



Arts Ageing and Activism symposium

Attendees information

#IDOPLDS



**International Day
of Older Persons**

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INTRODUCTION



The Arts, Ageing and Activism Symposium is the final activity of the 1001 Stories project, forming part of the LEEDS 2023 Year of Culture. The project was created by The Performance Ensemble in partnership with LEEDS 2023, Leeds Playhouse, Leeds Older Peoples' Forum and Leeds Museums and Galleries. Over 600 older people, from every ward in Leeds, engaged in a mass-participation oral history project preserving their personal histories, songs and poetry through the collection, co-curation and sharing of [1001 Stories](#). The stories were celebrated in a [10-day Takeover of Leeds Playhouse](#) by older people during April and May 2023.

The symposium responds to an identified “strong desire for The Performance Ensemble and the Playhouse to host similar events in the future to ensure the momentum from the project” are not lost over time. The Symposium was scheduled to be a concluding activity in Leeds’ celebrations for International Day of Older People with the theme of “The resilience of older people in a changing world”. As well as an opportunity to promote new connections in a fun and friendly environment that celebrates ageing, the symposium sought to explore what we can do to ensure older people live the best life for as long as possible. As part of continuing the conversation, attendees wanted to learn more about organisations, initiatives and activities engaged in ageing well which follow in this short booklet.

ARTS AGEING AND ACTIVISM SYMPOSIUM BLOG BY DUŠKA RADOSAVLJEVIĆ



Part of a blog series by Duška Radosavljević on the emerging work of The Performance Ensemble, building up a picture of a company of older artists creating art with the experience of age

There is a guy called Garry in the Chapeltown area of Leeds, who cures people's aches and pains with art. If you have a frozen shoulder, for example, you can go to him to make your shoulder out of ceramics. He crafts it carefully according to your detailed specifications capturing the way in which pain sits in it – and then he smashes it. The act of smashing the frozen shoulder – as you'll find out in a few days time – takes the pain away. No one knows how this works but it does. He has also invented a card game for such medicinal purposes, getting men to open up over a pint about their ailments.

In an Open Space symposium on Creative Ageing organised by The Performance Ensemble, artist Garry Barker has called the question 'How can we establish meaningful relationships through art?', and his story about curing frozen shoulders has stopped me in my tracks though I had originally intended to rotate around all the groups.

'How is this work funded?', I ask.

'It isn't', he says, 'I do it voluntarily through other sources of income as an artist.'

Having lived and worked in Chapeltown for a long time, Garry is embedded in the community and he engages people because they know him already, or through word of mouth. 'It is a familiar story from the history of humanity', someone observes, 'all societies have had a form of a healer, although the multiple functions of this sort of individual might have fragmented into the separate domains of medicine, art and alchemy over time.'

Having spent the last few years watching fledgling – often culturally displaced – artists hoping for instant fame in the global mecca of London as they prepare for their career take off, I have been painfully aware of their problem number 1 being how to find an audience. I marvel a little too loudly at this revelation of contrast and well-earned privilege that comes from being a local artist with deep roots and long-held trust of the community.



Sue Gill, who also happens to be in Garry's open space group, proffers more evidence of how this works in her community of Ulverston where she officiates, often at the request of her local community, at alternative wedding and naming ceremonies, designed bespoke with and by the celebrants themselves. Sue is the second half of Welfare State International, the 'engineers of the imagination', the very company that graced the covers of my university coursebooks in the 1990s, as the prime example of the 1960s radical theatre.

I am slightly in awe of Sue Gill and John Fox who are also present here today, invited by Alan Lyddiard to add some ceremony to the opening of the Open Space event. And so they did, by bursting some balloons to cover us in glitter, some impromptu accordion-playing and reading from their beautiful new book titled "Eighty-Something".

Though age has crept up on their physical bodies, they are bursting with energy, still dazzling with articulation, inspiration and mental clarity. Sue has a quirky story in response to every question. John has an ease of verbal expression that he tends to speed up so 'not to take too much time', as he says. They both have a love for and a belief in humanity that is infectious.

There are more dispersed conversations in the room, definitions of elitism, redefinitions of diversity, attempts at envisaging improved access and ways of reaching those who are difficult to reach. Diverse voices are present in the room, different cultural perspectives, different interests in arts and cultures and although this is energizing for everyone present, Alan is thoughtful. I later find out he is not sure how this will translate into constructive action, what will happen next, and how?... But I think this is good because, knowing Alan, it is bound to lead somewhere.

