



## Core Arts



**Website**  
[corearts.co.uk](http://corearts.co.uk)

**Location**  
Hackney, London

**Founded**  
1992

**Legal structure**  
Charity, Company Limited by Guarantee

**Description of services**  
Mental Health Day Care Service and Educational/Training College that promotes recovery, social inclusion and mental wellbeing through the arts

**Employees**  
Five full-time, 43 part-time

**Volunteers**  
75 per week

### Overview

In 1992, artist Paul Monks used vacant space in the old Hackney Hospital to do some painting for himself. He encountered a group of people who were using the mental health services and others who stayed around the partially decommissioned hospital (despite the fact that they might have been discharged). They were encouraged to use the space independently to be creative. Over time, the workspace organically transformed into a haven for patients on the psychiatric ward to realise their artistic and creative abilities.

With limited funding, an open studio was created and after several successful exhibitions, Core Arts was officially born and gained charitable status in 1994. After using temporary accommodation, it obtained the lease for a vacant building where it continues to thrive. The organisation has grown and evolved over 25 years to become a highly respected educational college which owns its own building and has 900 students taking part in 85 classes

a week. Although locally focused in Hackney, services have expanded to include 21 other London boroughs where the local authorities purchase their services.

Core Arts has been strongly driven from the outset by community needs, with service users playing an important role in the design and delivery (co-production) of services, including a series of ventures related to sports and leisure, landscaping and horticulture, as well as design and publishing services. In fact, 79% of Core Arts' Board of Trustees are service users or ex-service users.

### Addressing health and wellbeing needs

*"Core Arts is like a community and that's [...] so powerful, because it accesses a different side of the brain, this is what the neuroscientists are saying, the right side of the brain is a power source for wellbeing [...] I was in that dark space and I found Core Arts and started to just bloom a little bit again [...] it's a really healthy space a lot of people thrive in." (Member and Trustee)*

Core Arts promotes positive mental health and wellbeing through creative learning – providing education, training, employment and social enterprise initiatives that enable people who experience mental health issues to overcome barriers and fulfil their potential. Key elements include:

- Creative classes (about 85 per week), under five departments; Arts, music, multimedia, sport and horticulture;
- Open studios and resources for self-directed projects, including recording studios, exhibition space, art workshops and an ICT Suite;
- 50 professional PGCE trained and established/practicing creative arts tutors, assisted by 120 creative volunteers per week;
- Individual guidance and support in personalised progression and skills development.



## Business model and income sources

Core Arts is run by professional artists, writers and musicians in their own right, some of whom have been through the psychiatric health care system themselves. The organisation has a small, highly talented and skilled management team of 11, and a large volunteer group (circa 160 per year), with a special member volunteer progression scheme made up of clients or ex-clients.

Given the very difficult and uncertain funding context for mental health provision of recent years, Core Arts has been highly entrepreneurial in responding to income generation opportunities. At the same time they have ensured that priority is given to the stability needed by its service users or 'members'.

*"Our first life drawing class started on a Tuesday afternoon 21 years ago and it's still on a Tuesday afternoon, so it's that kind of thing that, you know, we do the same, we've just grown doing the same thing." (Director)*

Public funding via delivery contracts is the main source of income, including from personal budgets (currently about 25% of overall income) which are expected to be a growing funding source and seen as an increasing opportunity, given reduced public spending in other areas.

Other sources of income and support are from:

- Grants and donations – including from Lloyds Foundation Trust, The Tudor Trust, The Act Foundation, and other trusts and foundations, as well as from young people and entrepreneurs in the local community who help with fundraising;
- Local Government funding;
- Earned income;
- Public donations.

Core Arts are also involved in a number of delivery partnerships to pool the resources needed to address complex and varied needs, and help access client groups including through referrals from hospitals, GPs, social care services etc.

The organisation has many established partnerships with other public and third sector organisations focused on mental health and is part of the local Wellbeing Network with 12 other charities in Hackney.

They also have partnerships with other organisations that are seeking to be more inclusive including: Canal and Rivers Trust, British Museum, Science Museum, Victoria and Albert, London Symphony Orchestra and Ballet Rambert, and the Wellcome Foundation.

As a well-known innovative leader in mental health creativity, cultural diversity and social enterprise, Core Arts have exerted wider influence through sharing ideas and service models with others. These have included statutory services, schools and community groups, including organisations further afield, both at a national and international level. This has included becoming part of a local service to help others to set up community gardens/wellbeing spaces and also the replication of its model in Norway and Holland.



