

HOME HOME MCR. ORG

Home from HOME Impact Report 2025 - 26



FOUNDING SUPPORTERS



**“Home from HOME
has given me a life.”**

Foreword

I am enormously proud and excited by **Home from HOME** – HOME's flagship community programme.

Over the past year **1,404 people** living in some of the most underserved areas of our city have made films, visual art and theatre with incredible artists, programmed art for their communities, and exhibited their work in community settings and at HOME.

It was fantastic to see the quality of the programme recognised at the Manchester Culture Awards where we were nominated for **The Igniting Creativity: Culture, Education and Talent Development Award**. This achievement belongs to all the participants, artists and staff who worked so hard to make the programme happen.

The highlight of the year for me was seeing the residents' show *The Home We Made* run on our mainstage. This moving, multi art form piece demonstrated the power of authentic place-based storytelling. Co-created with theatre company Malandra Jacks, local artists and Manchester residents, it was performed for an audience of nearly **1,000 people**. It was essential to us that their work took its place at the heart of our public programme - and the feedback we received from our Manchester audiences was a resounding endorsement of such work, and testament to its need right here in Manchester, as you will see in this report.

Home from HOME is all about long-term change. We are now about to begin the third and final year of this iteration of the programme and are relationship building for expansion into new areas of our city. I can't wait to see what the women and young people involved do next and how the programme evolves over the coming years.

Karen O'Neill, CEO of HOME



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Introduction



About HOME

HOME is an arts centre and charity in central Manchester, serving **900,000 visitors** per year. Our mission is to create and share high quality art that improves the life chances of the Greater Manchester population, through our two theatres, three galleries, and five cinemas.

We have extensive Community Engagement and Artist Development programmes working across Greater Manchester and in our purpose-built artist studios: HOME Arches.

HOME's strategic priorities - to share compelling stories, tackle inequality, and support sustainability - underscore our dedication to making art **accessible** and **impactful**.

We work to **embed co-creation** and transform how we make and present art, to **revitalise arts engagement** in underserved areas of Manchester.

Home from HOME

Home from HOME is an intensive **three-year community programme**, informed by two years' community consultation, which aims to:

- Embed creativity in areas that are underserved and have low arts engagement.
- Support health and wellbeing.
- Build long-term relationships with HOME, to transform who contributes to programming and strategic decision-making.

Throughout 2024-27 we are working with **3,000 people** in Moss Side, Hulme, and Gorton.

Home from HOME costs £450k over three years, and we have £34k remaining to raise towards this iteration. From 2026, we will also be fundraising to expand the programme to North Manchester (Moston, Harpurhey and Blackley), and Wythenshawe.

In Year One (April 2024 - March 2025) of the programme, 1,170 residents took part in 119 workshops learning about visual art, film and theatre. They made three exhibitions, a short film, performed at a community festival and at HOME, attended 16 trips to HOME, and programmed seven productions to tour to their communities. See our full Year One report [here](#).

We have now delivered Year Two of the programme, which is detailed in this report.



Activity and Reach: Year Two

1,404
residents
took part

Participants

57 consistent members (36 women and 21 young people)

545 residents attended workshops as drop in/out members

514 residents attended community performances or workshops

288 residents attended community made exhibitions

What did they do?

Took part in **159 workshops** exploring theatre, film and visual art

Attended **18 trips** to see theatre, film and visual art at HOME

Attended **13 community meals** to evaluate and plan the programme

What did they deliver?

Created Theatre 1 (main space) production **'The Home We Made,'** performed to almost **1,000 people**

Programmed and delivered **two festival style events** for International Women's Day: including comedy, panel discussions, wellbeing workshops, theatre and food

Created exhibition **'Ripples of Arty Joy'** for HOME's Inspire Gallery

Programmed **five productions** to tour to their communities

Made **three short films** and premiered these at HOME





Participants

About the residents:

The residents live in Moss Side, Hulme and Gorton, which are underserved areas of Manchester.

According to the UK Government's English Indices of Deprivation 2025, parts of Moss Side are in the top 1% most deprived in the whole of the UK with half the ward in the top 5%. Moss Side's unemployment rate stands at 20%, nearly triple the national average. This disproportionately affects young people and women.

Gorton is in the top 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in England. Action group End Child Poverty estimates more than half of the children there are living in poverty. 47.9% of Hulme households are deprived in one or more category: employment, education, health or housing. They are also highly diverse areas, with an average 57% of residents coming from the Global Majority.

