

Bridgefest

Royal Opera House Bridge

A peer-led consultation with people aged 11 – 19, exploring their ideas and views about arts and culture in the region

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Executive summary

Terminology - what do the words arts and culture mean to young people?

- The young people consulted in this research find arts and culture difficult to define and they don't believe it relates to the wide range of creative activities they are interested in.
- Art is an easier term, and concepts including creativity, expression and freedom were frequently cited.
- The term culture is more challenging, but those that did define it described it as a way of life, what we believe in, eat and wear. They also think the term related to how people live in other countries, diversity and history.

What kind of arts and cultural activities are young people engaged in?

- Independently, young people consulted engage in a very wide range of activities, from traditional arts such as writing, drawing and playing classical instruments, to the more contemporary, many of which include influences from technology and contemporary culture, such as anime, breakdancing, gaming, cosplay and fashion blogging.
- Music, art and writing were the three most popular interests.
- Many interests of young people cross over in to multiple art forms.
- Most organised group activities are performance based such as dance, drama and music.
- There seemed to be a lack of organised groups catering to the wider range of creative interests young people engage with independently.

What are the motivations and benefits of taking part in arts and cultural activities?

- Enjoyment, experience for career aspirations and social opportunities are the three most important reasons why young people consulted engage with creative activities.
- Those who had been engaged with arts and culture for a long time or spent a significant amount of time involved in activities were more likely to be motivated by getting experience for career goals.
- Young people also said their creative interests brought them escape and relaxation, an outlook for personal expression, a sense of freedom and sense of accomplishment.

What are the barriers to engaging?

- The key barriers to young people engaging in arts and culture for those consulted are a perceived lack of opportunities and poor awareness about existing provision.
- Both factors lead young people to believe poor marketing and communications is a major barrier.
- Other important barriers were lack of time, lack of confidence and having other interests, mainly sports.

How do the young people consulted think arts and cultural organisations can engage them more effectively, both through marketing and programming?

- Focus on reaching young people through people and places they know and trust, mainly schools.
- The most effective way of engaging them is through taster activities, which don't put on the pressure to be the best or commit long-term.

- Develop partnerships with other sectors to reach a broader range of young people.
- Involve young people in developing and delivering marketing campaigns to reach other young people, and identify those already engaged to be spokespeople.
- Within marketing content emphasise skills-development opportunities, the social element and provide as much information as possible to support those with less confidence.
- Develop activities that cross art-forms, especially programmes which cross physical and digital interests, such as sports and social media.
- Offer a mix of long and short-term opportunities. Develop long-term strategies, which consider how audiences can engage from a very young age, and how they can transition to programmes for teenagers.
- Offer space for young people to practice or hang out with peers – space-led programmes rather than activity-led.
- Link activities to young people's interests, especially music, popular culture and contemporary issues.

Recommendations for how ROHB can develop stronger links to young people in the area and actively involve them in planning and delivery of arts and cultural youth provision

- Do more research into and raise awareness of the cross art-from activities that young people are interested in, especially those that are inspired by new technologies, the digital world and physical interests such as dance and sports. Young people are still interested in traditional art forms, but creative activities with crossover into digital and physical

interests have potential to broaden the appeal of arts and culture to a wider range of young people.

- Develop a guidance that helps arts and cultural organisations better assess the way their offer to young people provides career, skills development, and enterprise opportunities.
- Support organisations develop these as key messages within marketing and communications content.
- Develop a centralised regional information hub, which organisations and young people can use to access guidance and advice about future training, apprenticeship, volunteering and career opportunities.
- Develop a resource of good practice case studies where young people's creative outputs are supporting art organisation's commercial ventures, thereby improving enterprise and business skills, and going some way to supporting youth programme costs.
- Develop funding pots that arts organisations can administer, which allow young people to develop, deliver and manage budgets for their own art activities.
- Commission more research into successful youth-lead marketing or develop resources that highlight successful case studies.
- Utilise Bridgefest Ambassadors as connectors to young people and arts organisations in the region. Utilise their consultation skills for future research.
- Support organisations to develop audience development strategies that focus on engaging the very young and consider how these audiences can transition to programmes for older young people.

- Help facilitate partnerships between the arts & youth sectors and sport, health and commercial organisations, possibly through region-wide online networks.
- Invest in online hubs or networks, or raise profiles of existing ones, which are a one-stop shop for young people to find out what is on offer in their area.
- Consider developing umbrella branding to bring a range of activities from different organisations together to raise profile and improve marketing.
- Promote the importance of the evaluation of marketing to young people, so the sector can build up intelligence about what works.

1. Introduction and research aims

The aim of this project has been to engage young people from the Royal Opera House Bridge (ROHB) region in research, which identifies and develops a deeper understanding of young people's engagement with and views about arts and culture. Bridgefest is the name given to the project by a core group of **'Bridgefest Ambassadors'** who have been involved in the project from the early stages to shape and facilitate consultation with other young people.

The research aims to explore the following questions:

- What activities are young people engaging in?
- What would they like to engage with but can't access?
- How can arts and cultural organisations appeal more to this age group?
- How can ROHB develop stronger links to young people in the area and actively involve them in the planning and delivery?

