

## THANK YOU!

Dear Marcus,

I wanted to write and share with you some of the incredible progress that Chickenshed – and our young people – have been able to achieve, thanks to your support this year at Marble Arch’s Go Karting event, Multiplex’s Football Tournament and your continued generosity.

I hope that through this report, I am able to convey the tremendous impact that your support has had across our work. Thank you so much from everyone at Chickenshed.

It is only through the support of companies, like yours, that children and young people are able to access these programmes and discover their true potential. Coming from every walk of life – with a range of abilities, perspectives and personal experiences – they can participate alongside their peers, learn, share values, challenge labels and exceed expectations in a safe, welcoming and inclusive space where everyone is given the support they need.

Thanks to Hurley Palmer Flatt, the barriers they may face in the outside world – whether they are physical, intellectual, emotional, social, cultural, or financial – can be broken down, and confidence can be built back up. Thanks to you, they can discover their true talents, find the best version of themselves and become a positive force in our society. It really does make an incredible difference.

If anyone from Hurley Palmer Flatt would like to see the impact of your support first-hand, I would be delighted to share the dates for our upcoming outreach projects, shows, or to arrange a tour of our theatre. Please don’t hesitate to contact me – it would be lovely to hear from you.

Yours sincerely,

Will Porter  
Corporate Development Manager

## IMPACT REPORT: Contents

PERFORMANCE – thought-provoking theatre, challenging the way we see the world, <i>Dreams of Freedom</i> .....	2
EDUCATION – an opportunity for all to excel .....	3
PARTICIPATION – an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive .....	5
OUTREACH – changing lives beyond our walls, Grenfell workshops .....	6

## PERFORMANCE – thought-provoking theatre, challenging the way we see the world

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Thanks to the support of people like you, we have been able to test new approaches to our artistic programme, to determine the most effective way forward for our artistic programme. This has included producing more work, putting on longer runs of our shows, working with professional external actors and companies who bring expertise and profile, and increasing our production values with larger budgets for set and costume. Already, it is clear from the press and audience responses, the changes we have already been making are paying off.

*“Chickenshed is probably the most important theatre company in the world, not just for its inclusivity but also the incredible quality of its work. Their production of my book ‘The Midnight Gang’ is beautiful, and made me laugh and cry in equal measure. Do try and see it and all the work of the Chickenshed if you can.”*

David Walliams, July 2017

*“Powerful. Superb timely production of a harrowing play about displacement underpinned by an astonishing affecting performance from its young lead. Stein’s timely production echoes far beyond its immediate setting to strike a powerful affirmation of Chickenshed’s continuing engagement with the world as it is, here and now.”*

Stuart Gidden, The Stage 4\*\*\*\* - Kindertransport

## CASE STUDY: Dreams of Freedom, Royal Albert Hall

On 26 June, Chickenshed staged one of its largest scale performances ever. Inspired by Amnesty International’s book of the same name, the performance was the culmination of an outreach project lasting more than a year, gathering children’s ideas and thoughts on freedom.



The performance brought together over 600 children from a number of state, independent and SEN schools from across London, including many children from the schools surrounding Grenfell Tower. They performed alongside members of Chickenshed’s CTs from both Kensington and Southgate.

Children’s Laureate Chris Riddell and 9 year old illustrator Jude stunned the performers and audience alike by producing beautiful live pencil drawings depicting the unfolding action as it happened.

*“I want to let you know how touched I was by last week’s extraordinary event at the Albert Hall. Witnessing so many children involved in something so powerful - speaking, singing, drawing and moving with such conviction - brought many people in the audience to tears and gave us lifelong memories to treasure. You harnessed the children’s energy in a truly wonderful way and I want to thank you very much indeed for everything you have done on Dreams of Freedom.”*

Kate Allen, Director of Amnesty International UK

## PERFORMANCE – in the last year:

- ✓ More than **40,000 people** have experienced our diverse programme of professional performances, staged both at Chickenshed in our purpose-built Rayne Theatre and Studio Theatre spaces, and on tour at venues including the Royal Albert Hall, the Southbank Centre, Wilton's Music Hall, Lyric Hammersmith, Barclaycard British Summer Time Hyde Park Festival and the V&A.

