

Objectives and Activities

Our objectives and purpose:

For the public benefit, to promote, improve and advance education in, and appreciation of, the arts of dance, drama, and physical performance in particular, but not exclusively among children and young people through the facilitation and management of educational workshops, participatory arts projects, group work, residencies, and events.

About us

Highly Sprung is England's physical theatre company for and with children and young people.

Performances and participatory projects are produced with and for new audiences of children and young people to invite collaboration, contribution, and discovery. By working together, our inclusive approach creates a physical language that enables children and young people to tell stories and explore global themes, using accessible, gestural, high-energy, and often risk-taking dynamic movement.

These stories through movement speak of the world our children and young people will create their futures in.

Public Benefit

In shaping and delivering our strategy, objectives and activities, the trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit, including guidance on public benefit and fee charging.

Highly Sprung relies on public funding, private giving and income from fees and charges to cover all operating costs. In setting the level of fees, charges and concessions, the trustees consider the accessibility of the charity's activities, especially for children and young people in areas of deprivation.

Summary of main activities

Activities delivered

- 47 Schools Workshops for 3,236 children and young people across the UK
- Four 'Play In A Day' activities delivering theatre making activity to over 500 secondary school aged young people
- Give It A Go! 3-day activity programme in Coventry at October half term for 100 young people aged 7-16 years old
- Three Holiday Activities and Food Programmes (Summer and Easter), for 238 children and young people aged 7-16 years old
- Physical Fellowship Changing Climates Festival and associated Coventry Young Producers Programme, 270 young people from 7 schools and 24 Sprung Youth members
- Teach Make delivered CPDL to 16 teachers from 7 Coventry based primary schools
- Coventry University performance making project with 18 3rd year degree students
- Smith's Wood School Residency, working with 180 young people across year 8
- Commonwealth Connections working with 300 young people from 6 Coventry schools
- First Play Day held at Daimler with 300 participants from the local community

The figures:

59 performances including, the Queen's Jubilee Parade, Transmission, Festival of Flying, Warwickshire Libraries, CastAway and Urban Astronaut

Worked with almost **5,500** young people

Almost **38,000** in person audiences

Plus **over 8 million** people watched Highly Sprung take part in the Jubilee Parade

270 children and young people took part in Sprung Youth -

Eight Sprung Youth bursaries awarded

Achievements and Performance

In this Jubilee Year Highly Sprung was fortunate to be selected to take part in several celebrations including the Jubilee Parade in association with Imagineer.

Urban Astronaut completed its last performance at Preston's Encounters Festival before being retired in September. One of the charity's most recognisable productions, over its life it has played to 120,000 audience and has been performed over 200 times. A key element of Highly Sprung performative work is at outside events such as festivals. Structural change in the way that festivals are now booking acts has resulted in fewer bookings than forecast. Further, the physical space required for large scale works such as Castaway means that fewer festivals were able to accommodate us this year. This is something that the artistic team will consider in future creations.

CastAway, an outdoor spectacle that utilises a unique gyroscopic flying machine, was developed in response to the excessive production and use of 'disposables' and the devastating effect on canals, rivers, and waterways. It was re-staged in 2022 to tour to six strategic venues, extending its reach into geographic areas with low levels of arts engagement, as part of our commitment to developing culture and new audiences in towns, cities, and parks.

Another area of development for CastAway in 2022 was improving accessibility including an Easy Read to support neuro-diverse audiences to understand and access the performance, training to deliver touch tours for learning disabled or visually impaired audiences and development of a BSL transcript.

Two new major works were ideated in this year - Accelerate exposes the flaws of our relationship with energy; and is presented using new aerial technology, combining dynamic aerial bungee with conveyor belt dance. Also, on the environmental theme a new performance GROW was developed aimed at 5–7-year-olds from deprived communities in Coventry.

Physical Fellowship returned to the Belgrade Theatre. 270 young people from 7 schools and Sprung Youth participated in this project. Led by our artists, each participating group created a performance piece on the theme of "Changing Climates". During the week-long festival, participants were involved in workshops led by artists from companies such as Moth Physical Theatre and Complicite and performed their pieces in front of a live audience. Each evening of performance was concluded by our Sprung Advance group performing their own piece on the same theme. This year, for the first time, the festival was entirely produced by the Coventry Young Producers Collective.

