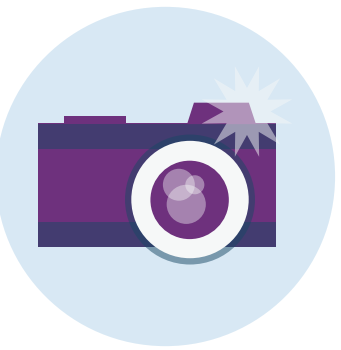
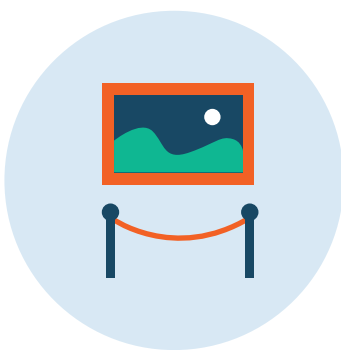


Open House: Cultural Spaces' Responses to Homelessness

A report by Phyllida Shaw
Commissioned by With One Voice





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1. Introduction

This report has five sections. It starts with an introduction, explaining the reason for the review and defining the terms it uses. Section 2 explains how the review was undertaken. Section 3 summarises the main findings and suggests seven characteristics of cultural spaces that are making progress in their response to homelessness. Section 4 offers recommendations for cultural spaces thinking about how to respond to homelessness. Section 5 provides examples and illustrations of how, through their beliefs and values, policies and plans, programmes and day to day operations, cultural spaces are helping people with experience of homelessness to exercise their right to participate in the cultural life of the community. The report concludes with a small number of appendices.

The reasons for the review and some definitions

With One Voice, the international arts and homelessness movement (WOV) is a British charity working to strengthen projects, influence policy and to help people thrive not just survive. Founded by Streetwise Opera in 2016, WOV is helping organisations and individuals to learn from each other through exchanges, events and arts projects. It commissions and disseminates research, designs and delivers training for arts and/or homelessness organisations and advocates for a place for the arts in homelessness support.

As cultural spaces, around the world, search for better ways to respond to homelessness – whether as a national political issue, an immediate local one, or both – there is an increasing demand for information about what others are doing. *Open House: Cultural Spaces' Responses to Homelessness* is a first attempt to bring together some of the approaches taken and lessons learned by different kinds of cultural space, as they try to make people who are or have been homeless feel as welcome as anyone else. This is not a survey or an evaluation of activity. It is a sharing of ideas that might be relevant and interesting to others. As with all WOV publications, we hope that readers will come forward with new material for possible inclusion in future editions.

December 2019 saw the publication of the first WOV *Literature Review of Arts and Homelessness*. This looked at evidence of the positive outcomes that the arts can produce for people experiencing homelessness and cited wellbeing, agency, resilience, knowledge and skills. It offered examples of how participation in creative and cultural activity can make a positive

impact on a person's life, on their physical and mental health, their outlook, their ambitions and material circumstances. It described the creative contribution of individuals, who are or have been homeless, to cultural spaces' programmes, through their writing, making, performances, exhibitions and other forms of cultural production.

Also in 2019, WOV collaborated with Manchester School of Architecture and the construction company Laing O'Rourke to produce *Cultural Spaces and Homelessness*. A design handbook. This one-off, student project consulted people with experience of homelessness about the design elements that make cultural spaces more or less welcoming. This publication, *Open House: Cultural Spaces' Responses to Homelessness*, looks at how cultural spaces, which habitually welcome members of the public, are directing their beliefs and values, policies, plans, programmes and day to day operation to become better at welcoming and involving members of the public who happen to be homeless. This report is not about the why of arts and homelessness; it is about the what and the how.

At the same time, WOV is launching a *Cultural Spaces Homelessness Toolkit and Training Package*. Both resources have been developed with the Museum of Homelessness, Manchester Museum and Tate Modern and are intended for cultural spaces that want to deepen their involvement with people who are or have been homeless. The toolkit is a free, step-by-step guide incorporating some of the conclusions of this report. The training package is bought in by organisations and is tailored to their needs. It is designed to open a space within the organisation to talk about and demystify homelessness, to build the confidence of staff, to share examples of good practice and provide skills and tools for front of house and visitor experience teams (see www.with-one-voice.com for more details).

What we mean by homelessness

Homelessness is experienced and defined differently around the world. Our definition is not having a home. People who are homeless may or may not be living on the street. They may have somewhere to stay, but it is temporary or unsuitable.

How we refer to people

WOV recognises that different societies, organisations and individuals use different forms of words to describe "people who are or have been homeless". This is the form of words used throughout this report, other than where we are reporting something that someone else has written or said. Readers will therefore find references to "homeless people", "homeless-experienced people", "people with experience of homelessness" and "with lived experience of homelessness".

What we mean by the arts

Our definition of the arts is any form of creative or cultural activity including, but not limited to, music, dance, theatre, creative writing, storytelling, the visual and applied arts, film, photography, digital arts, library, museum and heritage activity.

What we mean by cultural spaces

Our definition of a cultural space is one that programmes arts activities for the general public. It may be a theatre, an arts or cultural centre, a concert hall, an opera house, a dance or music venue, a cinema, a library, a museum, a gallery, a heritage site, a park or even a place of worship that regularly programmes the arts. While many educational, community, housing, health and social care settings promote and host arts and homelessness activity, they would only be included in our definition of a cultural space if they also programmed activities for a public audience.

Why cultural spaces are responding to homelessness

Where there is homelessness, there is often a cultural space. Some of those that are open during the day and free to enter have local reputations as relaxing and interesting places to pass the time. For people with nowhere else to go, they can be a welcome refuge from bad weather and the stress of being on the street, or in temporary and unstable accommodation. In some societies, public libraries are the cultural spaces best known for having an open door policy and for welcoming people who just need somewhere to be, but they are not alone among cultural spaces in recognising and carrying out their civic role.¹

With many communities seeing an increase in homelessness, more cultural spaces are looking for ways to respond, and to offer more than a place to shelter. Their ambition is that all members of the public, whatever their circumstances, will feel sufficiently at home to want to look at the programme on offer and to get involved.

A human right

Article 27 of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights² states that "everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits." Some cultural spaces are reasserting this right on behalf of everyone who feels excluded, or who is excluded by tangible barriers. However attractive a building, however welcoming the people

1 The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (UK branch) has been leading an inquiry into the civic role of arts organisations. <https://civicroleartsinquiry.gulbenkian.org.uk/>

2 www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/

who run it and however excellent the programme, only a proportion of the potential audience will use the cultural spaces available to them. This is true of the population at large and is likely to be true of any group of people who are or have been homeless. But this should never be an excuse for not continuing to invite everyone in.

The local facts of homelessness are part of a bigger national picture, shaped by history, culture, natural and manmade disasters, and politics. Whatever the national story, WOV's interest is in what more cultural spaces might do to ensure that people who are or have been homeless know they have as much right and are as welcome to that cultural space as any other citizen. The diversity of the arts and homelessness sector, with its different definitions of and attitudes towards homelessness, its different national, regional and local cultures, different ways of organising and financing arts provision and different kinds of creative practice, mean that some of the content of this report will be of interest and relevant to many readers and some, to just a few. We hope that readers will be able to pick out what is of most value to them.

It is for every cultural space to determine its priorities and its pace of change. We know that change takes time, but we also know that, by sharing experience and acting on it, change will come.

2. The review process

The review had three objectives:

- Identify cultural spaces, anywhere in the world, where people who are or have been homeless feel welcome, participate in the programme, help to run the organisation (on a voluntary or paid basis) and encourage others to get involved.
- Describe the decisions and changes that cultural spaces have made, to increase the likelihood that people who are or have been homeless feel as welcome as anyone else.
- Identify the characteristics of cultural spaces that are genuinely open to all.

Co-produced questions

We began by asking people who were or had been homeless about their experience of cultural spaces. At meetings in Manchester and Edinburgh, in 2017 and at the WOV International Arts and Homelessness Summit and Festival in Manchester, in 2018, we asked participants what made it more or less likely that they would visit a museum, library or arts centre for the first time? What made a good or bad impression on them, when using cultural spaces? What would encourage them to return? What aspects of a visit mattered most? The review was to focus on organisations that are already working to make their buildings and programmes more inclusive and that might have useful experience to share. So we also asked for advice on the kinds of questions we should be putting to those who run cultural spaces. Why are they doing what they are doing? What changes have they made? What challenges have they faced? What do they think it essential for other cultural spaces to know?

We organised these co-produced questions under four headings:

- Organisational beliefs and values (or organisational culture)
- Policies and plans
- Programming
- Day to day operations

There was some overlap between questions and a few could sit under more than one heading but, together, they captured the significant issues for individuals who would like to spend more time in cultural spaces, but who sometimes feel uncomfortable or excluded. Some of the questions

implied actions that organisations could take to make their spaces more inclusive of members of the public who happen to be homeless. Here are some examples of the questions. The full list can be found in Appendix 1.

Organisational values and beliefs

- Why do you exist? What are your values?
- What do you think homelessness is? Do you understand what it is?
- Do you see your work with homeless people as additional?

Policies and plans

- How is your organisation currently impacted by the increase in homelessness?
- Is responding to homelessness part of your strategy?
- What do you want to change? What's in this change for homeless people?

Programming

- Is art by people with lived experience of homelessness integrated into your mainstream exhibitions or performances?
- How do you support people in making their voice heard? What are the challenges for you in doing this?

Day to day operations

- How have you trained your front of house staff to be informed and aware around homelessness?
- What do you think your other audiences think of your involvement of homeless people?

The search for answers

The next step was to find examples of what cultural spaces of different kinds have been doing in response to homelessness. The review was advertised to WOV's membership and its wider network, including contributors to previous projects, events and publications. The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the British Council, two of WOV's original supporters, both put out a call and the WOV's Director, Matt Peacock, took every opportunity to speak and write about the review and to invite contributions.

The WOV International Summit and the Literature Review provided further leads, but only a few of these generated new examples of interesting practice. While many cultural spaces have taken small steps to make themselves more inclusive, the number that have taken big strides is small. Most organisations were happy to share their experience, but none claimed to be expert in the field or to be an example of good



practice. This instinctive reserve may be a reflection of the fact that few cultural spaces have Board members or staff who have themselves been homeless and there may be a reluctance to claim significant progress until that changes.

In Manchester and in Rio, co-researchers with experience of homelessness took part in the interviews alongside WOV researchers Nigel Allmark and Jan Onosko. Jennifer McDerra conducted interviews in Canada. Other interviews and desk research were conducted by Phyllida Shaw, who also wrote the report. Articles about arts and homelessness published online have been a valuable source of information, for which the authors and their publishers have been credited.

3. A summary of findings

Cultural spaces responding to homelessness are engaged in one or more of these five types of activity

1. They are working, in-house or off-site, with local homelessness organisations (and sometimes other partners) on projects to promote participation in creative and cultural activity.
2. They are providing space for activities (regular workshops or time-limited projects) designed and delivered by an organisation specialising in arts and homelessness, and showing the work produced.
3. They are co-producing projects with an organisation specialising in arts and homelessness, and sometimes involving other partners.
4. They are commissioning, producing or promoting work on the subject of homelessness and increasing public awareness and understanding.
5. They are making changes to their building (inside and outside) and to their day to day operation, to make themselves more inclusive and welcoming.

