

The Glasshouse
International
Centre for Music



Twenty years of music. One big future.

Music lives and grows here

theglasshouseicm.org

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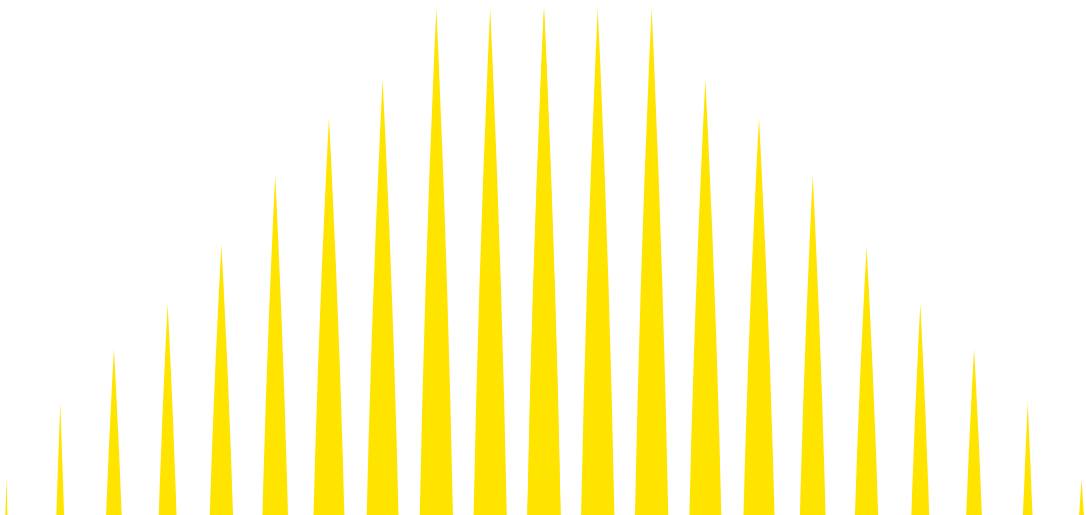
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Building our musical future together



A foreword from our Chief Executive, Fraser Anderson.

As Chief Executive, I'm constantly reminded just how extraordinary The Glasshouse is. On any given day, you'll see young people arriving for a music lesson, artists stepping through stage door and audiences leaving with that unmistakable post-concert glow.

Twenty years ago, community leaders, architects, musicians, acoustic engineers, entrepreneurs and music lovers shared a bold vision - to create one of the finest places in the world to experience music. What they built was more than a music centre. They created a place that reflects the values, ambition and spirit of the North East.

This report offers a window into the scale of that impact.

As we enter our third decade, we're building on that foundation with clear ambition for what comes next. We've set out four major goals. These are stretching but entirely natural for an organisation with our history.

They are:

1. Establish a new Music Academy for young people - opening the doors to a life full of music, right from the start.
2. Be the most affordable music centre in Europe - making sure money is never a barrier to music.
3. Enter our most creatively ambitious era yet - enabling world-class artists and homegrown musicians to make and perform their best work.
4. Invest in our iconic building so it continues to inspire, welcome and wow for generations to come.

If you share our belief in what music can do, you will see these ambitions are about more than performance. They're about confidence, jobs, opportunity and growth.

Our big number is £1 billion. That's how much we've contributed to the UK economy since opening, supporting jobs, in working alongside public education and health, and in helping put this country firmly on the global creative power list.

More than 8 million people have experienced music with us. Young people have come along to a class or workshop 1.8 million times. We know this has helped launch musical careers, brought families together and the NewcastleGateshead Quayside is now recognised as a symbol of our region's creative ambition.

But numbers only tell part of the story. Week after week, we hear how music here has shaped lives, building skills and creating opportunity.

The Glasshouse is both a building and an idea that can make us hopeful for what could be next. I hope this report shows what has been achieved and why the next chapter matters so much.

You can read the full Lichfields social and economic report on our website at theglasshouseicm.org/impactreport



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“The Glasshouse is a very special place. To have a world-class hall in such an iconic building, along with the education centre and rock and pop concerts happening alongside it creates a unique atmosphere, and I don’t know anywhere else quite like it.”

