

# St Helens creative toolkit

COMPILED BY ARTIST-LED ST HELENS FOR ST HELENS ARTS SERVICE



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# Welcome!

## **This is a toolkit tailor-made for creative people in St Helens!**

With this guide we aim to try to bring together every relevant nook and cranny of creativity & support for creativity that exists within St Helens, no stone unturned!

You will read interviews with local creatives from several different disciplines.

There are so many creative opportunities in St Helens and opportunities for collaboration and networking but we've noticed there isn't one place where these are all collected and curated to be in one place.

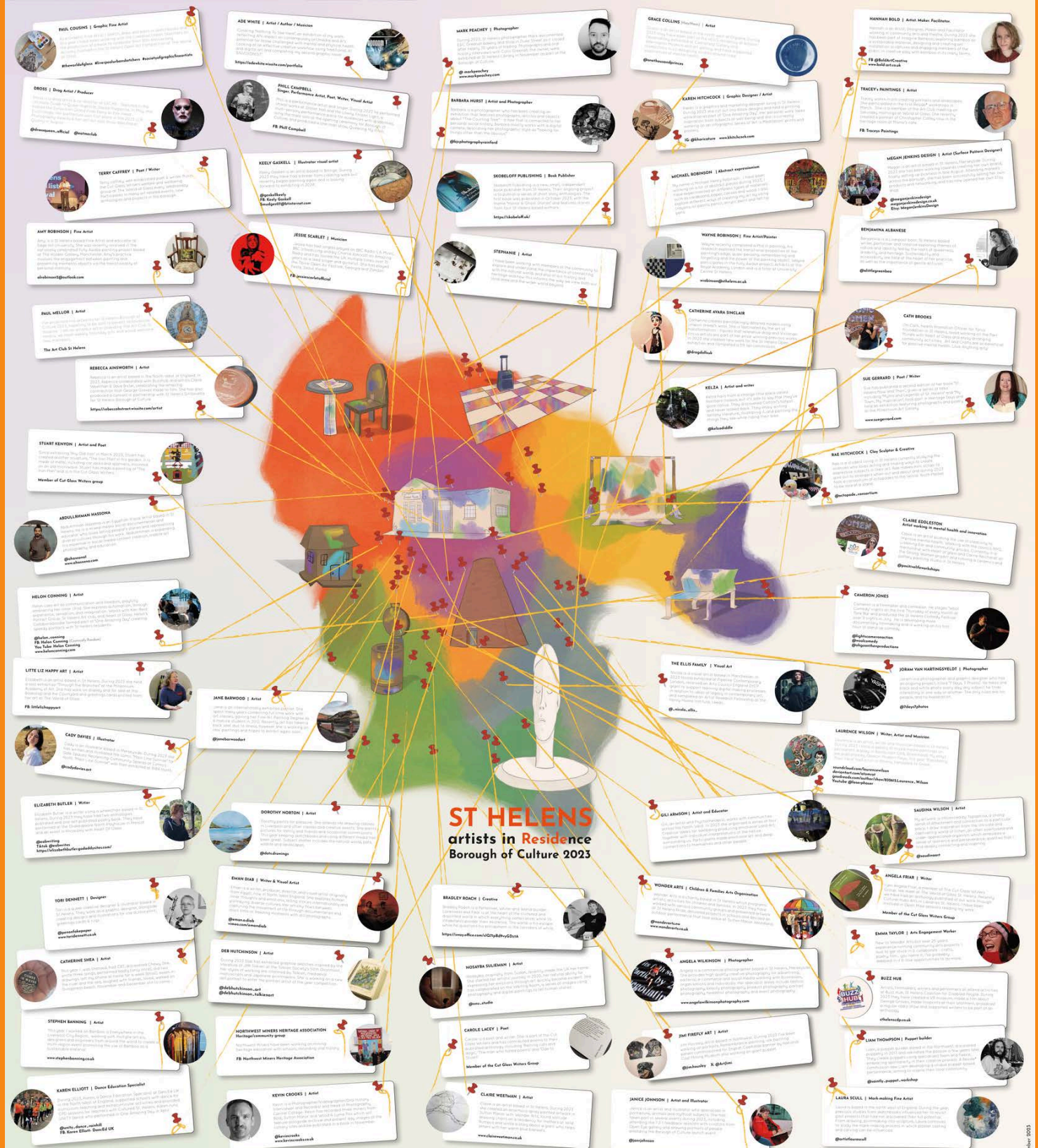
We've done our best to make sure that this guide is as inclusive as possible to artists of all disciplines and of all backgrounds so that you will hopefully find something useful, relevant or interesting!

The background is a solid orange color. It is decorated with white wavy lines that appear to be stylized, possibly representing water or a textured surface. These lines are concentrated in the top-left and bottom-right corners, creating a sense of movement and depth. The lines are of varying thickness and curve, giving the design a modern, organic feel.

**Meet the locals!**



## The Reside\* map, introducing local artists





## Meet the Locals: Cady Davies (She/They) Illustrator

### How did you get started with illustration?

I started drawing when I was really young, as I always leaned towards visualising my ideas through pictures, rather than writing them down in words. I'm from a family of amazing creatives who were always supportive of my art, so that definitely was a driving force towards making illustration my career.

My Dad was a storyteller, he always made up stories to tell my brother and I. When it comes to why I choose to tell stories through illustration, I always link it back to how storytelling was such a prominent part of my adolescence. I learned, without knowing how to articulate it at the time, that storytelling can create connections and leave a lasting impact on people's lives.

Throughout my childhood, right into my teenage years, I would often draw characters from TV shows, games and comics I enjoyed. This allowed me to build up the technical skills and muscle memory in cartoon drawing, which I put into my original work as I grew older. Starting out, it was mostly Sonic the Hedgehog characters and Pokemon I drew.

I was 11-12 in 2015, which is when I started illustrating with an aim to develop my skills. For which tools I used around this time, traditionally I used sketchbook multimedia paper, and my go-to for colouring were Promarkers, a cheaper alternative to Copic markers. Digitally, I used Microsoft Paint, before moving over to Firealpaca when I got my first drawing tablet, a Wacom Intuos Draw. I got that drawing tablet a decade ago, and I still use it to this day.



### 'Wild as the Sunlight' synopsis:

Perri has one goal: buy pet food for her pet bear, Percy. Whilst Percy tags along, he is distracted by something else... Imagine a small bear being let loose in a pet shop. What could possibly go wrong?



# **WILD AS THE SUNLIGHT**

*CADY ANN DAVIES*



## Where do you find inspiration? Whether online or in real life?

Most of my inspiration comes from observing the general public as I commute to University. I'm drawn to the mundane, small things. I'll notice the tiny connections between people, whether it be a crowd of disgruntled strangers waiting for the bus, or a large family in the train station. The way people interact with one another or don't, fascinates me.

My lived experience plays a big role in what inspires me to write, or draw. I'm a big fan of graphic memoirs, like *Persepolis* (Marjane Satrapi) or *Without Ceremony* (Hanna Gwynn). I see comics as a way to process and document memories, as I'm able to communicate thoughts, feelings and nuances in a way that I'm unable to communicate just with words.