If nothing else for today, there is a guy called Trevor from Bradford who takes to the stage at the end to revel in the newly found enthusiasm of this accidental community, and in the promise for creative ageing he has found today that goes beyond quotas, free public transport, and the mere ticking of boxes.



Duška Radosavljević is a writer, dramaturg and academic. Her books include Aural/Oral Dramaturgies (2023), Theatre Criticism: Changing Landscapes (2016), The Mums and Babies' Ensemble: A Manual (2015), Theatre-Making (2013) and The Contemporary Ensemble (2013).



A WEEK OF ACTIVE & CREATIVE AGEING BY DAVID BLAKELEY

Here's my list of things I get up to and take part in through the week.

Firstly I'm very lucky that I live in Horsforth. There's lots of places to go and interesting things to do and take part in.

MONDAY From 7 till 8 I go to Horsforth School for Zumba Fitness run by the fantastic Nancy Lucas. £6 a session. How would I describe what Zumba Fitness is? I'd say it's a cross between aerobics mixed with Latin American dance steps/a bit like line dancing on steroids. This is the only exercise I have ever done that I love. No it's never easy it is full on... but it's worth it for the adrenaline rush and feel good factor alone. And yes I'm still one of the only guys. It definitely is a good workout but it definitely gets under my skin and even on holiday I try to get my Zumba fix. Yes I'm addicted it's hard work .

TUESDAY From 11-30 till 12-30 I have joined The Cross Gates Good Neighbours Ukulele band at The Newman centre located on Cross Gates side of York Road. This is new for me as I only started playing the Ukulele (Ukulele Banjo) in January. It is run by David Camrass and we pay £5 a week subscription. Yes it's not easy playing an instrument and singing at the same time but it's great fun. We play lots of different songs including Johnny Cash, The Beach Boys, Status Quo and George Formby to name but a few. Great fun and I'm constantly learning new strumming techniques. Yes I've even played a couple of gigs. There's about 20 odd of us with 3 lady members, I can highly recommend this.

WEDNESDAY I attend Heydays run by The Leeds West Yorkshire Playhouse which is located on Playhouse Square Quarry Hill LS2 7UP. Again there's a monthly subscription fee but lots to choose from. This group is great for making new friends and getting you out of your comfort zone. It has helped me to become a better writer and performer. Lots of great things to come and try out.

Horsforth School on Lee Lane East has always run evening classes on Wednesday evening from 7 till 9. These are not free, but open to anyone, they have a website email horsfortheveningclasses.org.uk. My wife Helen and I both go to The community Chior (we have been in this since it started 9 years ago). We have a Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass singing section. We sing a varied mix of song through pop, jazz and classical. There's currently about 24 members.

THURSDAY I attend a Mens only Yoga session at Tithe House on Horsforth Town Street. £6 a session. I can recommend Yoga as it has helped me to improve my core strength, improved my fitness and flexibility, my balance and helped with controlling my breathing. Breath control is really important for singing. (We are learning The Gloria by Vivaldi which has an 8beat note on one of excelsis deo). I have really started to feel the benefits of Yoga. It slow exercise that everyone can enjoy and do. I can highly recommend this.

FRIDAY I go to Leeds Art Gallery and attend Meet and Make from 1 till 3 in schools term time. This is a free drop in event run by Clare Jolley. I have been part of this group for over 5 years and taken part in quite a few different projects. I have also participated in some of the stitch craft workshops.

I was given the name of King of French Knots (a tapestry stitch technique). I have made flowers from crepe paper, done various types of painting drawings and creative writing. The art gallery with the help of The Art Doctors encouraged me to do my first ever live performance of some of my own poems. We even painted and decorated a piano for The Leeds International Piano festival. This piano ended up being on BBC one television Look North and was played live by Sophie Raworth, Alister McGowan and Ed Ball live from Leeds Railway Station.

SATURDAY morning from 10-15 till 11-15 I'm in an Acapella singing group at Horsforth School music centre followed by a Ukulele group session. It's really interesting to learn a song just using your voices, again we sing in 3part harmony. We are only a small group of about 10, but it sounds good. Our teacher Katy is a professional Folk Musician singer and Clogger (she is in a Morris men dancing group) and plays numerous instruments. I've always loved folk music so again great fun, with a different challenge.