# Glamis Hall Community Centre



**Website**  
[glamishall.org.uk](http://glamishall.org.uk)

**Location**  
Wellingborough, Northamptonshire

**Founded**  
Taken over by locals in 2015 to save the centre from closure

**Legal structure**  
Charitable Incorporated Organisation

**Description of services**  
Community centre with a particular focus on providing a wellbeing day care service and lunch club for the elderly

**Employees**  
Four full-time

**Volunteers**  
25

## Overview

In 2014, people from the local community started a protest group and petition demanding to keep open a council-run day care centre for people over 50 because there was no alternative provision in the town or surrounding area. When these efforts became fruitless, they decided to take over the building and service themselves. At the beginning of 2015, the charity was granted the freehold of the community centre by the local council at a cost of £1. Although motivated by the aim to keep the day centre for older people running, the community group's vision for the centre was strongly linked to the roots of the organisation and had a much broader remit in the local community:

*"While we were protesting and collecting signatures for our petition, we discovered that there were a lot of people that had fond memories of the building from when they were a child or a young woman, having their babies weighed, coming here to discos, karate*

*and things like that, and we decided that we wanted to recreate as much of that as we could. So, we became an organisation with a wider purpose than just keeping the day centre open, which was our initial fight."*  
(Chair of Trustees)

## Addressing health and wellbeing needs

The community centre now provides wellbeing activities for people of all ages, ranging from toddler groups, football, youth and theatre groups and cookery classes for young people through to seated exercise and Zumba gold classes for older people. However, the principal activities of the organisation are the day centre and lunch club for people over 50 which aim to increase health and wellbeing more broadly by reducing isolation and loneliness, as well as increasing physical activity and improving nutrition:

*"We know we are doing a good job when we hear the clients say as they're leaving, 'thank you for another lovely*

*day, it's been fabulous, see you next week', we know that some people leaving on a Friday won't see anybody until they come back on Monday. People that come every day, we are their family essentially."*  
(Care Manager)

The organisation is strongly embedded in the area, with locals involved as service users, staff and volunteers. It works closely with local GPs and also recently joined a pilot scheme run by the NHS which allows them to undertake some simple health checks which can help to reduce A&E attendances. Glamis Hall also works in co-operation with the community, police and in partnership with local businesses and charities. For example, the 'Wellibus', a local social enterprise, has included a 'Glamis Hall' stop in its route and also helps with collections and drop offs on special event days.



*“When you live on your own, even if you live in an assisted living facility with a warden, it’s really easy to become isolated. We are a lifeline for some people. This is where they come to meet their friends. They come and make friends here and have activities to keep their minds ticking over. They have physical activities to keep their bodies supple, they play skittles, which is quite interesting and they have regular entertainment, so they get lots of enjoyment from coming here. They also get a freshly cooked three course meal, which for some people is probably the only hot meal they’ll get during the day. It is all freshly cooked, so it’s nutritious, and it helps them out with their diet as well.”*  
(Chair of Trustees)

### Business model and income

The centre draws from a variety of income sources, from trading with the public (including through a day centre, lunch club, café, exercise classes, room hire, transport, bathing services and fundraising events), grants (from the public sector and trusts) and donations (from local businesses, service users and the wider public). Although the day care service and lunch club for the elderly are the main source of income, Glamis Hall is very entrepreneurial in spotting opportunities for generating income (such as serving as the local driving test centre and renting out space for birthdays and other family celebrations) that can be reinvested into their social aim without causing conflict with core activities.

Glamis Hall makes very efficient use of the funds available. For example, the staffing model is highly dependent on volunteers which is cost effective and provides the flexibility to adjust to both busy and quieter times during the week.

In addition, the business is part of a very complex support network characterised by the mutual exchange of favours. Various local businesses have chosen to support the organisation as part of their corporate social responsibility activities. Staff of these enterprises also often choose to do work for Glamis Hall in their free time and become involved in gardening and other manual jobs as needed.



# Oldham Community Leisure



**Website**  
oclactive.co.uk

**Location**  
Oldham, Greater Manchester

**Founded**  
2002

**Legal structure**  
Community Benefit Society

**Description of services**  
Operates leisure and sport centre facilities and runs services in partnership with other agencies to improve the health and physical activity levels of local people.

