

Transform FAQs

1. All previous Transforms have been completed in partnership with National Theatre of Scotland. How will we be able to deliver this without such close support?

The toolkit has been designed to prompt and give advice and guidance on 'How to Transform'. However, the toolkit alone will not create your Transform. You should use the creative people from your community.

National Theatre of Scotland is able to supply you with CPD which will enable you to develop your Transform project. Throughout the process, if any difficulties emerge that you cannot resolve, National Theatre of Scotland will be happy to offer relevant support to allow you to overcome these and continue to develop your Transform project.

The time and commitment of all those involved will be crucial to the success of your project; as will the resources you acquire. Transform is designed to inspire and encourage creativity and it will be your creative approach to the project that will make your Transform unique and successful.

2. There are a range of areas of expertise needed for Transform. How will we be able to undertake a Transform when we do not have all the skills and expertise required?

Firstly, you should seek to work in partnership with people from your community that have specific skills that could benefit your Transform. For example, local theatre groups, dance clubs, arts and crafts clubs, etc. For a Guide to Connecting to the Community please see Transform Task: Find the People. Secondly, the Creativity Portal is available at <http://www.creativityportal.org.uk/> The Portal brings together practitioners from both the arts and education sectors to place creativity at the heart of all learning and teaching.

The Creativity Portal offers access to:

- Scotland's many arts and cultural organisations
- Links to articles and research concerned with aspects of creativity

Be confident that among you there are the skills and experience you need. Utilise the strengths of those who are keen to be involved. For example, if you have a keen choreographer perhaps your Transform will include many aspects of movement and dance.

3. We are encouraged to connect with local artists and practitioners with the relevant experience. How will we know the right place to find these people?

It may be that people do not have 'experience' as such, but are keen or have an interest in a particular area relevant to your Transform that they want to learn about. Branch out to people (refer to Connecting to the Community Guide under Transform Task: Find the People). The Creativity Portal lists many arts and cultural organisations. Also, get in touch with National Theatre of Scotland as they may be able to recommend artists.

4. How much will it cost to put on a Transform?

Costs will vary depending on the size of the Transform and the length of the project. You may aim for costs to be minimal and this does not necessarily mean that the production will be affected negatively. For example, you may use clothes that people already have, borrow them or buy them cheaply from a charity shop. You do not need an elaborate set. For 'FLIT' the East Ayrshire Transform project, we used cardboard boxes predominantly to put across our message of momentous change.

5. There are funding and cost implications when taking on a Transform where do we get the funds?

In the first instance you should look for 'in kind' support. Companies may give you materials in return for advertising space in your programme. Be enterprising and creative. This could be the task of one Transform Team.

You may be able to source money from your own organisation – school fund, arts budget, etc. or you could hold fundraising events.

There are arts funds available; however the application process can be very long so keep this in mind when applying.

6. Some Transform tasks/activities/exercises suggest what we might do but they do not fully explain how to do the task (e.g. Design a programme)

The Transform toolkit is designed to suggest how you may go about your project. It gives information to help and guide you to create material for your performance but it is not prescriptive. A Transform project should be created by the participants involved. It should be an organic process which is shaped by the people and their experiences. The Toolkit has videos and examples that will assist you in your process.

7. I am not a teacher but I want to lead a Transform, can I do this?

Yes. Many Transforms began in schools and branched out from there to other schools and communities. Transform is for any group wanting to transform a community and tell a story. The key factor of a Transform is partnership working. Any group, whether it is based in a school or community setting can start a Transform.

8. Should there be someone with the overall responsibility for Transform? If so, who should that be?

Many people may be involved with your Transform and be responsible for different aspects of the project but we would recommend having one person who is your Transform Champion who can lead and oversee the project, making final and important decisions by pulling all the elements together. This person will require time to be invested to achieve this.

9. This project seems large and overwhelming to staff who are otherwise occupied, how can we manage to do all of this?

There must be a level of commitment from those involved before starting a Transform. However, your project can be as big or small as you wish. You may want to engage an entire year group or club, or instead have one class or small number of participants. You will know what is best for your group. Feel free to use the toolkit however you see fit.

If you are working within an educational establishment, the Transform project can be planned to be central to the learning of the school. This would have to be complimentary to the learning and teaching requirements for the learners and to the school improvement plan.