The Bridgefest Ambassadors (Ambassadors) worked with The Audience Agency to develop a number of key research objectives they wished to explore to provide insight to the research aims. These formed the focus of the consultation activity:

- What do the words 'arts' and 'culture' mean to young people?
- Which creative activities are young people engaged in, both independently, and as part of organised groups?
- Which factors contribute to a young person's decision to engage in arts and culture, for example, how do they hear about opportunities?
- What are the motivations and benefits of taking part in arts and cultural activities?

- What are the barriers to engaging?
- What advice would young people give to arts and cultural organisations so they can effectively reach out to and attract young people?

Following the executive summary and introduction, the methodology and project process details the approaches used within the consultation. This section also includes some key information about the process of Bridgefest project, as well as information about how many young people have been involved, and where consultation has taken place. Key findings follow, each research topic beginning with the top-line conclusions. There is also a section of recommendations about how ROHB can develop stronger links to young people and actively involve them in the planning and delivery of creative opportunities. The executive summary comprises conclusions and recommendations. Some of the Ambassadors have contributed to this report by sharing their experiences of the project so far. In addition, all Ambassadors were sent a draft report for comment.

A steering group of young people have worked with The Audience Agency and ROHB to plan the You Ask We Answer event, taking place 20th February 2015, which will share the research and add to the discussions.



2. Methodology and project process

Feb – May 2014: Exploring existing arts and cultural provision in the region

The first stage of this project involved desk research to develop a fuller understanding of arts and cultural provision for young people in the region. This was followed by some face-to-face meetings and telephone interviews with staff working with young people. Views of young people were central to this research, but it was useful to speak to staff to compare views and their thoughts are included in section 3.6 of the finding, 'building up a picture of the region.'

Feb – May 2014: Recruiting Bridgefest Ambassadors

Involving young people as much as possible was key to effectively exploring the research aims of this project. Following the initial research, a core group of young people aged 14 – 19 were recruited to become 'Bridgefest Ambassadors.' The Ambassadors worked with us to plan and facilitate wider consultation with young people aged 11 – 19. The process of recruiting Ambassadors also gave more insight into existing arts and cultural provision, as a result of art and youth organisations passing on the recruitment flyer to a wider network of contacts across the region.

May 2014: Consultation with Ambassadors and training them to develop and facilitate consultation



Bridgefest Ambassadors at Royal Opera House; image courtesy of Jess White

Around 30 young people came to the Ambassador workshops that took place over two days in May. The workshops equipped the Ambassadors with a range of consultation skills: interviewing, leading discussion groups and using digital and social media tools to document views. We also consulted Ambassadors about their own views and ideas of arts and culture. This was initially led by The Audience Agency, then by them with each other. Methods used involved: creative approaches such as post-it notes, meaning maps and mood boards; presentations; one to one interviews; wider group discussions; digital and social media tools including Audioboo, Soundcloud, Vines and Instagram. Once familiar with the research aims the Ambassadors then created a question guide they could use at the wider consultation with other young people (see appendix A). Throughout the consultation, Ambassadors were encouraged to use the guide as just that, and adopt the language to whatever they felt most suited them and the young people they were interviewing.



Ambassadors had an amazing tour of the Royal Opera House during their training workshops.

Use of social media to document and communicate the consultation

Storify¹ has been used throughout the training and wider consultation to document the process and communicate this to stakeholders. The Storify from the training sessions can be viewed here: <https://storify.com/Bridgefest/bridgefest-ambassador-training-may-2014>. There is also a Storify page for each consultation event. Consultation interviews with the young people consulted at Bridgefest events have not been featured on the Storify page or other social media channels such as Audioboo, Instagram and Twitter, which have been embedded within the Storify page. This is because these were research interviews with young people, many under 18, and it would not have been possible to gain guardian permission at the events. All interviews were confidential; first names, age and general area they live in was the only information collected. Guardian permission was gained for all Bridgefest Ambassadors, so for this reason some of the Ambassadors do feature on the social media channels. A Bridgefest Audioboo and

Instagram account was set up so all Ambassadors could document events from these social media accounts, rather than using personal accounts. A Bridgefest hashtag was also created, and all Ambassadors were encouraged to use this when producing social media content.

June – Aug 2014: Wider consultation

The final part of the research involved consultation with young people aged 11 -19 at existing events between June and August, which were grouped together under the banner of Bridgefest for the sake of this research. This was purely for this project, so this branding wasn't used externally by any event organisers in the promotion of their events. Both contacts established through the initial desk-based research and ideas from Bridgefest Ambassadors at the training days were key to finding events to form Bridgefest. It was also important to aim to find a range of events across the whole region, at which we could consult young people who both are and are not interested in arts and culture. The events included both private and public events. The scope of this project was relatively small, with four days, or eight half days for attending consultation events. Therefore, this research does not aim to be a representative of all young people in the region, and neither has it been possible to represent all the different regions within the overall ROHB region equally. We had to rely on which organisations and events were happy to have us there.

