



# OUT OF CHARACTER THEATRE COMPANY

## ANNUAL REPORT 2024

SEPTEMBER 2023 - AUGUST 2024





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The year began, last September, with the addition of five new company members and for the first time a Marketing Officer, Abbie Turner. During her time with the company, Abbie considerably increased the company's visibility. Her work promoting *After Life* (at both York St John Creative Centre and York Theatre Royal) contributed significantly to strong ticket sales and increased media interest in the company. With fellow student Beth Fitch, she created promotional film material and short 'behind-the-scenes' documentary. Abbie also updated the website, making it more user friendly.

To develop further as a company, we have made real efforts this year to reach out to audiences. We invited those who came to watch *After Life* in December and May to share their reflections with us. 32 audience responses were collected through our online survey, allowing us to understand more about the demographics of our audiences and their response to our work. Evaluation findings have been included in the Appendix.

Company members got out and about supporting York Street performers, who generously gave their time to raise funds for Out of Character entertaining the crowds at King's Square, York in late September. Company members also spent time at York University delivering simulated patient workshops.

In November 2023 we were delighted to be awarded the **Special Prize** for our film submission, *Disability and Autonomy*, for the Eleanor Worthington Prize. This was shown in June 2024 at the Pesaro Film Festival.

Activity continued over the summer break with members continuing work on our next piece. The company continues to grow with four new company members moving in June from Introduction to Theatre and taking the company to twenty-three members.

We would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who continue to support us in so many ways. The year ended with the welcome news that we have gained a Patron. Mark Addy, a local actor with a national reputation for both deal of stage and screen work, has kindly agreed to take on this important role.

## Director's Report

### Productions

This year has marked some big steps forward for Out of Character. In Autumn 2023 we rehearsed and staged Jack Thorne's play *After Life* at the Creative Centre. This, to my knowledge, is the first time that OOC have performed an 'off the shelf' script (not commissioned for us) and this provided challenges in finding the right script, but also positives in having a script right at the start of the project. The company relished this. We performed four times to 139 audience members in total and the company came away with a big sense of achievement and also the desire to perform the text again.

After discussions with the company and the board, we decided to perform *After Life* as part of the Takeover Festival at York Theatre Royal in May 2024. This was a huge challenge; firstly vocally for the company as the main house space is very different and requires a great skill in projection. Associate Director, Jane and Adam (company member) worked each week with the company for an hour to develop and strengthen their vocal skills, also providing take home exercises to work on daily. This was a huge success and many audience members and trustees complemented the company's projection. A second challenge was the marketing of the production at YTR. We recruited a marketing officer, Abbie Turner, who developed a strong marketing strategy for the project and this was really impactful, with a social media campaign and radio and tv interviews which the company members undertook. This led to nearly 200 tickets being sold for the show.

### Film

In January 2024 we were commissioned to make a film for Richard Knight, a PhD Researcher in Counselling and Disability. Richard's film explored some of the themes of his PHD findings through creativity. The film, *Counselling for Therapists; A therapists Guide to Client Experiences and Perceptions* will be used to disseminate his research at conferences. Richard's own description of what he took from the experience can found in the Appendix.

### Simulated Patient work

We have continued working in partnership with the department of Health Sciences at the University of York to deliver simulated patient sessions. This year, Out of Character members delivered 6 sessions to 277 nursing students. Sessions included: one-to-one assessments; whole group forum theatre style sessions and installations that OOC actors created around their own mental health experiences. The relationship we have with the University of York nursing lecturers is a really positive one: they came to support our production of *After Life* and are planning to book more sessions in 2024-5 despite limited budgets.

## Company Representative Report

The new members we welcomed last September slotted in perfectly and were amazing in *After Life*. You'd think they'd been with us for years!

The company gave a solid yes to performing at York Theatre Royal on the biggest stage that we've ever performed on and with the biggest audience yet. The company felt ready to take on a big challenge. We've built the trust in each other and know that we've always got each other's backs. We feel safe at OOC and that's why we're adamant that we are a family.

