

Annual Review 2018/19

kalasangam
uapungam





**ACROSS THE ARTS
ACROSS CULTURES**

**AT THE HEART
OF BRADFORD**

Our Vision

Kala Sangam is an intercultural arts hub which aims to reflect the diversity of contemporary Britain through the work we present, the artists we support and the communities we engage.

Specialising in South Asian arts and culture, most of our work takes place in our Arts Centre in the heart of Bradford (between Bradford Cathedral and The Broadway Shopping Centre) with our outreach activities extending regionally and nationally.

In Sanskrit, 'Kala' means arts and 'Sangam' means a meeting point.

Kala Sangam aims to bring people and communities together to create and experience high-quality diverse art, to increase understanding and awareness of different cultures, and to provide talent development pathways for young people and emerging artists into a career in the arts.



Summary

“ I am delighted to present Kala Sangam's Annual Review for 2018/19.

This year has been an extremely successful one for Kala Sangam, with audiences up significantly, many more performances on our stage, more artists supported and our new Pay What You Decide ticket scheme opening up access to our artistic offer like never before. Kala Sangam also continues to be the meeting and conference venue of choice for businesses from across the City, bringing the corporate world into a creative, inspirational environment.

We are extremely grateful to our core funders, Arts Council England and Bradford Council. Without their long-term commitment we wouldn't have been able to achieve the successes we have this year. Equally important is the support we have received from audiences, artists, students, parents, room bookers and café users over the last twelve months - thank you and we hope to see you again soon!

This annual review will be my last as Chair. It has been a huge privilege to lead this organisation over the last three years and I am delighted that Jas has agreed to take over at the helm. I wish him every success in the role and look forward to supporting him in my new role as Treasurer. ”

Caroline Harrison
Outgoing Chair of the Board



“ I am delighted to be joining Kala Sangam at such an exciting and dynamic time for the organisation.

With an expanding programme of events across a range of art forms and a clear vision for the future, Kala Sangam is bringing relevant and engaging work to Bradford residents and re-establishing itself as the city's cultural hub.

I am looking forward to helping support the continued growth of the company over the coming years. ”

Jasbir Athwal DL
Incoming Chair of the Board



Our Artistic Programme

In 2018/19 Kala Sangam presented 36 performances and 7 exhibitions - up from 24 performances and 6 exhibitions in 2017/18 and more than double the performances and exhibitions in 2016/17

Kala Sangam has three public facing programming strands: **This Is Bradford** (bringing work to the city that is relevant to its communities); **South Asia Now** (supporting the development of South Asian artforms and British artists of South Asian heritage); and **British Diversity** (ensuring we present work that reflects contemporary Britain). Every performance in 2018/19 aligned with at least one of these strands.

A diverse programme for a diverse city

Building on the success of the previous year, in 2018/19 Kala Sangam presented its most diverse programme to date. Performances included Nuzhat Ali's site specific, refugee-focussed theatre piece *Flight*; BBC Radio Leeds' sold-out *Voice of Bradford Rap Showcase* (featuring 6 young rappers from Bradford); *Tech Styles 5* - a two day celebration of Breakdance and Hip-Hop culture; the third staging of Bradford's satellite *Women of the World Festival*; a theatre reading of first-hand accounts of LGBTQ+ people seeking asylum in the UK, programmed with Bradford's Peace Museum; and a three night run of *The Vagina Monologues* for International Women's Day, performed by a group that included survivors of sexual and domestic abuse.

“The atmosphere was truly electric.”

Javed Iqbal - Shah e Mardaan Qawwals

Engaging Exhibitions

Throughout the year we hosted a number of exhibitions that reflected the range of work delivered at Kala Sangam. Exhibitions included *WE ARE HERE*, a collaborative exhibition between Grassroots arts collective Wur Bradford and traders and members of the public in the City's Oastler Market; an exhibition by Syrian-born fine artist Ousama Lazkani; *Ways of Communicating* - an exhibition of bold and tactile artwork by Deafblind artist Minerva Hussein; and an exhibition of Yorkshire's textiles trade by photographer Tim Smith.



