

London Youth Response

Mayor of London Culture for All Londoners Strategy

19 June 2018

London Youth
47-49 Pitfield Street
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About this consultation

The Mayor of London is consulting on a draft [Culture for All Londoners Strategy](#), closing on 19 June 2018.

The strategy lays out the Mayor's plans for culture to be accessible to Londoners and for supporting the creative industries. It has four key themes:

- **Love London:** This theme is about more people taking part and enjoying culture in their own neighbourhoods.
- **Culture and good growth:** This is about looking after our cultural places and spaces.
- **Creative Londoners:** This is about making sure that everyone has a fair chance to work in culture.
- **World city:** This is about making sure that London carries on being one of the most important cultural cities in the world.

About London Youth

[London Youth](#) is a federation of over 320 community youth organisations in London. We are a youth charity on a mission to improve the lives of young people in London, challenging them to become the best they can. Young people need opportunities outside school to have fun with their friends, to learn new skills, to make a positive change in their communities and to shape the city they live in.

We deliver a broad range of meaningful benefits to our members, including funded opportunities, training and professional development, specialist networks, Quality Mark accreditation, and a policy and research voice. With members and partners, we deliver sports, arts, and youth social action programmes, as well as the [Talent Match London](#) employability programme to young people in London.

We also run two residential centres, [Hindleap Warren](#) in Sussex and [Woodrow High House](#) in Buckinghamshire, that help young people develop their skills and confidence through specialist outdoor education.

We directly develop the confidence, resilience and relationship skills of over 27,000 children and young people each year on our programmes and reach tens of thousands more through our membership network.

Our response

What impact does the capital's culture have on quality of life for Londoners? What could the Mayor do to amplify and support these areas?

London Youth believes that culture has a huge impact on the quality of life of young Londoners, including improved mental and social wellbeing, strong and cohesive communities, and the possibility of meaningful economic and career opportunities.

Young people deserve to be supported to be both active creators and makers of culture, as well as accessing the cultural options that London offers. We take the position that the Mayor should seek to support culture provision in the places that young people choose to go, including community youth organisations. We consider that community youth organisations play an important role in delivering cultural programmes and activities, fostering cultural capital among young people, and should be seen as an asset in encouraging outreach to those young people least likely to engage in London's cultural life.

We also consider that the cultural programmes delivered by community youth organisations are often an effective vehicle for achieving other aims, such as increasing mental wellbeing, reducing youth violence, and effective signposting to other services.

Do you agree that London must embrace a broad definition of culture that includes less formal places and spaces? If yes, what could the Mayor do to best support informal culture?

London Youth supports the broad definition of culture used in the strategy. We consider that culture should rest in the hands of Londoners as active creators and should be accessible in the communities that people live in.

We consider that community youth organisations are a vital part of the "less formal places and spaces" that involved in the creation, fostering of, and engagement with culture in London. While often not considered in these terms, community youth organisations provide a huge role in delivering cultural programmes and in encouraging and supporting young people to take up the city's cultural offerings.

In 2017, London Youth partnered with a market research company to understand the views of young Londoners between 15 and 25 years old. From this research, we discovered that sports and cultural activities were an important basis for community among this group. From this research, we also know that 32% think that museums and galleries are one of the best things about London, compared to only 5% who thought that they were the one of the worst. Likewise, 10% think that sports and leisure facilities are among the best and 9% thought they were among the worst. However, the majority of young Londoners were confident that in their local areas over the next year that access to arts, culture and music opportunities (32%) would improve.

How could the Mayor help to remove barriers that prevent all Londoners from securing creative jobs? What examples of good practice are you aware of in this area?

London Youth supports assisting young people to find creative jobs. Through our experience with Talent Match London, our Big Lottery-funded employability programme, we have experience with youth employability. In 2016, 24% of entrants onto the programme said their first preference was in the creative, arts, and cultural sector. This was the fourth highest sector, after the health and social care, education and youth work, and retail and sales sectors. However, there is an impression among many young people that work in this sector is out of reach or 'not for them', and many see their only route into the sector to be through entrepreneurship. For example, a young person interested in music production may think it unlikely that they will be hired by a music studio and instead start a small business, setting themselves up as an independent music producer.

Through Talent Match London, we have learnt a lot about helping young people into employment. We consider that it is vital for youth employability programmes to see the wider needs of a younger person and focus on sustained employment. Ideally, wider needs should be addressed through personalised support and individualised, trust-based relationships in places that young people choose to go to in their community. This support should extend beyond initial job placement and continue as a young person develops their career. For this reason, employability programmes should involve partnerships that include community youth organisations and employers. The former provide outreach and support in trusted contexts, while the latter provide employability programmes with genuine opportunities and are perceived as such by young people.

