Cobalt Studios:

COBALT

Impact

(2022)

Social

Who we are?

Cobalt is a Community Interest Company (CIC) with 3 unpaid directors.

We exist for culture & community & not for profit, we believe in community & the transformative power of affordable/accessible culture.

We are DIY – this means we build everything ourselves, we largely manage to exist within public funding & self-sufficiency is our aim.

In the event of making a profit, after everybody is paid a fair wage, any excess would be reinvested into culture & community.

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We do not receive any regular programme funding, we rely on voluntary work, ticket sales, studio rent and drink sales.

We have received some grants & loans for capital development of our co-working space, more studio spaces and some very small amounts of program funding compared to the income we generate ourselves. Our intent & aim is self sufficiency.

How much culture did Cobalt provide & support in 2022?

1007
Hours of Culture

1
Student Placement

242
Total Events

2
Exhibitions

2
Residencies

42
Arts Events

181
Music Events

2
Free Studio Visits

5
Student research opportunities

3
Cobalt Newspapers

14
Affordable Artist Studios

29
Free Venue Hires

69
Community Engagement Events

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Was Cobalt affordable in 2022?

Our 24 hour access artists studios ranged from **£110 - £388 pcm**.

We offered free use of the venue for **29 seprate events** to enable others to make their cultural event affordable and accessible.

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Average Ticket Price

£8.52

FreeTickets

3601

DonationTickets

57

‘Surviving’ Tickets (£10 <) sold

8199

‘Driving’ Tickets (£10 - 12) sold

1633

‘Thriving’ Tickets (£12 - 16) sold

575

How many people benefitted from Cobalt in 2022?

Cobalt Studios: 2022 Impact Report

1019

Artists

17,675

Audience

Is Cobalt diverse?

In 2022 we made opportunities for:

609 Female Artists

452 Male Artists

34 Other Gender Artists

We are proud of this because we know it bucks the music industry statistics to facilitate and present more female musicians.

We have only just worked out a comfortable way for us to ask questions about cultural heritage, sexuality and more so expect this data in 2023.

How much do we contribute to the cultural economy?

Social Impact (2022) Cobalt Studios::

COBALT

£65,514

Paid to Artists & Musicians

(nb this does not include a number of artists who performed here but were paid by promoters or artists who self-selected to play open mic/open house unpaid).

£94,460

Paid to Cobalt staff, technicians & other freelancers

The Building

Co-Working

Studios

Venue

COBALT

Do we own the building?

NO

We wish we did! More than anything...



£30,600 Our rent per annum

27 Years Our remaining lease

NCC have given us a provisional price to buy the building which takes into account all of the self-building we have done to improve it – we currently have no idea how or where to raise the money. All suggestions and wealthy benefactors welcome to get in touch...

Our hope & dream is to make cobalt a 'forever project' a sacred space for culture that can't be touched by capitalism or financial predators.

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What other income do we have for the venue?

Voluntary Hours (worth £62.4K)

4160 Hours / £62,400

Total Ticket Sales

£61,867

Bar Sales (after VAT & sale costs)