I'm part of a few artist communities. The St Helens art scene is a big one, which I take lots of inspiration from every day. The wide amount of practices I see and the opportunities I've got through being part of it have deeply influenced me. I'm also part of Comics Youth, a youth group based in Birkenhead, which focuses on helping marginalised young people through the power of comics. The experiences I've had through them have opened my eyes to just what comics are capable of, due to being such an accessible medium.

Online, I enjoy looking at fandom spaces to see how people interpret and respond to the media they are passionate about, through a whole spectrum of creative practices. The sense of community, enjoyment and freedom of expression that runs through these spaces can be really inspiring.

## Has living in St Helens influenced your work in any way, and if so, how?

Yes, definitely! As an artist living in a small town up North, I have learned that lots of opportunities for artists are mostly London-based, and that surrounding area. As a result I travel out for a lot of my work, but I still see St Helens as my home, and I'm forever grateful for the opportunities I've been given through the Libraries and Arts Service, and the events they put on for the community.

I've found that St Helens hasn't been represented as a setting in narratives all that often. One of my favourite modern graphic novels is *Welcome to St Hell* and its sequel *Escape from St Hell* (Lewis Hancox). Both books take place predominantly in St Helens and the surrounding area, and the feeling of validation I had to see the town I grew up in represented in this way, inspired me to do it myself.

My comic *Main Line Sunrise* is mostly set in St Helens town centre. Seeing people recognise and smile at the iconic shops and locations, without needing to read the dialogue, is wonderful.

I hope to continue using St Helens as a muse of sorts, as I feel my identity as an artist is heavily influenced by this place.

## Where can people find your work?

Instagram: [@cadydavies.art](https://www.instagram.com/cadydavies.art)

Website: [Home](#) | [Cady Ann Davies](#)

Linktree: [Cady](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Linktree](#)



## Meet the Locals

### Siobhan Kerr (She/Her)

#### Sustainable fashion facilitator

#### **Was there a moment that made you want to do something creative with fashion rather than just consume it?**

It was more of an accumulation of events. I've always sewn and started altering and tweaking my own clothes from about 12, I didn't know you could study Fashion. I was already doing my A Levels in Maths and English and had to do a Foundation degree to transition. I wasn't great in design but I loved garment manufacturing and pattern cutting, working out how to put things together and learning the techniques.

In university (2007) my dissertation was 'Can the Fashion Industry ever be Sustainable?'. Back in 2007, fast fashion was relatively new, as was the term sustainable fashion. There wasn't much research on it, however, I knew I wanted to be on the sustainable path and use my creative skills to be a better consumer. So I turned my love for charity shop hunting into a creative outlet, upcycling, mending and selling it on, with the hope of someone buying something preloved rather than new. I wanted to fix things and give clothes a new purpose. Hoarding might seem negative, but I hated throwing things out when broken. I loved fixing clothes for other people and I loved helping people fix their own clothes (hence teaching!). It's so much more rewarding than going to a shop and buying an item that's mass produced, literally, 10 a penny.

#### **What's the best part of running a clothing swap shop?**

Definitely going through the donations, finding amazing pieces and having first dibs! First dibs might be for anyone too, I love finding items I know customers will like and being able to pull them out for them when they're next in. I love making people feel special, even only for a little moment.

I never swap anything 'new with tags' for myself, only preloved items. And, I only swap with the intention of wearing then swapping back so it's like a lovely, glamorous, rotational wardrobe! I love that that's for everyone too. You can come in, get an outfit, wear it, bring it back and get another outfit, wear it, bring it back...and so on! That's the joy of a swap shop!

#### **What challenges do you face with running it?**

Laundry, making sure the clothes are clean and presentable.

Managing the load, we often find people want to bring old clothes but don't want to take new clothes so we end up with more and more clothes. Sometimes, people use us as a way of getting rid of their OLD unwanted clothes, meaning we have a lot of rags to process and manage.

Customers, I can travel from venue to venue, unloading and reloading, unpacking and packing clothes up, at least 3 times a week. I can do that and have no one turn up. I can have people there and no one come over and I can have people turn up and bring clothes but not take any, so I end up going home with more.

#### **Where can people find Zero fashion?**

[instagram.com/zerofashion.uk](https://www.instagram.com/zerofashion.uk)

[facebook.com/zero.fashion.uk](https://www.facebook.com/zero.fashion.uk)

Haydock Street, St Helens, WA10 1DD. Thursday - Saturday @ 10am - 2pm



## **Meet the Locals:**

### **Claire Weetman (She/Her)**

**Artist, producer and educator**

**What do you find most rewarding about working with other artists? Are there any success stories that stand out to you?**

I love meeting other artists, hearing about what they are making and why that is important to them. I love seeing an artist's confidence develop as they build connections with others. And it's so great to hear about a project when it's a germinating idea and then see it come to life.

Christine Alexandra Beckett took part in a 1-2-1 support session with Open Eye Gallery in 2023 and from that meeting Christine decided to begin releasing collections of her photographs in publications that she is distributing around independent bookshops and retailers. The first, *Drag Kings of Manchester*, also led to an exhibition of the photographs alongside Chester University, and copies of that book and *Pride in the North West* can both be found on the shelves of St Helens Libraries. I think this is a great example of an artist making the work they want to make, and through being connected to other artists and organisations and really following an opportunity are then able to get that work in front of an audience.

**What advice would you give to emerging artists or those looking to get involved in creative production?**

I think that opportunities often happen because you've been doing a thing anyway and somebody notices that you can help them. And that leads to something new - lots of my funded or commissioned projects have started out as an idea that I write down in a notebook, or a drawing that works a bit like a model for a larger installation. Find the people who will spur you on to make a windbreak out of paper and then film you while you sit inside it drawing in the middle of Church Street in Liverpool (this is one of the first things I made in 2004 just out of university). They can also be the people who will help you load up a car, or paint the walls in an empty shop and deliver postcards to promote an exhibition you've put on and those experiences of making an event happen out of a good idea and lots of good will have definitely shaped my ability to work as a Creative Producer.

A longer version of this Q&A is available [on the St Helens Arts in Libraries blog](#).







## Meet the Locals: Christine Beckett Photographer

### How did you get started with photography?

Not sure how the interest developed. My dad was a keen amateur photographer and film-maker. But I think I was more interested in the photos I saw in newspapers and magazines. When I was about 17 my dad helped me to buy my first cameras. He knew someone at his work who was selling a Zenit EM, so I bought it from them. I took photos with that camera for almost a decade and it went with my everywhere, even in my army days when I had access to better kit. It was finally stolen when my North London bedsit was burgled in 1986. I did manage to find a later, pristine example of a Zenit EM a few years ago, so I still have one for old time's sake.

### Where do you find inspiration? Whether online or in real life?

Oh, lord. Seriously? Inspiration? Now I have to think. Let's see.... Books, and real life. I spend more money on photo books than I spend on photo gear. Looking at the work of past greats is, I think, vital. Not in order to copy them, but in order to see how they put a photo together. There are so many great photographers out there, past and present, and I will admit that many of them influence my work, although mostly that influence came in my formative years in the seventies, which is why my work has an old-fashioned air.