The review has prompted the following observations.

- Cultural spaces where the leadership is well informed about homelessness and publicly states that the organisation is responding to homelessness are important role models for the rest of the sector.
- As leaders move from one organisation to another, they take their experience with them and increase the commitment and capability of the cultural sector, as a whole, to respond to homelessness.
- Where the work on homelessness is being led by staff or freelancers who are not part of the senior team, it may be vulnerable.
- Partnerships between cultural spaces and specialist arts and homelessness organisations can increase both organisations' capacity to achieve more.
- Cultural spaces can play an important role as incubators of arts and homelessness projects, which can then go on to become independent organisations.
- Newer cultural spaces may have more scope to do things differently. There are fewer traditions and established practices in the way. There are examples of new, high-profile venues, of the kind not

usually associated with poverty and exclusion, that are responding to homelessness.

- University staff and students are important contributors to the arts and homelessness sector in many countries. Ending homelessness is a high priority for young people and a popular topic for student research projects. There may be opportunities for cultural spaces to involve university departments in the development of their responses to homelessness.
- As the arts and homelessness sector grows, globally, so too will the number of artists who are or have been homeless. This should present cultural spaces with a wider choice of work to commission, produce and programme.
- The volume, range and depth of media coverage of the arts and homelessness appears to be increasing, providing cultural spaces with more opportunities to share, publicly, their responses to homelessness.
- Significant, sustained relationships between cultural spaces, other organisations and individual practitioners take time to build. In such a sensitive area of activity, trust in each other's ability to deliver is essential.

Cultural spaces that are working to respond to homeless share these characteristics

- Their commitment to responding to homelessness is written down.
- They recognise the complexity of homelessness and are working with other organisations and individuals and pool their resources, to achieve more.
- They know that it takes time to build relationships and achieve change.
- Homeless or not, every visitor has access to the facilities, programme and opportunities on the same basis as anyone else. If an event is free, anyone can come. If it is a ticketed event, everyone needs a ticket. This is not about free access, but equality of access.
- Understanding homelessness is part of the training of staff, volunteers and governing body.
- They are consistent in the way they communicate with their audiences.
- There is a record of activities relating to the cultural space's response to homelessness. This reduces the likelihood of organisational memory loss, when key people move on.
- These characteristics are expanded upon in the recommendations below.

4. Strategies for responding to homelessness - Recommendations for cultural spaces

Each cultural space has its own history, context and priorities and its strategy for responding to homelessness will be an individual one. Some of the recommendations below, which are informed by the findings of the review, as set out in the previous section, might help to inform it.

Write down the organisation's decision to respond to homelessness.

By recording the decision in writing, in the minutes of a meeting or the text of a plan or annual report, an organisation is confirming its commitment to respond to homelessness. It means there will be a record of when it began to work on this, in a systematic way. Some organisations may have included homeless people in their assumptions, without naming them as a group; some may have mentioned them in a list of target audiences; a few may have identified responding to homelessness as a priority.

Have an aim and a plan for achieving it.

There may be one aim or several. The plan may be for an activity that lasts weeks, months, or years. What matters is that an organisation's commitment to becoming more open and inclusive has a direction.

Plans are more likely to achieve their aims if they are co-produced with people who are, or have been, homeless.

Whether looking at changes to the presentation of a space, the programme, opening hours, pricing, the training of staff and volunteers or some other area, people who are or have been homeless should be involved in the process. Be clear about the purpose of every discussion, keep a record of it and ensure that all contributors' expectations are managed.

Be honest about what the organisation is and is not and what it can and cannot not achieve with its resources.

Be clear about what an approach or a project in response to homelessness is aiming to achieve and how you will know it has succeeded. Start small and learn from the experience. A disappointing result may feel worse

because of the expectations surrounding it but, as in every new area of activity, confidence will grow.

Recognise the complexity of homelessness and employ people who understand it.

Effective engagement with any group of people who feel unentitled or excluded requires empathy and experience. Whoever is leading an organisation's response to homelessness (whether a staff member, freelancer or volunteer) must have relevant experience. If they have not themselves been homeless, they need to have worked with people who have been, and with homelessness organisations. Colleagues can learn, but the lead person must have relevant experience.

Look, listen and collaborate.

A collaborative approach is likely to be more effective than a competitive one. While there can be competition for funds, profile and even participants, partnerships (whether with local homelessness organisations, other cultural spaces, or organisations specialising in the arts and homelessness) are likely to achieve more. Collaboration helps to build confidence that all parties have the right motives and the capacity to deliver. Who is homeless in a given community can change at any time and strategies may need to change too.

Help people to feel at home.

Most cultural spaces can introduce changes that make them appear more welcoming. Manchester School of Architecture, Laing O'Rourke and WOV's *Cultural Spaces and Homelessness Design Handbook*¹ describes how a space can be made more accessible, inclusive and appealing, from the threshold and doorways, to the signage, to a secure space in which to store coats and bags, and enough places to sit and relax. The starting point of the visit (the welcome desk, reception, box office, etc) and key locations – toilets, café, cloakroom, space for sitting – should be clearly signposted. Most first-time visitors need help to navigate an unfamiliar building and it is always useful to have people on hand to respond to someone who asks for help, or looks as though they might need it. In most settings, human interaction is more important than physical signage. Do not underestimate the power of word of mouth. Good and bad experiences are highly likely to be shared within the local homeless network.

Give it time.

It takes time to get to know new users of a space and to earn their trust. Trustees or senior managers who find themselves doubting that their organisation is making a difference, or that the investment of time and

1 <http://bit.ly/cultural-spaces-homelessness-design-handbook>

money is producing results, need to be patient. Depending on the activity and the style of delivery (a weekly or monthly event, an intensive, time-limited project, or something else) it may take years for people who have felt excluded to trust that this cultural space is for them.

Explain and train.

Homelessness may be more visible and more discussed than ever before, but few people currently working in cultural spaces know, from personal experience, what being homeless feels like or involves on a daily basis. Awareness raising and training need to start with the fact that access to culture is a human right. As a cultural space becomes more experienced at welcoming people who are or have been homeless and as laws, regulations and guidelines on equal opportunities, disability access, safeguarding and other relevant topics change, the training of the workforce needs to be refreshed.²

Be consistent in what is said and done.

Different staff members and volunteers communicate with visitors in different styles and tones, but when speaking for the organisation for which they are working, the message needs to be the same. There can be a temptation to bend the rules and to make exceptions when faced with an immediate or difficult challenge, but clarity and consistency are vital to the development of trust and reputation with any new audience.

Speak and write about cultural spaces' responses to homelessness.

The more people working in cultural spaces, who are willing and able to speak or write about their strategies for responding to homeless, the more learning there can be. This is not about claiming expertise, but about sharing experience. The reported experience of the participants in a programme is critically important and as far as possible, it needs to be unmediated. Where someone who is or has been homeless is willing to speak or write about his or her experience of using or working with a cultural space, this should be welcomed.

Ensure there are choices.

No one's experience of a cultural space should be limited to a group activity, or to a training or education room. Introductory activities for any group should signpost what else the cultural space has to offer. Some organisations may be able to offer group members complimentary tickets to at least some events and create a budget to support this.

² If you would like to know more about WOV's Cultural Spaces Homelessness Training, email lora@with-one-voice.com

Include people's creative work in the public programme.

A programme that reflects different perspectives and different kinds of lived experience, is likely to be a more interesting one. Opportunities for people who are or have been homeless to show their work to an audience could range from sharing of a piece of writing, visual art or performance, during the course of a project, to an entire publication, exhibition or production. There should be no expectation that the content will be about homelessness, unless that was the brief. The inclusion of any artist's work in a public programme should benefit both the maker (who is likely to feel a stronger sense of belonging within that space) and the organisation (which will be seen by its audience to be championing new perspectives and new voices, and be enriched by them). The shared experience of producing programme content can strengthen relationships between all those involved. Each individual must have the right to choose whether or not to be identified as homeless or formerly homeless. No assumptions should be made about this. Some will want to be identified in this way, others will not.

Create opportunities to volunteer, to train and to undertake paid work.

Inclusion in the workforce of people who are or have been homeless and an interest in co-production will introduce different perspectives and experiences to the team; it will confirm the cultural space's commitment to responding to homelessness; and it will enhance its reputation among audience members and supporters who value inclusion.

Record what is happening, to preserve organisational memory.

When key figures (trustees, employees, freelancers, volunteers) move on, it is important to the groups and individuals with whom they have worked that there is continuity. Their successors will build relationships and trust more easily if they have been well briefed. They need to know the history of the relationship with partner organisations,³ the background to a particular approach or programme and the names of regular participants, and users of the space. A written record of the responses to homelessness, of what has taken place and when, and of who was involved (names and roles) will be help in this process. Attention to detail, and respect for what has gone before, promotes trust. Recording this work and commitment will begin to normalise access and involvement for people who are or have been homeless.

3 In 2014 the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester produced this timeline of the first seven years of its relationship with the Booth Centre <https://www.royalexchange.co.uk/317-booth-centre-ret-partnership-timeline/file>

5. Examples and illustrations

This section described some of the experiences and practices of a diverse collection of cultural spaces, around the world, that are responding to homelessness in their different local and national contexts.¹ As noted in the introduction, none of these examples has been evaluated by WOV and their inclusion is not an endorsement of a particular approach. It is our hope that readers will follow up the examples they find interesting and continue to share with us, further illustrations of responses to homelessness.

With the exception of the few cultural spaces that have taken their local homeless community into account from the outset (for example, the Biblioteca Parque Estadual in Rio, Arts at the Old Fire Station in Oxford and Skid Row History Museum and Archive in Los Angeles) most organisations' responses to homelessness have evolved over time and the change has been incremental: a barrier to participation is identified; a new member of staff proposes a different approach; a regular workshop participant is ready to show her work to an audience; a local homelessness organisation suggests a collaboration.

However long their experience, no cultural space claims to have got everything right and no two organisations are the same. For these reasons, rather than presenting single organisations as case studies of good practice (as sometimes found in reviews of this kind) we have compiled a selection of experiences and approaches organised them under the four headings used to frame the consultees' and co-researchers' questions set out in section 2:

- Organisational beliefs and values
- Policies and plans
- Programming
- Day to day operations

The featured organisations may not use these headings themselves and may not think of their activities in this way but, while there is some repetition and overlap, we hope this structure provides readers with a helpful way to explore different responses to homelessness and to



Scotland Review, Co-Researchers group

¹ If you have interesting examples of cultural spaces' responses to homelessness, please email the name of the space and the reason why you are suggesting it to lora@with-one-voice.com

emerge at the other end with new information and ideas.

Organisational beliefs and values

The beliefs and values of an organisation inform its priorities and the way it behaves. Most of the cultural spaces mentioned in this review have publicly accessible statements of their vision, mission, beliefs or values which suggest why they are responding to homelessness. While there are rarely direct references to homelessness in these statements (which can be found in their governing documents and plans and – more accessibly – on their websites) a published commitment to access, inclusion, diversity and agency opens the door to everyone.