We consider that outreach is often the part of youth employability that is least addressed. Young people should have the opportunity to explore before they commit to a career path. Our experience is that retention is highest when young people are able to have several taster days in different industries, before moving on to a work experience placement. These should be paid or otherwise supported, no longer than three weeks, focus on practical and on-the-job learning, and have the option to lead to genuine employment or apprenticeships. While working with Talent Match London and Movement to Work, the effectiveness of this model became clear to Centrica (British Gas) and they restructured their work placement along the above lines.

London Youth has published its findings from the Talent Match London programme in our Hidden in Plain Sight report (<http://londonyouth.org/quality-and-impact/hidden-in-plain-sight/>). The report focuses on 'hidden' young people, who are not in education, employment, or training and are not accessing statutory welfare support. We have made the following key findings:

- 'Hidden' young Londoners are typically between 18 and 25 years old, are not engaged in employment, education or training and not receiving any welfare benefits.
- A staggering 480,000 young people are 'hidden' nationally each year. This is not only detrimental to their wellbeing and future prospects, but also results in a £440 million loss of revenue from potential income tax and national insurance contributions.
- Unemployed young people who do not access welfare benefits or statutory support are often excluded from employability programmes because they are too qualified or are in part time or insecure employment, such as zero hours contracts.
- Many 'hidden' young people are closer to the job market than we might imagine having achieved good GCSE qualifications and continued with their education beyond 16 years old.
- Often 'hidden' young people were also facing complex and challenging circumstances beyond their control, such as caring responsibilities or mental ill health, meaning that appropriate support or interventions were also needed to prevent a negative impact on their employment outcomes.

Based on the findings of the report, we have made the six recommendations below:

- Choose to see the hidden: Unemployment statistics should include details of the number of young people who are unemployed and not claiming benefits, as well as provide a more accurate picture of the employment status of young people who are in work.
- Enable access to statutory support: The Government should review current arrangements under the Youth Obligation to ensure that Job Centres provide meaningful and adequate support for young people.

- **Bridge the gap:** Funders and commissioners should ensure there is designated funding in place for programmes that provide specialist employment support for young people and that programme eligibility criteria do not exclude hidden young people or those in precarious work.
- **Informed choices:** The Government's Careers Strategy should recognise the needs of older young people and ensure that all young people have access to independent, personalised and impartial careers advice throughout adolescence and into adulthood.
- **Start at home:** Funders should invest in building the evidence base for effective models of support and advice that involve and empower families by funding pilot programmes and approaches that draw on this critical source of support.
- **Beyond employability:** Funders and commissioners of employability programmes should ensure that adequate time and resource is built into programmes to support young people with their wider needs.

How can the Mayor increase participation in the arts and cultural life of the capital, particularly for people who don't currently have access to it? Who should he be partnering with?

To encourage more young people to participate, we consider that the Mayor should seek to go to the places they choose to go, including community youth organisations, and should do more to deliver culture to young people on their terms in the places they feel most comfortable. The standard cultural and arts participation model is for organisations already involved in these activities to be funded to undertake outreach with young people. We consider that a complementary approach would be to fund culture programmes in those organisations that already have relationships with young people but are not delivering this type of project. Those actively involved in arts and culture in their communities through organisations like youth organisations are more likely to take up the wider arts and cultural offer of London, as well as developing skills, knowledge, and relationships that may lead to careers in the creative sector.

We support the aim of the Mayor's expansion of the Zip Oystercard initiative to remove travel and cost barriers to young people accessing London's cultural offerings. However, for many young Londoners, cost is not the only or largest impediment to travelling to other parts of the city. Young people and youth workers frequently tell us that many young Londoners are intimidated to travel beyond the familiar areas where they usually live, learn, work, and play. The most commonly expressed are: fear of travelling into unfamiliar postcodes, with safety and crime remaining the largest concern for young Londoners according to our polling; and a lack of confidence. Youth workers from our members tell us that young people often require significant amounts of support to travel to unfamiliar parts of London. If the Mayor wants to meaningfully increase participation in culture, then he should consider partnering with community youth organisations that already have the trust of young people and, with the right support, can introduce them to new opportunities.

How can you or your organisation contribute to the Mayor's vision for culture and pledge to support the final strategy?

London Youth is currently launching Young Culture Makers (<http://londonyouth.org/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/>), which will help community youth organisations to develop their creative arts offer for young people and inspire young people to get creative and develop a lifelong passion for the arts. From our 320 member youth organisations, we have heard that the cultural activities on offer, including arts and crafts, drama and music, are hugely popular with the young people.