We worked with two inter-generational women's groups with an age range of 25-80, and two youth groups aged 8-16.

Project Partners:

Home from HOME works in partnership to achieve most impact. We have built on existing infrastructure to reach more people, strengthen capacity, and improve provision for the long-term future. For our full list of partners see page 28.

The Home We Made

The Home We Made

The Home We Made was a brand-new piece of theatre made by 66 devisors, makers and performers from Home from HOME groups, for our main stage in January 2026. Together with artists Malandra Jacks, residents wrote, designed and performed a brand-new production for an audience of 989 people.

The production was a celebration of belonging, of the bonds that grow between neighbours, friends, and strangers who choose to stand side by side.

“An inspiring showcase of the power of community.” Audience Feedback

You can watch the trailer for *The Home We Made* [here](#)





Audience feedback demonstrated the authenticity, quality and power of the show:

"Thank you for the reminder of the importance of community, community spaces and the time we need to take for ourselves to be able to give back to the world."

"I've never seen anything like it. The performances were so accomplished, I had to remember these were real people not actors. Impressive and moving."

"What a brilliant production. Captures the soul of Manchester as well as the different stories and experiences which people go through."

"Full of heart and soul, speaking our truth. That's Manchester for me."

"I absolutely loved it. It was so full of heart."

"Go Manchester. I love love loved it."

"Excellent. We all have a story to tell. Thank you for telling yours. We are so powerful together."

The press said:

"A palpable sense of community and authentic Manchester." The Reviews Hub

"This production celebrates a sense of belonging, the bond between neighbours, friends and strangers, who choose to stand side by side." I Love Manchester

"The Home We Made is a thoughtful, heartfelt piece that champions real voices and real stories. [It's] strength lies in its authenticity." Manchester Theatres





“Amazing to hear authentic stories from the Manchester community brought to life on stage.”

Audience feedback



Impact



Impact overview

We have continued to see growth in four key impact areas:

Skill development and employability

94% of survey respondents told us that Home from HOME has helped them to develop new skills, with **58% strongly agreeing**.

A notable example is Lucy (not her real name). Lucy joined the Gorton Women's Group in 2024 and expressed an interest in stage management having worked with HOME on our production *WrestleLadsWrestle* as a performer in Year One of Home from HOME. Lucy completed a 3-month paid internship in stage management at HOME and was Assistant Stage Manager for *The Home We Made*. Lucy told us:

"I was assistant stage manager on the show, and I called the whole show. **I learnt how to do stage management better.** I learnt how a theatre production can go from nothing to being a whole show. **I learnt that I could handle more than I thought I could.** The highlight for me was calling the whole show because you are in control of it and people are relying on you. Opportunities like this are important because without this I'd be doing the same shit job – it's opened a lot of opportunities for me. I finished the internship as ASM and then was given another internship at HOME as Community Engagement Assistant Producer, helping to plan and run events, like shows. **I've just done my first paid job as a freelancer** working on the National Theatre tech workshops. If you had told me a year ago that I'd be doing this, I wouldn't have believed you. **Home from HOME has given me a life.** I didn't go out – just sat at home playing video games, but now I go out and I get paid. It's given me a life and stuff to do."

Lucy has since been hired as a facilitator by Manchester City Council and been introduced to other cultural organisations so she can move forward to long term employment.

Five residents were employed as performers for *The Home We Made*.

Residents told us:

"I've learnt about acting. Using a camera. Writing a scene and improvising." Member of the youth groups

"I've learnt about improvising." Member of the youth groups

"I've learnt about drama games, facilitating, directing and dance." Member of the youth groups

"I've learnt about teamwork, communication and improvisation, and story structures." Member of the youth groups

"I've done things I've never done before. Like the lanterns. Using recycling materials. The clay! I loved the clay and celebrating amazing women." Member of the women's groups

"The project rekindled skills that I had therefore reinforcing my abilities and confidence to go on the stage to express myself." Member of the women's groups

"I've been able to communicate more with people and be more open minded." Member of the women's groups

"Confidence and help from others has helped me to realise my ideas into actual art and projects." Member of the women's groups

"I'm really excited to make a film!!! I love HOME theatre!" Member of the youth groups

"I've enjoyed writing my film ideas I came up with two different films!" Member of the youth groups

"It has shown that I can do anything I put my mind to without judgment of other people. It has led me to be more self-confident. That has lead me to get a job."

