




"Hijinx help to show the world
our son's capabilities and let
them see what we see everyday,
instead of just seeing someone
with a disability."
Parent



Social Impact Report



"Hijinx create simply the best work.
With all, for all, and taken everywhere.
They have made inclusive work
something we should all be doing."

Industry Partner

Photo by: Kirsten McTernan - Intro The Light. Hijinx & Frantic Assembly

Who we are

Wales' Hijinx is regarded as one of the leading inclusive theatre companies, producing high quality performances and activities.

We are one of Europe's leading inclusive theatre companies, striving for equality by making outstanding art with learning disabled and/or autistic (LD/A) actors on stage, on screen, on the street, locally, nationally, and internationally for Wales and for the world.

At Hijinx our vision is of a world where the arts and society are fully inclusive for learning disabled and/or autistic people. To achieve this, it is our mission to pioneer, produce and promote opportunities in the arts and creative industries for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

The Social Impact Report is the first time that we have evaluated our work in this way. We've seen the power of theatre and the arts can transform, and this was a chance to reinforce our story, share the stories of our participants, actors and their families. To share the successes and demonstrate what is brilliant, unique, and bold about Hijinx.

Sarah Horner
Chief Executive – Hijinx

The findings in this report clearly demonstrate the life enhancing impact Hijinx has on the lives of our actors and their parents and communities by building confidence and independence and increasing happiness. The report also shows how we create significant value in wider society by changing the perceptions of people who work with us, attend our performances, or experience our training courses.

While we are encouraged by this report, we know there is much to do – even more so as we recover from the devastating effects of the pandemic. Disabled artists are an essential cultural asset in the UK and we wholeheartedly support the work of the UK Disability Arts Alliance and the #WeShallNotBeRemoved campaign for a truly inclusive recovery.

James Downes
Chair of Trustees – Hijinx

What is Social Impact?

It's the change that we created in the lives of our actors, participants, their families, staff and the sector.

We wanted to discover how we at Hijinx has contributed to our communities. We wanted to know our economic impact as well as the personal stories from the people we work with.

We commissioned an independent evaluation of how we have changed the lives of our actors, participants and their families, our staff, our partners and the arts sector.

Over the course of a year our researchers unearthed some key themes that makes Hijinx so important as the national inclusive theatre company of Wales. We will share those key stories of how we benefit those with learning disabled and/or autistic (LD/A) and those around them and how we are helping to change opinions of the sector and our communities.

Researchers:

Abigail Tweed – Milestone Tweed & Mark Richardson – Social Impact Consulting

We reach thousands of people each year.
In over a year we engaged with

- **123 LD/A actors.**
- Supported **228 parents or carers.**
- **1336 people** have been on Hijinx training to learn how to communicate effectively.

We created over **£4.5 million** of social value. For every **£1 invested** in Hijinx we generated **£4.84 of social value.**

What does this mean financially?
This means we generated...



Making people happy

We show that the performing arts are a vehicle for health and wellbeing, and increase happiness in people's lives.

"One day a week she is really happy and has something to look forward to. Up until she joined she hadn't had anything like this. It's the one night she goes out and socialises. It's made a huge difference."

Parent

- **73% of actors and participants** said they felt happier since joining Hijinx.

We helped our community of actors and participants feel less isolated during COVID-19. Some of the research that took part during the first lockdown showed how our virtual activities helped to provide a focus each week for our actors and participants, creating a continuity of connection with each other and us.



Confidence to perform on stage and everyday life

We invest in our actors' and participants' acting skills. They gain increased professionalism and we have seen communication skills improve. We have seen them more confident in sharing their opinions and experiences, where they may have struggled to do so before.

"They gain very comprehensive skills. Acting, script work, movement, dance, mime, clowning, puppetry and recently they have learnt to self-tape, to help them put themselves forward for roles. It is a whole curriculum, and the quality of the tutors is at a really high level."

Staff Member

"I went from a meek shy girl who wouldn't do anything to an independent confident girl who is confident to go travelling and they [my parents] don't have to worry about me. Thanks to adult placement and Hijinx I'm here doing what I do today. They are awesome. They've helped me a lot."

Hijinx Actor

- **9 out of 10** Hijinx actors are more confident as a result of their work with Hijinx.
- **72% of our actors** experienced an increase in their independence as a result of joining Hijinx.

Our actors are now more organised and some travelling on their own, supported by Hijinx to travel to many foreign countries. Some of our individuals have become increasingly independent and have taken on more responsibility during their time with us, including independent living.



People around us



Photo by: Matthew Thistlewood

As well as contributing to help our actors and participants improve skills and confidence, we also improved the lifestyle for families, friends and our staff.

- **1/5** of parents say Hijinx gives them welcome respite.

In a short space of time the actor can go off on their own away from home and travel and tour with us.

"It is a bit of a life changer working with Hijinx. It's changed my views on people with learning disabilities dramatically. I thought I was openminded but there are certain things that society implants in you. I realised some of the attitudes I had picked up weren't the reality."