**Dinis Sousa, Music Director of
Royal Northern Sinfonia**

A world-class asset – rooted in the North East

The Glasshouse International Centre for Music is a home for music lovers - a world-class venue on the banks of the River Tyne.

Built with what was then the UK's largest National Lottery grant outside London, and driven by the ambition of Gateshead Council, The Glasshouse opened with one clear mission: to make music accessible to everyone - no matter your background or income.

We're a charity, and the support of generous donors and funders - including Arts Council England - helps us bring that mission to life every day.



"The Glasshouse is a shining example of how access to the arts can change people's lives.

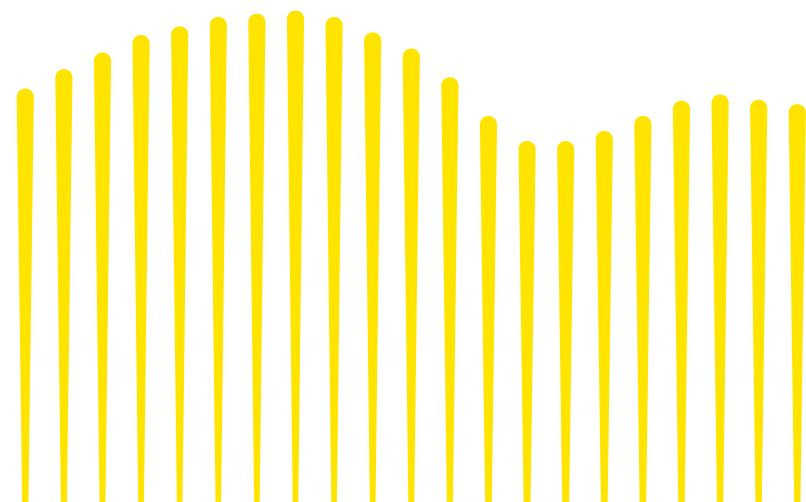
It's not just a world-class venue, it's an economic powerhouse that supports local jobs, inspires thousands of young people, and shows the transformative power of culture.

As Mayor, I am committed to ensuring the North East is a place where everyone has the chance to succeed.

The Glasshouse not only drives £38.6 million into our economy each year but also fosters a sense of pride and belonging.

Its work to support diverse artists and make music accessible to all is central to my vision of a thriving region where there's real opportunity."

Kim McGuinness, North East Mayor



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What we've built together over the past 20 years.

8m visitors

that's enough to fill St James' Park more than 150 times.

4.9m music lovers

including **2.8m** class attendances, **1.8m** young people, **10,400** performances and **233,000** music learners.

£681.2m to UK economy

that's about **£38.6 million** a year.

£10.80 for every £1

for every £1 of public investment we generate nearly £11 for the economy.



£14.1m annual social value

through education, inclusion and community programmes.

£13.5m annual local spend

by audiences supporting shops, restaurants, hotels and other local businesses.

610 people

employed directly each year and **445** full time jobs in the wider UK economy.

£10.6m revenue

from our conferences and events to reinvest in our charity.



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A home for artists

The Glasshouse is more than just a place where artists come to perform. It's a home where artists are supported, inspired, and celebrated – wherever they are in their career.

Royal Northern Sinfonia

37 musicians at the top of their game. Electrifying music, old and new. All the talent, determination, and creativity of the North East on a world stage. They perform everything from chamber music to symphonies, soundtracks to opera - working with musicians across all genres, from Sam Fender to Philip Glass.

They work to break down barriers that can stop people engaging with classical or orchestral music. Their thriving schools programme reaches thousands of young people each year and offers £10 tickets for anyone aged 30 or under. The orchestra works with partners to support groups with career development and creates pathways towards careers in music, including a trailblazing collaboration with the Royal Philharmonic Society to support female conductors.

And when they're not at The Glasshouse, they can be found touring the region and internationally. Over the last few years, Royal Northern Sinfonia has played to around 68,800 people in concerts up and down the country including halls, colleges, schools, churches, breweries and castles, plus performed 23 concerts internationally.

“This is a real beacon of high-quality playing, unique around the world. It doesn't matter if someone has a disability - music makes a connection to all of us.”

Clarence Adoo, founding member of RNS Moves, our inclusive ensemble featuring disabled and non-disabled members of Royal Northern Sinfonia.