Here are some examples of the high-level statements by cultural spaces which provide the framework for their responses to homelessness.

The mission of **Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums** (UK) is "to help people determine their place in the world and define their identities, so enhancing their self-respect and their respect for others". In its brochure entitled *Valuing Voices*, TWAM lists six beliefs, which cite "people of all needs and backgrounds," and resources that are "accessible to everyone". There is no mention of any specific group, but "homeless people's projects" are included in a list of groups on the community page of TWAM's website.

The values of **the Seattle Symphony** (USA) are "excellence, innovation, curiosity, collaboration, inclusivity, respect, integrity and service". There is no reference here to homelessness yet working with local partners to respond to the rise in homelessness in Seattle and King's County has been a priority of the organisation since 2013. The orchestra runs two cultural spaces, the Benaroya Concert Hall and the Octave 9, Raisbeck Music Center, which opened in 2019 as a new home for the orchestra's education and community engagement programming.

In Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), **The Museum of Tomorrow** (**Museu do Amanhã**) on the site of the city's former port, opened in time for the 2016 Olympics and has welcomed homeless visitors from the outset. Its vision includes these words: "We believe the arts and culture are knowledge pillars that contribute to individual autonomy, communities' plurality and cooperation between nations." Its values are "joy, optimism, compromise, cooperation and affectivity, trust, respect." The Museum hosts a choir of homeless people, *Uma So Voz* every week and has helped to expand this programme to create more opportunities for the choir members.

Montreal Museum of Fine Arts (Canada) describes itself as "a bold, innovative and caring museum". Its response to homelessness is part of a much broader



Museum of Tomorrow (Rio de Janeiro)
Credit to Lorena Mossa



Uma So Voz performance at Museum of Tomorrow
Credit to Lorena Mossa

commitment to being a socially engaged museum, serving people who are excluded or restricted. "The Museum combats violence and social exclusion by helping young victims of bullying at school...It offers many programmes to organizations focussing on alleviating homelessness... and promoting adult literacy. The Museum helps with the reintegration of the intellectually challenged and people with severe disabilities."²

In many societies, public libraries' long-standing policy of free and equal access, make them a natural attraction for people who are or have been homeless. They are a familiar part of the cultural landscape and in addition to reading material, most now provide access to computers and internet and some programme free talks, exhibitions and performances. Libraries are also like community 'hubs' with notice boards full of local groups and events to join and enjoy. Many libraries recognise their role in the lives of people who are or have been homeless, without naming them. The first two values of **Vancouver Public Library** (Canada) are "diversity" and "access for all". **Dallas Public Library** (USA)'s mission statement is that it "strengthens communities by connecting people, inspiring communities and advancing lives". **Manchester City Library** (UK) "shall strive to provide quality services and materials to meet the cultural, educational and informational needs of our diverse and changing community". In Brazil, opposite Rio de Janeiro's Central Station, the **Biblioteca Parque Estadual** (currently closed, due to funding cuts) is one of several park libraries in the city. Modelled on an initiative in Medellin (Colombia) these libraries, with their plentiful outdoor space, are designed to ensure social inclusion.

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre

opened in 2017, on the south side of Athens (Greece). It was conceived by the Greek government and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, a charitable foundation with a history of financing activities to reduce homelessness. The mission of the SNFCC is: "The creation of a public space open to all, where everyone has free access and can participate in a multitude of cultural, educational, athletic, environmental and recreational activities and events." The building, which houses the National Library of Greece and the Greek National Opera, is set in a huge, landscaped park, which is considered to be equal in importance the two "institutions" inside. By the end of 2019 the SNFCC had delivered 9,000 events, most of them free.



Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Centre and gardens (Athens)

Without mentioning homelessness, statements of beliefs and values can give the leadership of an organisation the permission and scope to respond to homelessness and it could be argued, leave no justification for not doing so. Cultural spaces where people with experience of homelessness are at the centre of the action are more likely to refer

² <https://www.mbam.qc.ca/en/about-the-museum/a-bold-innovative-and-caring-museum/>

directly to homelessness in their statements. Here are some examples.

The Edge Theatre and Arts Centre, which occupies a converted Red Cross hospital in Chorlton, south Manchester (UK), believes that everyone should have access to the arts as a basic human right. "The Edge runs a comprehensive participatory programme alongside a professional theatre provision (both a receiving and producing house), working with people who are homeless, vulnerable adults and young people, using high-quality theatre and arts to transform lives." The Edge has a long-standing partnership with the Booth Centre, a day centre for homeless people, with a thriving arts programme.

The Old Fire Station in Oxford (UK) "is a public arts centre presenting new work across art forms, supporting artists and including people facing tough times." This choice of vocabulary invites people to relate to "tough times" of their own and helps those who have not experienced homelessness to think about how "tough" it might be. The Old Fire Station is owned by Oxford City Council and had been a cultural space for decades before it was remodelled and reopened in 2011. The building is run by Arts at the Old Fire Station (a charitable company set up by the Council) in partnership with the homeless charity Crisis. The Arts at the Old Fire Station Trustees' report explains: "Through this partnership, we offer people who are homeless space to define themselves and choose their own labels by including them in the running of the centre. We look for ways of including others who are socially isolated and disadvantaged. This improves the quality of what we do, helps develop networks, builds resilience and leads to more stable lives. We do this, with Crisis, by offering a public space which is shared by very different people and helps to break down barriers and promote solidarity in Oxford. We prioritise building good quality relationships within our team, with our public and with partner organisations."



Old Fire Station
Credit Crisis UK

Los Angeles Poverty Department is no less compromising in describing its mission and its values. Founded in 1985, LAPD was America's first performance group of mainly homeless people and the first arts programme for homeless people in Los Angeles. Thirty years later, it opened **Skid Row History Museum & Archive**. Its website explains: "The museum functions as a means for exploring the mechanics of displacement in an age of immense income inequality, by mining a neighbourhood's activist history and amplifying effective community resistance strategies. It also serves as a literal and artistic common ground, a welcoming space for Angelenos to meet and mingle and explore civic issues together. LAPD values accessibility and inclusion. We meet people where they are. We don't give life sentences: 'homeless', 'drug addict', 'crack addict'. We believe people grow and change. Tolerance. Society judges, gives labels rather than giving the space for recovery. LAPD doesn't do that. Not judging, we build compassion." In October 2019, the Museum hosted *Worlds of Homelessness*, a week of discussions, performances and screenings led by the Goethe-Institut Los Angeles and

culminating in the Festival for All Skid Row Artists.³

These contrasting and sometimes compelling statements from organisations with different histories and working in different social and political contexts highlight the importance of understanding what homelessness in a particular community looks like and what it means; how people experiencing homelessness are seen, and see themselves, and what the role of the cultural spaces in their lives might be.

Policies and plans

This section offers some examples of how cultural spaces' policies and plans support their engagement with people who have experienced homelessness.

In 2012, two of Manchester's long-established cultural organisations, Cornerhouse and the Library Theatre Company, merged to become Greater Manchester Arts Centre Ltd. Three years later, the new organisation moved into its purpose-built centre for international contemporary art, theatre and film. They called it **HOME**.

The name and the direction that HOME would take were informed, in part, by discussions with existing Cornerhouse and Library Theatre audiences and participants, freelance arts workers and other cultural and community organisations. "HOME is a name that holds us to account," explains Head of Engagement, Marisa Draper. For HOME, engagement is "every activity that enables people to get closer to the programme, artists and art-forms, and to tell their stories through their own artistic creations". The policy is that every engagement activity must be linked to the programme and that nothing is done in isolation.

The framework for the organisation's response to homelessness is the #HOMEinspires Communities Programme. This includes the Inspire ticket scheme, which provides groups with £1 tickets to certain shows. In a city the size of Manchester, the distances involved and the cost of transport can be prohibitive, so groups can also apply for free tram and bus tickets, to make it easier for them to attend. (There is a limited number of transport tickets each year.)

As the HOME team got to know its visitors, it learned that many of them also made art and so they created a dedicated exhibition space in the downstairs bar, which it called the Inspire Gallery. There are open calls for proposals and the Community & Outreach Programme Producer, Ann Louise Kershaw, helps to install each exhibition. Members of the Booth Centre are regular visitors to HOME and have exhibited their work in the Inspire Gallery. "Most of the people we work with have no income or low income," explained a Booth Centre worker in a film on HOME's website. "They are on benefits, or their benefits have been sanctioned, so this is a really good opportunity for them to be able to experience some culture and something that's happening in the city and not be excluded from it."

³ <https://www.goethe.de/resources/files/pdf184/worlds-of-homelessness-press-release-final.pdf>

In 2009, **San Francisco Public Library** became the first library in the USA to employ a social worker, to support library users who were homeless. By 2019, 30 American public libraries had full-time or part-time social workers and at least 49 had provided social work students with placements.

Dallas Public Library launched its Homeless Engagement Initiative at the J Erik Jonsson Central Library in 2013. Library Director Jo Giudice explains why: "When I came to the Central Library, many years ago, I felt very strongly about creating some programmes for the homeless; that this becomes an opportunity for them to find a job, to be connected with resources. And that's what the library is about." As well as supporting its customers to use the library's resources, the Homeless Engagement Initiative offers keyboard and guitar classes, photography, screenings of classic films and a fortnightly social event called 'Coffee and Conversation', in the Community Exchange Space. Recognising that many of their customers have questions about day to day practical issues, the library also runs a Homelessness Engagement and Leadership Programme (HELP) Desk.



Dallas Public Library

Conversation is the raw material of the Library's Street View podcast. This was initiated in 2014 by Rashad Dickerson, a homeless library customer, with the involvement of the then Community Engagement Administrator. The Library wanted its homeless customers to have their voices heard and here was a way to do it. They had the personnel, the space, the technology and the stories. Over two and a half years 29 podcasts were completed, all aiming to "increase community awareness of issues related to homelessness and promote the library as a place of social inclusion". Early on, Dickerson reflected: "To be able to share my whole entire story, no matter how ugly or jaded or jagged it is, and other individuals are willing to share their story—just a tad bit—there is a positive energy, a healing, to people giving up and giving themselves the opportunity to speak." The podcasts were paused for more than two years, when the Community Engagement Administrator moved on, but they have since re-started with a different team.⁴

Toronto Public Library's strategic plan refers to "reducing barriers and increasing inclusivity in the library". An illustration of what this means in practice is that people without a permanent address only need to provide proof of their name to receive a library card. This allows them to borrow books and use the library's computers. Six community librarians based in different locations in the city (one of them a homeless shelter) encourage people to use the library system. There is also a Bookmobile Shelter Outreach programme, which visits shelters for homeless families and provides library cards for adults and children. Books can be borrowed

⁴ The Dallas Public Library Street View podcasts are here <https://street-view.podomatic.com/>

for longer than usual, they can be returned to the shelter, rather than the library and there are no fines for late returns. This is an example of a policy responding directly to the reality of homelessness for some people.

