



CELEBRATING

**TEN
BIG
YEARS**

THE
**BIG
HOUSE**

THE BIG HOUSE



The Big House has a simple mission:

**TO ENABLE CARE
LEAVERS AND AT
RISK YOUNG PEOPLE
TO FULFIL THEIR
POTENTIAL.**

Transforming young lives through
the power of performance

Refusing to accept that childhood abuse
+ a lifetime in care = a blighted future

Unlocking potential, unleashing positivity

Building supportive and empathic
communities

THE BIG PROBLEM

Founder and
Artistic Director
Maggie Norris
worked with ex-
offenders and was
stunned by the
staggering numbers
who had been in
care. The statistics
are catastrophic
and speak for
themselves.

The transition to
independent living is a
challenge many struggle
to cope with.

Maggie decided to do
something about it. The
Big House was born.

More than
80,850

children are currently in the
care system across the UK
(GOV.uk)



Over **66%** of children in care are
looked after due to abuse and neglect

(National Statistics UK)

41%

of care leavers
aged 19-21 are not
in **employment, education or
training (NEET)**

(National Statistics UK)

4x

more likely to
commit
suicide

(Barnardos)

33%

experience
homelessness
within 2 years of
leaving care

(Homeless Link)

F **66%** **M** **50%**

It's estimated nearly
half of young men
and two thirds
of young women
in custody aged
between 16 and 21
have recently been
in statutory care

(House of Commons Justice
Committee 2017-19)



THE BIG SOLUTION

"The impact of The Big House's work on young care leavers has been tremendous and provides an ideal platform for care leavers to develop their creative and practical skills as well as plan and set goals for the future. I am a massive supporter of their work."

Matthew Blood,
chair, London Virtual Schools Heads Forum

"Maggie Norris' work with young people at risk is innovative and exciting. I have no doubt that her ideas for The Big House will continue to be just as exhilarating and rewarding. Our communities need projects like this. Please help in any way you can."

Kathy Burke,
actress, director and playwright

The Big House has developed a unique model of working with socially excluded care leavers through drama.

The strict discipline required to produce professional theatre imparts vital transferable skills including time-keeping, focus, team working, effective communication, ability to regulate emotions and make better-informed decisions; empowering and equipping young people with the skills needed to become self-reliant.

THE BIG HEART

The Open House Project ...

It is an intensive 12 week project of drama participation, life and employment skills, literacy, counselling and help to recognise and regulate emotions.

We design workshops around the needs of the young people, and work with them on areas such as budgeting, nutrition, mental health and healthy relationships. We help care leavers confront multiple issues and break destructive cycles.



THE OPEN HOUSE PROJECT IS AT THE HEART OF WHAT WE DO

During the project, young people work with professional writers to develop a play which they then perform as a full-scale theatre production. The writer works with the young people to explore their collective experiences to develop a story. This is a cathartic process which allows the young people to let go of their trauma and look towards the future.



Following the project, each young person is assisted to develop a strategic plan and is offered ongoing pastoral, practical and peer support including guidance to access education, training and employment opportunities. The aim – to equip them with the skills and confidence needed to be job ready and to live independently. Drama is the catalyst to build self-esteem, self-discipline and aspirations. Through a range of other interventions they confront challenges, accept responsibilities, and gain confidence. Drama is a powerful tool for unlocking potential.



If you are a young person who is interested in taking part, or someone who knows a young person who might benefit from this project, please get in touch. We would love to speak with you and welcome you to one of our weekly drop-in workshops where you can get a taster of our work.

**Please contact
info@thebighouse.uk.com
for more information.**

"The writing has an amazing freedom and candour. It shrinks from nothing. Jay's mother is a born again matriarch who preaches Christianity but also beats her children till they bleed. You wouldn't get a character like that at the Royal Court... Everything here is dramatic, fresh and brutally gripping. The songs are exceptionally good, a mixture of gospel tunes and soul ballads."

The Spectator
(*The Realness*)

25th March - 11th April 2015



Hear. Here.



