

Pyramid Plan 2023 - 2028

This is a plain text version of the Pyramid Plan 2024 to 2028.

This plan explains Pyramid's ambitions and aims for the period 2024 to 2028.

It has been written by Pyramid's Visioning Group. The Visioning Group are 10 artists with and without learning disabilities, autism, or both, who lead on the strategic direction of the organisation.

'Strategic Direction' means deciding what Pyramid's ambitions should be, and what we will do to achieve them.

From October to December 2023 the Visioning Group consulted with members, volunteers, staff, and trustees, so everyone had a chance to contribute their thoughts and ideas to the plan.

The Visioning Group are Alice Burford, James Hill, John Densley, Matthew Watson, Nicole Guillian, Penny Lewis, Rosie McAndrew, Stephen Harvey, Victor, and William Stapleton. We were helped with photographs in this plan by Alfie Fox, Louis Wong and Mindy Goose.

Artwork

The Pyramid Plan contains photographs and artwork made by Pyramid's Visioning Group, which they describe here.

We took apart the Pyramid logo into three ticks. We realised that the word 'ticks' reminded us of creepy crawlies. We tried to change the name to "arrows" but by then 'ticks' had stuck.

We thought about single words and ideas about Pyramid and about writing plans, words like dreams, collaboration, exhibitions, music, skills, and ideas, and made a 'tick' based on each of these words.

We photographed the ticks around and about Pyramid's headquarters and studios in Holbeck with help of Pyramid artist Alfie Fox.

We used a lot of pen and paper to come up with our plan, so we messed around with stationery and scanners to come up with the background design. We worked with artist Nicole Guilliam to design the Pyramites, which are in the easy-read symbols. The font we have used is based on William's handwriting.

This artwork symbolises Pyramid's desire to change, develop and progress.

Our Mission

This explains what Pyramid does now.

Pyramid is an organisation of artists for lots of different people.

We do all sorts of art forms, including music.

Doing art and music helps us do what we want in our lives.

Pyramid supports us in the right way to be artists, by providing activity, skills development, materials and space which include everyone, including people and artists with learning disabilities, autism or both.

We make art together in groups, and as individuals.

We all have potential and ambition.

Some of us hope to be well-known or famous artists.

Some of us enjoy trying out art together.

We are all rounded individuals, not defined only by labels like ability or disability. There are lots of different aspects to who we are.

We want our membership, our workers and our audiences to be representative of all aspects of our identity.

We are proud of our work. Our authentic voices, views and histories are heard through our work.

We aim for everyone to see and enjoy our work.

We show our best work to the public at exhibitions and performances.

We want to use our art to make others think and care about the world.

We want to make big change through big art!

In the plan, there is a photo of an artwork by Stephen Harvey. It is a red, neon sign that says “roar”.

Our Vision

This explains the way that we would like the world to be.

Our Vision is that all people with learning disabilities, autism or both, will have access to the right space, equipment, time and support to discover and explore the arts.

We will be able to make our own choices about our artwork and how we make it.

All our membership will have the opportunity to be involved in the planning and leadership of Pyramid.

We will have access to training and new skills so that we can continue to develop.

We will work with artists, organisations, galleries and venues from across the UK and the world.

There will be more famous artists with a learning disability, autism or both.

Our social and creative activity at Pyramid will contribute to our members' wellbeing. Our members will be healthier, happier and more connected.

Why is Pyramid needed?

All artists need support. We need a particular kind of support.

All artists face barriers. For us these barriers are made worse by a lack of encouragement, choice, opportunity, access and control.

At Pyramid we provide each other with the right kind of support to thrive and develop as artists, and to overcome and remove barriers.

We work with research partners and care agencies who can help us to tackle and overcome the barriers that people and artists with learning disabilities, autism or both, face.

What have we achieved so far?

At Pyramid we have been making art together since 1989.

We started as the Arts Club at Meanwood Park Hospital, where most of our members lived.

