

**Soft
touch
arts**



2014-2015 REVIEW



Now we are settled in to our new home at 50 New Walk, we present an update on some of the highlights of the last two years including extracts from our annual Charity Commission report.

Our new home

The final move into our wonderful new home was frantic at times. For a few weeks all of us and many volunteers were filling, painting, scrubbing and scraping, putting up shelves, ready for the grand opening by HRH Earl of Wessex of Wessex. It was all worth it!

Even though we still have things to finish, our new space is so special and it feels like 'home'. We were very fond of our old premises, but when I asked one of our regular young people if he missed the old place the answer was, "Not at all this is so much better!"

He is right in so many ways. We have wonderful space and facilities for young people and staff to work and grow in. The location enables us to reach out to passers-by. Even at night when the building is closed the recent digital light show by Lauren Park has grabbed the attention of the public passing by and brought a new perspective to the surroundings. We are also able to work much more easily in partnership with the Museums Service. Together we welcomed visitors from the British Museum as part of the Museum of the Citizen - Young Citizens event and early next year we will jointly stage the National Generation Art: Young Artists on Tour Exhibition. Our exhibition space has welcomed an audience of 800 to the recent Changing You(th) Exhibition and our pop-up café has fed lunchtime visitors, including the High Sheriff and High Court Judges.

Our location is so accessible, for young people especially, but also for cycling to work, train travel for visitors, easy walking distance for business links and city networks. This is especially important for marketing our spaces and activities.

As we get ready to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Soft Touch Arts in 2016, we can do so with a confident vision for an exciting future at the centre of our young and vibrant city, in 50 New Walk, Leicester's Youth Arts and Heritage Centre.

Gill Brigden, Chair

HRH EARL OF WESSEX OPENS OUR NEW CENTRE

It was fantastic to have our centre officially opened by HRH Earl of Wessex on 22nd June. He toured the creative spaces and talked to different groups of young people about their artwork, music, film and cooking. The young people loved meeting him and it really boosted their confidence. Seventy invited guests attended and The White Peacock, one of our business partners, delivered a fantastic lunch for the Royal Party and guests, helped by our young cooking volunteers.



The daytime launch was followed by a special business and press reception with talks by Laura Dyer, Executive Director of the Arts Council, our Patron, Lady Gretton, our Business Champion, Glynis Wright and one of the Event Sponsors, Brent Goodwin from Newby Castleman. The City Mayor unveiled a special digitally produced collage made by young people at Soft Touch which is now on display at the City Hall in Leicester.

CHANGING YOU(th) EXHIBITION

Our first young people's exhibition took place in October 2015

Our building was constructed in 1951 as a car showroom. Along with providing funding towards the refurbishment of the building, the Heritage Lottery Fund has supported a special intergenerational project to explore and contrast life in the 1950s and now. A group of young people worked with Malika Kraamer, an independent curator, to interview people who were young in the 1950s. They worked together to produce a multi-media exhibition which highlighted different aspects of daily life from both eras.



During the month that the exhibition ran we had over 800 visitors with a very positive response.

To find out more, visit the project's dedicated website www.number50newwalk.co.uk

RG+P ARCHITECTS TAKE PART IN OUR FIRST CREATIVE CORPORATE TEAM BUILDING DAY

Our building has been designed to help us generate income to reinvest into our core work with young people so we are less reliant on grant and public sector funding and sustainable as an organisation in the future.

With this in mind we have developed a range of team-building activities which businesses can book. Designed to encourage team-working, problem solving and good communication, a variety of creative experiences are available, which are fun, challenging and provide a memorable experience for all involved.

In September we welcomed the full staff team from rg+p Architects. Staff from the Leicester and London offices came together and split into five teams doing different activities in the morning and afternoon.

The cooking teams worked in a high-pressure but fun environment to prepare lunch for 54 hungry people. Later, another team made afternoon tea of sandwiches and cakes.

The 'music-from-junk' teams made their own instruments from scrap materials. The film crew teams made news reports about strange happenings on New Walk and the art teams created Leicester-themed graffiti boards. The photography teams made photo-slideshows with poetry. All the teams performed or showcased their work to their colleagues during the breaks.



"Seeing members of the team who don't ordinarily work with each other doing activities together was great. Such a fun day".

"More companies should book this - great team-building and a way to fulfill their CSR".