I also write for The Adel Bells Parish Magazine and I'm an artist and poet.

I feel it's important to keep learning new skills and do some regular exercises as you get older and retire from work. I think I'm a good advert for what's possible once you get older, and have more time to do things you enjoy, and have always wanted to do but never had time to do when working.

We also have grandkids so go up to Newcastle and Whitley Bay to visit them. And finally, I also volunteer when I can. I did volunteer at Leeds Art Gallery for 5 years but more recently I have volunteered for The Playhouse Takeover, 1001 Stories and Sinfonia

You can contact me at david.blakeley@ntlworld.com

Kind regards,

David

ANY WORK THAT WANTED DOING



This exhibition is curated by Gill Crawshaw, working in partnership with Leeds Industrial Museum. It is part of Leeds 2023 Year of Culture, funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and is on until the end of January 2024

It brings together disabled people's voices from the past and present, highlighting their contributions to history and to contemporary culture. Disabled artists have created eight new artworks in response to the hidden histories of disabled mill workers. These are displayed amongst the museum's collection of textile machinery.

FREE tours for community groups available, otherwise the museum's admission charges apply. Contact Gill to arrange a tour.

Find out more: <https://anywork.org.uk/>

Contact: gill.crawshaw@gmail.com



Any work
that
wanted
doing

anywork.org.uk



ARTS IN CARE HOMES DAY

The National Day of Arts in Care Homes is an annual event that takes place on 24 September.

The aim is to champion, promote and encourage arts engagement in care settings and highlight the health and wellbeing benefits for all involved.

This year NAPA held a weeklong celebration of arts in care provision, w/c 18 September culminating in The National Day of Arts in Care Homes on Sunday 24 September.

The theme for AICH2023 was Reflections. We looked back at learning gained from the programme so far, trying to identify with our care and arts partners what is needed, going forward, to embed the arts into care provision.

The programme has included the Arts & Culture in Every Care home Consultation (2021): <https://digital.napa-activities.co.uk/view/48420290/> which you may be interested in reading.

Learn more on our website at:
<https://artsincarehomes.org.uk/nationalday/>.

Alison Teader
alison@artsincarehomes.org.uk.

ASCENDANCE



Creative Health & Wellbeing with Ascendance

Ascendance, a creative charity dedicated to health and well-being, offers dance classes and performance opportunities that are inclusive for all. Our welcoming and friendly community provides rejuvenating experiences for the body and mind, creating a sense of belonging and joy, especially for older adults.

[Dance Class Timetable - Ascendance](#)

[Fuse Dance Co - Ascendance](#)

We run specialist Parkinson's friendly programmes led by our exceptional creative dance artists who use image cues and uplifting music to get the body moving and feel more alert. Our tailored exercises focus on balance, coordination, and conditioning while encouraging positivity, enabling individuals to lead fulfilling and active lifestyles.

We have our own performance company "Fuse Dance Collective," a community-driven company that rehearses and creates new dance works to be performed in a range of site-specific spaces and prestigious theatre venues and festivals, including The Riley Theatre, Leeds Playhouse, and The Stanley & Audrey Burton Theatre.



Everyone is welcome to join, regardless of experience level, as our diverse cast includes professional dancers and individuals with and without Parkinson's. By participating, you'll enhance your creativity, improve your overall health, and, of course, have fun! At Ascendance everyone can enjoy being a dancer, a choreographer, a director or part of the administrative team. Wellbeing and giving people a voice is at the heart of everything we do.

classes@ascendance.org.uk

Tel: 07933 685359

www.ascendance.org.uk

ASCEN  DANCE

BUS FAIR CAMPAIGN



At present West Yorkshire receives only the basic mandatory deal on the concessionary fares for older and disabled people. This means that their free bus passes can't be used before 9.30 am on weekdays. This affects older people with early morning hospital appointments, or who have child care duties, or who wish to travel for volunteering, as many do. It affects disabled people who may need to travel regularly in the morning to hold down a job.

Many parts of the country get a better deal. So the BusFair Campaign is asking for the pre-9.30 am charging to be eliminated in Leeds and West Yorkshire.

Following the Symposium a letter has been drafted with The Performance Ensemble in support of the BusFair Campaign to be sent to West Yorkshire Mayor, Tracy Brabin. With Cllr Salma Arif's support, I'm now planning to promote BusFair by taking a Deputation to a full meeting of Leeds City Council.