¹ Storify is a social network service that lets the user create stories or timelines using social media such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram; definition from Wikipedia.



Ambassadors Charmine and Louie ready to interview at Village Green in Essex

Ambassadors worked with The Audience Agency to consult with 92 young people across 8 events. It was useful to have a large number of Ambassadors attend the training days in May, because the rigid, externally determined timings and dates of Bridgefest events, combined with the very busy lives of the Ambassadors meant there was, apart from one event, always at least two Ambassadors free to come. Of the 30 Ambassadors from the training workshops, 12 Ambassadors actually facilitated consultation at Bridgefest events. Most just came to events in the regions in which they lived. The training days in May and the consultation events were distinct parts of the project, meaning that young people were able to have a valuable experience and develop skills even if did not participate in both.

The training days they had enabled Ambassadors to develop a flexible toolkit of consultation skills that they could adapt depending on the nature of the Bridgefest events. It had been predicted that larger public events may have been more suited to interviews, whereas smaller private workshops could suit discussion groups. It turned out that short interviews were the most successful method for each event because there was always some other main activity, whether that was a meeting

or performance, which had their focus. Most interviews involved asking young people to take their attention away from other things such as chatting to friends, participating in an activity, watching an event or shopping, which was initially daunting for Ambassadors, but confidence really increased over time.

The long-term relationship with Ambassadors, from recruitment, to training workshops in May, the wider consultation events and email communications throughout has developed a depth to consultation which adds to lighter consultation with larger numbers of young people from the summer consultation events. Meaning whilst many young people expressed their views in short interviews at the Bridgefest consultation events, or at the training days in May, there were a core group of Ambassadors with whom a longer-term relationship developed. This allowed for conversations and reflection about the research aims over a longer period of time.

A total of 8 Bridgefest consultation events took place. The table below outlines these events:

Area	Event	Descriptions	No. of Ambassadors	No. of young people consulted, including Ambassadors
Essex (Colchester)	Limitless at Firstsite	Dance workshop within a contemporary art gallery	4	4
Essex (Colchester)	Circuit at the Waiting Room	Art workshop at a community centre/ hang out space	3	2
Essex (Southend)	Southend Youth Council meeting	Monthly meeting of youth councillors	2 (plus two involved in the youth council)	9
Hertfordshire	Herts Young Cultural Ambassadors celebration event	Private celebration event	2	9
Hertfordshire	Watford Palace Theatre youth theatre show	Show and celebration event	0	3
Essex (Southend)	Village Green, young people's day	Music and arts festival for and by young people	4	35
Essex (Thurrock)	Grays Street festival and South Essex College open day	Public street festival part of Thurrock International Celebration of Culture	3	33
North Kent (Rainham)	Geek 2014	Geek festival (gaming)	3	7
Total young people consulted at events over summer: 92				

There were a lot of advantages to the consultation being led by young people. Those consulted may have felt more comfortable sharing real opinions to another young person. There were also some challenges. At longer events the Ambassadors were able to build up their confidence and were better facilitating more relaxed interviews, probing other young people to open up and expand more on their ideas. At shorter events there was less opportunity to do this. In addition, due to the wide geographical area, most Ambassadors involved in the consultation came to just one event, so again less opportunity to build confidence at interviewing. Overall though, the Ambassadors did a fantastic job and managed to gain some useful insight into what young people think about arts and culture.

Sept 2014: Analysis and reporting

All interviews were recorded then listened to and partially transcribed by The Audience Agency within the framework of the research objectives as laid out in the interviews questions guide (Appendix A). The findings of this analysis is presented in the next section.

A note about sample size and representation

This is a small qualitative study, which explores the views and experiences of a relatively small number of young people, and cannot be fully representative of all young people. Although recruitment for Ambassadors initially focussed on ROHB staff's contacts with young people's groups in arts and cultural organisations, around half were not engaged in any organised arts and cultural groups outside formal education. In addition, through the wider consultation activities there was a good balance of organised creative events, and wider public events where the Ambassadors were able to interview young people for whom arts and cultures plays a very different role. There was only a very small number of young people consulted who said they were definitely not interested in arts and culture, but

the majority did have some independent or school related creative interests. Around one third were part of some creative group at school or college and around a quarter were engaged in an organised arts or cultural group outside of formal education. It is recognised that some additional time and a slightly adapted methodology would be required to explore experiences and barriers of young people who may feel very disconnected from arts and cultural opportunities, including young people experiencing challenging life circumstances such as exclusion from mainstream education, unemployment, housing problems or health issues.

3. Findings

3.1 The terminology of arts and culture

The young people consulted find arts and culture difficult to define and they don't believe it relates to the wide range of creative activities they are interested in. Art is an easier term, and concepts including creativity, expression and freedom were frequently cited. The term culture is more challenging, but those that did define it described it as a way of life, what we believe in, eat and wear. They also think the term related to how people live in other countries, diversity and history.

