

Arts at the Old Fire Station - Theory of Change



We have developed a series of measures which help us describe whether and how we are achieving the impacts we are seeking. These consist of numbers counted over the year, tracking of the engagement of individuals and surveys/interviews conducted in relation to specific projects and activities.

The change we want to see

We believe that art is for everyone: everyone has potential. Seeing, participating in and making art engages, excites and stretches people, encouraging new voices and unexpected connections. As an arts centre, sharing a building and working in partnership with Crisis, we want to deliver and sustain a truly inclusive artistic and cultural public space, which welcomes and celebrates difference and enables people to engage with new ideas, develop new skills and try on new identities. Our job is to put on shows, exhibitions, events and workshops – and to work hard selling tickets, running the bar and the shop, hiring out spaces and keeping our customers happy so that we keep the money coming in to make this all possible. We believe that the mix of people, activities and opportunities within AOFS – and the values that underpin everything we do – enable people to find their own ways to become better artists, more resilient individuals and part of stronger, more inclusive communities. Together, they will create outcomes that we could never have planned for or predicted. Our ambition is that everyone we are working with – volunteers, artists, homeless people, staff, members of the public, professional colleagues – can enjoy these opportunities and benefits. Within this, we have chosen three specific changes we want to support through our work.

Top level outcomes

Everyone engaged with AOFS is more open to new ideas and

Artists are more successful

Homeless people are more resilient and stable

different people		
------------------	--	--

Interim outcome	How this happens	Why it contributes
People participate and have fun	Through watching art Through making art Through engaging with the development of new work Through interacting with others (e.g. as member of a team or class)	Because positive feelings support positive lives Because experimenting, enjoying and learning together makes us all stronger, happier and more open to others Because homeless people need opportunities to focus on their strengths and interests not their problems
People have expanded cultural and artistic horizons	Through exposure to new work Through seeing creativity in their own community Through AOFS commitment to creative partnerships and networks	Because exposure to interesting, high quality new work stimulates new thinking and different ways of engaging Because exposure to work created by and with marginalised people challenges stereotypes Because seeing 'people like me' as artists builds confidence and hope Because engaging with the arts within AOFS opens doors for other artistic opportunities
People have increased creative ability/ confidence	Through opportunities to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiment and develop ideas - Collaborate across art forms - 'Engage with difference' - Test new works with engaged audiences - Show work in a high quality space - Attract a paying audience and the attention of critics and commentators 	Because a stimulating and supportive environment enables emerging artists to grow and share their ideas Because developing a voice as an artist is powerful Because people who face disadvantage and are marginalised in society are too often denied a voice as artists Because the mix of people engaging with AOFS is itself stimulating and supports better art
People have new skills	Everyone has the opportunity to develop new skills through engaging in classes and workshops, and learning through collaboration Artists develop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - business skills - technique - skills in participative arts practice - skills in working with vulnerable people Volunteers and trainees develop <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general work skills and disciplines - skills in arts management and delivery - skills in working as members of a diverse team 	Because having fun, experimenting and learning together makes us all stronger, happier and more open to others Because developing as an artist – and earning a living - calls for a creative, practical and business knowledge and confidence Because engaging with and learning from vulnerable people is in itself stimulating and supports better art Because working in and around the arts in a busy public space which takes inclusion really seriously helps people develop new skills and confidence Because practical work experience builds transferrable skills for employment and life
People can try out new, positive identities and	Through trying out new roles and experiences Through working as peers with others	Because homeless people need a place where they are not labelled, bringing their skills not their problems

choose the labels they feel comfortable with and change them	Through being a valued member of a team, group or community	Because becoming confident in new roles and in collaborating and contributing builds new public and self-identities
People appreciate diversity	Through engaging artistically with 'difference' Through learning how to relate to and work alongside 'unexpected people' Through seeing the skills and talents to be found in new, emerging or 'pre-emerging' artists	Because the mix of people engaging with AOFS in itself stimulating and supports better art Because working on a common task breaks down barriers and builds genuine relationships Because exposure to work created by and with marginalised people challenges stereotypes
People contribute to and benefit from networks and collaboration	Through the boundary crossing relationships within AOFS – and in its extensive external networks Through the partnership with Crisis that lies at the heart of the Old Fire Station Through opportunities to collaborate across disciplines, engage with audiences and test new ideas and new work	Because positive community and networks give people greater resources to define their own futures Because working with vulnerable people who are well supported in tackling their problems enables AOFS to focus on their strengths and interests Because positive exchange of ideas and approaches – and two-way feedback with engaged audiences – stimulates a creative community of value to all
People are more resilient	Through developing creative confidence by making and showing work Through developing new skills and confidence as artists and in working in and around the arts in a busy public space Through being part of teams, networks, groups and a creative community Through being trusted, relied on and appreciated	Because developing an increased sense of recognition in a role that satisfies them gives people greater hope and confidence Because being appreciated and valued for your contribution matters to everyone Because positive community and networks give people greater resources to bounce back after setbacks – and to support others