Member of the women's groups

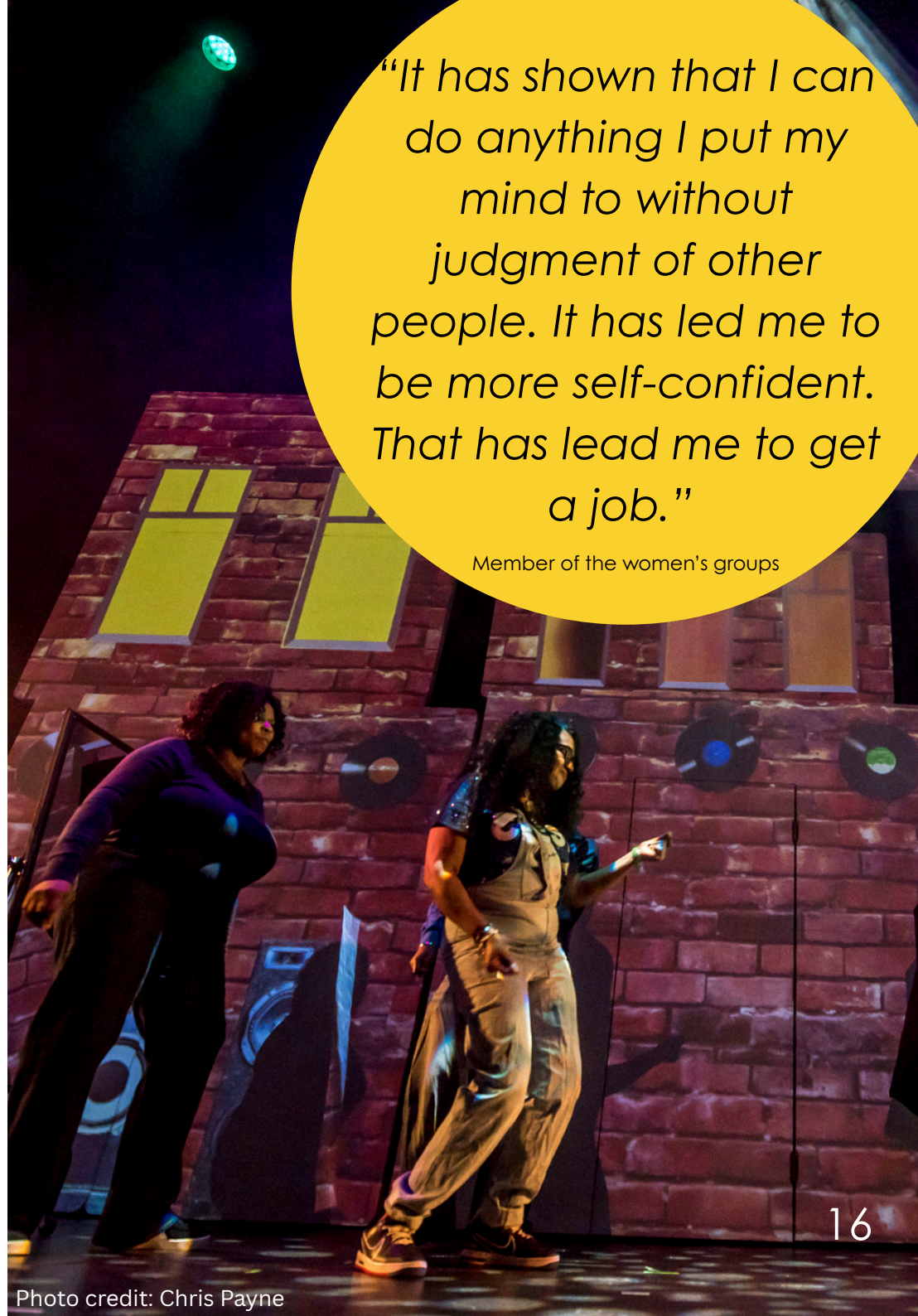


Photo credit: Chris Payne

Improved mental health and wellbeing

91% of survey respondents told us that taking part in the programme has improved their mental health or sense of wellbeing, with **73% strongly agreeing**.

