



## Making a Bigger Splash! with East Midlands SEND Schools

Here in the East Midlands, children and young people with learning disabilities are being failed: there's nowhere near enough exceptional arts and creative opportunities for them and their families to experience, a lack of serious job opportunities for disabled artists, and non-disabled audiences can have very limited and ill-informed perceptions of what those children and young people can achieve.

But we're doing something about that here at The Mighty Creatives by shaking up the region with *Splash!* a new participatory arts programme held around the waterways of the region, led by the world renowned inclusive street performance company, *Extraordinary Bodies*. We'll be making waves through arts organisations, schools, businesses and families across the region soon and we want to get you on board.

### The Concept

Whilst a connected identity of the East Midlands is difficult to define, one geographical feature that connects and binds the region are the many canals and tributaries that connect the River Trent all the way to the River Nene. We have taken the waterways of the region as the central metaphor and inspiration for our programme, which will promote new *streams* of artistic talent and identities: and bring that talent and identities into the '*main stream*' of cultural provision in the region.

The project will achieve this by commissioning a new theatrical production – the *Splash!* Commission - which will be toured around five sites located on the East Midlands waterways. The commission will be devised from the experiences and stories of children and young people (CYP) with learning disabilities and their families who will engage with the programme through its extensive audience development strategy.

The programme aims to:

- i) provide high quality artistic engagement opportunities for on CYP with learning disabilities and their families;
- ii) place a disabled and D/deaf aesthetic at the heart of the audience development and creative production process;
- iii) challenge non-disabled audiences perceptions of what CYP with learning disabilities can achieve;
- iv) increase employment of disabled artists;



- v) engage new audiences in civic spaces which are perceived as inaccessible;
- vi) provides opportunities for artistic collaboration and skills development between disability arts specialists and theatre companies across the region;
- vii) connect with local cultural education partnerships (LCEPs) in order to improve the cultural education for CYP with learning disabilities provision across the region;
- viii) increase participation in Artsmark by SEND Schools across the East Midlands.

### **Artistic activity**

#### **Year 1: Creative Residential: creating a disabled artist ensemble**

At the start of year 1, there will be a Research and Development phase: a week-long creative residential at Attenborough Arts Centre for disabled artists to collaborate, test creative ideas and design a robust artistic brief, ensuring that disabled access is at the heart of the project planning stages.

#### **Year 1: Audience Development: Every SEND School a Splash! School!**

After the creative residential process, 5 locations across the East Midlands will host a programme of audience development and engagement activities - entitled 'the City Splashes' - co-ordinated by the appropriate consortium partner in each sub-region. Consortium partners will work with the cultural partners who participated in the creative residential process, SEND schools, local authorities and families to maximise the strategic engagement opportunities. This R&D process will take place both in schools and on location.

#### **Year 2: Splash Commission and Performances: making an even bigger Splash!**

The lead artists for Splash! are Diverse City, led by joint artistic directors Jamie Beddard and Claire Hodgson. They will connect with the work of the Year 1 Splash City Producers in order to create, plan and produce an outdoors, mid-scale touring production which responds to and interprets the Year 1 work. Diverse City's responses will involve the employment of a professional performance company whose skills are drawn from theatre and circus, working together with groups of community performers drawn from the engagement work in year 1.

#### **Artists / others involved.**

We have been drawn to artists and arts organisations who work across linguistic barriers and who are experienced at working with our target audiences of CYP with learning difficulties and their peers and families.

Graeae Theatre will be engaged as co-deliverers in providing creative delivery for young people in communities and in schools, festival performances from their Ensemble young artists, and training events for artists wishing to develop their skills in working with D/deaf and disabled people.



Neo Learning as Lead Media Partner will provide the participants with a video conferencing platform. This will support more remote engagement and overcome accessibility and enable participating cultural organisations to present the content via live video-conferences.

The Canal and River Trust – East Midlands is our Lead Engagement Partner and will contribute to identifying and securing the most appropriate sites in each of the sub-regions.

Professor Bob Gates, Editor of the British Journal of Learning Disabilities and Dr. Debs Robinson at the University of Derby will be our Lead Academic Partners and will produce a body of research work which will help build the project's legacy and sustainability.

**Most importantly... we want you!**

We want the region's SEND schools, interested mainstream schools and other school-based partners to get involved in SPLASH! You'll be able to host workshops, get involved with the artists, attend the performances, offer Arts Awards to your children, become an Artsmark School - the choice is almost endless! **Whatever your choice, we want to make an even bigger Splash! with you!**

