

Carlisle City Council

Report to Council

Report details

Meeting Date: Tuesday 8 November 2022
Portfolio: Communities, Health & Wellbeing
Key Decision: No
Policy and Budget Framework: Yes
Public /Private: Public

Title: CHARITABLE AND OTHER BEQUESTS – LOCAL DISTRESS FUND; PARKER BEQUEST; AND THE DISTRICT NURSING AMENITY FUND

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive

Report Number: CS.34/22

Purpose / Summary: This paper proposes using the City Council's available charitable and other bequests monies to support three urgent needs across the communities of Carlisle District: Carlisle Food Bank; Prism Arts; and North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust.

The Executive considered and approved the proposed use of the available monies, as detailed in Section 2 of Report CS 32/22.

Delegated detailed decision making was given to the Deputy Chief Executive to take final decisions about fund allocations to the Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust.

Recommendations:

- It is recommended that Council release the funds to be utilised as set out in the report.

Tracking

Executive:	10 th October 2022
Scrutiny:	
Council:	8 th November 2022

1. Background

1.1 The Council holds a number of bequests for use by the Council:

- **Local Distress Fund (225500)** – established in 1914 to aid the relief of distress in the City and immediate district i.e. the prevention or relief of poverty. The available balance is: £10,055.29
- **Parker Bequest (225394)** – established in 1954 to benefit disabled children and other young residents of the city in ways not normally covered by the Health Service. The available balance is: £1,356.28
- **District Nursing Amenity Fund (225395)** – established to provide amenities for nurse's homes and retirement allowances to nurses. The available balance is: £7,231.12

1.2 These funds can only be released with the full approval of the Council under the terms set out when the bequest was given. In the first instance it is the responsibility of the Executive to consider proposals for the use of the bequest prior to submission of the request to Council. This was considered and approved by the Executive on 24th October 2022.

1.3 Funds can be spent so long as the spending is consistent with the governing document and the money is spent on the charity's purpose.

1.4 If closing any of the funds, there is also the option of donating the remaining money to other charities with similar purpose. A charity closure form would need to be completed to remove a charity from the register but only after the funds have been spent.

1.5 We have considered options for making best use of these funds. We could have developed, publicised and run an open application process, but this was ruled out on grounds of (i) cost versus value; and (ii) limited available timescale with context of LGR. The preferred option has therefore been to target appropriate Charities using internal expertise.

2. Proposals

2.1 The City Council's Healthy City Team has an overview of needs across different sections of Carlisle District's communities and, on this basis, is recommending the following proposals as being the best fit with the purposes of the respective bequests:

- 2.2 The £10,055.29 balance of the Distress Fund should be offered to Carlisle Food Bank. The Food Bank has submitted an application, detailing immediate needs, which is attached as **Appendix 1**.
- 2.3 The £1,356.28 balance of the Parker Fund should be offered to Prism Arts, to support the arts-based therapy that they offer to target groups across the District. Prism Arts have submitted an application, detailing how they would use the money, which is attached as **Appendix 2**.
- 2.4 The £7,213.12 balance in the District Nursing Amenity Fund should be offered to North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust to deliver benefits for nursing staff impacted by the pressures of responding to nurses and nursing staff suffering from hardship. Initial discussions have been held with Mark McCready, Clinical Operational Lead – Carlisle & District ICCs, to start to identify how benefits from this funding can be maximised. The Executive delegated detailed decision making to the Deputy Chief Executive and the Healthy City Team Manager, to continue these discussions and to take final decisions about fund allocations to the Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust.

3. Risks

- 3.1 The main risk that we foresee is that there may be other deserving causes that could make equally good use of the money that we are not immediately aware of. However, we are confident that priority communities across the District will benefit from the increased support that these funds will allow the respective Charities to deliver.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 The City Council's Finance Team approached other internal Teams to invite expressions of interest and has subsequently held discussions with the Healthy City Team to agree the most appropriate approach to allocating the funding for best effect.
- 4.2 The Healthy City Team has subsequently held discussions with prospective applicants, to verify need and discuss priorities.
- 4.3 No external/public consultation has been considered necessary.

5. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 It is recommended that Council release the funds to be utilised as set out in the report.

6. Contribution to the Carlisle Plan Priorities

6.1 The Carlisle Plan's Health and Wellbeing section states that "We will continue to prioritise the current response to and rapid recovery from the health and wellbeing impacts of Covid-19 pandemic.". All three of the selected Charities directly relate to this commitment.

Contact details:

Contact Officer: Darren Crossley Ext: 7120

Appendices attached to report:

- Appendix 1 – Carlisle Foodbank Proposal
- Appendix 2 - Prism Arts & Case for Support

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

Corporate Implications:

Legal – Please see the Finance comments which deals with legal issues as well as the financial ones.