“It has helped me come out my shell and come away from my anxiety and depression.” Member of the women’s groups

“It’s improved my mental health in a way I’m not as anxious as before.” Member of the women’s groups

“It encourages me to take time out for myself and saying I’m worth it.” Member of the women’s groups

“It has encouraged me how to take time out of the hustle and bustle of everyday life and find time for myself and how to relax.” Member of the women’s groups

“[Home from HOME] makes me feel like I can express myself.” Member of the youth groups

“[Home from HOME] has made me feel more confident.” Member of the youth groups

“It’s introduced more awareness [of mental health and wellbeing].” Member of the youth groups

“Home from HOME makes me feel special.” Member of the youth groups

“It has drastically improved my mental health and made me more open to new things.” Member of the youth groups



“My sense of wellbeing has improved because I am getting out of the home and meeting new people and socialising.”

Member of the women’s groups

“Home from HOME has given me a safe space to show my creativity and be in a safe environment with lovely people.”

Member of the women's groups



Reduced isolation

88% of survey respondents felt that Home from HOME has made them feel more connected to other people in their community, with **58% strongly agreeing**.

Residents told us:

“Talking to people makes you feel relaxed because you are saying how you feel. I feel supported, it means everything to me.” Member of the women's groups

“It's a warm and welcoming group where women can go with lots of opportunities to just be yourself and learn new skills and meet new people.” Member of the women's groups

“Welcoming any background.” Member of the women's groups

“The benefits it gave the community is a friendly environment where people from different backgrounds and struggles can come together and support each other.” Member of the women's groups

“I have stepped out of my comfort zone to take part in the activities and not shy away from others.” Member of the women's groups

“It's made me feel like part of the community.” Member of the youth groups

“Home from HOME feels like family.” Member of the youth groups

“Home from HOME makes me feel included.” Member of the youth groups

Access to the arts

91% of survey respondents told us that Home from HOME has improved their confidence to attend cultural events, with **64% strongly agreeing**.

85% of residents would consider going to the theatre, cinema or art galleries more than before, having taken part in Home from HOME.

Residents told us:

“After doing Home from HOME workshops I’ve been going to local art galleries to see local artists exhibitions.” Member of the women’s groups

“I loved seeing the musical at Christmas. I would never have gone to that and I loved it!” Member of the women’s groups

“Before working with HOME I wouldn’t have gone to the gallery, and I enjoyed that.” Member of the women’s groups

“I previously was aware of HOME but since attending I have attended more events than before.” Member of the women’s groups

“I want to go to see art more now.” Member of the youth groups

“I don’t go to the theatre or cinema usually. But I’ve gone more with HOME.” Member of the youth groups

“I don’t go to see art often. I’d go more now.” Member of the youth groups



Case Studies

Case Study: Home from HOME shows best practice in meaningful, creative, place-based approaches

I have been working in partnership with HOME since the inception of their Home from HOME project in my role [in Community Development] at Gorton Central [where the women's group is run]. From the outset, this work has been a clear example of best practice in how arts organisations can meaningfully support women and communities through creative, place-based approaches.

Home from HOME established a **safe, welcoming and creative space**, delivering regular fortnightly sessions from Gorton Central. These sessions were intentionally community focused, inclusive, and **shaped by participants themselves**. Over time, I have seen participants' confidence grow, both in creative expression and in their sense of belonging within the space. Some have since engaged with other projects and activities locally, **some now volunteer at the centre**, and **all now have strong relationships** with neighbours, services and more broadly, their community.

I've attended numerous events at Gorton Central, many of which were **co-designed by participants**, and also events hosted at HOME where the women involved in the Gorton group helped shape the content and experience. This journey has demonstrated the power of delivering high quality arts activity within communities to support residents to access cultural spaces that can often feel inaccessible or "not for us". HOME's way of working, driven by thoughtful, joyful and supportive artists, has **actively broken down those barriers**. Their approach has enabled residents to feel welcomed, represented and **confident in accessing both local creative spaces and major cultural venues across the city**.

HOME has...[delivered a wide range of] community facing activity. This has supported wider community development priorities and strengthened local partnerships. Their partnership working in Gorton demonstrates the **transformational potential of arts-led, place-based practice**.

By centring relationships, valuing lived experience and working collaboratively with local partners, HOME has contributed to:

- **increased confidence and participation** among residents
- **Wider access to cultural spaces and activity**
- **Stronger community cohesion**
- Meaningful conversations around **safety, identity** and **belonging**

Their work in Gorton shows how **major cultural institutions can embed themselves locally in ways that are respectful, impactful and genuinely inclusive**.

