



SPRIT OF 2012  
INVESTING IN HAPPINESS

# OUR IMPACT: 10 YEARS OF INVESTING IN HAPPINESS





**SPIRIT OF 2012**  
INVESTING IN HAPPINESS

# CONTENTS

<b>WHAT (ON EARTH) IS SPIRIT OF 2012?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>FOREWORD</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>INVESTING IN HAPPINESS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>SPENDING IT WISELY</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>BUT WHO IS ALL THIS HELPING?</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>NOT YOUR TYPICAL FUNDER</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>PHYSICAL ACTIVITY</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>ART AND CULTURE</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>VOLUNTEERING AND SOCIAL ACTION</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>GRANT HOLDERS</b>	<b>29</b>



## WHAT (ON EARTH) IS

## SPIRIT OF 2012?

**Remember 2012? It was the year that the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games excited and inspired people up and down the UK, and across the world. That national positivity captured the attention of the BIG Lottery Fund (now the National Lottery Community Fund), who realised that events can have a monumental power and capacity to trigger change.**

Born from the legacy of those London 2012 Games, Spirit of 2012 is more than just a funder or charity. We help fuel community pride, positivity, and wellbeing across the UK. Set up with a £47 million National Lottery endowment, we support projects that foster social unity, champion youth empowerment, and inspire increased participation in physical activity, arts and culture and volunteering. Our work goes beyond simply funding - we also delve into research, evaluate our impact, and share insights. Over the past ten years, we have become experts in harnessing the power of events. Specifically, we have learned about turning that power into practical and meaningful changes that cultivate thriving, interconnected communities that echo the resilience and unity sparked by those events. Our goal now is to share that expertise as widely as possible as we look back at how we've helped to craft a more joyful, connected, and healthier UK over the past ten years.

**234**  
GRANT AWARDS

**£48M**  
GRANT FUNDING



**3.2million**

people have taken part in our events & activities

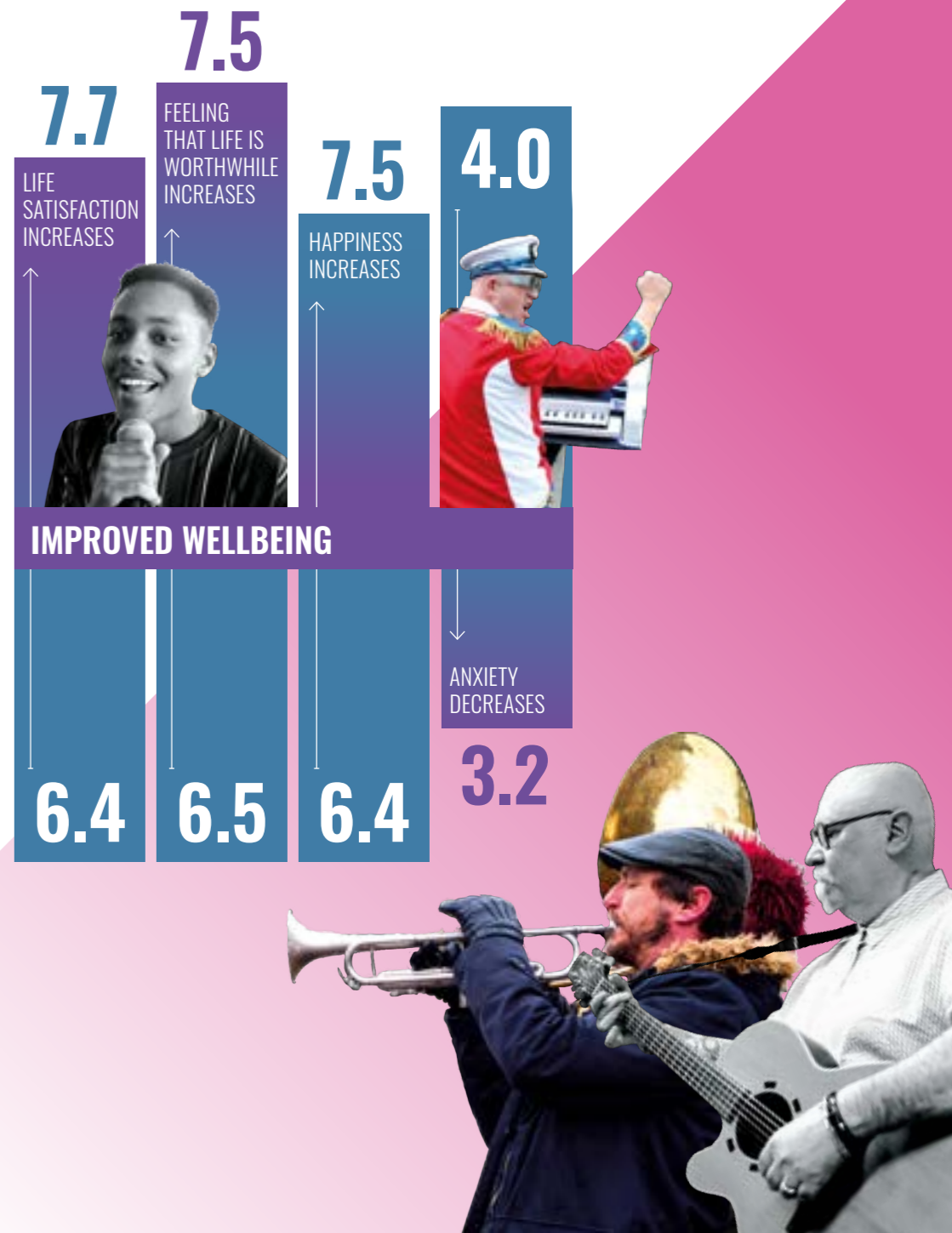
**60,000**

We've helped to engage and recruit more than 60,000 volunteers, social action participants and community helpers

**86,000**

To date, over 86,000 people have taken part in longer-term, regular physical activity and art and culture with our grant funding

Our targeted engagement means the average wellbeing of people reached by our projects is significantly lower than the UK average. As a cohort, people leave our projects feeling happier and more satisfied with life than when they started them:



# FOREWORD

## AN INTRODUCTION FROM SPIRIT OF 2012 CHAIR – JANE, LADY GIBSON OBE

**Spirit of 2012 was created with a vision to ignite positivity, enhance wellbeing, and foster community pride across the length and breadth of the UK. I believe we have made that vision a reality and I am delighted to share with you some of our achievements over the past ten years.**

I joined the Board in 2015, motivated by witnessing the power of culture, sport, and volunteering to enrich the lives of individuals and communities. I have had the privilege of visiting many projects over my time at Spirit, all of which have changed me for the better: The Women of the World festival in Bradford, especially meeting young women who *will* change the world. The opening events of Hull City of Culture in 2017 when residents of Hull saw the outside world looking at their city with the respect and affection that it deserves. The spectacular

opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in 2022. These are all moments that have redefined my understanding of what it is to be human.

