

Arts Award Access Fund: Success Stories



The **Arts Award Access Fund** provides small grants to Arts Award centres working with young people for whom access and inclusion is an issue. It first launched in 2007, and since then has enabled thousands of young people to achieve an Arts Award.

Taking part in the awards can often have a huge impact on young people's lives, their aspirations and self-esteem. The Access Fund has enabled thousands of young people who might not otherwise get the chance, to express themselves creatively, learn about and develop their skills within the arts, and gain a recognised qualification. Here are some stories from just a few of the centres the Access Fund has supported over the years:

The Arts Excite (Round 1 2013), £1485
Number of young people: 9
Arts Award level: Bronze

Working with a local charity supporting victims of domestic abuse, and The Arts Excite, a group of young people created a filmed drama to raise awareness of domestic abuse and how victims can get help. All the young people involved in this project were facing disadvantage in their lives; most were living in sheltered accommodation in a local housing project in Slough and not in education, employment or training.

Since receiving this small amount of seed funding and running a successful pilot project they secured a further £22,000 to continue their work. The Arts Excite has been transformed into a social enterprise that engages disadvantaged 16-25 year olds in accredited arts and media workshops.

'The Arts Award Access Fund has been one of the key factors in helping us to get The Arts Excite off the ground. Without it we would not have been able to run a pilot project and gain the momentum that we have.'
Jordon Maynard-Daley, Arts Award adviser

'If it was not for this project I really would not have known about domestic violence and how to spot signs of it.'
Participant M



Photo: The Arts Excite

According to McGee (Round 2 2012), £1225.40
Number of young people: 10
Arts Award level: Bronze

According to McGee worked with a group of young adults with learning disabilities and a range of complex needs. The group participated in summer Art Camp sessions, working with other young people on their Bronze awards, and taking part in a range of art activities, and visits to museums and galleries.

'The Bronze Arts Awards themselves made a massive difference. All of the participants have very complex needs – indeed, Holly had never picked up a paintbrush or pencil in her life. To work towards rigorous targets made for a very fulfilling challenge. It was Holly who, after the Arts Award journey, had the confidence to choose the colour scheme for her new flat (Holly can only communicate through smiles): her carers and family are astonished by her new confidence in this area. Lewis and Jon have designed their own posters and business cards for their car washing business; Louise is now employed by summer holiday art classes as an assistant art teacher.'
Greg McGee, Arts Award adviser



Photo: Culture Shift

Derby QUAD (Round 1 2013), £479

Number of young people: 9

Arts Award level: Bronze

The grant was used to part-fund Q Club, a group for young people, most of whom are on the Autism Spectrum. The group explored the exhibition at QUAD, using it as a starting point to work in print, photography and film. They also visited Déda to work with a dance artist.

'Gaining a qualification and succeeding in the challenges set by the artists, helps to guide these young people through the difficulties that AS presents on a daily basis. By allowing them the space to explore and experiment with coping strategies, helps these young people discover their likes, dislikes and helps them build their own framework to become successfully independent.' **Sophie Powell, Arts Award adviser**

Royal & Derngate Theatre (Round 1 2013),

£1163

Number of young people: 13

Arts Award level: Bronze

Royal & Derngate worked with a group of young people who did not have English as their first language, many of whom were from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds, and/or were carers of younger siblings or lived alone. The group worked with a director and a musician to devise their own play based on a Chinese folktale. They were introduced to different songs and vocal techniques, and shared songs and music from their own countries.

'As an adviser, the project was a testament to the importance of the Arts Award for young people who cannot otherwise access the arts or whose needs hinder them in achieving qualifications. The skills that the Arts Awards develop are crucial to every young person, regardless of age or ability.' **Georgia Munnion, Arts Award adviser**



Photo: Royal & Derngate

Find out more

If you're interested in applying for an Access Fund grant, head to www.artsaward.org.uk/accessfundinfo for more information. The Access Fund has two application rounds each year, and is open to Arts Award centres in England.

