

Arts Council England Shaping the Next Ten Years: Draft Strategy 2020-2030

23 September 2019

London Youth
47-49 Pitfield Street
London N1 6DA

About this consultation

On 23rd September 2019, the Arts Council England closed its consultation on its draft strategy, [*Shaping the Next Ten Years: Draft Strategy 2020-2030*](#).

About this response

This response is on behalf of London Youth and supported by our 450+ members and associate members. The following members contributed to this response: Action on Disability and Cambridge House.

About London Youth

[London Youth](#) is a federation of over 450 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 member networks on issues affecting young people, Quality Mark accreditation, policy and influencing voice, and research that evidences the needs of the young people and the youth sector. With our members, we deliver sports, arts and culture, youth social action, and employability programme to young people in London.

We also run two residential centres, [Hindleap Warren](#) in East 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 through our programmes and reach tens of thousands more through our membership network.

London Youth believes it is vital to connect those who make decisions with young people and the over 400 youth organisations in our membership. We are able to facilitate:

- Visits to community youth organisations;
- Consultation on specific issues or programmes with young people and youth professionals;
- Dissemination of opportunities or information to community youth organisations; and
- Young people and youth professionals attending and speaking at events.

Our response

Key messages

London Youth generally supports the aims in the Arts Council England's draft strategy, particularly widening the creativity and culture that the Arts Council supports.

We strongly support increasing young people’s active participation in arts and culture in their communities. 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 Arts Council should seek to support culture provision in the places that young people choose to go, including community youth organisations.

It is our position that community youth organisations offer a huge untapped, strategic opportunity for the Arts Council to widen young people’s involvement in creativity and culture. We consider that community youth organisations play an important role in delivering cultural programmes and activities, fostering cultural capital among young people, and are an under-recognised asset in encouraging outreach to those young people least likely to engage in London’s cultural life. With the right support, there are great opportunities and enormous benefits to working with young people through community youth organisations.

However, we consider that the Arts Council needs to be much more explicit about how they intend to work with young people outside of formal education, such as in community youth organisations. There is enormous knowledge in the youth sector about working with young people creatively and expanding access to culture, and the Arts Council should be willing to listen.

Our challenge to the Arts Council is to ask what they are, or could be, doing differently to engage young people and the organisations that work with them.

Chapter 1: Testing our proposed vision and the key shifts

Part 1: To what extent do you agree with the statements below?

The vision is bold and ambitious.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

- Agree

The vision is clear to me.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

- Agree

I want to help realise this vision.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

- Strongly agree

Part 2: Testing key shifts in the new strategy

The draft strategy for 2020-2030 proposes some significant shifts from our current strategy, some of which are set out below. Do you agree or disagree that these shifts are important to you?

Widening the range of culture and creativity we support. Do you agree that this shift is important to you?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Do you have any comments about this shift?

- Strongly agree

Stronger support for individuals including diversifying the talent pipeline and sustainable careers. Do you agree that this shift is important to you?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Do you have any comments about this shift?

- Strongly agree

Stronger focus on partnership working to help creativity & culture build thriving communities. Do you agree that this shift is important to you?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree

- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Do you have any comments about this shift?

- Strongly agree

Embedding children and young people across our stated outcomes and principles. Do you agree that this shift is important to you?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree or disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Do you have any comments about this shift?

- Strongly agree

We strongly support embedding young people across all outcomes and principles of the Arts Council. However, we consider that the Arts Council should ensure that the embedding children and young people across all outcomes and principles does not result in reduced visibility of this aim. We have some concern that the shift could have the unintended consequence of making children and young people a less explicit goal than as currently stated in Goal 5.

Chapter 2: Creative people

Priority A: Ensuring more people, of all ages and all backgrounds, find, access and take part in a wide range of creative activities, both in their communities and online.

How much of a contribution do you feel you/your organisation is currently making to this priority? Select from the below scale.

- 1 (low contribution)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Highest possible contribution)

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review.

- Explore the most effective ways to increase the visibility of the local creative offer provided by voluntary, publicly funded and commercial organisations.
- Consider ways that Arts Council funded organisations and their partners could collaborate to increase the creative offer available to local people of all ages.
- Explore how we can support and enable better connections between the professional and amateur/ voluntary sectors.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- 5

We know that increased access to creativity and culture is very important to young Londoners. 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.

We encourage the Arts Council to consider disabled young people and the importance for them to access meaningful cultural opportunities, and to ensure that they are included in this strategy. We strongly support bringing young disabled young people and non-disabled young people together through creativity in meaningful ways.

Priority B: The creativity of pre-school children and their families.

How much of a contribution do you feel you/your organisation is currently making to this priority? Select from the below scale.

- 1 (low contribution)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Highest possible contribution)

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review.

