


company

Business Plan
2023-26



The world is changing, faster than ever.

The teenagers who we work with at Company Three have already lived through austerity, Brexit, the Covid pandemic, the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement and unprecedented political turmoil.

They face a cost-of-living crisis, the arrival of AI in our everyday lives, intense pressure in the education system and the beginning of climate emergency.

MOODY

INTRODUCTION

Company Three is changing too.

After fifteen years of growth and success, we are implementing a more representative and democratic approach to artistic leadership. We have become an Arts Council National Portfolio organisation for the first time. We are moving our delivery to a new partner venue. Our founder and Artistic Director will move on in early 2024.

This business plan is a response to where we are as a company, and the context in which we work. We have written it so that we can navigate the next few years in the most creative, collaborative, flexible and responsive way possible.

We will deliver it through a series of projects involving young people, staff, trustees and partners. There are no immovable objectives or fixed destinations, just a direction to travel in, together.

These projects will help us become a model for a better future, telling the widest range of stories, being more intentional about change-making and working at the heart of a transformative youth theatre sector.

There are lots of different ways we might achieve each aim. We've suggested indicative objectives to help us to plan and navigate, but we expect these to change as our young people, staff, trustees and other stakeholders start to experiment with them.

We have a perfect base to begin this exploration: deep local connections, an exceptional track record of co-creation, a consistent delivery framework that encourages innovation, and a national community of practice to exchange ideas with.

Most importantly, we have an extraordinary company of young people: nurtured out of the pandemic with kindness, love and hope; the most committed, engaged and supportive group we've ever known. But also, perhaps, the most anxious and uncertain.

Their capacity to create change – in themselves, their communities and wider society – sits at the very heart of our ambitions over the next three years. In a deeply uncertain world, we need their change more than ever, and we'll do everything we can to enable it.

***We help teenagers tell
their own stories and
create change.***



VISION AND MISSION

We do this by:

Working long-term with young people, helping them understand and express themselves.

Creating theatre that helps young people create the change they want to make.

Sharing our practice to help teenagers create change through theatre across the UK.

We use these tools:

Co-creation

Supporting adults and young people to creatively make decisions together - both artistic and strategic.

Story-telling

Telling stories to enable self-expression, artistic development and evaluation.

Exchange

Sharing our practice, plays and process with other organisations to learn, develop and influence.

Blueprints

Capturing process in easy-to-share documents that help capture practice and learning.

Edgelands

Working in the space around formal activity to better understand and listen to each other.

Play

Using games, joy, fun and playfulness to explore, connect and learn together.

We have three rules:

*Be
Kind*

*Be
Brave*

*Be
Yourself*



2008

Founded as Islington Community Theatre.

2009

Selected to perform *Success* at the National Theatre.
Runners Up at the Spirit of London Awards.

We have an exceptional track-record to build on.

2010

Given £27,000 for a new General Manager on Channel 4's *The Secret Millionaire*.
Created *Remarkable Things* to re-open Islington Assembly Hall

2011

Created an immersive warehouse show involving more than 100 young people.
Opened Platform - Islington's new youth arts hub - with *Fifteen*, created by fifteen fifteen-year olds.

2012

An epic residential in the South of France
Our first 24-hour challenge - all night plays created by very tired C3 members.

2013

Produced *Mostly Like Blue* by Inua Ellams, *The Centre* by Alexandra Wood
and the first scratch of a new devised play called *Brainstorm*.

2014

Founded Young Associates - training and development roles for 18-19 year olds.
Turned Platform into a fully functional Chicken Shop, for a play called *Chicken Shop*.

2015

Five-star reviews for our show *Brainstorm* at the National Theatre and on the BBC,
the first piece of theatre made by young people to be included in the NT's main programme.

2016

Published the *Brainstorm* Blueprint, enabling groups across the world to
make their own version. Produced *The Future* at the Yard Theatre.

2017

Produced our first ever Assembly festival of new work.
Won the Innovation Award at the Peter Brook/Empty Space Awards.

2018

Created *Aunty* - a play and film about Black girls' relationship with older Black women.
Produced *The Act* - a play about sex and relationships - at the Yard Theatre.

2019

Produced *The Best Day Ever! (A Play about the End of the World)* at the Pleasance Theatre and
Everything, a new time capsule play.

2020

Created *The Coronavirus Time Capsule*, a record of the pandemic involving more than 3,000 young
people in 17 different countries.

