

Impact Report 2023-24



 UNIVERSITY OF
LINCOLN

 Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

Year one of University of Lincoln's National Portfolio Organisation (NPO) status, funded by Arts Council England.

The University of Lincoln is one of twelve universities to be included in Arts Council England's National Portfolio of Organisations (NPO), having joined the portfolio for the first time in 2023.

This recognition, from the foremost agency for creativity and culture, means that the University of Lincoln is considered one of the premier venues for arts and cultural provision in the UK.

As part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio of Organisations, the University delivers projects and activities through the Lincoln Arts Centre and Barbican Creative Hub.

This is all made possible and powered by the Centre for Culture and Creativity at the University of Lincoln, a 'think and do tank', researching and leading on cultural programmes and creativity.

This report details the impact becoming an NPO has had.

Who we are.

Centre for Culture & Creativity

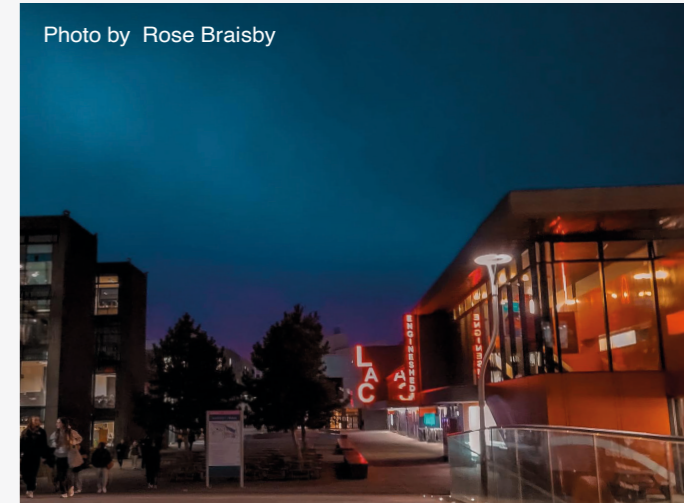
The Centre for Culture & Creativity is a 'think and do' tank, researching and leading on cultural programmes and creativity. It acts as a dynamic force, powering new conversations, collaborations and creative journeys. The Centre is a home and catalyst for a suite of cultural assets and organisations.



Lincoln Arts Centre

Lincoln Arts Centre is the University of Lincoln's public arts centre, with a focus on contemporary visual and performing arts. We nurture the next generation of artists and artistic ideas to create work that challenges, inspires and delights audiences across the campus, county and country. Re-opened in 2023, the organisation is undergoing transformation across four areas (People, Place, Perception and Programme) as part of its 2023-26 Strategy: 'Lincoln's Future Arts Centre'.

Photo by Rose Braisby



Barbican Creative Hub

Barbican Creative Hub is already proving to be a vibrant new addition to Lincolnshire's cultural and creative landscape, supporting individuals, businesses, and the creative ecosystem through a mix of projects and activities. With its physical space opening in January 2025, within the iconic Grade II listed Barbican building, this hub will provide a mix of studios, members' lounge, flexible co-working spaces, 'white cube' event space, meeting rooms, and stunning café bar.



Our impact (so far).



Supporting creative talent

£114,705

invested into artists, through commissions or fees.

37 creative artists directly supported.

Reaching new audiences

3661

first-time ticket bookers (35% of all ticket sales)*.

447

free tickets gifted via the Every Child or Blue Light scheme.

100%

of tickets were made available for £25 or less.

Dynamic programming

12

new works on their inaugural tour or presentation.

2

new seasons of work: 'Just What the Doctor Ordered' and 'Perma-Crisis'.

Visioning the future

4

major conferences.

40

national and regional speakers.

464

tickets booked.

Creating new opportunities

02

'Routes In' internships.