Staff

"This is a professional academy. It is demanding and they have standards. They push you to be the best that you are and to not doubt yourself. At the same time, they give you your space. If you feel down they allow you to take a minute to yourself to gather yourself. They are very supportive of you. They care for your wellbeing."

Hijinx Actor

Changing Perceptions

We are contributing to changing the perception of how learning disabled and/or autistic (LD/A) people are seen on stage, screen and in our communities.

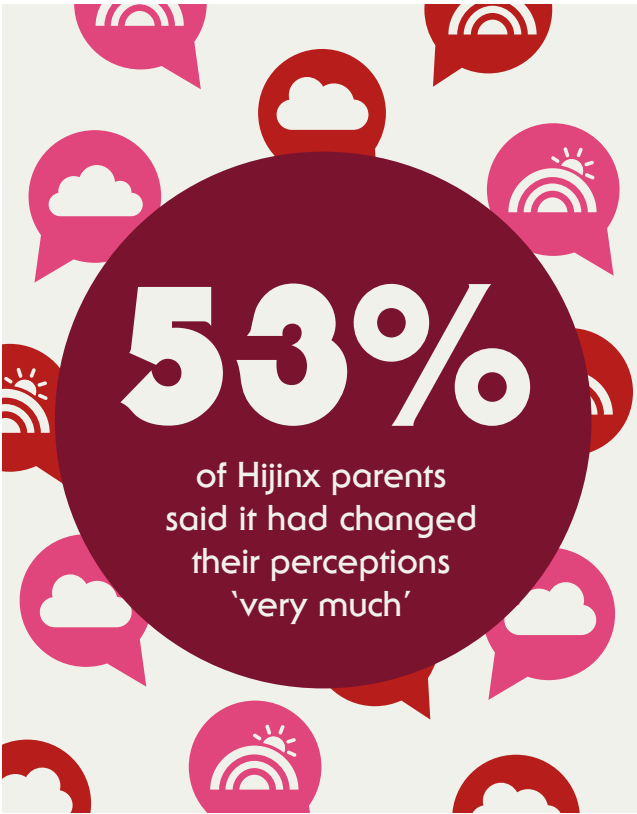
“One mum came up to me in tears. She said, ‘It’s changed how I see people with learning disabilities, and I am a mum of a person with learning disabilities. It’s really changed the possibilities for us for the future.’”

Hijinx Staff

Our community of artists deal with negative perceptions daily. They are often treated like children, they are patronised, decisions are made for them, people talk for them, help, though often well-meaning is often not needed or wanted, and at worse they receive abuse.

Parents felt that there are limited opportunities for learning disabled and/or autistic (LD/A) people and that Hijinx is a positive and forward-thinking organisation which provides a very good experience.

Staff members reported parents having changed expectations of their child who are learning disabled and/or autistic (LD/A) people as a result of their actor’s or participant’s work with Hijinx.



• **73%** of Hijinx parents say it has changed their expectations of what their children are capable of.

Changing the sector

We introduce many thousands of people each year to inclusive theatre. We create high quality performances that change the way that we perceive the world.

“Hijinx show that it's possible to work with people with autism or learning difficulties on an equal footing, taking into account our different needs, by providing a structure to work within and support for everyone in the room.”

Industry Partner

“Hijinx have reaffirmed a belief in the creative potential of all individuals and the need to make work as open and accessible as possible whilst maintaining the highest standards and making work as challenging as possible”

Industry Partner

- Our performance skills training and opportunities are worth **5958 theatre tickets**.
- **90%** of the creative people we work with are more inclusive and changed the way they work.

Our training programme raised awareness and increased confidence of working with learning disabled and/or autistic (LD/A) people

Over **15,000** people saw our shows.

That’s nearly...



3x The Royal Albert Hall

We're still not done. What we want to change next...

The way we train and support contributes to changing perceptions of learning disabled learning disabled and/or autistic (LD/A) people.

We are committed to changing lives for our actors, participants and the sector:

Covid Recovery

We will work to ensure that our communities are not excluded from engaging with the arts after the pandemic.

We alongside many other organisations and individuals will continue to lobby for inclusive provision for artists, participants and audiences.

We will lobby the screen and stage industries to follow the **Seven Industry Principles**, a new guide to support the industry to make decisions inclusively, to go beyond compliance and celebrate diversity.

We will support our actors and participants to return to in-the-room activity in a safe and considered way. Striving to re-build their confidence and nurture their talent.

Ambitions

We will not limit or reduce our ambitions for the future – if anything we are emboldened!

We will continue to challenge perceptions, striving for equity and representation of learning disabled and autistic people on screen, stage, and our communities by working with partners to change thinking and ways of working and remove systemic barriers.

We will get our inclusive productions back on the road and use our learning from lockdown to develop new hybrid digital theatre productions that are accessible and inclusive for all.