Property Services –

Finance - The Council holds a number of bequests for use by the Council. These funds can only be released with the full approval of the Council under the terms set out when the bequest was given. In the first instance it will be the responsibility of the Executive to consider a report outlining proposals for the use of the bequest prior to submission of the request to Council.

Funds can be spent so long as the spending is consistent with the governing document and the money is spent on the charity's purpose.

If closing any of the funds there is also the option of donating the remaining money to other charities with similar purpose. A charity closure form would need to be completed to remove a charity from the register but only after the funds have been spent. The District Nursing Amenity Fund was removed from the charities register on 25th April 1991.

The balance of funds available is confirmed in the table below.

<u>Balance as at 31/03/2022</u>	Revenue Balance	Capital Balance	Total
Local Distress Fund	10,055.29	0.00	10,055.29
Parker Bequest	856.28	500.00	1,356.28
District Nursing Amenity Fund	5,533.68	1,679.44	7,213.12
	16,445.25	2,179.44	18,624.69

Equality –

Information Governance-

Carlisle Foodbank Proposal

Summary

Proposal for funding to cover additional opening hours to meet increasing demand over the winter period.

Background

2022 looks like it will be a year of increasing demand for the support of Carlisle Foodbank. In the previous 3 years there has been between 2500 - 3800 referrals in each year. We are now over 2600 referrals in the first 7 months of 2022. The expectation is that this continues, particularly through winter months, leading to 5000 referrals over the year.

Fig1: Use of Carlisle Foodbank. The table below shows how referrals this year are looking to be the highest since 2019

Year Referrals	
2022	2676 (Jan - Jul 2022)
2021	2489
2020	3375
2019	3855
2018	3296

We currently run a 3 day a week service which includes stocking, packing, and distribution with 2 part time staff who manage the service, ensure appropriate referrals and support volunteers. In the past year the increased needs have pushed the limits on how many households we can support in our current hours of opening.

An often overlooked, but important part of the Foodbank service is the trusting relationship that develops between our staff and the people who access the service. This helps when signposting to other support, or understanding specific needs to be able to work collaboratively with partner agencies. The increasing number of referrals has meant there is less time for this informal relationship building.

We work on a referral system and all the households who access Carlisle Foodbank do so through referral from a recognised welfare support organisation.

Working with the welfare support agencies is important as we know that the households accessing this emergency support are the people who need it the most. This evidence based approach provides us, and those who donate to us, with assurance that the food donated is going to people in crisis situations. This system also confirms that the people accessing Carlisle Foodbank are also accessing additional services who may be able to provide them with the support they need into food security.

We work with over 50 referral agencies which include: Carlisle City Council, Citizens Advice Carlisle and Eden, Recovery Steps, Probation services, Ways to Welfare,

Gateway, Cumbria County Council, Housing schemes, Schools, and Mental Health services.

We are an organisations that relies on volunteers, donations and our own fundraising activities to be able to deliver what we do. The Carlisle community have been incredibly generous in supporting what we do through donations of time, food, and funding. We also have good links with local supermarkets and businesses which are also incredibly important to provide food donations. However we know these are challenging times for all and that it can be increasingly difficult to donate.

Our key requirement is the donation of food that can be placed in to parcels to supported households accessing our service. However we have found that there is a reducing amount of food donations, while at the same time as there is an increasing number of people needing support. This has meant we have had to increasingly purchase additional food from our funds to make up the short fall in donations. We currently spend an additional £1,200 a month of our funds to supplement the food donations we receive. We are grateful for the recent additional funding from Cumbria County Council of £9,600 towards the costs of purchasing food for emergency food parcels but we are now looking at how best to be able to distribute this emergency food and meet the increasing needs. In order to do so we are looking at additional resources and increasing what we currently do.

Proposal and costs

We are proposing to open an additional day in order to meet the expected increasing needs over the winter period (4 days instead of 3 between October 22 to Mar 23). This will incur costs towards for additional staffing, volunteer expenses and utilities.

We also want to maximise the positive relationship we have with households who access our service and signpost them to additional spaces that they can get informal support, especially the Space's to Talk project which also includes potential links to wider health and wellbeing services. This will incur costs towards materials to signpost to Spaces to Talk as well as the additional costs for Spaces to Talk volunteers (which would include accessing training).

This additional funding would also enable us to develop our partnership with Fuelbank and support people most in need to access emergency energy support in a similar way to emergency food support. There is a registration fee to become a Fuelbank partner and once a partner Carlisle Foodbank would be able to support referrals to access support.