This will involve a 5-minute speech by me to all 99 Councillors in the Council Chamber in the Civic Hall. I can take up to four supporters with me, and I hope to find them via community groups and disabled charities.

I would very much like a representative from the arts in Leeds also, and I wonder if a Symposium attendee from the arts would like to accompany me.

If you can help, contact me at: david.smith@crossgatesgns.org.uk



CREATIVE VOICES

Creative Voices is an arts project co-created by older adults from the LGBTQ+ plus community in Leeds and Creative artist Minoti Parikh. This project was delivered by Yorkshire MESMAC and kindly funded by the National Lottery funding.

The project's main purpose was to give members of the community, the time and space to explore creative arts as a way of feeling uplifted, empowered and positive in a fun and relaxing space. Over five months the group have been meeting to laugh, be playful and learn different creative forms of expressing themselves while building new friendships.

At the end of the project, the group put on a final sharing event where members showcased their creativity through a series of short acts. Please see below a small snippet of the work that was shared.

https://youtu.be/st_a31X_w9U

Minoti is keen on finding ways of continuing to lead the group and is looking for funding partners.

Contact Minoti Parikh at minoti@tplexperiences.com

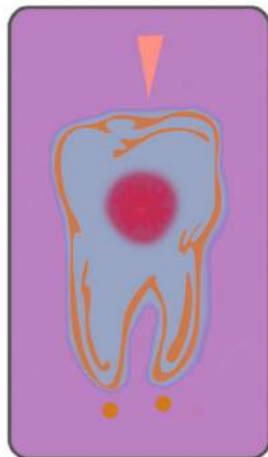
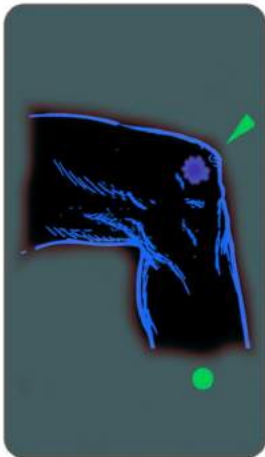


GARRY BARKER



Garry Barker

An artist interested in visual narrative



Garry Barker is a visual artist in his 70s who often works with older people in order to make visible what is invisible. He makes ceramics, draws and paints, as well as producing artist's books.

Web: <https://garrybarkeronline.com/>

Blog: <http://fineartdrawinglca.blogspot.com/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/barker.garry/>

Votives: <https://thevotivesproject.org/2020/09/15/making-votives/>

Email: garrybarker69@gmail.com

Votive cards

Out of conversations all manner of things emerge



NATALIE THARRALEOS ON ACTIVITIES IN HAREHILLS

Here are three projects in Harehills:

1. East Side Story: We publish information about the East Leeds area.

This includes the area bounded by the postcodes LS8, 9 and LS14, and extending further where other East Leeds communities wish to take part.

We welcome contributions from 55+ East Leeds residents, including blogs, recipes, poetry, reviews, and news of campaigns. We would love more journalists, reporters, contributors, editors, proof readers, photographers! We offer friendly team meetings, editing, support to unleash your inner journalist!

Contact Natalie, Janine or Jonathan at eastsidestoryleeds@gmail.com

2. Chatty Cafes: Creating free, welcoming and friendly space for local people to meet and chat. Serving healthy, light refreshments i.e. hot and cold drinks, fresh fruit, a range of biscuits and nutritious snacks. Building a sense of community and develop friendships by being situated in a space that is well known and easily accessed by a local people from all backgrounds, abilities and ages. Sharing information so people have better access to opportunities and are helped to find out what's happening for them in the local community.

We exist not to single people out as "lonely", although we believe opportunities for people to meet naturally addresses loneliness, but to enable people to naturally share and open up about issues that may be affecting them at their own pace and on their own terms. We can signpost people to relevant organizations if they need further support

3. Monthly Street Markets: bringing opportunities to make, sell and buy locally made products and/or sustainable and preloved products in a friendly accessible setting which includes the chatty café to help connect people. We offer volunteering opportunities and a warm welcome to guests.