Our commitment to South Asian performing arts increased, with 21 of the 36 performances featuring South Asian performers and/or a South Asian artform

Kala Sangam continued to programme some of the very best work showcasing art forms from South Asia. Highlights included: *Dance Discoveries* - a showcase of classical Indian dance styles; a recital by Santoor maestro Ustad Kiranpal Singh; performances by some of the UK's most exciting dancers such as Seeta Patel, Shane Shambhu and Kamala Devam; zer0classikal's *ONE*, which featured a veena ensemble; a showcase of British Asian Women Writers; and a Kathak double bill by Rhythmosaic-Sengupta Dance Company.

“Right from the organisation to the hospitality, everything was so well organised and everyone was so positive and invested. It was honestly one of my best experiences performing in a long time.”

Pracheeti Dange, Performer - Dance Discoveries



Support for Artists

In 2018/19 Kala Sangam supported more artists to create new work than in the previous 25 years combined

For the second year in a row, our support for artists increased significantly. Support remained gender neutral, with artists from a wide range of faiths, cultures, sexualities and genders (including Trans and non-binary) supported to develop new work and present performances. Work created at Kala Sangam was recognised as being of the highest quality - such as Kamala Devam's *Jati-Swara-Leela*, which Pulse magazine recommended 'every Bharatanatyam student in the UK should see this show as part of their education'.

We provided 190 days of studio time to artists as support in kind

We continued to provide platforms for artists to share work, presenting: two Bradford Scratch nights with partners Theatre in the Mill and Mind The Gap; our *Artists Takeover scratch night*; and several sharings of work in progress. We continue to present more opportunities than ever before for diverse artists and practitioners to showcase work.

“ The space is so nurturing and it's so encouraging to see the support that is being given to so many artists. ”

Parbarti Chaudhury - Artists Takeover participant 2018

“ I have had the most blissful week, surrounded by passionate, positive, supportive people. ”

Sharena Lee Satti - Artists Takeover participant 2018

Artists Takeover 2018

Our second annual *Artists Takeover* was again a success, with four artists receiving financial support and a week of studio space to create, rehearse and develop new work. Artists this year were Hiten Mistry, whose work uses Bharatanatyam to explore the subject of male depression; Bradford poet Sharena Lee Satti; Kathak dancer Parbati Chaudhury; and Leeds-based contemporary choreographer Rachel Clarke, whose work examines BSL/deaf/hard of hearing culture.

Kala Sangam supported 11 artists and organisations in developing successful applications to Arts Council England, releasing over £100K in funding

Audiences

3,468 audience members saw a performance in 2018/19 (up 38% on 2017/18) and an estimated 22,000 visitors engaged with our exhibitions

Average 63% capacity for performances – up 15% on 2017/18

Kala Sangam's change in programming - to ensure we are representative of our local community - continued to be successful, with diverse audiences and a large increase in attendances, including six sold out performances. Our audiences are now far more reflective of a wider range of Bradford's communities.

Our social media profile continued to grow, with a significant increase in the content we generated. In 2018/19, 100 videos were shared on our Facebook page, including 16 livestreamed post-show discussions, 51 livestreamed performance excerpts and an artist takeover by Shane Shambhu. Our social media channels all grew their reach, with Twitter followers up 19% (to 3,454) and Facebook likes up 18% (to 2,593).

Pay What You Decide

In January 2019, we changed our ticket model so that the majority of our performances are now Pay What You Decide. Under the new system, tickets can be booked in advance as usual but audiences don't pay until they have seen the show. This allows people to not only pay what they can afford, but also to decide on a price based on their experiences of a show. The decision has been a huge success, with audiences increasing and gross ticket yield up. Audience feedback has demonstrated that this approach has removed price as a barrier to attendance for those currently least engaged, and is encouraging audiences to take more risks.

Connecting more with our city, 2018/19 saw a large increase in attendance from Bradford district residents (now 61% of bookers)

Audience satisfaction remains high, with 96% of attendees rating their experience positively

“ What an amazing night of music, I didn't understand the words but it took me away, great job to the organisers - loved it ”

Audience Member – Zahir Abbas Qawaali

“ It was wonderful to see the women's confidence in discussing subject matter that was a taboo in my own growing up. I felt genuinely humbled and affirmed. ”

Audience Member – The Vagina Monologues



Education & Outreach

In 2018/19 Kala Sangam continued to work with schools from across the district, welcome people into our centre for an increased range of classes and deliver projects in partnership in Bradford and beyond

In Britain Today

In 2018, Kala Sangam launched its new *In Britain Today* primary school offer, developed using Arts Council England's Quality Principles and designed to support schools with teaching PSHE and citizenship. The pilot was delivered at four primary schools across the Bradford district, testing a number of different delivery models (e.g. weekly after school, intensive 2 day workshops).