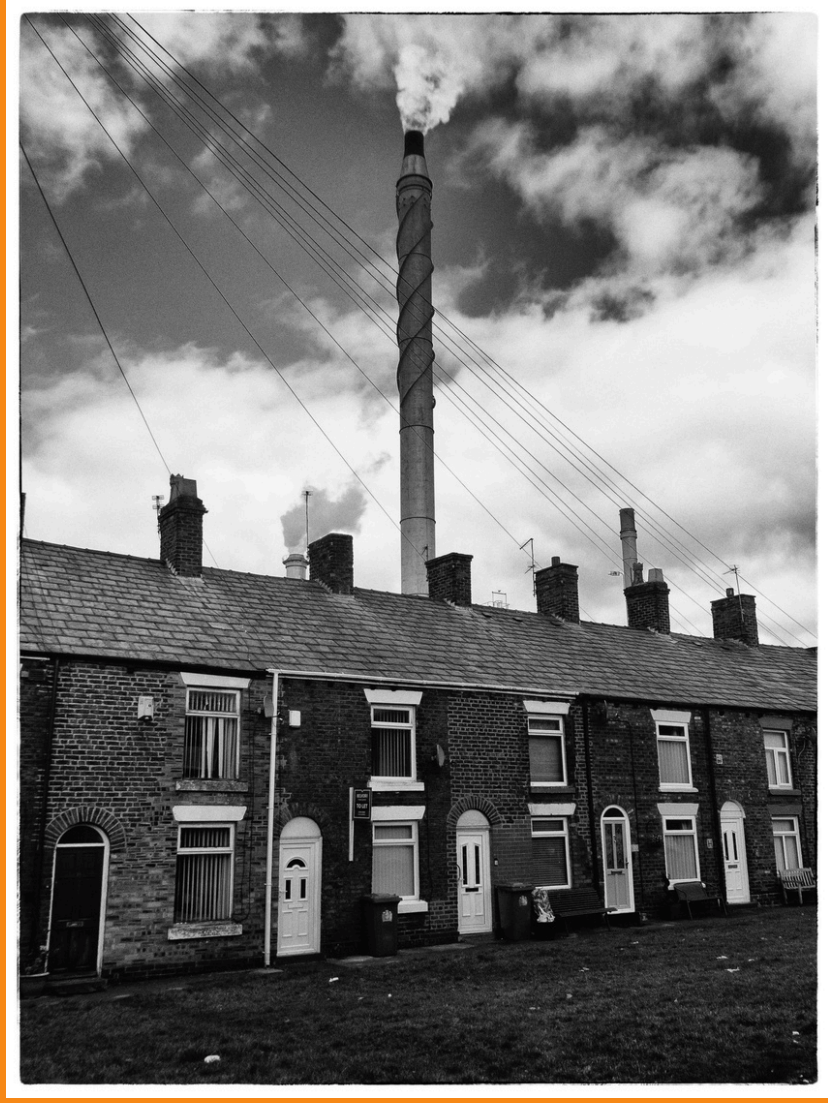
### A lot of your photography consists of places in St Helens, in what ways would it be different if you lived elsewhere?

I have made photographs in many, many different places, here in the UK and overseas. The differences are usually obvious, but I know that if I create work in, say, Wigan, or Bolton, or Preston, then that work will be very similar to the type of work I produce here in St Helens. All are Northern, post-industrial towns. All bears the scars of that history, some tangible and visible, and others intangible and invisible. The ruins of an old mine or railway or canal are obvious visual reminders. The huge mounds of highly toxic waste, buried under a layer of topsoil, and potentially posing serious threats to the health of locals, present an intangible, at least for now, reminder. One could search for similar issues to photograph in other countries, but the details, landscape, and light would likely be very different.

### Where can people find your work? (Social media, website, exhibition etc)

I am not a great fan of the internet and social media, I am afraid. And I am pants when it comes to website design. I do have an Instagram presence, at [https://www.instagram.com/strawberry\\_girl\\_photography/](https://www.instagram.com/strawberry_girl_photography/). Some of my specific project work is contained in my published zines and books. Copies can usually be found in The Book Stop in St Helens, News From Nowhere in Bold Street, Liverpool, and the Open Eye Gallery bookshop in Liverpool, or direct from me, of course.





Photographs by Christine Beckett





# Putting on Events

# Event planning guide



Here are some event planning ideas to equip us as community event organisers, creatives and those with an interest in putting on an event for the first time.

## General Event Planning:

- **What is the event?**
- **Why are you organising the event?** Is it to showcase talent, learn more about certain skills, celebrate a festival, mark an occasion or tell a story you feel passionate about?
- **Are you engaging with your target audience early in the planning stages?** Is there a need or interest in the area in which the event is focused? Are there local like-minded people who would like to be involved?

Check the Live Well Directory for groups in the Liverpool City Region who may be interested in taking part in your event.  
[thelivewelldirectory.com](http://thelivewelldirectory.com)



- **Establish clear and focused aims, objectives and ambitions** to help keep you on track with the planning and process. Gantt charts can be useful for this.
- **Do you have adequate resources (financial and person-power) to plan and deliver the event?** How long will it take to get relevant funding, plus permissions and promotions in place?
- **Who will help you organise the event?** How many people are involved? Even a one-person show takes a lot of time, planning and resources.

- **Consider forming an event steering group** – and at each meeting, write out all the related actions, who is doing what, what has been agreed and related timelines.
- **Protecting everyone involved (staff, individuals, community members, wider public)** It is your responsibility to make sure everyone is safe, and you have checked that a venue has all the correct health and safety processes and procedures in place or that anyone you are working with has the right insurance documentation. Consider partnership working with other local community groups and organisations to share ideas, discuss activities, and help with advice, support, related costs.
- **Who is the target audience and how do you think they will benefit from it?**
- **Who would you like the event to appeal to?** Is it a specific group of people, a diverse audience, anyone passing by or people that go to a specific place? Is the event about the people, the place or a common theme?
- **How will you welcome those attending and how will they be engaged?** Highlight any information that might be useful – for example, is there an age guidance, any topics people might feel are triggering or content warnings about smoke, haze or strobe lighting that could be a safety factor to some people? Can you use certain words or different languages that relate to your audience on advertising or posters at the event? Think about certain colours, music playing or food that might appeal to them?



- **How will you communicate with your target audience** – door to door conversations, social media, leaflets and posters, radio, through community groups and newsletters, QR codes etc.? Are there other people who are well connected to the community that can spread the word of mouth? Are there people who would like to volunteer to help promote? If so, can you offer them a cup of tea, snack or offering to say thank you.

## The location

### Where will the event be held?

- Is the location big enough or is it too big?
- What is the maximum number of people you can accommodate?
- Does it fit with your plans and the number of people you are expecting?
- Do you need a booking system to keep track of numbers (in advance and on the day)?
- Have you risk assessed the site and are there any hazards?
- How easy is the site to get to, is it accessible and can emergency vehicles gain easy access if need be?
- **Do you have the landowners' permission, location hire confirmation and any contracts in place?** Always ask for a copy of the terms and conditions of hire from the outset and establish what licenses are held by the location, and which ones you will need to apply for e.g. special music licenses, special sound licenses, health and safety, public liability, performer insurance etc. and allow plenty of time for dealing with these in your timeline!

