

creative  
SUPPORT



# HELLO, WE ARE



## IMPACT REPORT 2023





# CREATIVE TOGETHER

opportunity choice wellbeing



# OUR WHY



## OUR WHY

A world where *every* human being is encouraged to dream, achieve, believe in their power and embrace differences.

Through Creative Together people have :

- Upheld their right to choose
- Found their voices and the power of their stories
- Improved well being and self worth
- Been able to connect with and achieve their goals
- Advocated for equality in society
- Acted as ambassadors for Creative Support



“I’ve always not had the confidence to follow (my dreams) because I feel like people have always put me down. But when I come here I feel like people are the same as you and start building your confidence back up again. I can turn my hand to anything.”

Creative Together  
Member





# OUR YEAR



“ All the work we’ve done, making the products, artwork and designing the site on the Shopify makes me really proud of Creative Support and the service users. We’ve worked really hard this year.”

Creative Together  
Member

“ We are believers and achievers – before, we all lacked confidence.”

Creative Together  
Member

# BE YOU NOT THEM MUSIC FESTIVAL JULY 2023



**"COUNT ME IN FOR A BIGGER AND BETTER GIG NEXT YEAR!"**

- MEMBERS - cooked, cleaned, served, welcomed, performed, painted banners, designed tickets, organised and encouraged.
- HOMEMCR - lent us the stage
- GAVIN, VOLUNTEER - gifted expertise and equipment
- WAYNE FROM MAKING SPACES - performing and equipment set up
- EUROVISION SONG CONTEST CS WINNERS - performed
- JOHN WILLIAMS FROM MAKONNEN HOUSE - performed and built the set
- 287 TICKETS SOLD

## How did the music festival make an impact?

"Everyone helped to make the food that we all ate."

"I feel like our voices have been heard."

"I felt famous!"



# BE YOU NOT THEM MUSIC FESTIVAL JULY 2023



"I'd love to do it again next year and take on more responsibility."



In January 23 the members meetings gave way to coproduction meetings. People wanted to celebrate and make a noise instead of feeling ignored and obscure. They wanted music and dancing and we decided to focus the project with a theme, a slogan that meant something to them. The result was **BE YOU NOT THEM**. People wanted to stand out and be seen. They wanted to learn new skills and produce something to be proud of.

## How did the music festival make an impact?

- Members encouraged each other. They provided support to the team and relationships improved. Their passion was around inclusivity and reaching out to involve as many people as possible.
- The event provided opportunities to volunteers. People volunteered their time and expertise to perform. Sound engineers volunteered equipment and skills. The roles encouraged community involvement and helped to reduce loneliness and isolation.
- The event forged lasting relationships with local organisations such as HOMEMCR, MACC and MAKING SPACES.
- The members gained new skills in organising the event. They talked about accessibility, quiet spaces, they researched food and drink choices.
- Service users put themselves forward for several roles, including producer, compere, lighting technician, security, chefs and food servers. The ripple effects of the event are clear to see, as people's confidence grew throughout the process and they gained a sense of achievement and ownership over the event.

"I learnt that it's ok to leave your comfort zone."

"I met lots of new people and I feel my confidence has grown."



# Coproduction in 2023 - The Year's Journey

**“Bad things happen to all of us but all you need is a few people willing to show you warmth to have faith in human kind.” KJ**

Kris's words were shared in a creative writing session we held. Our main aim is to encourage and support the members and volunteers in recovering or finding their voices. The courage and tenacity they gift the world is astounding. Their stories are moving and shocking. The bias and abuse many of them experience on a daily basis remains a challenge to their mental health. Here at the centre we work hard, together, to improve self worth by producing tangible goods and inclusive events to be proud of. We are committed to assisting and enabling the ambitions of all participants.

In the year of 2023 there was a real shift at Creative Together. Coproduction became the buzz word. After a slow start the members and volunteers began to believe. We invested time, money and effort in the design of bespoke fabric.



**TRIPS AND  
TRIBUTES**  
Members of CT

The level of commitment grew and when the first roll of boutique velvet was unveiled, faith and aspiration rocketed. Cushion manufacture followed with larger companies gifting us their experience and pointed us in the right direction. The wrapping paper was rolled out and the cushions flew!

