



# Impact report

2024-25





## **Our vision**

**A world where every child's imagination is inspired by theatre.**

## **Our mission**

**We create theatre *with* and *for* children and young people, lighting up imaginations and sparking creativity.**





# How Travelling Light makes a difference

## our Theory of Change

**Travelling Light is working towards a world where every child's imagination is inspired by theatre.**

**This means that children and young people...**

Experience and share joy with others.

Live in neighbourhoods that are vibrant and creative places.

Have creativity at the heart of their development.

Engage with creative storytelling and play.

Share imaginative experiences that explore their feelings, ideas and place within the world.

**Because they...**

Experience theatre that is created with their stories at the heart.

Experience theatre in their communities.

Feel valued as individuals and artists.

Are at the centre of how work is planned, created and delivered.

**To achieve this we create theatre *with* and *for* children and young people...**

In our local community, from our studio in Barton Hill, Bristol.

In schools and early years settings, supporting the cultural entitlement of hundreds of pupils per year.

That 'travels light' to where children are, reaching children, young people and families who would not otherwise have the opportunity to experience theatre.



# Winter Lights

## Celebrating joy and community in Barton Hill

On Sunday 26 January over **700** local children, young people and their families enjoyed *Winter Lights* – our community event in Barton Hill, Bristol, celebrating joy, light, creativity and the warmth of community. The day featured theatre performances by our Youth Theatre, storytelling, craft activities, a room of joy, a room of play, and a lantern parade that lit up the Urban Park in Barton Hill.

**“It’s the best. You see your kids enjoying themselves and there is nothing better than that, feeling part of the community is important and being with friends is good.”**

Audience member

**“It makes you feel great. Today is such a good presentation of UK diversity – everyone joining in as one community.”**

Audience member

People that came to the event were mostly from the local area and overwhelmingly said how the event brought the community together. **88%** of audiences our evaluator spoke to said they didn’t normally access arts or culture or only did so through Travelling Light’s activities.

The event was created with children and partners in the local community. In the lead up to the event over **400** local children and community members contributed ideas and took part in creative activities and lantern making workshops to help create *Winter Lights*.







# Youth Theatre and Louder Than Words

For young people aged 6–16

**87** children and young people took part in our regular Youth Theatre groups and developed their confidence, creativity and wellbeing. We ran 3 groups for children and young people aged 6–16 and Louder Than Words, our free group for Disabled children and young people with additional needs.

**“Mum, I love Travelling Light so much.” (I asked him why and he said) “when I have had a bad day at school, I come to Travelling Light and I feel happy again.”**

Louder Than Words member

**“I like how all of our ideas are valued and listened to.”**

Youth Theatre member

Our groups offer an accessible space for young people to explore their creativity outside school, ensuring access through community partners, bursaries and free places. In 2024–25, **51%** of children received bursaries to attend.

From Easter 2024, all our Youth Theatre groups developed *Where the Acorns Grow* – a new theatre show for our *Winter Lights* community event. Working together with our team of facilitators and a professional director, writer and designer, the participants created a performance, which was enjoyed by **180** people.



# Creating new work

## with children and young people

9 young people from our Youth Theatre and holiday activities and 7 artists spent 3 days together in our studio. They used themes from *Where the Acorns Grow*, our Youth Theatre show for *Winter Lights*, as a starting point for exploring ideas.

“My fave thing has been the creativity.”

Child feedback

“I liked that it was all magical.”

Child feedback

We played, improvised and discussed how we might create a new offer for primary schools that felt innovative, exciting and based on what the young people wanted.

Local children who took part said they enjoyed being in a room with adult artists, having their ideas valued and being treated as artists in their own right.



# Creative Learning

## In schools and early years settings

**1,068** children and young people enjoyed drama and creative play in their schools and early years settings, with **114** creative sessions supporting their self-expression, confidence and learning.

**“ It was inspirational not only for the children, but also the staff. It supported their confidence in allowing themselves to be playful and imaginative. ”**

Jet Davis, Head at Little Hayes Nursery

Our creative learning programme supports the cultural entitlement of hundreds of children through one-off bespoke workshops, as well as our regular Arts Days and Play in a Week activities with partner schools, which engage whole year groups in drama activities.

We also delivered Little Lights, a pilot project which explored creative play and storytelling with two early years settings, leading to our Light Up Language project.



# Light Up Language

**129** children took part in **43** drama and creative play sessions as part of our new 3-year Paul Hamlyn Foundation funded project, Light Up Language.

In January 2025 we began creative sessions in 3 local nurseries and 2 primary schools, exploring how drama techniques can be used to improve children's speaking and listening skills.