We're named after the 'Pyramid of Light', the first piece of artwork by our members that was exhibited beyond the walls of Meanwood Park Hospital, at the City Art Gallery.

The hospital closed in 1996 and Pyramid moved to the Swarthmore Centre.

In 2002 we became an independent charity.

In 2010 we moved into our current base in Holbeck, Leeds.

There are 200 artists in Pyramid from across Yorkshire, of which 150 are artists with learning disability, autism or both.

We run 8 weekly groups in Leeds.

We work with 14 individual artists through our Development Teams.

Since 2010 we've run our High Rise programme which works with artists with profound and multiple learning disabilities. Half of our members are artists with profound and multiple learning disabilities.

We share the artwork we create through a programme of high-quality events and exhibitions across Leeds and Yorkshire.

We're really proud of the amazing big artworks our members have made, like 'Flocks' for Light Night in 2010, and the 'Big Hand of Time' for the Cultural Olympiad in 2012.

We're also really proud of 'The Pyramid View On...', our long-term series of projects where our artists create work in response to work presented by other organisations.

We've done this in partnership with organisations like The Tetley, Leeds Art Gallery, Kala Sangam, Opera North and the Leeds Lieder Festival.

We work with partner organisations to tackle some of the bigger barriers and challenges in our lives, for instance we worked with University of Leeds School of Fine Art to run the Irregular Art School – looking at the idea of developing an inclusive fine art degree at the University.

We run short-term projects and groups aimed at tackling particular barriers to involvement such as Developing You, a course in employability and wellbeing, and ALaDDIN – Leeds' Autism and Learning Disability Digital Inclusion Network.

Who is involved?

Pyramid is made up of lots of different people who do different roles.

It's really important that all these people have the opportunity to be involved in the planning and leadership of projects and of Pyramid as a whole.

There are 150 artists with learning disabilities, autism or both, who make art and music throughout the year, in groups and Development Teams.

There are 30 professional arts facilitators with lots of different creative skills and many years of experience working with people with learning disabilities, autism or both.

Our groups are supported by a team of dedicated volunteers who are on hand to assist the artists to complete their projects.

Our artists are often accompanied by support workers or family members who are a really important part of what we do.

We have a small, dedicated office team who run the operational, administrative, logistical and fundraising side of the organisation, as well as managing projects.

A passionate and diverse Board of Trustees with a broad range of skills and experience have overall responsibility for the organisation.

The Visioning Group is made up of artists with and without learning disabilities, autism, or both. They work with the office team and trustees to lead the organisation.

Part Two – Big Change Through Big Art

For this section, we (the Visioning Group) made a series of statements about what we want to change and added our ideas about how to do it.

Being accountable

Every June, Pyramid will produce a report which explains what we've done in the previous year (April - March) to work towards these goals and what has been achieved.

We will use specific action plans to do the work. These are separate documents to what's in this Pyramid Plan.

An Action Plan (or Strategy) means a document that lists what steps must be taken to achieve a goal. It breaks the work down into different tasks and says when they need to happen.

What do we want to change?

1. More people with learning disabilities, autism or both, will have access to the right space, equipment, time and support to discover and explore the arts.

We will continue running our Discover Programme of art groups and offering 1:1 Development Teams.

We aim to recruit 10 new members each year from across Yorkshire. We will develop and implement a new marketing strategy to support this by March 2025.

Pyramid will be more inclusive, flexible and safe for different groups of people.

We want to make sure everyone feels safe and welcome at Pyramid. We will make space and time to hear what people need and want from us, and make sure we offer flexible solutions.

We will increase collaborations and partnership working to reach new people.

We will work with our members and other networks to meet new organisations and form partnerships. By doing projects together, new people will find out about Pyramid.

We will increase opportunities to be involved in leadership and decision-making.

The office team and trustees will spend more time with members, offering drop-ins or informal opportunities to speak to members. We will promote opportunities to lead on specific areas of Pyramid's development without needing to be a trustee or Visioning Group member.

The plans we will use to do this work are:

- Recruitment Strategy
- Marketing Strategy

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

What do we want to change?

