



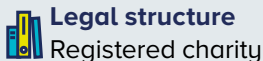
Rotunda, Liverpool



Location
Liverpool



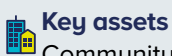
Founded
1986



Legal structure
Registered charity



Description of activity
Rotunda provides a wide range of services for the local community, including: a nursery; an independent school; education and training programmes (e.g. training for people not in education, employment or training and digital inclusion training for over 40s); a café/bistro; a garden; a range of other support (e.g. community rehabilitation of offenders, employability support, advocacy).



Key assets
Community hub based in a row of terraced Georgian houses



Staff and volunteers
27 staff members and 30 volunteers

Overview

Rotunda is a charity and community hub based in Kirkdale, Liverpool, which provides a range of services for the local community, including a café/bistro, garden, education and training courses, a nursery and an independent school. It is based in a row of Georgian houses which it owns the freehold to and which were purchased from private sellers from 1986 onwards by local community leaders, with financial support from Liverpool Community College.

What difference community ownership makes

Community ownership of Rotunda creates a range of benefits for the community including providing important services and jobs locally, and an inclusive and welcoming environment where people can access education and support. Reducing social isolation and providing (or signposting to) services needed by the community are key benefits of the asset.



Rotunda provides jobs for local residents, with 95 per cent of the staff and volunteers being from the community. This also results in wider benefits for the local community, as staff and volunteers are themselves community members, and therefore have a greater awareness of the needs of local people. This connectedness allows Rotunda to respond to the needs of the community and ensures that it is providing the most appropriate services and support possible.

Additionally, being run by the local community means that Rotunda is perceived as a welcoming and inclusive environment, where local people feel comfortable – *“because I’m born and bred, I’m from the area, people know me, they know my family, so they’re comfortable walking through the door. And that’s the same, you know, if you look at our staff structure, a significant number of them live within a one, two, three mile radius. It’s a very inclusive organisation.”*

Rotunda is respected and valued by the local community because it is run by the local community – *“we are them.”* Additionally, social media and word-of-mouth recommendations mean that people from further afield also travel to Rotunda to access its services and support.

Rotunda began as an adult learning centre affiliated to Liverpool Community College. Over the years it has continued to provide a range of education and training, but its focus has shifted slightly towards enabling and empowering adults and young people in the local community. It achieved this through facilitating access to education, as well as other services, advice and support, and signposting to other services where needed, to provide holistic, personalised support based on what people need. It has a number of partnerships with local businesses who offer guaranteed interviews for people taking part in programmes and courses run by Rotunda.

Services being based in the local area is an important benefit of Rotunda, meaning that people do not have to travel further afield. Rotunda provide a range of support and courses from the buildings making it easier for local people to access services, including education and training programmes, childcare, work experience, addiction and mental health support and advocacy. Referrals can be made easily between different services based on need, and Rotunda has good relationships with partner organisations meaning it can signpost to other services if needed – *“if we can’t, we’ll find someone who can”.*

Additionally, local people feel comfortable coming to the building, which has been a familiar and consistent part of the infrastructure of the community of Kirkdale for over 30 years. This encourages them to access support and advice

that they may not feel confident or able to access in a less familiar or less welcoming setting. For example, JobCentre Plus is based in Rotunda for two days a week, allowing the community to access benefits advice and services locally and, most importantly, in an environment in a more relaxed atmosphere where they do not feel judged or labelled.

Rotunda ensures that the services it provides are reflective of the needs of the community. The buildings contain office and event space which it rents out considerably, ensuring that the organisations it works with are like-minded and add value to the community-focused work of Rotunda.

“Community access is about the physical location and it’s about people being able to say ‘Rotunda are there.’ We are very accessible.”

The local community is very engaged with Rotunda and this is strongly linked to the ethos of the organisation being for and belonging to the community. *“The community know that this is theirs.”* This engagement has benefits in terms of reducing social isolation, and identifying the needs of people who may need extra support, e.g. accessing benefits, safeguarding issues.

Financial health

Rotunda has experienced recent financial challenges as a result of reduced funding opportunities and political uncertainty. Funding core costs (e.g. maintenance, staffing, running costs) is a particular challenge however, income from its nursery and educational programmes provides its largest source of revenue, and financial and business support from external sources has helped to mitigate this. Management and governance of the asset is well-organised and structured.

Reduced funding opportunities

The key challenges Rotunda faces are financial. The main expenditures of the asset come from maintenance, staffing and general running costs of a Grade 2 Listed Building. However, while it previously received significant funding from organisations such as Henry Smith and the Tudor Trust, it is increasingly difficult to access grant funding to support development needs and core running costs of the organisation. The perception of commissions towards third sector/voluntary and/or community based providers generally infers poor quality which equally hinders more commercially viable contracts being awarded.

Currently, Rotunda has an annual shortfall of around £75,000 which it needs to raise in grants, until more sustainable income streams can be identified or awarded (Rotunda has submitted 1.5 million worth of educational

tenders). However, until it receives confirmation of its success cash flow is an issue. LCC, Big Lottery and Power to Change have all provided support to help bridge the gap, with additional guidance on financial planning from Capacity Lab, an organisation that supports community businesses. The biggest sources of revenue for the asset are from the nursery, educational programmes and serviced office space/room hire which provide relatively predictable sources of income.

Political uncertainty

Political uncertainty (for example, related to Brexit) has created challenges for Rotunda, and is likely to continue to do so in the future. For example, there are concerns about the sustainability of some of its adult education programmes which receive funding from European Union programmes, and government funding is uncertain as this tends to be agenda-led.

Management and governance

The current CEO has worked to ensure that Rotunda has become more professional and compliant since taking over. The introduction of more structured processes and procedures and a well-organised management and staffing structure supports the running of the asset. Decision-making is inclusive and 'bottom-up' and up to 12 trustees from the local community provide governance. Trustees are all either from the local community or have a relationship with the area, and are elected by members of Rotunda (of which there are around 70). The trustees have a range of skills (including financial, marketing and HR) and are encouraged to challenge the decisions made by the CEO and senior managers to ensure the asset achieves its aims and meets the needs of the community.

Financial information

The following table provides an overview of Rotunda's income, expenditure and assets for the year ending 31st March 2018.

Income	£603,600
Expenditure	£652,415
Difference between income and expenditure	-£48,815
Surplus/deficit on ordinary activities before taxation	£24,404
Annual income from grant or subsidy	£153,378
Fixed assets	£1.64m
Current assets (Debtors; cash at bank and in hand)	£90,696
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	Not available
Total	Not available
Net assets	£1.60m