We will work to increase representation on screen and stage. We want a neurodivergent actor to be nominated for a BAFTA Cymru award by 2025, a BAFTA award by 2028 and an Oscar by 2030.

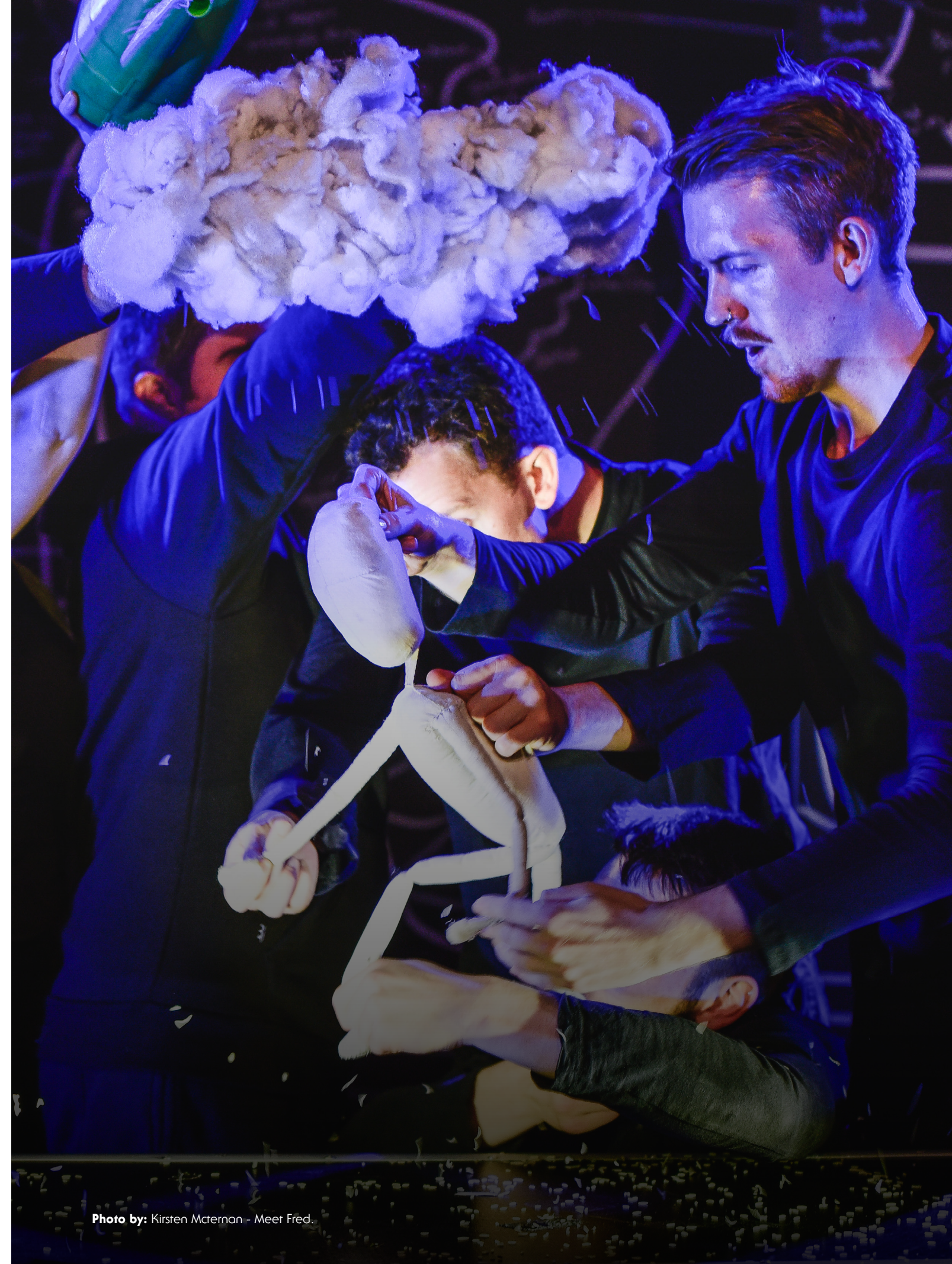


Photo by: Kirsten McEternan – Meert Fred.

Over the course of a year:

90%

of the creative people we work

with are more **inclusive** and

changed the way they work

We created over **£4.5 million** of social value.



We **created** the same amount as

Our training programme
raised awareness and
increased confidence of
working with learning disabled
and neurodivergent people

5958

theatre tickets

of performance skills
and opportunities

53%

of Hijinx parents
said it had changed
their perceptions
'very much'

70%

of our actors and participants are **better at**
communicating and **working as a team**

Over **15,000** people saw our shows. That's nearly...



3x

The Royal
Albert Hall

73%

of **actors** and **participants** said

they felt **happier**

We increased happiness
and wellbeing in our
communities that could fill

66,545

coffee cups

9

out of
10

Hijinx actors are more confident

72%

of our **actors** feel

more **independent**

since **acting** and

engaging

Some parents said **Hijinx** gives

them welcome respite



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