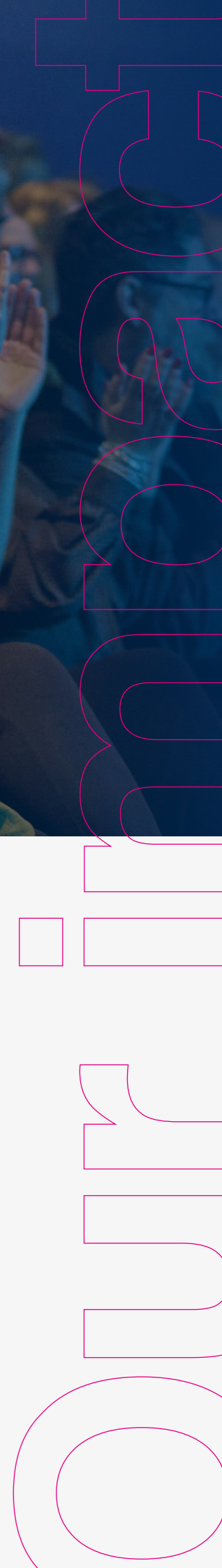
01

Associate Producer

01

Book Festival Director

*across all performances and events presented by Lincoln Arts Centre and Barbican Creative Hub.



Artistic highlights.

Just What the Doctor Ordered

Five pieces of work that connected to health, wellbeing, how we look after our minds, our relationships to our bodies and what makes us happy.

Autumn 2023 season

Perma-Crisis

Artists and young people in this season tackled some of today's 'big questions'. Through seven new pieces of work, they explored things like: how not to blow up the planet; vital life lessons from young people; and consumer culture.

Spring 2024 season



From Silence into Song!

A collaboration with the charity Shout at Cancer, celebrating life-affirming stories of survival shaped by the powerful legacy of radiation. Eight people living with cancer worked with four professional artists to bring together a new premier of performance at Lincoln Arts Centre.

Don't Panic!

A larger than life project that brought together young people and early career artists for three workshops in Lincoln. Together, they co-created an immersive participatory outdoor performance. The project explored the industry of panic - and the fight to keep in touch with our anxieties and stop them from overwhelming us.

2759

members of the public engaged with the project.



Keeping it local.



Photo by Phil Crow

Lincoln Arts Centre announced four **Associate Companies** and six **Innovate Artists** benefitting from the biggest support offering for early and mid-career artists in its history:

Associate artists

In 2023, the arts centre worked with Associate Artists Zest Theatre to commission a new made-in-Lincoln production packed with adventures, new music, and vital life lessons.

Camp Phoenix, Zest's first new commission since 2019, toured during Spring 2024 to Stockton-on-Tees, Lincoln, Barnsley, Canterbury, and Deptford. Every performance featured integrated Audio Description.

During its debut in Lincoln, 74 subsidised tickets were booked via Every Child scheme, an individual giving campaign to ensure every child growing up in Lincoln can experience great culture.

82
young people performed alongside professional actors.

600+
young made contributions to the script and the production.

10
freelance creatives were supported by the commission.

The creative team are majority disabled, majority queer, majority female, trans or non-binary and 80% white.

This...empowering, inclusive play, given an energetic production... culminates in a spirit of goodwill and rebellion – and with a humdinger of a show-tune.

The Guardian ★★★★★

Innovate artists

Innovate Artists are individuals and companies that Lincoln Arts Centre has supported as part of their mission to be a home for new artistic ideas.

Six £2,500 commissions awarded.



Four out of six commissions awarded to University of Lincoln graduates.

Innovate Artists supported six university alumni within the first five years of their professional lives.



Photo by Phil Crow

Lincoln Arts Centre presented **Demo**, three work-in-progress evenings where artists are paid to present new work for a supportive audience:

Demo

Featuring artists from across Lincolnshire and regionally, Demo has developed the ambition and quality of locally-created new work. Artists spent the day at the arts centre, where their work was documented by professional photographers. They also received advice from technicians and facilitated feedback from supportive peers.

9
companies

15
performers

88
audience members

Routes in.

Lincoln Arts Centre introduced two brand new job roles as part of innovative scheme to develop people's skills and kick start their career in the creative industry:

The scheme, entitled Routes In, aimed to provide the first step on the ladder to a creative career, retain more talent in Lincoln and bring new, diverse perspectives to arts centre workforce. Two new entry level job opportunities were created: **Technical Assistant** and **Digital Marketing Assistant**.



“Lincoln Arts Centre has truly transformed my office experience, making every minute enjoyable and unforgettable. I’ve never encountered such a unique blend of professionalism and fun.”