Adam Wood – coming home at The Glasshouse

Born and raised: Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne.

First instrument: steel drums in primary school band.

Musical inspirations: watching Dad, a trombonist, and seeing a trumpet player perform with Royal Northern Sinfonia on a school trip.

Journey through music: trumpet lessons at The Glasshouse, auditioning for Jambone jazz youth ensemble before veering to classical music with Young Sinfonia, then studying at Royal College of Music and Royal Academy of Music.

Back to where it began: returning home to the North East in 2024 to become Section Leader Trumpet of Royal Northern Sinfonia.



“So many inspirational experiences here have helped to make me into the artist I am today. From learning and having fun in the Folkworks classes as a kid, to developing as an independent musician in Summer Studios, to my current place as an Artist in Residence. It’s an exciting and really supportive community to be part of as a musician.”

Frankie Archer



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The future of our music industry

We're committed to supporting artists and the future of our music industry. Emerging musicians get the support they need to grow – from rehearsal space, professional support, commissions, training, performance opportunities, or access to a network of other local musicians. There are no barriers here: whatever your background, you can access professional support.

In a single year through our talent development initiatives we:

- Supported 134 artists and music makers
- Majority of artists supported were from under represented groups
- Delivered 3,500 hours of support
- Ran 11 workshops and 15 live performances
- Created 19 online or broadcast projects
- Reached 2,500 music fans

BBC Introducing From The Glasshouse

In 2025, we teamed up with The Fire Station, Tees Music Alliance, Middlesbrough Town Hall and Generator to forge one of the first regional partnerships for BBC Introducing. The goal? More ears on music from the North East. More stages for artists from our region. More ways to get into the music industry.



Artist Focus: Finn Forster

Born and raised: Teesside

Musical style: anthemic melodies shining a light on stories from his youth.

Finding The Glasshouse: took part in Summer Studios in 2023 – writing, rehearsing and developing a personal brand.

What came next: sold out UK tours in 2022 and 2023, a top 5 single in the UK iTunes pop chart, winning the prestigious Drake YolaDa award.

Home at The Glasshouse: backed by BBC Introducing as 'one to watch', then returning to a home crowd to headline a Sage Two 'From The Glasshouse' concert in 2024.

Where things are headed: fresh back from SXSW festival in Austin, Texas, he's just released the second single from upcoming EP 'Embers'.



Our musical family

The Glasshouse is the place where artists and music fans meet. Together with our Artistic Partners and musical family we curate and create new music experiences to spark new links between artists, audiences and venues in the North East.

“Becoming Artistic Partner is an incredible opportunity for me to work with the orchestra in a different way, developing further the relationships with the musicians and our audience.”

Maria Włoszczowska, Artistic Partner

“It’s a place where I can let my imagination run wild”

Corinne Bailey Rae, Artistic Partner

“The Glasshouse is famous the length and breadth of the country. Whenever anyone asks me where I’m from, they invariably mention ‘that amazing concert hall’ - so it’s a talking point as well as a music venue of which North-Easterners are rightly proud”

John Wilson, Sinfonia of London and Artistic Partner

“We are an outlier in the UK scene in that we are part of the hall, and the orchestra was at the heart of what the building was meant to be. It’s an amazing thing because we can think of everything we do in the context of having a permanent home - we can be bold and plan things knowing that we can have access to the space to make it a success.”

Dinis Sousa, Music Director

“Our music is rooted in the North East, so being able to work in partnership with this wonderful venue that brings so much music to the region feels really fitting.

The Unthanks, Artistic Partner

“We’ve worked together for many years, but this partnership takes things to a new level, giving South Asian artists a platform on one of the region’s biggest stages and connecting even more people through music. It feels like the right moment to build something really exciting together.”

Vikas Kumar, Director at GemArts and Artistic Partner



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BBC Proms at The Glasshouse

Since 2021, we've brought the excitement of the world's greatest classical music festival to Gateshead through our partnership with BBC Proms.

About 5,000 music lovers join us every year – 75% of them new to the Proms and 25% new to The Glasshouse. With many grabbing a promming ticket for under £10.

“This venue is possibly my favourite UK venue for music. The place is perfect for music, and the selection is a brilliant mix of artists and musicians.”