We continue to work in challenging times. The COVID years have caused some people to continue to be isolated, and so we are trying to engage people from afar. Routines have shifted and we are finding a new way of working. Our Eurovision Song Contest was a huge success over Zoom from every corner of England – we hope to grow on this achievement in 2024.

**Coproduction. Coproduction.**

**Coproduction.**

**The community effort from the members, other people we support, volunteers, staff, local businesses, charities, colleges and organisations has been central to our success. With these bonds we hope to continue to achieve the aspirations we have worked so hard to imagine.**

TOGETHER



432

DELIVERED OVER 432 LOCAL AND NATIONAL SESSIONS AND EVENTS

38

WELCOMED OVER 38 SERVICES NATIONWIDE

40

PARTNERED WITH 40 ORGANISATIONS AND BUSINESSES

26

WELCOMED 26 STUDENTS AND VOLUNTEERS



## MEMBERSHIP

In 2023 the team have worked hard to engage as many members of the community as possible while delivering a range of aspirational projects and events.

The Cost of Living Crisis and rising poverty are having a ripple effect on people's lives and the centre will keep this in mind next year when it comes to support people with lower incomes to help them budget to attend the sessions they enjoy.

We are pleased to see well over 150 one off visitors from Creative Support services over the year and we hope to increase the number of people who chose to become more regular members.

52

STANDARD MEMBERS

8

ENHANCED MEMBERS

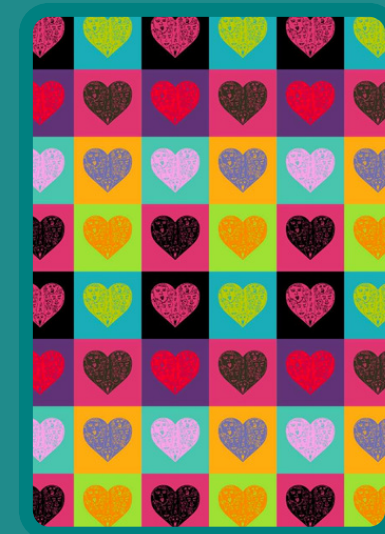
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NEW REFERRALS

## WHAT ARE WE DOING IN 2024

Our Coproduced Outreach Plans for 2024 will help us to best identify strategies for improving social interaction. We will develop a strategy for nation wide engagement that will see both staff and members visiting services.

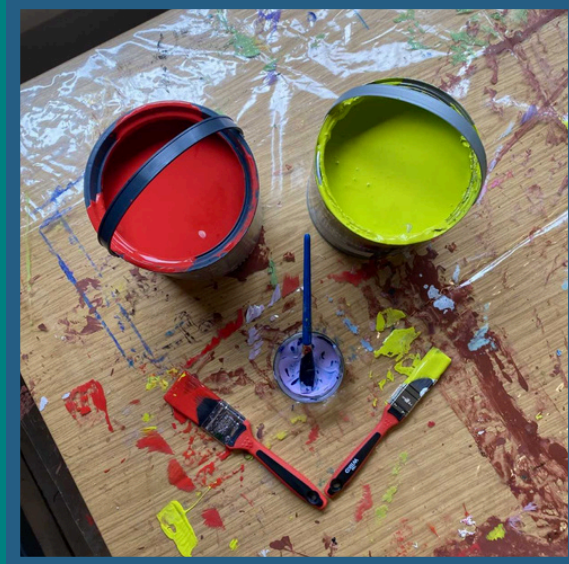
- Our Membership Coordinator will spend 1:1 time either in person or remotely to help empower involvement.
- Our aim is to visit 10 services in 2024 to provide creative activities as a tool to engage more people nationally and gather ideas from the people we support to enhance the coproduction strategy.
- We will make our events available on zoom, where possible.
- A member suggestion has resulted in NO PAY MAY where all sessions at Creative Together will be free for all and they will record the impact on attendance themselves.