Creative Enterprise

Now that we are settled into New Walk, we are using the flexibility offered by the new premises to forge ahead with programmes that help develop creative enterprise. Many of the young people we work with come from economically deprived communities and may face additional difficulties in following a path towards further education and employment.

We know that using the arts and creativity can engage the natural enthusiasm of young people and get them to realise the possibilities that could lie ahead for them. When fundraising for the new building we were determined to get a high quality kitchen installed that could build on our successful healthy eating projects and which, by partnering with local restaurants and colleges, could give young people some hands-on experience of catering.

As a result we've created a weekly pop-up cafe – sMASHing - on Thursdays which serves a range of high quality soups, sandwiches and cakes to the public. The cafe had a successful launch during our inaugural exhibition, "Changing You(th)", providing some 200 people during half-term week with food cooked and served by young people with professional supervision.

We are also now set to launch "Re-Fab", a project that will see young people make arts and craft items to sell, and use their creative skills to undertake work for local companies. This might involve taking photographs for events or up-cycling and re-cycling materials to create artwork for office walls.

We have already trialled this approach with individuals and have found it a good way of providing positive experiences for young people and for businesses to express their support for young people and for Soft Touch. Re-Fab will be launched in January 2016 and will involve up to 30 young people attending weekly, three-hour creative skills development sessions and a series of talks and workshops with successful local crafts people. These are designed to inspire them to recognise the potential for earning a living through their skills. We will back young people further by supporting them to exploit opportunities for showcasing and selling their work, for example at the new weekly cafe.

Soft Touch has always helped young people to thrive. We are now in a position to do that for larger numbers and in a more structured, through-going way.

Tim Burke, Vice Chair

From all the projects and events I have been involved in, I think Soft Touch is AMAZING! It has changed my life so much. By coming to Soft Touch many opportunities have been opened up which I wouldn't have had before. Whenever I'm out doing a project or event I am able to meet new people confidently and do new things independently. My Silver Arts Award and the things I do at Soft Touch will help me get a job.

Leona Bond, 15



Our young cooking volunteers meeting HRH Earl of Wessex at our opening event and helping to prepare the food for his lunch!

OUR FIRST SOCIAL ENTERPRISE - sMASHing POP-UP CAFE



Since October 2015 we have been trialling a pop-up cafe at 50 New Walk. On Thursdays between 12-2.30pm young adults who are not in education or employment help our chef, Mike Rooksby, to run the cafe which sells very high-quality sandwiches using locally sourced produce and artisan bread baked by Leicester College catering students. They also help with food preparation and mentor our volunteers. Local businesses place orders and our volunteers deliver, and passers by using New Walk come in and visit the cafe.



The project is helping young adults with additional support needs to learn about cooking and catering and gain skills in dealing with customers, managing money and serving food. We offer the opportunity for them to gain a food hygiene certificate and some will move on to help with our planned pop-up dining evenings and business team-cooking events in 2016.



Local restaurant partners also give our young volunteers opportunities to work in their kitchens and in helping with preparation of food for our events. This is a great way for them to gain experience of working with top chefs in local high-end restaurants.

KickStart Business Mentoring

Our Kickstart Mentoring Scheme, funded by the Lloyds Bank Foundation, pairs mentors from the business community with young adults aged 17-25 who are finding it difficult to move forward with their lives and find work or who are struggling with education and other life challenges. Typically the young people will have been in the care system or involved with children's mental health services and need help in transitioning to independent life as a young adult.

Mentors undertake training with Soft Touch so that they are able to support the young people to set goals and make positive changes. They also have regular support and review sessions.

We aim to engage 30 young people through individual and group mentoring in the first year of the scheme, which ends in June 2016. Young people and mentors are very positive about their experience. The young people are more motivated and enthusiastic about their future and the mentors gain satisfaction from knowing they are making a difference.

Please get in touch if you are interested in mentoring a young person.

*Mason Allsop with his Mentor,
Robert Woolston from rg+p
Architects*





HOW SOME OF OUR WONDERFUL SUPPORTERS ARE HELPING US

Over the past two years we have made some important and mutually beneficial partnerships with local businesses that support our vision and mission to create opportunity for and change the lives of some of Leicestershire's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people. Here are a few examples of how we work together and the difference the partnerships make.

