



YSWN

Yorkshire Sound Women Network
Annual Review 2025-26

Yorkshire Sound Women Network CIC (YSWN) is a Yorkshire-based community interest company working nationally to champion gender equity in audio.

We inspire and enable women and gender-diverse people to explore sound and music technology, running projects devoted to artistic development, education and network-building. We also work with the audio industry to promote equality, tackle discrimination and increase opportunities.

The community we serve ranges from beginners to students and professional audio practitioners of all ages – all with an interest in the creative use of music technology – including sound designers, DJs, engineers, coders, producers and sound artists.

Our mission is to support a flourishing industry which welcomes, encourages, progresses and respects the inclusion of women and gender-diverse people into the workforce at all levels from studio floor to board room and reflects the diversity of its participating communities.



[@yorkshire_sound_women_network](https://www.instagram.com/yorkshire_sound_women_network)



[@yswn.bsky.social](https://twitter.com/yswn.bsky.social)



[@yorkshiresoundwomen](https://www.facebook.com/yorkshiresoundwomen)



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Shortwave Collective radio-building workshop at Plug It Up festival, October 2025. Photo: Jannat Iqbal. Opposite top: 2015 workshop with Nina Richards and Zoë Blade; below: We Turn Tables workshop, May 2025.

Introduction

July 2025 marked the 10th anniversary of the very first Yorkshire Sound Women Network meeting, organised and hosted by Eddie Dobson in the basement of a gaming shop in Huddersfield.

To celebrate, we totted up a few statistics from our journey so far. At the time of our anniversary, YSWN had delivered 391 workshops and events to more than 2,750 people. We'd offered 285 paid freelance work opportunities and 15 paid audio industry traineeships to women and gender-diverse people. We'd partnered and collaborated with 45 different organisations, and we'd commissioned nine new works of electronic music from women and gender-diverse creators.

By the time you read this, those numbers will have grown again, thanks to 2025-26 highlights including our continuing Changing Gear programme, our Rewired commissions and the amazing Plug It Up festival.

Much of our impact over YSWN's first decade has been harder to quantify but just as important: the educators who learned from and put into practice our WIRED Toolkit research; the friendships made and professional connections formed through our community, and everyone who felt welcomed, empowered to take risks and inspired to learn and create more as a result of our work.

As in any year, we'd like to say a massive thank-you to everyone who has supported YSWN so far: our community, Associates, Working Group, partner organisations, industry supporters, funders and donors who together keep everything going. While we're proud of what we and the other world-changing organisations working for gender equity in music and audio have achieved so far, there's still so much more to do.



Yorkshire Sound Women Network CIC is a Community Interest Company Ltd by Guarantee, registered in England & Wales. Company No: 11360765.

Yorkshire Sound Women Network, 3M Buckley Innovation Centre, Firth Street, Huddersfield, HD1 3BD.

Our year in numbers

34 events delivered, including education workshops, training and seminars with over **640** attendances

Our Instagram audience rose by 29% to **2,539** followers

53 women and gender-diverse people paid to deliver activities, including workshop leaders, trainees, seminar speakers and admin roles

Our Facebook audience rose to **1,626** followers

Our LinkedIn audience rose by 33% to **300** followers

Oramics Machine workshop at Gut Level, Sheffield, May 2025. Photo: Juliana Day.

Our activities

Rewired & Crowdfunding campaign

Launched to celebrate 10 years since YSWN's founding, our Rewired programme offers creative commissions for women and gender-diverse artists working with electronic music and sound art.

We put a callout to the YSWN community across Yorkshire and the Humber for exciting artistic ideas that embrace varied influences and practices, aiming to support creators across a range of genres and experience levels as they take their work to the next stage.

The five selected artists are: Mary Stark (main commission), Ryoko Akama, Naomi Hart, Mayshe-Mayshe (aka Alice Rowan) and Anna Ross. The proposed work embraces electronic pop, field recording, expanded cinema, computer game soundtracks, DIY electronics and sound art installation, with a planned live showcase event in June 2026.

Rewired is supported by Arts Council England's National Lottery Project Grants. An associated crowdfunding campaign allowed us to offer an extra micro-commission; the rewards we created for supporters included tote bags, mugs and prints featuring an exclusive illustration inspired by YSWN's first decade, hand-drawn for us by our co-founder Eddie Dobson.

(Clockwise from top left:) Rewired artists Mary Stark, Ryoko Akama and Naomi Hart; Rewired crowdfunding rewards.

