

ignite!

**“their futures
ignited”**

**Futures,
ignited!**

**An Ignite! Strategy for
a new world 2023-2026**

Introduction

Ignite! is a Nottingham-based charity unleashing the unique creative spark in young people, from toddlers to twenties, equipping them for a rapidly-changing world. Our programmes provide a curiosity-first approach to disrupt traditional education, connect with people, and nurture the natural creativity within.

We are experts at creating joyful, safe, expressive environments, ideal for personal development and self-determination. We ignite moments of wonder and curiosity, and work to remove the perceived barriers between people.

Our work occupies an important place in the creative landscape, working alongside young people on their journey of self-discovery and personal development, making use of the lenses of science, art, music, literature, history and more to meet every young person where their interests lie.

This three-year strategy comes at a pivotal time when our world is changing rapidly, with crises after crises looming above our young people. Now, more than ever, the younger generations need opportunities for self-realisation, for empowerment, so that they know their innate spark has value and that they can truly make a difference.

Over the next three years, Ignite! will be consolidating its energies, focussing on its strengths, and building programmes that deliver consistently on our vision.

This is an ambitious strategy.

By 2026, we will have grown substantially in our capacity and operations, with four strong core programme areas that span across age ranges, and a network of connectors which provide the potential to engage with young people who are most in need across Nottinghamshire.

We will do this with the support of new partners, staff members, and a motivated network of people who have experienced their own personal creative ignition and want this for the next generation.

**“The world
is changing,
fast”**

Vision, Mission & Values

Futures, ignited!

Our Vision

Time and time again we see young people light up as they engage with an activity that teaches them something about themselves, their interests and their skills.

We know that these opportunities for self-realisation are increasingly hard to come by; they are under-funded and under-valued, and we also know that mounting pressures on young people to 'succeed' push these exploratory experiences down the priority list.

That is why our vision is a **world set up to provide young people with endless opportunities** to flourish in their creativity, follow their curiosity, and ignite their futures.

Our Mission

Ignite! will continue to **create environments** in which young people feel safe to be curious and develop their creative skills, to solve problems and express their interests and ideas.

We act as a bridge between young people, their communities, and professional sectors, bringing together fantastic combinations of people to inspire, widen perspectives, and break down barriers. Our work will always cross sectors and industries, because **creativity is a critical skill everywhere.**

Our Values / Behaviours

Everyone who works with us can understand what the essence of Ignite! is. Here are four key behaviours which we circle back to in all of our work:

We thrive in delight and surprise.

Yes, we are joyful and we create spaces that are safe, expressive and happy. We celebrate personal decision-making, self-worth, and individualism at every opportunity.

We ensure that they pave the way.

We are led by our participants and we place no limit on outcomes for them. As reflective practitioners, our programmes adapt and improve by listening to the needs and soaring ambitions of our participants.

We leave no-one out.

We assess and remove barriers to access, engagement and success. We will not ignore those in need, and we will work to develop respectful, and long-lasting relationships with our participants and partners.

We nurture and care.

We always prioritise the protection and comfort of our employees, volunteers, participants and partners and seek to maximise their potential and their lived experience.

How we'll achieve our vision

We are working to provide young people with **endless opportunities to flourish in their creativity, follow their curiosity, and ignite their futures.**

We have identified three key outcomes of our work that moves us closer to this vision.

We work hard to curate impactful programmes that generate these outcomes demonstrably via our adaptive evaluation framework.



Outcome 1

Coming together

The architecture, culture and networks of Nottinghamshire come together to provide for its children and young people

Our programmes tangibly:

1. Increase connectedness of the Nottinghamshire cultural and creative ecosystem
2. Increase funding, valuation, and capacity of youth-provision throughout the county
3. Increase the influence of children and young people on programming related to them

Example: The Festival of Science and Curiosity brings together Nottinghamshire's cultural ecosystem to provide communities across the county with opportunities to flourish in their creativity.

Outcome 2

Unlocking creativity

Children and young people are able to reach their potential in any path they desire

Our programmes tangibly:

1. Increase access to information, experiences and networks
2. Increase understanding and expression of own creativity and curiosity
3. Increase the feeling of joy in learning and discovery



Example: Creative Sparks is an after-school project that provides activities free from assessment, pressure and end-products.

Outcome 3

Taking control

Children and young people are heard and are able to affect personal and societal change

Our programmes tangibly:

1. Improve language and communication skills
2. Increase understanding of systems of power, influence and change
3. Increase self-confidence and improve self-perception



Example: Primary Parliament opens the doors to the democratic process and encourages the articulation of views on social issues

Strategic Objectives

Five strategic objectives will drive, and bring focus to, our activity over the next three years. They are demanding and ambitious, focussing on our strengths and expertise while challenging Ignite! to expand its capacity, and collaborate more intensively with others.

Each objective is expanded on in the following pages.