2021

Produced *Eighteen*, at the New Diorama Theatre. Cancelled *When This Is Over* at the Unicorn
Theatre when half the cast caught covid midway through tech.

2022

Won Best Community Project at the Stage Awards.
Produced *#BlackIs...* at the Pleasance Theatre and *When This Is Over* at the Yard Theatre.

We're building structures designed for success.

Young people

Over the next three years, we will increase the number of young people engaged in our work on a long-term, weekly basis. Between our 678 foundation project and Core Company, we will work with 90 young people in 6 groups of 15.

We will work with and support a further 250 young people every year through schools projects - many of which will provide a pathway into our core company.

Permanent staff

Our work will be driven by a permanent staff team of seven. Two new appointments will ensure that our team is more balanced and sustainable, particularly around office administration, income generation and our exchange programme. This includes forming two new producer roles.

At the heart of our staff structure will be a commitment to long-term, salaried roles for artists. We see these as key to meeting our aims around breadth and impact and will fundraise to ensure the continuation of our associate positions.

Artistic Director

We expect our founding artistic director, Ned Glasier, to step down in early 2024. The board will ensure a rigorous and open recruitment process for his successor, with the new staff structure providing opportunities to rebalance both the AD and Executive Director job descriptions. The new appointee will be given support to grow in the role and thrive as an artist and leader.

Freelance Staff

We will support 15 freelance artists over three years through our Facilitator Pool, offering paid employment, training, mentoring and development space to artists who are committed to working with young people, and who are representative of our company.

Board

Our board will continue to be made up of 6-8 trustees, with a strong focus on representation. A key development aim in this plan is around bringing co-creation into our governance process, ensuring young people, staff and trustees can work together on the long-term strategic development of Company Three.

Deep Dives: intensive projects in schools, helping us to listen to, support and learn from young people who up to now haven't been part of our work.

The Happiness Project: regular happy hour' workshops for Year 6 students to support transition and recruit new C3 members.

Assembly: an annual showcase of new 'first stage' plays for a public audience.

January - April *Wrighting, rehearsing, performing*

Our key making phase - taking the most promising ideas from the scratch process and crafting new 'first stage' plays, driven by the change our young people most want to see. These are performed for audiences at Assembly.

Scratch night: a sharing of very early, very rough work for the other groups

September - December *Research, development, scratch*

We take the stories and ideas that are shared in Summer Project and during the previous years projects and begin to explore them in small groups of company members. The work we develop in this period helps us understand what's really important to us and what change we want to make with it.

Core Company: the main group of young people in Company Three, aged 12 - 19. Before joining the core company, members are part of the 678 Project, supporting transition into secondary school - and the company.

Summer Project: a two week exploration of new ideas and work, including a week-long residential involving the entire core company.



Our life cycle.

May - July

Rest, reconnection, learning

A period of rest and reflection after Assembly. We reconnect to our local community through Deep Dive and other schools projects, invite new members to join the company and begin to explore new ideas through C3 Adventures.

C3 Adventures:
experimental workshops exploring what youth theatre can be.

Bonfire: *our leaving ceremony for members at the end of their C3 Journey*

August

Forming, discovering, seeding

An intensive period of listening, playing and experimentation in Summer Project, discovering what's most important to our members and beginning to build small pieces of work around it.

At different times/throughout the year:

Flagship shows

Developing the most promising work created in Assembly into flagship productions like *Brainstorm*, *When This Is Over* and *#BlackIs...*, in professional venues.

Practice Labs

Learning together through weekly Practice Labs – internal workshops in which our artistic team challenge, develop and explore our practice through training, discussion and experiments.

Affinity Groups

Small groups for young people with shared identities to come together, talk and make work outside of our regular groups, led by artists who share the same identity.

Pool Parties

Supporting our Facilitator Pool – ten artists who work with us on a regular basis supporting core and schools projects – through paid termly 'Pool Party' training, mentoring and resources.

Exchange

Delivering our Exchange programme – interactions with other companies across the UK including learning exchanges, delivering training courses and sharing Blueprints.

***In the next three
years, we want to ...***



OUR AIMS FOR 2026

Over the next few pages, we set out four key aims for the next three years, with three projects that will help us to achieve each one.

These aims are rooted in conversations we've had with young people, staff, freelancers and trustees. We hope they will help us become a more purposeful, confident and representative company - a space in which a wider range of young people can tell their stories and understand their power to create change. We want this spirit of change to be embodied in everything we do - from our internal structures to the way we engage in a national community of practice.