Audience member at BBC Proms

For live music lovers

Live music can change lives. It can broaden horizons and inspire the next generation. You'll see it on our stages with a huge mix of local, national and international artists and bands from every genre.

From local artists playing pay-what-you-decide gigs to develop their sound and live performances; to legends like the Pet Shop Boys, Bryan Adams, Sting, Herbie Hancock and Grace Jones; right through to current future megastars like Self Esteem, our stages bring the very best and brightest to the North East.

Since opening, we've welcomed 4.9 million music fans to 10,400 performances.

Music is for everyone. Nothing should stand in the way of enjoying incredible live music.

In 2023/24:

- **We held almost 400 live shows.**
 - **30.8% of our gig goers lived within 5 miles of The Glasshouse, 58.5% within 10 miles and 86.4% within the wider North East.**
 - **93% of tickets were under £50, with 50% under £30.**
 - **3,658 tickets sold for £5 through accessibility schemes.**
 - **58% of Royal Northern Sinfonia touring shows were in Levelling Up for Culture Places.**
 - **51% of touring was to venues in the UK's 30% most deprived areas.**
 - **88% rated our concerts as good (or even better).**
- 

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A day at The Glasshouse

Morning

Families with kids aged 0-7 get moving, singing and learning through music at *The Kids Are Alright*. Down in the Foyle Music Centre, young people with additional needs or disabilities create music in *Music Spark*. Foster families play together in *Loud and Clear*, while community singers meet for *Seven Bridges Singers*.

Energetic Brazilian drumming fills the air at *Sambanistas*. Renaissance-style choral singing takes centre stage at *Madrigals*.

Afternoon

Traditional drumming in *West African Percussion*. Singing and ukuleles in *Sing and Strum*. Adults with learning disabilities express themselves in *Sounds Good to Me*. A joyful singalong in *Songs From The Shows*, and rock and pop belters with *Sensations*. Families with babies enjoy a gentle music experience at *Baby Love*. The *Recorder Ensemble* tunes up. Older adults raise their voices at *Silver Singers*. And *Rock and Roll Band* cranks up the volume.

Upstairs, Royal Northern Sinfonia rehearses in Northern Rock Foundation Hall for its next big concert with Artistic Partner Maria Włoszczowska.

Evening

Young Programmers dream up new ideas and events. Young musicians learn music tech and production skills through The Glasshouse Studios. Guitarists ramp up their skills at *Intermediate Guitar* while the *Folk Rock Band* folks rock out. *Voices of the River's Edge* choir rehearse. There's smooth soul singing in *Harmony Soul*, a few riffs in *Blues Guitar*, and brand-new players picking up *Beginner Fiddle*.

Over in Sage Two, an upcoming local band headlines BBC *Introducing From The Glasshouse*. Meanwhile, next-door in Sage One, fans pour in for a sold-out show by a favourite international artist.





Music lives and grows here

Music makes us feel...

Music is for everyone. And anyone can make it at The Glasshouse.

Since opening our doors:

£14.1 million

of social value generated each year through our Make Music programmes.

233,000

music learning sessions delivered.

+2.8million

attendances at Make Music programmes.

1.8million

young people discovered their love of music.

In 2023/24:

51%

who attended a class lived within 5 miles of The Glasshouse.

12,000

sessions.

140

different classes.

104,000

attendances.

78,800

young people involved.

168

music education sessions across 119 schools with 4,800 children.

90+

music makers supported with £56k in bursaries.

£215k

in grants for families to help them access music education at here.



“For me, being able to get scholarships for my children when I was on a zero-hours contract was amazing. I want everyone to know about the funding help you can get. As a parent, you want your children to access these things but some of them are really inaccessible and unaffordable, but here there is something for everyone.”

Matti Imarhiagbe



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Weekend School

Every Saturday and Sunday, the Foyle Music Centre bursts with energy, music and laughter. This is what our Weekend School is all about. Whether you're singing your first note, trying a new instrument or playing in one of our youth bands or ensembles – this is where musical journeys begin.

In 2023/24, our students came from a wide range of backgrounds, including:

- **31% from low-income areas or communities facing financial challenges**
- **11% had special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)**
- **16% came from low-income households**
- **40% were Global Majority backgrounds**

“The Glasshouse has enabled young people who have the least in life to get involved in music and experience its joy, healing and education benefits. As a founding donor, I take pride in having watched this first-hand and have supported the charity through match donations bringing together like-minded supporters. I look forward to The Glasshouse’s third decade in which it will benefit a new generation of young people across the region.”