**“ I am so much more confident... now people say I am very chatty in class. ”**

Pupil

**“ One child in Year 2 who was reluctant to participate has become so much more confident in their speaking and behaviour. Their parents have noticed a real difference at home as well as at school. ”**

Teacher

In early years settings, benefits were observed not only in speech, language and communication but also in emotional wellbeing, social interaction and even other areas like maths.

In primary schools, teachers observed that the project helped pupils with group work, confidence, turn-taking and listening, which all supported communication skills.



# Creative holiday workshops



**“It was really amazing, kids love everything in each session. Thanks a lot to St Luke’s and Travelling Light for the effort they did. My kids loved it.”**

Parent

262 people from our local area took part in free creative holiday activities in Barton Hill, Bristol, alongside healthy meals for families eligible for free school meals, in partnership with food charity St Luke’s Lunch.

Activities included storytelling, craft, drama games, trips and picnics in the summer, Easter and half term holidays.

**“The Travelling Light and St Luke’s sessions give me a feeling of safety and welcome.”**

Parent

Evaluation during the summer showed that **90%** of children felt they were more creative, **91%** increased their confidence, **90%** had eaten better and the meal had helped financially.



# Summer School for Disabled Young People



7 young people explored drama, music, storytelling and art during our youth theatre summer school for Disabled young people in August 2024. We ran this in partnership with WECIL – West of England Centre for Inclusive Living.

Over the course of four days, one per week, the young people created their own story. It celebrated the resilience, strength, imagination and creativity that is within all of us. The summer school ended with a performance for family and friends in our studio.

**“ Travelling Light are really inclusive. They are non-judgmental. They really encourage young people to use their imagination and create stories... they are so accepting of the young people’s ideas. That doesn’t happen anywhere else. ”**

Parent

Evaluation showed that the project met a clear need for Disabled young people in the holidays.



**In 2024–25  
we were proud that:**

**Over 700**

children and their families took part in *Winter Lights*, **50** of our Youth Theatre members created a new performance piece and another **381** children, young people and members of the Barton Hill community were involved in creating the event.

**262**

children and parents/carers in our local area of Barton Hill, Bristol, took part in **15** free creative holiday workshops with free healthy meals. **93** people enjoyed other community events delivered with local partners.

**73** children and young people created theatre out of school

through our Youth Theatre, **100%** said their ideas were valued and listened to.

**21** children and young people with additional needs took part in Louder Than Words

and our summer school for young Disabled people, **100%** said they had made new friends.

**1,068**

students benefitted from our creative learning programme in early years settings, schools, higher and further education.

We provided employment for

**41** freelance artists and facilitators, and approximately

**358** days of paid work.

We also engaged **37** volunteers.

Bristol City Council's impact survey showed our work had an economic value to the city of

**£531,986**

through our activities and the creation of employment opportunities.







# Celebrations and Awards

In 2024–25 we celebrated our 40th birthday and looked back on reaching over 1.25 million children and young people through our shows and projects over this time.

We were delighted to win a Fantastic for Families 'Best Family Arts Activity' award for the tour of our early years show *Igloo* in January–February 2024. The national awards celebrate organisations who have made an outstanding contribution to family and age friendly arts and culture.

Our holiday activities and meals programme was shortlisted for an 'Audience Impact and Innovation' award. We also received a High Sherriff's Award for services to our local community in Barton Hill, Bristol.



# In 2025–26 we will deliver:

## Light Up Language

Year two of the project with 7 new schools and early years settings across Bristol exploring how theatre and creative play can support speaking and listening in young children.

## Development of new work for children and young people

We will continue to develop and pilot *The Forest Door*, a new theatre piece for school touring that is created with children and young people. We will also work with children, families and nurseries in our community on research and development for a new show and creative play offer for early years audiences.

## Youth and Community programme

Continuing our regular engagement with local children, young people and families. We will provide safe creative spaces outside school from our studio in Barton Hill, Bristol, with a focus on community cohesion activities with partners as a legacy of *Winter Lights*.

## Creative Learning programme

Continuing our engagement with schools and education settings; including developing our university partnerships to share our specialism in Applied Theatre and Theatre for Young Audiences.









# **YOU** can help change children's lives through creativity

From families experiencing moments of shared joy when watching theatre for the first time to young people finding a safe space to express themselves, creative opportunities can change lives.

Most of Travelling Light's income comes from donations from individuals, companies, trusts and foundations.