13 NOV-20DEC2014

THE REALNESS



11 MAY >> 2022

MISSION

>> 4 JUNE

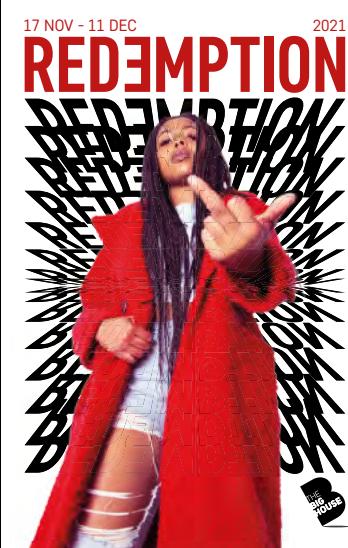


"Visceral storytelling. Shot through with moments of pure theatre, graced with vivid, moving performances by an excellent young cast. A stirring opening statement from this exciting new theatre company"

Jez Butterworth: Writer of
Mojo and Jerusalem

"If what you want is authenticity then this company will deliver big time with raw, angry and vibrant shows that uncover worlds unseen beneath London's shiny surface."

Lyn Gardner, Stagedoor
(Redemption)



"The production blazes up its grimy streets powered by pure passion."

The Times
(*The Realness*)

*"Every year there are new immersive shows trying to shepherd big audiences around a story. Few of them manage to create something with as much raucous energy and emotional integrity as *Redemption*. Made by The Big House, a venue that nurtures talent in young adults who have spent time in the care system, this immediate and ambitious promenade performance is a powerful journey of hope, grief and music."*

The Guardian
(*Redemption*)

*"Honestly I have never been more proud than I was tonight at The Big House. How lucky I am to be a part of such an amazing family. (*Redemption*) blew my mind, touched my heart, and reminded me why powerful and honest storytelling is so important. I wouldn't be where I am without you guys (The Big House), and to see the culmination of hard work, love, support, vulnerability and talent come together and produce such a beautiful show reminded me why I love acting so much and the impact it can have."*

Michael Coveney,
What's On Stage
(*Phoenix*)

TBH Member
(*Redemption*)

"(Phoenix) sizzles with energy ...this is a pulsating, angry show that should make us angry, too, about the way we let down those who most deserve our care."

Lyn Gardner, The Guardian



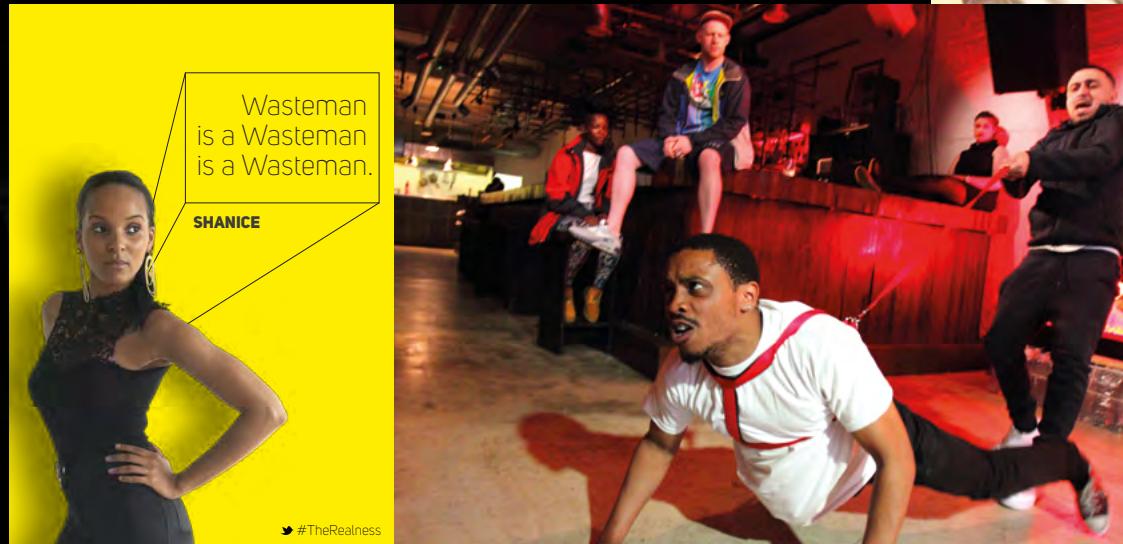
"Within 15 minutes I was hooked. I found myself jostling to get a better view."

**Camilla Cavendish,
Sunday Times
(Phoenix)**



"If Dickens were around now, he would surely be writing for The Big House"

**Susannah Clapp,
The Guardian**





2019

22.MAY - 15.JUNE

BULLET TONGUE

RELOADED



"It's a deeply engaging show that forces the audience to listen to these stories which are so often ignored."

Time Out

"This is a great night out, and sometimes a shocking one too ... a brilliantly spiky piece of promenade theatre created by Big House, a charity working with care-leavers and young people at risk, gives it straight to us from the horse's mouth."

