



**Sarah Spowart**  
**Project Assistant**  
**Report: March 2014**

***"My name is Sarah Spowart and I am currently working as a Project Assistant in the Creative Learning Department at ARC Stockton."***

From January 2014 through to March 2014 I have been working on a Graduate Internship at ARC Stockton Arts Centre as a Project Assistant. I have thoroughly enjoyed my time here and have grown both professionally and as a person.

During my time here I have built on my knowledge of using Microsoft Outlook Live, including learning how to use the calendar settings to add events and reminders in for the weeks and months ahead. I have also learnt some useful admin skills, such as how to use the printing machine, including using the scanner and copier parts too. For example I have learnt how to print a document double sided using both sides of the paper. I have also learnt how to photocopy a document that is double sided and reprint it double sided. This has all been very valuable as I can take those administrative skills to any job I apply for in the future. I was also shown what a Task List was and I soon learnt the benefits of having one for my own tasks which I have gratefully used over the past 3 months. I have also learnt how to communicate efficiently with people both inside and outside the organisation. I have built up on my communication skills by sending emails, making phone calls and having face to face contact with numerous people.

My favourite part of working at ARC would have to be meeting the people that I have met. Everyone in ARC including all office staff, box office, technicians and cleaners are all lovely people and it has been a pleasure being able to work alongside them all. I have been given help by all members of staff from, checking over my work, helping me look for jobs to apply for and giving me knowledge whilst I shadowed them. My first week was my best because I was fortunate enough to be allowed to attend all the programmes ARC have to offer. For

example I joined in the Silver Singers sessions, the Ukulele groups and Ballet Pilates – just to name a few! I have also spent some time with some lovely people in the groups including the participants and practitioners, such as Paul Walker and Joe Johnston. Both the practitioners and participants of all the groups have made me feel very welcome which made my first week even more pleasurable for me. I have worked on 4 main projects whilst at ARC but my favourite would have to be the Hunt For The Horcrux project. From working on this project I was introduced to Pinterest, which is a website that you can collate loads of photos together similar to a mood board. I had the task of finding everything and anything Harry Potter related to help set out the event, for example coming up with ideas for the food that would be served, the decorations and technical aspects of the night. The fact that the event went tremendously and a lot of people turned up made me even more delighted that I had been given the opportunity to contribute to such a successful evening.

I have faced many challenges, the majority of which have boiled down to my confidence, or lack of it. Another project that I spent a lot of time working on was called Tell Someone Special and it involved a lot of things that I felt somewhat uncomfortable in doing. The biggest challenge I faced was the telephone! I have had to make numerous phone calls during my time here, which I did not enjoy but feel that each day it became a slightly easier task and I became more confident in ringing people. For this project I also had to walk around Stockton myself handing out leaflets to different shop keepers. I found this task also a bit off putting as it meant I would have to speak to strangers which I don't enjoy doing but I actually surprised myself and did really well.

The impact that this job has had on my career has been really significant as before I started at ARC I had decided that I wanted to become a secondary school teacher and now I know that is not what I want to do. I applied for this internship at ARC because it said I would be working with young people and I thought the 3 months experience of working with young people would help me get onto a PGCE course. Now, 3 months later I know that I don't want to become a secondary school teacher and that I actually want to continue working as a project assistant here at ARC. Unfortunately there isn't a job for me here but at least I have learnt that I definitely want to pursue a job in the creative arts sector. I want to be able to work with young people in a more creative way and a way that they want to work with me. I also have benefited from this internship as I now have 3 months experience in administrative work, 3 months experience as a Project Assistant and 3 months experience working in Creative Arts.

I don't feel like working at ARC has been too different from being at university, apart from it being more hours and I get paid. My course at university was all about working on different projects and seeing them through from start to finish which is similar to how I have been working on projects here at ARC. At university I would through a process of getting the brief then have to organise how I would go about working on the project, I would then complete it and finally write an evaluation report of how I thought the project went.

To me working in the arts has been exciting and challenging, but mostly rewarding. I enjoy seeing how passionately people work in the arts sector, from the practitioners wanting to pass on their skills and knowledge to others, down to the organisations trying their best to shout out about upcoming projects and events. I didn't realise how broad the arts sector is and I now know this is definitely where I want to be.

The next step for me is to continue looking for jobs as a project assistant or anything similar. I am actively looking for jobs in the creative learning and creative arts sector such as signing up to the Arts Council website and other sites such as Youth Focus North East. During my time here I have also been searching for jobs on websites such as Guardian jobs and North East Jobs but have been unsuccessful in receiving one. Nevertheless I will keep looking for jobs till I find the perfect one that is right for me.