In previous Transforms where secondary schools were heavily involved, the school dedicated time and ensured it was relevant to the curriculum areas that they felt suited the needs of their learners. Often, options were given to staff who wanted to participate and felt the Transform experience would be beneficial to their learners. Work was planned in an interdisciplinary manner and this encouraged creativity across the curriculum. Staff felt Transform was complimentary to their courses and a Curriculum for Excellence. Staff met frequently to plan together and take forward the developments that occurred throughout the process. It would be advantageous if the lead teacher or champion could have some management time to allow for effective communication and planning during school time. For more information on timetabling please see the timetable examples, accompanying Timetable guide and Timetabling FAQs.

10. In what ways can we use the Transform toolkit?

You may wish to use this toolkit as a guide to create a large scale Transform project and so you may try all the exercises. However, the nature of the project and the toolkit allows you to determine how big a project you create and this toolkit is designed to allow you to pick and choose the appropriate activities for your participants.

11. How much time should we set aside for our Transform?

This will depend on how large you wish your project to be. The larger the project and number of participants involved, the longer you will need to put it all together in terms of planning, communicating and rehearsing. It is good to put together a proposed schedule so you have a date or month to work towards and as you are working on your Transform you can amend this as necessary.

12. Were there any challenges faced by the teachers and facilitators, if so what were they?

There were many challenges faced, however, when overcome this was most exciting, rewarding and ultimately satisfying. For example, balancing the demands of class time with the demands of rehearsal time, needed to be strongly and carefully negotiated with school practitioners and parents. The reward in doing this was that learners genuinely took ownership and responsibility for their learning, which manifested itself in them working harder. The positive effects were the value of the learning occurring during class time and that staff tended to find learners were engaged.

Cynicism, apathy and a lack of belief that Transform is worthwhile was a great challenge to overcome. The support and belief of the senior management team is essential in overcoming this. Being able to clearly articulate why you are doing this and the benefits is essential (See 'Why Transform?'). Change cannot happen without stress and failure. Aim to celebrate the successes and learn from the failures. In every Transform we produced, many people were converted and there was evidence that the learners had changed, matured, met the challenges and expected more because they produced something world class that had a profound impact on those involved and the audience.

Finding space to accommodate all of the different workshops that were running alongside normal classes was also a challenge. Aim to plan ahead in consultation with all staff, well in advance of the project starting.

The biggest challenge was to embrace challenge and see it as a positive learning opportunity. When this was done everyone shared in the success in overcoming the challenge and growing with it.

13. What surprises were they hit with and what went wrong that could have been avoided in hindsight?

There is never enough time and it is easy to panic at this. However, plan and re-plan regularly to make use of all the time you have. This means regular meetings with all the relevant people and aiming to ensure full attendance where possible. Aim to keep interest sustained.

Not everyone will see it through and for valid reasons. Plan ways in which people's contribution can be celebrated and included. They may not be able to make it to the final performance, but they may contribute in other ways. For example, they might produce an exhibition of the processes. This might be photographic, a journalistic blog, painting, audio or they can feature in video or audio form as part of the show.

Try to utilise the time that people are investing. It will be off-putting if their time is not valued.

People can get emotionally attached as they have invested a lot into the process. Genuine transformation is often quite profound. Plan to harness this positivity but also plan an exit strategy so that people know it will end and that normality will resume. How will they cope with that when they have changed? Get them thinking about this before it ends. (See Transform Task: Leave a Legacy).

Surprises came in the shape of pupils and or teachers changing and developing. Make sure this is captured in some way.

The weather, licensing or health and safety executives or other external forces can scupper your plans so aim to always have a contingency in place.

14. Did they source their costumes?

Yes. They sourced their own costumes which fitted with the look and feel of the Transform project. These 'costumes' were participants own clothes or borrowed or gifted from companies. You need not have elaborate or expensive costumes to have a good Transform. Block colour can be effective or a uniformity of all wearing jeans and a t-shirt. Simple can be effective.

15. Did they pay for the venue?

Sometimes we had to pay for the venue and other times we got it for free but we then had on-going costs to convert it.

FOR ANY FURTHER SUPPORT PLEASE CONTACT NATIONAL THEATRE OF SCOTLAND

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