Mohammad

212

people applied, with a further 134 people who started to complete an application.

33%

of applicants identify as part of the LGBTQIA+ community.

28%

of applicants are Black, Asian, or from a global majority background.

14%

of applicants are disabled.



“There’s no apprenticeship for this kind of role, and for me I’d already studied in the past. I didn’t want to go to uni and pay for another three years of learning. So, this job enabled me to have an income and learn on the job.”

Alex

routes in

Wider impact

Working with the University’s People, Performance and Culture Department, members of staff at Lincoln Arts Centre took an innovative approach to inclusive recruitment by...

- Reviewing processes and removing barriers (e.g., industry jargon)
- Sharing information through alternative channels (e.g., Instagram Live)
- Developing new approaches to things like job guides
- Working directly with charity partners
- Discovering alternatives to competency-based interviews/shortlisting questions
- Advertising the roles together, focussing on shared learning and on the place of work
- Establishing a longer advertising period.

The result was most diverse pool of applicants the arts centre has ever attracted. There was also a significant increase in early applications.

Big thinking.

The Barbican Creative Hub hosted a series of bold and inspirational conferences, each offering a dynamic platform for national and local thought leaders to address some of the challenges and opportunities for the region. With each event attracting an audience of 100+ creatives, industry experts and emerging talent alike were able to exchange ideas and help shape the future of the creative and cultural industries for Greater Lincolnshire.

Shining a Light on Social Prescribing

Inspired by the research of Dr. Robert Dean, Deputy Head of School of Creative Arts, this event showcased innovative approaches to social prescribing on a national and local level. It also presented a range of artistic responses throughout the day. Work included: a photography exhibition of social prescribing in action, a screening of 'A Super Happy Story: About Feeling Super Sad' and a performance of 'Don't be Silent Tonight' by Cat Winter with choir featuring students from the BA Music course and in support of the Bearded Fishermen Mental Health and Suicide Prevention charity.

"I really enjoyed the event! ...I love the idea of incorporating creative workshops, the importance of creativity and connection was really prevalent."

Participant feedback



Technically Speaking

Future-proofing technicians and back of stage roles, this event looked at a wide reaching number of topics including AI, improving working conditions, to a more inclusive and diverse sector. Co-designed with the Technical Theatre and Stage Management Course at the University of Lincoln, Technically Speaking showcased an all-female line-up of speakers and panellists.



"In my opinion I also felt the healthy amount of time for audience participation/Q&As etc. really worked and allowed for a lot of interaction and shared learning."

Participant feedback

Future Perspectives

Exploring diverse perspectives and a multidisciplinary approach to climate change, this event featured thought-leaders in circular, regenerative, slow, and de growth practices. Audience included organisations such as Innovate UK and the RAF who are keen to explore opportunities with the creative sector in the region.

"A well-constructed and ambitious event for this city."

Participant feedback

40 speakers: **16** National **16** Lincolnshire **5** East Midlands **3** Internationally renowned

Hitting the brief.

Securing NPO status has also enhanced our ability to support the University's Arts, Heritage and Culture Strategy and wider Strategic Plan. This is evident throughout the impact report, in addition to the examples below.

Aim #1:

Transform our campus into a vibrant creative hub – a destination for students, residents, and visitors that offers year-round cultural enrichment, excitement, and challenge.



Response: animated the campus.

- Transformed campus through ambitious and immersive activities, including 2,500 taking part in Don't Panic!, family-friendly Creative Weekender, and digital world at Frequency Festival
- Two new seasons of work, twenty new pieces of art, ground-breaking projects, all bringing young people onto campus for high quality experiences.
- Diverse range of high-profile conferences attracting a large audience of thought-leaders, industry and students.
- Work got underway on the latest addition to the university campus, Barbican Creative Hub .

Aim #2:

Serve and develop the local cultural ecology and its creative and heritage industries, contributing to their future success.



Aim #3:

Pursue innovative, synergistic approaches to teaching, learning, research, and professional practice that bring arts, heritage, and culture into mutually productive interchanges with science, health, business, and social scientific disciplines.

Response: local cultural ecology supported.

