programme and Spotlight.

The Bridge was designed for 15-17-year-olds who are interested in considering further study and engagement with music but face barriers to doing so. It provides four weeks of structured workshops, seminars and practical sessions led by talented musicians and industry professionals in the early summer holidays after exams.

Aimed at those who have finished year 11 or 12, young people are recruited from schools that we already engage with through School Ground Sounds and through open marketing with partner organisations, schools, and youth groups.

This year we worked with 10 young people from across London boroughs and had 70 hours of direct contact per participant.

A summary of end of programme survey responses showed:





The EP Accelerator is a programme supporting early-career artists to write, record and release an EP, with songwriting development, 1-1 mentoring and music industry advice workshops. Artists are provided with access to studio time, financial investment and check-ins at each stage of the process from the Grounded Sounds team across a 6-9 month period as well as 1-1 mentoring.

The programme has historically supported three emerging artists, but in 2024 due to staff capacity and participant health, we switched things up and supported two artists over the full programme and with investment into their EP, and four others over a shorter period with mentoring and access to masterclasses.

This year's programme consisted of weekly songwriting sessions with a music mentor, weekly catch up and wellbeing check-ins with GS staff, development days in partnership with National Theatre, festival attendances, music industry masterclasses with experts, a performance at Streatham Space, studio time and coaching with an award-winning producer plus a grant to enable the production of an EP.

The two artists that completed the programme are Topia and LDEEA



Töpia, a soulful UK singer-songwriter, began her musical journey as a band frontwoman at thirteen. Drawing inspiration from neo-soul luminaries like Mereba and India Arie, she seamlessly blends elements from her time in rock and punk bands into her sound. With the finesse of a seasoned spoken word artist, Töpia offers a refreshing musical interpretation.

"[EP Accelerator] has helped me to understand what I want my output to be and enabled me to feel a lot more comfortable in the music industry space. The most significant support has been Esther and Zola supporting me. They have been the most significant contacts that we have made and have been really helpful"

LDEEA is crafting a sound unique to her vast influences - 'Ambient Soul' - music curated specially to enlighten the soul with an immersive sound-bed, that also draws from Neo-soul, R&B, Funk, Indie, Jazz, Hip-Hop, and Latin grooves. A big fan of immersive experiences and intentional listening, she hopes that her music is a safe container for those who listen; acting as either a comfort blanket or a lightbulb moment.

"With the knowledge that I gained from the programme and various musical insights, I have taken time to rethink my plan as an artist and my mind has been opened to new ways that I can create/function as an artist and grow a career with longevity."



Thank you

We would like to thank the following donors for their financial support during 2024:

3 Monkeys Charitable Trust	Official Charts UK
ABRSM	Postcode Society Trust
Andrew & Belinda Scott	PRS Open Fund
Arts for Impact (Big Give)	Q Charitable Trust
Chapman Charitable Trust	SGS Friends
Chelsea Arts Club Trust	The Black Fund
D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust	The Gowling WLG (UK) Charitable Trust
Foyle Foundation	Wavendon Foundation
John Coates Charitable Trust	Woodroffe Benton Foundation
John Thaw Charitable Trust	Woodward Charitable Trust 2024
Kobalt	Worshipful Company of Basketmakers
Lucille Graham Trust	Youth Music Catalyser Fund
Mila Foundation	Youth Music Recharge Fund
National Lottery Awards for All	

We would also like to thank the following organisations for pro-bono support for facilities, resources, donations to our silent auction and more:

Baltic Studios	Oyster Bay
Berkeley Partnership	Raw Material, Media and Music Ltd
Brixton Hill Studios	RiCreated Merchandise
Brixton Village Studios	Soho House Foundation
BTR Cycling	Streatham Space project
Cloud X	Tesco
Deltaforce Paintball	The Black Fund
GPF Lewis	The Cause
Mrs Salisburys Famous Tea Rooms	TOCA Social
Next	Tooting Lido
Ocado	Upstairs at the Ritzy
Off Peak Luxury Hotels	

And there are so many individuals that we can't mention here who help us by giving their time, donating each month, attending our events, providing their services at reduced rates and spreading the word about the work we do, which all helps us meet our goals.

THANK YOU



Reference and administration details

Charity Name	School Ground Sounds (Trading name: Grounded Sounds)
Registered charity number	1159676
Registered Address	14 Henderson Road, London SW18 3RR
Trustees	Tom Keohane – Chairman Charles Scott - Treasurer Jack Keeling Stephen Cartwright - appt September 2024 Christina Barone – appt December 2024
Senior Leadership	Anthony Olanipekun – CEO until end November 2024 Sharon Noble – Interim CEO from November 2024 and Managing Director from July 2025 Jess Loveless – Creative Director from March 2025

Structure, governance and management

Type of governing document	Constitution
How the charity is constituted	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
Trustee selection method	Open advertisement, selection and appointment by resolution of existing trustees.

Financial review and reserve policy

The charity had income of £196,241 (2023: £176,022) and expenditure of £189,209 (2023: £180,139). A small unrestricted surplus arose of £7,032 (2023: deficit of £4,117) which has been added to reserves.

The reserve policy of the charity is to hold between 3 and six months worth of costs in reserve.