Public health nurses have had a presence in the city's libraries for years and in 2018, a social worker was appointed to Toronto Library's staff team. Rahma Hashi's role is to support homeless and other vulnerable users of the library. "We are trying to be proactive," explains Aly Velji, Manager of Adult Literacy Services. "We have a lot of vulnerable clients, who use our spaces and so we are looking [at] how to better serve their needs."

In 2013, the **Seattle Symphony** began working more regularly with local organisations and with teaching artists in an effort to tackle homelessness and its consequences. The programme had three strands: Artistic Partnerships, which offered people the chance to create and perform music; Residency Programs, in which teaching artists would run regular sessions, or short projects, in community settings; and Ticketing Programs which used a network of some 60 local organisations (15 of them specialists in homelessness) to distribute concert tickets to people who would not otherwise be able to attend.

In 2016, following the declaration of a state of emergency in relation to homelessness in Seattle and King's County, the Symphony's Chief Executive, Simon Woods announced an organisation-wide commitment to homelessness. The three strands described above were pulled together under the name Simple Gifts and a fourth, encouraging trustees, staff and volunteers to undertake some activity in support of homeless people, was added.

At the launch,⁵ Woods described "a multi-year initiative that will share the inspiration of music to spark joy, alleviate trauma and connect individuals with their creativity through artistic projects, residencies and access to performances. We have a unique opportunity to build on the work we already do in the community to create a sense of belonging, provide respite, give hope and share the healing power of music with those in need. We hear from our partners that what we do makes an enormous difference to their clients. We believe, as they do, that engaging in creative work makes the 'invisible' visible, it builds confidence, influences self-perceptions and connects people to their own creativity."

When Alistair Hudson⁶ was Director of **Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art** (UK) he introduced free, weekly lunches for anyone who wanted to come, to see whether new ideas on any issue might emerge. It changed the way the gallery listened to people. In an interview with the BBC⁷ he told report Ian Youngs: "We redirected our exhibitions

5 <https://www.seattlesymphony.org/watch-listen/beyondthestage/simple-gifts>

6 Alistair Hudson is one of the key partners of Museum of Arte Util ('useful art') – a community of art spaces which are striving to show how they are delivering social change.

7 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-47807780>

budget to pay for cooking for people every week. Around that table you would have gallery goers, homeless people, refugees, the police, the mayor, dementia groups... The most amazing range of people all gathered around this meal. It became this moment in the week where you could start to galvanise opinion and energy that could then be directed in very positive ways... But it also became the place where a lot of these groups, who didn't have a voice, could have recourse to power. They could use the gravitas of the public institution in order to talk up to power - whether that's the Mayor, or the council. That became a very interesting way of working. It started to affect a lot of decisions."

In 2018, when Esme Ward moved from her role as Head of Learning and Engagement at the Whitworth Art Gallery and **Manchester Museum** to become Director of Manchester Museum, major building work, to create a new exhibition hall and galleries and accessible visitor facilities was about to start. It was a good moment to reconsider the future direction of the Museum, which is part of Manchester University and is 150 years old. Its new aim is to become "the UK's most inclusive, imaginative and caring museum". While care is implicit in many cultural spaces' responses to homelessness, it is rare to find it headlined in this way.

Manchester Museum contributed to the WOV Summit and Festival in Manchester, in November 2018. Among other things, it hosted an Open Mic night where independent artists and groups performed. In February 2019, the Museum invited Peter 'Cookie' Cooke, one of the artists responsible for the Ducie Street mural (the theme of which is homelessness) next to Manchester Piccadilly Station, to spend up to a year as the Museum's artist in residence. This was a significant development and a sign of the Museum's willingness to try new approaches to inclusion. This continued with the Museum's involvement in the creation of the **Cultural Spaces and Homelessness Design Handbook**; a programme of art workshops with many of the city's homeless organisations, spearheaded by Volunteer Programme Assistant Karen Brackenridge, and as a flagship partner for WOV's training programme which has grown out of this review.

The **Old Diorama Arts Centre** (London) runs a purpose-built complex of rehearsal rooms, studios, meeting rooms and exhibition space, a few minutes' walk to the west of Euston station. The income it earns by hiring space for casting, rehearsals, filming and other activities, pays for its own creative programme. One element of this is a residency for an emerging artist. Artists can apply to have a studio for three months, free



Manchester Museum (WOV Summit and Fest)
Credit Andrew Brooks



Peter 'Cookie' Cooke, Artist in Residence
at Manchester Museum

of charge and to make an exhibition for the public gallery café, which runs for two weeks. The idea is that the residency is accessible to anyone, with or without resources, which is how, in 2015, David Tovey was appointed its first Artist in Residence.

Now describing himself as 'a formerly homeless artist, educator and activist' Tovey is arguably the best known formerly homeless visual artists in the UK. In 2016, he went back to the Old Diorama Arts Centre to develop the first edition of the One Festival of Homeless Arts. The idea had come from a Brazilian colleague he had met during a With One Voice exchange, who had told him about the music festival he had organised. This is an illustration of how a policy of open access can not only transform the life of an individual but create new opportunities for others (in this case through the One Festival). The Old Diorama has also trialled other programmes with the homeless community, including a clothes drop and free tea and coffee in the foyer.

Programming

Some visitors to cultural spaces rarely, if ever, engage in the creative or cultural programme. There are multiple, individual reasons why but since the ambition of most cultural organisations is that people will explore what is on offer, few will accept that there is nothing more they can do to make their programmes appealing to someone who has got as far as crossing the threshold.

It is impossible to know the extent to which people who are or have been homeless visit cultural spaces, individually or with others, and what they do when there. What we do know is that these spaces are increasingly working with homeless organisations, groups and services to encourage people to get involved in creative and cultural activities, because of the positive outcomes we know they can deliver. The examples of programming for inclusion that follow include three types of work:

- Regular participatory activities
- One-off projects
- Work commissioned from artists with who are or have been homeless

The **Casa de Música** in Porto (Portugal), designed by Rem Koolhaas, opened in 2005. As an initiative of the Portuguese government, the commitment to access and inclusion was built in from the start. Jorge Prendas was appointed Director of the Education Service in 2007 and two years later, launched the Orquestra Som da Rua (the Sound of the Street Orchestra). Professor Graça Boal-Palheiros has written about the orchestra in depth⁸ and interviewed Prendas about his thinking. "The principle was to include



Casa da Música Porto

8 www.researchgate.net/publication/322406304_Singing_Against_Loneliness_Songs_of_a_homeless_choir_in_Porto

the most excluded people (homeless, at risk, living in social institutions) and to collaborate with social institutions, to build up a fully inclusive musical project," he explained. "Many of these individuals are excluded from society. In our group they are integrated and respected and through musical practice, they [learn] basic rules of democratic life, such as the right to express ourselves, the capacity to listen to others and respect their opinions. Thus, this is definitely also an educational project that develops many relevant skills." Everyone was welcome to join. No audition or previous musical experience was required.



Som da Rua choir and band, Casa da Música

The orchestra is managed jointly by the Casa de Música and by the "social institutions" that house many of the musicians. Social workers accompany the musicians to rehearsals and provide any support needed. Concerts take place at the Casa de Música and in local schools and there are regular invitations to perform at conferences, typically ones that are discussing the impact of this kind of activity

"For the participants, concerts represent the main goal and activities of the year," believes Graça Boal-Palheiros. "Performing for well educated, understanding audiences who feel empathy and applaud warmly is a reward for their efforts and increases their self-esteem." Prendas introduces each concert who "explaining the aims of the project and introducing the group with the official text. His way of speaking, gestures and tone of voice enhance the strength of his message: An adequate atmosphere is created for a positive response from the audience." This suggests that, however confident the Casa de Música is in its work, providing the audience with a context for what they are about to see and hear is important. "The vision and determination of the Educational Service of the CM, the internal recognition of the project by the CM, and the high social prestige that the institution enjoys in the public space are crucial to [the] support of the project," Graça Boal-Palheiros reflects. "The motivation of the music director comes from his own perception that "at the CM we are all proud of this project of public service. I believe that there is no better example of integration and of social work than this one done through music."

Through its Sharing Programme, **Montreal Museum of Fine Arts** has been working with a hostel, the Maison Eugénie-Bernier, run by Acceuil Bonneau. In workshops at the hostel, participants are introduced to a range of media and techniques, including photography, painting, drawings and writing. The workshops are linked to the Museum's collections and exhibitions, "with a view to creating works that make their daily environment more attractive". Through these workshops and through their regular visits to the museum, the ambition is that participants will develop a stronger sense of belonging."

The Booth Centre, a day centre for homeless people in Manchester (UK) first applied to the **Royal Exchange Theatre Community Partnerships**

Scheme in 2007. The scheme was an attempt by the theatre to lower the barriers that some homeless people face in accessing cultural facilities. In spring 2008, drama practitioner Janine Waters began running weekly sessions at the Booth Centre and the group gave its first performance in the Royal Exchange Studio that summer. The weekly workshops continued and in 2011, the Royal Exchange secured the funding from the Rayne Foundation and the J Paul Getty Jnr Charitable Trust for a three-year programme that would enable it to deepen its relationship with the Booth Centre and offer its members more. The Community Leader programme "used theatre processes and practice as creative tools to develop the social and personal skills of adults who have experienced homelessness. The overarching aim was to increase participants' ability to resettle, find stability and address ongoing health and substance misuse issues." Over three years, 202 people took part in 253 workshops, worked with 14 different arts practitioners and gave 12 performances at the Royal Exchange. The programme was comprehensively evaluated by Gerri Moriarty and her reports and other information about the programme are available online.⁹

When Janine Waters became Director of the **Edge Theatre and Arts Centre** (in Chorlton, Greater Manchester) she continued to work with the Booth Centre. Its drama group puts on two productions at the Edge every year. The organisation's impact report for 2017-18 explains: "The productions provide opportunities for friends, family, others with experience of homelessness and the staff that support them to see participants achieve. Our work profiles the impact of making theatre with vulnerable adults and challenges the public's perception of a person who has found themselves homeless. It proves that there is so much more to people than their current situation."¹⁰ Members of the drama group attend performances at the Royal Exchange, with tickets at reduced rates paid for by the Booth Centre.

At the **Old Fire Station** in Oxford every member of Crisis, which shares the building (see p13) has the opportunity to participate in creative arts activity. They can approach it as a training, volunteering or recreational activity, but the ambition is that each person will make progress of some kind. There is an arts training scheme designed to develop the skills and resilience that are likely to make participants more employable. Trainees choose the areas that interest them most (technical, front of house, office work etc.) and commit to two sessions of two to three hours a week, for ten weeks. Members who are not interested in training are welcome to work as front of house volunteers, greeting the public and ushering at shows. Tickets for most performances are available to any Crisis member free of charge.

An annual theatre-making programme called Hidden Spire (named after an architectural feature of the building) is an opportunity for

⁹ <https://www.royalexchange.co.uk/royal-exchange-theatre-and-booth-centre-partnership>

¹⁰ <http://www.edgetheatre.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/The-Edge-Impact-Report-2017-18.pdf>

Crisis members interested in making a piece of theatre. Funds have to be raised for this each year. The story of the 2017 production, *Sawdust*, was the subject of a documentary, broadcast on BBC Four - https://www.bbc.com/artsattheoldfirestation/docs/sawdust_20programme_203

In 2018, Katie Taylor was appointed, by a panel of members, to take on the role of artist in residence. The brief was to work with Crisis members towards an exhibition. She attended the classes that formed part of the regular programme and then, with the help of two additional artist mentors, worked with a small group of artists who were interested in developing and exhibiting their work. The exhibition, by Mary Bell, Firooze Tahri and Jordan Vanderhyde, attracted 250 people to its opening in November 2018 and was seen by several thousand more over the next two months.