### Future Goals: A sustainable programme of inclusive performances, accessible to everyone

- We are growing our **artistic programme**, enabling us to increase the amount of public-facing work we produce, and the amount of resources that we put in to creating our shows, leading to the long-term sustainability of our artistic output through growing and sustaining audiences. More people will have the opportunity to experience the power of inclusive theatre, building empathy and understanding towards those whose backgrounds are different from our own.
- Chickenshed is for everyone, and we do all that we can to ensure that our programme of pioneering, inclusive, beautiful theatre is open to all. We provide **accessible performances** for audiences with sensory impairments at a cost of £15,000 each year. We programme audio-described captioned and sign-interpreted performances for people who are blind, deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

## EDUCATION – an opportunity for all to excel

Many courses and institutions claim to be 'inclusive', but at Chickenshed, we really mean it. Our BA (Hons), Foundation degree and BTEC Extended Diploma courses really are for everyone. Some who join us have never achieved any qualifications before. **A significant proportion have been segregated from mainstream education and spent their time in a special school, a pupil referral unit, or being educated at home.** For whatever reason, whether through disability, behavioural problems, mental health or some other barrier that has excluded them, these young people often don't have the qualifications that the majority leave school with. **66% of our students wouldn't make it on to an equivalent course elsewhere, yet 95% achieve a nationally recognised qualification at Chickenshed.**

In a society where GCSEs, A Levels and even a degree is the norm, trying to get into further education, training or employment without qualifications is extremely difficult. We allow young people to redefine themselves, and break the cycle of negative expectations leading to negative outcomes. We know that, to be taken seriously in the real world, qualifications are often needed to get a first step on the career ladder. That is why **our qualifications are accredited, in partnership with CoNEL (FE) and Middlesex University (HE), ensuring young people leave us with both valuable experience and a recognised qualification.**

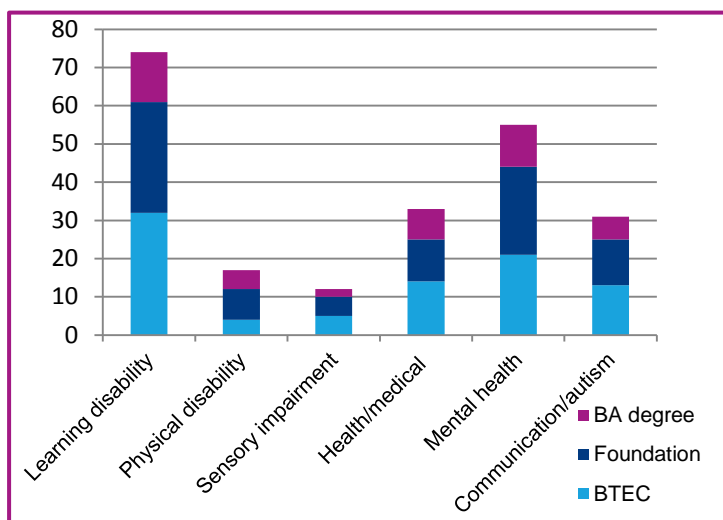


Saida and JoJo dancing in a Chickenshed performance

*“Before Chickenshed, I defined my life by the challenges I faced. But at Chickenshed these barriers disappeared. I had the energy and positivity to go beyond any limitations that I had felt previously, because of my disability. My life is very different now. I am a leader in my community. I really believe that anything is possible.”* Saida, BA (Hons) Graduate

## EDUCATION – in the last year:

- ✓ Chickenshed has become a member of the **Higher Education Academy**, a national body which champions quality teaching, advises on HE developments and is at the forefront of HE research. Ten of Chickenshed’s teaching staff are currently undertaking an Associate Fellowship of the HEA, providing professional recognition and personal development, enabling them to evaluate their delivery and reflect on their practice.