£82,027

Arts Council Grant

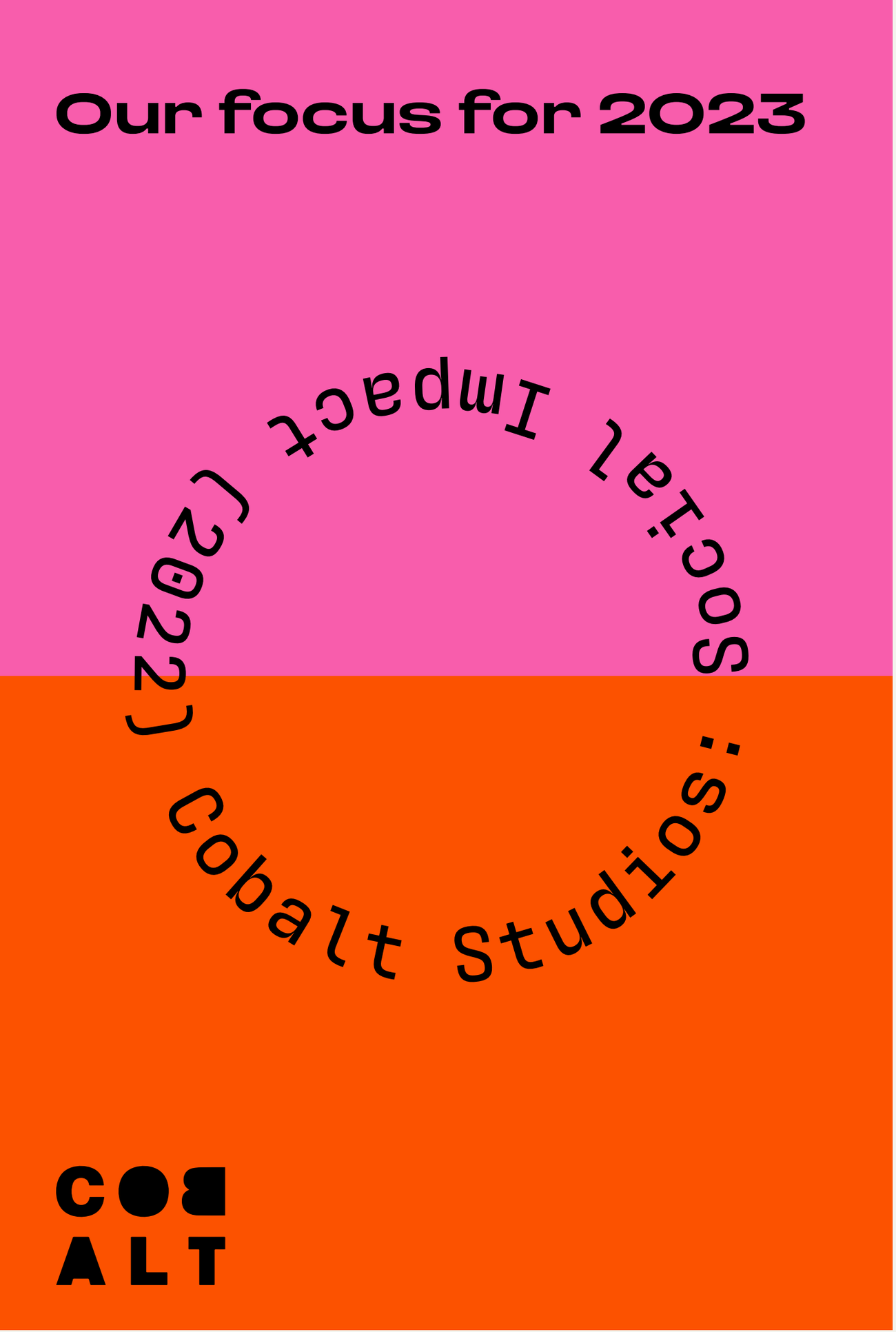
£15,600

NCC Grant

£2970

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Our focus for 2023



To continue growing our programme in diversity and excellence.

To focus on creating better sustainability for cultural activity via a mixture of grant applications and new activity eg - Co-working.

To collect better diversity data.

To collect better audience data.

To activate a stakeholder group and a core community membership.

To take an element of cultural activity offsite into harder to reach communities.

“Last night was a big reminder of why I do what I do. People/places like this. Thank you.”

“I am already aware of Cobalt’s commitment to diversity and inclusion, and the care you put into organising your program. The initiative is unique, and so far, I have not encountered such a warm and generous home-like energy in any other space in the UK.”

“I feel safe, welcome, not judged and I love the space you've created.”

“I suppose I just wanted you to know that, no matter what the future holds, you have created an oasis that definitely touched my life and I am sure the lives of many others. I wish you all the best moving forward, keep the faith. Peace and love.”

COBALT

“I really like Cobalt and the way it somehow does community stuff and arts events and nightlife things; I'm very glad it survived the pandemic!”

“Always a joy to play for people who do it DIY with love and care.”

“Thank you for making us so welcome and for creating such an amazing safe space for so many people, a home for misfits it always good thing. I love being part of the Cobalt family.”