Sir Peter Vardy

Making music in schools

In 2023/24, our work in schools included:

- **168 sessions with 119 schools**
- **+4,800 children**
- **524 teachers**
- **1/3 of schools in the top 20% most under-resourced areas in England**

Held at Hawthorn Primary and Bridgewater Primary in Newcastle, the In Harmony programme celebrated its 13th birthday in 2025. Through the programme, children get the chance to learn a new instrument, develop their musical skills, build confidence – and, most importantly, make friends and have fun through music. In 2024/25, over 725 young people took part. 50% of them were living in poverty.

“Ofsted said our music provision is exemplary. They gave the example of a Year 5 child who has excelled and found his passion and saw that this is transforming a life. In terms of cultural capital, In Harmony is ‘phenomenal’.”

Sam Robson, Headteacher at Bridgewater Primary School



Making the music happen

Music doesn't just change lives – it creates careers too. At The Glasshouse, we invest in people and jobs, helping talent to grow and stay in the region.

Our team by the numbers:

- **1 in 3 of us live within 2 miles of The Glasshouse**
- **82.6% within 10 miles**
- **30-36% of our permanent staff are from lower income backgrounds**
- **11-14% identify as having a disability or long-term health condition**
- **12-17% identify as neuro-diverse**

Investing in our people

In the past five years, we've supported eight apprenticeships across roles including ICT, community arts, coaching, kitchen skills and data analysis.

That's a social value impact of £95,700.

Creating pathways into the music industry

Adam is one of our Young Programmers. He was studying Media, Communication and Advertising at university when he spotted our ad on social media looking for Young Programmers. It sounded like a good way to get some experience working in the music industry. Skip ahead a few years and since 2021, Adam and the Young Programmers team, have helped shape the events and performances here, all aimed at bringing more young people through our doors. Thanks to the skills and confidence he gained, Adam is now Senior Programme Coordinator at Generator.



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Building a place for culture and growth

Culture fuels investment, pride and places. The Glasshouse is a powerful part of that story for Newcastle Gateshead, and the wider North East.

We help to:

- Bring people and energy to the quayside, driving cultural regeneration.
- Raise NewcastleGateshead's profile across the UK and beyond.
- Strengthen investor confidence by making the region a more vibrant, attractive place to live and work.

Backing regional growth

The Department for Business and Trade, and HM Treasury have recognised that creative industries are a key growth sector for the UK, central to the UK Government's Industrial Strategy and to economic growth. They are also essential to the North East's success and recognised across key regional policies.

Here's a snapshot:

- The North East Combined Authority (NECA) aims to make the North East a centre for music, supporting new musicians, the music industry and growing the visitor economy.
- The North East Local Enterprise Partnership sees leisure, culture and tourism as key drivers of growth – but recognises more investment is needed to unlock full potential.
- The NewcastleGateshead Core Strategy calls The Glasshouse a "cultural icon," and credits venues like ours with boosting the area's appeal.
- Gateshead Council sees culture and tourism as central to creating more, better jobs and a stronger local economy.



Rooted in the region

While The Glasshouse draws visitors from across the UK, we're proud to be firmly rooted in the community we serve.

511,000 people live locally - up 11.3% since we opened.

Nearly 18% of locals are aged 20-30 - much higher than the national average.

We're located in one of the 20% most deprived areas nationally - making our commitment to access and opportunity even more important.

While the region's economic growth has lagged behind national averages, The Glasshouse keeps helping by attracting visitors, supporting local jobs and injecting energy into the economy.

Driving visitors and spending

We're a big part of why people visit and spend in the region.

- **In 2023/24, day trips linked to The Glasshouse brought around £10.1 million into the local economy.**
- **Overnight visitors added another £3.4million.**
- **Visitors spend around £13.5m locally every year – supporting shops, hotels, restaurants and more.**

“It's a community venue that benefits the people of the region, but also brings in significant audiences... which has a massive knock-on effect and benefits everyone,”

Paul Szomoru, Regional Development Lead at Visit England

“It creates a real connection between Newcastle and Gateshead, reducing the idea of the Tyne as a boundary and standing for what can be achieved when the region works together.”