**“We have been privileged to witness the power of unity and resilience in action”**

Over the years, we’ve been privileged to witness the power of unity and resilience in action. Our journey so far has seen us engage millions of people in events and activities that inspire and bring joy. We’ve been honoured to have our partners, volunteers, social action participants, and community helpers join us in our mission.

Through our funding, we’ve enabled thousands of individuals to immerse themselves in physical activity, embrace the world of art and culture and to become more active in their own communities as volunteers. Whether it’s disabled young people in Swansea playing hockey, a group of over 60s meeting up in a café in Morecambe to sing together or refugee mothers from Syria learning to play the ukelele, our funding has made people happier, brought people together and given people opportunities to join in where before they were excluded.

Now, our focus is on sharing what we have learned. We consider ourselves a ‘test and learn’ organisation. We are enthusiastic about learning from our successes and challenges and using these insights to support

projects across the UK to continuously improve. Our goal is to provide evidence, learning and tools from what we have learned so that others can continue the work and ensure their projects have the maximum impact possible.

**“We are enthusiastic about learning from our successes and challenges and using these insights to support projects across the UK”**

That approach sets us apart. We are not just a funder; we are change-makers, enablers, and believers in the power of human potential. We have invested in innovation, encouraged curiosity about impact, and shared everything we have learned about improving life satisfaction and happiness. We’ve seen how this approach has been transformational for many of our partners, and we are proud to be part of their journey.

Finally, we are indebted to our founder, the National Lottery Community Fund, for its investment and belief in us. This report is a testament to what we’ve achieved, the lives we’ve touched, and the communities we’ve strengthened. It is a story of resilience, unity, and the indomitable spirit of 2012 that continues to inspire us every day.

Thank you for being part of our journey.

**JANE, LADY GIBSON OBE**

**“Our approach has been transformational for many of our partners, and we are proud to be part of their journey”**

– Jane, Lady Gibson OBE

**“**

Ten years ago, inspired by the positive impact the London 2012 Games had on communities around the UK, The National Lottery Community Fund founded the Spirit of 2012 with a mission to continue that work, and harness that energy in the future. We are beyond proud of the Spirit of 2012’s achievements and the impact that has been delivered for communities with our initial endowment. For ten years, Spirit’s support has benefitted and supported people across the UK to come together, play an active role in their communities, and to be measurably happier and healthier.

– David Knott, Chief Executive of The National Lottery Community Fund



2013

**LONDON 2012 OLYMPIC & PARALYMPIC GAMES**

After the success of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games, Spirit of 2012 is born to preserve the spirit of pride and community unity. Championed by founding trustees Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson and Baroness Sue Campbell, we start awarding grants for inclusive arts, sports, and volunteering activities. Our partnership with Unlimited kicks off to support disabled artists, and we fund the first National Paralympic Day on the first anniversary of London 2012.



“ Spirit of 2012 now has a fantastic opportunity to capture that positivity and inspire future generations by supporting a range of exciting ideas around the UK.”

– Lord Sebastian Coe

2015

**RUGBY WORLD CUP**

We introduce open Challenge Funds to support inclusive arts, culture, and physical activity. We assemble the Spirit of Achievement Panel of disabled artists, sports people and charity leaders to award grants, and we launch Spirit of Rugby with RFU, putting young people in the lead to expand the diversity and accessibility of local rugby provision in fifteen communities.



2017

**HULL 2017 CITY OF CULTURE & WORLD ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Hull becomes our first UK City of Culture partner, marking the beginning of a long-term partnership. We support the Scottish Government's Sporting Equality Fund for girls and young women, and partner with England Athletics after the World Athletics Championships to diversify volunteering. We also publish our first independent evaluation from InFocus.



# INVESTING IN HAPPINESS – A RACE THROUGH THE PAST TEN YEARS

2014

**GLASGOW 2014 COMMONWEALTH GAMES**

We form our first Youth Advisory Panel, and allocate the panel £100,000 to run their own funding round. We make our mark in Glasgow Commonwealth Games 2014 by funding projects to bring young people from around the UK to experience the Games (Streetgames) and providing grants to individuals that cover the costs of volunteering (Volunteer Scotland). We launch the three-year Fourteen programme to enhance community wellbeing.



2016

**RIO OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES & 400TH ANNIVERSARY OF SHAKESPEARE**

We fund Get Set's Road to Rio to connect UK schoolchildren with the Rio 2016 Games. We make our largest-ever grant to Activity Alliance for Get Out Get Active and announce a £1.3m partnership with the Scottish Government. To celebrate Shakespeare's 400th anniversary, we fund Mighty Creatives to deliver Emerge

– a series of Shakespeare inspired youth-led arts festivals.



2019

**CRICKET WORLD CUP**

Work continues on Breaking Boundaries, a project led by Youth Sport Trust and Sporting Equals using cricket to unite communities. We also launch three Music Challenge Fund projects for social connection and wellbeing through music and establish the Carers' Music Fund, with funding from DCMS, to promote music-making among women and girls with caring responsibilities.



2021

**COVENTRY 2021 CITY OF CULTURE**

We support Coventry City of Culture's Caring Cities programme, which embeds artistic producers in four community organisations. We maintain our commitment to young people by recruiting alumni from our Youth Advisory Panel to join the Spirit of 2012 board. We also find the time to launch an independent Inquiry into the Power of Events.



2023

**EUROVISION, WINDRUSH 75, THE CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III, GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT 25TH ANNIVERSARY**

We launch the final report from the Inquiry into Maximising the Power of Events and contribute to Liverpool City Council's Eurovision schools programme and wellbeing evaluation. We make seven grants as part of our Moments

to Connect fund, which celebrates how national moments can bridge divides between people across lines of difference.



2018

**CENTENARY OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE**

We launch EmpowHER, a UK-wide initiative to empower and upskill young women and girls for positive change, marking 100 years of women's right to vote. Our grant to the Southbank Centre allows them to expand their Women of the World festival to five UK cities outside of London.



2020

**A PANDEMIC AND A NEW DIRECTION**

We pivot and introduce our new 2020-26 strategy, Happier People, Happier Places, focusing on evidence-building, partnerships, breaking barriers, social inclusion, and building influence. We fund the Jo Cox Foundation's Great Get Togethers and Great Winter Get Togethers across a four-year partnership. We work together with our grantees to adapt their projects during the pandemic.



“

I was the type of person who couldn't go anywhere on my own, and I knew that if I did this, I would have to make that step and go out there on my own and meet people and talk to people, and it's worked. I've got more confidence.”