“As a single woman who likes to go to gigs I find Cobalt a positive venue that's welcoming, non-threatening with brilliantly helpful bar staff (plus a good range of non alcohol drinks)
You are attracting a good crowd of people - I applaud and appreciated what you're doing.”

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“Cobalt has given (and continues to give) so much of their time to help others develop and flourish – artists, musicians and activists from all spheres of life. You run a really special place.”

“Ive finally recovered / come up for air from what was an incredible, incredible weekend. I went home with a heart full of love and felt so restored by it all. Your care and passion for nur-turing artists to be their fullest fantasy selves is a pure inspiration. Im so glad you exist! It was an absolute pleasure.”

“It was my first solo gig back since COVID and I couldn't have been more grateful for such a great vibe, venue and the kindness all of your team showed me was mind blowing. As someone who's played nigh on every venue in town, yours was a cut above by a country mile. Again, thank you for asking and thanks to everyone for being so hospitable and welcoming. ”

COBALT

“Been really enjoying the last 4 sessions btw, atmosphere is always great and the people are too.”

“Just wanted to say that the gig on Sunday was AMAZING! Thank you for continuing to put on such great music and making Newcastle a much brighter place to be.”

“Fresh at the Cobalt is the best venue hosting the most innovative young talent I've ever seen. Newcastle’s best kept secret.”

“ #everydayartforextraordinarytimes enabled me to focus and achieve small art daily, which was a spark of light in what seems a very dark time. It also helped to know that there were others out there, who I do not know, were also creating art for the project, as a temporary mini artist's community.”

“I joined in with Jake and Georges' Riso zine making sessions too a few months back. For me all these Cobalt events and opportunities have been a little ray of sunshine, keeping in touch with all the good things in life, waiting for them to blossom again once lockdown ends. A bit like a lighthouse in a storm, I could still sense Cobalt being there, a hopeful sign. Many thanks for running them.”

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“Art is a fantastic way by which to meditate on the world around us. Being part of this project and using newfound free-time to create, gave me the chance to express those thoughts tangibly while our worlds changed suddenly.”

“Yoshino said it was best show of the tour and you took such amazing care of her and band too. THANKYOU! x appreciate what you do at Cobalt so much.”

“I can't read minds (and it would be rude to even imagine/try) but what I do know is that everyone I have ever spoken to who has had any kind of involvement with Cobalt - whether they are artists with studios, musicians, and performers, or gig and party-going folks - have only the greatest things to say. Musician friends have extolled the welcome and generosity of you, Mark, and the staff - I've heard several times now, what a rare and lovely experience it is to perform in a venue that really cares about them, and their work, whilst also making them feel at home. ”

“I have friends who don't go to gigs but who go to Cobalt because there are events, gigs, and a crowd for them - because they know it is a place where they feel safe and welcome. In some instances, because it is a place they can take their families, too. ”

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“As difficult as running artist studios can be, I have heard many times over from Cobalt artists (past and present) just how much it means to have a high standard of studio provision which is also a creative home. As someone who has drifted from one run-down, transient studio situation to another, it can't be overstated how important that is for a person's creative practice (not to mention well-being).”

Personally, I find the wealth and variety of programming at Cobalt astounding. I mean, it's more than I can take in but every month there are half a dozen things I would love to go to. You've created a place that can be depended upon to offer something unexpected, exciting, and alternative. That feels vital, especially in these times when the arts and human rights are being violently dismantled by the fascist government. Places of hope, creativity, many voices, and gathering, are essential.

“You've created something amazing, a whole universe worth celebrating. But, and this is a bookend kind of a but, nothing is worth working yourself to death over. Please do take care of yourself and make space and time for just being. If you can't do that now, then please remember to take three deep breaths and, when you get the chance, make a solid plan for a real break. No one can do quite what you can but delegation of some of the heavy load is sometimes necessary (and people will always be glad, grateful even, to help).”

COBALT

“So great to see how the venue has grown, you should be really proud! You are doing super important and valuable work.”