### When will the event be held?

- What day of the week, month, time of year? Choose a date appropriate to your event/theme/format. Check for any other key events taking place locally, regionally and nationally which may affect or clash with your event.
- **Are you hosting an after party or a meet and greet?** Do you want to run a workshop or talk to people for feedback after the event?
- Sometimes events have question and answer (Q&As) so the audience can find out more.
- Maybe everyone has to be off the site by a certain time due to licences or safety?
- Have you considered the amount of time it will take to clean up after the event?



St Helens Council's website provides guidance on organising events in public spaces.  
[sthelens.gov.uk](http://sthelens.gov.uk)



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# Finding Space

Here is a non exhaustive list of potential exhibition and performance spaces in St Helens



Visit the Live Well Directory for information about more community organisations around St Helens who may have spaces to hire for your events.

[www.thelivewelldirectory.com/](http://www.thelivewelldirectory.com/)

## Platform studios at the Coffee Stop

Wall mounted art

St Mary's Market, Chalon Way WA10 1AR

[platformartsthelens.co.uk/](http://platformartsthelens.co.uk/)

## Street and a Half

Big and small ground floor event spaces with an accessible toilet in the main building

Haydock Street, St. Helens, WA10 1DD

[kindred-lcr.co.uk/](http://kindred-lcr.co.uk/)

## The Millennium Academy of Art

Wall mounted art

The Millennium Centre, Corporation Street, WA10 1HJ

07771 847 539

[millenniumacademyofart.co.uk](http://millenniumacademyofart.co.uk)

## The World of Glass

Gallery spaces for Wall mounted art & sculptures plus hireable spaces for screenings, workshops and events.

Chalon Way E, St Helens, WA10 1BX

01744 22766

[Info@worldofglass.com](mailto:Info@worldofglass.com)

## St Mary's market exhibition space

Large event space that has been used for exhibitions, pop up markets and workshops.

St Mary's market, Chalon Way, WA10 1AR,

01744 677 155

[themarketsteam@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:themarketsteam@sthelens.gov.uk)

## Lucem House Community Cinema Plus+

Community cinema with stage suitable for performances, and workshop space.

78 Corporation Street, WA10 1GQ

[lucemhouse.co.uk](http://lucemhouse.co.uk)

## Libraries in St Helens

Different spaces in each library with the opportunity for performances, small scale exhibitions and workshops.

Locations in: St. Helens, Haydock, Moss Bank, Thatto Heath, Chester Lane and Eccleston

[artsinlibraries.sthelens.gov.uk/](http://artsinlibraries.sthelens.gov.uk/)

## The Bookstop St Helens

Small exhibition space, cafe space and in future a larger event space, suitable for events that celebrate the written word.

Bridge Street, St Helens, WA10 1NN

[thebookstop.org](http://thebookstop.org)

## St Helens Parish Church/St Helens Minster

The church encourages its use as a concert venue and an exhibition space for local artists within the church and the adjoining parish hall.

Church Square, St Helens WA10 1AF

[sthelensparishchurch.org](http://sthelensparishchurch.org)

## Catalyst Studios

Professional acoustically designed rehearsal and recording facility.

Units 7-17 Catapult Too, WA10 1LX

[catalyst-studios.co.uk](http://catalyst-studios.co.uk)

# Event Inspiration from We Reside\* Here

Reside started as a pop up exhibition at the World of glass that mapped the locations of artists around the borough, soon after this there were opportunities for artists to get help with funding, planning and commissions and collaborate, including 1-2-1 feedback from curators, at the end of this process we arrived at the end of 2023 with the production of We Reside\* Here.



**We Reside\* Here is both a publication and exhibition that maps and showcases the work of over 60 artists in St Helens.**

The document features a map, illustrated by Cady Davies and with graphic design by Karen Hitchcock, that places each artist in the area of St Helens that they are based, showing our audience that artists aren't rare beings, only to be found in the big cities of Liverpool and Manchester.

These artists are our neighbours, the people you meet on the school run, the folks standing at the bus stop, and they are only a small proportion of the people who bring light, colour, stories and the joy of creativity into St Helens.

As well as mapping some of the artistic population, the We Reside\* Here document provides guidance to artists.

There are examples of how a number of artists are making their work, designed to provide inspiration and support to other artists seeking to develop. A list of organisations who support people's creativity features, along with a breakdown of what the process of Reside\* was during 2023, so that other artists can pick this up and make new work in the future.

*"Sometimes a creative practice can be a lonely activity - you've got an idea, maybe you go and make it, but if you're outside of a formal method of sharing and creating your work like an organised group, a degree or college course, it can feel like no one wants to see your work or to help you to share it with an audience."*

**-Claire Weetman**

**The full map is available online:**

**<http://www.claireweetman.co.uk/gallery/print/we-reside-here/>**

# Talking to venues

## Tour Pack

(to send to venues to sell the idea of a show or performance to them)

Examples of key things to consider/include:

- **Length of pack** (2-4 pages max)
- **Images and copy** (what is the show about)
- **Production/event info** (what is the show about)
- **Promotional copy and images**
- **Info/bio about your company** (inc. Any previous credits)
- **Company and creative team details** (actors, producers, directors, production manager etc.)
- **Press reviews and audience comments** (links to videos, trailers and any other digital content or assets)
- **Technical requirements**
- **Audience info** (age guidances, advisories etc.)
- **Any show-related activity** (workshops, discussions etc.)
- **Access info**
- **Cost of the show, deal and splits** (that you are looking for, or are you open to discussion)
- **Contact details**



## Venue Agreement

### Charges and profits

Each venue will have a different policy for how to charge you. You need to think about if you want to make a profit, or if the production is non-for-profit, which means you can still make some money, but only enough to cover your costs.

### The most common charges are:

**Hire fee** (you pay a set amount and then keep your profits; the company will then keep bar profits if there is one);

**Guarantee** (the theatre guarantees to pay you (the company) a set amount no matter if the show makes a profit or a loss);

**Box Office split** (the specified percentage of Box Office (gross or net, whichever is greater – the actual percentage paid to the company is up to you to negotiate, and there is no fixed rule. This is usually between 65 – 80% in favour of the company.

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# Venue Contract

It is important to get a letter of agreement or contract with each different venue and clearly state what you expect from them and how you will work with them when you agree the booking. This can include things like:

- Do you bring your own equipment or are you asking them to provide?
- Does your equipment fit the electrical sockets at the venue?
- Is there a lift or many steps?
- Will any set or props fit through doors?
- Is there somewhere to park for loading/unloading
- How long can you get into the space to set up and possibly run or try some technical things before the event opens?
- Who is responsible for health and safety, first aid, evacuations, is it you or the venue?
- What is the venue capacity?
- Do you run your own technical aspects of the show or do you need the venue to provide a technician?
- Cost of hire and deadline for invoice payment
- Dates and times of use
- The terms and conditions of using the space
- Noise management requirements
- Capacity of the venue
- H&S requirements: evacuation processes, fire safety, first aid etc
- Information on other groups who also access the venue

Please see below information relating to key sections covered within an example contract. Where possible, be as specific as possible so you and the venue are clear on expectations from each side.