The costs of this proposal for additional and enhanced support is £10,055

Regarding the bequest of *“Parker Bequest (225395) – established 1954 to benefit disabled children and other young residents of the city in ways not normally covered by the Health Service. - Revenue 856.28 & Capital £500 = Total £1356.28*

Prism Arts is a charity that exists to develop opportunities for disabled adults, young people and children to engage in high quality arts programmes. Our vision is Art without Barriers. The charity has been operating in Carlisle for 35 years, over this time we have supported young people and children to access creative opportunities and to develop skills and confidence over this time.

www.prismarts.org.uk

We would like to apply for the Parker Bequest funding to support 2 key programmes of work 22/23.

1. Capital equipment £500: Harvey Tye’s Exhibition at Carlisle Cathedral Fraternity. Harvey Tye is a young person with life limiting condition and learning disability. He has been working with Prism Arts for over 8 years. In October we will be presenting a solo exhibition of Harvey Tye’s work at Carlisle Cathedral Fraternity. This is the first time an artist with a learning disability will be holding a solo exhibition in Carlisle. We will use £500 capital funding to support framing, interpretation and hanging costs.
Exhibition Date: 18 – 29th October
<https://carlislecathedral.org.uk/900years/>
2. Annual programme of work £856.25: Working with James Rennie School we will deliver a programme of creative engagement and learning for young people with disability and autism. The purpose of this programme is to raise confidence and enable young people to think about what they might like to do after they leave school. By working with artists over the year, across a range of artforms, children and young people will be able to explore their identity through engagement in creative arts. We will work with artists specialising in theatre, visual arts and movement. This funding will enable us to enrich the programme by engaging professional artists and also to bring the work together at the end of the year as part of a sharing. September – July 2022/23. 8 x freelance artist sessions. The objective of this work will be to develop an ongoing annual programme of work for young people in partnership with James Rennie and also to develop a new Studio Programme strand that specialises in working with young people with learning disability and autism from Sept 2023.



Prism Arts
Art Without Barriers
Registered Charity Number 1159797

Executive Summary

Prism Arts uses artistic activity to empower people with learning disabilities and autism in Cumbria. For more than 35 years, our charity has created opportunities for participants to make excellent art, develop skills, and showcase their talents, all while boosting their confidence and wellbeing.

While disability is common in the UK, **there remains a significant inequality of opportunity for the 14.1million people living with physical or learning difficulties.** In Cumbria alone there are more than 100,000 people living with a disability, yet services and support for these people is few and far between. Despite the growing knowledge that access to cultural activity can deliver huge benefits such as increased wellbeing, reduced isolation, skills development and confidence building, cultural provision in Cumbria (and across the UK) is very limited.

At Prism Arts we work hard to counter these challenges by providing vital opportunities for those with disabilities, additional needs, or learning disabilities, helping over 4,500 people each year. Unfortunately, with the growing number of people in need and the impact of Covid-19, **our core programmes are operating at full capacity, with long waiting lists of people needing our help.**

We are now excited to be launching a three-year strategy - **Art Without Barriers** - which will combine organisational development with the delivery of strategic projects that reach even more people in need and do more to support our communities.

The first year of this strategy will see us **consolidate** our activity, expand the core programme, and conduct extensive community **consultation** across Cumbria, enabling us to get to know and address local need better. Years Two and Three will then see Prism Arts **change and grow**, applying learning from community consultation to launch of new strategic projects that better serve local need.

The Arts Without Barriers strategy will better engage individuals with learning disabilities and autism from across Cumbria, providing them with meaningful progression routes that use artistic tools to build essential skills and relationships for life.

As such, we are now looking to partners, stakeholders and our communities to help us to meet this bold vision.

About Prism Arts

Founded in 1987 by a group of artists developing opportunities for excluded people, Prism Arts is a leading inclusive-arts charity based in Carlisle in Cumbria that provides creative opportunities for people aged 14 to 25 with learning disabilities, autism, or additional needs every year.

We create spaces that empower people with learning disabilities or autism to make excellent art, allowing them to drive their own creative journey as artists, leaders, and advocates for change.



In the last year, we helped more than 4,500 individuals define their own goals and ambitions through a series of creative projects across a range of artforms, leading to a growth in independence, confidence, and improved wellbeing.

The Need for Prism Arts

Rooted in Cumbria, Prism Arts makes a transformational difference to the lives of individuals with learning disabilities and autism across the county. We aim to provide a meaningful route into cultural participation so that everyone can enjoy the wellbeing, community, and skills development that art provides.

Across the UK, there is not enough access to culture for those with disabilities. In England, 14.1 million people report having a disability, of which 1.5 million report a learning disability. In Cumbria there are over 100,000 people with a disability, accounting for approximately 20% of the population in the county, of which c.10,000 have a learning disability¹.

Whilst public attitudes are increasingly supportive of those with learning disabilities², these communities remain isolated, with almost a third of 18–35-year-olds with learning disabilities spending less than 1 hour a day outside their home³ (even before Covid-19).