Lyn Gardner



A BIG THANKS FOR YOUR PRAISE

IT MEANS A LOT



TRUST IS EVERYTHING

"I joined The Big House as a trustee soon after Maggie founded the organisation 10 short years ago. Along the way I've been inspired and moved by how she has turned her vision into a powerfully felt reality.

I've seen how young people who have come from difficult and traumatic backgrounds – often dealing with low self-esteem, isolation, and pain – can come to find their voices and potential through working holistically with The Big House team and of course with each other. They learn to share and express vulnerabilities in a trusting and safe environment, giving each other support and hope, and find words to unlock feelings that for many have been long sealed off, often soaked in shame or anger.

I've seen how those words become the foundation of the searingly brave, immersive theatre productions these care leavers go on to perform. Their skill, discipline, drive, unflinching honesty and willingness to take artistic risks has an unforgettable impact on the audiences for whom they perform - an impact I've experienced personally at every show they have produced over the decade.

The dynamic of performing in front of an audience plays out metaphorically what the young people experience at The Big House more generally. They feel seen, legitimate, open, exposed yet safe and learn to feel worthy of applause; to feel justified and confident in ways that people with a luckier start in life can take for granted. As a long-time witness to this work, and to The Big House project as a whole, in watching these young people change - as so many others have said - I feel changed in return. And I can only hope that this ongoing work will help in some way to change the blinder, blunter institutional and cultural forces that persist in our society and that make this work so essential in the first place."

Ziyad Marar

President of Global Publishing at SAGE Publishing
FAcSS and Trustee of The Big House



My Big House Journey

"I found out about The Big House through my connexions worker and she arranged for me to come down to The Big House and visit.

I really enjoyed both the projects I've done for the same reasons. I loved playing warm up games and doing improvisations, they really helped break the ice and build confidence. Which is something I think is so important, especially as a young person today. There's a lot of pressure to be "cool" and there's no such thing as being cool during the penguin game or splat, you've got to let your guard down and roll with it! As well as it being lots of fun, there's also a real sense of community on the projects and overcoming different obstacles together helped build my own resilience whilst building my trust in others. I enjoyed performing every night too, that lit a real fire in my belly and assured me that acting is all I ever want to do.

My temper and inability to control my emotions has held me back and often got me in serious trouble my whole entire life. The Big House is the first and only place I've ever been where rage or tears can dissipate into joy after taking part in an acting workshop. It gave me a space to be angry, it never held my outbursts against me but it also forced me to address them, channel them and find a way to make my emotions work for me. I was always held accountable for my actions but with love. I had to accept consequences for my behaviour, but knew I'd always be welcomed back with open arms. Their support has been invaluable to me really. The Big House accepts me for who I am whilst always pushing me to be better and that is something I've never had before, ever.

I've achieved so much since coming to The Big House. I think the biggest things are becoming a person that I am proud of and being cast in a tv show, doing auditions and becoming a working actor."

"It's more than just acting, but I never understood that before. But now when I'm working I can talk about the skills I've gained. It's building confidence in people knowing that we still can talk to you even if we don't see you everyday. It gave me confidence in myself, to just be the same and show the same energy. When I got my job everyone was so supportive and so excited and that was amazing. It's family. We built everything each and every day and there was never a dull moment. The whole experience was amazing and something I'll never forget."





THE BIG RESULTS

"I'm convinced The Big House is plugged into the community in a way that other charities are not. A genuine life transformer, helping the lost to locate a path and stick to it"

Sir Lenny Henry CBE

At The Big House we constantly evaluate, monitor and measure what we do, how effectively we do it and how to improve outcomes.

In 2014 we received the Charity of the Year Award from the Centre for Social Justice in recognition of our impact.

Of the young people who have taken part in the Open House Project to date:

100%

do not offend or reoffend within 18 months of completing a project

80%

feel more confident in themselves and in their potential after taking part

75%

move into Education, Training or Employment (ETE) after taking part

"Like so many of the young people that come to The Big House, when I was young I didn't really know what my future was going to be, I didn't think I'd have much of a future. I just thought this is it for me, I'm probably going to go to prison or die at a really young age. But thanks to The Big House and all of the opportunities that they've given me and all of the support that they've shown me, I don't worry about about my future no more. In Fact, I'm very excited about my future. I'm so excited to see what I'm capable of, I feel so confident. There's just this hope in my heart nowadays and it's all thanks to this place."

I never got into higher education, I didn't go to university or anything like that. I chose not to and I don't regret my choice because the education I get from The Big House is priceless.