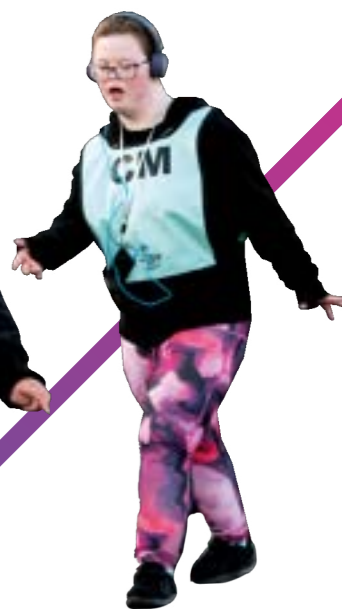
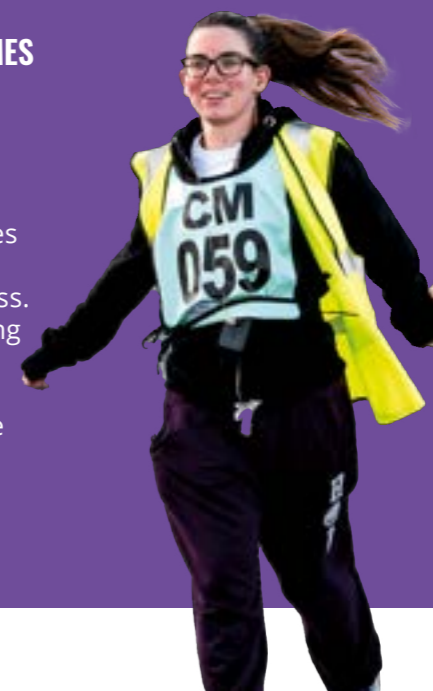
– City of Culture Volunteer



2022

**BIRMINGHAM COMMONWEALTH GAMES**

The 10th anniversary of the London 2012 Games. We celebrate the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games with mass inclusive dance cast Critical Mass. We launch Volunteering Cities to support applicants to the City of Culture programme to strengthen their volunteering infrastructure.



# SPENDING IT WISELY - HOW WE'VE ALLOCATED OUR FUNDING:

## WE'VE MADE THE UK HAPPIER AND MORE ACTIVE THAN WHEN WE STARTED

We've made sure to fund projects across all parts of the UK. Naturally, for a remit like ours, more funding has gone towards areas hosting major events. But we've also been careful to support programmes across the country, particularly in rural and coastal areas where we know that people often feel the least benefit from national events taking place elsewhere.

### CREGGAN, MONKSTOWN & LIMAVADY

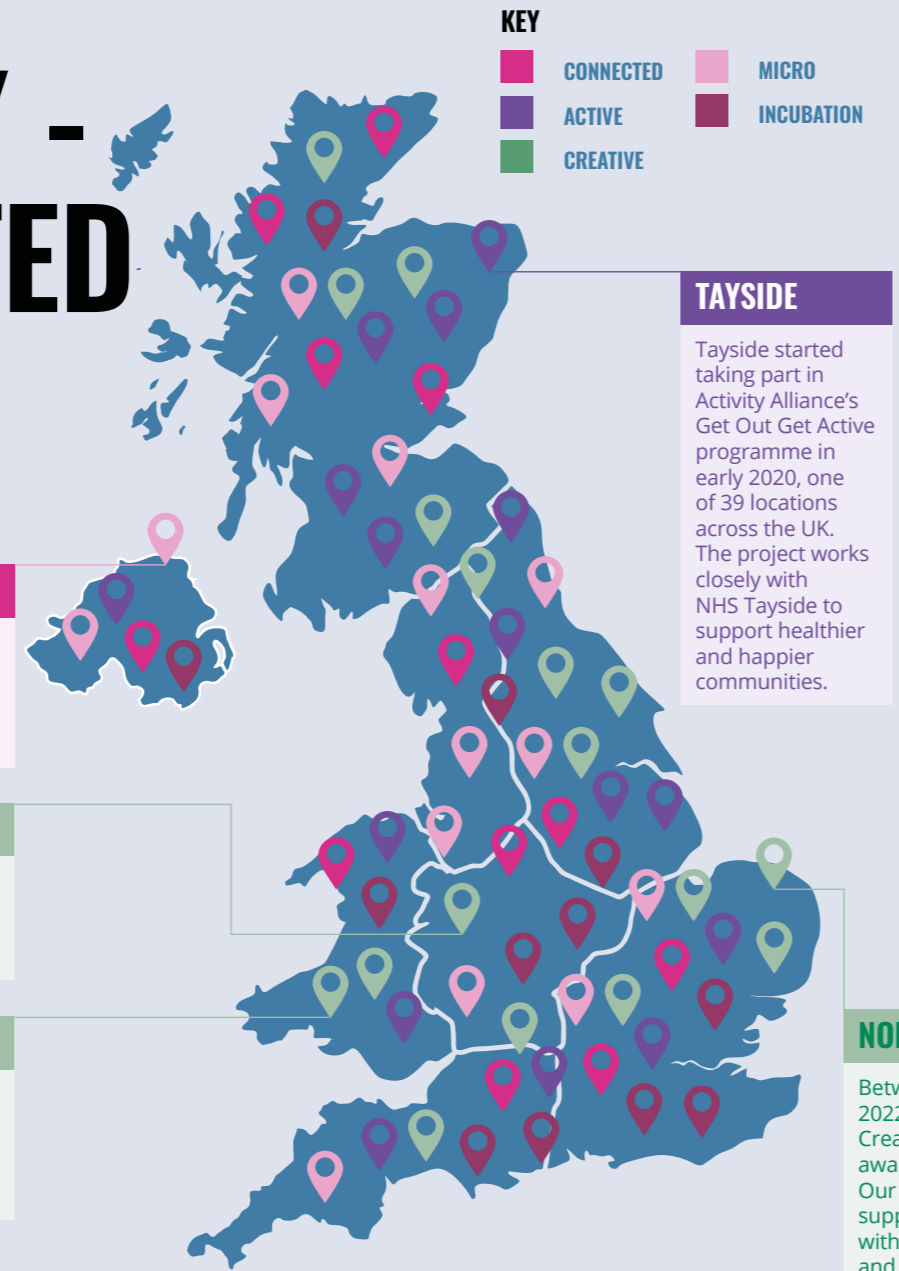
The three locations taking part in Springboard's Fourteen Now, supported by a £500,000 grant for community members to develop activities for their local area, a long term – and perhaps unexpected legacy project of Glasgow 2014.

### CANLEY

£196,000 to Warwick Arts Centre for a three year project with Canley Residents Association to develop an annual community carnival inspired by Birmingham 2022.

### SOUTH WALES

Youth Cymru set up for Creative Hubs across South Wales for young people to develop creative projects that challenged stigma around mental health. This £73,000 grant was awarded by the Spirit of 2012 Youth Panel.



### TAYSIDE

Tayside started taking part in Activity Alliance's Get Out Get Active programme in early 2020, one of 39 locations across the UK. The project works closely with NHS Tayside to support healthier and happier communities.

### NORFOLK

Between 2016 and 2022 we funded Creative Art East's award-winning Our Day Out, supporting people with a dementia and their carers to dance, sing, and get creative.

PROJECT LOCATIONS

## MORE PEOPLE ARE GETTING ACTIVE

**£13.3M**

IN 59 GRANTS IN OUR ACTIVE PORTFOLIO

Focuses on increasing physical activity among the least active individuals. Projects provide a range of activities tailored to people's needs, explore what interventions work best, offer peer support and mentoring, open pathways to other sports, scale successful strategies, and foster social interaction beyond the activities themselves.