# Our Impact on Members' Wellbeing - Sessions we delivered in 2023



- 6 mindfulness
- 103 art and textiles
- 42 creative writing
- 36 hiking for happiness
- 12 day trips
- 53 coproduction sessions
- 18 weekend, BH or evening meet ups
- 12 cookery
- 22 drama
- 1 candlelit valentines meal
- 3 christmas dinners
- 8 parties
- 13 open mic nights
- 4 baking
- 48 hair appointments
- 50 bingo mornings
- 1 art exhibition
- 10 sight loss social meet ups





# Our Impact on Member's well being - David's article

“Over the last 12 months I have taken part in the walking group on a Thursday afternoon pushing my wheelchair which I use for long distances.

So far we have completed 2 stages of the Manchester Green Trail which consisted going through nature trails and the local parks around Manchester, some of the terrain covered was rough which is quite challenging with a wheelchair.

The Manchester Green Trail took a step back due to the music festival and the onset of winter. To make up for this we have been walking through the city centre and stopping off for a well earned drink at the end of the walk.

Taking part in the walking group has improved my physical and mental health, I enjoy the fact that I am doing exercise in a group, before this I only did exercise with support staff or family members. The walking group is the highlight of my week and I love the fact that we explore new places by foot instead of Public transport “

David Johnston



# A MEMBER'S STORY



“I started coming here after my Mum died and my brother committed suicide. I was scared to open my mouth. But yeah, I absolutely love it. I like spending time with the members. The staff sit with us, talking to us, realising we are who we are and accepting us.

Before (coming to) Creative Support's centre I nearly gave up on my life. Claire, Bex and Zoe saved my life. Without them I would not of made it through this year. I really wanted to say thank you.”

**Creative Together**  
**Member**



# OUR IMPACT ON THE WIDER COMMUNITY



## IN 2023 WE PARTNERED WITH:

- HENSHAWS - Coproduced the Sight Loss Social
- EUROPIA - Creative Together hosted their Ukrainian Day
- KIDS OF COLOUR - Creative Support gifted space at the centre
- MEN'S SHED - invited Creative Together members for support
- AKT MANCHESTER - space sharing
- GMMH - shared good practice
- POCKLINGTON TRUST - coproduced the Sight Loss Social
- MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL - Manchester Day safe space
- MANCHESTER COLLEGE - placements
- PIN COLLEGE - placements and shared good practice
- SALFORD CITY COLLEGE - placements
- BREAKTHROUGH UK - we hosted sessions on wellbeing
- POOL ARTS - advice on Art Exhibition
- AMBASSADOR TEXTILES - produced our bespoke fabric
- ODD ARTS - gifted drama sessions to the centre
- SCOPE - coproduced Sight Loss Social
- MANCHESTER METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY - placements
- MSSS - Sight Loss Social and good practice
- MACC - gifted free training and information sharing on the textiles project
- THE BIG LIFE GROUP - menopause film and support
- HOMEMCR - Inspire tickets and stage hire
- ILBP LTD - support around finances and appointees
- MAKING SPACES CHARITY - one to one support for members
- CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU - workshops around finance
- ODD ARTS - free drama sessions for members
- ACTING ON IMPULSE - free tickets to film showings
- VERIZON - free workshops on social media safety
- BT - free mindfulness sessions
- BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY - introductions
- HEALTHY ME HEALTHY COMMUNITIES - wellbeing information around diet
- MANCHESTER ROYAL INFIRMARY - Sight Loss Social support
- TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL - placements
- SHEFFIELD HALLAM UNIVERSITY - placements
- SUEZ - eco friendly workshops
- GMI CONSTRUCTION - installed art rails for free
- THE CLINK CHARITY - talk on the power of food
- CENTRAL LIBRARY - free meeting space and information
- WOVEN LABELS UK - textiles project
- MARSHALL ROBERTS MANUFACTURING - textiles project
- BAND ON THE WALL - use of space and equipment for filming



**SIGHT LOSS SOCIAL**

**A FRIENDLY GROUP OF VISUALLY IMPAIRED YOUNGER (OVER 18) PEOPLE WHO MEET ON THE FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH 1.30 – 3.30PM TO CHAT AND ORGANISE INTERESTING STUFF!**