Birtenshaw Specialist Support School (Round 1 2014), £409.50

Number of young people: 25

Arts Award level: Discover and Explore

Birtenshaw offers education to children with moderate to severe and/or complex learning needs. The grant supported the costs of a trip to see the musical 'Happy Days' at the Lowry Theatre in Manchester as well as moderation/certification costs. In their project, pupils researched the 1950s, exploring fashion, music, and art and design. The project culminated in an exhibition of work and a summer production of 'Grease'. Some of the students went to work at a local mainstream secondary school where they attended 1950s dance workshops and choreographed their own routine.

'This project was very successful and has highlighted the positive benefits of delivering high quality arts provision within our school. We will definitely continue to run regular Arts Award projects and we will continue to invite the school community to share and celebrate the work with us. The project has encouraged the school to aim towards gaining more Explore and Bronze accreditations. We would like to develop strong links with artists and arts organisations within our local area.' **Jane Schofield, Arts Award adviser**



Photo: Odd Arts

York Mind (Round 2 2013), £1010
Number of young people: 26
Arts Award level: Bronze

York Mind worked with young people either in groups or one-to-one to support them with their recovery from mental ill health. Young people worked on a variety of projects including photography, craft, creative writing, drawing, animation and drama. The animation group worked together to produce a short piece aimed at reducing the stigma around mental health, which was shortlisted for a regional award as part of the Love Arts festival. You can watch the film here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LI-10Yw-Cjg>

'Of the 12 people who have completed their arts award with us, we have seen fantastic developments which include, 4 people moving on to work, 3 into further training; which includes university, 1 volunteering at a local theatre and 1 into a community based theatre group. Of these young people, 100% have shown an increase in their score on the 'Mental health recovery star', and 100% achieved their personal goal that they set when joining the project. In addition to supporting people to improve their skills and knowledge in the arts, this project has helped young people who are experiencing mental ill health to increase their confidence in a group setting, and to develop informal peer support groups.' **Arts Award adviser**

'The project helped me to realise that I have a support network to turn to when times are low.' **Arts Award participant**

'I have more confidence now to try new hobbies/qualifications to improve my skills.' **Arts Award participant**

Odd Arts (Round 2 2014), £850
Number of young people: 1
Arts Award level: Silver & Gold

Odd Arts work with vulnerable and at-risk young people, many of whom are in the criminal justice system. They delivered Gold with two young people from Barton Moss secure setting, the firsts young people in a secure setting to achieve this level. The Arts Award is used to accredit their successful resettlement projects. Read their full case study on the **Arts Award adviser hub** (artsaward.org.uk/adviserhub).

'The Gold Arts Award is certainly a step up from Silver. It is not to be underestimated but nor should the interest and potential of these particular young people: young people who have offended. Attempting an Arts Award within a secure setting can be part of a larger, life changing experience and ethos for the young people.' **Rebecca Friel, Arts Award adviser**

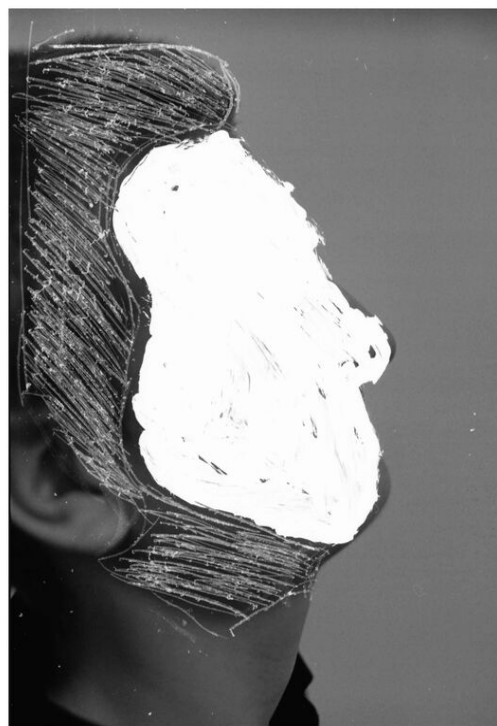


Photo: Odd Arts

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