- ✓ Final results are yet to be confirmed, but for our BA and Foundation degree students, **94%** are predicted to gain a 2.2 qualification or above in Inclusive Performance. **All** of our BTEC Performing Arts students completing their studies

are predicted to achieve a Pass, with over 60% expected to achieve at least 1 Distinction. This is an incredible achievement for any group of students, but when also taking in to account the disadvantages experienced by many of these students, these successes are extraordinary (see graph right).

- ✓ **80%** of current BTEC year 2 students are anticipated to move in to Higher Education here at Chickenshed in September, and **85%** of current Foundation degree year 2 students are planning to complete a third year of studies and complete the BA (Hons) programme.

## Extended provision for our most vulnerable students

- We have in-house **counselling support** for the increased number of young people we’re encountering with emotional and mental health issues. It costs £11,400 per annum to provide this service.
- Each year we need to raise £30,000 for the **Hardship Fund** to provide travel and meal vouchers for students facing adversity, usually those from socio-economically deprived backgrounds, and those living independently and without other support networks outside of Chickenshed e.g. care leavers.
- Due to the complex and multiple needs of some of our students, it is necessary for Chickenshed to employ an **Education Medical Support Officer** at a cost of £25,000p.a., who is trained to provide the assistance that they need.

## **PARTICIPATION** – an inclusive environment where everyone can thrive

Each week, 700+ children and young people, aged 5-21, come to Chickenshed to take part in Children's and Youth Theatre sessions, exploring activities including drama, dance, music and devising through our unique, inclusive creative process. We provide a safe space where children and young people can discover their worth and realise their potential. **We believe that every person who joins our company positively changes the way that we work.**

**More than a third of our members are facing significant disadvantage**, whether due to social or financial deprivation, disability, or health reasons, but through the support provided by Chickenshed's experienced practitioners and by peer support, we create an environment where barriers caused by disadvantage are removed, and everyone is able to flourish.

**The challenges faced by the young people we work with include: physical disabilities; mobility issues; learning difficulties; sensory impairments; poor speech, language and/or communication; behavioural problems; and mental health issues.** We also work with young offenders, young carers, and children: in the care system; with difficult family circumstances; and from socio-economically deprived backgrounds.

But at Chickenshed, these perceived barriers don't matter. Our members see for themselves **the value that each individual can bring**. They grow to understand that the high quality of the work we create is not despite including everyone, but *because* we include everyone. All these values are then taken by our members in to their homes, their schools, their communities, and their futures, contributing towards our aim of creating a more inclusive world for us all.



Children's Theatre participants

### **PARTICIPATION** – in the last year:

Our evaluations of the programme have demonstrated the positive outcomes for those that take part, including:

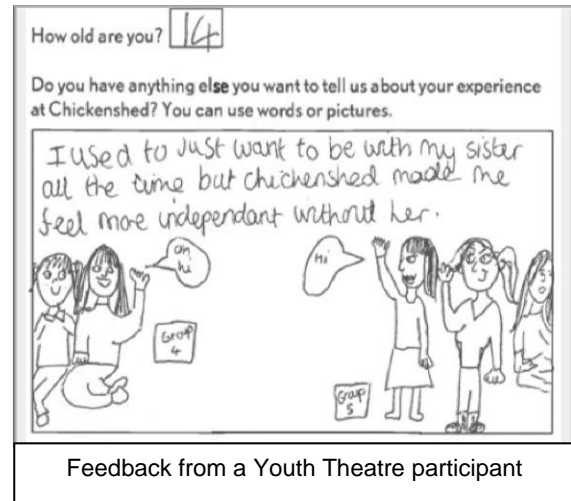
- ✓ Increased confidence and self-esteem, leading to increased capability.
- ✓ Improved communication skills, leading to improved ability to make themselves understood, and to understand others.
- ✓ Improved ability to form relationships, leading to increased social empathy.