- Graduate outcomes enhanced through professional support for early career artists/recent graduates
- Delivered the largest direct investment into artists and Lincoln-made creative projects
- Supported the sector, through knowledge-transfer of research, expertise, and resources, whether grassroots or community-led to other Lincolnshire NPOs
- Ensured the Lincoln Book Festival was saved for future generations.

Response: synergistic approaches to our programmes, and the teaching, learning, research, and professional practice outcomes of the University.

- Twenty-four academics engaged through Open To Ideas. Developing links between submissions and research such as rural and coastal health
- Connections strengthened with Lincoln Medical School, International & Business School, School of Psychology, and the Schools of Design, Architecture and the Built Environment, Creative Arts and Social and Political Science.
- Hosted well-attended creative meet-ups to foster culture of collaboration with campus community and external stakeholders.

The Creative and Cultural Governance Board was established, as part of the NPO governance process, consisting of local industry and university leaders. This provided due diligence to the programme, whilst offering the opportunity to reflect on more strategic objectives and give visibility to other university initiatives.

Joining the dots.

As part of our ongoing commitment to championing the region's creative ecology, we were able to come together to share new research and best practice, undergo team training and development, and host several sector meet-ups with both partners and individual artists.

As a result, we:



Became Carbon Literate.



Collaborated with NPO Partners Zest Theatre on anti-racism training with Talawa.



Undertook significant regional and sectorial data analysis with Data Culture Change.



Participated in or hosted a variety of events amplifying the work of other organisations.



Worked closely with NPO partners and grassroots organisations to share best practice and opportunities.



Established 'Critical Friends', a self-organising group that inform and shape programming decisions, organisational activity plans and strategic direction.



Hosted six 'Creative Meet-ups' for artists to boost connectivity and belonging.



Hosted a visit from Darren Henley, CEO of Arts Council England, showcasing the ambition of the region's cultural and creative organisations.

Who we worked with:

Altech

Association of British Theatre Technicians

Baboro International Festival

Casson And Friends

China Plate Theatre

Christopher Raeburn

Dance Free

Data Culture Change

Derby Theatre

Design Nation

Designs In Mind

Engine Shed

Fiona Carruthers

Frequency Festival

Full Grown

Geraldine Wharry, Futurist

Green Synergy

GroundWork Gallery

Haptiv

In Good Company

Jonathan Hendry Architects

Joss Arnott Dance

Lincoln Book Festival

Lincoln College

Linden Dance Company

Magna Vitae

Mishap Theatre

Mouth House

National Centre for Creative Health

Nicola Davison Reed Photography

Nonsuch Studios

Northern Roots

Nottingham Playhouse

Phil Crow Photography

Prototype

Richard Hall Photography

Shout at Cancer Choir

Silent Upoar

So Festival

Social Prescribing Solutions

SoundLINCS

Southampton Hospital

Sugar Theatre

Talawa

Tanya Akrofi

The Hub, Sleaford

The Spark Arts for Children

Theo Simpson

Thick Skin

Threshold Studios

Under the Bed Theatre

Zest Theatre

What's next?

Being awarded NPO status has been a huge achievement for the University of Lincoln and is testament to the growing strength of the sector in the region.

Having delivered an impactful start to our NPO programme, for year two we plan to build upon the lessons learnt and connections made, whilst being more strategic and direct in the way that we support the sector - with the aim of achieving longer lasting impact and an equitable approach to delivery.

The Barbican Creative Hub will also open its doors in January 2025, adding a new cultural asset to the region, and boosting the overall offer of the university and working alongside its partners.

Our five goals:

01

Uplift people and planet...

...By ensuring that inclusivity, diversity, and sustainability are at the heart of what we do - so our work is reflective of the changing nature of the area.

02

Champion the region...

...By supporting the ecology of the sector, providing improved visibility, and opportunities for knowledge sharing.

03

Offer newness...

...By not only delivering directional programming, but also giving a platform to new talent, processes, and thoughts.

04

Go deeper...

...By drilling down into reporting and impact measurements, whilst using effective research data to provide insights and support decision making.

05

Create change...

...By offering two dynamic and brave cultural assets that support the wider region on an individual, organisation, or sector level.

Find out more:

c4cc.org

lincolnartscentre.co.uk

barbicancreativehub.com