The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art on the campus of the University of Chicago has a permanent collection of 15,000 objects and is free to all. The Museum is acutely aware of its responsibility for ensuring that its programme is relevant and attractive to the widest possible audience. These two extracts from the its website set the scene.¹¹

"Through our public practice, the Smart Museum offers programs, supports artistic interventions, and provides platforms that address the pressing cultural, social, and political issues of our moment. These projects are driven by the intellectual and cultural energy of our place – the University of Chicago on the South Side of Chicago – and situate the Museum as a critical civic site for our publics to convene in meaningful dialogue and action. Collaborations multiply our impact and connect the Smart with a broad network of campus, cultural, and civic organizations promoting a multi-faceted and omni-directional discourse grounded in artistic inquiry, social impact, and a diversity of ideas and perspectives."

The Museum's Public Practice Projects "directly investigate issues that are critical to the Smart Museum and its publics. Whether gallery-based, site-specific, ephemeral, or durational, these projects catalyze discourse about the nature of the Museum's work and how our ongoing operations can shift in response to the lessons learned. Often conducted in deep partnership with our campus and community partners, Public Practice Projects are usually participatory in nature and responsive to the Museum's place and context."

One such project took place over the summer of 2016. Called *In Anticipation of Belonging*, it invited four cultural and community partners to consider the aesthetic, social and political conditions that promote belonging or exclusion and to transform the Museum's galleries into "a space of belonging". One of the partners was **Red Line Service**. Founded by artist Billy McGuinness and historian and curator Rhoda Rosen, Red Line Service "creates cultural



Red Line Service
University of Chicago - Smart Museum

11 <https://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/public-practice/>

experiences for and with Chicagoans concerned about and/or currently experiencing homelessness...In partnership with organizations providing direct services and advocating for policy development, we strive to open and expand critical dialogues about poverty, social responsibility, and culture. Simultaneously, we generate change for all participants, and transform the cultural institutions that house our programs."

Red Line Service's responses to *In Anticipation of Belonging* included a sleepover at the Museum and an installation called Home. In an interview about its contribution, Red Line Service said, "We hope that visitors to the Smart Museum will take this opportunity to reflect on how a sense of cultural and physical belonging is cultivated, and to ask what work each individual needs to do to ensure that all Chicagoans have homes. Secondly, as an artist and curator team, we want audiences to consider the ways in which we may reshape our cultural institutions to be inviting and welcoming to all."¹²

The summer project was not a one-off. The four partners were asked to continue to develop their ideas and be the Museum's Interpreters in Residence for 2016-17. (This is a programme established in 2013 and different organisations and individuals are invited to take on the role each year.) In the autumn, Red Line Service and the Smart Museum hosted a potluck brunch for adults experiencing homelessness and museum staff. This included a tour of the autumn exhibition, readings, and a performance of *Electra* at the nearby Court Theatre. Red Line Service subsequently worked with a museum volunteer to create a series of pop-up installations to share and record stories inspired by the Museum's annual *Conversations with the Collection* series, on the theme of belonging and home.¹³

The Royal Academy of Arts (London) is better known for its blockbuster exhibitions than for its monthly community art club. In 2013, the charitable foundation of BNY Mellon sponsored the RA's exhibition, *Manet, Portraying Life*. It was also a supporter of the homelessness charity St Mungo's and suggested to the RA's Learning Coordinator, Becky Jelly, that the two organisations might contact each other. The monthly art club, initially for St Mungo's clients, was the result. A year later, Jelly and her colleague Anna Nunhofer reflected: "Over the past year, we've been delighted and inspired to see how participants grow in confidence from workshop to workshop. With the two of us as consistent workshop leaders, we can witness and be part of this development. Making art is difficult at the best of times, but we think this consistency helps to create a welcoming and safe environment for the group to express themselves in a personal and experimental way... One of our attendees who has learning issues is painting more often and has started to enter their work in competitions. Another has sold his work and is now retraining as a tattoo artist." A keyworker from another

¹² <https://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/blog/constructing-home-an-interview-with-red-line-service/>

¹³ <https://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/exhibitions/conversations-with-the-collection-belonging/>

homeless charity, The Connection at St Martin's, observed: "A lot of our folks have slept [rough] in this area, but never been inside. Just coming into somewhere as prestigious as the Royal Academy gives them a real sense of being valued – it boosts their self-esteem."¹⁴

By 2018 the RA had 14 community partners, seven of them specialising in homelessness and the art club was regularly attracting 40 participants. Each session would begin with a tour of the current, temporary exhibition, before the group began work. Since 2018 it has had the use of the Clore Learning Centre at the Royal Academy which includes exhibition space. In December that year, the club mounted its first public exhibition *Art is Part of the Equation* curated by members of six of the partner organisations. For the *Art Newspaper*, Kabir Jhala interviewed some of the artists.¹⁵ "Sonia, one of the exhibition's featured artists, is displaying two pieces both influenced by Impressionism. One, an oval miniature that one of the exhibition's organisers describes as a fusion between Monet and Bacon, was made in last month's Art Club. The other—a larger canvas in vivid shades of green—was made at her shelter. Artistic expression provides a vital outlet for Sonia, she says, and creating these pieces helped her reflect on her life's experiences. But the real inspiration behind her work, she says, is 'the community spirit of the club.'"

Seattle-based **Path With Art** provides year-round classes in the visual and performing arts for people recovering from homelessness, addiction and other trauma. "We envision a world where arts engagement is recognized as transformative – connecting the individual with the self, the self with community, and communities with society. In this world, the power of arts engagement is available for all." Path With Art showcases students' work both at its own premises and in public cultural spaces and lists more than 30 arts and cultural organisations among its partners. During the course of a typical year there are numerous visits to exhibitions and performances at professional arts venues. One of these, the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art, hosted an exhibition of students' work, for nine weeks, in the spring of 2019. Path With Art is also using its experience of working with cultural organisations to provide training to any that want to make their spaces more welcoming.

Tate Liverpool and Tate Modern each has a dedicated space called Tate Exchange. The space is used for activities that question how art can make a difference to people's lives and society. Both spaces have hosted *State of the Nation*, which was the artistic launch programme for Museum of Homelessness. Over two days at Tate Modern in April 2017 and seven days at Tate Liverpool in January 2018, visitors had the opportunity to listen, see or discuss art and ideas about homelessness. The entire programme was conceived and produced by a small group of people, 80% of whom had experience of homelessness. Museum of Homelessness funded and supported David Tovey's installation, *A Soldier's Story*, as part of *State of*

14 <https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/community-art-club-forging-a>

15 <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/preview/royal-academy-widens-out-reach-with-exhibition-featuring-works-by-people-struggling-with-homelessness>

the Nation, highlighting the vulnerability of members of the armed forces to homelessness. State of the Nation at Tate Modern also included David Tovey's *Man on Bench*, a fashion show devised and directed by him, using found materials to symbolise the beauty of second chances.

At the core of *State of the Nation* were 16 objects collected by Museum of Homelessness from London, Glasgow and Bedford, which told unheard stories of the homelessness crisis around the country. State of the Nation at Tate Liverpool included *Frequently Asked Questions*, an artwork by Anthony Luvera with Gerald McLaverty, based on local authorities' responses to McLaverty's questions, as a homeless person, about shelter, food and other basic needs. The shockingly low number of useful replies highlighted, to gallery audiences, the extent to which local authorities are struggling to meet homeless people's basic needs. (Museum of Homelessness continued to support this project and showed an updated version, in Bristol and London, at the end of 2019.)

For a week in March 2018, Tate Liverpool continued to focus on homelessness with a public engagement event called Exchanging Views: Narratives of Homelessness. This was a collaboration with ART LABS, a research centre at Liverpool John Moores University and Chester Aid to the Homeless (CHAR). Callum Craddock, a final year student at LJMU volunteered at CHAR's day centre and took part in art sessions, with service users. This work was then taken to the Exchange space at Tate Liverpool where, during the course of a week, service users, art students and gallery visitors worked alongside each other, making models from recycled circuit boards and decommissioned electrical components, while talking informally and for some, learning more about homelessness.

In April 2019, Tate Modern, presented a 12-hour, overnight performance of *Never Failed Me Yet*. This piece, written by the composer Gavin Bryars, almost 50 years ago, incorporates Bryars' recording of a homeless man he had overheard, saying, "Jesus' blood never failed me yet." At Tate Modern, in the galleries dedicated to performance art, the piece was performed by musicians from the Gavin Bryars Ensemble, the Academy of St Martin in the Fields, Southbank Sinfonia, West London Mission, the Connection at St Martin's and singers from Streetwise Opera. More than a thousand people attended the performance during the course of the night. "*It's such a privilege to be part of this, you have no idea how it's made me feel. I haven't done anything else with meaning since having kids, who I don't see,*" said one workshop participant. At the time of this performance, WOV began working with Tate Modern as a flagship project for the Cultural Spaces Homelessness Training Programme. Museum of Homelessness, which initiated the project and brought the partners together, supported the delivery of the event.¹⁶

February 2019 saw the opening of ***Missing Pieces: A History of Homelessness*** in Newcastle. Supported by the National Lottery Heritage

¹⁶ The Academy of St Martin in the Fields runs regular music workshops at The Connection at St Martin's. For more on these and a film of *Never Failed Me Yet* see <https://www.asmf.org/learning-posts/projects-with-homeless-people/>

Fund, the exhibition was the result of year's work involving members of the homelessness charity Crisis Skylight, volunteer researchers and five spaces - the Laing Art Gallery, the Discovery Museum, Betty Surtees House, the City Library and St Nicholas Cathedral.

Supported by two projects leaders, one a historian and the other a curator, volunteers used museum and gallery archives and public sources to research the facts and experience of homelessness in the city since 1840. They visited local museums and galleries to see how differently history is presented. They produced five stories that were turned into homeless history walking tours, led by trained guides, and they designed the way the exhibition would be shown in each of the five spaces. The publicity promised: "The exhibition features rarely seen documents and photographs from local archives as well as personal stories from the past and present to find out what history can tell us about the ongoing crisis of homelessness in Britain. Presented within unique structures built by Crisis members in collaboration with local artists, the exhibition will challenge you to think about homelessness in a completely new way." Images of the exhibition can be found on the Homeless History of Newcastle blog.¹⁷

Streetwise Opera has been working with cultural and community spaces in the North East England since 2006. It currently runs weekly singing and creative sessions at the Sage Gateshead (a music venue) and Middlesbrough Town Hall (as well as the Methodist Asylum Project) and has given public performances at the Sage Gateshead, the Biscuit Factory (a gallery in Newcastle), Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, Stockton International Festival and the Tall Ships Festival in Sunderland. In July 2020, Streetwise Opera's Middlesbrough groups will be premiering *After Winter*, a new work by Errollyn Wallen (inspired by Schubert's song cycle *Winterreise*), first at Middlesbrough Town Hall and then at the Ryedale Festival in North Yorkshire. This is the new work commissioned by Streetwise for a company that includes professional and non-professional musicians.