2. We aim for everyone to see and enjoy our work. We show our best work to the public at exhibitions and performances.

We will continue to deliver an annual programme of high-quality exhibitions, performances and publications.

Currently we produce around 40 events each year. We will set ambitious annual targets for sharing work, aiming to increase our reach, in person and online.

We will make sure a diverse mix of people experience our work as audience members.

Our Audience Development Plan will explain how we will reach audiences in person and online. We will set annual targets for increasing audience diversity.

We will work with non-arts organisations to tackle the barriers to inclusion that people with learning disabilities and autism experience.

For example, doing innovative research with universities, or working with social care agencies to change how our artists are supported.

We will share what we do internationally.

Through projects and exchanges with non-UK arts organisations we will create and share our work with an international audience, and exchange learnings about good practice.

The plans we will use to do this work are:

- Audience Development Plan
- Marketing Strategy

What do we want to change?

3. We want to use our art to make others think and care about the world. We want to make big change through big art.

We will create artwork that celebrates the fact that Pyramid is welcoming to a diverse range of people.

We will run at least one project each year that focusses on themes of diversity and identity.

We will create artwork which celebrates Pyramid's commitment to environmental responsibility and sustainability.

We will run at least one project each year that focusses on environmental responsibility.

We will create artwork which makes people think, and care, and act on social issues to make a better world.

The plans we will use to do this work are:

- Audience Development Plan
- Environmental Action Plan
- Artistic Programming Plan

What do we want to change?

4. We will be able to make our own choices about our artwork and how we make it. All our members will have the opportunity to be involved in the planning and the leadership of Pyramid.

Our weekly Visioning Group will continue to contribute to the strategic leadership of the organisation. The Visioning Group is made of artists with and without learning disabilities and autism. They work with staff and trustees to lead the organisation.

We will encourage and support more people with learning disabilities, autism or both to join the Board of Trustees or the Visioning Group.

We will continue to run other activities for all members that involve leadership and development as well.

We will explore ways for our members with learning disabilities, autism or both to design projects and to recruit artists to run projects.

We will have choice and control over the actual artwork we produce and the way it is produced.

We will provide training and support to encourage and support our artists with learning disabilities, autism or both, to run or deliver projects and to have choice and control over their artwork, specifically subject matter, materials, art form, techniques and collaborators.

The plans we will use to do this work are:

- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan
- Artistic programming

What do we want to change?

5. We will have access to the right space, equipment, time and support to discover and explore the arts.

We will source and use the best and most appropriate materials and equipment to support our development as artists.

We will do this in a sustainable way and always think about the environmental impact of the things we use.

We will use best practice around accessibility in our own venues, and the other venues that we use, both in terms of physical access, and the ways in which we provide information.

We recognise that no venue is perfect for accessibility and every space will present challenges to somebody. We recognise the need for compromise and will share friendly critical advice and suggestions with venues that we use.

Our office and studio will be safe spaces: welcoming, inclusive and safe.

We will explore ways of making our studio space more flexible and physically more adaptable, and accessible to artists week round, rather than just for a short session at the same time each week. This means that our artists are more likely to have enough time to do their projects.

The plans we will use to do this work are:

- Environmental Action Plan
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan

What do we want to change?

We will have access to training and new skills so that we can continue to develop.

We will provide our own inclusive arts training for freelance artist facilitators and support our team to access external training and skills.

We will redevelop our training programme so more of it is delivered by people with learning disabilities and autism, and more of it is attended by people with learning disabilities and autism.

We will support our members to partner with other organisations to access specialist equipment and skills, where these are not available at Pyramid.

We will support our artists with learning disabilities and autism to gain skills so that they have more opportunities to work in the arts, for example delivering workshops and sessions.

The plans we will use to do this work are:

- Training Development Plan

Contact

Our contact details are:

Address: 62 Barkston House, Croydon Street LS11 9RT

Email: info@pyramid.org.uk

Phone: 0113 234 6040

Text or Whatsapp: 07531 215 999

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