



## **PANDA ANNOUNCEMENT APRIL 2018**

At our Board meeting of 17th April 2018, a unanimous decision was made to dissolve the organisation and PANDA aims to cease trading on 25th June 2018.

This decision was not taken lightly and we have spent many months researching different models and scenarios in order to find a sustainable way forward. As a small northern support network, our sources of finance have been steadily declining for many years now - just as it has for those we seek to assist. Although Arts Council remain supportive, they do not consider our work of enough strategic importance to include within their National Portfolio. Meanwhile, many others are now seeking to address the professional development of individuals and are better resourced to do so. Raising enough income from subscriptions is unrealistic without compromising our key value of financial inclusivity. The current challenging climate has seen us overwhelmed with demand for our support with our capacity diminished to the point whereby the Board consider PANDA can no longer effectively fulfil its mission and remain viable. The dictionary definition of support is 'bear all or part of the weight of; hold up'. We cannot do this without firm footing ourselves.

A tiny organisation, PANDA has managed for many years to punch above its weight, working strategically and creatively to provide support to many individuals. The Board and staff are proud of our many achievements:

Creating and supporting 100 new jobs within the arts sector through Future Jobs Fund; assisting 70 artists and companies to employ someone for the first time; Providing affordable training for 12 creative independents to qualify as coaches, 12 as Critical Response Process Facilitators and a further 20 in Advanced Communication skills; Providing underlying support for 12 NW Decibel artists, 17 MIF Jerwood Fellows, 8 Wigan Imago artists, 8 British Council Artist Development Artists, 20 Curious Minds Young Associates, Intern and Apprentices, 8 BGAF participants, over 50 Rural Touring Mentoring Scheme Beneficiaries, 70 self-employed individuals through the ERDF Business Support Scheme, over 100 Manchester/Greater Manchester participants Local Authority Young Media Consultants/Creative Breaks training schemes; brokering work experience opportunities for 7 young people with disabilities; delivering over 2800 coaching sessions and helping establish more than 25 peer networks/action learning sets. We have always worked hard to ensure fairness and equality within the sector and those 'in the shadows' of 'mainstream'. We have over 1,400 individuals on our network who have at one time or another been PANDA members and benefitted from our activities and we've compiled and sent over 600 e-listings/newsletters informing of jobs, opportunities, events and industry news.

Yes - PANDA has a lengthy track record of pulling financial rabbits out of hats, thriving despite high levels of uncertainty and risk and generally bootstrapping its way through adversity. We care very much about the Performing Arts Sector and those we particularly exist to support. However, survival in this way is costly in terms of time and energy and is not sustainable in today's climate.

The PANDA Board take their duty of care seriously - in terms of the organisation, its members and those who work for it. They felt that to continue without any prospects of core/long term funding in place would leave PANDA unable to fulfil its sector support mission and unviable financially. It is important to have made this decision at this time, to enable PANDA to close in a carefully managed and well governed manner.



We wish to extend our thanks to those who have persevered alongside us throughout recent months of revision and review. We have been closed to new members since December 2017 and all subscriptions are now expired. However, alongside the winding up process, our main thoughts are how we can ensure some support is in place for members for after we close. From now until 25th June, we will be collating information to remain as an archived online resource. We will be signposting to alternative sources of support and announcing details of PANDA's Legacy Funds - essentially the contents of our savings account/reserves converted into small professional development grants.

All of us at PANDA have been honoured to have played our part within the sector and wish you all the very best for your future journeys. We hope you will continue to contribute to and benefit from the networks, professional development and peer solidarity that can only be achieved through courage, creativity and above all, collaboration.

Best Wishes

PANDA