John McCabe, Chief Executive, North East Chamber of Commerce



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“Sage is proud to be a founding partner of The Glasshouse International Centre for Music. We’re an organisation that is headquartered in the North East and committed to its cultural vibrancy. We are delighted that through this inspiring partnership we have helped to bring music to all corners of the region, and it’s fantastic to see those stories captured in this report as we look ahead to the exciting next decade of The Glasshouse.”

Sally Moore, Global Sponsorship Leader, Sage

Shaping the future of the North East

Our iconic building helped kickstart the transformation of Gateshead's riverfront, alongside Baltic and the Millennium Bridge. But there's still more potential ahead.

Major plans are underway, including a new indoor arena, an international conference centre and new hospitality and retail outlets. Together, these projects will build on the foundations laid by the cultural powerhouses like The Glasshouse, creating a destination that's ready for the future.

About the building

An architectural competition in 1997 led to Pritzker Prize and Stirling Prize-winning architects Foster + Partners being chosen to design The Glasshouse - an iconic, flowing structure of glass and steel.

From the start, the vision was clear: a building that would welcome all genres of music, be socially inclusive, and a place for learning and participation on an equal footing with performance. Every part of the design supports that mission:

- World-class acoustics and exceptional sound isolation, making spaces work brilliantly for every kind of music.
- A single shared foyer for all halls and the music education centre, encouraging audiences to mix and meet.
- An entire floor dedicated to music education - putting learning and participation at the heart of the building. The design has gone on to win major awards, including the RIBA Inclusive Design Award, Civic Trust Award and The Journal's North East Landmark of the Year Award.

"The Glasshouse completely transformed the diet of music available in the North East."

Anthony Sargent, CBE, Founding General Director (2000-2014)

The Glasshouse is also a landmark destination for conference and events. With stunning views of the River Tyne, flexible spaces, and a world-renowned setting, it regularly attracts business, political and cultural gatherings from across the UK to Newcastle and Gateshead.



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Newcastle Gateshead Music City

In October 2024, The Glasshouse and Generator launched Newcastle Gateshead Music City to supercharge the growth of the music industry in our area. The potential economic impact is significant. Between 2,000 and 4,000 new jobs in music, adding £750million to the local economy.

Through this project, we want to:

- Attract future investment from the national music industry.
- Bring more people to NewcastleGateshead to see great live music.
- Strengthen links between education and careers in music.
- Help artists grow and thrive – and stay in NewcastleGateshead.

It's going to need a collaborative effort. But together, we want to create a stronger music community, one that's more resilient and ready to inspire the next generation of musicians.

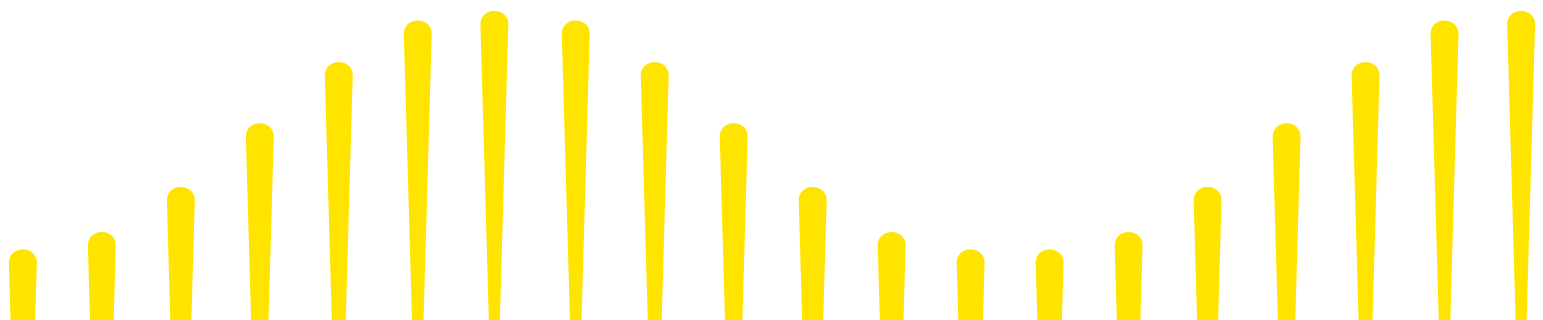
We've already shown what's possible when we join forces across our region, with NewcastleGateshead recently hosting international music events like MOBO Awards and the Mercury Prize. It's an exciting time to be a music lover in the North East.