By building strong relationships with residents and grassroots organisations, their work has **supported greater inclusion, participation and a stronger sense of belonging**, particularly among people who may not usually engage with arts activity. **Their understanding of place, power, access and representation has ensured community voices remain central throughout**.

Case Study: I built my confidence

I am 15, turning 16 in two days, and I really love drama. The amount of drama things that I've been in have all just been complete improv. The only thing they do is improv, and it's always been super annoying. So, the reason why I actually joined HOME [Young Theatre Company] in the first place was because Home From HOME in Gorton Hideout was actually really fun, because it wasn't just saying improv is the most important, which it's not. Improv is important, but it's not as important as learning how to act in the first place, and how to write a script, learn how to act out that script, and follow directions from the director.

First Experience at Gorton Hideout:

Basically, I joined Hideout at Gorton and was just eating a bag filled with rice, cheese, prawn crackers, and sweetcorn. Then I walked into this room, right, the drama room, and found Sam (HOME's Creative Engagement Theatre Practitioner). We talked about how Sam sounds like a really good name and joked about how we would make a play called Sam's Life, where it was just someone standing there eating a bag of rice, cheese, and sweetcorn. I then fell in love with the class. It's like genuinely doing what you would actually want from a drama class.

Attending the Classes:

It was like an acting, semi-acting class thing, so I decided to come more weeks. I never actually came the proper length until after the new year, which then I started coming biweekly sometimes. Then there was a trip that we came to here, to the actual HOME theatre, and then I just decided, I'm going to join the HOME group.

Favourite Game:

We play games. I think Mafia. I like Mafia, Mafia is fun, not about being able to lie to people. I love being the person who's in charge of the game, like narrator. You can go into very gruesome detail when it comes to being the narrator, it's very fun to do that.

Joining The Young Company:

I joined the Young Company (HOME's youth theatre), because it is something that I can join that's not just completely improv. I can actually learn skills of drama. I just found out that we can do shows, I believe. Being able to actually act for the first time and not just acting like a small mini film shoot on a phone. I'm an idea person in drama class. It's just I can't write nor read, but I can semi-implement.

Friends, Confidence, and Growth:

My peers are amazing, a lot of diversity. They're all very fun to talk to, and they don't actually care that I have very, very weird and crazy ideas. I've made friends. I've learnt I would love to be an actor, and knowing how to pretend to punch someone without punching them. I built my confidence, and I have a little bit less social anxiety.

Case Study: It's made me fall back in love with Manchester

I belong to the women's group. It's been really enjoyable. I was part of the cast of the production of *The Home We Made*.

The group

It's just been unbelievably valuable for me, a real kind of medicine, a real saviour for me, in terms of having a tendency towards anxiety and having low moods. I've got quite a stressful job, as most people have. It's just having that chance to go somewhere, and you can either offload about your problems or just sit there quietly. To be creative in a space amongst women that I really respect and have a laugh with.

Being part of this group really brought my confidence and sense of hope about the future and now, and it's made me fall back a bit in love with Manchester. I had a bit of a rocky time in Manchester at one stage, really a victim of hate crimes and stuff, and it turned me off being in Manchester. I think the big part of the whole group has really made me value Manchester again in terms of what it's got to offer.

The community is a real mix. We've got lots of differences but lots of commonalities as well. So it's intergenerational. We have members probably in their 80s, and then we get the chance around school holidays to have younger people in there as well. It's a real mix of demographics, but we all seem to be able to kind of gel. We don't always have the same opinion, but we kind of gel on certain things, like what it's like to be a woman. We have shared experiences like menopause, bringing up children, parenting. That can be quite stressful and make you feel like you always put yourself last. We can share those feelings and it be acceptable.

I think that the art bit is very important. I think that's really important, that it's art and being creative, because again it's giving people value, that they have got something to offer. It isn't just the elite that produce the best. Giving people materials and opportunities and space means that they can flourish when it comes to being creative.

Joining *The Home We Made*

I decided it was a bit like how I went for that *WrestleLadsWrestle* [a professional production the residents were part of in Year 1 of Home from HOME]. It's all about mental health for me. I don't see myself as a performer really. I tell a story if I feel like it's about the content rather than me being the performer, if you see what I mean.

