



FREEDOM FESTIVAL  
ARTS TRUST

# 2024 IMPACT REPORT

**FREE** festival

*"IT'S AN EVENT I WILL ALWAYS ATTEND. EVERY YEAR IS EXCITING."*  
- 2024 AUDIENCE MEMBER



# ABOUT US

**Freedom Festival Arts Trust are one of the pioneer organisations in Hull's cultural revolution. Producers of Freedom Festival, the Trust is anchored in the city of Hull and influential in the global arts sector.**

Freedom Festival began in 2007 and was inspired by the reformist legacy of William Wilberforce and the wider abolitionist movement. In 2013 we were incorporated as a charitable trust and since then, have undergone a significant transformation to better present, in public space, extraordinary artistic programmes rooted in the thematic exploration of democracy, freedom and human rights.

Outside of our festival programmes, we are committed to talent development and innovative participatory projects with a focus on work that raises awareness of relevant social issues in our local communities.

Freedom Festival Arts Trust is an Arts Council NPO (National Portfolio Organisation); an associate of the European arts network In Situ; and one of the 12 partners in the national arts network Global Streets. These partnerships have put our festivals on the international stage, allowing us to commission world class projects for the people of Hull and beyond to enjoy.



festival

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## DIRECTOR MESSAGE

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As 2024 comes to an end and the next stage in Freedom Festivals Arts Trust's journey begins, I am thrilled to share with you the impact report for Freedom Festivals Arts Trust 2024.

Through the delivery of our international festival Freedom Festival, we brought to the streets of Hull powerful performances, thought-provoking installations, and immersive experiences that celebrated freedom, creativity, and community connection in ways that resonated deeply with our audiences.

With performances that transcended traditional boundaries and installations that transformed our city into an open-air gallery, 2024 has been a testament to the unifying power of the arts, placing local people at the heart of our programme alongside the best international talent. From the quiet moments of reflection to the vibrant energy of the crowds, every experience reminded us, that creativity has the ability to inspire change and develop cohesive communities.



As we look forward into 2025, we remain committed to pushing boundaries, exploring new ideas, and deepening our engagement with our communities. We will look to do this via a number of core programmes, including the development of a year-round community engagement programme, the expansion of our Freedom on Tour initiative and the continued investment in commissioning national and international works for Hull, Freedom Festival and the wider East Riding, that engage, inspire, and delight our audience.

None of this would be possible without the unwavering support of our funders, partners, sponsors, donors, and volunteers, and for that, we extend our heartfelt thanks. You create the space for Hull's streets to come alive, our people to be seen and heard, and for the communities in Hull to come together and celebrate the rich, cultural essence of Hull, Freedom.

I would like to take a moment to thank the FFAT team who work tirelessly to deliver an exceptional cultural provision for Hull, in particular, a huge thanks to Mikey Martins, Jo Hawkes, Laura Beddows, Vanessa Nolan, and our previous chair, Kate Denby, who have all placed Freedom Festival Arts Trust as a key local, national and international player and I am proud to be able to take the organisation on the next step in its journey.

If you're reading this, you are already part of our journey and we look forward to continuing working together into 2025 and beyond. If you are not part of the journey, then we invite you to come along for the ride. Together, we can continue uplifting our community, enriching our cultural landscape, and building a legacy of freedom and expression through creative initiatives.

**Phil Hargreaves**  
**Festival Director**

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## 1. How big is your organisation?

We are a small organisation made up of 3 full-time, and 4 part-time members of staff. We are also supported by 7 people who sit on our board of trustees.

## 2. How do you get your funding?

We set up as a charitable trust in 2013 and receive core funding support from Arts Council England, Hull City Council, and long-standing sponsors of the festival. Outside of that we apply to trusts and foundations for funding, and receive donations from generous individuals. As well as this, we engage local businesses, organisations, and institutions through sponsorships. We also partner with creative organisations internationally to secure funding support for their artists to come to Hull.

## 3. Do you work with local artists?

Yes! We work with many local artists through our talent development programmes, as well as support local organisations by giving them a platform to showcase their work to the public. We are a strong believer in this and will continue to support new and innovative projects from Hull!