“For generations, North East music has shaped our region’s identity and powered our dreams. But for too long it has been treated as an optional add-on to our economic success. As North East Mayor, I’m working with people from across the region to put the creative economy at the centre of our plans for economic growth.

That means not just more fabulous music coming from talented local artists, but also space for recording, backing for live music and, crucially, a skills plan for the creative industries.

The Music City project will help make these plans a reality not just in Newcastle and Gateshead, but across our North East, and I look forward to working with The Glasshouse, Generator and musicians across our region on delivering these plans.”

Kim McGuinness, North East Mayor



Our third decade

We want The Glasshouse to be a home for music for the next generation. Our third decade is about unlocking our creative potential and creating a music-filled future for the North East.

1. Making music accessible for everyone

The North East has huge musical talent, but low incomes can be a barrier. We're committed to making sure that never stands in the way. We already offer free and discounted tickets and bursaries, but we plan to double our bursary fund to help even more young people access music. We'll also keep growing programmes that invite people from every background to get involved – whether it's their first time playing or they're training for a career.

2. The Glasshouse Academy

The Academy will bring together all our learning and artist development work, from newborns in music classes to emerging professional musicians. It will double the number of opportunities for young people and create four new music 'hotspots' across the North East and Cumbria: Middlesbrough, Carlisle, Sunderland and Kendal.

3. Unleashing our most ambitious creative era yet

We want The Glasshouse to be known as a powerhouse of creativity. That means:

- More investment in production and collaboration with artists and content developers across all types of music.
- More contemporary work with Royal Northern Sinfonia.
- A bigger platform for emerging artists, including through BBC Introducing From The Glasshouse. We'll nurture new sounds and keep growing audiences - including welcoming more young and diverse music lovers.

4. Keeping the building extraordinary

We'll invest in upgrades that enhance the artist and audience experience - including new technical equipment and a destination restaurant and bar. We'll also play a leading role in the next chapter of the Gateshead Quays area, helping shape it into a vibrant cultural destination - a North East answer to London's South Bank.



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Turning twenty is a pivotal moment.

A £2million donation from The Foyle Foundation to support The Glasshouse Academy has kickstarted a broader £20million fundraising campaign to boost the work and impact of the charity into our third decade.

In 2023/24, The Glasshouse:

- **Generated £14.1 million in social value**
- **Returned nearly £11 in national and regional economic impact for every £1 of public funding.**
- **Brings £38.6million of value to the economy every year.**

But to deliver our pledges – and keep growing that impact – we need strong support.

Currently:

- **60% of our income is self-generated**
- **20% comes from public funding**
- **20% is donated by individuals and businesses who believe in what we do.**

We're building momentum for a major public fundraising campaign to ensure The Glasshouse continues to be a vibrant place for artists and audiences for decades to come.

Writing the report

The findings presented in this report come from a comprehensive social and economic analysis carried out by the leading economic and planning consultancy Lichfields. The methodology uses three primary, industry standard, sources:

- For economic impacts, "Contribution of the arts and culture industry to the UK economy" produced by Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) on behalf of Arts Council England; and economic estimates of the cultural and creative sectors produced by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).
- For social impacts, the Homes and Communities Agency (HACT) Social Value Bank®.
- For tourism impacts, the STEAM Tourism Data Model.

As an integral and critical part of the research, Lichfields also consulted with a wide range of stakeholders from The Glasshouse staff and trustees, young people and community groups, to politicians and funding partners. This was done to ensure that as many views and stories as possible about what The Glasshouse represents were captured.

A full version of the findings and report from Lichfields is available on our website
theglasshouseicm.org/impactreport



A big thank you to our Founding Patrons and Endowment Donors

The Barbour Foundation
Garfield Weston Foundation
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Northern Arts



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And thank you to every person, business and funder who has supported us over the last 20 years. We simply wouldn't be here without all of you.

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