**AT CREATIVE TOGETHER CENTRE, GROUND FLOOR COURTYARD, 20 SWAN BUILDINGS, SWAN STREET, M4 5JW – GATEWAY NEXT TO HQ BARBERS OPPOSITE BAND ON THE WALL – CALL FOR ASSISTANCE OR INFORMATION 07966 286217 EMAIL CREATIVE.TOGETHER@CREATIVESUPPORT.ORG.UK**

**ONE LEVEL ACCESS AND DISABLED TOILET  
GUIDE DOGS WELCOME**

**HOSTED BY CREATIVE SUPPORT**



This year saw the launch of the Sight Loss Social event with Creative Together. Having as many as 10 members attending our session from outside Creative Support. The group began as a result of identifying a lack of social opportunities for visually impaired people. We met approximately each month at the centre on Swan Street for a two hour session. The group gave extremely positive feedback stating that it had greatly improved their confidence and awareness of access technology that is available. It was a chance for people to make new friends and even share ideas about music collaborations between each other. Members had the opportunity to gain an insight into what it is like to live as another visually impaired person living in and around Manchester.

**SARAH - VOLUNTEER**

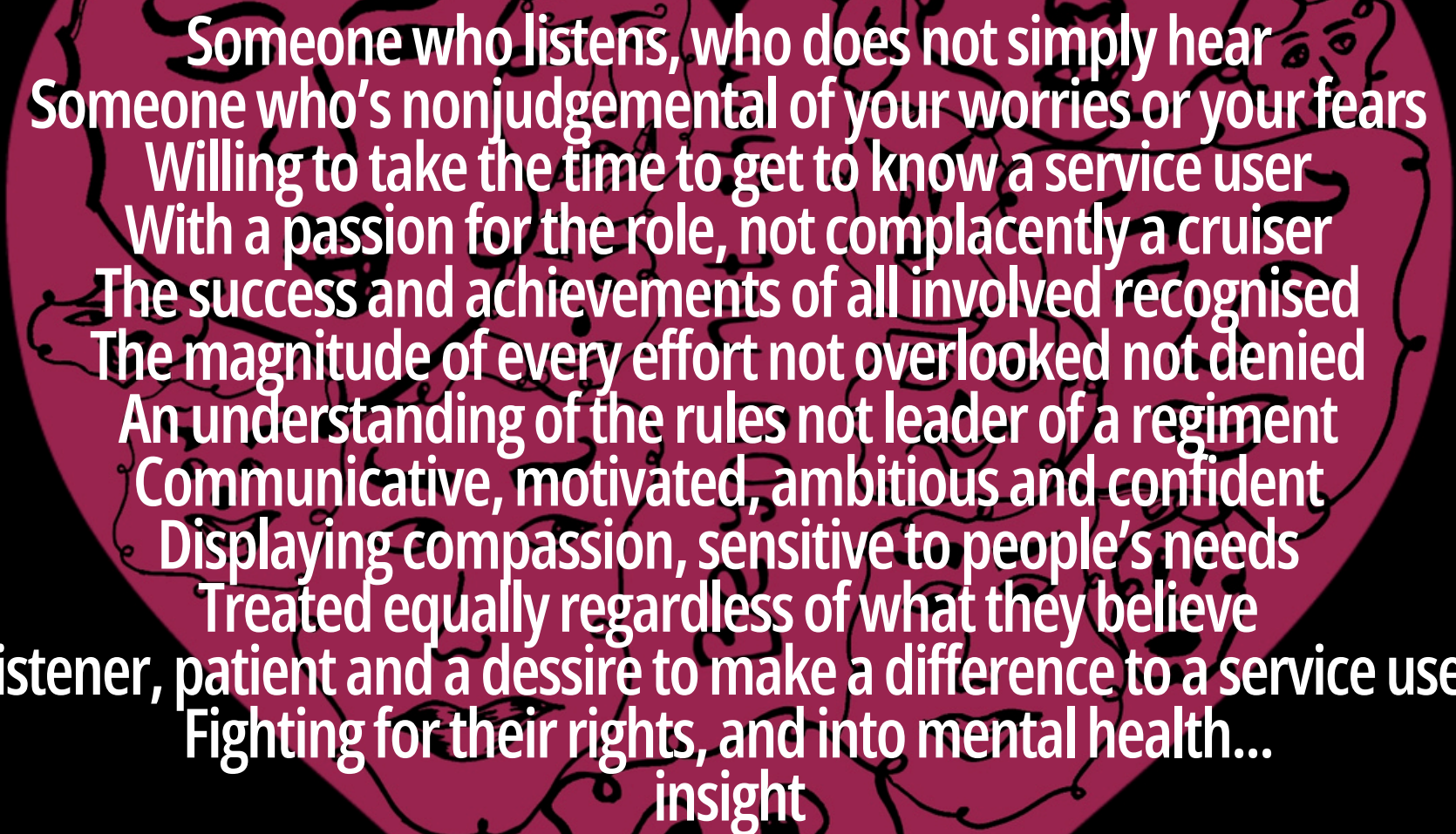


# OUR IMPACT ON CREATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES



## IN 2023 WE WELCOMED:

- Clough House - Mch
- Amhurst Road - Mch
- Haldon Road - Mch
- Burkhart Accommodation - Mch
- Northern Grove - Mch
- 65 Osborne Road - Mch
- 30-32 Osborne Road - Mch
- Bury Dom / Market Street - Bury
- Sycamore Court - Tameside
- Manchester Community Services
- Sidney Road - Mch
- Kwaanza House - Mch
- Birch Lane - Mch
- Werneth House - Tameside
- Bendix Court - Tameside
- Strawberry Gardens - Morecambe
- Coltishall House - Stockport
- Upper Chorlton Road - Mch
- Hastings Avenue - Mch
- Simonside - South Tyneside
- Town Lane - Tameside
- The Crescent, Middlesborough
- Junction Road, Stockton
- Stockton Homecare - Stockton
- Thistley Green - Essex
- Whitfield Lodge, St Helens
- Brandling Court, Leeds
- Calderdale and Kirklees Service
- Woodside Close, Tyne and Wear
- **Blackburn Services**
- Longley Lane - Mch
- Cringle Road - Mch
- Queens Grove Mch
- The Willows, Grimsby
- Great Clowes Sreet - Salford
- Wagtail Close, Derbyshire
- Dalbeattie Court - Manchester