## MORE PEOPLE ARE GETTING CREATIVE

**£12.5M**

IN 39 GRANTS IN OUR CREATIVE PORTFOLIO

Aimed at nurturing creativity through various art forms. Projects offer sustained arts participation, investigate how arts engagement impacts personal and community feelings, provide leadership opportunities in art production, encourage talent development and showcasing, create volunteering and employment pathways, and celebrate diversity and inclusion.

## MORE PEOPLE ARE GETTING CONNECTED

**£21.1M**

IN 45 GRANTS UNDER OUR CONNECTED PORTFOLIO

Designed to unite people from diverse backgrounds, especially younger people, to positively impact their communities. Projects offer volunteer opportunities, promote equal participation regardless of background, support local problem-solving initiatives, build social capital, and enhance community connections.

## SPACE TO TEST AND LEARN

**£850,000**

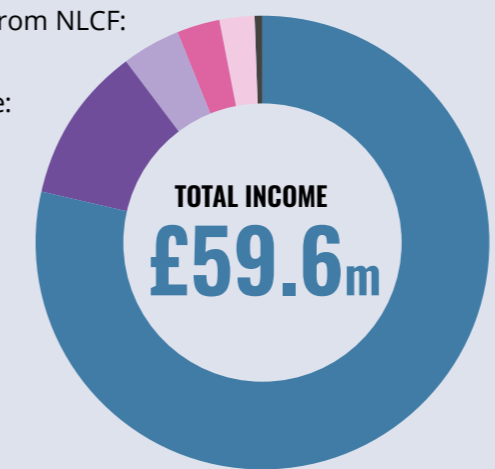
IN 28 GRANTS THROUGH OUR INCUBATION FUND

Supports smaller projects that test and learn innovative practices around our identified theme or facilitate researchers to consolidate evidence and pilot projects with delivery organisations.

...plus a little extra through micro-grants of less than £5k.

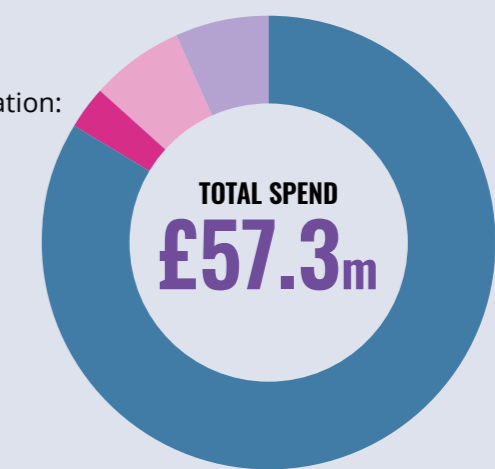
## INCOME TO DATE

- Original funding from NLCF: **£47.1m** (79%)
- Investment income: **£6.7m** (11%)
- Scottish Government: **£2.5m** (4%)
- #iwill Fund: **£1.8m** (3%)
- DCMS: **£1.5m** (3%)
- Local Trust: **£25k**



## TOTAL SPEND TO DATE

- Grants / Awards: **£48m** (84%)
- Learning & evaluation: **£1.8m** (3%)
- Managing grants: **£3.7m** (6%)
- Running the organisation: **£3.8m** (7%)



## MATCH FUNDING

**£25.9m**



# BUT WHO IS ALL THIS HELPING?

## WHO WE'VE HELPED

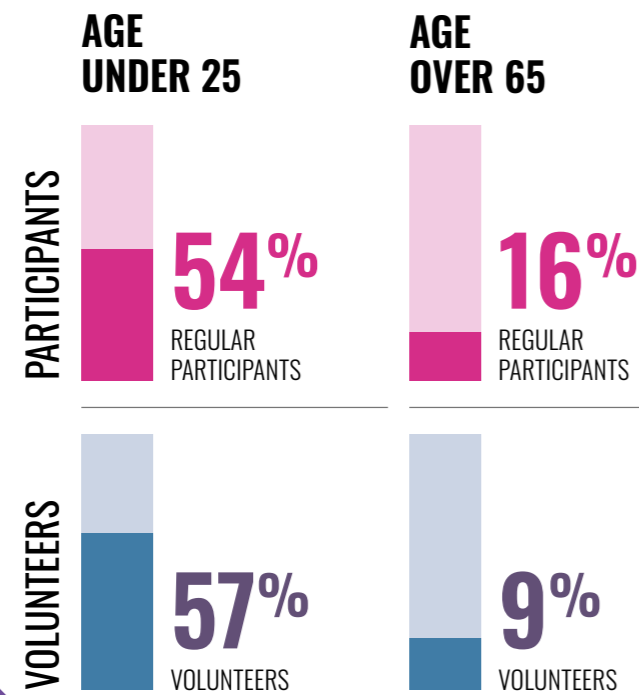
Our funded projects deliberately target the areas and people who need them, which means the wellbeing of our participants is often significantly lower than the national average. We now know from the data that - thanks to our innovative approach - people leave our projects feeling happier, less anxious, and more satisfied with life than when they started them.

Over 3.2 million people have taken part in our events & activities, with over 60,000 volunteers, social action participants and community helpers recruited. Alongside that, because of our support, 86,000 people have taken part in longer-term, sustained physical activity and art and culture projects.



## HOW WE'VE HELPED

We've worked hard to make sure that our funding helps the people who most need it, with a particular focus on young people and disabled people.



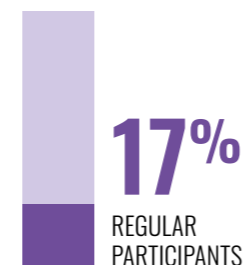
## LIFE SATISFACTION (OUT OF 10)

**6.4**  
AVERAGE WELLBEING OF PARTICIPANTS STARTING OUR PROJECTS

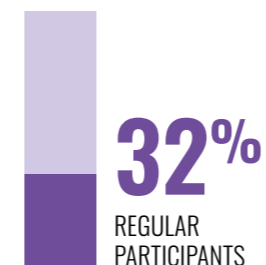
**7.7**  
AVERAGE PARTICIPANT WELLBEING AT THE END OF OUR PROJECTS

**7.7**  
NATIONAL AVERAGE WELLBEING (2019 PRE-COVID FIGURE)

## MINORITISED ETHNIC GROUPS



## SELF-IDENTIFIED AS DISABLED



## BUT DON'T JUST TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT...

“ Emerge seems unique as a project on this scale, particularly with the double prong of engagement and opportunity.... there's both opportunity for young people and for the artist. So that's two generations of people who can do things better. It's really nurturing, and development focused.”

– Young artist, Emerge The Mighty Creatives

“ I can communicate perfectly when I'm with Beacon Hill Arts. It's an environment where I have things in common with people. They understand what I'm looking for and what I want to do. It's more than just a school, a college, or a university. Beacon Hill Arts is on top of the pyramid. It's the easiest place to go, to be with people who have similarities to me.”