To contact Harehills Lane Action Team's weekly Chatty Cafes and monthly street markets email: nataliehlatt@gmail.com and tasneemHLAT@gmail.com

For booking a stall to sell: Tasha Grant communitymarketsleeds@gmail.com

If you're a local project wanting to offer free information or items contact Natalie or Tasneem



Independent Age

Independent Age is a national charity providing support for older people facing financial hardship. We offer free and impartial advice and information and grants for community organisations. We use the knowledge and understanding gained from our frontline services to highlight the issues experienced by older people who are facing financial insecurity and to campaign for change. We believe no one should face financial hardship in later life.

We wanted to share the report we published on Why England needs a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing, following our consultation at the 1001 Stories takeover in May this year. You can find it on this page: <https://www.independentage.org/commissioner-report>

We also have a campaigning toolkit here

<https://www.independentage.org/campaigning/CampaigningToolkit>

We are quite keen to keep track of what impact the guides have. We encourage individuals who want hard copies of the report and toolkit to get in touch with us directly, and we can mail those out.

We have lots of other guides which you can order for free, with advice and information on all sorts of topics - <https://www.independentage.org/get->

You can find out more about our campaigning work at

<https://www.independentage.org/campaigning> or contact

campaigns@independentage.org to get in touch about other ways you can get involved.'

Sign-up to our Campaigning network at

<https://campaigns.independentage.org/page/79357/subscribe/1>

LEEDS CARE DELIVERY SERVICE



Hello,

I am Sarah Waldron care delivery community engagement worker with Leeds City Council's Care Delivery Service. We are working at increasing inclusion for people in their residential homes, recovery hubs and in day services. We are helping to get people online and rebuild and maintain community connections and, as part of this, we host a popular programme of Wellbeing "taster" sessions with various partners with a view to creating some new opportunities for people.

Northwest Recovery Hub - LS19 7JN I am setting up an in person program for Northwest Recovery Hub , starting from November, and want community organisations to come and talk about their services /taster sessions. The days I am looking is Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at 11am

South Recovery Hub - LS11 7DB I am also setting up a program for the South Recovery Hub, starting from November and want community organisations to come and talk about their services / taster sessions. The days I am looking is Monday, Thursdays and Fridays at 11am

"Wellbeing Wednesday" This is a weekly online session (on Teams) hosted by LCC care delivery community engagement and digital inclusion staff from 11 to 11.45am on Wednesdays. The sessions are advertised across LCC Care Delivery Service (to include care homes, day opportunities, recovery hubs, accommodation services, etc). We aim to also reach some people in their own homes to enhance the support they get from the service. Most people need support from carers to access the activities online. We have between 15-25 people online each session.

The format is: introductions, activity from the partner organisation/people, and the possibility of Q&A. Content needs to be light and enjoyable as an introduction to all. Ideally, something people can "join in" with - doing something accessible to anyone.

Would you be available to take part in one of our sessions to showcase the work you/your organisation does? If this is something you would like to be a part of please let me know when you are available.

Sarah Waldron 07545604391 sarah.waldron@leeds.gov.uk



SAME SKIES THINK TANK

Same Skies Think Tank is the citizen-led regional democracy network and think tank for West Yorkshire. We encourage and facilitate the active participation of all residents in West Yorkshire's regional democracy, no matter where they or their families were born. We understand that engaging those who are most marginalised by national power means taking active steps towards those people, not just expecting them to come to us or to trust us.

Our regional democracy must learn from, and make the most of, the skills, knowledge and experiences of the people who live and work here. We challenge anyone who seeks power in West Yorkshire to do so and we will hold them to account if they don't. At the same time, we challenge the legitimacy of national power in every way that it affects us. That includes the media, big business (especially finance), culture, charities, political parties and other national organisations as much as it does the Westminster government and Whitehall civil service. We propose radical subsidiarity: that every decision about our lives that can be made in West Yorkshire is made in West Yorkshire, and as far as possible in neighbourhood and local democracy.

We recognise that there will be areas of policy and co-ordination that are best done at a wider geographical scale, but no decisions that are best made outside West Yorkshire should be made without our prior consent and appropriate participation. We are a think tank that is about, and in the service of, a place and the people who live and work here. We care about the whole region, its towns, villages, suburbs and natural environment as well as its city centres. We are interested in everything that happens here, and the interconnections between different aspects of our society, economy, cultures, politics and environment. We work to create new ideas and ways of doing things by bringing people with different kinds of knowledge together for our common good.