**Employees**  
110 contracted staff (73 full-time, 37 part-time) and more than 190 casual staff

**Volunteers**  
Six regular and a pool of additional volunteers that can be drawn from to support special events

## Overview

As an independent public sector mutual or 'spin-out', Oldham Community Leisure (OCL) was set up by staff originally employed at the council-owned and run leisure centre. The outsourcing contract to run the facilities was initially awarded to a private sector operator, but objections to this led to the staff at the centre developing a counter proposal to establish themselves as a co-operative. The council were persuaded to reconsider, resulting in the contract being shared with the private local operator who provided transitional management support, before stepping away allowing OCL to become fully independent.

*"There were national organisations that bid for [this contract] – they didn't win, OCL won and one of the reasons for that was because of that local added value [...] it's the additionality [...] that they are embedded into the infrastructure of [the area] that's quite critical."* (Head of Health and Wellbeing, Borough Council)

The Community Benefit Society legal form was chosen for its flexibility, including with respect to the democratic involvement of staff and other stakeholders in decision making, responsiveness to community needs and innovation. The Board of Directors includes council members, staff and volunteer community members.

The establishment of OCL and how it is run has been strongly led by the original vision of its founding members and is shared by the local authority who are a 'co-operative council'. OCL work closely with the council to add 'local value', building on their knowledge and understanding of Oldham and its diverse communities with high levels of poor health and low rates of physical activity in some areas.

## Addressing health and wellbeing needs

As well as operating a range of leisure, sport and fitness facilities on behalf of

the town council, OCL provide various classes and services related to physical fitness and wellbeing. The aim is to be as inclusive as possible to overcome cultural and other barriers to physical activity. This is achieved by reaching out to those who would not normally use a gym facility, for example through delivering exercise classes in residential homes and women-only classes in the Pakistani community.

OCL also work in co-operation with the local community police service to address the town's history of ethnic and racial divisions and reduce conflict. These efforts have included sports activity that brings people from different communities together to integrate through football.



*“For us [the role of community businesses in providing health and wellbeing services] is helping with health issues within the local area and Oldham has a few of them that we are working very hard to improve across the borough. It involves working with the NHS, working with housing, working with the local Police services and other community businesses that are out there in Oldham, to make sure that an individual, a family, a community, are looked after for what they need and what we need to provide for them to make sure they’ve got the best in life in what we can offer.” (Community and Partnership Development Officer)*

Although currently at a stable stage, OCL have developed since their inception, constantly adjusting services in response to customer demand and community needs. OCL combine commercial outlook and customer focus with the ideal of serving the community. Skilled staff and advanced instructors are seen as important for the organisation’s competitive edge over budget private sector operators and in the context of delivering bespoke services to vulnerable groups with health issues.

## Business model and income

A main source of income has been the contract with Oldham council to run its facilities. Other publicly funded services include NHS commissioned exercise referrals for falls prevention (in partnership with Age UK) and for patients with heart disease (e.g. 2,000 such referrals in the last year) and from personal budget holders.

However, in the context of public sector austerity and the diminishing financial resource available for local services, there has been pressure over a number of years for OCL to steadily reduce its dependency on public funding. Income from trading with the public has increased steadily, particularly from gym memberships and swimming lessons. Any surplus generated is used to cross-subsidise less profitable activities within the community, such as for groups that would not usually be comfortable using a gym (e.g. those in residential homes and women in the Pakistani community).

OCL has numerous delivery partnerships, with other local and national organisations, to pool the resources needed to address complex and varied needs, and help access client groups (through referrals from hospitals, GPs, social care services etc.). This includes working in community facilities to increase the accessibility of services for particular groups, libraries and other community centres for example.



# Triangle Community Garden



**Website**  
[trianglegarden.org](http://trianglegarden.org)

**Location**  
Hitchin, Hertfordshire

**Founded**  
2000

**Legal structure**  
Charity

**Description of services**  
Community garden and therapeutic horticulture

**Employees**  
Five

**Volunteers**  
30

## Overview

The Triangle Community Garden started in 2000 when a social worker and landscape architect had the idea of setting up a community garden. They asked the council if they could use a plot of unused land, and after initially being brushed-off, they approached more senior staff who were persuaded of the community garden's benefits. The council supported Triangle with benefits in-kind such as provision of a water supply. A wide range of community members have come on board and the organisation has shifted emphasis in response to the needs of the community, in particular in the interest of a group of people with learning disabilities. In 2009, the organisation became a charity as they took on more responsibilities such as the use of a pavilion that had been renovated using local authority funds and a grant from a waste management and landfill company.