Within the scope of this project terminology was not explored in great depth, however, if we were going to ask young people about arts and culture we needed, in some small way, to address what it meant to them. We wanted to find out the range of arts and cultural activities young people were engaged in, even if this did not fit into their perception of what arts and culture meant. For this reason, all young people consulted were asked what the words 'arts' and 'culture' meant to them, more to get an insight into their perceptions, rather than this being a thorough exploration. In addition, when asking young people their views we explicitly referred to 'arts, cultural and creative activities' to encourage them to talk about a full range. 'Creative activities' has been used throughout this report to include all arts and cultural activities. Gaining an insight into terminology is particularly useful when considering how to promote creative opportunities to young people.

When asked what the word meant to them, the majority of young people took some time to respond. They found it much easier to respond to 'art' and the majority listed different arts activities. However, other common themes were creativity, expression and freedom.

"The first thing that pops into my head is expression."

Isaac, 19, Bridgefest Ambassador from Colchester, Essex

"Being creative, showing your imagination to the whole world."

Paris, 15, Southend

Overall, young people found it harder to respond to the word culture, although the emerging theme from those that did respond, is that it is more about a way of life, and relates to belief, religion, what you do, wear and eat. They also talked about community, other countries and diversity.

"Arts and culture are too distant, arts is more like drawing and sculpture and galleries, and culture is like historical and what your background is. Because I do more music and acting the words don't really fit in."

Malik, 17, Bridgefest Ambassador, Luton

"Culture is the things that we do in our everyday lives that makes us what we are, from what we wear to the food we eat."

Pauline, 18, Bridgefest Ambassadors from Luton

Over the period of the project some Ambassadors considered terminology in more depth. Those that did, agreed that arts and culture did not directly relate to the wider range of creative activities they are involved in. In addition, the need to use the words 'creative activities' through the interviews to encourage young people to think more broadly also demonstrate that this terminology does not relate to young people.



***“Culture means what different people
believe and feel.”***

Georgia, Hertfordshire

“I suppose it just means a way of life.”

Reuben, 12, Southend

Photo credit: Nick Strugnell

3.2 What kinds of arts and cultural activities are young people engaged in?

Independently, young people engage in a very wide range of activities, from traditional arts such as writing, drawing and playing classical instruments, to the more contemporary. Many of which include influences from technology and contemporary culture, such as anime, breakdancing, gaming, cosplay and fashion blogging. Music, art and writing were the three most popular interests. Many interests of young people cross over in to multiple art forms. Most organised group activities are performance based such as dance, drama and music. There seemed to be a lack of organised groups catering to the wider range of creative interests young people engage with independently.

We asked young people about the kinds of activities they do both independently and as part of an organised group.

Independently, outside of an organised group

Young people have a wide range of creative interests, from drawing to playing in bands with friends, gaming, manga and cosplay. Music, and more specifically, playing instruments, was the most popular activity. Within the umbrella of music, singing was also very popular, and many were involved in performing at local venues. Quite a few were in a band, enjoyed writing their own music and more technical based music production.

Art and design was the next most popular activity. Many mentioned drawing and painting, but digital arts including photography, creating art works on tablets and making animations were also popular. Other kind of specific activities mentioned included drawing comics, anime/manga (Japanese

style animation and comics) and engineering drawings.

Writing, including fiction, poetry and non-fiction, was the third most popular activity. Some wrote blogs although for the majority who enjoyed writing it was more of a private activity. Obviously there was a crossover here with song-writing.

Other activities mentioned included dancing - street dance and Irish, unicycle riding, magic, cooking, sewing and cosplay (creating costumes inspired by animation characters and going to comic book conventions). Social media was also mentioned as a creative activity.

As part of an organised group

Activities engaged in as part of an organised group were much more likely to be performance based activities. Group activities mentioned the most were music, dance and drama. Everything from breakdancing, street-dancing, tap and Bollywood, to choirs, orchestras, musical theatre and backstage production. Almost half of those who were engaged in an organised group did so through school or college. A full list of the arts and cultural groups the young people we consulted with engaged in are listed in Appendix B.

3.3 Motivations and rewards

Enjoyment, experience for career aspirations and social opportunities are the three most important reasons why young people engage with creative activities. Those who had been engaged for a long time or spent a significant amount of time involved in activities were more likely to be motivated by getting experience for career goals. Young people also said that their creative interests brought them escape and relaxation, an outlook for personal expression, a sense of freedom and sense of accomplishment.

We asked those young people who are engaged in creative activities about their reasons why, and key benefits. These tended to be very connected – those consulted did not distinguish between why they started initially and to why they continued to engage so the factors have been presented together. Many mentioned more than one reason.

Enjoyment was a factor that over a third of those consulted mentioned, with many of these saying their creative activities were a great passion.

“Mainly creativity is my love.”

Brendan, 14, Bridgefest Ambassador, Essex

“I love it, it’s my life.”

Maddy, 15, Southend

“It makes you happy, it’s the best feeling in the world.”

Melissa, 13, Thurrock

Around a quarter said their interest was linked to their career aspirations, so the experience was important to help them realise these ambitions.

“I want to be a journalist so its good experience for the future.”