- Date of agreement made
- Names and details of all parties involved in the agreement
- Name and details of event/performance/venue
- Event details (date/s, time/s, ticket prices, ticket commission, running time, age suitability, seating capacity)
- Fees/settlement (what kind of deal e.g. Split, guarantee, first call, how much will be paid to the visiting manager, vat details and breakdown, bar profits, merchandise and sales, invoice details, terms and conditions)
- Technical info and breakdown (tech requirements, level of power required, get in and get out times, size of stage lifts and other key spaces)
- Marketing (marketing campaign, plan, actions and timelines, assets provided, photo and video permissions)
- Front of house (staffing required, support from venue, any additional charges)
- Venue parking
- Venue insurance
- Data sharing agreement (the collection of audience/participation data and where the booker agrees for this to be shared and used by a third party)
- Cancellation policies signatures (dated) from all parties

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# How to put on a workshop

To do this, we need to **develop our facilitation skills**. We hear this a lot... but what does it mean?

After talking to our partners and community we came up with a definition of the term “facilitator”: **someone who ‘holds the space to allow others to discover, play and create whilst balancing the energy of everyone in the group’.**

A session can be led by one or two people or a group who take it in turns to lead exercises and activities for everyone else.

A facilitator can run a workshop for a few hours, all day or a longer project.

It’s also important to consider how you will structure the workshop session. Ask yourself the following questions:

- How will I welcome participants when arriving at the sessions?
- How will I welcome participants when arriving at the sessions?
- How will I ask participants to introduce themselves?
- How can I build trust with participants?
- Would the workshop session benefit from an ice-breaker?
- What questions will I ask participants?
- How will I capture and record participant feedback?
- How will I wrap the session up?

## The Planning Stage

**Allow yourself the time and space to plan workshop sessions**

**During the planning process ask yourself:**

- What is the purpose of the project?
- Who are the participants, do I understand their history, relationships and the group dynamics?
- How many participants will be taking part?
- Where will the session take place, is the venue accessible to all, is it in a neutral location?
- How will I set the room up?
- What are the ground rules for the group, how will participants contribute to establishing them?
- What materials will I need for each workshop?



Reverse Realities workshop by Jasmine Lockett March 2025

Original material by



# What, Who, How, Where and When

Plan your questions based on the purpose of the workshop session and the participants who will be taking part.

Ask participants 'open questions' this will prevent participants responding with only yes or no to questions.

Open questions can include:

- Tell me about...?
- How did you...?
- When was the first time you...?
- What was that like?
- How do you feel about that?
- How would you describe...?



How to put on a workshop - image of Artists Together Seasonal Social led by Claire Eddleston

## Being an Active Listener

Having the ability to be an active listener is an important skill for a facilitator, this involves always listening to participants and their needs.

Making eye contact, nodding, repeating, referring back, clarifying, checking, focusing, and summarising are all excellent ways to show that you are listening to participants which, in turn, will encourage participation.

## Creative Activities

Develop a selection of creative activities and techniques which can be used to ensure that all participants have the opportunity to be fully involved and able to contribute.

When selecting creative activities consider:

**Consent** – Be aware that not everyone will want to take part in a creative exercise. Always give people a run through of what it will involve and explain why you are suggesting it so they can decide how/whether to join in.

**Variety** – Using a variety of tools and techniques will help a much wider range of people engage fully in your workshop session.

**Accessibility** – Not every activity will be accessible to all participants. Where possible, ask participants in advance if they have any access requirements that are relevant to the workshop.

Original material by

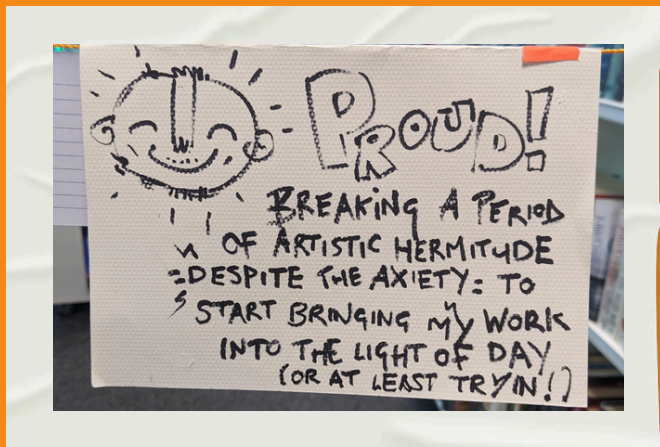


# Creative Evaluation Ideas

When you first think of 'doing evaluation', what is the first thing that comes into your mind?

Some responses from people often include: 'too much pressure', 'lots of writing', 'forms', 'analytics', 'feedback', 'consultation', 'stress', 'reflection', 'process', 'learning', 'don't have time'... **BUT did you know it can be really fun!**

Evaluation is important because it tells us if what we have done worked and it helps us plan our next event in a more informed way. There are ways to make it easy and fun if we think about it right from the start.



## Two different types of evaluation data:

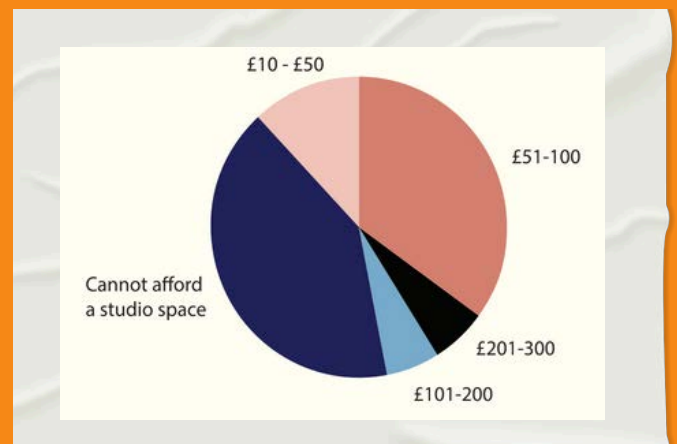
**Quantitative data:** this includes anything with statistics and numbers, so it could be how many people attended your event.

**Qualitative data:** this is more about how an event made people think and feel. This is so we can measure the soft outcomes of a project – for instance did the event have a positive impact on people's wellbeing?

## Evaluation Methods

Evaluation methods can include: online or paper questionnaires, data gathering, writing down comments, or keeping a journal/diary of things that you have done. It can also include more creative ways to get people talking, for instance it can be something fun, colourful and tactile, meaning that people are often more likely to spend the time on it.

Think about your audience/participants that have taken part when you are evaluating. Do they have English as a first language? Do they have access needs? Will you be on hand to encourage people or will you need to leave instructions to create the invitation to take part?. Base your creative evaluation on the theme of the event and the considerations of the group.



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THEATRE  
COMMUNITIES



# Here are a few examples of creative evaluation tools:

## Tablecloths:

You can ask people to doodle on them during and after events...just be careful of drink spillages) – tip: write your questions, or starter thoughts, so people know they can write on them.