- Makonnen House - Manchester



Someone who listens, who does not simply hear  
Someone who's nonjudgemental of your worries or your fears  
Willing to take the time to get to know a service user  
With a passion for the role, not complacently a cruiser  
The success and achievements of all involved recognised  
The magnitude of every effort not overlooked not denied  
An understanding of the rules not leader of a regiment  
Communicative, motivated, ambitious and confident  
Displaying compassion, sensitive to people's needs  
Treated equally regardless of what they believe  
Good listener, patient and a desire to make a difference to a service user's Life  
Fighting for their rights, and into mental health...  
insight

Sarah Strutt, Volunteer





## The Textiles Project



In January 2023 the members designed their own bugs with the title **WHAT'S BUGGING YOU** in mind.

The wealth of industry experience in staff, alongside member enthusiasm, created a possibility that these bugs could scuttle far!

Graphic designers, upholsterers and sewing bees produced the repeat pattern and sample cushion covers that started a wave of belief. Aspiration was no longer a dirty word and the Shopify site was born.

“ We even came up with the names of the products, we designed the logo, we chose the name of the shop, we chose the items to be sold, we wrote our own biographies, we went out into Manchester to take photos and get inspiration for selling our products on the website.”

**Creative Together**  
**Member**

## The Textiles Project

**“It changes the way people perceive me because we are contributing to society by being productive. It’s easier to talk to my family and friends because we have something to show for our work and that gives me something to be proud of”**

**“We want to show that Creative Support is a good service.”**

**“It is very important to members that the shop project grows in 2024”**







## The Textiles Project

“It’s important that it comes from our heart and made with love and care”

“The centre is here to build your confidence and show us new skills.”

“Before I started coming here I didn’t think there were many opportunities”

“It’s shown me I have control over my own life.”