Arts Council England research has also found that disabled audiences' participation in the arts is largely dictated by practical factors, with negative experiences in cultural settings creating a vicious circle that stops participation. Organisations don't understand the needs of these groups, leading to a lack of support and cultural engagement for individuals with disabilities, learning difficulties or autism.⁴

“When I say how I feel, others here actually understand what I mean”
Prism Arts Participant

Individuals with learning disabilities face distinct challenges⁵. Only 7% of people with learning disabilities have a job, and young people with learning disabilities are three times more likely to be not in employment, education, or training (NEET) than their peers.

More than 93% of people with learning disabilities indicate they regularly feel lonely and isolated, with social networks often limited to family⁶. This has a detrimental impact on self-esteem, confidence, wellbeing, and independence.

People with disabilities have also been disproportionately impacted by Covid-19, in terms of their wellbeing (65% reported a worsening vs 50% of non-disabled people) and an inability to access essentials (27% vs 12%). Looking specifically at those with learning difficulties, research found that 58% felt lonelier due to Covid-19, and 64% had their support services removed or reduced⁷. This included vital services such as day centres, GP access, respite care, healthcare provision, and community activities that are crucial for positive mental health.

¹ <https://cumbria.gov.uk/elibrary/Content/Internet/536/671/4674/17217/17220/4311261159.PDF#--:text=In%20Cumbria%2C%20in%202015%2D16,Framework%2C%202015%2D16.>

² <https://www.mencap.org.uk/press-release/first-depth-research-public-attitudes-towards-learning-disability-30-years-reveals>

³ <https://www.mencap.org.uk/press-release/almost-1-3-young-people-learning-disability-spend-less-hour-day-outside-homes-survey>

⁴ <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/ACE206%20MAKING%20A%20SHIFT%20Report%20FINAL.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.qcs.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/1-The-challenges-facing-people-who-have-a-learning-disability.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/research-and-statistics/friendships-research-and-statistics>

⁷ <https://www.scid.org.uk/the-impact-of-coronavirus-on-people-with-learning-disabilities/>

Unfortunately, access to support is worsened in disparate locations such as Cumbria. As the second most sparsely populated county in the UK, Cumbria faces challenges such as a lack of funding for services⁸, poor transport links and under provision for cultural activity – all of which has a detrimental impact on access to healthcare, social isolation, mental health, and skill development⁹.

Carlisle, where Prism is based, ranks in the bottom 40% of local authorities in terms of engagement with cultural activity, and while there is support for disabled people in Cumbria – through Carlisle Mencap, and Youth Ability – Prism Arts is the only creative provision for specifically disabled participants in the county.

There is an opportunity for culture to have a significant benefit for individuals with learning disabilities. Research has shown that participation in cultural activity not only develops skills, confidence, and friendships for those with learning disabilities, but also challenges negative attitudes towards these people, and gives them a sense of belonging¹⁰.



“My genuine hope is that through events like these [a Prism Arts exhibition], Carlisle becomes a city that lives and breathes art that is enjoyed by and stimulates all of its people.”

Pam Birks, Carlisle City Mayor

Accessible cultural opportunities are key to the future of the local area. The Carlisle Strategy (for which Prism Arts is a consortium member) sets out plans to establish Carlisle as a hub for culture in the wider region, delivering opportunities and helping to minimise the challenges faced locally. It recognises culture as key for the economic prosperity in the region, and highlights the importance of inclusion, ensuring that *“local cultural opportunities are diverse, reflective of and inclusive of people’s needs”*.

Prism Arts has a central role to play in Cumbria’s cultural future, as the leading organisation bringing together arts engagement with inclusion.

Responding to Need: Activities and Impact

Our programmes have been designed to address this need, enabling each individual we work with to define their own goals and ambitions, leading to a growth in independence, confidence, and improved wellbeing.

Our activity is made up of two core pillars:

Regular Programme

We run weekly creative arts programmes for adults (19+) and young people (14-25) with additional needs, learning difficulties and autism, allowing regular engagement with visual or performing arts, the creation of new work, and the development of friendships and community. Our regular programmes run during term times (36 weeks a year):

- On Mondays, our **Studio Art** group of 12 adults with learning disabilities comes together to create visual art. Participants work with professional artists to develop a range of skills, including print making, painting, clay work and textiles, which are then showcased in exhibitions around the county. These

⁸ https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/basw_111815-1_0.pdf

⁹ https://www.basw.co.uk/system/files/resources/basw_111815-1_0.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.mencap.org.uk/learning-disability-explained/research-and-statistics/friendships-research-and-statistics>

sessions are participant led, giving each person the opportunity to direct their own creative development, make new friends, build confidence, develop skills, and gain independence.