– Paul, participant, Viewfinder Beacon Films

“ The whole process meant that you got to see people transform. People have totally changed and now people know each other from the local community. We have one group who got a small grant, they call themselves the 'Likely Lads' and it is a group of people over 70s who get together once a week to go fishing. We got an award, it's all a massive achievement.”

– Ryhope and Hendon resident, participant of Fourteen UKCF

“ As a disabled person I am used to my body and mind feeling like a problem in public spaces, to standing out and causing extra fuss and anxiety around me. I attended every one of Spirit's Making Routes events with a confidence and sense of safety that I very rarely feel. What you have created...and the months of work behind this was something precious and powerful.”

– Jess Thom, artist, participant in Making Routes, Oasis Play

“ The stories and experiences that my clients have shared with me during their time volunteering puts a smile on my face, they have made friends, seen fantastic shows they otherwise wouldn't have been able to see, mixed with the stars and come away from it with a huge boost of confidence. The clients that have taken part have gone on to gain sustainable long-term employment and nearly every employer has remarked how impressed they were when they saw Festival City volunteering on their applications, it's gained an excellent reputation with everyone involved.”

– Lee Hutchinson, Employment Advisor & partner on Festival City Volunteers Festivals Edinburgh

“ I saw this event advertised in the local library when I was feeling incredibly lonely and tired with a newborn baby. This was back in June. I didn't even know things like this existed. I have met women of every age who I can call friends and I know I'm going to be part of this in the future.”

– Attendee of Women of the World, Southbank Centre

NOT YOUR TYPICAL FUNDER –

# A POSITIVE, HANDS-ON RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR PARTNERS

Spirit of 2012 has always been a hands-on funder. We actively communicate and engage with our partners to support their delivery and challenge them to really be curious and get under the skin of their impact. Since the beginning, we have promoted the use of Theories of Change and asked for standardised measures, especially around wellbeing. We have encouraged and supported partners to have potentially difficult conversations about how people feel about their lives, their communities, and the people around them, and be responsive to those findings.

As soon as Spirit began, we knew that the clock was ticking. The time-limited nature of our funding meant that we were committed straight away to learning as much as we possibly could and contributing and enhancing the understanding of how to gain maximum benefits from events.

We allocate up to 10% of our funding for partners to evaluate and learn from their projects. We've also worked closely with fantastic research and learning organisations InFocus, Renaisi and the Behavioural Insights Team over long term partnerships, to take an independent view of what we do, and how we can improve, and to provide evaluation support.

We've gained invaluable knowledge along the way and, for many of our partners, our unique approach has been transformational:

## LET OUR PARTNERS EXPLAIN...

“Neighbourly Lab has loved working closely with Spirit of 2012, both as a learning partner for the Volunteering Cities Fund and as a grantee for the Moments to Connect research piece. We have particularly enjoyed the open and collaborative approach from all members of the team; ever interested in what we have learnt and its implications for community connection and the sector more broadly. As funders, Spirit of 2012 are flexible and supportive of their grantees, encouraging them to overcome inevitable challenges while reminding them they can achieve their objectives. This is so necessary in the current climate and grantees appreciate the support.”

– Marnie Freeman,  
Neighbourly Lab



“It's been a real privilege to have worked with Spirit since 2016. A funder that truly lives its values, full of great people that trust in others and who genuinely care about the people behind their investments. With a relentless focus on outcomes and learning, Spirit have allowed us to flourish and create a genuine legacy from 2012 for those that needed it most. Thank you for all that you do and how you have helped others to think and act differently. I will be forever a Spirit fan!”

– Kat Southwell, Head of  
Programmes, Activity  
Alliance



“Spirit of 2012 are a hands-on funder. They strike a perfect balance between letting you ‘get on with it’ and having an active interest in what you are doing. They are challenging whilst supportive and are great at helping you figure out what learning can both improve what you do as well as inspire others across your sector and beyond.”

– Will Sadler, Co-founder &  
Development Director, Beacon  
Films



“It's been professionally and personally fulfilling to work with an organisation that has learning and innovation at its core. Springboard has developed so much from our partnership with Spirit, particularly on theories of change and impact reporting. Spirit is passionate about what they do and about learning, and they ensure grant holders are integral to this process – a great combination for both parties. Our relationship with Spirit has enriched our organisation in what we do, how we do it and had positive impacts on our staff and participants.”

– Angila Chada, Executive Director,  
Springboard Opportunities



“Spirit transformed our organisation. They provided us with funding, but more than that, they gave us a kind of deep support that helped us learn, grow and flourish. They listened, helped us find solutions, nurtured us and encouraged us to be ambitious. The result of this support is that we help many more people than we did before via projects that are more impactful, more exciting and more fun.

They took a chance on us and were the first funder to back us over multiple years, rather than on a shorter term basis. They were the first funder to really get under the skin of our organisation and help us develop and strengthen our projects. They really listened to us and then helped us find solutions. They have changed how we work and who we reach and how much difference we make. It's been the most fantastic relationship and we are proud to be part of the Spirit Family.

– Peter Snelling, Director,  
My Pockets



# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



## GETTING PEOPLE MOVING:

### REDUCING INACTIVITY AND REMOVING BARRIERS

**Large-scale events often set ambitious goals to get more people more active. We believe that the greatest gains are not always to be found in big numbers, or traditional sport, but in supporting the least active to start and sustain their physical activity journeys, focusing on movement in the widest possible sense and emphasising the social, fun side of activities.**

Spirit-funded projects focus on removing barriers to participation and unlocking the health, wellbeing and social benefits of physical activity for those who could benefit the most.

**Build the evidence base:** The projects we have funded have successfully motivated people with consistently low activity levels to engage in regular physical exercise and provide a scalable framework for working with the inactive. This has not only resulted in improved physical health, but also bolstered social networks and enhanced overall wellbeing. An evaluation by Wavehill of the Activity Alliance's Get Out Get Active programme showed a social return on investment of £8.83 for every £1 spent.

**Work in partnership:** We have supported numerous collaborations between sports and non-sports partners. We use the strengths each can bring to reducing inactivity and widening the net of organisations that see sport as a tool to achieve their social outcomes. For example, the Scottish Government funded Changing Lives Through Sport and Physical Activity Fund saw seventeen grant awards to partnership projects – the Fund itself a collaboration between Spirit, Scottish Government, Sport Scotland and Robertson Trust.

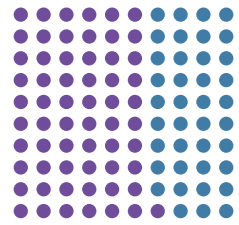
**Break down barriers:** Our funding model has prioritised successful outcomes over participant numbers, going beyond the discrete per-session cost. This approach allows partners to experiment with new recruitment and delivery methods and provides them with the space and time to reflect on what works well and incorporate it into their work.

**Champion genuine inclusion:** We have provided vital support to bridge the gap between people watching elite sports on television and actively participating in real-life social activities. We've focused our funding on supporting disabled and non-disabled people to get active together – in GOGA, 42% of regular participants (more than 10,000

people) identify as disabled. We have helped Swim England reduce obstacles for disabled people to volunteer at aquatic events, funded the participation of 12,000 young individuals in Streetgames' Pop-Up Games, and provided three years of support for the BPA's National Paralympic Day.