Our activities

Changing Gear

After its successful launch where our selected artists responded creatively to Daphne Oram's centenary in 2024-25, our PRS Foundation Talent Development Network-supported programme Changing Gear returned for a second round.



This edition coincided with the Railway 200 celebrations, offering the artists a chance to explore the sonic possibilities of trains and York's status as a key railway city past and present.

We also saw the anniversary as an opportunity to challenge the male-dominated histories and cultures around railways and spotlight some of the untold stories of the women who lived around and worked on them.

Our programme partners were the University of York and the National Railway Museum.

Top: Rosie Parsons.

Below: Diya Tailor.

Opposite: Rhiannon Kenny-McGrath, all performing at the National Railway Museum. Photos: Arya Kokate.

Our three selected creators – Rosie Parsons, Diya Tailor and Rhiannon Kenny-McGrath – were given access to the NRM’s exhibits and archives, and in particular the wealth of material gathered by film recordist and railway enthusiast Peter Handford (1919–2007), with permission for sampling and reuse generously granted by his family.

They also had access to the University of York music department’s state-of-the-art immersive sound studios – including a 20+ ambisonic loudspeaker array – offering them the time, space and technical support needed to take creative risks and develop skills.

The new works were performed in front of the impressive Royal Scot train in the NRM’s newly renovated Station Hall on 1 November 2025 and again in surround sound at the University of York as part of its concert series on 19 November 2025, supported by a train-themed sound collage outreach workshop delivered there by YSWN Associate Sophie Russell. The Changing Gear programme returns for a third year in 2026.

‘From learning new technical skills to presenting and performing as a solo musician, the experience was transformative. I felt supported creatively and professionally at every stage.’ – Rhiannon Kenny-McGrath, Changing Gear 2025 artist

Our activities

Plug It Up

As part of the Bradford 2025 UK City of Culture programme, we supported Bradford Sound Women Network to produce Plug It Up, a sonic arts festival combining workshops and performances by some of today's most innovative female and gender-diverse artists along with new commissions by emerging local creatives.

Taking place at Theatre in the Mill from Friday 17–Sunday 19 October 2025, Plug It Up brought together cutting-edge UK and international artists, including LA-based abstract turntablist Maria Chavéz and multidisciplinary Swedish artist Ann Rosén. Hands-on sessions included radical radio-makers Shortwave Collective, Sam Topley's conductive pom-poms, upcycled junk instruments with Margarita Novikova, a scratch orchestra led by organist Rebekah Okpoti and open decks DJ sessions.

The closing event, SoundBleed, presented the three new commissions created by Bradford-based sound artists Kirran Shah, Tallulah Lilburn-Quick and Jacqueline Sharp. The backing from Bradford 2025 meant that all events were free to attend and we were especially proud of the opportunity to have Bradford Sound Women Network curate this corner of the BD2025 programme.

Workshops and performances from Plug it Up festival.
Photos: Jannat Iqbal.



Our activities

‘It was a valuable opportunity to explore and learn how to express sonically the ideas that have been evolving in my practice.’ – SoundBleed emerging artist



‘A brilliant blend of old-fashioned crafting mixed with newer technologies.’ – Plug It Up audience member



Our activities

Collaborations and partnerships

We Turn Tables

workshops run by DJs JoMo and Léna C in Hebden Bridge and Mytholmroyd, supported by Hebden Royd Town Council (May 2025)

‘It felt like a genuine knowledge exchange with both us and the facilitator sharing best practice.’
– Sound and Music training participant

- **Writing with Sound** introductory recording workshops with a group from Serendipity Creative Writing at Batley Community Centre (April-May 2025)
- Bespoke **gender diversity training** delivered to a team at Sound and Music (December 2025)
- **Sound technology workshop** for learning-disabled young women at Shabang Inclusive Learning, Huddersfield (March 2026)

Our activities

YSWN music stage
curation and live
looping workshop at
Sheffield Food
Festival (May 2025)

Items from YSWN's first 10
years displayed in the
Music Leeds Us exhibition
at Leeds City Museum,
plus free **Ableton**
workshop led by YSWN
Associate Cherry Seraph
(October 2025-June 2026)

Future Plans 2026/27

Year 3 of our **Changing Gear** programme, inspired by 75 years of the Peak District National Park

Presenting the **Rewired** commissions at a live event in June 2026

More **regional group workshops and activities**, supported by Arts Council England.

Working with Daphne Oram Trust to deliver the composer's **Centenary Heritage project workshops** with YSWN groups

A Bradford edition of our **WIRED music tech club** for girls and gender-diverse young people...