**Working externally,
we're going to...**

**And internally?
We're going to...**

- 1.** **Provide** quality programmes to those most in need
- 2.** **Grow** Nottingham's creative ecosystem
- 3.** **Champion** the successes of our young people
- 4.** **Shake up** the financial model to deepen our impact
- 5.** **Invest** in our key players to maintain excellence as we grow



Objective 1

Provide quality programmes to those most in need

Rationale

Ignite! is working towards a vision where young people are given the opportunities they need to flourish. In order to reach these young people, Ignite! needs to build relationships with groups across the region and provide inclusive programming across a range of age groups.

Approach

We will direct our energy into four key areas. Our programmes will flex to the needs of our participants but hold a basic structure that can be impact-assessed over a long period. We will seek out new partnerships to reach those most in need, as well as providing our own opportunities within Ignite! itself.

Key deliverables

1. Develop our programmes in four key areas. (**Schools, Communities, Families, and Individuals**)
2. Create eligibility and decision-making processes to focus capacity on young people who would experience the greatest benefit
3. Partner with other organisations so that we can increase inclusion and access within our programmes
4. Formalise an inclusive work experience programme with Ignite!

Provide



Objective 2

Grow Nottingham's creative ecosystem

Rationale

Ignite! is informally connected with a wide network of inspirational people and groups that embody our values and vision for the future. We believe in the potential of activating this network to drive forward our vision to the benefit of young people everywhere.

Key deliverables

1. Formalise an Ignite! Spark Network made up of creatives ready to support our young people
2. Embed the role of the Spark Network in our programmes
3. Create a development programme for Spark Network members

Approach

We will build the Ignite! Spark Network, a collective of curious, creative, community-driven people who believe in our vision and want to drive this forwards. This network will provide value within our programmes, and will also work together to drive the mission of Ignite!.



grow!

Objective 3

Champion the successes of our young people

Rationale

We are dedicated to supporting young people to ignite their own futures and over the last sixteen years we have seen hundreds of young people flourish in their creativity. We will champion the successes of our young people to showcase the transformational effect that supporting young people to explore their own curiosity can have.

Approach

We will track success and share these widely through our growing Spark Network and beyond as well as embedding monitoring and evaluation in all of our programmes to allow for transparent assessment of the impact of our programmes. We will share our knowledge with other individuals and groups through resources, courses and consulting to expand our impact beyond Nottingham, with no geographic limitations, investing in digital access.

Key deliverables

1. Invest in creating and embedding a gold-standard evaluation procedure
2. Define a reporting and critique schedule
3. Create capacity for sharing successes as well as knowledge to individuals and groups through events, newsletters, resources, courses and consulting.

champion



Objective 4

Shake up the financial model to deepen our impact

Rationale

Ignite! has long (and successfully!) relied solely on small grant funding to fund its activities and maintain its small staff team. This model reduces Ignite!'s ability to fulfill its ambitions of high quality, value-driven, sustained programming. Diversifying income streams will allow Ignite! to focus on driving change.

Approach

We will focus on developing sustainable financial models for each of our programmes, and across the organisation, expanding income through strategic partnerships, philanthropic support, intellectual property, commercial activity and donations.



Key deliverables

1. Increased support from corporate partners and donors (individuals, trusts and foundations)
2. An expansion of commercial activity, including consulting work, content licensing, and training
3. Investment in staff to drive income diversification



Invest

Objective 5

Invest in our key players to maintain excellence as we grow

Rationale

Ignite! is small but MIGHTY! We currently operate with two permanent staff members in management roles as well as being supported by a freelance development consultant and a variety of enriching fixed-term staff and interns. In 2022, our team consisted of over 30 individuals.

Our new strategy is ambitious and, in order to deliver this to the same standard of excellence, we need to ensure our structures are appropriate.

Approach

We will listen to our staff team, assess workloads, and put the appropriate provisions, policies and practices into action to ensure that working for and with Ignite! is a joyful experience.

We will aim to reduce individual responsibility loads by increasing our staff capacity where necessary as well as prioritising the personal development of all our staff members, contractors, Trustees and volunteers.

Key deliverables

1. Create organisational and governance structures that increase clarity, efficient, communication and empowerment of both staff and trustees
2. Embed a new transparent pay scale and revise employee rewards
3. Expand the staff team in a phased way involving deep staff consultation
4. Invest in the personal development of staff members, contractors, trustees and volunteers





Only by working together can we truly provide young people with endless opportunities to flourish in their creativity, follow their curiosity, and ignite their futures.

Futures, ignited!

We know that the best way for us to support young people is to reach out to others, share freely, and grow our community of volunteers, advisors, champions and donors.

We are grateful to the very many people and organisations that have supported Ignite! thus far and excited about those yet to join us in our mission to ignite futures.

Ignite! is a registered charity that is predominantly funded on a project-by-project basis, meaning we have limited funds to cover our core costs.

Could you become a regular donor and help us ignite more futures?