We continued to increase our involvement with the Schools Linking Network, hosting six primary schools in partnership with Bradford Cathedral and engaging over 400 young people.

All education staff received training on the Quality Principles, Arts Award and Artsmark.

Classes

We offered the widest ever range of classes at Kala Sangam, including: our Bharatanatyam Academy; PRA's Punjabi music and dance classes; Ashtanga and Hatha Yoga; Phoenix Dance Theatre's NO BOUNDS free contemporary dance classes for boys; Young Masters Visual Arts School; Movement! - our dance class for people with a learning disability or autism run in partnership with Dance For Life; dance sessions for people with Parkinson's, led by Ascendance; Freedom Studio's Youth Theatre; and the Bradford Friendship Choir.

July's *Kala Utsav* and December's *Pick & Mix* provided performance opportunities for each of our classes, with friends and family members being offered free or Pay What You Decide tickets for each performance.

“ The children learnt how to express themselves through their bodies, learnt to trust each other and work as a team. An excellent workshop. ”

- Teacher, St Paul's CE Primary

Working in Partnership

Through our partnership with Balbir Singh Dance Company, we continued to deliver weekly sessions at Community Works in Barkerend for a group of 15-20 young people, many of whom had little or no previous engagement with the arts. As well as performing twice at Kala Sangam, nine members of the group also achieved their Discover Arts Award.

Our partnership with tenants Dance United Yorkshire developed further, with their Gradient company and Bradford Youth Group moving to be based at Kala Sangam from April 2018. As part of the partnership, Kala Sangam has also provided a performance opportunity for Gradient at least once per season.



“ It's nice to do cultural things as a family, especially with a dying art like Dhol drumming. We'd recommend trying it, because it's something you'll enjoy! ”

- Participants, Punjabi music and dance class

“ From our group we just want to thank all Kala Sangam staff and our teacher for giving us opportunities. Our friends and parents loved our dance. I hope we will get to do it more in the future. ”

- Participant, Community Works project



25 Years of Kala Sangam

In 2018 Kala Sangam celebrated its 25th Birthday with a lavish Gala Dinner and an Open Day which brought back some very familiar faces!

From small beginnings to a cultural powerhouse

Founded in 1993, 2018 marked 25 years of Kala Sangam delivering high quality performances, workshops and events throughout Yorkshire and beyond.

Founded in Leeds, the company relocated to the Carlisle Business Centre in Bradford in 1996. Then, in 2007, with funding from Arts Council England, the company found its permanent home in the beautiful Grade II listed St Peter's House. From there, we continue to deliver the very best in intercultural arts to this day.

A Gala occasion

In June over 100 guests joined us for our 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner. Compered by BBC's Harry Gration, the evening saw guests treated to drinks and canapes in The Rooftop Café, before heading into The Ganges Theatre for a special performance that showcased Kala Sangam's new creative direction. The programme featured a breathtaking duet by the Middleton Corpus, a reading by Bradford poet Nabeelah Hafeez, Bharatanatyam from Kala Sangam academy students and teacher Santosh Menon, and a finale from Dance United Yorkshire's Gradient Dance Company. After the performance, guests were served a three course meal from Apna Kahna before dancing the night away to music from Punjabi Roots Academy's DJ's. In all the evening raised over £5,000 for Kala Sangam.



A day of celebration

On Friday 26th October 2018, Kala Sangam opened its doors for a day of celebration to mark our birthday. Members of the public could take part in free workshops including yoga, Bhangra dance and Bharatanatyam, and had a rare opportunity to see into rehearsals with artists That Ribeiro Company, who were in residence that week. To end the day, we had a party which saw people from throughout the company's history returning to share stories and happy memories. Alongside performances by Breakdancers Clean North Crew and Bharatanatyam dancer Annmaria Robins, guests were treated to a special one off performance of poetry and dance by Kala Sangam founders Dr Shripati Upadhyaya and his wife Dr Geetha Upadhyaya.

The evening was also a chance for us to share our exciting new vision with everyone as we look towards the next 25 years of success!