We're so glad to have Kate as our Director and the directing team to support us so that we can get on with the job of acting. They allow us to have input in to all our performances. It's so important to have our voices heard. It's been a pleasure and privilege to be the spokesperson for members, knowing that they trust us to put the points across to the board.



## *Performances and workshops*

### **Productions**

- After Life - Creative Centre YSJ - December 2023
- After Life - York Theatre Royal - May 2024

### **Simulated Patient Workshops delivered by OOC company members** (*See Appendix*)

- Mental Health Simulation - March 2023
- Psychosocial Skills module assessment- April 2023
- Stigma – May 2023
- NA programme – June 2023
- Enhanced Psychosocial Skills module – May & August 2023

### **Partnership project** (*See Appendix*)

- Film *Counselling for Therapists; A therapists Guide to Client Experiences and Perceptions* co-created with Richard Knight

### **Workshops for OOC company members**

- R &D for *Hospital Doors* led by Matt Harper-Hardcastle – November 2023

### **Upcoming plans for OOC**

It was recently suggested in a board away day that we work to create an annual blueprint for the company. This will help us apply for funding and plan ahead. This has been created with the company members and has been agreed by the trustees; we are excited about our future work.

Our next production will take place in November 2024 at York St John. The devised piece, working title *A Teenage Toolkit to Mental Health*, will explore company member's experiences of and advice given about mental health. The devised piece will be scripted by Jane. We are working in partnership with two York Theatre Royal Youth Theatre companies aged 14-19, who will input via questionnaires, workshops with Kate and company members, and then will be part of the audience for the finished production.

September 2024 will see the recruitment of our next Marketing Officer to help raise further the profile of Out of Character.





# ACCOUNTS

1<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 2023 – 31<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 2024

Income	
Grants	£17,561
Donations	£571.85
Performance income	£9,128.24
Refunds	£31.55
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£27,292.64</b>

Expenditure	
Artistic Direction	£8,635.60
Assistant Art Direction	£8,563.25
Performers	£2,633.50
Pension Payments	£1919
Playwriting	£102
Travel	£476.50
Refreshments	£2,041.29
Simulated work	£1,619.45
Technical	£1256
Music for show	£300
General and Admin	£687.75
Gifts	£158.39
Props	£279.36
Exam of Accounts	£320
Public Liability Ins	£145.60
Playscripts	£310.27
Film making	£500
Promotion	£860.49
Sundries	£200
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£31,008.45</b>

<b>Balance to carry forward</b>	<b>£15,511.38</b>
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## How grants are used:

£5000 from Image Foundation to support our core costs.

£5300 from Two Ridings Trust to make a step change in the promotion and management of the Company and in addition from the Belfry Fund an additional £4000 to support the transition of people from Converge to Out of Character.

£2691 from Postcode Lottery to cover the costs of a Marketing Officer for the company.

# APPENDIX

## Simulated patient workshops

Quotes below were given by nursing students. In each case OOC actors played case studies and were assessed by pairs of students.

*Me and my partner had Fiona as our patient and it felt hard to believe she was not a 'real' patient. I almost forgot the simulation wasn't real at one point, a lot of the group said the same about their 'patients' too. She really wasn't giving much away, but that was good because this is what happens in practice and I have worked with people who present exactly like this. Even her sitting with her hood up was so convincing to me, it really added to her character we thought and was another barrier for us to try to break down. If she had made it too 'easy' for us I don't think we would have got as much out of it. She was absolutely brilliant.*



*I was allocated to Tracy as the patient to assess. I was nervous as she was disgruntled when I sat down and I thought this is going to be hard. But I started to have a conversation with her and I could see what I was doing was helping to make her more comfortable, I really got into the zone of being 'nurse' with my 'patient' and her amazing acting skills helped me to do this! She was responding to me in a way which felt very realistic and we would not have got this experience had it been just the lecturers or other students playing the part of the patient. I was really impressed by her and wanted to say thank you to her and the other actors for making this such an amazing experience for us all!*