## Washing Line:

We did this for one of our workshops (for people to write down/draw their feedback and hang it on the line) – tip: pre-write questions on different coloured card for people to select and peg up.

## Collective Graffiti Wall:

If you are looking to create a collective feeling, then maybe one long wall where everyone can also interact with each other's feedback, would be a great idea.

## Feedback forms:

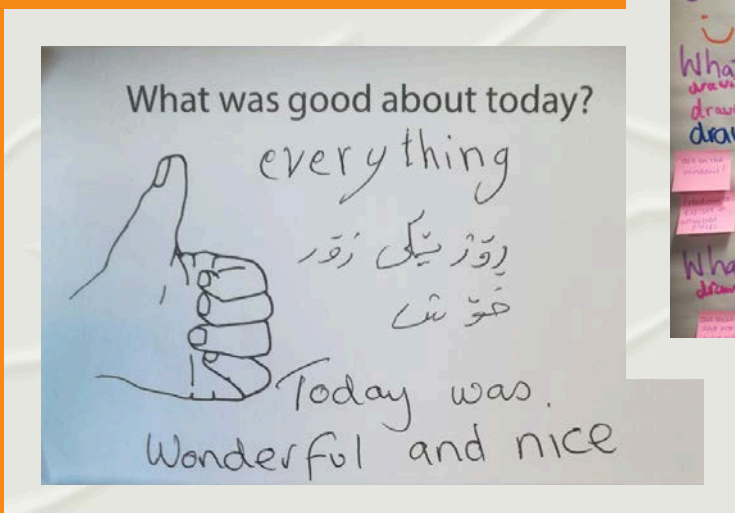
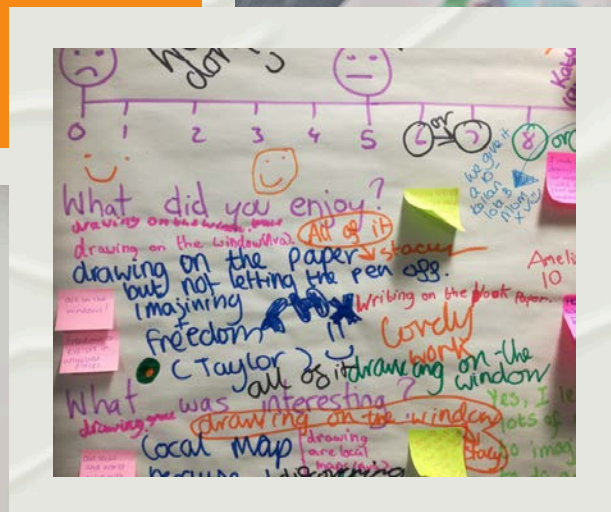
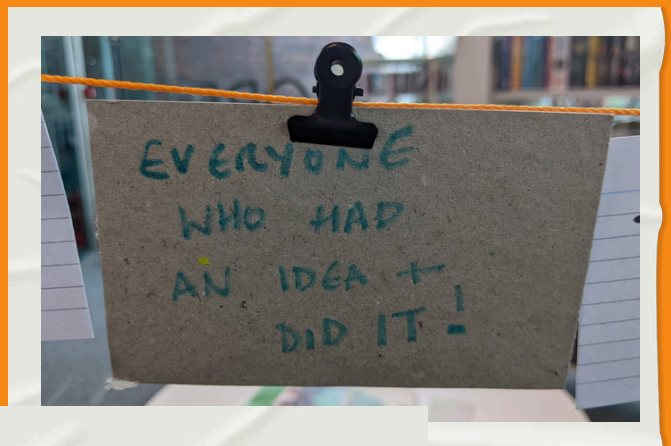
We have asked if people have time to fill in a quick feedback form when they leave, in order to improve events in the future and cater to what people want and need.

## Other Ideas:

Maybe consider using pictures for people to vote on, or for them to rate on a scale of 1-10, you could record a video in British Sign Language to ask the question and this could be played on a screen or tablet.

## Incentives for more detailed feedback:

If asking for longer and more detailed feedback you could offer a voucher for a drink from a local cafe or other independent business. Artist-Led St Helens offered survey participants gift vouchers for the bookstop St Helens as part of their research into studios.



Original material by



# Funding

Fundraising these days is an art in itself, with it's own set of skills needed to consistently get the funding you need. In the arts sector it's an important necessity because of its scarcity of it as well as the competition faced with the applications.

**Generally there are 7 sources of funding;**

- Donations, from the public or from certain organisations
- Trading (and commissions)
- Grants via Public Sector bodies (Councils, Museums)
- Grants via Trust Funds
- Lottery grants
- Business Funding
- Lending including Loans, microfinance, social value bonds etc.

**Whichever sector you're in, the process tends to be similar:**

- Planning what you are going to do
- Ensuring you have the right plan to do it
- Choosing which sources of funds are right for the project
- Building a proposal
- Applying for it
- Delivering the project
- Reviewing the project once completed and
- (sometimes) reporting back to the source of funds

**Where can artists and creatives in St Helens find out about funding?**

- A service called Grantfinder is available for free in both St Helens library and Newton library
- [Halton and St Helens VCA](#) can support voluntary and community organisations in finding funding
- [Uncover Liverpool](#) promote commissions and funds
- [Art in Liverpool](#) (Newspaper available from St Helens libraries and online) promote commissions and funds
- [Arts Jobs from Arts Council England](#) lists jobs, commissions and funding opportunities
- [Artists Together](#) as part of Arts in Libraries offer 1-2-1 peer support for artists applying for funding or commissions

## Top Tips when applying for funding

Read the instructions and criteria... then read it again and then check your answers match what they are looking for.

Keep it clear and concise

Give it to someone who is not in the arts to proof read and ask them if they get a clear idea of your project.

# Here are our top key places in St Helens to explore potential funding...

## Local grant funding

Via St Helens council, from the police (Community Cashback Fund 2024), local ward budget, community organisations etc.

## Private sponsorship

From commercial organisations who might give you money for your project if you advertise them in your show, on your publicity or social media.

## Charities

Where a percentage of proceeds from certain monetary gains are dedicated to a certain area or where people freely give donations for certain causes e.g. the National Lottery Arts Fund.

## Trusts and Foundations

These could be from people who have left money in their estate for others to manage after they pass away for specific things like arts, nature or communities, eg, Paul Hamlyn Foundation or Steve Prescott foundation.

## Funding from other creative organisations

Especially if their current goals/projects align with yours they may be interested in funding the project and/or supporting it in other ways.



**Arts Council England (ACE) Project Grants** are a major source of funding for the creation and touring of new work. A minimum of 10% match funding will be required either in cash (from another source) or in kind (like a community group or arts organisation you're working with offering rehearsal space or the use of equipment that you don't have to pay for but still holds a value.)