Our People - 2018/19

Our Patrons:

David Lascelles, Earl of Harewood
Lord Patel of Bradford OBE

Honourary Lifetime President:

Dr Geetha Upadhyaya OBE

Our Board:

Caroline Harrison
Chair

Ian Lewis

Treasurer (until November 2018)

Pauline Mayers

Trustee (until July 2018)

Paul Nash

Trustee

Marie O'Reilly

Vice Chair

Daniel Prendergast

Trustee (until July 2018)

Laiqa Sheikh

Trustee (until March 2019)

Ravinder Singh

Trustee

David West

Trustee (until December 2018)

Our Staff:

Jez Arrow

Head of Finance

Suhail Bashir

Facilities Assistant

Sidra Bi

Bookkeeper

Bradley Cook-Pattison

Facilities Assistant

Alex Corwin

Freelance Marketing support

Alex Croft

Creative Director

Sam Cryer

Facilities Assistant

David Dearlove

Facilities Assistant & Caretaker

Phillip Henegan

Facilities Assistant

Mohammed Ifikar

Facilities Manager

Mandeep Kaur

Marketing & Admin Officer

Mo Khan

Facilities Assistant

Marianne Matusz

Education and Outreach Officer

(until August 2018)

Steve O'Connell

Head of Commercial

Suleman Rahman

Facilities Assistant

Summayah Rahman

Cleaner

Mat Schofield

Caretaker

Cat Scott

Marketing & Admin Assistant

Ajit Singh

Chief Executive (until October 2018)

Thomasina Spencer

InCommunities Receptionist

Marcia Travers

Cleaner

Farzana Yaqub

Education and Outreach Officer

(August 2018 to February 2019)

“ Marcia Travers - Cleaner

I've worked at Kala Sangam for about three years. It's built up my confidence working here, the people are really nice. Last year I joined Dance United Yorkshire's Women's Group, which rehearses at Kala Sangam. I'd never heard of contemporary dance before and I found I liked it! I was nervous doing my first performance but afterwards I was really excited. I've seen a few things at Kala Sangam. I especially loved Keira Martin's *Here Comes Trouble*, because some of the things she'd been through were similar to me, and I loved the Irish music. It's a great place.

”



Our Venue

Over 40,000 people visited Kala Sangam in 2018/19, with 1,143 room bookings during the year – up 13% on 2017/18

Arts-related room bookings increased significantly for the second year in a row, increasing 87% from 288 in 2017/18 to 540 in 2018/19

Hirers included: individual artists; Dance United Yorkshire - who once again ran a number of intensive projects at Kala Sangam; private dance schools such as Addo Dance and ND Dance Academy; the UK Indie Lit Festival; Applause Theatre School; the Penny Appeal - who presented a Muslim Pantomime; and the Southbank Centre for WOW Festival 2018.

We remained the meeting and conference venue of choice for businesses from across the region

Public sector use of our building increased by 88%, to 261 bookings in 2018/19. Regular bookers included Bradford, Leeds and Wakefield Councils, the NHS and West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Commercial/private sector usage of the building also increased significantly, from just 6 bookings in 2017/18, to 92 in 2018/19. During the year we hosted businesses as diverse as Moss Bros., Exa Networks, and The National Science & Media Museum. Charitable, voluntary and community sector usage of the building remained strong with hirers including The Princes Trust, NCS/The Challenge, Release Potential, Better Start Bradford, Leeds Community Foundation, and Trinity Embassy Church.

Growing our hub for the arts in Bradford

As well as remaining a home for Dance United Yorkshire, Breaking Tradition and a number of individual creative practitioners, 2018/19 saw Freedom Studios relocate to Kala Sangam, bringing with them their Youth Theatre and Bradford's Friendship Choir. Footfall in The Rooftop Café continued to grow, with the space becoming one of the places to eat in Bradford and rated 5 stars on TripAdvisor.

We continued to ensure everyone received a warm welcome at Kala Sangam. In 2018/19, this included specific training in engaging with people with autism and learning disability, delivered to all facilities staff as part of Kala Sangam's involvement with the Tin Arts led Talent Hub.