Pauline, 18, Bridgefest Ambassador, Luton

“The dream is to do it as a profession one day.”

Rob, 19, North Kent

In addition, many recognised that although they may not choose a directly related career path, the skills and confidence they gain are valuable to their future study and career goals.

The third key factor was the social element. They really valued the opportunity to meet new people, make friends and spend time with their existing friends.

“It sounds ridiculously cheesy but I’ve met loads of people. All my friends do drama and music, I’ve met them from that.”

Abbie, 15, Southend

There were some other benefits mentioned, including escape and relaxation, opportunity for expression, improving physical health, a sense of accomplishment and the freedom creativity brings.

3.4 Barriers

The key barriers to young people engaging in arts and culture are a perceived lack of opportunities and poor awareness about existing provision. Both factors lead young people to believe poor marketing and communications is a major barrier. Other important barriers were lack of time, lack of confidence and having other interests, mainly sports.

We asked those young people who were not engaged in any creative opportunities the reasons why. We broadened this by asking those who only took part in activities independently why they did not take part in organised groups. We also asked some of the young people if they had friends who weren't interested in creative activities and why they thought this was the case.

The two greatest barriers were a perceived lack of opportunities and lack of awareness about current provision. It was clear that these two factors were linked; many thought there may be more opportunities than they were aware of, which led them to say that the ineffective marketing and communications was a key barrier. The concept of marketing was not overly familiar to young people, they tended to talk about advertising which was a more tangible concept to them.

“There are some (activities) but you do have to dig quite deep. Sometimes it's not always well advertised.”

Brendan, 15, Bridgefest Ambassador, Colchester, Essex

“I've never seen an advert for arts activities.”

Nathan, 12, Grays, Thurrock

“Maybe there is, but there's not enough awareness. We don't really know, I'm sure there is but we just don't know.”

Akrity, 16, Southend

“There is not enough to do, I'm always looking for things to do; it's not easy to find them.”

Danny, 19, North Kent

“Not enough in this area, there are more sport activities, but if you don't like to go out and run around there's not enough to do.”

Skye, 16, Thurrock

Even young people engaged in creative activities believed there should be more opportunities available; only a very small number thought there were plenty of activities, and that these were well advertised.

Three other key barriers came out strongly from the consultation. Lack of confidence, lack of time and not being interested in arts and culture. It was clear that even those already engaged said it can be hard to try something new for the first time, especially if you are participating at a new venue or group on your own. A lack in confidence in ability was also evident.

“Sometimes you are worried if you go on your own; you are worried about making friends.”

Tilly, 13, Southend

“People are normally scared to go to a club because they don’t know what to expect.”

Elliot, 14, Southend

“You’ve got to have a lot of self-confidence and belief in yourself. You might not be good enough.”

Becca, 17 Bridgefest Ambassador, Hertfordshire

Lack of confidence and interest may be linked to a range of intellectual, emotional and cultural access issues. What was most prevalent in the consultation responses was the attitudinal barriers – young people not knowing what to expect or how welcoming arts and cultural organisations would be for new visitors and participants. There were no specific responses about disability access in the wider consultation, but two of the Ambassadors had hearing impairments they both found it hard to access creative opportunities outside college because they needed to rely on access support staff to support with signing.

When it came to time, some said they were busy with other interests, such as sports, or they had too much schoolwork. In addition, some said the timings of creative activities did not suit their schedules.

“I’m very busy with other things, but the timings of arts activities don’t suit me. I have to help my mom with little kids, and be at school. I’d like more evening activities. In my area there’s not much to join in that is tailored to the timescale of school.”

Nicole, 17, Bridgefest Ambassador, Southend

“I don’t have time to get involved in them. I’m more focused on GCSEs than anything else.”

Albert, 16, Essex

“They are generally really time consuming - 3 or 4 hours plus, and you need to go every week.”

Israel, 14, Southend

Those who were not interested in creative activities generally had a greater focus on sports.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the aim of this project was to meet a wide range of young people across the whole ROHB region within a fairly limited amount of time and resources. We recognise some additional research with a slightly different approach would probably be required to consult with young people who may be totally unconnected, uninterested or even disenfranchised with the arts and culture world. Overall though, we did manage to speak to a good range of young people by going to both arts and non-art events, being in public spaces and even going to a college open day, so the barriers here are believed to be fairly representative of young people in the region.

The other barriers mentioned were cost, peer pressure – i.e. you don’t get involved because your friends are not involved or it’s not cool, and laziness. However, these were not strong themes, and laziness only seemed to be mentioned in the context of young people sharing views on why others may not be involved.

3.5 What do young people think arts organisations can do to reach them more effectively, both through programming and marketing?

Focus on reaching young people through people and places they know and trust, mainly schools. The most effective way of engaging them is through taster activities, which don't put on the pressure to be the best or commit long-term. Develop partnerships with other sectors to reach a broader range of young people. Involve young people in developing and delivering marketing campaigns to reach other young people, and identify those already engaged to be spokespeople. Within marketing content emphasise skills-development opportunities, the social element and provide as much information as possible to support those with less confidence.