“This (which we have achieved) shows other people that they are somebody, that the world is your oyster.”

“We want people to know that what they can do can make a difference and really matters. ”



Creative Together Members discussing the project and what they want to achieve in 2024



The wrapping paper project runs alongside the textiles project.

It is the most inclusive project to date and will be a focus of our outreach sessions in 2024.

Each project we visit will be given the opportunity to doodle or paint, and their design will be made in to a repeat pattern. These designs can be entered into a competition, with the winning design being made into high quality wrapping paper. The product will then be available to buy on our Shopify site.

The designs on the left include:

- The Clock Power design was created by a supported person who visited the centre from the Blackburn services.
- The bugs are part of the design created within the textiles project.
- The Be You Not Them Hearts are the original “Many Faces of Creative Together” design exclusively for the Music Festival which welcomed nearly 300 ticket holders.

## The Wrapping Paper Project

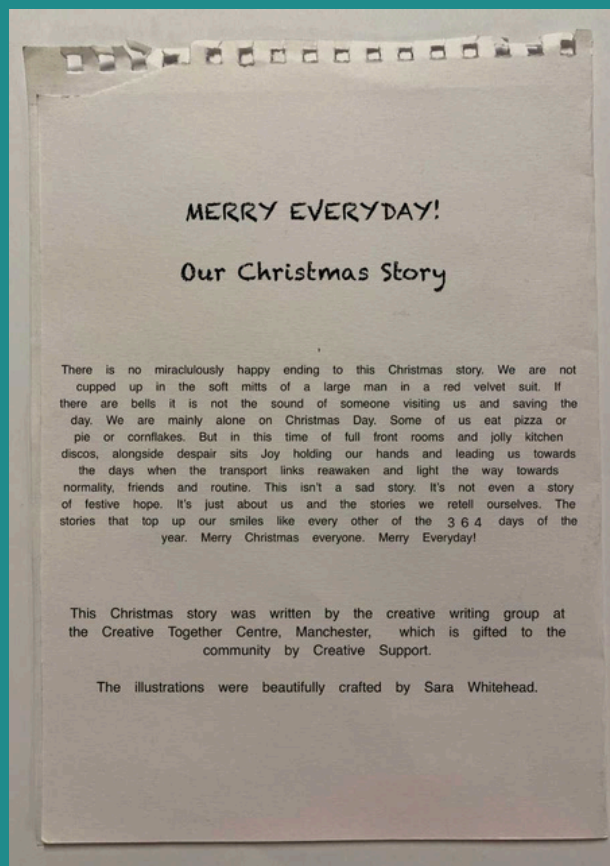


The good quality wrapping paper retails at £2.50 per sheet and the design that sold out at our Christmas Stall was the Heart design.



The members wanted to create a realistic Christmas story. One that told the true experience of people with mental health diagnoses, learning and physical disabilities. The story is honest but uplifting.

We are hoping to build on the foundations they have laid and publish the book for online distribution to services for Christmas 2024 - so people know they are not alone in their "different" festive seasons. This project is coproduced.



Merry Everyday!

A coproduced Christmas story  
by the members of  
Creative Together Dec 2023



# FINANCES

## 2023 Creative Together Income

£7955

Sessional + Trips

£5434

Cafe Takings

£989

Music Festival Takings

£960

Cushion and Wrapping Paper sales

£1540

Membership



“We have made all these things, people have seen them and bought them. We are raising money. We are showing you that just because we have some differences doesn't mean we can't be business savvy.”

# EVERYTHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO!

## OUR GOALS FOR 2024

### Broadening Coproduction

#### OUTREACH PROJECT

- Members are keen to encourage other people to achieve alongside them. Ambassadors will attend Creative Support spaces leading art sessions, answering questions and welcoming the people who live there to venture out and be part of the Creative Support community.

#### MUSIC PROJECT

- The members have decided to write and record a track for general release in Summer '24. The lyrics are currently being written in creative writing sessions and members are hoping to welcome people from all over to contribute to the project.
- The artwork for the record cover will be designed in our art sessions and people from all over Creative Support will be encouraged to submit ideas. The vinyl will be sold on our Shopify site and performed at the Be Free Not Afraid Music Festival on 13th and 14th July 2024.