**Influence:** We have facilitated and promoted the widespread dissemination of the evidence and knowledge we have gained and made it available in a variety of formats. These include the Thrive learning programme, Belong's Power of Sport toolkit, the development of The GOGA Way, and the recommendations laid out in our Our 2022 Step Change report.





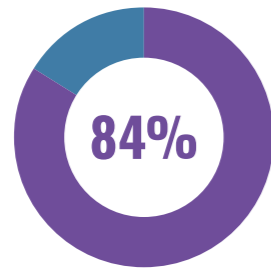
GET OUT, GET ACTIVE ENGAGED OVER 34,000 PARTICIPANTS, 7 IN 10 ARE INACTIVE AT START, POST PROJECT 61 % STILL ACTIVE.



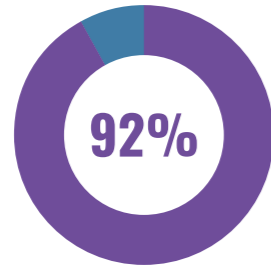
CITY TO SEA HELPED 87% OF THE VULNERABLE YOUNG LONDONERS TAKING PART IN SURFING ACTIVITIES TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS.

# 13,000

THE CHANGING LIVES FUND BOOSTED WELLBEING, INCLUSIVITY, LIFE SKILLS, AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS FOR OVER 13,000 PARTICIPANTS.



OF SPIRIT OF RUGBY VOLUNTEERS DEVELOPED NEW SKILLS AND 81% MET NEW PEOPLE THROUGH THE PROGRAMME.



OF GET SET ACTIVITIES DURING TRAVEL TO TOKYO WERE RATED AS ENJOYABLE/REALLY ENJOYABLE BY PARTICIPATING FAMILIES.

# 2,800

THANKS TO THE SPORTING EQUALITY FUND, MORE THAN 2,800 WOMEN AND GIRLS HAVE BENEFITED FROM ENGAGING IN REGULAR SUSTAINED ACTIVITY AND EXPERIENCED IMPROVED WELLBEING AS A RESULT.

“He looked the happiest I’ve seen him in years. It’s boosted his confidence and self-esteem, helped him grow and shown him that he can achieve things he never thought possible.”

Parent of City to Sea participant  
(Grant holder- Laureus/The Wave Foundation)



## ADRIAN'S STORY

# SUPPORTING CHANGE

### THE IMPACT OF GET OUT GET ACTIVE ON ONE FAMILY'S PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND PERCEPTION OF DISABILITY

The Active Together project has had a profound impact on one Lincolnshire family. Adrian, once an avid footballer and hiker, faced a challenging period of his life after a severe leg injury led to amputation below the knee. His physical activity came to a standstill, with a resurgence of childhood asthma due to inactivity.

Adrian shares, “I stopped doing any sort of physical activity, became unfit and struggled with asthma.” The turning point was his introduction to wheelchair basketball through the programme. Despite initial difficulties, Adrian mastered the sport, reaping both health and happiness benefits.

The impact extended beyond Adrian. His eight-year-old son, inspired by his father's determination, also took up wheelchair basketball. “He absolutely loves it; and would give up all his other activities in a heartbeat just to play wheelchair basketball with me,” Adrian said.

The GOGA programme has not only helped Adrian regain his physical fitness but also brought his family closer together through shared activity. It has also played a pivotal role in changing his son's perceptions of disabled people.

“My son absolutely loves it and would give up all his other activities in a heartbeat to play wheelchair basketball with me.”

Adrian, GOGA participant, Lincolnshire



# ART AND CULTURE



## PARTICIPATION IN ARTS & CULTURE:

### EXPANDING PEOPLE'S OPPORTUNITIES

The UK is home to many arts and culture festivals including the UK Cities of Culture, and large-scale sporting events often have a cultural offer alongside, like the Cultural Olympiad. Taking part in creative arts or having an arts or cultural experience is universally understood to be good for people's wellbeing. Everyone should have the opportunity to participate regardless of ability or circumstance, and often, we know that those people who could benefit most are likely to face the biggest barriers.

We have invested heavily in a wide range of arts and cultural projects which centre on inclusion. From singing, filmmaking, painting, drawing, songwriting, dance, and music making, whether at a local level or a national event, Spirit has collaborated with some of the UK's most innovative producers and events, producing tens of thousands of moments of joy along the way. We don't care if people can sing, paint, or draw well, as long as they are able to express themselves, have fun, and connect with others.

#### IN THE LAST TEN YEARS, OUR FUNDING HAS DEMONSTRATED THE POWER OF PARTICIPATION AND THE LINK TO INCREASED WELLBEING:

**Build the evidence base:** From a What Works Wellbeing/Liverpool John Moore rapid evidence review on Arts & Wellbeing, to the Eurovision impact household survey, to supporting community arts organisations with theory of change development, we've funded a wide variety of evaluations alongside our grant-funding. This work has ranged from helping organisations to make the case for their arts investment, to asking if and in what ways major events can improve community and individual wellbeing.

**Work in partnership:** We've brought together networks of grant holders to learn from one another, and other sector experts. We've been proud to work alongside academics, researchers, policy makers and practitioners to play an active role in evaluation steering groups for major events such as Cities of Culture.

**Break down barriers:** Not all barriers to participation require explicit funding to address – but many do. We've looked for different ways to support our grant holders to address barriers to participation, including

“It has completely changed my life and my view of myself.”

Vici Wreford-Sinnott, Cultural Shift

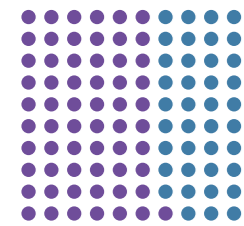
through ringfencing an additional 20% of grant funding to address access costs.

**Champion genuine inclusion:** Our inclusive arts projects, led by experts such as darts, Little Cog & Stockton ARC, and Stopgap Dance, have produced a wealth of easy-to-use evaluation and guidance materials to support other venues and organisations looking to raise the profile of inclusive practice, supporting disabled and non-disabled people to participate together. Organisations such as Beacon Films, Oasis Play and Creative Arts East have trialled innovative approaches to qualitative and quantitative data collection to ensure a wide variety of disabled people's experiences are captured in evaluations.

**Influence:** We have contributed to the use and development of Theories of Change in Hull 2017 and Coventry 2021, an approach that is now standard in the City of Culture competition. (but suggesting this all goes on p20).

**£5.7m**

INVESTED INTO TWO CITIES OF CULTURE

**50%**

OF 924 YOUNG CARERS REPORTED INCREASED HAPPINESS AND DECREASED ANXIETY DURING THE PANDEMIC THANKS TO THE CARERS MUSIC FUND.

**81%**

CARING CITY PARTICIPANTS IN COVENTRY 2021 REPORTED IMPROVED WELLBEING AND LESS ANXIETY WITH INCREASED 81% REPORTING INCREASED CIVIC PRIDE.