The process was inclusive, welcoming, and exciting. I was also kind of adamant that this was a real opportunity for me.

From the very start it felt so warm to be around the people I was working with. I was out of my comfort zone as well. It was really testing at times. For some reason I was crying a lot throughout the process of putting the script together. So I learnt about myself in so many different ways.

This quite intense opportunity really reinforced some of my tendencies, and that some of them were acceptable as well. It's acceptable to be that way. It doesn't make you a bad person or anything. It was very life affirming. It was very good for confidence, even though it was very scary.

I also learned about compromise, and asking for help as well. That it's OK to say this is not my skill base.

We talked about this at the beginning of the process. The three of us were sharing quite intimate stories, so we had to trust each other. As we got closer to the production, anxiety levels went up. Emily and Louise [from HOME's Creative Engagement team] recognised that and checked in regularly, giving us opportunities to feedback if we were struggling.

Performing

In terms of performing. I didn't like it. I feel like I'm about the story, the message, not necessarily enjoying being on stage. I had to fight the anxiety and the urge to run away.

But afterwards, it felt incredible. I went for a job recently, first interview in about 20 years. You think, how can I possibly do this. But then you do it. It shows you that your mind can be managed. It's something I can draw on in future.

I felt that we got it right. It could have been corny or patronising, but it wasn't. They really told our story, and I think the audience appreciated it.

Final Reflections

I was also really proud to be in a show with so many Black cast members. That was refreshing. And seeing a young Black man ending the show was so positive. It made me feel really good about Manchester.

Not in a rose-tinted way, but recognising that Manchester is built by migrants and different cultures. The play really reinforced that in a positive way. I suppose it did influence my politics as well about the potential of human beings, if you give them the right circumstances they can thrive, but so many people aren't given that. The piece of theatre reinforced that they are and should be valued more.

It was beautiful to be part of that.



What's next?

The Last Year of Home from HOME

We have now delivered two years of Home from HOME, reaching **2,578** people.

Year Three

Year three's focus is long-term change in the communities and at HOME.

Residents will:

- See at least two productions in their community, maintaining a cultural offer.
- Continue to take part in a minimum of 10 workshops exploring film, theatre and visual art.
- Work with HOME to shape the future of the groups and contribute ideas for programming and strategy at HOME.
- Be supported to identify the next stage in their creative journey, including job opportunities, paid apprenticeships, and internships at HOME or other cultural venues, creative opportunities at HOME such as The Manchester Open and our Artist Development programme.
- Support the making of a short film as part of the evaluation, to be shared with the sector, project stakeholders and current and potential funders.
- Have continued access to free film via our Cinema Social scheme (our free, dedicated community cinema), free art in our Gallery, and access bespoke Creative Engagement pricing or additional free opportunities at points throughout the year.

HOME will:

- Host a Co-creating Communities event to share best practice with local and national partners in February 2027.
- Manage the transition of the delivery of the groups to our community partners and residents.



Long term change: beyond 2027

This is a long-term project. Home from HOME sits at the heart of our organisation as a strategic tool to increase diversity in our programming, artists, staff and audiences, alongside creating meaningful long-term change within communities.

As the programme has proven impactful, we are now fundraising for expansion to North Manchester (Harpurhey, Moston and Blackley), and Wythenshawe, where we have developing relationships and know there is demand.

Transform lives and communities: Support Home from HOME

After two years of delivery, residents have told us how Home from HOME has transformed their lives.

By supporting Home from HOME, you can ensure residents in Manchester's underserved communities gain access to this transformative programme.

To find out more, please email Development Manager Hattie Callery on development@homemcr.org or call 0161 212 3404.



Thank you to our partners and supporters

Home from HOME would not be possible without our amazing partners and supporters. Thank you.

Supporters:

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation
Garfield Weston Foundation
The Leri Charitable Trust
Arts Council England
Manchester City Council
BFI
Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Partners:

Ascension Church, Hulme
Gorton Hub
HideOut Youth Zone, Gorton
Moss Side Millenium Powerhouse – Youth Centre
Archway 3
ARCON Housing/ Bolton at Home Housing
Can Survive UK
Gorton Library
Healthy me, Healthy communities CIC at Gorton Central Community Centre
MCR Active
Manchester City Council Neighbourhood teams
Manchester Mind
One Manchester Housing
Women of Worth Empower CIC



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