Did you know? Arts Council England can support in helping you to fill out forms if you are struggling. [artsCouncil.org.uk/access-support](https://artsCouncil.org.uk/access-support)

We also recommend [The Uncultured](#) who have artist-written guidance for applying for ACE funding and this [Library of Successful Funding applications](#) from The White Pube

# Budgets

To make a new show or run an event you will need a **budget** to cover the costs such as:

- The team and don't forget yourself – Arts Council England fair pay guidance is a useful resource
- Making your work accessible
- Equipment, props, costumes and infrastructure
- Marketing, film and photography
- Travel, accommodation and welfare whilst rehearsing and touring
- Artist and workforce fees, rehearsal fees, expenses and travel
- Rehearsal space
- Evaluation
- Insurance/licenses
- Accessibility – BSL interpreters, captions, specialist equipment like ear defenders or audio description
- Performance fees

Be realistic when developing your budget, ask for advice from people and local organisations, do your homework and understand everything you will need to include, always get quotes (three is a good number) to find an average, and always work with a contingency (a pot of money that is not assigned to anything but is like an emergency pot) of around 10% – 15% of your total budget. It's okay to review your budget as your project progresses and amend if required.

Make dates for when cash flow will be going out i.e. are you paying people monthly, when are invoices terms for each transaction and when do you get money coming in.



Arts Council England fair  
pay guidance  
[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

**Top Tip**  
**Invoices: It is your  
responsibility to keep  
track of your incomings  
and outgoing cash flow.**

Chase people if invoices  
are not paid and keep a  
diary or folder following  
the tax year for any self-  
employed records.

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# Fair pay for freelancers

How much should I pay myself and the artists that I work with?

## Visual Artists

We believe you should aim to pay the rates set by Artists Union England for visual artists.

New graduate artist:	£216.63 a day £119.15 per ½ day £27.08 an hour
3 yrs + experience	£284.31 a day £156.38 per ½ day £35.54 an hour
5+ years experience	£352.01 a day £193.61 per ½ day £44.00 an hour
Lead artist/Project manager	£387.21 a day £212.97 per ½ day £48.40 an hour

About these rates (Taken from the Artists Union England website)

- These rates of pay apply to freelance & short contract employment for artists working within the field of visual art.
- Rates apply to, for example, consultancy work, project planning and development, exhibition fees, workshop delivery etc.
- Rates do not include equipment rental costs, travel costs, publication costs, insurance or shipping, or any other costs.
- Rates do not include tax or NI contributions. Self-employed people should set aside 25% of earnings for this.
- Rates are for guidance purposes. Artists are free at all times to negotiate different rates of pay to those set out above.
- Day rates are based on an 8-hour day. The recommended minimum 'call' is for a half day session.

## Other creative fields

Other organisations represent and advocate for fair pay for other areas of the arts including:

- Equity, Performing arts and entertainment trade union
- Musician's Union rates of pay and agreements
- Association of Photographers - usage calculator
- ITC (Independent Theatre Council) rates of pay
- BECTU, the Broadcasting Entertainment Communications and Theatre Union ratecards.



Equity's  
Professionally  
made and  
Professionally  
Paid document

<https://www.equity.org.uk/>

# Setting up as a freelancer



# Setting up as Freelance or as a Company

We are always excited to see artists in St Helens set up as freelance artists or companies to start promoting their own creative businesses.

We have delivered events to help facilitate this business development, including collaborating with Tax, Back & Craic to introduce local artists to the professional skills network and tools they would need to set up to be paid for their work.

Here is some guidance our community have asked us about and wanted us to share in this toolkit - Make sure you take advice to decide what is best for you and your individual situation.

## Solid, simple steps to setting up shop as a Sole Trader

- Log in to your Personal Tax Account using your **Government Gateway User ID**.
- Register as a **Sole Trader** with HMRC (His Majesty's Revenue & Customs)
- When you register, you will be sent a 10-digit UTR by post. This is your **Unique Taxpayer Reference number**.
- You will need this to give to employers and to complete your **Self-Assessment**



[gov.uk/register-for-self-assessment](https://gov.uk/register-for-self-assessment)



### Community Interest Company (CIC):

A Community Interest Company (CIC) is a limited company, with special additional features, created for the use of people who want to conduct a business or other activity for community benefit, and not purely for private advantage.

[gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise](https://gov.uk/set-up-a-social-enterprise)

### Sole Trader:

A sole trader is a type of business where you work for yourself, make all the decisions and are responsible for all the debts.

[gov.uk/working-for-yourself](https://gov.uk/working-for-yourself)

# A basic Invoice template

## Invoice

Your Name  
Your address  
Telephone number.  
Email.

Ref: [Put something in here so you know which invoice has been paid, e.g your initials and a number.]  
PO Number: [If the person paying you has provided a Purchase Order number or a contract reference you can put that in here.]  
Date: [Today's date]

To:  
The person you want to pay you  
Their Address

Description	Cost £
Description of the work that you've done, dates etc. Itemise it if it's needed on separate lines. E.g one line for your time, another line for materials you've needed to buy	
Total	

### Payment Terms:

[Make a note of when you want them to have paid you by – 28 or 30 days is standard practice. <https://www.gov.uk/late-commercial-payments-interest-debt-recovery>]

### Payment details:

Account Name: Name on your bank card  
Bank: Name of your bank  
Account Number: Your account number  
Sort Code: Your sort code

**Tax Reference:** If you're registered as self-employed then you'll get a tax reference number, some places ask you to include it on the invoice.

# Creative Networks



# Local creative organisations within St Helens

There are lots of organisations within St Helens that can support you and your work. Some might be interested in participating in the work you do, others might have similar aims to your own and want to work alongside you. This is an incomplete list that highlights some of those involved in our projects recently. Check out the Live Well Directory for more places and groups in St Helens.

## Artist led St Helens

They facilitate and celebrate a wide range of artist led projects in St Helens including this guide!

[Artist-Led St Helens Wiki page](#)

## Artists Together

St Helens Arts in Libraries programme of support for artists and performers in St Helens.

[artsinlibraries.sthelens.gov.uk](http://artsinlibraries.sthelens.gov.uk)

## Buzz Hub

Creative day programmes for people with various support needs.

[sthelenscdp.co.uk](http://sthelenscdp.co.uk)

## Cafe Laziz

A cafe that helps people from other countries to learn english and create meals for the community.

[Cafe Laziz on the Live Well Directory](#)

## Creative Alternatives

A prescription service that offers residents of St Helens a free programme that is centred around creative activities, wellbeing and self-care.

[creativealternatives.org.uk](http://creativealternatives.org.uk)

## Glass eye

A physical magazine showcasing local heritage photography and writing available from The Bookstop and Kaleidoscope Records

[Glass Eye on Instagram](#)

## Heart of Glass

Collaborative art organisers and facilitators, providing provide support, space and resources.

[heartofglass.org.uk](http://heartofglass.org.uk)

## Platform studios

Artist studios above St Mary's market with a wall based exhibition space.

[platformartsthelens.co.uk](http://platformartsthelens.co.uk)

## Positive life workshops

Mindful and sensory creative workshops

[positivelifeworkshopscouk.wordpress.com](http://positivelifeworkshopscouk.wordpress.com)

## Skobeloff Publishing

Publisher of books and ebooks, especially experimental books.

[skobeloff.uk](http://skobeloff.uk)

## Wonder Arts

Artistic experiences to children, young people and families who rarely engage with the arts.