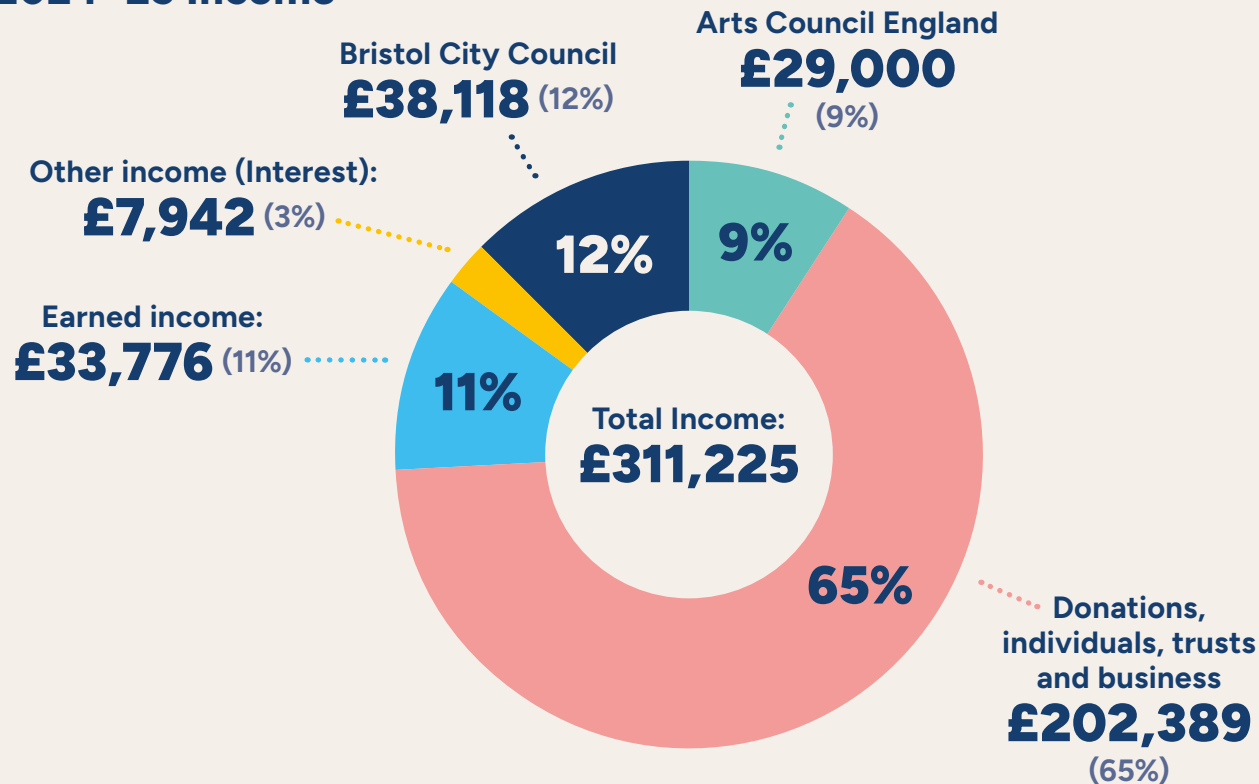
As a children's charity, we rely on donations to keep providing opportunities to create and imagine for all children and young people, especially those who are the least able to seek them.