#### TEXTILES AND WRAPPING PAPER PROJECT

- The members are so proud of the work they have done on the cushions and wrapping paper. In 2024 they are aiming even higher with designs for silk scarves and other high quality items. The project has gifted them belief in what they can achieve.
- The wrapping paper designs are fully inclusive meaning we can support other groups or individuals to create their own repeat patterns. Then each of these can have the wrapping paper printed and they can sell them at their own events taking full ownership and empowering people to voice ideas and opinions.

#### THE NATIONAL COPRODUCTION TARGET

- We would like everyone to be brought together as a community to share good practice and be bold with ideas and aspirations. We welcome being able to visit other places where people live and share experiences of the coproduction journey and offer encouragement.
- The members at Creative Together will have more input in the cafe, food and materials purchases, accounting for the Shopify and making essential decisions on green targets.

**“We are not afraid to show people what we can achieve, we want to send a positive message to other people out there who may be in a similar position”**

# EVERYTHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO!

## OUR GOALS FOR 2024

### Creativity and Events

#### MUSIC FESTIVAL 13th AND 14th July 2024

- Building on the success of the Be You Not Them Music Festival in 2023 the members have settled on the slogan Be Free Not Afraid. Last year's event was fully coproduced and people visited from over 20 Creative Support locations across the nation.
- This year we are committed to welcoming more people and encouraging staff to coproduce involvement with the people they support.

#### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 8TH MARCH 2024

- Creative Together hosted the annual IWD event that was organised by Lauren Norton and a range of people from South Manchester locations.

#### INTERNATIONAL MEN'S DAY 19TH NOVEMBER 2024

- Creative Together will coproduce an event with as many Creative Support locations as possible to promote well being and creativity.

#### EUROVISION FRIDAY 10th MAY 2024

- Last year we had participants from all over the Creative Support Community and this year will be bigger and better with less technical hitches!
- The winners will be invited to perform at the music festival and we thank all the staff that went above and beyond last year to support this event and hope to see them all again this spring.

**“We are not afraid to show people what we can achieve, we want to send a positive message to other people out there who may be in a similar position”**



# EVERYTHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO!

## OUR GOALS FOR 2024

### Membership

#### Welcoming Membership

- Building on the existing members by listening to their changing needs and wishes.
- We are committed to welcoming people supported by Creative Support either in person or remotely and will explore ideas on how to encourage people to feel part of the Creative Together community. We are already exploring ideas of engagement through the newsletter, inviting people to display art in our art exhibitions and contribute to events such as the music festival remotely.

#### WE ARE YOUR FRIENDS - WE WELCOME YOU

- Every person who is supported by Creative Support is already a member of Creative Together. By paying membership they will receive a pack with the newsletter and information on how to take part in our workshops and events.
- We will soon be sending out as many letters of invitation and encouragement as possible to the community so they know they are acknowledged and their opinions and ideas are welcomed.

**“We are not afraid to show people what we can achieve, we want to send a positive message to other people out there who may be in a similar position”**

# THANK YOU



**WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK:**

**SAM PRIESTLEY AND SARAH SMITH**

FOR ALL THEIR ENCOURAGEMENT, SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE

**THE MEMBERS WOULD LIKE TO THANK EACH OTHER**

FOR THE LOVE AND SUPPORT THEY GIVE TO ONE ANOTHER

## CREATIVE CHRONICLES

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PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE WITH YOUR SMART PHONE TO READ OUR INTERACTIVE NEWSLETTER.

THIS HAS BEEN PUBLISHED AND WRITTEN BY MEMBERS WITH MINIMAL STAFF INPUT. MEMBERS ARE BECOMING MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE SOFTWARE USED TO PRODUCE THESE RECORDS OF ACHIEVEMENT.

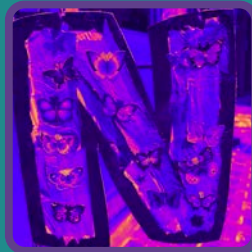
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