I'm not the only one who has gone through the process and had life changing opportunities come at them.

I think the most beautiful thing about The Big House is the family that we have created... You have to come, you have to come down to see one of our plays or just come to a drop in and see the energy that's there and I promise you, you'll fall in love."

The Big House Member

Given the adversity that these young people face, these outcomes are astonishing.

In every way, the price for not supporting young care leavers is high for everyone involved. For instance, the average cost of a place in a young offender institution is £76,000 per annum and the average cost per UK prisoner is £43,000 per annum (Ministry of Justice). Through preventing the common path from care to custody, the personal impact and the saving to society is vast.



THE BIG HOUSE MEANS BUSINESS

Bring immersive theatre to your corporate training and events to create memorable, high energy and engaging experiences for your teams in-house or remotely.

Our bespoke experiences employ exceptional young people who have successfully completed our Open House Project.

We offer bespoke performances or workshop packages tailored to your organisation which can be delivered to your teams in-house or remotely.

- Team Building
- Wellbeing and Empathy
- Diversity and Inclusion
- Contextual Safeguarding

We deliver workshops and training to social care professionals and the corporate world. Our unique and interactive training takes people out of their comfort zone, whether we deliver in house or remotely.

The Big House develops confidence and self-expression, with a focus on empathy and our shared humanity.

We also offer bespoke performances whereby we work with companies to bring alive their key business messages. We can 'break into' your AGM, conference or event.



"Given the leadership of the future needs to be very different in creating sustainable growth, I would highly recommend other leaders experience the energy, fun and potential. When reflecting on our experience the word 'inspired' was unanimously articulated."

Samantha Schlimper,
Head of Resourcing, Barclays UK

"ELBA organises team away days for many of our more than 100 corporate members on 400 occasions every year, so we had high expectations when we set off. We weren't disappointed – The Big House team provided the perfect day out for our team of 50. Well organised, professional, inspirational and a lot of fun – ELBA hasn't laughed so much for years!"

Liam Kane,
CEO, East London Business Alliance (ELBA)



"Absolutely stunning performance by The Big House at the recent Employment and Skills Convention 2018; so thought provoking, moving and powerful"

Tony Hyland
(DWP) Employment & Skills Convention

To make a booking or find out more about our workshops, training and bespoke performance packages contact:

info@thebighouse.uk.com

"The Big House performance brought a massive amount of energy and emotion to our conference. Their young people blew us away with their openness, honesty and talent and gave our team so much to reflect on. The Big House are unique in creating an inclusive space where everyone can achieve the best that they can possibly be."

Antonio Simoes
Chief Executive Officer, Global Private Banking, HSBC

A BIG SPACE

Fancy a stint inside?

Hire our uniquely beautiful converted frame factory made up of 10 incredible spaces of varying size in Islington, N1.

Available for long and short term hires for:

- Rehearsals
- Parties
- Conferences
- Photoshoots
- Meetings
- Receptions
- Castings
- Wardrobe Fittings
- Workshops
- Filming
- Rehearsed Readings
- And more
- Events
- Pop Ups & Launches



Hire:

The Tower a light, airy space on the first floor of The Big House with high windows and white walls. An excellent space for rehearsals, workshops, readings and castings. It's perfect for photographic shoots or launch events. 63 sq/m (678 sq/ft).

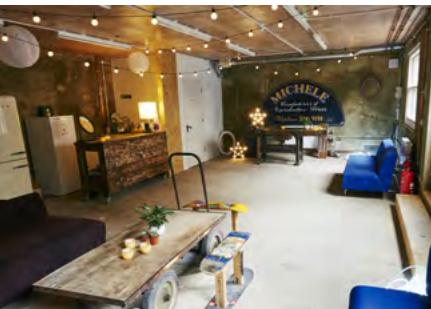
The Slammer is an open plan industrial space for events, filming, photo shoots and pop-up events. It has private access, storage & an outside space. Full of exposed brick work, copper piping & industrial features of a renovated factory in the heart of Islington. 132 sq/m (2390 sq/ft).

The Caravan is adjacent to the Slammer and can be used quite naturally as an extension. The Caravan is ideal for catered events. It has a brand new kitchen attached. It also has a private bathroom. The Caravan has its own entrance which opens out onto our lantern lit courtyard. 57 sq/m (614 sq/ft).

Downstairs at B Block is open planned with a kitchenette, bar area, fully accessible toilet and storage space. It has Wi-Fi and power points. It has vintage furnishings and industrial pieces that provide a welcoming atmosphere.