- On Fridays, our **Studio Theatre** group convenes to develop new live pieces for skills development, production and performance to the local community and schools. Across the sessions, 12 participants get the opportunity to act, write, build theatre sets, make costumes and props, and perform on stage at Cumbria venues including Theatre by the Lake and the Old Fire Station. Participants gain a huge range of benefits from the sessions, including talent development, team building and socialisation.



“The great thing about Prism is that they focus on my son’s abilities & not his disabilities”
Parent of a member of the Studio Theatre group

- On Thursdays, we run a **Youth Theatre** with the James Rennie School, for 10 young people (aged 14 – 19) with learning disabilities, autism, and additional needs. These sessions help participants explore identity and shared experiences through theatre techniques, including movement, and voice. The Youth Theatre is focused on skills development, with regular showcases to family and friends.

Special Projects

Designed in response to local need, our Special Projects reach new audiences and provide new opportunities for our beneficiaries to develop their creative skills. Examples include:

- **Picture of Me:** responding to isolation due to Covid-19, and the difficulties faced by disabled people in accessing high quality art activity, we are currently piloting a story telling project with individuals who are new to Prism Arts’ activity. Working with 30 people from Cumbria, we are running a series of workshops with a facilitating artist, who will help them create their own high-quality piece of work that engages local audiences.

Through the project, each person will create a story that helps build their own confidence and reflects their personal journey. These stories will then be developed into public displays, either through street art, dance, and film, or as an audio trail through West Cumbria.

This pilot involves a robust evaluation, which will assess engagement levels, impact on participants, and long-term connection to Prism Arts and the community.

“At Prism Arts, we use creativity to inspire those with learning disabilities to lead empowered, independent lives.”

Catherine Coulthard, Creative Strategic Director

- **Step Up:** delivered in partnership with the University of Cumbria and funded by the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, this project explores models for supporting Prism Arts participants into professional roles or higher education courses. Developed as an action research programme, Step Up offers 10 participants:
 - The chance to work with freelance printmakers and technicians at the University and develop an annual exhibition at Carlisle Cathedral.
 - A collaboration with a neurodivergent fine-art graduate from the University of Cumbria to create collaborative art two days a week over a year, culminating in a public sharing of the work.
 - Participation in formal learning routes such as foundation degrees and individual modules. This includes access to online lectures, taster sessions for modules, and one to one support.
 - Access to a series of workshops to learn new creative techniques including photography, ceramics, printmaking, metalwork, and textiles.

Step Up is being continually evaluated to help us better understand how to provide a clear progression pathway into the creative industries for individuals with learning difficulties, disabilities, or autism.

Catherine and Amber

Catherine is a young adult with learning difficulties who has a passion for art and a strong desire to develop her work as an artist.

Amber is a recent graduate of the Fine Art course at Cumbria Institute of the Arts and received a bursary to work with Prism Arts as part of the Step-Up project.

Together they are developing creative work, learning from each other, in the University studios and workshops to experiment with new skills and ways of working. They will produce pieces to exhibit in the university gallery and will share their experience at a symposium in July 2022.



All of our programmes are operating at full capacity, with long waiting lists of those wanting to access this activity.

Prism Arts is a vital charity that is embedded in the communities of Carlisle and Cumbria, with our impact recognised by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation. In 2019/20, our impact included:

- Delivering 700 workshops and projects reaching 9,500 participants (80% come from Carlisle).
- Working with 50 adults and young people with learning disabilities on a weekly basis.
- Engaging 1,000 children aged 5 to 11 by working directly with schools.
- Supporting 20 children with learning disabilities who attended the Prism Arts Youth Theatre.
- Reaching more than 4,400 people through a Prism Arts production and more than 400,000 people through exhibitions.

As a result of our work, our participants and communities' benefit from:

- Improved resilience and wellbeing
- Enhanced artistic skills and a stronger platform on which to showcase them
- Changed perceptions around people with disabilities and their creative skills
- A stronger, more collaborative, and inclusive arts sector

“Prism Arts provides a safe space to try out, practice, and learn new skills. It provides a happy place to engage with others.”

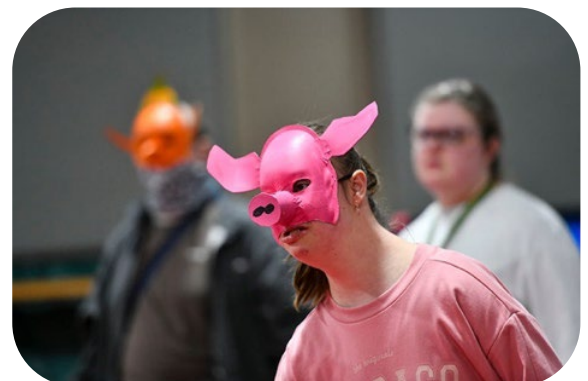
Parent of Prism Arts Participant

Our work is led by experts in inclusive arts, including Catherine Coulthard as Creative & Strategic Director. With a small staff team of just 5 FTE, Prism Arts is supported by a team of freelancers providing specialist insight and skills, and a Board of Trustees bringing together expertise in inclusivity, the arts and charity sectors, strategy, and the local community.