Highly Sprung worked on two rail projects: Coventry Station Community Day in association with Heart of England Community Rail Partnership, Avanti West Coast and Coventry City Council. The celebration included an original performance created by Highly Sprung and involving 200 children from local schools. It was awarded "best community engagement project" at the Community Rail Partnership awards in October 2022. West Midlands Community Rail Partnership (CRP) worked with Highly Sprung to provide 19 people from newly arrived families their first experience of planning and undertaking a day out by rail. This was turned into a documentary and aired at an exhibition at Coventry Railway station.

Other works included Out Out a bold new dance film that unlocked the voices of Coventry's LGBTQIA+ community. Bringing to the mainstream voices that are often hidden, in a celebration of togetherness and coming out. Created using a verbatim script based on real stories, contributed by 14–30-year-olds in Coventry's LGBTQIA+ community. The film was commissioned by Sky Arts and aired in May 2022.

Two years on, the impact of the pandemic continued to be felt as schools concentrated their resources on academic priorities. This has meant a continued challenge in securing work in schools and in the promotion and take up of Ready Box Set Go.

Our residency at Barr's Hill school continued, running workshops as part of their Inspire programme for year 7 and 8, including Play in a Day opportunities and a performance of CastAway. The charity secured a residency at Smithswood, the very first school that Highly Sprung began work with in 2000. We also secured

residencies with children and young people in further education with Birmingham Conservatoire and Coventry University

This year saw a new partnership begin with ISTA, International School Theatre Association. The team attended and delivered an international schools festival in Terezin in March and hosted webinars providing CPDL for teachers across the world.

We continued our relationship with Echo Eternal delivering teacher and artist training and school workshops in four schools to kickstart the project.

As part of the government's Holiday and Food Activity Programme, Highly Sprung delivered three weeklong activities, at Easter and the Summer providing children and young people aged 7-16 with physical theatre activities and access to free food.

Talent Development

Following a significant and continued drop in numbers and a subsequent consultation with both parents and young people, the difficult decision was taken to stop offering the very youngest age range Sprung Stars. Resources were redirected to a new more advanced offer creating a new group Sprung Advance Plus providing a natural progression for older Sprung Youth participants. It was received well and as a result there has been an improved retention of young people and additional capacity to offer 20 more places.

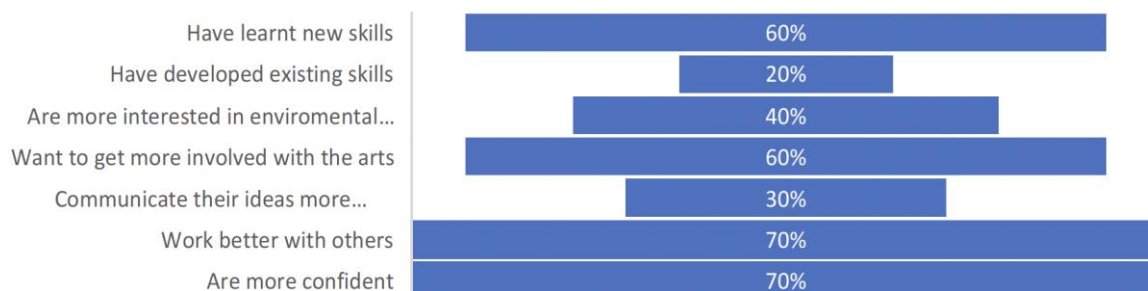
We awarded 8 bursaries to young people attending Sprung Youth– over twice the number applied for and awarded in previous years. These are offered to children and young people who are nominated as a result of experiencing financial disadvantage.

Highly Sprung is dependent upon a talented network of associate artists and in the year ran several training sessions to increase the size of this network as well as further embed our practices with existing artists.

Case Study: Coventry Young Producers Collective (CYPC) and Changing Climates Festival

CYPC gave 20 young people the opportunity to work together to realise their own vision of producing work by young people for young people.