**Support Travelling Light's work today.**

**Visit:** [travellinglighttheatre.org.uk/donate](https://travellinglighttheatre.org.uk/donate)

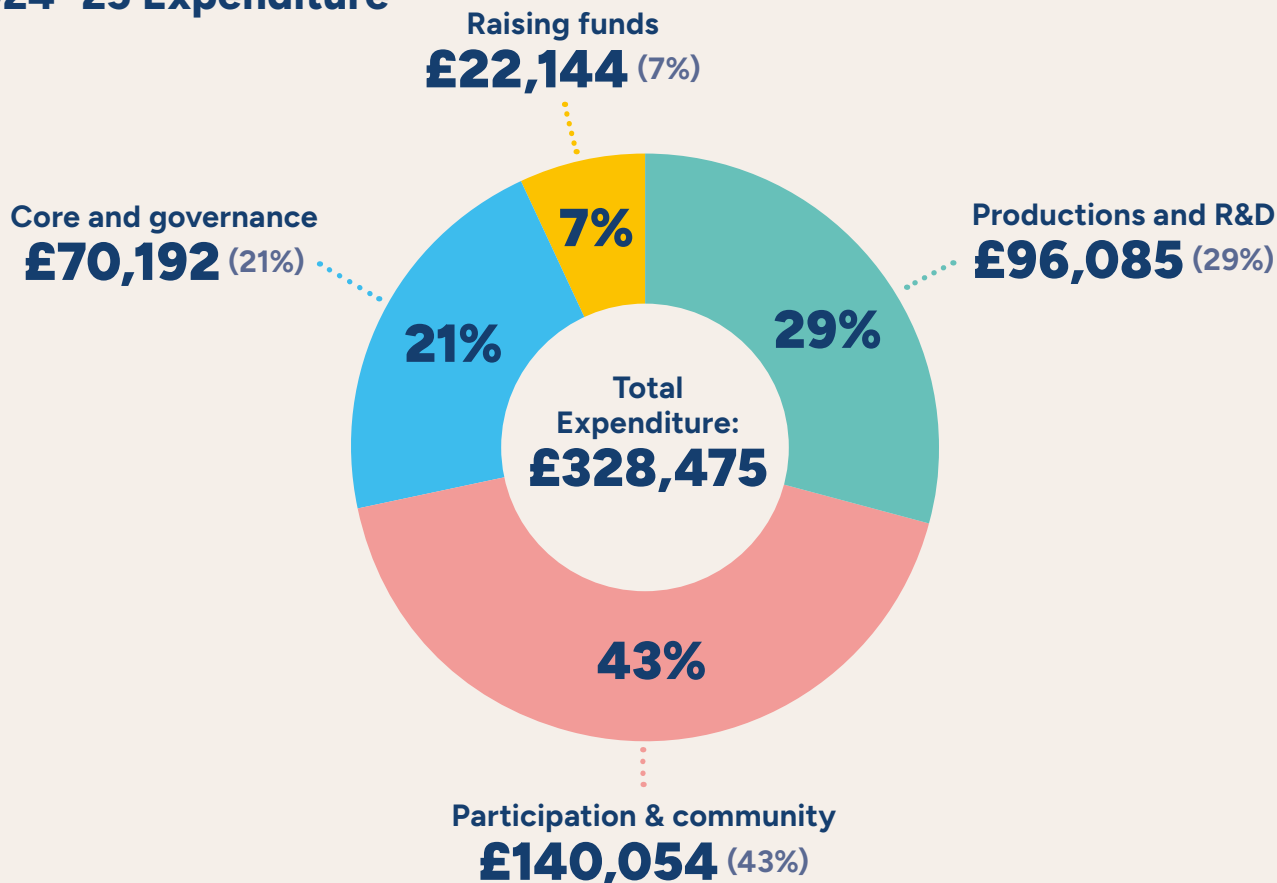
# Financial information

## 2024–25 Income





## 2024–25 Expenditure



# Thank you!

## Staff

Ali Sully General Manager

Dienka Hines CEO

Jamie Harber Marketing & Development Manager

Lizzy Stephens Artistic Director

Lou Betts Youth & Community Producer

Mike Akers Early Years Lead

Rachel Millett Creative Learning Project Manager

## Trustees

Ian Stickland Chair

Matimba Swana until Oct 2025

Jo Cross

Toni Glazzard from Jul 2024

Carlo Hornilla from May 2025

Selina Orrell from May 2025

Mark Richardson from May 2025

## Creatives and Organisations

Alexandra Ricou, Amy Iles, Amy Vickers, Angela Athay-Hunt, Bath Spa University, Brenda Callis, Bristol Grammar School, Brunel Field Primary School, Bruno Chavez, Casey Lloyd, Cashmore Early Years Centre, Chris Woodward, Claire Greenhalgh, Claudia Collins, Dan Canham, Easton Children's Community Centre, Ed Felton, Ed Patrick, Edwina Bridgeman, Elaine Faull, Ellie Kilburn, Emile Clarke, Fairlawn Primary School, Fifi Delaney, Flying Geese Consultancy, Hannah More Primary School, Headington Rye Prep School, Hillfields Library, Imogen Downes, Jessica Clough-Macrae, Joseff Harris, Kate Pasco, Kerry Russell, Kevin Stratton, Kieron Edwards, Laura Street, Lauren Filer, Little Hayes Nursery, Liz Felton, Lizzie Crarer, Megan Vaughan-Thomas, Meena Davies, Nick Fogarty, Nicky Ebbage, Nicola Bohlen, Oasis Academy Temple Quarter, Rachael Duthie, Raph Clarkson, Rebecca Braccilarghe, Richard Worsnop, Ruby Brown, SGS College, Shanti Sherson, Shoscombe Primary School, St Lukes Lunch, Stevie Thompson, The Lamplighters, University of Bristol, Victoria Park Primary School, Wellspring Settlement, Willow Vidal-Hall, Xahnaa Adlam.

## Photography

Alastair Brookes, Camilla Adams,  
Ed Felton, Nicky Ebbage.

## Auditors

Godfrey Wilson Ltd

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# Travelling Light

Just bring your imagination

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