In summer 2019, five years after they had last collaborated, with Streetwise Opera providing chorus members for the **Royal Opera House's** production of *Les Dialogues des Carmelites*,¹⁸ the two organisations worked together again. This time it was for a seven-week residency based on Bizet's *Carmen*. They jointly delivered weekly workshops, in the Linbury Theatre, for up to 30 people aged between 40 and 75 and then gave a free lunchtime performance of *Carmen: Frailty, fire and freedom* in the Paul Hamlyn Hall (formerly known as the Floral Hall). Streetwise also runs weekly workshops in other cultural spaces around England including Manchester Art Gallery, Royal Festival Hall and Theatre Royal & Royal Concert Hall in Nottingham.

In May 2018, **Vancouver Opera** (Canada) gave three sell-out performances

17 <http://homelesshistorynewcastle.blogspot.com/2019/10/>

18 <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2014/may/30/simon-rattle-revolution-royal-opera-house-dialogues-des-carmelites-poulenc>

of *Requiem for a Lost Girl* at the Simon Fraser University Goldcorp Centre for the Arts. The chorus included 25 members of the Kettle Choir, a group that had been started by the Kettle Society and Vancouver Opera three years before. The Kettle Society was founded, in 1976, to support people with mental health issues, to provide services, including supported housing, and to reduce the stigma attached to mental illness. While Kettle clients had welcomed free tickets to Vancouver Opera's dress rehearsals and preview talks, the weekly singing sessions were something new. *Requiem for a Lost Girl* was written, in 2010, by Onalea Gilbertson, with music by Marcel Bergmann. Inspired by Gilbertson's loss of a friend, who had become homeless as a teenager and been murdered, it was commissioned by the Land's End Ensemble of Calgary and featured a chorus that included members of Calgary Drop-In Centre. The piece incorporated chorus members' own words, drawing on their experience of homelessness and this was the model repeated by Vancouver Opera, whose teaching artists worked with the choir.

The three shows were seen by an audience of 800. Colleen Maybin, Vancouver Opera's Director, Education and Community Engagement, said: "The positive impact that this project had on everyone involved is significant and serves as motivation for us to enable this work to continue." It wasn't a one off. At the 2019 Vancouver Opera Festival, the Kettle Choir performed a new chamber piece. *The Troubador and the Tallow Candle*. Written and composed by Lesley Sutherland, it again included material by members of the Kettle Choir and Writer's Guild. It was previewed at the O'Brian Centre for Vancouver Opera and then performed at CBC Studio 700. "Engagement in the creative process builds self esteem," reflects Colleen Maybin. "It builds resilience, it builds capacity to be able to speak about one's experiences and in a lot of ways, it allows people to be seen."

Milk Crate Theatre is one of Australia's well known community and cultural development companies and one of the few with expertise in homelessness. It does not run a cultural space but it grew out of one. In 2000, South Sydney Council asked Glenn Terry, the director of Darlinghurst Theatre Company, how he might work with the local homeless community. The Council had recently supported the company's move to the Reginald Murphy Hall in Potts Point, which it went on to refurbish and reopen as the Darlinghurst Theatre in 2001.

Terry went to see Ruth Polley, the activities officer of the homeless shelter, Wesley Edward Eagar Lodge, and together they designed a project, based on forum theatre. The Council offered to fund it for a year.

For ten years, Darlinghurst Theatre Company nurtured and developed Milk Crate Theatre as Australia's first theatre company for homeless and vulnerable people. In 2006, Milk Crate received its first significant grant from the Australia Council for the Arts and was able to extend its reach. Participant numbers increased from 50 to 250 and the audience for each production grew from 360 to 900. By 2010, it was ready to become an independent organisation, "using the performing arts to change the

story of homelessness". Milk Crate works mostly in community and mixed-used venues, rather than in mainstream cultural spaces, although it does receive offers of tickets for its members. Darlington Theatre Company relocated to the Eternity Playhouse in 2013.

Bury St Edmunds is a market town in Suffolk (UK) with a 200-year-old theatre. The **Theatre Royal** presents its own shows and touring productions, runs a creative learning programme for young people and a community engagement programme. Since 2015, the community engagement programme has been run by two associate artists, Danusia Iwasko and Lucinda Meredith and the theatre's response to homelessness has evolved over that time. A key partner is Bury Drop-In, a charity based at Trinity Methodist Church. Twice a week, a pool of 70 volunteers offers people who are homeless, or vulnerably housed, access to advice from various agencies, a hot meal and conversation. Up to 50 people per session use the service and Lucinda Meredith is a regular visitor.

The Drop-In's founder, David Bonnett, met Lucinda while she was working with Cardboard Citizens and Streetwise Opera and did not need persuading that the opportunity to take part in creative activity might be helpful for some of the Drop-In's guests. Activities have included photography, printmaking and creative writing and in 2018, the creation of the Theatre Royal Community Company to create a performance to celebrate the theatre's 200th birthday in 2019. The company's members all came through the theatre's partner organisations, including the Refuge, run by Bury St Edmunds Women's Aid Centre, the YMCA, Age UK and Bury Drop-In.

In the summer of 2019, a six-week printmaking project at the Drop In appeared to influence the way the theatre thought about exhibiting finished work. A project update on its website noted: "One of the values guests have brought to the project is *thrift* – with the sentiment that "if it's not free – we can't use it". This has led us to think creatively about how to display the work and what resources to use in the printmaking process. Guests are bringing in found materials each week and together we are being creative with the process to explore materials and make some meaningful images to tell the stories that the makers want to share through this work." Their work was shown in the Greene Room bar of the theatre which was temporarily transformed into a replica of the room in the Drop-In where it has been made. Visitors were invited to have a go at printing themselves and to contribute their work to the exhibition.

In addition to these participatory activities, the Theatre Royal distributes a number of free tickets to shows through local hostels and the library.

Seattle Symphony's programming response to homelessness is Simple Gifts, a collection of projects and programmes informed by the expertise of community partners. *All of Us Belong* was an early one-off project, which incorporated multi-media artworks, by 19 members of Seattle and King County's homeless population, into two performances of Charles

Ives' *New England Holidays*, in the Benaroya Hall. Ives was known to have been interested in community music and it felt appropriate to use the performance of his piece to highlight the experiences of the local homeless community. Professional artists employed by the Symphony worked with users of four homelessness organisations to create multimedia pieces informed by their stories. During the two concerts in early February, the completed works were projected on to a screen above the orchestra, between movements (of which there are four). These concerts had been planned without any such enhancement, so the opportunity to understand more about the individuality and complexity of homeless was a bonus for the audience.

The Symphony's Lullaby project has been running since 2013, with homeless women, children and families being supported by Mary's Place, at its day centres and night shelters. Members of the Symphony and students from Seattle Pacific University's Music Therapy programme spend a day at Mary's Place helping to compose the lyrics and music for individual lullabies. Each piece is arranged and recorded by musicians at Benaroya Hall and then brought back to its owner at Mary's Place. The final element is a live performance for the composers, their friends and family in the Octave 9, Raisbeck Center a new facility at Benaroya Hall. Recordings of some of the lullabies are available online.¹⁹

Speaking about Simple Gifts to journalist Rich Smith, for an article in *The Stranger* in February 2017,²⁰ the then Chair of the Board of the Symphony, Leslie Chihuly said: "We can't fix things, but we can play a role in dignifying with music. The point is to raise the profile of those suffering from isolation and homelessness and bring some dignity and goodness into those lives. The way I look at it is that we own a lot. The Symphony belongs to the community, and the social problems belong to the community. Someone can bring diapers, and someone else can bring lullabies and music. We need it all."

Day to day operations

This section offers a few illustrations of the way cultural spaces' day to day operations are part of their response to homelessness.

In Rio de Janeiro, the **Museum of Tomorrow** charges an entrance fee, which would normally prohibit someone with no income from visiting. Wanting to demonstrate that it is for everyone, the Museum created a scheme called Neighbours of Tomorrow. This provides its neighbours, including those who are homeless, with a free pass at any time. Entry is free to all visitors on Tuesdays, but the decision to be free to its neighbours every day sends an important message, according to Fábio Moraes, a member of the Museum's Community Relations team. "This [part of the city] has become a new area," he explained to With One Voice. "But

19 <https://www.seattlesymphony.org/lullaby>

20 <https://www.thestranger.com/music/2017/02/01/24836568/can-arts-organizations-address-seattles-homelessness-crisis-in-a-meaningful-way-seattle-symphony-is-trying>

is this new area good for the people who live here? Is it better for those people living in the favelas, for the fishermen, for the homeless people? We have to think of the problems that the museum coming here might have caused and not just think of our arrival as a really positive thing for the whole city. That's why the Community Relations team was created. The idea was to link with those vulnerable people, with those people who aren't used to these public spaces. It's important to make clear this isn't done as a favour. It's done as an exchange, because the museum also benefits when we have homeless people here and shows the world that the museum isn't an exclusive space. It's a space that really has been created for everyone."

When the Biblioteca Parque closed, Uma Só Voz, the street choir it had been hosting, needed somewhere else to rehearse. The Library and the Museum are run by the same organisation, so it made sense that the choir would relocate to the museum. "I think every homeless person who has come here has probably thought, 'When are they going to throw me out of here? When am I going to start getting nasty looks?' And this didn't happen – not because they were lucky but because the Museum was designed for them too. Generally the staff who have been hired here have been hired thinking of social engagement."

In 2016, three museum organisations in Bath (UK) - **the Holburne Museum, Bath Preservation Trust and the American Museum & Gardens** - embarked on a programme called Pathways to Wellbeing, a community engagement programme for "people with lived experience of mental health issues, social isolation and homelessness". The programme comprised four projects designed to support participants' progression: an entry level art group, a slightly more advanced group involving creative projects with professional artists, a peer-led group with a wider membership, and a Discover Museums course for those interested in learning about museum volunteering. Participants were referred by local healthcare providers and by the homelessness charity Julian House. Over a period of three years they created and exhibited artwork around the city, developed skills and confidence in volunteering and helped the museums to design new interpretation tools and public engagement activities.

There have been positive outcomes for the museums too. All regular participants in the programme received a free museums pass, entitling them (and a companion) to visit all the partner museums for free for a year. This has been highly valued and well used, with the result that the museums' audiences are more inclusive. Their staff and volunteers have learned how to support people with a range of needs. The museums feel more engaged with their local community and have a stronger relationship with the health and homelessness sectors on which they are continuing to build. In 2019, the Museum published an evaluation of the first three years.²¹ In his foreword to the report, the Holburne Museum's

21 <https://www.holburne.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/independent-evaluation.pdf>

Director, Chris Stevens, wrote "Many have expressed their appreciation of the opportunities the programme has offered but I want to turn that around and express how much we at the Holburne are indebted to them. Their engagement with the museum and our collection transforms how we see ourselves, how we understand the objects we have the privilege to care for, and how we stand in our community." The programme is continuing.