THE WHITE PEACOCK: A TOUCH OF COMMUNITY

Chef Patron of the White Peacock, Phillip Sharpe, and his partner Charlotte, have been supporting Soft Touch for over two years. Providing catering for our events and involving our young cooking volunteers has been a big part of their support but they have also advised and helped us to set up our sMASHing project kitchen at 50 New Walk. Young people from Soft Touch have their photographs displayed on the restaurant walls and one particularly talented young person, Liam Burt, made an amazing large cut-out paper stencil of a White Peacock which is proudly displayed on the restaurant stairwell.

In November 2015, The White Peacock kindly hosted a fundraising dinner on our behalf to raise funds for kitchen equipment that we need. Guests enjoyed a special 6-course taster menu which was an amazing gourmet experience. It was a fun and lively night and we raised £750 to help Soft Touch to get our food and cooking projects up and running.

Phillip also gave up his time to run our first "Cooking Up Business" corporate team-cooking experience for another local company that supports our work: Arch Creative. Arch support us by providing pro-bono design work and have helped greatly by improving and updating our logos and our printed and web promotional materials. The Arch team spent an fun oriental-themed evening with Phillip, learning how to cook stir-fries and spring rolls and then making their own creations choosing from the range of ingredients provided.

RUNNING THE LEICESTER MARATHON

On Sunday 25th October 2015 we had a team of seven runners taking part in the Leicester Marathon to raise money to get our sMASHing project kitchen properly kitted out so we can run healthy eating and cooking projects with disadvantaged children and young people.

Joe, Christina and Danny, Directors of Soft Touch, put their best feet forward to run the half-marathon. They were joined by Marcus Joseph a local musician (and past project participant) and three of our lovely business supporters Jacqui Womersley from the Practical Printer, Jacqui Dean from Key Virtual Assistance and Bhavin Patel from Dermacare Direct. We raised £2000 through our running challenge in the second year we have entered. If there are any keen runners out there we would love you to sign up to join our team for next year's Leicester Marathon.



OUR BUSINESS AMBASSADORS

During 2015 we have been very lucky to have the support of a team of skilled and supportive business ambassadors. We recognise that the business community have a great range of skills to contribute to our business development ideas but may not have the time to take on more formal roles by joining our management board. We have therefore established a business panel, which existing and new business supporters are invited to join. Meeting every six weeks, members are invited to discuss different business development topics and contribute their ideas and support. Over the year they have helped to put us in touch with new sources of funding, contributed specialist skills and helped to shape our creative team-building offers.



Julie Langton & Tracey Miller



Alex Kowalczyk & Chris from

Individual members have organised their own fundraising events on our behalf. Julie Langton from True Potential Wealth Management has held a series of open-office fundraising evenings and Tracey Miller of the Miller Partnership is organising the Fine & Funny Dining Night as part of Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival which will be hosted at Soft Touch on 16/2/16. She has brought in local events company KKong Events who are sponsoring the comedian for the night and The White Peacock will be providing the food. This support really helps with organisational capacity by helping to bring in much needed funds and taking the pressure off Soft Touch staff to organise events.

OUR FUNDERS, SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS

Our work would not be possible without the generous support, skills and experience our funders, supporters and partners bring. Our capital building project has brought in many new funding partners and supporters as well as forging mutually beneficial new relationships with local businesses and individuals.

Arts Council England, Leicester City Council, Big Lottery Reaching Communities, The Heritage Lottery Fund, The Mighty Creatives, National Foundation for Youth Music, The Lloyds Bank Foundation for England & Wales, The Lloyds School for Social Entrepreneurs, The Norman Gill Trust, The Edith Murphy Foundation, The Joyce Carr Doughty Charitable Trust, The Leicester Rotary Club, Leicestershire County Council, Leicester Youth Offending Service, The Star Trust, St James's Place Foundation, The Rank Foundation, The Trusthouse Foundation, The Clothworkers' Foundation, The Ironworkers' Foundation, EDF Energy, The Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Community Foundation, The Richi Rootz Foundation, Wooden Spoon, The ASDA Foundation, The Sylvia Waddilove Foundation, Leeds Building Society Charitable Foundation, The Leicestershire & Rutland Masonic Charity Association, The The Garfield Weston Foundation, Awards for All, Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland NHS Partnership Trust, Leicestershire Police & Crime Commissioner Grant, Yorkshire Building Society Charitable Foundation, Maud Elkington Charitable Trust, John Lewis, Blaby District Council, Leicestershire County Council, Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities.