Our projects relate directly to our aims and objectives as outlined in our Arts Council NPO application, and we will track them through staff and board meetings on a quarterly basis. They are designed to be flexible - to allow young people and others to influence and change them as they develop. They are ports to sale from, rather than the final destination.

AIM ONE

***Become a model for a
better future.***



Company Three will become a more transformational theatre company if our organisational structures model, encourage and enable change.

By modelling what we think a better future looks like, we will make the possibility of change more immediate and tangible for the young people we work with - and ensure the best possible conditions for them to create their own.

These organisational changes go hand in hand with with being sustainable and environmentally responsible. Climate justice can only be driven by equity, collaboration and wellbeing - we will make these central to the way we take decisions and deliver our work.

Project 1: Staffing

We will design and implement a new staffing model and approach that ensures we have the capacity to deliver our programme, reduces reliance on individuals, encourages collective decision-making and centres wellbeing.

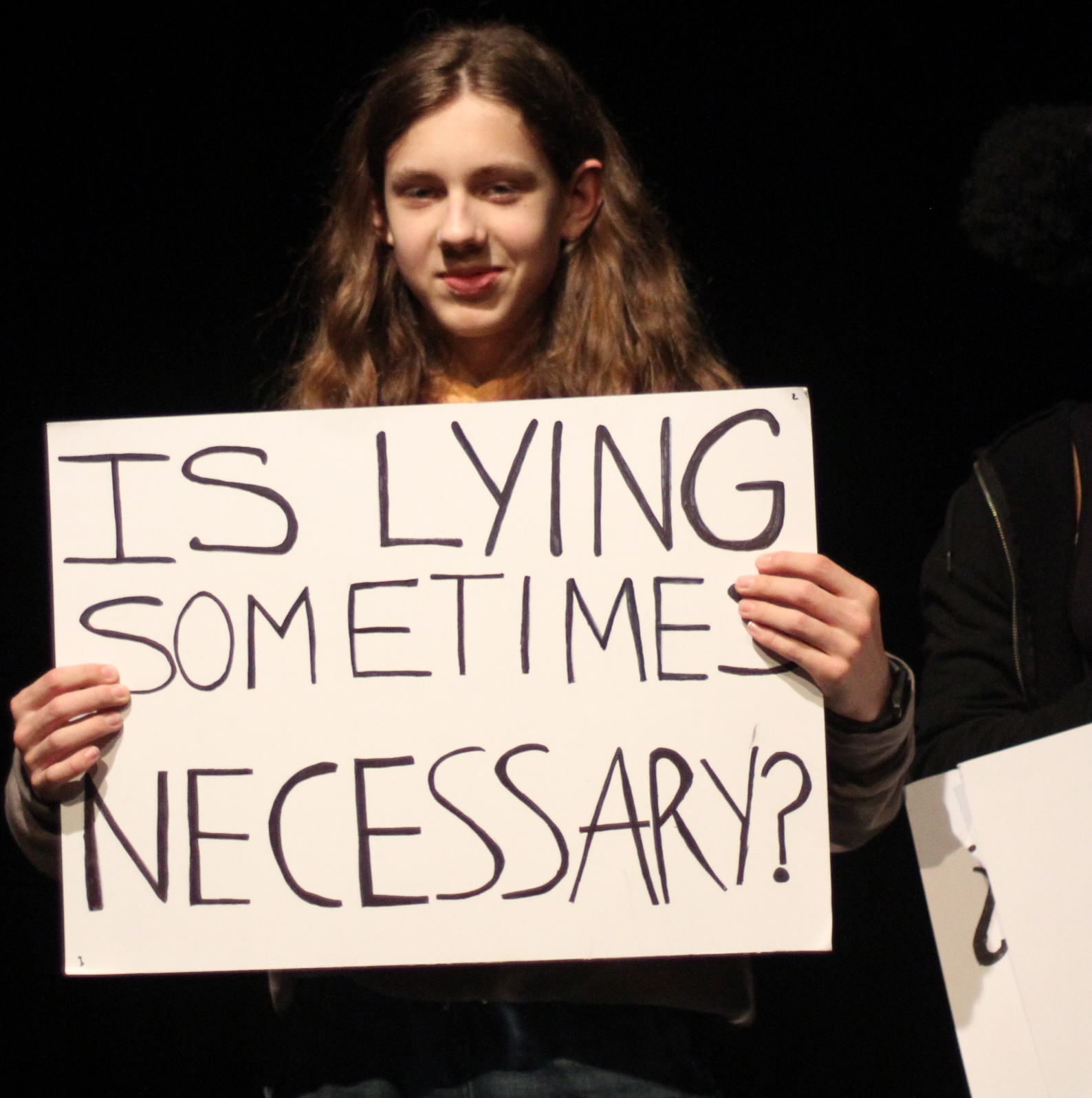
Project 2: Governance

We will build a new, more collaborative approach to governance that brings co-creation into the heart of our strategic decision-making. We will rewrite our governing document, formally adopting our new approach by 2026.

Project 3: Environment

We will work with young people, staff, trustees and partner organisations to create a new environmental responsibility action plan that models how youth theatre can respond to climate emergency.

*Platforming the widest
range of stories.*



IS LYING
SOMETIMES
NECESSARY?

We will have the biggest impact by enabling the widest range of young people to tell the widest range of stories.

We want to challenge the ways we make theatre with young people and learn how to best support those who are not likely or able to come to workshops in the way we currently run them.

We will become a more inclusive organisation, developing a new approach to disability through training, projects, and partnerships. We will meet, work with and learn from hundreds of local young people outside of our core company and find new ways to platform their stories by expanding our digital capacity. We will experiment with new forms and ways of making, embracing a more expansive, responsive and imaginative idea of what theatre can be.

Project 4: Deep Dives

We will deliver six 'Deep Dives' with schools and other partners, meeting, listening to and learning from young people who are currently under-represented in our core company. Each Deep Dive will be supported through training, evaluation and learning, helping us to articulate and introduce a new approach to inclusion by 2026.

Project 5: Digital

We will build our capacity to capture the stories of young people through digital media, allowing us to better platform, amplify and understand the young people we work with in Deep Dive and other projects outside our core company.

Project 6: Adventures