To deliver our new programme, we have worked with 10 member organisations to support over 100 young people. Working in a range of art forms and choosing what they are interested in, these young people have had the opportunity to meet artists, work with local arts organisations, visit London's inspiring venues, learn about a new art form, and express themselves through creative projects. The youth organisations participating have become hubs of creative activity, running new projects and bringing in new partners and volunteers to support them. One of the youth workers on the project told us: "Before we met with the arts organisation, I was thinking visual arts basically meant painting, drawing, maybe getting out some clay! But when I told them about our group and our young people, they started suggesting loads of ideas – jewellery design, pinhole photography, hand drawn animation, listing off all these things I'd never even heard of or thought about! It's totally opened my mind to what the possibilities are and I'm buzzing about it!"

This arts and cultural programme is based on the successful model of our Getting Ready sports programme, which has been operating since 2009 and currently works with over 90 member youth organisations and a minimum of 2,800 young people in London each year. The programme focuses on the more disadvantaged areas of the capital where a lack of facilities, equipment, and trained instructors has built a barrier between young people and participation. We support member youth organisations to deliver a bespoke 'sports offer' chosen by young people in their local community. We reach those not currently participating, who can be disengaged from school and not currently accessing sports elsewhere. Our model is carefully staged to allow us to deliver a huge range of sports, as chosen by young people and keep them engaged by using a simple but flexible model tailored for each youth club, including taster sessions, weekly structured sessions, coaching and leadership training and progression, residential weekends and tournaments, disability-specific programmes, and the provision of free sports equipment.

One attendee from Calthorpe Project in Camden on the 2014 programme was involved in gang activity, disengaged from school and at risk of exclusion. His inability to connect with formal education meant he missed out on what was on offer inside the school gates. He became involved in Getting Ready in a place he trusted. He began enjoying sport and taking responsibility within the club, supported by older youth workers. He quickly became a role model for other young people and has set up and now runs local football and futsal leagues, doing everything from arranging and booking fixtures, to ensuring discipline and high standards of behaviour. He has grown a great deal of confidence, and has taken his Level One coaching qualification, and enrolled in a Level One youth work programme, reigniting his interest in and passion for learning.

London Youth would be interested in helping the Mayor to reach, support, and hear from our over 320 member youth organisations across London. We extend an open offer to the Mayor and the GLA to connect them with community youth organisations delivering cultural programmes and the

young people that attend them. London Youth and our Quality Mark accreditation has been useful to the Mayor in distributing funding through the Young Londoners Fund, as an indicator of and commitment to high-quality youth provision among small and community-based youth groups. A similar approach may be useful to the Mayor in distributing funding and support to youth organisations for cultural programmes.

As an example of bringing culture to the places young people choose to go, we have been working with a prominent artist to connect them with one of our member youth organisations and their young people. We will continue to facilitate such partnerships between community youth organisations and other parts of London's cultural sector.

Is there anything else that could be considered in relation to the draft Culture Strategy?

In relation to Policy 1, we support the aim of the Mayor's Culture Seeds programme, but have concerns about its effectiveness. We have heard from our members that the maximum eligible organisation size (annual turnover of £50,000) is too low. Many community youth organisations that would be considered 'small' and may have trouble accessing national or regional funding would still be ineligible to apply for this funding. For example, a youth organisation with two or three staff and rented premises may be ineligible. While we support funding smaller initiatives and community organisations, we consider that the Mayor should look at raising the eligibility or considering bands of eligibility.

In relation to Policy 2, we encourage the Mayor to deliver community events that are organised and owned by communities. We consider that engagement with youth events will be much higher if there is a principle of youth leadership in their design and delivery.

In relation to Policy 4, our member youth organisations agree that a map of cultural offerings would be useful. We encourage the Mayor for this to include community youth organisations and other parts of the city's cultural offer that are not traditionally included.

In relation to Policy 11, we consider that the Mayor has committed to several good cultural initiatives aimed at young people. However, we do not consider that the Mayor has laid out a structural plan to engage more young people in London's culture. We encourage the Mayor to work with community youth organisations to reach those young people that are most disconnected or cut off from London's cultural offer.

In relation to Policy 12, we agree that there is desire among young Londoners to be employed in the creative sector. We consider that the independent and high-quality careers guidance is an important part of this. We also encourage the Mayor to consider outreach, employer engagement, and tiered work experience in any potential employability programme.

In relation to Policy 13, we support the Mayor's commitment to diversity in business practice. We encourage the Mayor to include young people as a group that requires additional support and recognition in work place diversity.

Get in touch



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