## 4. Why have international artists?

We believe that the people of Hull deserve to see the best! There are so many beautiful and powerful pieces of art and creativity from around the world that should come to Hull. We work with our fantastic international partners and through our networks to ensure they visit Hull and we are seen as international destination for culture.

## 5. Are you part of the council?

We are not part of Hull City Council, but they support us and are a core funder and friend of the organisation. We have been an independent trust for 10 years. In addition, East Riding of Yorkshire Council kindly provide project funding for Freedom on Tour.

## 6. Why do we charge for some tickets?

We are a not-for-profit organisation and would love to keep all the shows free of charge, however some shows we ticket to help cover show and venue costs. With all tickets we try to offer a pay what you can model or charge the lowest possible amount, with all ticket income funnelled into the programme. Our outdoor programme of events however will always be free-to-access.

## 7. What factors affect the size of the festival?

Since COVID, and now 8 years on from City of Culture, arts funding has dropped dramatically. Available funding through trusts and foundations has decreased, sponsorships have declined, and artist /production costs have gone up – understandable in the current economic climate. Over the last 8 years the festival budget has dropped by around 50%. We are working hard to identify new income streams and generate new partnerships, as we know that our audience deserve the best arts and creativity.

## 8. What's the plan moving forward?

With a new director at the helm, we are in a new era of Freedom Festival, and the Trust as a whole. We are looking to build on the foundations created, by developing further our community-based engagement strategy and collaborating with more likeminded organisations on projects which shine a light on freedom and what that means in our society today. We will also continue being a platform for new and emerging talent, and 'the place to be' to see cutting edge and thought-provoking performances. We have some great plans!

# FREEDOM FESTIVAL 2024 IN STATS

2024 saw the 17th edition of Freedom Festival take to the streets of Hull city centre, and the 2nd instalment of Freedom on Tour in Bridlington.



circa

**70,000**

visitors came to watch

**191** artists  
from

**32** companies  
present

**218** events

We estimate Freedom Festival had an  
economic impact of

**£1.8m to the city of Hull**

# FREEDOM festival *on tour*

circa

2,000

visitors came to watch

10 artists from 3 companies in

6 performances on  
Bridlington  
beachfront



# AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

**83%** of people said it was important to attend something with other people in the community

**89%** said it was important to support events happening in the area

**79%** thought the festival gave them a sense of pride in Hull

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*“Emotionally engrossed. It made me see things from a different perspective and acknowledge differences.” – Freedom Festival audience member*

*“Live in Brid, love Freedom Festival and want it to keep coming back to Brid!” – 2024 Freedom on Tour audience member*

*“Thank you for funding this amazing event, it brings the city together.” – Freedom Festival audience member*

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# DIGITAL STATS



**174k** social media reach

**49k** social media followers

**23%** total engagement rate

OOH & radio reach **1.8m**

 **WEBSITE:**

**24,000** visitors

**97,000** page views

# COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

**9** participatory projects

**576** participants

**1,800** hours of rehearsal or workshop time

## Installation (UK) *ON OUR DOORSTEPS* Tiitu Takalo, Zakiya Mackenzie, *We Live Here*

Themes – nature and our communities, climate change

**50** workshop participants    **11** different languages spoken

*“I would like to express my deep gratitude for the opportunity to take part in the project and to visit such beautiful places.”*

- Participant





## Performance (UK) CODE

### *Justice in Motion*

Themes – county lines, knife crime, child exploitation

**1,000** young people engaged through workshops and assemblies

Intensive engagement with **2** young people identified as at risk of criminal exploitation

**2,000** people watched the shows at the festival

*“I am really glad my 'hoodie' 14-year-old son saw the performance. He has been going off the rails recently and has admitted that his friend's brother delivers drugs on an electric bike. Hopefully this piece of theatre has been transformative.”*

- CODE audience member



# VOLUNTEERING

**84** volunteers completed **802** volunteering hours

**Our festival would not be the success it is without our volunteers.** Our volunteer programme has engaged over 1,000 people since 2013, and we welcome both new and existing volunteers each year to be a part of our team, ensuring our audiences have the best experience possible. We work with local organisations like VHEY to recruit, as well as welcoming volunteers from our academic and corporate partners.