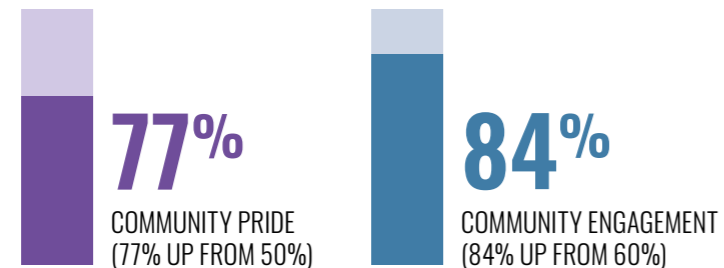
**£300,000**

OF FUNDING ALLOCATED DIRECTLY TO ARTS THROUGH YOUTH PANEL AWARDED GRANTS



£1.9M HAS BEEN AWARDED TO INCLUSIVE ARTS PROJECTS THROUGH OUR DISABILITY-LED SPIRIT OF ACHIEVEMENT PANEL.

879 YOUNG ATTENDEES OF EMERGE'S MIGHTY CREATIVES ARTS FESTIVALS REPORTED INCREASED

**DEAN'S STORY****UNLEASHING POTENTIAL THROUGH FILMMAKING**

Dean, who has learning disabilities, has found empowerment in filmmaking, and acting through the Beacon Films Viewfinder project. This journey has not only bolstered his confidence but also paved the way for work opportunities.

Creating a film CV to help gain employment was a particularly transformative experience for Dean. It not only allowed him to involve his family but also opened doors to potential employers who could appreciate his capabilities. In Dean's words, "Making the CV film in my own time made me feel happier because it involved making it with my family who appear in the film."

Dean's mother, Sandra, highlighted the importance of Beacon Hill Arts in building and sustaining friendships. "It's a big gap that Beacon Hill Arts fills. At special school, you leave at 19 and there's no chance to continue friendships unless they do the same activities. The comradery at BHA helps to build Dean's confidence to speak to people and develop friendships which is very helpful and important for work. Dean recently went back to McDonalds after not seeing them for so long due to ill health."



# VOLUNTEERING AND SOCIAL ACTION



## BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER:

### INSPIRING SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS AND CIVIC PRIDE

**Ever since the Games Makers exploded onto the scene in London 2012, volunteer programmes have become a vibrant and crucial part of major events. Throughout the last decade, we've passionately and carefully invested in volunteer initiatives and youth social action projects all over the UK. These projects, some grand, some intimate, were all sparked by national moments that united us.**

Alongside this, we have taken strides in empowering the UK's youth, encouraging them to be the change they wish to see in their own communities. We believe in their potential to transform society and have seen this belief reflected in the positive changes they've initiated. We're not just building programmes; we're building bridges of inclusion, unity, and inspiration.

**Build the evidence base:** We've maintained a steady focus on designing volunteering and social action programmes that enhance wellbeing. We funded the What Works Centre's Rapid Evidence Review of the link between volunteering and What Works Centre for Wellbeing and measure the wellbeing the

University of West of Scotland impacts within our own projects. With UWS we've produced a toolkit to support low-capacity and volunteer-led organisations to measure the impact of their events.

**Work in partnership:** Many of our volunteering focused projects involved community members planning how to make change in their area. We've awarded large grants to local community projects such as Fourteen (UKCF and Springboard) and The Great Get Togethers (Jo Cox Foundation), which help community members make a difference in their areas. This is backed by research like Moment to Movement that explore how community events can catalyse wider change.

**Break down barriers:** Over half (57%) of our volunteer and social action participants have been under 25. Through projects like Breaking Boundaries (Youth Sport Trust and Sporting Equals), Spirit of Rugby (RFU), and Inspire 2022 (UK Youth), we've empowered young people with not only funds but also decision-making authority to support projects that matter to them.

**“ You know you have got to have something to live for which I think is why these groups have been so, so brilliant. It's brought an awful lot to my life.”**

Our Day Out participant

**Champion genuine inclusion:** We've strived to raise awareness about inclusive volunteering and the challenges disabled individuals face in participating. We've supported the development of practical guidance to overcome these barriers, with funding provided for tools like the British Red Cross's Inspired Action Toolkit and the Activity Alliance's GOGA Volunteer Management toolkit, along with research by Kim Donohue et al. on Volunteering Together.

**Influence:** We've made a commitment to learn from London 2012's lessons, using events to bolster existing volunteer infrastructures. The volunteering programme born out of Hull 2017 has received seven years of our funding, and seed funding has been allocated for United by 2022 to transition the Commonwealth Collective into a long-term volunteering force. We support a broad range of social action and 'giving back' methods, recognising the strengths of formal, structured opportunities, but also the importance of more informally 'helping out'. We're continuously learning how these different approaches can benefit from each other.

78%

THE JO COX FOUNDATION GREAT GET TOGETHER CAMPAIGN MOBILISED 1,820 VOLUNTEERS, HELD OVER 1,150 EVENTS AND IMPROVED FEELINGS OF LOCAL BELONGING BY 20%. 83% OF MORE IN COMMON MEMBERS REPORTED FEELING HAPPIER, 78% OF GREAT WINTER GET TOGETHER ATTENDEES SAID THEY FELT LESS LONELY AFTER TAKING PART.

1,881

YOUNG WOMEN AND GIRLS TOOK PART IN EMPOWER WITH 63% REPORTING INCREASED CONFIDENCE AND 79% LIKELY TO VOLUNTEER AGAIN.



THE WOMEN OF THE WORLD IN 5 CITIES SAW 352 VOLUNTEERS AND OVER 9,000 ATTENDEES AT THE FESTIVALS.



Undoubtedly, United By 2022 benefitted from the seed funding from Spirit of 2012, but the relationship had so much more value for us because we could lean into their decade of experience and knowledge on event volunteering. As a direct result, we were able to move seamlessly from the end of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and bring thousands of volunteers with us into our new life as the Legacy Charity. This continuity was really valued by the 2,500 volunteers, from all walks of life, who came with us, and 18 months on from the closing ceremony they are still giving up their free time to support local communities and events across the region. We've now got a thriving place-based volunteering workforce in the West Midlands, and I don't think we would have been able to keep this important part of legacy alive without the support from Spirit of 2012."

Nicola Turner,  
Chief Executive  
of United by 2022



SPIRIT HAS SUCCESSFULLY EMPOWERED 60,000+ INDIVIDUALS TO PARTICIPATE IN VOLUNTEER WORK AND SOCIAL ACTION INITIATIVES.

## JOHN'S STORY

## BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS:

## A JOURNEY TOWARDS UNITY IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Our Lives Our Legacy, facilitated by Springboard Opportunities and funded by Spirit of 2012 brings people from diverse backgrounds together through significant historical events.

John McKinnon, a 21-year-old from a Unionist community in Belfast, joined the programme, marking the 25th anniversary of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement.