“F**k me ….Absolutely incredible scenes last night in Newcastle in this amazing building . @cobaltstudios.ouseburn at one the best under-ground venues ive been in (genuinely) on so many levels .
Just like the @hareandhoundsbrum and @leftfootuk The attention to detail ,sound , people , care and love given to every last molecule is an example how you do this . The crowd was so mixed, diverse AND what an energy and positivity in the room .so many youngsters who were digging techno , baseline , Detroit , jazz bass buggin dance , US garage house , Afro , and black heart disco Real and SO proper . Big love to the family that run this gaff with so much love including their 2 sons who did the art and sound.”

“Thank you for making us so welcome and for creating such an amaz-ing safe space for so many people, a home for misfits it always good thing. I love being part of the Cobalt family.”

“I wanted to particularly highlight that several people who per-formed this evening commented on stage that it feels like some-where they can come and experiment and fuck up and try things out because the audience and the vibe is so lush and encouraging.”

COBALT

“Very life affirming evening that was . very much appreciated.”

“Came down last night and just wanted to say a big thank you to the Cobalt team for an amazing night full of love and positive energy”

“Cobalt is such a great space, and very important for the city.”

“Thank you so much for letting me curate an event! I really loved every moment of it, thank you for hosting us all. Everyone I spoke to had such a beautiful and emotional time.”

"Cobalt Studios in Newcastle did it again! Inspiring gig, attentive audience, fantastic generous promoters and a perfect pigeon to add to my bird improvisations.. The world is a better place for promoters like Kate and Mark running these kind of venues.”

“I also just wanted to say thank you for providing a brilliant work environment, it's genuinely a pleasure to be part of such a great group of people and working towards lots of missions with an overall ethos I believe in and want to get behind. Looking forward to the next year of developments and the happy chaos of Cobalt.”

COBALT

“The Cobalt team understood my creative journey not just my room requirements. I booked a space to run a two-day research and development process for a theatre-making project for 5 artists. We felt like we welcomed into the creative ecology of Cobalt. The lighting and sound were set up with us at the start, the space dressed in a warm and cosy way with flowers and fruit. Ouseburn felt like a quiet yet industrious place to be with some real perks nearby.”

“We felt so welcomed, and what an incredible space, so much work and love went into it, we're so happy we got to see it all xx
It was a special one, thanks so much for making us feel looked after and at home. It's really good to hear about the health of cobalt strengthening, I hope things keep going well and thank you for making an amazing venue!”

“Thank you for having us last week and for such a beautiful evening. It’s so amazing see what you guys are running at Cobalt and we all want you to know just how much we appreciate your work (allll of it) to support arts and music. Places like cobalt are why we do it all! We had many lovely chats on the way home about what a great and important thing it is and also how hard it must be to run. So thank you.”

Thanks so much for last night! I really appreciated the opportunity and for you taking a risk on new music - it means a lot!
Cobalt supported new music in creating an atmosphere of possibility and comfort for us to create in, and in providing the venue for us to write and rehearse for the week as well as the live performance opportunity at the end of the week which we could work towards for the rest of the time, gave us a clear goal so that our creative work was focussed and purposeful.

COBALT

This kind of opportunity is all too rare in the world of music in the UK : the lack of funding and support in the industry means that it can be really difficult to find dedicated time to create new work, especially in the context of a band of working musicians with several people's schedules to coordinate. Even the 4 days that we had together allowed us to finish new songs and collaborate and mutually inspire each other, finally being able to share a physical space and do the kind of creative work that that allows for. Up until then almost all of our work as a band had been remote, at first during the pandemic and then because we couldn't afford to all give up the time to get together. Now, we have set a release date for our first single and have a plan for the rest of the year. This wouldn't have been possible without Cobalt.

It has allowed us a band to get off the ground in terms of developing a live show and strengthening our vision for the future. Often bands and projects never get off the ground for the simple reason that there just isn't the space, resources and opportunities for artist and bands to practise, write and perform.

Our hosts at Cobalt have been super helpful in supporting a weekly free improvisation night for new and experienced improvisers, creating a friendly space in which to play. Please return their faith in us and the art form by making a donation at the bar on the nights you attend, if you can afford to do so.

COBALT