While Prism Arts plays a significant local role, we also have a national impact. By sharing expertise through online case studies, networking, mentoring, and at conferences, as well as working with partners to address the lack of opportunity for disabled people in society, we showcase best practice for supporting artists and audiences with additional needs.

Our representation on the boards of Carlisle Culture, Creative Minds' North Network and LCEP West Cumbria, West Coast Creative People and Places and Carlisle, enables us to raise awareness of the importance of accessibility in the arts and advocate for our beneficiaries.

Alongside this, our partnerships with bodies such as Arts Council England, the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Theatre by the Lake, Tullie House, University of Cumbria, and English Heritage, help us play a strategic role locally and nationally.



We aim to build skills, raise aspirations, and foster community for individuals with learning disabilities in Cumbria. This often leads to further employment, creative projects, or education, and are always vital for improving health, wellbeing, and quality of life.

Harvey

Harvey is a young adult who attends our Studio Arts and Studio Theatre programmes. He has a life limiting condition and joined the programmes to grow his love of theatre and visual arts.

“Over the past five years at Prism Arts I have spent more and more time drawing and developing my own style. Since the Studio Arts programme began in 2016 I have chosen to focus more on the visual arts. I’d like the chance to experiment a bit more with different media and develop my style further.”

The team at Prism Arts works closely with Harvey to help him realise his aspirations. He has acted in several productions which have toured the main theatres in Cumbria, and his artwork has been enjoyed by over 10,000 people in regional exhibitions, boosting his confidence and developing his creative skills.

Recently, Harvey and two other members of Studio Arts worked with Claire Sleightholm, the Project Curator at Tullie House to curate their own exhibition. The exhibition, Culture Collide, is a year-long display of art from Tullie House’s collection, which gave them the opportunity to learn about curating as well as learning about the objects in Tullie’s collection.

“As Harvey completes each project and commission, we see how his confidence grows and his anxieties reduce.” – Anne Timpson, Project Manager

As part of the Step-Up programme, Harvey will be supported to produce professional quality limited edition prints of his work that will be displayed in a solo exhibition at the new Fraternity Gallery at Carlisle Cathedral.



Supporting Participants during Covid-19

From March 2020, we moved to a model that supported beneficiaries through digital delivery, before slowly re-introducing small group activity and the normal programme.

This included Zoom workshops, YouTube videos providing workshops and masterclasses in artistic practice and supporting at-home creativity through resources and guidance packs. Since March 2020:

- 73 people have participated in 41 Zoom calls and 280 people have watched 15 YouTube videos introducing them to a new element of artistic practice, helping those with learning disabilities to explore new disciplines and use creativity to support wellbeing. Video topics have included Vocal Warm-Ups, Using Paper Maquettes for Visual Arts, and a Performance Character Workshop.
- We delivered Zoom workshops engaging 84% of our usual programme attendees by listening and responding to their needs, boosting wellbeing, supporting the feeling of community created by in-person workshops and reducing isolation.
- We sent out 802 at home-creativity packs, reaching 42 households and supporting individuals who are less able to use technology to continue to experience the benefits of creativity. Over 1,800 meaningful points of contact have been achieved.

We will continue to support those unable to attend in person through **Bespoke Remote Delivery**. These six-week courses offer activity that develops creative skills whilst addressing the individual needs and creative interests of participants. For example, one young person receives a weekly home visit to facilitate

creative activity and rebuild her confidence to return to Studio Arts; while another attends half a day of Studio Arts in person and then has a weekly Zoom session to catch up missed activity.

Prism Arts is an expert organisation, with the skills, expertise, and partnerships to deliver significant impact. However, our charity is already operating at full capacity, with the growing need for our core programmes not matched by a growth in funding or staff time.

With the challenges faced by people with learning disabilities exacerbated by the effects of Covid-19, our work is needed now more than ever.

We now want to streamline and expand our programmes in order to better support local need, creating a pathway for participants that not only focuses on engagement, but also supports progression into the creative industries.

Art Without Barriers

Covid-19 prompted a period of significant reflection for Prism Arts, as we sought to identify how we could adapt our programme so that it is more informed by need and directly addresses the ongoing challenges faced by individuals with learning disabilities and autism.

As such, we are excited to launch a new strategy – Art Without Barriers - which will combine organisational development with the delivery of strategic projects that do more to support our communities.

This strategy will see us **consolidate** our activity by expanding the core programme and conducting extensive community consultation across Cumbria; and then **change and grow** by applying learning from community consultation to launch new strategic projects that better serve local need.