Develop activities that cross art-forms, especially programmes which cross physical and digital interests. Offer a mix of long and short-term opportunities. Develop long-term strategies which consider how audiences can engage from a very young age, and how they can transition to programmes for teenagers. Offer space for young people to practice or hang out with peers – space-led programmes rather than activity-led. Link activities to young people's interests, especially music, popular culture and contemporary issues.

Young people were asked how they had heard about the creative opportunities they were engaged in, to give a sense how current art and cultural organisations are successfully reaching out. This question covered how young people became involved in independent and group activities. In the consultation we also asked the question 'what advice would you give to arts and cultural organisations so they can be more successful at attracting young people?' The conclusions from the other questions within the consultation feed into these suggestions. It is no surprise that because one of the key barriers to engagement identified by young people was poor marketing, much of this advice centred on improving marketing, both content and methods. There were also a lot useful suggestions about programming.

How did the young people we consulted hear about the creative activities they are engaged in?

The large majority of those already engaged in creative activities had heard about it through someone they know. The most references were made to school, closely followed by friends and then family. Although schools are key for connecting young people to creative activities, different methods within schools are responsible: teachers, assemblies, newsletters and competitions. Schools are also key to connecting young people to external opportunities; through school news promotions or inviting organisations into deliver creative workshops.

"I started in primary school, year 2. They were offering piano lessons, and my mom and dad said I bet you won't stick to it... and 10 years later I'm still playing."

Dan, 17, Canvey, Essex

“Through my guitar teacher, he worked with them (YWMC Switch 2 Music); he invited me in.”

Rob, 17, Southend

Friends are, of course, very important to introducing each other to creative activities, especially given that the social element of participation in arts is important for so many young people.

“I got into cosplay through friends; they invited me along to an event.”

Nat, 17, Grays, Thurrock

A significant number of young people consulted had been involved in creative activities since a young age, and these were more likely to say family was an important factor in introducing them to this interest.

“My granddad is an artist; I got into it through him. He is a sculptor.”

Paul, 13, Rainham, North Kent

“I think growing up with music, and always having it there.”

Maddy, 19, Southend

Only two young people consulted said they become interested in arts after being actively approached by staff from arts organisations, both were at arts events as an audience member.

A very small number of those consulted heard about their activity from a third party; one saw it on the internet, one in a paper and one was inspired by seeing the activity on television.

How can arts and cultural organisations communicate with and market more effectively to young people?

Better communication and marketing was mentioned by most young people, but it was hard within the consultation to draw out what may be the most effective. Many answers were fairly vague and suggested organisations use standard approaches such as social media, posters, flyers and newspapers. Overall this would suggest there is not one specific way to reach young people. Most organisations are probably utilising a variety of approaches, but not a lot seems to be reaching young people. One key suggestion, which is evident from how those already engaging heard about their activities, was to reach young people through the places they tend to be in large numbers, so schools, colleges and youth organisations. This is nothing new but it is clear from this consultation that young people believe this is the most effective way of marketing opportunities to them. However, there were still some useful suggestions from the consultation about marketing content and approaches:

Content:

- Consider terminology that will relate to young people
- Emphasise skills development opportunities
- Make it clear there is no pressure to make a long term commitment
- Emphasise the social element; say you can bring your friends and meet new ones
- Emphasise you don't have to be an expert or even that good to take part
- Don't be patronising
- Include lots of information about what to expect to relieve any anxiety about coming for the first time

- Ensure all marketing and promotion material is created to high-quality professional standards.

Approaches:

- Going into schools to share opportunities was considered the most effective marketing approach
- Family members are also important so consider how to market opportunities to parents
- Take activities outside to public spaces to engage more young people through taster sessions
- Social media, obvious but key
- Involve young people in doing the marketing – it provide lots of creative opportunities and skills development, from making and distributing fliers, to leading social media campaigns
- Use young people already engaged as spokespeople, so the face of your organisation is one young people can relate to
- Develop partnerships with sports organisations and promote opportunities to young people interested in sports
- Recognise that different kinds of approaches are more successful with different young people. Face to face relationships are more important to young people with less confidence or exposure to the arts.

“Broaden the way you try and meet them, social media is a big one. Target different groups instead of just posting an activity to an art group or webpage they should go to a sport page to like

cross promote, or do partnerships with sports centres.”

Malik, 17, Bridgefest Ambassador, Luton

“It’s best to do advertising in schools; posters are a bit disjointed - it doesn’t really feel personal.”

Izzy, 16 Southend

“Getting it through schools, it’s more like chatting - if your friend goes somewhere you are more likely to go.”

Ellie, Southend, 16

“Starting outdoor activities would be a way of engaging young people in arts. Just start an outdoor activity and people would join in.”

Aaron, 19, Colchester, Essex

How can arts and cultural organisations develop programmes that are more attractive to young people?