We will expand our understanding of what theatre can be by delivering C3 Adventures – in which artists and young people will be invited to experiment with new forms, content, and ways of making. This will lead to the development of a new production that transforms the way C3, our members and audiences see theatre.

AIM THREE

*Helping young people
become change-
makers.*



We want to be more intentional about how we help the young people we work with to become change-makers.

We will make our impact more visible – helping young people better articulate themselves as change-makers and using our learning to make our projects and practice more focused and impactful.

We will build a new evaluation framework that helps us better understand what it means for a young person to be a change-maker and identify the changes they make in the systems around them.

By 2026 we will be able to clearly identify the change our young people have created in their families, schools, communities and wider society as a result of our work – and how we can do it more in the future.

Project 7: Evaluation

We will develop a new evaluation framework, informed by a new membership database, that centres change-making and the impact of our work on young people and audiences, supported by a new three-year collaborative PhD with Sussex University.

Project 8: Assembly

We will embed change-making more explicitly in our creative process, using our Assembly projects, supported by practice labs, training and discussion, to pilot and evaluate a more intentional approach to change-making within our work.

Project 9: Audience

We will work with our members to build a more influential audience for our work, inviting 50 change-makers from all walks of society to see our work and tracking the impact it has on them.



AIM FOUR

***At the heart of a more
collaborative and
transformative sector.***

We want the youth theatre sector to make the most of its potential to be a transformative civic space in which young people can drive change in their communities and society.

We believe we can play a major role in unleashing that potential – creating a vibrant ecosystem in which we can share our practice and learning with peers across the UK.

We will use our existing dissemination practice as the basis for a new a more strategic programme called C3 Exchange – delivering a series of national projects that challenge our work, share our practice, raise income and help shape our organisational development.

***Project 10:
Exchange***

We will establish Exchange as a key organisational practice, employing a new Producer (Exchange and Relationships) to lead C3 Exchange, helping us build meaningful relationships with 25 youth theatres over three years and raising income from training and other projects by 50%.

***Project 11:
Collaboration***

We will develop and deliver a new Exchange Play model, bringing artists and young people from companies across the UK together to share practice, ideas and experiences.

***Project 12:
Sector***

We will work with NPO youth theatres and other partners to build a better picture of the youth theatre sector and its needs – using data to inform the development of collaborative training courses and an online blueprint library designed to support organisations grow, with a particular aim of doubling the number of youth theatre NPOs by 2026.