Consolidate and Consult

Our initial focus will be on relaunching our core programmes that provide a backbone of support for people in Cumbria living with learning disabilities, autism, or additional needs. By first focussing on welcoming back communities to normal activity after a time of significant disruption, we will ensure that transformational change in the future starts from a position of stability and trust.

As well as supporting participants through Studio days, the Step-Up programme, and Story Crafting across Cumbria, we will:

- Consult with participants, families, stakeholders, and partners to better understand local need and help inform the work we do and changes we could make going forward. This will take place through surveys, individual conversations, focus groups, and outreach through partners, to really understand the impact Prism Arts is having and how we might adapt our programmes moving forward.

Alongside this in-depth engagement exercise, we will conduct a thorough Audience Development Plan to enable us to better understand the changing context in which we operate, and identify existing audiences, audience gaps and community need.

- Introduce additional capacity to the Studio programme, with a new cohort recruited in West Cumbria and an additional day offered in Carlisle, engaging 24 new regular participants (artforms to be confirmed in line with consultation). To expand this programme, we will recruit new artistic facilitators who will support people with learning disabilities to access creative education, skills development, and

community building. These new groups will also help us to forge new communities across the county, helping those with learning difficulties to recover from the significant impact of Covid-19 within a safe environment.

- Develop and implement a new impact and evaluation framework that allows us to better understand the change that takes place as a result of our work. This will include the creation of tailored personal progression plans for all participants and journey maps that track data such as skills development, wellbeing, confidence, and progression.



This transformation will be crucial for informing our advocacy role across the region, impacting conversations with funders and key stakeholders including Cumbria County Council, Carlisle City Council, Carlisle Culture, and the Local Cultural Education Partnerships in West Cumbria and Carlisle.

We now need support from a collective of funders to enable us to focus on consolidation, consultation, and capacity building. This vital work will provide us with the much-needed launch pad from which to deliver ambitious new projects.

Change and Grow

While the exact design of future programmes will respond to community consultation, key elements will include:

- **Welcoming:** establishing programmes that introduce new beneficiaries to the impact of artistic participation, including an annual **week-long summer school** that allows new participants to work with established disabled artists and expert teachers to create personal artwork across a range of creative forms.

We will also launch a **Youth Programme for 10 young people with learning disabilities** (aged 14 to 19) initially working with Jane's Rennie SEND School in Carlisle, helping participants explore identity and shared experiences through theatre techniques, including movement, and voice. Supporting those in SEND education, Studio Lift Off will focus on skills development (including the option to gain an Arts Award Qualification), confidence building through regular showcases to family and friends, as well as trips to see local productions to raise aspirations. We aim to expand Studio Life Off to West Cumbria.

We also intend to widen access by **investing in technology that supports creativity for those with learning difficulties and mobility issues**. This will include purchasing two PCEye machines that allow participants to create art by tracking eye movements and embedding accessible formats across our social media and website, including Alternative Text, Easy Reads and Audio Description.

- **Progressing:** we will build on learning from Step-Up to **embed a new model that allows participants to progress to wider opportunities**, including higher education (in artistic and non-artistic disciplines) and professional placements delivered by partner companies. The new pathway will engage young people at four partner schools across Cumbria (starting from the age of 15), and support them towards more independent adult life, while also supporting existing participants to progress, and reaching out to those who have fallen through the gaps of existing provision. Activities will include diplomas in the arts, summer schools, accreditation for individual university modules and accessible routes into courses.

We will also run a **series of masterclasses and workshops** in partnership with professional disabled-led organisations who will support our participants to develop skills in theatre, visual arts, or dance. Throughout the year, we will also host two residencies, welcoming artists to share their learning and co-create work that inspires and uplifts our participants over an extended period of time.

Alongside this, our **Artistic Opportunity Fund** will support the progression of participants who want to create and showcase new work to develop their skills and find a pathway into the creative industries. The first award is being given to Harvey (above), who will create professional prints and tour them in our partner venues across the county.

- **Advocating:** We will **expand the advocacy role that the charity plays on a national stage**, with a focus on addressing the lack of opportunity for disabled people in cultural, education and community settings, and sharing learning on solutions to this systemic problem. This will include hosting annual symposiums in partnership with the University of Cumbria, showcasing the work of our participants, sharing their stories, providing advice and guidance for the sector, and raising awareness of our research findings.