As parents have told us:

*"She feels safe at Chickenshed. She can be herself with the knowledge that she won't be judged. She is given opportunities that she wouldn't ordinarily get at school as there she is competing with other children who don't have any additional needs and whom she views as being 'better' than her".*

*“What Chickenshed does so magnificently is to inspire and cultivate empathy and develop emotional intelligence in our young people”*

*“Although Louise has friends at school, she goes to a highly academic, sheltered, all girls’ school. Chickenshed has exposed her to the reality and diversity of social situations allowing her to be much more understanding.”*



## Making sure that everyone can take part

- Members pay a fee to be a part of Children’s and Youth Theatre. However, we would never want to exclude anyone for financial reasons, so we established a Support Fund to provide assistance to those who could not otherwise access our work, subsidising fees up to 75%.
- Throughout 2016, 146 members received course subsidies. The cost of this fund is £40,000 p.a.

## OUTREACH – changing lives beyond our walls

We regularly take our inclusive model out in to the community, delivering bespoke, targeted projects that address wide-ranging issues and challenges facing children and young people. We develop work for a wide range of partners including primary and secondary schools, nurseries, Children’s Centres, Pupil Referral Units, Young Offender Institutions, and numerous community groups. We tackle issues from youth involvement in knife crime to the negative effects of poverty and disadvantage on early years children.

*“The performance and workshop experience were absolutely excellent. I had a spontaneous reaction from one of the children involved in bringing a knife into school who said that Chickenshed had made him think and he knew so much more about consequences. Who knows how important Wednesday morning may have turned out to be?”* Primary School Teacher

*“Tales from the Shed and Planet Play sessions allow children to build developmental blocks that have been missed in their early childhood. Speaking, listening, gross/fine motor skill development, trust etc. are all the blocks on which active cognition and learning grow.”*

Gill Buckland, B.Ed, M.A. Dip Spld [RSA], Early Years specialist and advisor to Chickenshed



## CASE STUDY: Grenfell Tower – bringing relief to surviving children

We were asked by the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, (amongst other qualified Early Years practitioners), to run some Summer sessions in Westway Sports Centre – the purpose, to try and bring some relief and distraction to the child survivors and immediate community of the Grenfell tragedy through our inclusive performing arts sessions.

The Council said that the need for provision for the community around Grenfell Tower is likely to be felt strongest in the Summer with delayed grief and the fact children will be out of routine and without the support of school. Our team are working hard to provide hour-long fun, interactive and creative sessions.

*“On Wednesday, we worked for an hour with a boy with autism and a physical disability which wasn't named which effected his walking. His Aunt, (who acted as his carer), died at Grenfell so his mother had flown from Egypt and was trying to look after him but speaks no English so was struggling a little.*

*After seeing the ruined building, the boy had been very distressed and had spent school lessons crying and hitting his head, but staff at the refuge centre said he was looking joyful and present whilst playing with Chickenshed for the hour we were there.*

*We also did a show for a child and her parents who have been rehoused 4 times, each time into a tower block, which they cannot accept as they have all suffered trauma from the tragedy. The mother and child were laughing throughout the show and left saying, ‘that was brilliant; thank you’”*

Jo Merritt, Artistic Workshop Leader

## **OUTREACH - in the last year:**

- ✓ 10,000 children and young people have engaged with Chickenshed via an outreach project.
- ✓ Partnership projects have been explored with organisations including Shared Vision, Barnardo's, Stem 4 (Young people's mental health charity), University of Greenwich and Guildhall School of Music and Drama, as well as numerous schools and community organisations. Such partnerships have provided opportunities for staff development and practice sharing, as well as helping us promote the importance of inclusion.

## **Tackling issues faced by children and young people through the arts**

- Our Outreach work is funded by a combination of fees, paid by receiving organisations, and support from Trusts and Foundations and individuals, to help us tackle an area of identified need, where schools and communities are unable to afford this provision. Our many and varied outreach projects are in constant demand.

## **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**

Your generosity has enabled us provide life-changing opportunities to our children and young people. It has helped us to overcome issues which we couldn't solve alone, react quickly to needs within our community, and to explore new territory. Please know that every pound we receive is used to challenge, inspire, empower and positively change our corner of the world. Thank you!