Same Skies started as a network of citizens in 2015, and our organisational structure is still that as much as anything else. In 2022 we became a Community Interest Company, and after a day of conversations in 2023 about how we wanted to organise ourselves to stay true to the spirit of our activities, we decided to experiment with a sociocratic way of working. This means that under the umbrella of Same Skies we try and allow participants as much as autonomy as possible to pursue things they are interested in. If you would like to get involved please do drop us a line.

<https://sameskiesthinktank.com/contact/>

same.skies.wy@gmail.com

YORKSHIRE DANCE: AWARD WINNING PROGRAMMES FOR OLDER ADULTS



Yorkshire Dance - works through dance to create happiness, health, connection and change.

Yorkshire Dance runs three programmes for older adults.

Dance On - in Leeds & Bradford

Dance On is a community-based dance programme that takes place across Leeds and Bradford. Dance On offers weekly inspiring, social and fun sessions aimed at people who have no previous dance experience. Sessions are accessible and suitable for everyone, including people living with disabilities and long-term health conditions. The programme is supported by academic research that explores the impact of dance participation on improved mobility, falls reduction and improved mental wellbeing. There are currently 12 weekly Leeds groups & 12 weekly Bradford groups.



YORKSHIRE DANCE: AWARD WINNING PROGRAMMES FOR OLDER ADULTS



In Mature Company

In Mature Company delivers weekly creative music, movement and dance sessions to frail older adults and people living with dementia. In Mature Company uses non verbal communication to reduce social isolation and loneliness within care homes. Since 2018 the programme has worked with over 30 Leeds care homes and engaged approximately 500 care home residents.



Ageless Festival - (Biennial 2019, 2022 & 2024)

Ageless is a 2-day festival showcasing local, national and international dance artists, film-makers and speakers who reimagine age and ageing through dance. The festival takes place every other year in Yorkshire Dance's studios in Leeds City Centre and in partner venues. Ageless features an eclectic mix of bold new performances, inspirational talks, exhilarating workshops and classes and is for anyone with a curiosity about dance and age.

For more information please visit www.yorkshiredance.com or contact Adie Nivison (Older Peoples Project Manager) Adienivison@yorkshiredance.com

YORKSHIRE DANCE

YORKSHIRE DANCE: DANCE ON TOOLKIT



In October 2023 Yorkshire Dance launched the Dance On Toolkit.

Dance On is a highly successful community-based dance programme for older adults in Yorkshire. Dance On is a partnership project, created by darts, Yorkshire Dance, One Dance UK and University of Leeds, to increase physical activity and reduce isolation.

In this toolkit we share our practical experience and knowledge of delivering Dance On, backed up by academic research, from across seven years.

Having a dance programme for older adults in your area can increase physical activity levels, overall well-being, balance and mood as well as reduce fears of falling.

Read the toolkit free at:

<https://online.flippingbook.com/view/674478900/>



Photograph by David Lindsay

THANK

YOU

TO ALL THE ORGANISATIONS
WHO BOOKED ONTO AND
ATTENDED THE SYMPOSIUM

100% Digital Leeds
Abeeralzhoor
Age Friendly Leeds
Age UK Leeds
Artlink West Yorkshire
Arts Council England
Arts in Care Homes / NAPA
Ascendance
Balbir Singh Dance Company
Belgrade Theatre
Bradford 2025
CADA England (Creative Ageing
Development Agency)
Canal Connections CIC
Care Delivery Service
CHWA
Climate Action Leeds
Dead Good Guides/Welfare State
International
Disability Arts Online
Full Circle Funerals
Harehills Action Team
HOPS (Neighbourhood Network)



LAHWN
Leeds 2023
Leeds Beckett University
Leeds Arts Development
Leeds City Council
Leeds Community Foundation
Leeds Playhouse
Leeds Older People's Forum
Leeds Public Health - Older People
LS-TEN
NHS West Yorkshire Integrated Care
Board
Opera North
OWLS (Neighborhood Network)
SAIL
Same Skies Think Tank
Space2
Split Design Studio
Spotlight
The National Lottery Community
Fund
The Performance Ensemble
University of Leeds
Workshop Press
Yorkshire Bylines
Yorkshire Dance



AND TO OUR PARTNERS AND FUNDERS THAT MADE
THE 1001 STORIES PROJECT POSSIBLE

