

The Library



Our National Portfolio Organisation (NPO)



What is a National Portfolio Organisation (NPO)?

The National Portfolio is a group of museums, libraries and art organisations that get regular funding from the national development agency, which invests public money for creativity and culture in England.

What does the NPO mean for us?

Since becoming an **Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation** (NPO) in 2023, Gloucestershire Libraries has been on an ambitious journey to transform library spaces into **vibrant, creative hubs** for everyone. Rooted in local need and driven by community voices, our work champions **innovation, inclusion** and **imagination**.

Through bold partnerships, dynamic programming, and a strong focus on priority places and under-served groups, we're re-imagining what libraries can be - spaces where **creativity, connection** and **communities** thrive.

The projects and activities that sit under our NPO are delivered in addition to core Library services, which are still delivered in our Libraries.



Our NPO Goals



Strengthen creative programming

Working with key cultural, community & education partners to deliver an ambitious and dynamic creative cultural offer.



Connect communities & reach new audiences

We run inclusive programmes in areas with the greatest need, working with schools and partners to support wellbeing and creativity.



Build inclusive community programmes

By engaging with under-represented groups, to ensure that our services, events & programmes reflect the voices of our communities.



Test new ideas to spark innovation & creative risk

Exploring new approaches, trying new things, evaluating and learning from both successes and failure.

Our NPO Projects



Ageing with Creativity

Engages with our over 60s community through creative and mindful activities to include those living with dementia and memory loss and their carers.

Projects currently include our **Library Choirs** and **Carousel of Stories** reminiscence projects.

Our Feedback



“ —

“Great fun, gets us out of the house, meet people, talk”

“Excellent for the soul and mental health”

Choir Attendees

— ”

Said what they enjoy most about attending is **meeting others**

100% Of our choir members feel the sessions meet their needs and expectations

NPO Case Study

Tastes of Memory

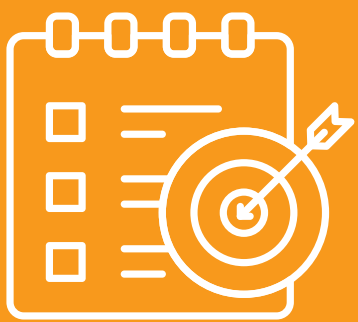
PROJECT SUMMARY

Bringing the past to the table, this community project captures cherished stories and recipes from older generations in a heartfelt Reminiscence Recipe Book.

Next, young people stepped in, recreating the recipes and sharing their delicious results at a vibrant community event.



GOALS



- Capture and celebrate intergenerational stories and food traditions.
- Engage young people in meaningful, skill-building activities.
- Strengthen community cohesion through shared experiences.

OUTCOMES



- Two young people developed culinary and event delivery skills.
- A platform to celebrate the Reminiscence Recipe Book with community members and contributors.
- New partnership established with a local organisation supporting disadvantaged young people.

IMPACT & LEARNING



- Adaptability was key to achieving engagement goals.
- Community-led connections can outperform formal outreach in some cases.
- Even small-scale participation can have a deep impact on individuals and community engagement.

Our NPO Projects

Family Focus

Is for early years children and their families, aimed at spending quality time with families and communities to increase social connection, using creativity as a theme for reducing anxiety and improving mental health. This non-digital project includes Family Festivals & Library Littles Sensory Play sessions in our libraries.



Our Feedback



Said that coming to "Library Littles" has encouraged them to use their library more often

“ —

Children are away from screens and gadgets. They are recognising things other than their daily routine.

I can feel the improvement in children's concentration and other skills with this little step."

Parent at Family Festival

— ”

50

New library members signed up at our first series of Family Festivals

NPO Case Study

Library Littles

NAOMI'S STORY

Naomi brought her two-year-old to a Library Littles session at Cirencester Library after spotting a poster. She was looking for something relaxed and creative — and found just that.



“NICE AND RELAXED ENVIRONMENT,
LOTS FOR THE CHILDREN TO ENGAGE WITH.”

Her daughter loved the songs, stories and sensory play. Since then, they've also visited Library Littles sessions at other libraries when they've had the chance.

“ACTIVITIES LIKE THIS ARE THE MAIN REASON WE USE
OUR LOCAL LIBRARY AS IT ENCOURAGES KIDS TO
ASSOCIATE THE LIBRARY WITH FUN WHICH NURTURES
THEIR READING.”