- Look at what lessons can be learnt from Talent25 (a longitudinal action research programme currently run in partnership with De Montfort University) to inform the design of a strong national offer for preschool children and their families.
- Identify high quality programmes that are already being delivered by arts organisations, museums and libraries for pre-school children and their families.
- Identify new partnerships that could help us reach pre-school children and their families, including media and broadcast, commercial leisure and entertainment, community groups and others.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- 4

Priority C: The creativity of 4-19 year olds both within and beyond the curriculum

How much of a contribution do you feel you/your organisation is currently making to this priority? Select from the below scale.

- 1 (low contribution)
- 2
- 3

- 4
- 5 (Highest possible contribution)

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review.

- Explore what a national schools programme for creativity and culture could look like, including:
 - Develop and test ideas with classroom teachers, headteachers, governors, parents and pupils to make sure we understand and respond to need
 - Work with the cultural sector to identify best ways to support the school curriculum
 - Advocate to the Department for Education for increased and sustained policy and funding support for creativity in education.
- Consider how we can best respond to the forthcoming recommendations from the Durham Commission on creativity and education.
- Explore whether National Lottery Project Grants could be used further to develop the creativity of 4-19 year olds.
- Consider whether there are early lessons from the five new Youth Performance Partnerships that can be used to inform ongoing work in this area.
- Research models for talent development provision to better understand how we can build more equitable and inclusive progression routes for children and young people.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- 5

We consider that the Arts Council needs to be much more explicit about how they intend to work with young people outside of formal education, such as in community youth organisations.

We consider that community youth organisations are a vital part of the cultural sector and are heavily involved in the creation, fostering of, and engagement with culture in London and elsewhere. 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.

It is our position that community youth organisations offer a huge untapped, strategic opportunity for the Arts Council to widen young people's involvement in creativity and culture. We consider that community youth organisations play an important role in delivering cultural programmes and activities, fostering cultural capital among young people, and are an under-recognised asset in encouraging outreach to those young people least likely to engage in London's cultural life. With the right support, there are great opportunities and enormous benefits to working with young people through community youth organisations.

Priority D: Help for people from all backgrounds to understand and access careers in the creative sector.

How much of a contribution do you feel you/your organisation is currently making to this priority? Select from the below scale.

- 1 (low contribution)

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Highest possible contribution)

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review.

- Work with partners including industry bodies and further and higher education to identify the right interventions across the country to deliver this priority.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- 5

London Youth supports diversifying the creative sector and helping young people to find creative jobs. On Talent Match London, our Big Lottery-funded employability programme that ran between 2013 and 2018, 24% of 2016 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 Talent Match London, the most common barriers to employment were lack of work experience (47%), lack of local jobs (44%), and lack of qualifications (41%).¹

Are experience shows that young benefit from multiple, meaningful work experiences to inform future career decisions. Nationally, only 51% of young people had access to work experience when they were in secondary school, and young women are 20% less likely to be offered careers interactions in education. When work experience is offered, 84% took it up. Young people's view of current provision is that: they're not getting the help they need, advice and support received is generic, and advice and support is focused on a certain route.²

One young person we work with said, "I don't think it's hard to find a job in general, but finding one that you want to do and that you'll be passionate about and that you can see yourself staying in – that's what's difficult. Not only because it's hard to get into, but also because you might not know what you actually want to do."

Chapter 3: Cultural communities

Priority A: Place-based partnerships which deliver shared outcomes, i.e. to strengthen and connect communities, and support inclusive growth.

How much of a contribution do you feel you/your organisation is currently making to this priority? Select from the below scale.

- 1 (low contribution)

¹ London Youth (2016) [*Reach Out, Enable, Connect: So more young Londoners can help themselves into employment.*](#)

² Youth Employment UK (2018) [*Youth Voice Census Report 2018.*](#)

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Highest possible contribution)

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review. [Click here to see these areas.](#)

- Identify current best practice, in the UK and abroad, of cultural organisations and others who are working in place-based partnerships to deliver cultural and other outcomes to a wider range of people.
- Research what type of evidence-based, place focused analysis of the creative and cultural needs of communities across England could inform and support more joined-up planning and delivery.
- Consider how we can best sustain and develop the Creative People and Places programme over the next decade.
- Explore how we can deliver this priority with a range of partners, including local government, business, further and higher education and schools, healthcare providers, the criminal justice system, the commercial and voluntary sector, and other funders.
- Reviewing the contribution to local economic growth of the Business and Intellectual Property Centre Network in public libraries in partnership with the British Library.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- 5

We support the Arts Council exploring greater partnership with community youth organisations in the community and voluntary sector.

London Youth delivers Young Culture Makers programme, which helps 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.