Reserves held at 31 December 2024 were £80,205 which is equivalent to 5 month's worth of costs and therefore in line with our reserve policy.

Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signature:



Full name: Charles Scott
Position: Trustee, Treasurer
Date: 31/08/2025

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees

Charity Name

School Ground Sounds (trading as Grounded Sounds)

On accounts for the year ended

31 December 2024

Charity no
(if any)

1159676

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Edmund Massey

Edmund Massey (Sep 3, 2025 09:59:13 GMT+1)

Date:

03/09/25

Name:

Edmund Massey

Address:

185 Elsley Road

London

SW11 5LG

Period: 1 Jan 2024 to 31 Dec 2024

Section A - Receipts and Payments All figures in £	Latest period (12 months to 31 Dec 2024)			Prior period	Notes
	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total	12 months to 31 Dec 2023	
A1 Receipts					
Grant funding	45,883	79,040	124,923	105,860	
Donations from private individuals	14,363	-	14,363	20,304	includes Hatty's Fund donations (Note 3)
Corporate donations	18,950	-	18,950	38,100	
Fundraising event income	29,332	-	29,332	-	
Earned income	2,453	4,400	6,853	11,758	
Investment income	1,820	-	1,820	-	
Total Income	112,801	83,440	196,241	176,022	
A2 Asset and investment sales	None	None	None	None	
A3 Payments					
Core team people costs:					
Salary and pension costs, including tax	36,851	51,344	88,195	78,779	
Freelance contractors	6,170	24,277	30,447	25,151	
Total core team people costs:	43,021	75,621	118,642	103,930	
Direct project costs:					excl. core team time on projects
Freelance contractors - non-core team		42,619	42,619	46,123	
Project collaboration partners		-	-	150	
Performance fees for SGS participants	250	1,150	1,400	4,126	
Studio / workshop space hire		2,906	2,906	1,435	
Artist fund		1,870	1,870	706	
Video/photography/live streaming	250	550	800	1,289	
Equipment hire (and support technicians)		-	-	40	
Instruments for young people		2,407	2,407	3,851	
Showcase ticketing fees		14	14	20	
Travel and accomodation expenses	724	44	768	146	
Travel expenses for participants		463	463	1,330	
Project consumables / stationery		199	199	45	
Food / refreshments	98	1,066	1,164	842	
Social media & offline promotion		120	120	60	
DBS checks	18	200	218	190	
Total direct project costs (excl. core team time):	1,340	53,608	54,948	60,352	
Direct fundraising costs:					excl. core team time on fundraising
Fundraising event costs	7,502	-	7,502	4,473	
Online fundraising tools	231	-	231	377	
Total direct fundraising costs:	7,733	-	7,733	4,850	
General overheads:					
Office space	600	-	600	600	
Branding & website design & development	-	-	-	1,637	
Website hosting	163	-	163	118	
Insurance	622	-	622	610	
SGS/GS branded merchandise	418	-	418	-	
Offline promotional materials	-	-	-	1,012	
Online software tools	3,512	-	3,512	3,390	
Training	822	-	822	2,478	
Stationery (general)	54	-	54	78	
Equipment - IT, mobiles, other	420	-	420	140	
Recruitment costs	1,203	-	1,203	874	
Miscellaneous expenses	72	-	72	70	
Total general overheads:	7,886	-	7,886	11,006	
Total Expenses	59,980	129,229	189,209	180,139	
A4 Asset and investment purchases	None	None	None	None	
Surplus/(Deficit)	52,821	(45,789)	7,032	(4,117)	
A6 Opening cash funds	51,902	21,436	73,338	77,454	
Transfer of unrestricted funds	(24,518)	24,518	-	-	See Note 2
Closing Cash funds	80,205	165	80,370	73,337	See Note 3

Notes

- Accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis, i.e. on cash in and cash out. Since, at this stage, we are not issuing any customer invoices and we aim to pay supplier invoices as soon as they are received, this gives an accurate view of the financial position.
- Some spend on projects for which we have restricted funding is funded from unrestricted funds. All expenditure on these projects is shown under restricted funding. Total restricted funds actually used has been £104,876. The amount of unrestricted funds used on these projects has been £24,518.
- Closing unrestricted funds include £16,853 designated for 'Hatty's Fund' - set up to purchase musical instruments for selected young people in need of

Section B - Assets and liabilities at the end of the period

	Latest period (12 months to 31 Dec 2023)			Prior period
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	12 months to
	funds	funds		31 Dec 2022
	£	£	£	£
B1 Cash funds				
HSBC Account			80,370	73,337
Total cash funds	-	-	80,370	73,337
				see Note 4
B2 Other monetary assets	None	None	None	None
B3 Investment assets	None	None	None	None
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use	None	None	None	None
				see Note 5
B5 Liabilities	None	None	None	None

Notes

- 4 At December 2023, £50,000 was held in a 4-month HSBC 'money market' interest-bearing account. This earned interest throughout the year and then was transferred back to the current account
- 5 Our accounting policy is to treat purchase of equipment less than £3,000 (e.g. camera, recording equipment, laptop, iPads) as an expense. SGS/GS branded merchandise is bought for promotional purposes rather than for sale so is not treated as an asset.

Signed on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

Date of
approval

Printed Name



31/08/25

CHARLES SCOTT