# HEAR FROM A FREEDOM VOLUNTEER

Janet is one of our long-standing volunteers, and has given us some information on why she volunteers each year:

## How long have you been a volunteer?

I started volunteering in March 2014.

## How long have you volunteered for Freedom Festival?

My first Freedom Festival volunteering was in 2014, so I've been volunteering with Freedom for 10 years.

## Why do you come back each year?

After the first year volunteering, I just fell in love with Freedom Festival (and maybe the T-Shirts!) and thoroughly enjoyed being part of something very special to Hull.

## Do you have a stand-out moment from one of our festivals?

Every year I have a lot of standout moments but this year being a part of Pan Catwalk with my fellow HEY Volunteers has to top them all.

## What's the best thing about volunteering at Freedom Festival?

I think it's about being a part of a great event and being able to help a fabulous group of people as well as seeing some very different things.

## Would you recommend volunteering?

I would definitely recommend volunteering at Freedom Festival. As a HEY Volunteer since 2016, doing many hours (over 2000 approx.) on a huge amount of very different events, my favourite is still Freedom Festival.



# ACCESS

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We work with multiple organisations to ensure on-site and online provisions are made so our shows are easily accessible for all.

**10** BSL interpreted performances

**8** Audio described performances & exhibitions

**99%** of venues & performance spaces wheelchair accessible

## On-site

Access support

Changing place toilets

Quiet spaces

## Online

Audio, easy-read and large print programmes



# SUSTAINABILITY



As an organisation we strive to be as sustainable as possible, implementing policies and procedures for our staff, volunteers, and suppliers to help us reduce our carbon footprint. Some of the ways in which we do this are:

**Catering:** All caterers onsite used locally sourced produce and provided recyclable containers for all items. Staff catering was vegan and backstage areas were free from single use plastics.

**Marketing:** All brochures and staff passes were made with recyclable materials and were distributed by Hull Delivery Co-op instead of vehicles.

**Audience:** Our audiences were encouraged to bring water bottles to the festival and travel to the festival by public transport, with information on how to get into the city available on our website.

**Festival Themes:** Climate change was the major theme behind projects, *On Our Doorsteps – We Live Here*, and *Arch – Kaleider*.

We will continue to produce our festival with sustainability at the core, and currently work in partnership with [Oh Yes! Net Zero](#) to ensure we are doing everything we can with our artists and audience to reduce our carbon footprint.

# FREEDOM festival

Freedom Festival Arts Trust would like to thank the following individuals and organisations for their support in 2024.

## CORE FUNDERS



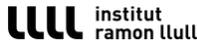
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**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



## MAJOR SPONSORS



## CORPORATE SPONSORS & CREATIVE PARTNERS



## MEDIA PARTNER



## ADDITIONAL PARTNERS



johnewright  
SIGNAGE | EXHIBITION | PRINT



CENTURY CONTAINERS  
Seamless Container Solutions.

Jadan  
Print that gets you noticed

## FREEDOM ON TOUR



EAST RIDING  
ARTS

## PARTICIPATION PARTNERS

### CODE

HCC Youth Justice Service  
HCC Neighbourhood Nuisance Teams  
Cornerhouse  
Route 1 Youth Centre  
Humberside Police

### PAN CATWALK

HEY! Volunteering

### ARCH

Freedom Chorus  
NAPA  
Carefree Singers  
Hull Male Voice Choir

### PRAM PEOPLE

Welcome House  
Child Dynamix  
HCC Children's Centres

### ON OUR

### DOORSTEPS

Welcome to English  
NICE  
University of Hull  
Yorkshire Wildlife Trust  
Rewilding Youth

## ACCESS SUPPORT

Gig Buddies  
Nice Twice Club  
Sight Support  
Disability Arts Network  
RevoLOotion  
Charlotte Anderson  
Dave Wycherley  
Michael Hurst

## 2024 TRUSTEES

K Hall (Chair)	G Taylor
P M Dalby	R Pritchard
K Denby	L Alford
N Porteus	
S A Christopher	



**FREEDOM**

Festival Arts Trust

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@FreedomFestHull

Freedom Festival Arts Trust is a registered charity (number 1158439)  
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