Naomi says the sessions have helped her feel more confident using the library with a young child — and they both now have library cards.

Our NPO Projects



Space to Create

Empowers 16-24 year olds, through hands-on learning, digital skills, and personal growth in creative outlets.

Working with charities and industry experts to inspire Digital Creative careers in young people from all walks of life, with a focus on those not in employment, education or training (NEET).

Our Feedback

100%

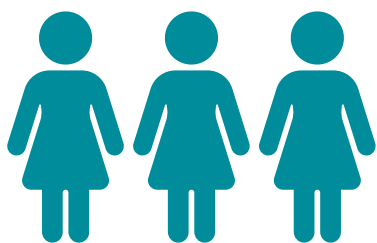
Of Bootcamp attendees had never stepped into a library before

“

“When I was given a paid commission to make an animation after the course I was completely shocked.”

21 year old Bootcamp attendee

”



NEET young people went on to gain paid work and/or pursue education in a digital creative area

“

As a year 11 class, they are looking to their post-16 education and this bootcamp has definitely influenced some of their ideas, with one young person signing up for an art & design course, and another enrolling on a creative media course! It has ignited a passion in them!

Class Teacher, Brook Academy

”

NPO Case Study

Space to Create

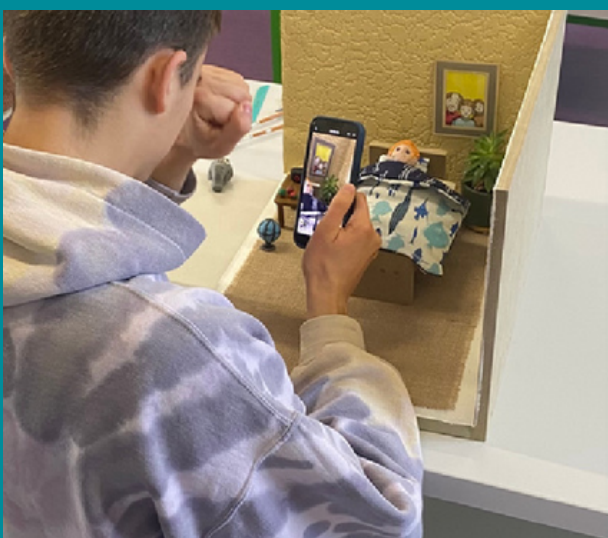
EDWARD'S STORY...

Edward is super artistic and an excellent illustrator, but his autism meant that attending college was just too much for him, and he had to leave.

In his own words, he 'got the bus to the big city' by himself for the first time, and was terrified when he arrived on the first day.

He attended every single session, catching the bus got easier, and his demeanour slowly changed.

As his confidence grew his potential was clear, he produced an incredible set, clay models and animation, and was offered paid work as a result of what he had learned with us.



Our 2024-25 Highlights



5,412

NPO EVENT
PARTICIPANTS



60

CREATIVE
PRACTITIONERS



724

ACTIVITY
DAYS



Our Partners



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



**THE
MUSIC
WORKS**



Herefordshire
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



roots
Gloucester

blue sky
signs



VOICES
G L O U C E S T E R



Heritage
Fund

your
COOP

External Partners

- Age UK Gloucestershire
- Alderman Knight
- Alzheimer Society
- BlueSky
- Brook Academy
- Creative Sustainability
- Department of Work & Pensions
- Dr Tracy Spiers - Artist
- Fiona Taylor - Choir Lead
- Gloucestershire College
- Gloucestershire NHS Trust
- Gloucestershire University
- Gloucestershire Young Carers
- Jade Fisher - Artist
- Kulchalee Arts
- Local Government Association
- Midcounties Co-operative
- No Child Left Behind
- One Gloucestershire NHS
- Phoenix Academy
- Roots Café
- SAND Visuals
- Tewkesbury School
- The Bizz
- The Friendship Cafe
- The Managing Memory Team
- Tom Cross - Artist
- Unit 1 Films
- Young Gloucestershire

Gloucestershire County Council Partners

- Gloucestershire Employment & Skills Hub
- Virtual Schools
- Adult Education
- Youth Support Team
- Forwards Employment Service
- Gloucestershire Archives