“ I cannot thank you all enough for the great customer service that we received - excellent IT support, catering, pre-event planning and on-site support. ”

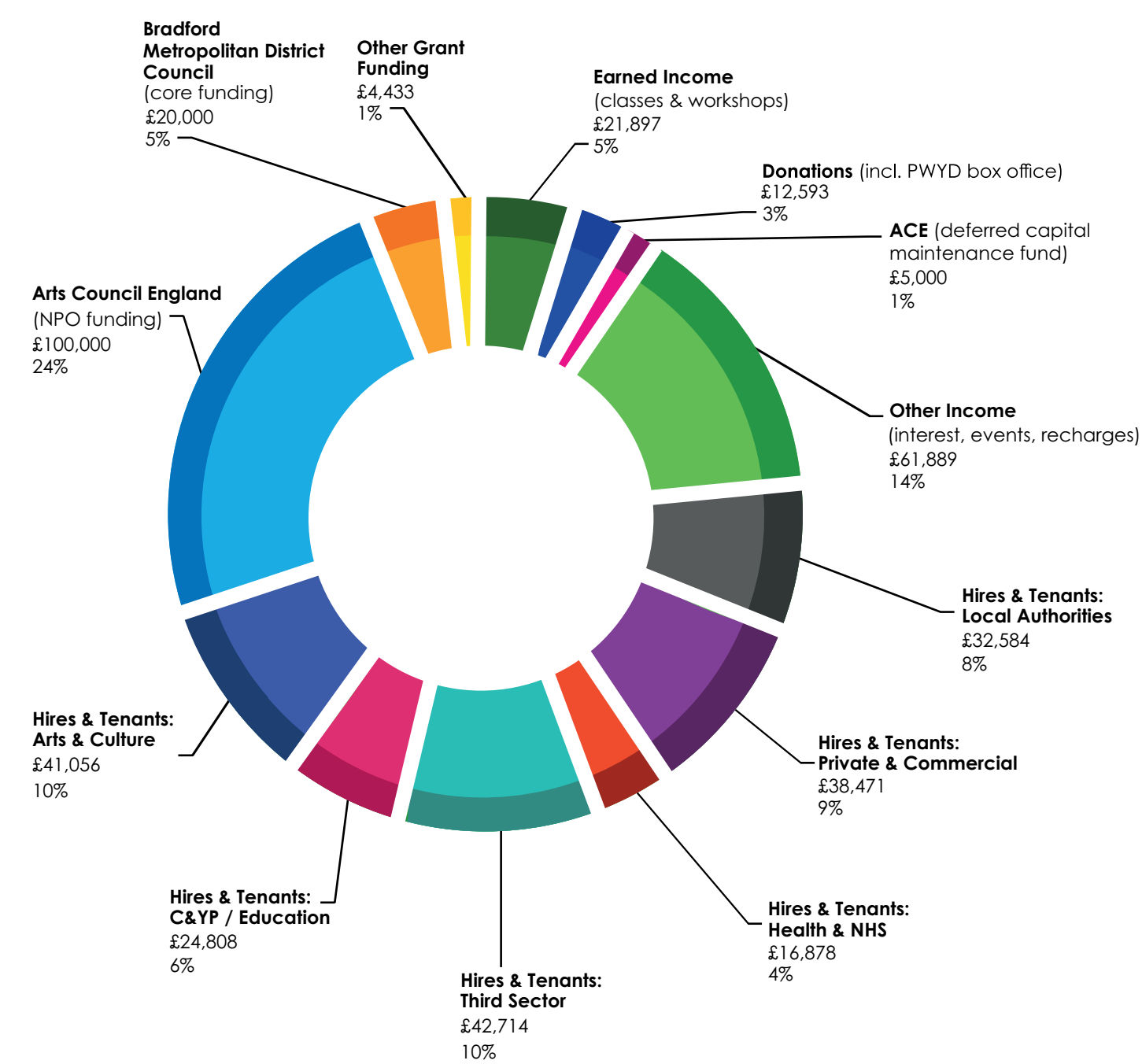
- Room booker, 2018

“ I realised again on Friday night why we keep coming back to hold our significant events at Kala Sangam. The event was a great success - in no small part down to the helpfulness, patience and goodwill of the Kala Sangam team. ”