The Park Lodge Project, Tender, The Philharmonia Orchestra, TREATS, Aspire Lifeskills, Millgate School, Beaumont Leys Shopping Centre, Riverside Housing, Phoenix Arts, Sustrans, Castle Rock High School, Learning for the 4th Age, Women's Aid, Centre Project, Leicestershire Youth Offending Service, Artreach, Leicester Shire Music Hub, Loughborough Foyer Project, Oadby & Wigston Borough Council, Living Without Psychiatric Medication Group, Charnwood Citizens Advice Bureau.

Newby Castleman, Arch Creative, Glynis Wright & Co Family Solicitors & Mediators, The Miller Partnership, Arthur J Gallagher, NatWest Women in Business, RBS, Nelsons Law, Anicca Digital, Berkeley Insurance Group, True Potential Wealth Management, Handelsbanken, The Practical Printer, Dermacare Direct, Key Virtual Assistance, Santander, Niche Magazine, The White Peacock, Smallman & Son, rg+p Architects, Cambridge & Counties Bank, RDZ PR, Corporate Architecture, Kaplan Financial, Shoezone, Everything Branded, Maiyango, National Space Centre, Sturgess Jaguar, Josiah Hincks Solicitors, Scenex, Blueberry Food Group.

Garden Glasto, Lord's Taveners (The Gauntlet), Pro-Con Awards, Blaby Society of Artists, the family & friends of Andrew Busby, the family and Friends of Ben Aucott, the family & friends of Cecilia Geary, Mike Phillips, Eleanor Arnold, Laura Pole, Barbara Wigmore, Helen Pearson, Morland Avenue Residents, Glen Hills Primary School, Mr Philip Draycott, Gordon & Janet Arthur, Gill Brigden, Tim Burke.

Thanks to our patrons, donors, supporters and funders and also to our volunteers that help on projects and events.



PROJECTS WE ARE PROUD OF

In any one year Soft Touch undertakes around 50 projects. These range from small one-off community engagement workshops to much larger complex programmes of work such as our Big-Up New Parks programme. This work addresses a range of different issues and needs on the estate and uses creativity to engage people and build their skills and confidence to make positive changes in their lives. It's hard to choose projects to feature but here are two we are proud of.



PARK LODGE CREATIVES AT SOFT TOUCH

Park Lodge is a supported living project for young single adults. Those who use Park Lodge have very challenging backgrounds and have been leading chaotic lifestyles with associated problems which have led to them needing specialised housing and life-skills support. Many have been previously homeless and/or in care.

The year-long project started in July 2014 and was funded by a Big Lottery Awards for All grant as a partnership between Park Lodge and Soft Touch Arts. It provided a weekly session for young people from Park Lodge to develop art and music skills and present a showcase of their work at the end of the project. It gave young people new creative, communication and life skills which broadened horizons for their future. Most importantly it helped to build their self-confidence and self-worth. The project supported them to see themselves and others in a positive light and to improve their relationships with people. This is beneficial for their future so they can communicate and build strong relationships, it also helped them to work as a team and have faith in each other.

Positive impacts of the project have been achieved with the whole group but with some young people in particular. The Deputy Manager of Park Lodge commented, "One young woman lacked self-confidence to the point where she would not want to get involved with anybody or anything. This young woman was very reluctant to attend group activities. Through attending the sessions she has now had support from staff both here and at Soft Touch, and blossomed into a different person. She has tried new activities and trusts people again and is now keen to participate in group activities even putting herself forward to attend a three-day residential outdoor activity challenge".

The Park Lodge group displayed and presented their artwork to HRH Earl of Wessex at the Soft Touch building launch event on 22nd June 2015. Young people have moved on to join other Soft Touch projects and taken up places on the Kickstart Business Mentoring Scheme.

A second Awards for All grant has been secured for 2016 to continue this successful partnership which is helping to make a difference to vulnerable young people's lives.

HEAR ME OUT

With funding from Awards For All, Kieran Walsh and Lewis Buttery from Soft Touch Arts ran a weekly session at Glen Parva Young Offenders Institute with help from staff from The Therapeutic Drug and Alcohol Support Team (TDAS).

The participants, aged 18-21, worked in two groups with the Soft Touch team to create artwork to display on the walls of the visits centre at the prison.