John reflects on his upbringing, saying, "Growing up in a segregated community, it was easy for me to have an attitude of division... I lived my life, even though I was born when there was 'peace' in Northern Ireland, with physical barriers in the form of peace walls and psychological barriers in the form of attitudes passed down by family, my community and the media."

Despite having previously attended riots, John credits the programme for challenging his beliefs and helping him dismantle existing prejudices and stereotypes. "I now have a better understanding of diversity and that difference is okay. I am proud of myself and how far I've come. There is a massive difference in me as a person."

Born four years after the Agreement, participation in the programme has given him a deeper understanding of his post-conflict society and a vision for Northern Ireland's future and he has cherished this opportunity to grow and connect with others.

John aims to continue his learning journey and positively impact his community by promoting mutual understanding and helping others break down barriers. He believes in the power of addressing common issues such as mental health, addiction, and housing, to unite communities. He concludes, "Programmes like this are vital and we would love for young people to be more involved in the conversations in what a better Northern Ireland might look like."



# NEXT STEPS

## A MESSAGE FROM SPIRIT OF 2012 CHIEF EXECUTIVE – RUTH HOLLIS

**It has been a real privilege to have been with Spirit of 2012 since the very beginning. The team and I are immensely proud of the impact we have helped create with our partners across the length and breadth of the UK over the past 10 years. It would not have been possible without the incredible grantees, partners, volunteers, colleagues, and friends whose work is highlighted throughout this report and I want to thank them all for the incredible work that has made this journey possible.**

Reflecting on the past ten years, I am particularly proud of the flexibility we have been able to offer with our funding. This has given grantees the opportunity to take risks and try new things. Hopefully this report illustrates that all our funding decisions have been rooted in a desire for knowledge and exploration. We have consciously taken risks because we are committed to our goal of finding out what works and to identify strategies that improve overall happiness, encourage diversity, and build social relationships through events.

**All our funding decisions have been rooted in a desire for knowledge and exploration.**

Until now, funding projects has been Spirit's bread and butter, but, as we look forward to our last two years, we are moving away from that to focus on advocating and influencing change. We will now be using the expertise we have gained to help shape how the legacy of events is planned for and delivered. As we set out in our Inquiry Report, we know the UK is a world-leader in delivering events but there is still more we can do collectively to ensure that there is a genuine long-term impact for people and communities. Particularly those that might feel the least connected to the event itself.

**We will now be using the expertise we have gained to help shape how the legacy of events is planned for and delivered.**

To help us in the last two years we have appointed three sector experts as our Legacy Learning Partners. This is to ensure that the learning collected by Spirit and our partners is not lost as we close our doors at the end of 2025.

**“ I have often described being a time-limited funder as our superpower”**

– Ruth Hollis, Spirit of 2012 Chief Executive

I have often described being a time-limited funder as our superpower, and in the next two years we will continue to be working with our partner and stakeholders to ensure that the legacy, and the spirit of 2012, lives on. We are committed to sharing what we have learned, so please do get in touch.



THIS IMPACT WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY ALL OF THE FANTASTIC GRANT HOLDERS WE’VE WORKED WITH OVER THE PAST DECADE

<b>ORGANISATION</b> Absolutely Cultured Access Sport Achieve More Scotland Active Communities Scotland Active Stirling Activity Alliance Amina WRC Barnardo’s Beacon Films Belong – the Cohesion and Integration Network Big Hearts Community Trust Bike for Good (Glasgow Bike Shed Limited) Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee Black Country Together CIC Blackpool Carers Centre Ltd Blueprint 22 Bradford Disability Sport and Leisure British Future British Lung Foundation (North Bristol) British Olympic Foundation British Paralympic Association Cairngorms National Park Authority Caithness Voluntary Group (CVG) Cannock Library Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias Carers UK	Caudwell Children CHANCE in Sunderland Change Foundation CHANGES East Lothian City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council Comic Relief Conwy County Borough Council Coventry 2021 UK City of Culture Coventry Refugee and Migrant Centre Creative Arts East Cricket Scotland Dance Syndrome darts (Doncaster Community Arts) Disability Sport Fife Disability Wales Drumchapel Sport – Community Sport Hub Dumfries & Galloway Council Edinburgh Leisure England Athletics England Rugby Limited Fabric Fawcett Society Fearless Futures Fèis Rois Festivals Edinburgh Ltd Fife Council Fife Sports And Leisure Trust Limited FODIP (Forum for Discussion of Israel and Palestine)	Forth Valley College Foundation Girvan Youth Trust (Z1 Girls Group) Glasgow Life GoodGym Grapevine Coventry Great Yarmouth Borough Council Greater London Authority Greenock Morton Community Trust Hull 2017 Culture Company Hull City Council Ideas Test Inch Park Community Sports Hub Jack Drum Arts Jo Cox Foundation Kim Donahue Consulting Laureus Sport for Good Foundation Leap Confronting Conflict Leeds Culture Trust Leisure & Culture Dundee Link4Life Live Active NI Liverpool City Council London Legacy Development Corporation Midlands Arts Centre Midlothian Council More Music My Pockets People CIC National Maritime Museum (part of Royal Museums	Greenwich) National Paralympic Heritage Trust National Youth Agency NAVCA Neighbourly Lab Netball Scotland New Heights – Warren Farm Community Project NHS Highland Noise Solution CIC North Ayrshire Leisure Ltd (KA Leisure) Northamptonshire Carers Oasis Children's Venture Oh Yeah Music Centre Paths for All Partnership PEEK Plymouth Music Zone Limited Preston Impact Group Royal Voluntary Service Scottish Association for Mental Health Scottish Sports Futures Scottish Women Warriors Wheelchair Basketball Club Scottish Youth Dance Shape Arts South Lanarkshire Leisure & Culture South West Athletics CIC Southbank Centre Southmead Development Trust	Spitalfields Market Community Trust Sport & Recreation Alliance Sport Aberdeen Sporting Equals Sporting Memories Foundation Springboard Opportunities Stay Up Late Step up to Serve Stills Stockton Arts Centre Stopgap Dance Company Street League Street Soccer Scotland StreetGames UK Streetwise Community Circus CIC Swim England The Adventure Syndicate The British Red Cross The Diana Award The Fighting Chance Project The Lord’s Taverners The Mighty Creatives The Ripple Project The Running Charity The Runnymede Trust The Shift Foundation The WOW Foundation The Young Foundation	Together UK Active UK Community Foundations UK Sports Association for Athletes with Learning Disability UK Youth United By 2022 University Of The West Of Scotland Uprising Urban Devotion Venture Trust Verbal Arts Voluntary Arts Volunteer Centre Dorset Volunteer Scotland Wales Council for Voluntary Action Warwick Arts Centre What Works Centre for Wellbeing Whitley Bay Big Local You Make It – Ladies Who L-Earn Your Leisure Youth Cymru Youth Scotland Youth Sport Trust
---	--	--	--	---	---



© Spirit of 2012 is a Charity registered in England and Wales (1155110). Our Sole Trustee is Spirit of 2012 Trustee Limited, a Company Limited by Guarantee (08474083).