*My colleague and I had Julie for our simulation experience. The way she was engaging with us was very convincing to me (I've had a placement in ALPS) because I have actually met lots of patients who appear like Julie, quite professional but you know they are hiding stuff from you! The way she was being was making it quite hard for us to get information out of her which was making me nervous but again, this is what happens in the real world! It really felt as though I was on a ward with a patient having to work hard to develop rapport with someone. I was so impressed with all the little things she was doing like the way she sat and talked to us, it really made it come alive. It just all felt very convincing.*





**Reflections from Richard Knight,**  
**PhD Researcher in Counselling and Disability.**

*What I knew from discussing with the Converge research and evaluation team is that this needed to be shared in a fun and accessible way and not in a usual academic paper locked behind academic language barriers and pay walls.*

*It was then that I thought of Out of Character, who else would understand and be able to convert my participants' words into something fun and accessible then other people with lived experience. Some similar to my participants.*

*Thus, allowing the amazing creative skills of the Out of Character cast to put their abilities and lived experience to use and breath creativity into participants' original voices to generate something, fun, beautiful and challenging. Hopefully, challenging enough to start a fire throughout the profession to change and work more collaboratively and co-productively with our clients.*

*I met OOC as a counsellor and researcher, but I make no secret that I was at one of my own darkest periods of life. What I found was support, understanding, acceptance and instead of leaving OOC on the completion of an amazing piece of work, I have joined the company and built new friendships with a fantastic group of people.*

## **After Life Evaluation Findings**

These findings were collected through Google Forms. 9 responses were collected following the December 2023 performance at York St John Creative Centre and 23 responses after the May 2024 performance at York Theatre Royal.

The data below is drawn from the performance at York Theatre Royal.

### **Audiences told us that the performances were:**



### **Some individual comments were...**

'The subject matter was great, it was different, made me think and lovely to see a diverse cast.'

'An incredible professional production, and the choice of script was superb for everyone.'

'Keep on doing exactly what you are doing and it will go far.'gave the

### **Some of the statistics...**

65% of respondents gave the performance a 5-star rating.

65% of respondents strongly agreed that the performance '... was absorbing and held my attention'.

82% of respondents strongly or very strongly agreed that the performance was 'thought provoking' and helped them to 'gain new insight or knowledge'.

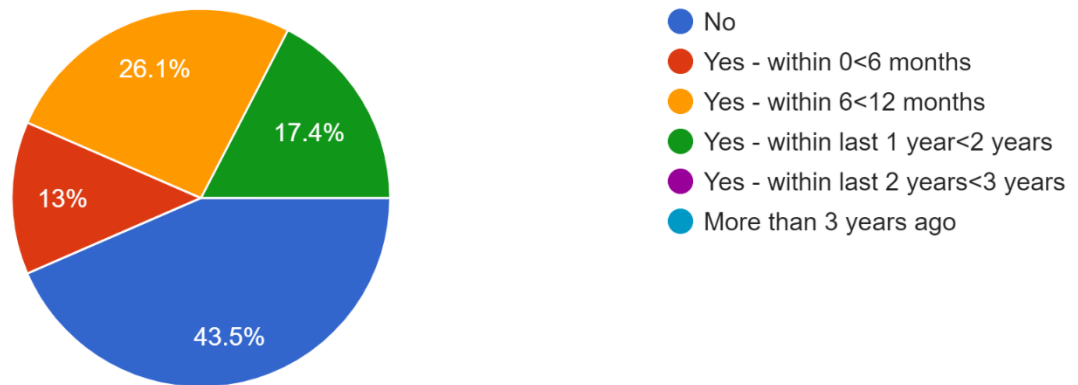
### A bit more about our audience...

Of the 23 respondents attending the York Theatre Royal performance:

- 35% identified as disabled
- 21% identified as neurodivergent
- just under 50% had caring responsibilities of some kind.

Have you been to an Out of Character performance, event or workshop before?

23 responses



How has attending this performance developed your interest in Out of Character?