There are also three beautiful meeting spaces;

The Library is a stylish, cosy room with reclaimed bookcases, teak sofas and a long view of the courtyard. It is ideal for small meetings or as a relaxing breakout space. **The Gallery** a bright, open area with stylish sofas and a kitchenette. It has adjacent bathrooms and shower and is an ideal breakout space for the Tower. **The Meeting Room** is a bright and open space, suitable as a break out area from the Tower or as a private airy meeting space in its own right. Perfect for castings, fittings or a production office.



For more information or to make a booking contact: hires@thebighouse.uk.com or call 020 7923 9955



A BIG WELCOME

We welcome you to The Big House. If you are interested in getting involved, as a donor, volunteer, corporate partner or sponsor, we would love to hear from you.

If you would like to fundraise for The Big House we would be delighted to support you in reaching your target. Some of our inspirational supporters have run marathons, cycled across countries and even shaved their heads!

If you need ideas for a fundraiser, or would like to drop into our venue to learn a little more about what we do, please get in touch.

Email info@thebighouse.uk.com
or call 020 7923 9955.

PARTNERSHIPS

We are looking to create partnerships with businesses that share our passion to help young people and can offer us support.

By expanding our partnerships and building a bigger community, The Big House will be able to offer more opportunities to young people and continue helping them to thrive.

There are a variety of ways that your business can work with The Big House to change the lives of young people and care leavers. Please get in touch to find out more about our bespoke packages.

SPONSOR A SPACE

Sponsor a space and help us make The Big House home to more young people.

The Big House provides a physical space where our community of young people can thrive. The provision of large, safe spaces where our members can nurture their talent and develop their independent projects is a priority moving forward.

Our flexible multi use space is open to our members for personal and professional development. They can pop in, borrow computers and fill out job applications, do online job interviews and film self tapes for auditions. But more importantly, The Big House is a home. It offers a safe space for young people to seek guidance or support, a place to have a chat and a cup of tea, connect with friends and share ideas.

Email us to find out more info@thebighouse.uk.com

The need is greater than ever.
The Big House needs Big People to help.



THE NOT SO BIG ASK...

We provide a safe space for young people to explore their feelings through a combination of drama, counselling and intensive support.

We help heal the wounds inflicted in early life. Bridging the emotional gap created by a profound lack of self-esteem and the constant relational, social and psychological upheavals that are experienced by care leavers. We are mindful that our support does not create dependency. We want to strengthen the resilience of our young people and prepare them for the realities and benefits of work and adult life. Often, case notes can describe our young people as 'the most difficult' or 'unmanageable child'. However we discover the untapped potential behind the challenges they have faced.

When you see Big House members reach deep inside themselves and begin to allow the many emotional and psychological barriers to be honestly explored in a trustworthy environment, often for the very first time, you begin to realise what it takes to enable lives to move from the margins to the centre of society and into full participation in the opportunities so many of us take for granted.



So how can you help?...

£10 a month/£120 a year

Enable 12 young people to spend a day at The Big House rather than being isolated and alone.

SUPPORTING ACTOR



PLAY YOUR PART

To ensure we can be there for every young person who needs our help, we need everyone to play their part. You can do this by signing up to give a regular donation or a one-off gift.



ENSEMBLE

£25 a month/£300 a year

Pay for 2 intensive drama/employment workshops for up to 30 young people.

CAMEO



£50 a month/£600 a year
Pay for 4 days of specialist one-to-one support, advice and guidance on health, wellbeing & progression.

PRINCIPAL ACTOR

£100 a month/£1,200 a year

Pay for 15 young members to attend a series of vital life skills workshops tailored to meet their needs; equipping them for the future.

LEAD ROLE



£250 a month/£3,000 a year
Fund 6 months of a weekly drop-in service offering a positive community for young people to meet others with similar backgrounds and experiences, make new friends, learn to develop trust, grow in confidence and have fun.



Discover more ways to support us at

www.thebighouse.uk.com

THE CENTRE FOR
SOCIAL
JUSTICE

CSJawards
2014
Winner



“Young people in care should not be defined by the scars left by their past experiences, but by their incredible ability to heal. Only when we truly nurture and inspire these young people, will the link between being in care and offending behaviour, long term unemployment, drug addiction, mental health problems, homelessness and suicide cease, and we, as a society, will reap the wonderful benefits of seeing them flourish.”

Maggie Norris,
Founder of The Big House

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Reg. Charity No. 1151106

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