The Impact of Art Without Barriers

Through this strategy, we will have a significant impact on beneficiaries, communities, and partners, across Cumbria and beyond:

Individuals

- The number of people with learning disabilities and autism that engage in our work will increase to 200 per year. All individuals will develop their creative skills alongside skills in communication, relationship building and problem solving, with an active route into the creative industries.
- 30 individuals each year will be supported to move into independent artistic practice that continues to stretch and challenge them. These individuals will have increased independence and will act as role models for wider Prism Arts participants.
- 10 additional young people with learning difficulties Cumbria will enjoy the benefits of our new Youth Theatre, developing their talents and giving them a qualification, as well as raising their aspirations.
- An additional 24 people with learning disabilities and autism each year will access regular support through the new Studio programme days, allowing sustained skills development that improves wellbeing, reduces isolation, and creates opportunity for those we support.
- Our targeted support projects will support our participants, helping them to develop skills and showcase their talents, raising their aspirations and improving their sense of pride and wellbeing. These participants will also be given the networks and support needed to develop creative careers.
- Individuals with significant mobility issues will enjoy the benefits of cultural engagement, helping them feel empowered and uplifted as they use our state-of-the-art technology.

Communities and Partners

- Across Carlisle and Cumbria, more than 10,000 people will attend Prism Arts events, exhibitions, and performances, changing perceptions of people with learning disabilities and autism in society, and inspiring the community through excellent artistic output.
- Cumbria will benefit from a better connected and less isolated community of individuals with learning disabilities and their families and friends, improving knowledge sharing and embedding a peer support network.
- We will have an approach to programme design that is regularly informed by its beneficiaries, their families, and the wider community. This will ensure the offer is relevant, impactful, and accessible for all who could benefit from it.
- By scaling up advocacy work, organisations nationwide will benefit from Prism Arts' expertise in inclusive ways of supporting artists to excel. There will be more opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in culture across England, and more understanding of the benefits for those who do through our research and symposium.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We will put in place a robust Monitoring and Evaluation framework that will better help us understand our impact. This data will not only improve our support for communities but will be crucial for our communication to partners and funders.

The new framework will focus on personal progression plans, using a journey map to track the progress of participants. This will enhance existing methods of reporting, rather than replacing them. Data used will include:

- Participant feedback, collected in person at live sessions, through videos and social media, and in 1:1 meetings with staff
- Parent / carer feedback, collected in person before and after live sessions, through feedback forms and social media, and in 1:1 meetings with staff
- Staff observation of participants during sessions, collated in reflective journals, registers, and photo / video formats
- Case studies developed from in depth conversations and reflections with participants
- Feedback from partner and stakeholder reviews, and focus groups, allowing peer reflections on Prism Arts development and for two-way knowledge sharing
- Digital and accessible data collation using a video survey and film to record responses alongside conversations and written evidence
- Research partnership with University of Cumbria around participation and progression



EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2022

EX.139/22 CHARITABLE AND OTHER BEQUESTS – LOCAL DISTRESS FUND; PARKER BEQUEST; AND THE DISTRICT NURSING AMENITY FUND

(Non Key Decision)

** (In accordance with Paragraph 15(i) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, The Mayor had agreed that call-in procedures should not be applied to this item)

Portfolio Communities, Health and Wellbeing

Relevant Scrutiny Panel People Panel

Subject Matter

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder submitted proposals to use Carlisle City Council's available charitable and other bequests monies to support three urgent needs across the communities of Carlisle District: Carlisle Food Bank; Prism Arts; and North Cumbria Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust.

The Council held a number of bequests for use by the Council:

- Local Distress Fund (225500) – established in 1914 to aid the relief of distress in the City and immediate district i.e. the prevention or relief of poverty. The available balance was: £10,055.29

- Parker Bequest (225394) – established in 1954 to benefit disabled children and other young residents of the city in ways not normally covered by the Health Service. The available balance was: £1,356.28

- District Nursing Amenity Fund (225395) – established to provide amenities for nurse's homes and retirement allowances to nurses. The available balance was: £7,231.12

Funds can be spent so long as the spending was consistent with the governing document and the money was spent on the charity's purpose. If closing any of the funds, there was also the option of donating the remaining money to other charities with similar purpose. A charity closure form would need to be completed to remove a charity from the register but only after the funds had been spent.

The Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder moved the following amended recommendations:

- to consider and approve the proposed use of the available monies, as detailed in Section 2 of Report CS.32/22.
- delegate detailed decision making to the Deputy Chief Executive to take final decisions about fund allocations to the Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust;
- that Council be recommended to release the funds under the terms set out when the bequest was given.

The Culture, Heritage and Leisure Portfolio Holder seconded the amended recommendations.

Summary of options rejected Not to allocate the bequests to the chosen charities

DECISION

That the Executive:

- considered and approved the proposed use of the available monies, as detailed in Section 2 of Report CS.32/22.
- delegated detailed decision making to the Deputy Chief Executive to take final decisions about fund allocations to the Integrated Care NHS Foundation Trust;
- recommended to Council the release the funds under the terms set out when the bequest was given.

Reasons for Decision

To release funding into the local community in line with terms set out in bequests.