When it comes to engaging young people there is much cross over between marketing and programming because certain activities are the most effective way to increase interest; offering taster sessions was mentioned by many young people. They want to be able to take part in different activities, without having to necessarily commit long-term. It is clear from the range of activities young people engage in, that many are interested in multiple art forms, and don’t tend to categorise what they do. For example fashion blogging involves writing, fashion and style; cosplay involves designing, styling, makeup, and performance; music production involves music and technical skills. Organisations may be more

successful at offering activities that cut across different art forms.

- Taster activities
- Activities lead by topic rather than art form (and include different activities)
- Mixture of long and short term commitment activities
- Start from a young age – i.e. develop a strategy for engaging very young people if you want to secure future teenager audience; although many organisations will be focussing on engaging young people as new visitors, it is useful to think long term about how any other under-5s and family programmes can provide transitional opportunities and feed into young people's programmes
- Offer young people social spaces and practice areas – rather than organised activities (space led not activity led)
- Link activities to the interests of young people; both popular culture and contemporary issues were mentioned, but also think about developing more active creative opportunities which may attract young people into sports
- Utilise abandoned buildings and unusual spaces – although realistically there are extensive resources and health and safety implications, young people believed both a lack of opportunities and the prevalence of empty building provided some kind of opportunity
- Support young people to develop, lead and get funding for their own creative activities

“Would attend some of them to see what they are like, like short taster sessions.”

Lewis, Southend, 12

“Do more things the kids are into, do sports - more active creative stuff.”

Niall, 13, Canvey

“Start from a young age is important, I don't think I would have come into it if I have started now. If you are introduced to it when you are little you will enjoy it later on.”

Maddie, 15, Billericay

“There are a lot of abandoned buildings in Southend. If they refurbished them and made them into spaces for young people it would help. Lots of people say there isn't enough to do.”

Alana, 17, Southend

“You need to go out and meet young people and ask what they want. They also need to try and find the bits that the younger audiences are interested in - like certain music.”

Kiera, 16, North Kent

“Grab their attention, think what they would like to do, what would stick in their memories and hearts for ever, for example link to a popular film on at the cinema.”

Benedict, 14, Watford

“I think it would be great to integrate art and creative activities with something like rollerblading. If you mixed them together more people would join in.”

Akrity, 16, Essex

3.6 Building up a picture of the region

This project has been a small-scale qualitative study into the views of a relatively small number of young people in the region. It would also be unfair to present the findings about specific areas as being truly representative because we consulted with a much larger number of young people across Essex, Southend and Thurrock, compared with Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and North Kent. A much larger scale research project would be needed to explore specific areas within the region. However there were some emerging themes:

- A lot of consultation was conducted in Southend, the overwhelming response was that there were not enough opportunities, although some thought there were lots of music activities
- Young people from smaller towns and villages in Essex found activities outside school were just too far away, so in-school creative opportunities were key for them to access arts and culture. This was particular feedback from young people who lived in areas around Southend; they felt any activities tended to be located in Southend, which was too far for them to travel to on a regular basis.
- There was only one consultation event in North Kent, and it was clear young people there thought there was not a lot for young people to do and activities were hard to get to, which correlated with the views of the Ambassadors from North Kent. Transport links from more isolated areas such as Isle of Sheppey were limited.
- In Hertfordshire young people found it easier to travel into London than to travel across the district. For example, Ambassadors from Luton came to lead the consultation events in Hertfordshire because it was easier for them to access than Ambassadors who lived in the region.

Whilst researching existing provision in the region, recruiting of Ambassadors, and securing events to form part of Bridgefest consultation, we contacted many arts and youth organisations. Although the views of young people are key, this additional research builds up a fuller picture of the current provision in the region. A full list of all the organisations we communicated with or heard about are listed in Appendix C. In addition, we conducted some informal face to face and telephone interviews with staff at youth and arts organisations about their views on the research aims. These organisations are listed below, with any key points of interest that came from the conversations. Many of these interviews were with arts organisations that are successfully engaging young people, and it is interesting to see how many of the suggestions from the consultation are happening within these organisations.

Central Bedfordshire College, Learning Improvement Manager

They take much of their work in to public spaces, for example fashion students have done fashion shows in the shopping centre and art students have created murals for a local hospital.

Much of their creative courses focus on developing enterprise and employability skills. Their enterprise club have had pop-up shows in the town centre.

They have developed strong links with the Hat Producers Gallery and recently teachers have exhibited work there. They also work in partnership with the gallery on projects to engage young people not in employment, education or training.

Watford Palace Theatre, Head of Learning and Participation

They have developed different youth theatre programmes aimed at young people with different interests and abilities. As well as their established youth theatre, they have a gifted and talented

theatre and a new satellite theatre to engage young people who may have little interest in or exposure to theatre. They have recognised the very different recruitment methods needed for the different programmes, for example the satellite theatre focuses on taking workshops out into areas where there is least engagement.

Young people involved in Watford Palace Theatre are linked up to wider regional initiatives, including taking their work to outdoor public spaces. This summer the youth theatre was involved in the Imagine Watford festival.

The theatre is also aware of how sporting venues are key to connecting to a broader range of young people, and staff had good links with Watford Football Club.