To deliver our programme, we worked with member organisations to support 226 young people in 2018/19 and 151 in 2017/18. In the 2018/19 cohort, over half of the young people participated reported improved 'life effectiveness' (LEQ) at the end of the programme compared to the beginning. Statistically significant differences were found across the majority of LEQ factors, including those relating to young people's relationships and leadership skills.

From our 450+ 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. Working in a range of art forms and choosing what they are interested in, these young people have 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!”

In London Youth’s 2018 report “*A Space of Our Own*”, we demonstrated youth organisations’ powerful role in strengthening communities (London Youth (2018) [“A Space of Our Own”: The role and value of youth organisations in strengthening communities](#)).³ We talked to 10 youth professionals in 10 different organisations, which varied in the types of services they offer and the young people that they support and were spread across eight London boroughs. Our team of five peer researchers interviewed 22 young people in 14 London boroughs.

Youth organisations strengthen communities by:

- **Creating connections:** Young people are able to meet and mix with people from different backgrounds in a more equal setting. This builds trust, counters negative perceptions, provides space to address specific cohesion challenges, and allows young people to lead.
- **Sense of belonging:** Youth organisations are seen like a family where young people belong. Providing ownerships over spaces, activities, and decisions helped young people connect to youth organisation and to the local area.
- **Physical safety:** Young people desire to feel safe and saw youth organisations as a place of physical safety.
- **Recognising and celebrating difference:** Young people can develop and maintain cultural identity, aiding a balance between English and other cultural backgrounds
- **Developing the skills and confidence to get involved in their communities:** Young people develop skills, open-mindedness, and confidence. Encouraging youth social action helps develop young people develop their world-view and a local voice, while seeing themselves as part of the solution.
- **Known & trusted within the community:** Youth organisations hold expertise and local knowledge and are well-known and well-networked. This means they deliver benefits wider than young people by signposting to services, responding to tragedy, and working with the community

London Youth considers that the Arts Council should reflect on how their practices help youth organisations strengthen communities in the following ways:

- How does its funding affect developing and maintaining community relationships?
- Does its funding sufficiently resource outreach, signposting, and partnership building?
- What is its role in protecting community assets and youth spaces?
- Does its funding ensure the true cost of operating high-quality space is recovered?
- What is its role in providing capital resources to operate and maintain youth spaces?
- Does its funding and the related application processes encourage a diverse range of organisations across sectors to apply, and do they set these types of applications up to succeed?

³ London Youth (2018) [“A Space of Our Own”: The role and value of youth organisations in strengthening communities](#).

Priority B: Cultural provision, including touring and distribution, that responds to the needs and aspirations of local communities.

How much of a contribution do you feel you/your organisation is currently making to this priority? Select from the below scale.

- 1 (low contribution)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Highest possible contribution)

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review. [Click here to see these areas.](#)

- Consider how we might use the learnings from programmes such as Creative People and Places to support community co-design across the cultural sector.
- Review what learning can be taken from the new Performing Arts Producing Hubs pilot, and especially the use of a local needs analysis to help design a collaborative programme of place-based activities.
- Consider whether a new mechanism to provide small grants for grassroots organisations might help deliver this priority.
- Review best practice in connecting communities to collections and ensuring that collections are developed and used to reflect and speak to the public.
- Consider the pivotal role that libraries can play through their position, platform and reach into local communities in supporting cultural engagement.
- Review how we use data to build and share a more sophisticated picture of investment at a local level, and to operate more effectively as an expert and strategic national development agency.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

London Youth considers that the Arts Council could consider much more explicitly the needs and nature of community youth organisations, if they would like to partner with them more effectively in the future.

We have heard from our members that not all organisations find it simple to apply for Arts Council funding. An example of how this could be improved is ensuring that applications do not assume the nature of the applying organisation, such as questions tailored to touring companies that may discourage place-based organisations from applying.

A notable example of accessible culture funding is the Mayor of London's Culture Seeds programme, which set out to provide small amounts of funding to community and grassroots organisations to deliver culture programmes without an onerous application or reporting process. While we support this programme, we have heard from our members that the maximum eligible organisation size (annual turnover of £50,000) is too low and has hindered the programme's reach. Many community youth organisations that would be considered grassroots organisations 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.

We support funding smaller initiatives and community organisations, but consider this should more closely reflect what a small organisation looks like. We know from our data on community youth organisations in London that the vast majority of organisations have an annual income between £50,000 and £500,000.

We consider that funders should always prioritise finding ways to fund and support relationships and spaces, because these allow youth organisations to strengthen communities in the longer term. These are social benefits and community services that youth organisations are currently delivering, but often not being sufficiently compensated for. This requires recognising the true costs of operating facilities and moving beyond programmatic funding to cover core costs.

Priority C: Place-based cultural education that is co-designed with young people and others, and delivered through local partnerships of cultural organisations and education providers.

How much of a contribution do you feel you/your organisation is currently making to this priority? Select from the below scale.