Since becoming part of the Coventry Young Producers Collective, the CYPC:



The Changing Climates Festival was the result. A week-long youth led festival platforming performances by over 300 young people from eight schools and two community groups from across Coventry and Warwickshire

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Funding Strategy and Pricing Policy:

The company is funded through various streams of income giving resilience against relying heavily on one income source. Representation of income streams is as follows:

- 82% Earned Income
- 18% Public funding

Our current business model is designed to be financially sustainable, drawing from a range of income streams and working in a market where our offer is unique and the audience wide and varied. We have consistently shown an ability to be flexible to adapt to economic changes, finding new ways to drive income in order to maintain the quality of our delivery.

Our pricing policy is designed to ensure we are meeting our objective of reaching the widest possible audiences. We work closely with partners to maintain cost-effective and reasonable project costs and keep costs to participants to a minimum. Funding is sought to support projects fully with no cost to participants or to put in place considerable subsidies for access to the work.

All our professional fees are based on rates of pay as set by industry standards (ITC).

Reserves Policy:

The policy allocates money from unrestricted fund balances, which are not invested in fixed assets, to several designated funds. These funds are:

1. Continuity Fund
This fund is to be used to bridge any delays in receiving promised grants or managing payment in arrears contracts. This has been defined as a minimum of 8 weeks budgeted trading activity.
2. Restructuring Fund
This fund is to be used to cover essential trading/activities whilst sourcing income to a maximum of 3 months budgeted trading activity.
3. Cyclical Maintenance Fund
This fund is to be used for major maintenance of the fabric of assets, such as the van or flying rigs.
4. Dissolution Fund
This fund provides for the costs of dissolution should the charity be unable to continue. It is only to be used in the event of the Trustees' deciding the charity should cease to exist. It will be used to pay notice periods, redundancies, and running expenses until closure of the organisation.

Fund	Balance
Continuity	£57,319
Restructuring	£85,980
Dissolution – Redundancies - 3 months minimal running costs - 3 months residual salaries (7 staff)	£85,980
Cyclical Maintenance	£5,000
Minimum Required	£171,960

The minimum reserves required is the Restructuring Fund plus the Dissolution Fund. These are to be used to ensure we look at every alternative before dissolution of the charity.

Risk Management:

An annual risk review is carried out by the Trustees, led by the Chair with participation from the management team. It is reviewed and updated throughout the year by the management team and any significant changes advised to the Trustees quarterly.

Governance - Less effective board, destabilisation of charity, lack of representation, not representative of audience, charity objectives are not met, lack of growth, inability to effectively reflect on and support objectives, lack of understanding of stakeholder needs.

- Inability to retain and/or recruit and retain trustees
- Management capabilities fail to evolve with charity
- Lack of diversity executive and trustee level
- Lack of Committee Structure
- Inconsistent and uneven involvement and active contribution of trustees
- Lack of knowledge and understanding in trustees
- Lack of arts knowledge and fundraising expertise
- Tenure of founding trustees

Financial- Loss of core staff, premises, infrastructure, Inability to meet charity objectives, Loss of projects, Reduction in activity and staff, inability to take on new work/commissions

- Unable to secure funding for core costs.
- Loss or reduction in project delivery
- Work in schools
- Sprung Youth Income
- Unavailability of core team
- Unavailability of Exec team
- Drop in income/increased costs

Operations- Unable to grow, reputational impact, reduction in activity or inability to deliver activity, Injury-serious & minor, lack of appropriate storage, no workspace, loss of key information, financial, reporting & data, lack of EDI understanding, failure to represent our audiences or meet funders needs.

- Inability to Recruit and retain suitable staff to enable planned growth
- Loss of exec staff or talent pool
- Lack of diversity
- Property appropriate to needs- inc. storage
- Inability to secure appropriate property
- Increasingly outdated IT hardware
- Health and Safety
- Equipment failure
- Suitable transport availability
- Climate
- Cyber security

Legal- Serious safeguarding implications, inability to deliver activity, fines, loss of charitable status, threat from other organisations to steal or copy our work, reputational impact, competition.

- Non-compliance with child protection legislation
- IP protection
- Conflict of interest

External- Loss of income, increased competition, lack of opportunity for funding, reputational impact, compromised delivery of objectives, loss of key members of staff due to absence, less freelance talent, less opportunity to deliver in schools.