## Addressing health and wellbeing needs

There has been an emphasis on wellbeing services for adults with learning difficulties using social therapeutic horticulture. The 'Growing Ability' programme is run by a qualified

horticultural therapist and involves working in small groups, focusing on the support needs of individuals. This could involve building confidence, developing fine motor skills and support with planning. This led to the 'Growing Health' project that promotes active, healthy living. The sessions include weight management for those that wish, a group walk and learning how to cook healthy food.

*"So, health is important in all of our projects, so it might be through specific health activities, but also the education and also the therapy. We may not always be allowed to call it therapy because therapy has a particular meaning in the learning and disability context, but what we find, we are also empowering individuals and so that helps towards their specific goals. We do have this element of exercise and healthy lifestyle and healthy eating in all three of our projects."*  
(The Chair of Trustees)

## Business model and income

Two thirds of Triangle's income comes from service users' personal budgets. This is a state-funded allowance which can be used by people with learning difficulties (and others) to fund their

attendance at services that they and their carers deem best for them. To qualify to receive this income, Triangle had to register as a provider with Hertfordshire County Council.

Other income comes from renting the pavilion to other organisations, which is earmarked for funding the community garden activity. There is also a small amount of income from selling horticultural produce, jams and apple juice. A new collaborative relationship with a local deli has created more income from these sources. There are also small amounts of income coming from fundraising events. Costs are kept low by relying on volunteers for some aspects of the business such as finance and publicity.



# Windmill Hill City Farm



**Website**  
windmillhillcityfarm.org.uk

**Location**  
Bristol

**Founded**  
By a group of locals in 1976

**Legal structure**  
Charity, Company Limited by Guarantee

**Description of services**  
City farm – provides educational, therapeutic and recreational activities

**Employees**  
72

**Volunteers**  
400 volunteers per year – 63 per week are regular

## Overview

Windmill Hill City Farm was set up by local residents 40 years ago with an emphasis on education and the environment, as well as addressing disadvantage by providing a green space in the heart of Bristol. Over time, the venture has moved more into wellbeing-related activities with a key focus on mental health, learning difficulties and disabilities. However, although provision of services has become more diversified, the farm has stayed true to the original social aim that motivated its start-up and has maintained strong links to its local neighbourhood. The community facility continues to attract general visitors from the local population and aims to build community cohesion.

## Addressing health and wellbeing needs

Windmill Hill City Farm aims to improve the lives of local people through its services and facilities. It has a dedicated team that works closely with the local community and runs activities for people with health and social care needs such as those related to mental health, learning difficulties, addiction

recovery and so on. It also offers opportunities for personal development through short-courses for adults with support needs, a mental health drop-in as well as work and volunteer placements. The venue also hosts other organisations with similar aims and services and offers educational, recreational and therapeutic facilities and activities for a variety of client groups. These include arts and crafts, complementary therapy, yoga, and poetry, interaction with farmyard animals, community gardens, a picnic area, a community café and farm shop, sports pitch hire, a community building with rental spaces, and a nursery.

## Business model and income

The farm draws from a variety of income sources and has been entrepreneurial in responding to income generation opportunities while, at the same time, trying not to put activities related to its social mission at risk. Instead, income from trading with the public, generated through its nursery and café for example, is used to cross-subsidise the organisation’s mental health support activities.

*“We seem to be doing pretty well! We’ve got a model that seems to be working and it’s one that we’re flexible and adaptable on. We’ve got a very mixed income base where it’s earned income, as well as grants, as well as contracts, so we do pretty well on that.”*

(Windmill Hill City Farm CEO)

The organisation adopts an open approach to sharing knowledge and its business model with other public and civil society organisations, and emphasises the ‘give and take’ nature of such relationships.

*“You could say that is not very savvy; we’re not protecting our Intellectual Property. But it’s not something that can be exploited anyway, as it is so unique to your circumstances that it needs a lot of adapting and changing before you can use it. [...] Being proprietary about stuff and trying to guard it all isn’t really going to help that; it’s counter to what we’re here for. [...] The more you share, the more you get back!”*

(Windmill Hill City Farm CEO)