

Written evidence submitted by the Bluecoat Display Centre

Bluecoat Display Centre (Bdc) is an independent charitable organisation, based in Liverpool for over 60 years, which aims to promote contemporary applied arts both nationally and internationally, to support the craft infrastructure through: extending audiences for contemporary craft and working with the leading North West practitioners, and to enhance lives through education, participation and learning, and improving the health and wellbeing of the communities of Liverpool and beyond.

The Bdc outreach programme was launched in 2012, delivering high quality contemporary craft workshop and residency experiences, facilitated by some of the north west's leading craft practitioners. The programme has formed lasting partnerships with organisations including the Royal Liverpool University (RLH) & Broadgreen Hospitals (BG), The Walton Centre (TWC), Wirral Autistic Society, Liverpool Wellbeing Centres under the PSS (Person Shaped Support) umbrella, Liverpool Hope University, Alder Hey Children's Hospital (AHCH), the Brain Charity and the NHS MerseyCare Foundation Trust's Life Rooms Recovery College in Walton, and Clock View inpatient unit at Walton Hospital and Maggie's Merseyside.

We regularly work with our local north west universities to provide professional development and exhibition opportunities for their students and recent graduates including Manchester School of Art, Bolton University, Liverpool Hope University and University of Central Lancashire.

Over the past year we have completed another series of 4 artist hospital residencies, each over 6-8 weeks, where our makers have engaged with patients living with dementia at the RLH, stroke and trauma rehabilitation patients at BG, neurological rehab and out-patients at TWC and oncology and general surgical patients at AHCH.

Since 2012 we have engaged directly with over £2,900 participants through our outreach work.

We have been closed since 21st March 2020 and our trading income during that month was severely impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak so in March 2020 our core income from artist's sales was down £18k on March 2019.

Then going forward (again based on 2019 artist monthly sales figures) we expect to lose over the coming months April £22,631, May £16,379 and June £18,453 which will total £75,463 (based on March - June) depending on how long we are closed.

Our 250+ community of makers, who rely on income from the sale of their work in our gallery and retail space, will also suffer income loss resulting from our closure.

All core staff have been furloughed in order for us to benefit from the government's Job Retention Scheme, apart from the Director, but we are committed to continuing to pay the 20% top-up to keep wages at the same level, for the next 3 months.

We have had to postpone funded outreach projects with NHS MerseyCare's Life Rooms Recovery College in Walton as well as new artist-led workshops programmed in March/April with Maggie's Merseyside.

We are part of an Art Fund supported curatorial network research study, together with curators from the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool and the Williamson Museum and Art Gallery, this has been put on hold.

Our exhibition programme has been halted which involves 44 makers in 2 main exhibitions between March and June, and 3 In the Window solo spotlights that includes our Manchester School of Art graduate exhibition award exhibition.

Our LightNight Liverpool demo with a local ceramic artist has been cancelled with the city-wide event now unable to go ahead.

Our involvement with Liverpool's Independents Biennial has been cancelled along with the main Liverpool Biennial which has been postponed until 2021. This event brings visitors from across the country and beyond which directly benefits small arts organisations like the Bdc.

Our new maker in residence project with Liverpool secondary schools and associated art teacher's professional development workshops, in conjunction with Liverpool Hope University's Creative Campus, has been put on hold until our gallery and the university reopens and resumes work.

An artist-led wire workshop in May, with a sizeable number of sign-ups, has been postponed until October and all our free meet-the-maker events have been cancelled.