Participants met regularly in their groups to discuss, plan and design artwork. They developed teamworking skills alongside other prisoners, collaborating as a group to create artwork that highlighted issues common to young adults in prison. They all felt it was great experience and being able to express themselves through art and creating positive work helped them deal better with some of their negative feelings.

Participants commented:

“After I get released I would like to come to Soft Touch as I really believe it has helped me improve on my social skills.”

“This is the happiest I’ve felt in a long time. I’m not thinking about who I have to rob for my next fix, or getting my fix, or feeling ill without it. I feel normal.”

A staff member commented:

“It gives the prisoners something to focus on and be proud to be a part of. They produced a lot of really good work.”

The outstanding artwork created by the participants is now on display in the visits centre. Everyone involved was so pleased with the high-quality and thought-provoking art pieces and the positive impact the sessions made that a launch event was held for family members and invited guests of the participants to come and see the artwork. We will be continuing the project in 2016 and one of the young men who has now been released has started attending sessions at Soft Touch to continue building his confidence and creative skills.



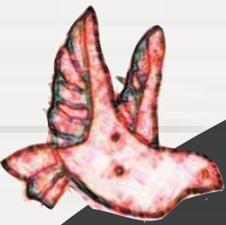
NEW PROJECTS & EVENTS FOR 2016

Mixt Up - A three-year developmental music inclusion programme starting in January 2016 using experimental combinations of cross-genre music-making to inspire disadvantaged young people across Leicestershire. We will be working in partnership with the Philharmonia Orchestra.

Generation ART - Young Artists on Tour. 15th January to 28th February 2016. Exhibition of children's and young people's artwork, supported by Arts Council England's Strategic Touring Programme. Opened at Turner Contemporary, Margate in June 2015 and will tour to New Walk Museum and Soft Touch Arts in Leicester.

Fine & Funny Dining 16th February - Sponsored by The Miller Partnership & KKong Events as part of Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival. An evening of comedy with fine food provided by the White Peacock. Our event and exhibition space will be transformed into a venue and pop-up fine-dining restaurant for the evening.

Pulled Both Ways - Innovative partnership film project in collaboration with Glynis Wright & Co Family Solicitors & Mediators. Soft Touch will work in Leicester High School for Girls and New College to create short films with young people to highlight the negative effects of parental separation on children. The films will highlight the benefits of mediation as an alternative to court proceedings.



OUR IMPACT EXTRACTS & FINANCIAL INFORMATION FROM OUR CHARITY COMMISSION REPORT 1/4/14-31/3/15

Headline statistics for the year ended 31 March 2015:

- 2300 people engaged in our projects (an increase of 609 from 2014).
- 99.7% came from vulnerable groups.
- 26% attended projects 3 or more times (excluding the school projects).
- 95% of people completing stakeholder surveys rated the quality of their experience and the quality of creative activities as 'excellent' or 'good'.



ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Our Move to 50 New Walk

Our capital project started in October 2014 and by the end of March was nearing completion. This is the biggest achievement in the history of Soft Touch, the culmination of five years relentlessly spent making our vision for a new arts and heritage centre for young people into a reality. It involved raising over £1 million in funding, and overseeing the management of the project which was a constant process of problem-solving and creative thinking to keep all the most important elements within the project budget. This dream has been achieved whilst still running a full creative programme and with minimum disruption. The centre was officially opened in June 2015 by HRH Earl of Wessex.

BIG-UP New Parks

The Style Your Space element of the five year Lottery funded BIG-UP programme in the New Parks area of Leicester has continued to transform the lives of local residents participating in the course. Most course participants were isolated adults who rarely left their homes or believed they couldn't achieve anything. One participant went on to apply for and gain a five-year apprenticeship with the City Council (500 applicants for five places) and was named Apprentice of the Year at the end of her first year. Several others gained employment for the first time in many years and one has progressed to be an assistant Style Your Space project worker.

The BIG-UP Flower Festival was another success. The festival took place in June 2014 and supported local residents to develop their own ideas for the event. It attracted in excess of 250 people on the day who all engaged in a range of creative activities.