- Room booker, 2018



Income



Core Funders

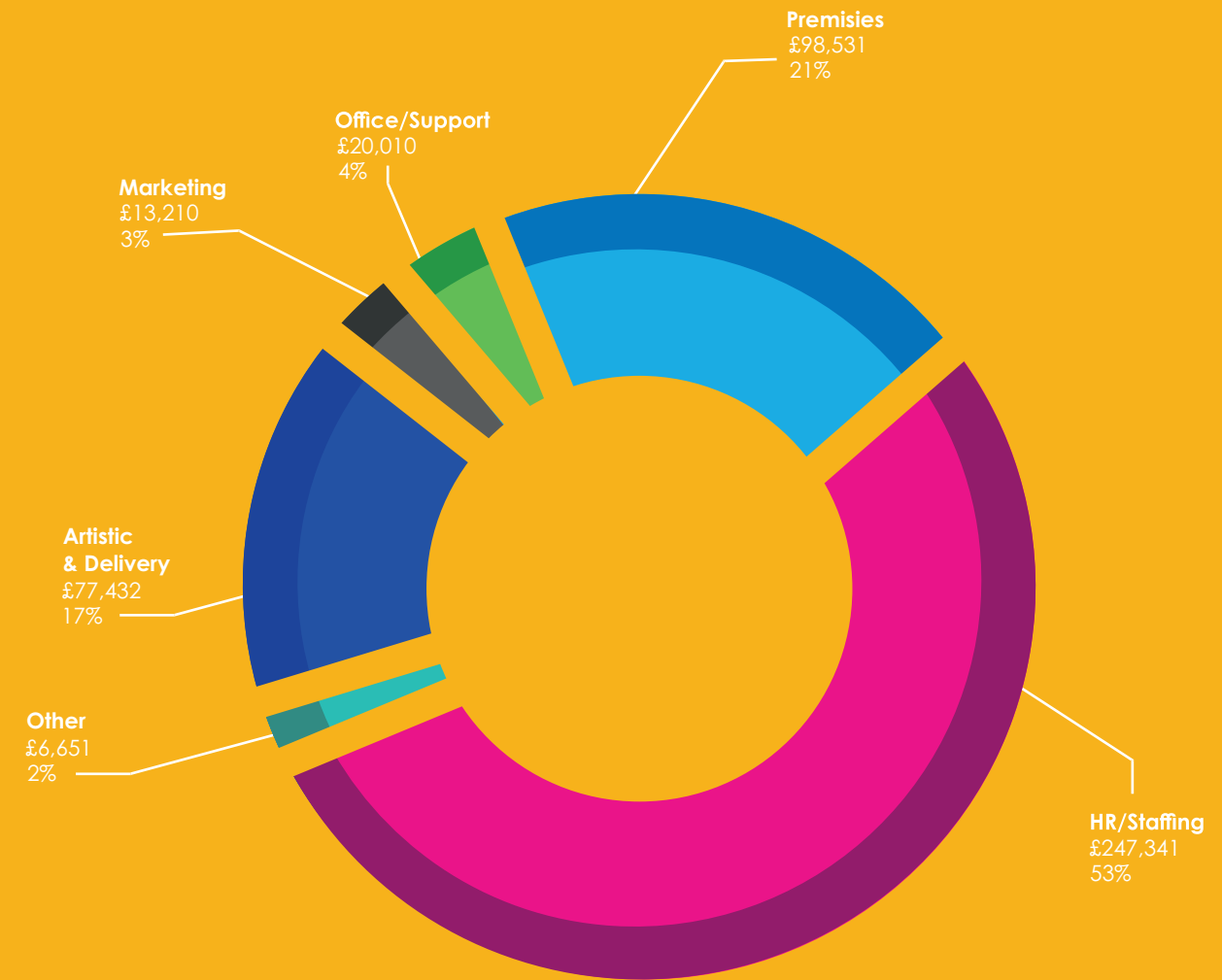


Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Expenditure

Excludes depreciation of £91,237



Financial Overview

Kala Sangam
1 Forster Square
Bradford
BD1 4TY

Kala Sangam is just a 5 minute walk from both Bradford Interchange and Bradford Forster Square train station.
Find us between Bradford Cathedral and The Broadway Shopping Centre.

The building is fully accessible with a lift to all floors.

For more information:

visit our website: **www.kalasangam.org**

call us: **01274 303340**

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All photography by Karol Wyszynski apart from:
Pg 02 by Danilo Moroni
Pg 03 Chairs' image
Pg 11 image
Pg 13 by Rob Ford
Back cover by Brian Slater

Company no. 03195878 | Registered Charity no. 1055488