- 1 (low contribution)
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 (Highest possible contribution)

To prepare for the first delivery plan, we have identified areas of initial research and review. [Click here to see these areas.](#)

- Identify features of success in various local models of partnership working including Music Education Hubs, Local Cultural Education Partnerships, Youth Performance Partnerships and Artsmark.
- Explore what a national schools programme for creativity and culture could look like, including:
 - Develop and test ideas with classroom teachers, headteachers, governors, parents and pupils to make sure we understand and respond to need
 - Work with the cultural sector to identify best ways to support the school curriculum
 - Advocate to the Department for Education for increased and sustained policy and funding support for creativity in education.

If you have an additional idea for how to realise this priority, please suggest it below.

- 5

We support greater partnership between cultural organisations and community youth organisations. However, we consider it vital to note that the process of developing effective and responsible partnerships takes time and resources for many organisations in the voluntary and community sector.

We strongly support the principle of co-design with young people. We encourage the Arts Council to ensure that wherever possible young people are compensated for their time and sufficiently supported to do this work.

The Arts Council should recognise the need for new partnerships to explore challenges and adapt their approach, and to allow for some element of trial-and-error. We consider that funding for partnership working should allow time and flexibility for this learning to take place.

Case study

Cambridge House runs the Super Teens Art Club every Wednesday as part of its Disabled People's Empowerment services. It is a well-established club that offers a flexible and supportive environment for young people with disabilities to explore their interest in visual art. They are encouraged to develop their own interests and to try new things.

Young people from the group entered the 2018 London Youth Visual Art Competition and won prizes. This boosted the young people's confidence and encouraged them as artists. But like many youth organisations, Cambridge House did not have as much capacity or resource as they needed to expand the work as much as they wanted to and offer new experiences. Cambridge House applied to be part of Young Culture Makers in order to build on their existing delivery, explore working in partnership and offer new opportunities to the young people taking part.

The team at Cambridge House were keen to maintain the supportive environment they had created with the young people, but also wanted to offer them something new and different. They spent time brainstorming what types of activities the young people would benefit from and how to make use of the local artists and arts organisations that they have on their doorstep in Southwark. They identified the Blue Elephant Theatre, who are just over the road. The two organisations had been in touch in the past but hadn't found an ideal way of collaborating. With a bit of seed funding and support to try something new, it was a good time to reach out and try to build something together.

Given the needs of the group, Cambridge House worked closely with Blue Elephant to devise a project that would play to their strengths. The team of theatre practitioners showed flexibility and willingness to be led by the young people and those who know them best, and took time to get to know the group and develop trusting relationships. They worked together to develop a theatre project based on the young people's visual art work – a medium they're already comfortable with – by turning the characters and scenarios in their visual art work into stories for the stage. They began thinking about storytelling but also about the set and costume design. A bespoke backstage tour of the National Theatre at the Southbank brought this to life, giving this unique group of young people an insight into the many different aspects of theatre and prop-making.

By having the opportunity to experiment and work in partnership with the Blue Elephant Theatre, Cambridge House has offered a completely new experience to the young people, one which is true to who the young people are and informed by their creativity. It has also required the young people to work in a different way, as a theatre project has challenged them to work more collaboratively than before. They have gained communication and interpersonal skills by

working together, and have challenged themselves and felt proud to work towards an end goal and a sharing of their work.

Chapter 9: Further thoughts

This is an opportunity to share anything additional you would like to contribute to the consultation. Share your thoughts.

A young person on Dare London, our youth advisory board, told us: “It’s simple to get young people involved in communities. Everyone has their own talent, a skill they enjoy themselves doing and a niche that they belong to. Maybe they have found it yet, maybe they haven’t. But regardless of what it is – whether it’s art, football, public speaking, or dance – this hobby they invest themselves into can definitely steer young people away from the negative life choices they might make.”

Community youth organisations are vehicles for social impact. Youth organisations play a vital role in delivering universal, open-access culture programmes amongst young people. They do this by providing fun and trusted spaces for young people to express themselves. However, this is the start of their impact, rather than the end; young people can seek advice, access services, learn skills, forge relationships, develop personally, and find where they fit into their communities.

Please share the three words that best sum up your view of the future of culture and creativity.

- Youth
- Inspire
- Partnership

Get in touch



Samuel Howell, Policy Officer | samuel.howell@londonyouth.org

47-49 Pitfield Street, London, N1 6DA | Tel: 020 7549 8800

londonyouth.org | [@LondonYouth](https://twitter.com/LondonYouth) | [#goodyouthworkworks](https://www.instagram.com/goodyouthworkworks)

London Youth is the operating name of The Federation of London Youth Clubs, a Registered Charity (Number 303324) and a Company Limited by Guarantee (Number 258577)