- Cancellation of events/activities
- Climate change
- Education and arts policy
- Economy- recession/inflation
- Childhood deprivation, cost of living crisis
- Pandemic- continued restrictions, reducing activity level and income streams

Reputation- Loss of staff, lack of staff, inability to deliver activity, loss of key and new partnerships, Reputation/Quality- Impact in funding and retaining and recruiting talent, lose charitable status, charitable objectives not met.

- Event/incident/accusation/accident threatens reputation

Structure, Governance and Management

Highly Sprung is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

The board of trustees, which can have up to 8 members, administers the charity. The board meets termly and coordinates interim calls or additional meetings where deemed necessary. An Executive Director is appointed by the trustees to manage the day-to-day operations of the charity. To facilitate effective operations the Executive Director has delegated authority, within terms of delegation approved by the trustees, for operational matters including finance, employment, artistic performance, and administrative activity. There is a trustee with specific responsibility for safeguarding.

Appointment of trustees:

As set out in our constitution after the appointment of charity trustees every trustee must be appointed for a term of three years by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. Trustees are selected following a fair and transparent recruitment process which seeks to reach under-represented communities, and which is aimed at ensuring that the board of trustees has a broad range of skills and viewpoints necessary for the proper running of the Charity.

Trustee induction and training:

Any new charity trustees undergo a formal board induction to brief them on their legal obligations under charity laws, the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit, the charity constitution, the committee and the decision-making process, the business plan and recent financial performance of the charity. They also receive a pack of appropriate information including policies, procedures and are invited to an induction day to meet Highly Sprung staff. All new trustees are also offered the opportunity to observe a Board meeting prior to their formal appointment and a face-to-face meeting with the Chair.

Trustees are encouraged to attend appropriate external training events and are updated by the Secretary of any relevant developments in Charity or other appropriate regulation or best practice.

Summary of Activity

Highly Sprung were unsuccessful in the 2023 NPO bid. Working with the executive team, the Trustees took the decision to review and develop a new strategy which will run from 2024 – 2030. It is the most comprehensive strategic review to date and the charity commissioned external consultants to support with its creation.

The year also saw a significant change in our trustee board; the Chair, Claire Singleton stepped down, due to but agreed to stay on as a trustee, Sandra Godley and Trish Willets also stepped down due to time constraints. Three new trustees, Dav Kaur, Rosalind Adams and Emma Gibbons were recruited with specific experience in finance, fundraising and the cultural sector. Amanda Campbell, a founding trustee, and vice-chair was selected as the new Chair and Dav Kaur was appointed Honorary Treasurer and Vice Chair.

We recruited our first Youth Advisory Board (YAB), made up of young people from the local area, with and without previous experience of Highly Sprung. Meeting quarterly, the YAB provided invaluable input to two projects, Play Day and Physical Fellowship, discussions around the 20th anniversary of Sprung Youth, EDI as well as the new 2030 strategy and the role of YAB going forward.

Governance was further strengthened with a new, slightly extended Remuneration Committee with updated Terms of Reference, an updated trustee recruitment and induction process and updates of various procedures and policies in line with new best practice in other areas. Regular training sessions on governance led by our secretary continued until her maternity leave.

Commitment to Environmental responsibility and Inclusivity and relevance was demonstrated through training in both areas with several of the management team and trustees achieving Carbon Literacy, whilst the comprehensive DEI workshops saw for the first time the Trustees, management and associate artists working together.

Highly Sprung aims to work to intermediate level of the Theatre Green Book:

- Sets are designed for easy reuse
- A minimum of 90% of production sets made of recyclable materials.

- Carbon footprint is now calculated for all work.
- Introduction of new practices for touring work have reduced carbon by 30% compared to 2021 figures.

Case Study - Changing Climates Festival

- The raincoats used will be used in future projects.
- 90% materials used in production had a previous life.
- 90% of our materials have been sustainably sourced
- 80% of plastics are reusable, recyclable, or compostable.
- Julie's Bicycle Carbon footprint calculator was used to track the project's carbon footprint. All vehicle mileage associated with the production and any associated travel or deliveries was tracked and recorded.