23 responses



[www.outofcharactertheatre.com](http://www.outofcharactertheatre.com)

Registered Charity (1161399)

## **Out of Character Accounts 2023-4**

### **Income**

Grants	17561
Donations	571.85
Performance income	9128.24
Refunds	31.55
	<b>27292.64</b>

### **Expenditure**

Artistic Direction	8635.6
Assistant Art Direction	8563.25
Performers	2633.5
Pension Payments	1919
Playwriting	102
Travel	476.5
Refreshments	2041.29
Simulated work	1619.45
Technical	1256
Music for show	300
General and Admin	687.75
Gifts	158.39
Props	279.36
Exam of Accounts	320
Public Liability Ins	145.6
Playscripts	310.27
Film making	500
Promotion	860.49
Sundries	200
Total Expend	<b>31008.45</b>

**Income less Exp for 23-24                      -3715.81**

**C/F from 22-23                                      15511.38**

**Balance on 31.8.24                                11795.57**

**Balance on 3.10.24                                16462.17**

# **Out of Character**

(Charity Number: 1161399)

**Trustees Annual Report & Financial Statements**

**for the year ended**

**31st August 2024**

**outsource**



# **Out of Character**

(Charity Number: 1161399)

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**Out of Character**  
(Charity Number: 1161399)

<b>Receipts &amp; Payments Accounts for the year ended:</b>			<b>31st August 2024</b>	
	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>2024 Total funds</b>	<b>2023 Total funds</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Receipts</b>				
Grants	17,561	-	17,561	25,600
Donations	572	-	572	11
Events	-	-	-	5,800
Performance income	9,128	-	9,128	6,350
Sale of books	-	-	-	168
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>27,261</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>27,261</b>	<b>37,929</b>
<b>Payments</b>				
Artistic directors	10,555	-	10,555	13,142
Assistant Direction	8,563	-	8,563	4,000
Performers	2,634	-	2,634	3,480
Simulations	1,619	-	1,619	-
Playwriting & scripts	412	-	412	1,500
Music	300	-	300	-
Fim making	500	-	500	-
Travel & accomodation	477	-	477	484
Refreshments	2,010	-	2,010	740
Design	-	-	-	400
Promotion	860	-	860	-
Technician and technical equipment	1,256	-	1,256	2,276
Props	279	-	279	822
Professional fees	320	-	320	200
Website	-	-	-	412
General and administration	888	-	888	2,894
Insurance	146	-	146	146
Gifts	158	-	158	48
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>30,977</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30,977</b>	<b>30,544</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>(3,716)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(3,716)</b>	<b>7,385</b>
<b>Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	
<b>Balance brought forward</b>	<b>15,572</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,572</b>	<b>8,187</b>
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b>11,856</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,856</b>	<b>15,572</b>

**Out of Character**  
(Charity Number: 1161399)

<b>Statement of Assets and Liabilities at:</b>			<b>31st August 2024</b>	
	<b>Unrestricted funds</b>	<b>Restricted funds</b>	<b>2024 Total funds</b>	<b>2023 Total funds</b>
<b>Assets</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Cash at bank and in hand</b>				
Current bank account	11,796	-	11,796	15,512
Petty cash	60	-	60	60
	<b>11,856</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>11,856</b>	<b>15,572</b>
	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>2024 Total Funds</b>	<b>2023 Total Funds</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Independent Examination fee	330	-	330	320
	<b>330</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>320</b>

**Out of Character**  
(Charity Number: 1161399)

**Notes to the Accounts for the year ended:**

**31st August 2024**

**1. Basis of Accounts**

The Trustees have taken advantage of section 144 (2) of the Charities Act 2011 and prepared the accounts on a receipts and payments basis.

**Approval of Accounts for the year ended:**

**31st August 2024**

The report and accounts were approved at a  
meeting of the Trustees held on:

**Date**

**Signed for and on behalf of the Trustees:**

**Signature**

**Name**

**Position (e.g. Chair etc)**

**Date**

**Signature**

**Name**

**Position (e.g. Chair etc)**

**Date**