In 2011-12, supported by the Happy Museum, **London Transport Museum** in Covent Garden and the homelessness charity, St Mungo's, began working together to "bridge the divide between the museum space and vulnerable adults on their doorstep". The Happy Museum was set up in 2011 to help museums respond to the need for a more sustainable future. This includes making more of their relationships with their local communities. The London Transport Museum project was one of its first and has led to a long-term volunteering relationship between the Museum and St Mungo's.

Individuals using St Mungo's services came to work as volunteers with the public and behind the scenes at the Museum. Activities ranged from object handling sessions to supporting maintaining historic vehicles, working alongside staff. Several years later, the relationship is still going strong, with Museum volunteers delivering museum-related workshops at St Mungo's Recovery College in the London Borough of Southwark.

Seattle Public Library's Central Library (USA), which opened in 2004, took account of visitors who might be homeless or vulnerable in its planning. The building features large open spaces, good sight lines and ventilation "to combat the effect of humidity, musty books and body odour"²² and the toilet cubicles are designed for easy access, should anyone inside need help. Seattle Public Library's mission is "to deliver universal access to information and provide opportunities to improve the lives of people in the community". The availability of computers and online services is highly valued by library users without equipment and accounts of their own. There are computers in all 27 of Seattle's branch libraries and the library provides mobile Wi-Fi hotspots in homeless encampments and shelters across the city. A Community Resource Specialist is on site two afternoons a week at the Central Library and for one afternoon in each of two branch libraries to provide guidance on shelter, mental and physical health issues, domestic violence, food assistance, legal advice and training for employment.

London's **Southbank Centre**, a complex of cultural spaces beside the River Thames, has a long relationship with people who are or have been homeless. The spaces between and below its buildings have provided shelter from the weather for decades and from 1978-98, until the local authority moved people on, part of the area between the Southbank and Waterloo Station was known as Cardboard City. Fast forward to 2011 and the roof of the Southbank Centre's Queen Elizabeth Hall was

22 <https://www.newstatesman.com/world/north-america/2018/12/how-seattle-s-public-library-stepping-deal-city-s-homelessness-crisis>

transformed into a garden by volunteers from two homelessness charities, St Mungo's and the Passage, working with designers from the Eden Project in Cornwall. Today it is maintained by volunteers from Grounded EcoTherapy a horticultural therapy project, whose members include people who are or have been homeless.

The Royal Festival Hall is the largest of the Southbank Centre's venues and following its refurbishment, in 2007, its foyer spaces (where there are often free activities) became even more popular with visitors. Head of Visitor Experience, Matthew Hale explains: "The majority of our visitors don't have a ticket. They use our spaces. We don't ask, 'Why are you here?' That's not our approach." The RFH does, though, have visitor guidelines (not 'rules' or 'policy') which are freely available in a bright yellow leaflet. They are applicable to all visitors and are carefully worded. For example:

Please help to keep our foyers looking welcoming and presentable to everyone.

For the comfort of all visitors, sleeping is not permitted in our foyer spaces.

You are welcome to bring your own food and soft drinks to Royal Festival Hall foyers.

Only alcoholic drinks purchased at Southbank Centre can be consumed here.

The leaflet explains that at different times of day, some of the foyer spaces are open only to ticket holders and asks visitors to look for signs and listen out for announcements. It also invites visitors to speak to a Visitor Experience Host if they want to speak to a Duty Manager. A section of the leaflet is headed 'Information for visitors who are experiencing homelessness' and details of where people can find help and advice nearby.

The Southbank Centre asked Streetwise Opera (the UK based organisation making opera with people who are or have been homeless where With One Voice started), to design a training programme for its duty managers and security team. This included talking about why people might be homeless and about the fact that there is always a bigger picture. The very first iteration of this training, involving some role play and highlighting the importance of communication skills, was to become the basis of the subsequent programme that With One Voice co-designed with people who are or have been homeless and partners Museum of Homelessness. Southbank's Matthew Hale again: "One useful thing was to bring it back to the arts. Why is SBC here? It is not a shelter. We bring it back to our core mission. If we are getting ready for an event, we need people to make the space available. If someone does not want to move out of the foyer space, we can use the fact that we are an arts organisation to make that point."



Southbank Centre
Credit to Victor Frankowski



“ Cultural spaces that refuse to ignore homelessness, whether as a national issue or a fact of local life, are contributing to social change. They are helping to enact Article 27 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights which states that everyone, homeless, houseless, or not, has the right to participate in the cultural life of their community. All but two countries in the world are signatories to the Declaration, so this is a justification that any cultural space could cite for investing time and effort in becoming more inclusive”

5. Appendices

Appendix 1

The co-produced questions that informed this review

Organisational beliefs and values (or organisational culture)

- Why do you exist? What are your values?
- What do you think homelessness is? Do you understand what it is?
- Do you see your work with homeless people as additional?
- How far up the organisation does the motivation to be a welcoming, inclusive space have to go, in order for it to really work? (While recognising that the action is often at ground level, there needs to be support for it from the top.)
- Is your commitment to including homeless people in what you do a top down 'will', an institutional 'should', or a personal 'we should and we will' from a key individual?
- What have been the benefits of working with and welcoming people who are or have been homeless to your organisation?
- What percentage of your staff are aware of and support your policy of working with and welcoming this audience?
- How have you tackled ignorance, within your organisation, around people who are experiencing homelessness?
- What would be a good outcome for you? What would be a bad outcome? How do you measure success? How do you communicate success?
- If you've done something worth noting, in relation to homelessness, who and what made it happen? What words of wisdom would you pass on?

Policies and plans

- How is your organisation currently impacted by the increase in homelessness?
- Is responding to homelessness part of your strategy?
- What inhibited you before?
- What barriers do you face in working with people living with homelessness? What barriers have you overcome already, and how?
- What stops you being more actively involved with people with lived experience of homelessness?
- What do you want to change? What's in this change for homeless people?
- What policies do you have that support this work?
- Do you allocate resources (a budget, staff, space, anything else) to homelessness?
- Do your safeguarding policies include homelessness?
- How do you work to gain the perspectives of homeless people who (for whatever reason) do not

have a voice?

- To what extent do you include 'lived experience' in your decision making? If you do, what would people with lived experience say you could do more of?
- Would you consider setting up a peer / ambassador scheme?
- Do you employ people with past or present experience of homelessness? If not, why not?
- What would it take to make your organisation do this work long term?
- What is the biggest risk that would stop you from continuing this work?
- Would you be interested in pooling resources with other organisations to enable you to achieve more?
- Do you have any partnerships with homelessness organisations?
- Do you work in the community with people who are homeless?
- Would your organisation consider being a custodian of homeless heritage?
- How might you share your practice, your programme, your ideas?

Programming

- How do you decide your programme? What is your programming policy?
- Why do homeless people come to your venue?
- What is the best practice you know for including poorer people – particularly homeless and multiply disadvantaged people - in you what you do?
- How do you make your performances inclusive? How do you make performances more relaxed?
- Do you, or would you, offer people with lived experience space to exhibit or perform their work?
- Is art by people with lived experience of homelessness integrated into your mainstream exhibitions or performances?
- Could your programme be more reflective of the lived experience of homelessness?
- How can you support groups of people from a lived experience background to have their voice heard through the arts?
- How do you support people in making their voice heard? What are the challenges for you in doing this?
- Do you offer homeless-experienced people a space to make work?
- Do you wait for people to come to you for help or do you seek them out?
- Could a time-limited activity that you do with a group (a course, for example) be passed on to another organisation to continue, so that people can carry on with what they have started and build on the experience?

Day to day operations

- Do you have a nominated member of staff working with homeless people? If so, what is his/her job title?
- Are homeless people actively involved in the venue and in what way? If so, how come you are doing this? What's the process of getting involved? How do you communicate it?
- Are you a ticketed space, or walk-up, or both?
- How do people use your space(s)? Do you have spaces that are open and free?
- How do you tell people what you do? Meet and greet? Street support? Opening times?
- How do you welcome people who are homeless? Do you invite homeless people into your space? If not, why not?

- Are there billboards, or a big screen, that can be given over to homelessness organisations?
- Is there a noticeboard showing what's on?
- What is the first thing an organisation could do to be more welcoming to this audience? How have you trained your front of house staff to be informed and aware around homelessness?
- Which staff have been trained to work with people with specific issues?
- What skills or training would you require to do more?
- Do your staff and volunteers have an induction session, so they know where to direct people?
- What do you think your other audiences think of your involvement of homeless people?
- Have you ever experienced any serious problems in welcoming this audiences and if so, what was the nature of those problems?
- How do you combat bullying or prejudice from other visitors not directly associated with your organisation?

Appendix 2

Some more examples of cultural spaces' responses to homelessness

Rosehill Theatre in Whitehaven, Cumbria (UK) has been providing West Cumbria with live performing arts for more than 60 years. In 2015, while the building was closed for refurbishment, it booked companies to tour to local community venues under the banner Rosehill on the Road. One of these was the forum theatre company, Cardboard Citizens. The experience was a positive one and the following year, Cardboard Citizens invited Rosehill to be a partner in one of its national residencies. (Homeless Link provided the theatre with additional funding from its Be the Change network to enable it to accept the invitation.) The three-week residency deepened the theatre's understanding of homelessness.¹ Cardboard Citizens' Dan Boyden and Terry O'Leary worked with a group of staff, freelancers and members of the public who were homeless or vulnerable to create *On the Edge*, a new piece of forum theatre about a woman who had come out of rehab and was struggling to cope. Emma McGordon, one of the theatre's associate artists observed, "There was a real sense from the people we worked with of not only being listened to but having had their story listened to." Community Manager, Anne Timpson, who also took part, confirmed that: "Our involvement in the Citz National Residency has been pivotal in enabling us to shape our approach to working with marginalised communities."²

The Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff (Wales) has been working with Theatre Versus Oppression and with the homelessness charity, The Wallich, since 2016 on a creative training project called Behind the Label. Theatre Versus Oppression uses applied theatre techniques to show participants how to use theatre to tell their stories. The 18 weekly sessions include script writing, performance skills, design, lighting, sound, marketing and customer service, all supported by Wales Millennium Centre staff. Each course ends with a performance at the Centre. In an article about the impact of the programme on one of its participants in 2019,³ the director of Theatre Versus Oppression, Jennifer Hartley, said: "We wanted to show [the participants] that they were included in every aspect of the Centre and they weren't being treated differently to anyone else. I can't praise the Wales Millennium Centre enough for the risk they took with us. They trusted us and trusted how we would run it." Former participants have gone on to work as volunteer ushers and others have become mentors to subsequent courses.