...And **another club** delivered in partnership with the University of Nottingham

Evolving into new roles

Over the past few months and continuing into 2026, we've been reflecting, questioning and reimagining YSWN's structures and processes to make sure they fully reflect the organisation's equitable and collaborative values. As a result, the existing team roles have been redrawn as Operations & Development Lead and Programme & Engagement Lead, and in February we were happy to welcome Emily Jones as YSWN's new Industry Lead, responsible for making connections with a range of audio organisations, devising and delivering equity training and advocating for YSWN's mission far and wide.

Finance

Income

Earned income

£2,808

Grants

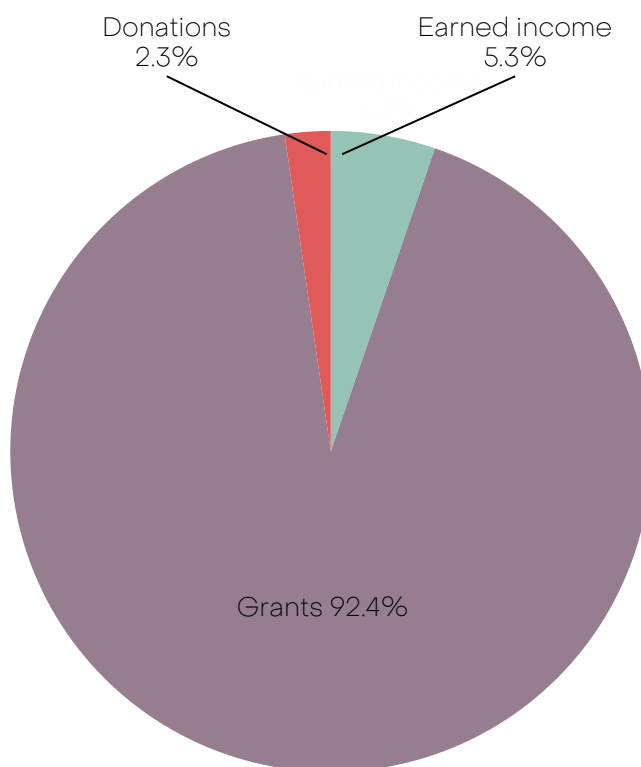
£49,234

Donations

£1,226

Total

£53,268



‘[It] gave me a chance to explore something I'd never otherwise think to do.’ – Plug It Up audience member

Expenditure

Direct project delivery

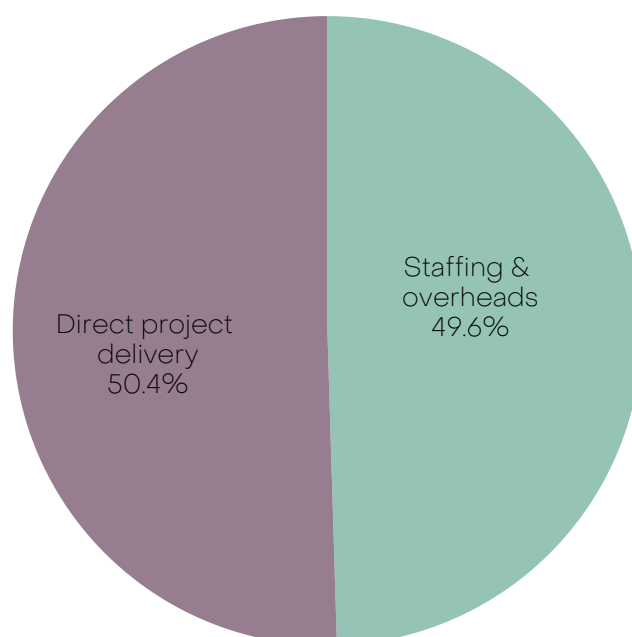
£29,106

Staffing & overheads

£28,552

Total

£57,568





Our thanks to:

Funders

Arts Council England National Lottery Project Grants
National Foundation for Youth Music
PRS Foundation
Bradford 2025
Hebden Royd Town Council
One Community Foundation
Individual donors

Partners

National Railway Museum
University of Huddersfield
University of York

YSWN working group 2025-26

Amy Beeston (Associate)
Manuella Blackburn (Director)
Abi Bliss (Director)
Eva Davies (Director)
Eddie Dobson (Director)
Olivia Gable (Associate)
Annie Jamieson (Director)
Jo Kennedy (Director)
Supriya Nagarajan (Director)

YSWN staff team 2025-26

Abi Bliss (Programme & Engagement Lead)
Heidi Johnson (Operations & Development Lead)
Emily Jones (Industry Lead)
Gill Wainwright (Bookkeeper)