Internships

During the year we employed two interns who have shown great progression. One started by attending Soft Touch Arts STart sessions two years ago. He was withdrawn, under-confident and struggling with social interaction and plans for the future. With the freedom to test out and develop his creative expression alongside the social support offered by Soft Touch Arts he has blossomed. After successfully applying for the six-month internship with us, he progressed to become a sessional worker, and now has a part-time job at a local gallery. He also co-organised several exhibitions and events, selling some of his own work, and he is now receiving bookings as a photographer at local business events. He has recently secured a part-time job as a youth worker.

Catalyst Arts Match Funding Programme

Well before the end of the year we had reached our income generation target of £70,000 under our Arts Council England Catalyst Programme. This amount encompassed significant new funding streams from trusts and foundations; businesses (including being adopted as 'Charity of the Year' by Kaplan East Midlands); fundraising events and individual donors. The resources provided by the Catalyst Programme supported dedicated Director and PA time which enabled us to establish positive, ongoing links with local businesses, which will prove invaluable as we settle into our new role as an arts venue. It has also helped us to develop skills in networking and in establishing and maintaining relationships with donors.

Our Charity Commission Report & Accounts 1/4/14-31/3/15 can be downloaded from our website.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

	Unrestricted Funds		Restricted funds	Total 2015	Total 2014
	General Funds	Designated Funds			
Incoming Resources	194,679	6,694	1,027,771	1,229,144	531,812
Resources Expended	(217,366)	-	(268,711)	486,077	450,903
Net Funds Movement	22,687	6,694	759,060	743,067	80,909
Fund Balance 1 April 2014	108,279	8,957	215,073	332,309	251,400
Fund Balance 31 March 2015	85,592	15,651	974,133	1,075,376	332,309

Audited accounts for April 2014 - March 2015 reflect the capital programme income and expenditure as well as that of the ongoing work of Soft Touch Arts. As a result, total incoming resources for the year amounted to £1,229,144 (2014 - £531,812). The principal funding source continued to be grant income. Total resources expended for the year amounted to £486,077 (2014 - £450,903).

BALANCE SHEET

	2015		2014	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets		1,108,509		370,686
Current Assets	316,782		224,895	
Creditors (amounts < 1 year)	(160,333)		(51,775)	
Net Current Assets		156,449		173,120
Creditors (amounts > 1 year)		(189,582)		(211,497)
Net assets		1,075,376		332,309

There was a deficit on general funds totalling £22,687, a surplus on designated funds totalling £6,694 and a surplus on restricted funds totalling £759,060. This has resulted in a total increase in funds for the year of £743,067.

An exceptional expense that has been included in the accounts relates to the loss on disposal of leasehold property at Hartopp Road totalling £36,570.



OUR YOUNG STAFF TALK ABOUT WORKING AT SOFT TOUCH

Supporting young people to progress and have a more positive future is what Soft Touch is all about and so we have made a commitment, where funding is available, to take on young people as employees through apprenticeships, university work experience placements and internships.

Emily Johnston, our Social Media Apprentice, and Lauren Park, Arts Project Worker, tell us about their experience of working at Soft Touch Arts.

Soft Touch Arts is a Leicester Charity. Since 1986 we have been using arts, media and music activities to create opportunity for and change the lives of disadvantaged children, young people and families in Leicester and Leicestershire. Our work responds to local need and helps people overcome difficult life challenges and look forward to a positive future.



Emily receiving her award at the Leicester Mercury Women in Business Awards Ceremony

Emily Johnston, 17, Soft Touch Arts Social Media & Digital Marketing Apprentice

“Working for Soft Touch has been incredibly beneficial for me. I have developed a range of skills but most importantly it has built my confidence. Soft Touch has always been very supportive of my college work and even sent me on courses outside of college to extend my skills. In September, Soft Touch nominated me for ‘Apprentice of the Year’ for the Leicester Mercury Women in Business Award and I won! I think through working at Soft Touch I have become more confident in trying new things and putting my ideas forward. Soft Touch encourages me to have my say and to believe that I am capable of doing tasks I set my mind to.”



Lauren working at the New Parks Winter Extravaganza community event

Lauren Park, 25, Soft Touch Arts Intern 2014. Now a part-time Arts Project Assistant

“I enjoy working for Soft Touch as it heavily engages young people in a variety of art forms. For me, art is a great outlet for personal expression and to be able to share the love of this with like-minded people has only made my experience at Soft Touch enriching.

I found I have learnt a vast amount of art skills, communication skills and much needed self-confidence. I am now confident in what I am capable of and also realise that helping people and communities is something that I can see for my future.”