1 <https://cardboardcitizens.org.uk/blog-what-its-work-citz-residency>

2 <https://www.homeless.org.uk/connect/blogs/2017/nov/13/rosehill-theatre-being-change>

3 <https://wales247.co.uk/this-is-my-story-from-being-homeless-to-stepping-onto-the-stage-at-the-wales-millennium-centre/>

In autumn 2019, four of the participants in *Behind the Label*, sat for casts by artist Maxwell Rushton. This was a joint project of the Wales Millennium Centre and The Wallich to increase awareness of homelessness in Cardiff. Casts of human figures in black bin bags were placed around the city over four days and people's reactions to them were filmed. The figures and the film (mostly depicting the indifference of passers-by) were then exhibited at the Wales Millennium Centre. Everyone visiting the exhibition had access to a guide advising on what they could do to help people who are 'rough sleeping'.⁴

National Museum Cardiff (part of National Museum Wales) has also worked with The Wallich. In 2017, it invited service users to co-curate an exhibition of modern and contemporary work, based on the Museum's collection. The show, *Who Decides? Making Connections With Contemporary Art*, ran for ten months until the beginning of September 2018. This was the first time the Museum had invited a group in to curate an exhibition. Senior Learning Officer, Grace Todd, said on film: "It was one of the ways that we thought we could make it clear that the Museum is for everyone. I am excited seeing the Museum as an organisation handing over the power."⁵ One of the participants, Michael Pugh, reflected: "I wouldn't have come into the museum before but now I'm here and I've loved it all. I'm now not afraid to come here by myself, I'm not daunted anymore."⁶

The Open Museum is Glasgow Museums' outreach team. They take objects from the museum collections out to communities across the city, particularly communities who may find it difficult to visit our museum venues. The Open Museum has had a long-running collaboration with homelessness charities. One project, 'Can You See Me?' was a portrait projects working with Glasgow City Mission and artist Ash Loydon. The project created portraits where there were no faces and no representation of the person beyond images showing their interests. The idea behind this was that traditional portraits are label-forming and that there is so much more to a person than the label 'homeless'.

Every October since 2007, in collaboration with the city authorities, **The Museum of Popular Art (Museo de Arte Popular)** in Mexico City has been organising an annual competition and parade of giant, fantastical folk art figures (*los alebrijes monumentales*). The figures are made of papier maché, clay and cardboard and painted bright colour and are paraded through the city accompanied by musicians and people in costume. In 2018 the Museum suggested to the City Council's Instituto de Asistencia e Integración Social (IASIS) that it should involve the increasing number of homeless people living in the city centre. IASIS provides shelter, food, treatment for addictions and new opportunities like this one. An artist was appointed to work with participants on their figures. The Director of the Museum, Walther Boelsterly Urrutia, told the press: "I believe that when a project like this is developed, when they [people who are homeless] are taken into account, when somehow they are given freedom to create their ideas, we give them the opportunity to little by little include [be included] in a production process, which will give them long-term satisfaction and may help them [in] changing their lives."⁷

HOME, Manchester (UK) organises a film night, four times a year, called *A City Seen*. Each event is programmed by, or features work by, what the venue describes as the city's "most essential" groups and charities. This programme offers people the opportunity to experience HOME, both as audiences and as artists. The theme of one of the film nights in 2019 was *Narratives of Homelessness*. It started with a series of 60-second films on the issues and experiences of homelessness, made during a pilot project involving Manchester Metropolitan University and five homeless charities. "The issue of homelessness is affecting more and more people, more deeply and profoundly, and what is now so visible on the

4 <https://wales247.co.uk/this-is-my-story-from-being-homeless-to-stepping-onto-the-stage-at-the-wales-millennium-centre/>

5 <https://thewallich.com/innovation/who-decides/>

6 <https://advisor.museumsandheritage.com/news/homelessness-charity-curates-major-new-national-museum-wales-exhibition/>

7 <https://www.telesurenglish.net/news/Mexico-Homeless-People-Design-Own-Creation-for-Alebrije-Parade-20181006-0033.html>

streets in cities like Manchester, is just the tip of the iceberg. The effect of being homeless is traumatic, it's inhumane, and it's seems endemic. Believing there is no one simple story here to tell, but there are many stories that need to be told, MMU alongside various charities around Manchester have created the films to be screened tonight. This event is action focused, with the discussion aiming to question such projects, explore what can meaningfully work for charities and those affected and identify future ways of working with creativity to make change."

The Citizens Theatre in Glasgow (UK) has been described by Shelly Coyne (in the With One Voice Review of Arts and Homelessness in Scotland⁸) as "something of a trail blazer for its high quality professional arts and homelessness work..." For several years the theatre has been working with the Chara Centre, which provides women with emergency accommodation and assesses their housing needs. In addition to the regular arts workshops that the Citizens Theatre leads at the Centre and trips it organises to arts venues, it has been working with Chara Centre residents to co-produce a magazine. Designed and written with theatre staff and published twice a year, *The C Word* is the first magazine by and for women experiencing homelessness in Scotland and it has been facilitated by a cultural space.

Sage Gateshead is a regular venue for Streetwise Opera's weekly singing and acting workshops. It has also promoted Streetwise Opera Hour (a performance of opera extracts for audiences who doubt that opera is for them) and Streetwise productions, the most recent of which was *Tell Me the Truth About Love*, with four performances in April 2018.⁹ Sage also hosts CoMusica's work with the charity Children North East to improve the musical and wider development of families, children and young people, including those experiencing homelessness. In October 2019 the Sage hosted a sleepout to raise awareness of and funds for youth homelessness.

Northern Ireland Opera was founded in 2010 "to provide the highest-quality opera to the widest possible audience" the Grand Opera House in Belfast (UK) is one of its regular venues. It offers free tickets to open rehearsals, including the dress rehearsal. North Ireland Opera's artistic director Walter Sutcliffe told the *Belfast Telegraph*,¹⁰ "We work with homeless charities, mental health charities, refugee charities to open this up and let people benefit because I think it's an important thing. Didn't somebody say people don't live from bread alone? Other things inspire you and other things touch you and it's easy to forget that..." He continued: "I've seen a few people and spoken to a few people who sleep outside the Opera House from time to time. I don't know if they came the last time but there were homeless groups who came to the last dress rehearsal of *Rigoletto*, and they don't have to pay for it because they don't have money. But we want to have people seeing a rehearsal and it's not a paying thing, so there's ways you can share this stuff that doesn't necessarily have to mean paying for it. You don't just give the tickets away but you have rehearsals where it's good to get a little bit of audience feedback, it's good for the performers to have an audience, and it's not a finished product so you can change, you can stop, you can talk, you can work. But people are invited and get to be involved. It's simple, you're a member of society and these things are there for you. This is stuff like other public services - what we provide is a public service. If it wasn't a public service it would be a lot more expensive than it is, and it doesn't just belong to a small group of people, it belongs to everybody."

Upbeat Arts (Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, Australia) offers inclusive arts activities including singing, song writing, music theatre, creative writing, percussion and drama for people experiencing disadvantage and isolation. It uses the arts "to engage, educate and empower. [Its] programs involve participants in arts and well-being activities, led by the country's best arts practitioners,

8 <http://www.with-one-voice.com/sites/default/files/With%20One%20Voice%20Review%20of%20Arts%20and%20Homelessness%20in%20Scotland.pdf>

9 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xHk46vim3U

10 <https://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/life/features/why-rough-sleepers-on-the-doorsteps-of-belfasts-grand-opera-house-are-invited-in-to-watch-the-cast-rehearse-for-their-latest-gala-38400214.html>

in the highest quality rehearsal and performance venues". Performance is described as a key outcome and the Everybody Brisbane Choir has performed at Brisbane City Hall, QPAC's Concert Hall and Deakin Edge. For those who want to go on to further education or to find employment, Upbeat Arts can help them to do so.

In October 2019, **Manchester Folk Festival** and the **One Festival of Homeless Arts** selected four formerly homeless artists to take part in a three-day programme of activity during the Festival, culminating in a performance at the city's Comedy Store. The musicians were Ben Greenland, Liam Jordan, Paula Wichall and Thomas Pliszka.

In 2017, **Portland Art Museum** (USA) used an exhibition of the work John Yeon, an architect and environmental activist, as the springboard for a discussion of the efforts of architects and designers in the city to come up with solutions for 'houseless' residents. MuseumNext has published film footage of the discussion and a transcript.¹¹

In 2017, an English government report (Cathedrals and their communities. A report on the diverse roles of cathedrals in modern England) highlighted **the role of cathedrals in raising awareness of homelessness** locally and providing homeless people with essential support.

The report highlighted the work of the Archer Project, a charity founded by and housed within Sheffield Cathedral. As well as providing essential services such as a kitchen, a computer room, a doctor's and dentist's surgery, the Archer Project runs an activities programme designed to help people "develop new skills, meet new people, fill in their time, and make them happy". While the cathedral is primarily a place of worship, it is also a heritage site and cultural venue attracting thousands of visitors a year. There is a public concert programme and art and photography activities for visitors to the Archer Project, and a Progression Support Worker arranges group visits to Sheffield's theatres, cinemas and galleries and to participatory events, such as the lantern-making workshops of the annual Sharrow Lantern festival.

Gloucester Cathedral offers breakfast to anyone who needs it, two mornings each week. Once a week, it welcomes Gloucester Rugby to the Chapter House to run a walking rugby session for anyone who is homeless; and once a year it hosts the Cloister Challenge, an independently organised sleepover to raise awareness of homelessness. In 2018, also in the Cloister, the Cathedral programmed *My Solitude*, an exhibition of photography and mixed media by David Tovey, with a sculpture by Ralph Brown. In 2019 Tovey was invited to exhibit a different work in one of Gloucester's city-centre shopping centres.

Cathedrals are increasingly programming spectacular free events. Since 2019, Luke Jerram's *Museum of the Moon* has so far been seen at five cathedrals (Ely, Derby, Gloucester, Leicester and Rochester). Leicester Cathedral took the opportunity to invite visitors to the Museum of the Moon to make donations in support of the cathedral and Leicester Homeless Charter.

Homeless centres as cultural spaces

As the number of homeless centres embedding arts into their day-to-day practice increases, so too are the number of homeless centres that are becoming cultural spaces in their own right. In Manchester, the Mustard Tree building was redeveloped in 2018 to incorporate a performance space, art space and recording studio, under the direction of Creative Programme Manager Graham Hudson. His vision was that the Mustard Tree would not only use these spaces themselves for creative activities for their members, but the spaces would attract external cultural programmes. This has been the case with nationally acclaimed theatre such as *The Political History of Smack and Crack* choosing the Mustard Tree as one of the venues for its national tour.

11 <https://www.museumnext.com/article/houselessness-a-museum-responds/>

Other examples of this approach include the Booth Centre in Manchester, UK which hosts regular performances and exhibitions; the Rainbow Soulclub at the Blaka Watra walk-in centre, Amsterdam, the Netherlands;¹² the Pe:ar in Portland, USA;¹³ Sketch in Toronto, Canada;¹⁴ Shedia, the street paper in Athens, which has built a new café with exhibition space;¹⁵ Emmaus Solidarité in Paris,¹⁶ and Crisis which has Skylight buildings around England in which activities, exhibitions and performances take place.



Artscape, The Sketch building, Toronto

12 <https://www.deregenboog.org/en/rainbow-soulclub>
 13 <https://www.pearmentor.org/>
 14 <https://www.sketch.ca/>
 15 <https://www.shedia.gr/>
 16 <https://www.emmaus-solidarite.org/>

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