[wonderarts.co.uk](http://wonderarts.co.uk)

**LIVE WELL**



Visit the Live Well Directory for information about more community organisations around St Helens and Liverpool City Region.  
[www.thelivewelldirectory.com](http://www.thelivewelldirectory.com)

# Local creative organisations within the North West

## Art in Liverpool

Online and physical art magazine featuring info on exhibitions as well as resources.

[artinliverpool.com](http://artinliverpool.com)

## Castlefield gallery

A contemporary art gallery and artist development organisation.

[castlefieldgallery.co.uk](http://castlefieldgallery.co.uk)

## Comics Youth

Creative workshops and artist empowerment for those Age 8 to 25.

[comicsyouth.co.uk](http://comicsyouth.co.uk)

## FACT Liverpool

FACT is a social space for artists to allow them to create transformative experiences across artworks, exhibitions, projects and events

[fact.co.uk/](http://fact.co.uk/)

## Home Manchester

HOME collaborates with artists to produce and present visual art, cinema, and theatre experiences.

[homemcr.org](http://homemcr.org)

## Liverpool Artists Network

[liverpoolartistsnetwork.org/](http://liverpoolartistsnetwork.org/)

## Shakespeare North Playhouse

A theatre that hosts and facilitates programmes of performance, activities and conversations.

[shakespearenorthplayhouse.co.uk](http://shakespearenorthplayhouse.co.uk)

## SINK Magazine

An online and print magazine that publishes the work of underrepresented creatives from the North of England.

[sinkmagazine.co.uk](http://sinkmagazine.co.uk)

## STAT Magazine

An independent art & culture magazine showcasing creativity outside of major cities.

[statmagazine.org](http://statmagazine.org)

## The Unity Theatre

A small producing theatre based in Liverpool that helps develop diverse theatre-makers at every stage of their careers

[unitytheatreliverpool.co.uk](http://unitytheatreliverpool.co.uk)

## The Whitworth

An art gallery in Manchester that also supports artists to create social change.

[whitworth.manchester.ac.uk](http://whitworth.manchester.ac.uk)



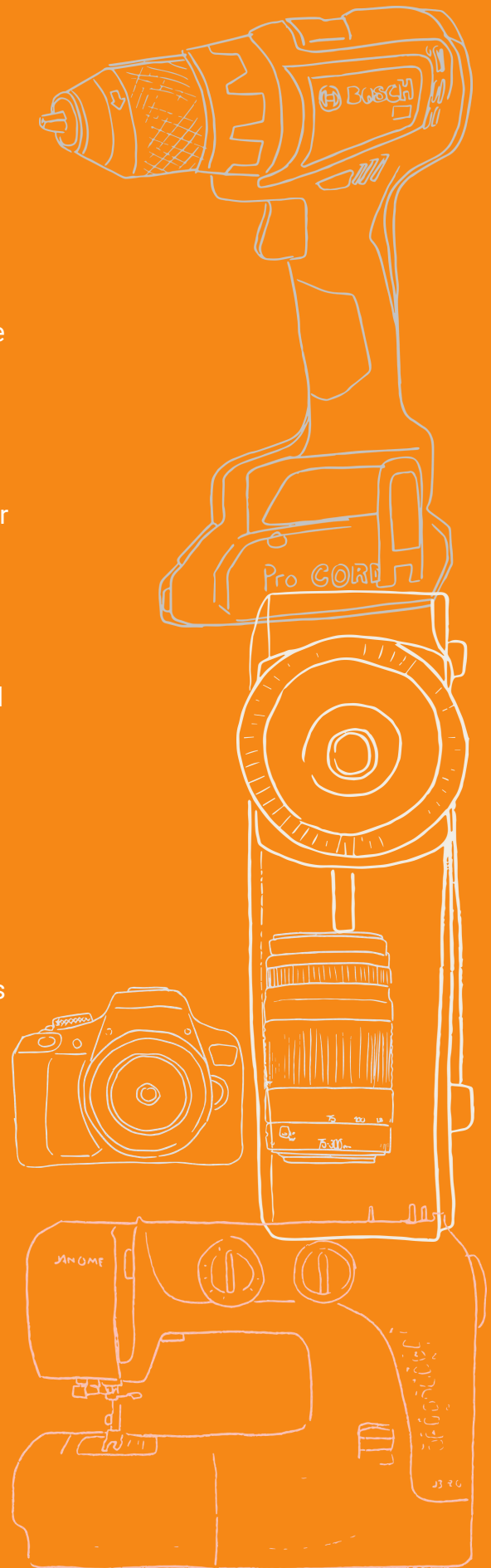
# Shared Equipment library

As part of a UKSPF funded project, an equipment library shaped by artists is being put together, the contents of which were chosen in strong collaboration with creatives around St Helens, we held zoom calls as well as in person events to work out what equipment the people of St Helens need and how often they would need to access it etc.

40 items of equipment plus the required accessories and storage were purchased and includes:

- **Digital Art Equipment** (ipads, drawing tablet and software)
- **Power and hand tools** (Drills, sander, router, tools)
- **Paper cutting, binding and sticking** (cutting mats, large paper trimmer, bookbinding tools)
- **Audio Visual Equipment** (Battery powered PA, microphones, podcast equipment, audio recorders, lights and digital projectors)
- **Display Equipment** (Theatre curtain stands, green screen and projection fabrics, exhibition panels and easel)
- **Photography and film** (4K video camera, dSLR and tripods, backdrop and stand)
- **Print and scan** (small print press and digital scanners)
- **Textiles** (sewing machine and overlocker)

Research into operating models for equipment libraries was completed by Artist-Led St Helens and a list of recommendations to enable access to the creative community will make the equipment ready for use during 2025.





# Creativity in mischief

By Joseph Hughes



Head above water

Some local creatives I was unable to credit, their work doesn't have a name, they probably don't even think of themselves as artists but it doesn't mean we have to ignore their work...

What would you name these accidental pieces?



writers demise



Clubcard not accepted...





Photographs by Christine Beckett



# Credits

Thank you to Derby CAN/DT Communities for allowing us to use parts of their fantastic Toolkit and take inspiration from the rest!

[View the Derby CAN toolkit on Issuu.](#)



With thanks to Derby CAN (now, DT Communities) funded by the Reaching Communities fund for sharing their toolkit, which we have adapted for St Helens.



Thank you to all the artists in and around St Helens who have given this Toolkit much more authenticity by working with us to bring their experiences to the forefront.

Thanks to the following folks for being part of the Artists Together programme this year, which has informed the contents of this toolkit: Andy Cave, St Helens Arts in Libraries; Pete Mercer, STAT Magazine, Pete Mooney, Tax, Back and Craic.

All freelance artists involved have been paid Artists union rates and rightly so!

Thanks to you too, the reader for even just considering making St Helens a more vibrant and creative place by sharing your work and talent with the rest of us!

**Written by Joseph Hughes for Artist-led St Helens**

**This toolkit is part of a commission awarded to Artist Led St Helens by St Helens Council's Arts Service. This project is part-funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority as the lead authority and part funded through Arts Council England. Additional partnerships with St Helens Borough Council, Kindred LCR CIC, St Helens College, and St Helens Borough creative practitioners.**



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**Kindred**