Many staff we spoke to in Hertfordshire were aware of the Hertfordshire Youth Parliament's manifesto, http://www.youthconnexions-hertfordshire.org/media/148906/manifesto_1314_final.pdf its second priority focuses on leisure and cultural opportunities. Page 25 summarises their suggestions, based on research, for improving access to arts for young people in Herts. More relevant programming and better marketing are also key themes, along with development of loyalty schemes.

Hertfordshire Music Service, Head of Participation and Inclusion

The Head of Participation and Inclusion has found that Creative Hertfordshire, an online network for creative practitioners in the county <http://www.creativehertfordshire.com/> valuable for developing partnerships. It is a fairly new initiative, but is working well, and there are plans to involve organisations that work with young people outside of an arts and cultural context too. Linked to this online network is Channel Mogo, which is an online listing site for young people's events.

The Heart of Flame festival is a programme that brings together lots of events under a single brand to give them a greater profile. It also has a strand of enterprise work, which aims to train young people to be events managers, also giving them opportunities to get Arts Awards.

Karis May Darling Foundation, Thurrock, Charity Director

This organisation supports underprivileged children and young people to engage in the arts. It also has a small community centre. The Director believes young people in the area do not get much exposure to arts and culture. The Director thinks music is the most popular creative interest amongst young people. They have opened a small music studio at the centre, which gives young people the opportunity to record and produce their own music. This has been very popular, and they believe engaging young people in music could open up other creative interests. The Director also thinks many young people are interested in gaming and technology, so this could be a good route into exploring wider creative opportunities.

Ideas Test, Swale and Medway Creative People and Places, Youth Catalyst (manages Impact, their young people's group)

The Swale and Medway CPP project encourages local people to apply for small pots of funding to develop and deliver creative activities. This fund is open to young people, and some of the Ambassadors involved in this research have been accessing this fund. It gives them the opportunity to actually shape and lead activities, rather than just participate, which was clearly a huge motivator for the young people involved. In addition, applying for funding and managing budgets and projects offers range of professional skills, and the young people felt they were being treated as equals. Some of the young people we spoke to were currently applying to funding

to deliver dance flash mobs, stencil art and film projects. Some of these projects are now in delivery stage.

The Youth Catalyst thinks young people in the area have confidence issues about accessing creative opportunities, especially about making that first step to meet new people. In addition the Youth Catalyst believes that access issues, mainly travel – both the distance and cost, is a major barrier. The Youth Catalyst also believes linking to music is the most effective way to attracting young people.

Firstsite Gallery, Essex, Circuit Artist (leads and manages youth programmes including Youth Arts Kommunity)

Youth Arts Kommunity is a core group of young people at Firstsite who meet regularly to plan and deliver arts activities for other young people. They are able to deliver activities based around their own interests, and these are as wide ranging as breakdancing and circus skills. Firstsite gives them the space and support. Firstsite has utilised celebration events, which involve youth-led activities as a way of recruiting more young people. They also have worked with the local youth services who run a youth bus², which means they can travel around the region to engage young people in their own areas, rather than

onsite. These offsite workshops have to be flexible to suit the interests of young people they meet. For example, a zine making workshop did not engage with a group of 12/13 year old males, so they used the paper to make paper planes, then create music playlists. Although many of their workshops are free they offer vouchers to any paid ones to young people they meet on youth bus, so they can have taster sessions at low cost. The Circuit Artist believes that being so close to London means that a lot of local young people don't realise there are creative activities closer to

home. The Circuit Artist also thinks Essex loses a lot of creative talent to London.

Some of the outputs young people make, such as Zines, are sold in the gallery shop. She also believes space is important for young people. They recently made an art piece and film which portrays a map of Colchester showing all the public spaces they have been moved on from. The Circuit Artist believes art organisations can offer much needed spaces for young people.

2 The author was not able to fully clarify, but believe the Youth Bus is run by Essex Council, <http://www.essex.gov.uk/News/Pages/New-Essex-Youth-Bus-unveiled.aspx>

4. Recommendations

How can ROHB develop stronger links to young people in the area and actively involve them in the planning and delivery?

- Do more research into and raise awareness of the cross art-from activities that young people are interested in, especially those that are inspired by new technologies, the digital world and physical interests. Young people are still interested in traditional art forms, but creative activities them crossover into digital and physical interests have potential to broaden the appeal of arts and culture to a wider range of young people.
- Develop a framework that helps arts and cultural organisations better assess the way their offer to young people provides career, skills development, and enterprise opportunities. Support organisations to develop these as key messages within marketing and communications content. Develop a centralised regional information hub which organisations and young people can use to access guidance and advice about future training, apprenticeship, volunteering and career opportunities.
- Develop a resource of good practice case studies where youth programme outputs are supporting art organisation's commercial ventures, thereby improving enterprise and business skills, and going some way to supporting youth programme costs.
- Develop funding pots that arts organisation can administer, which allow young people to develop, deliver and manage budgets for their own art activities.
- Commission more research into successful youth-lead marketing or develop resources that highlight successful case studies.
- Utilise Bridgefest Ambassadors as connectors to young people and arts organisations in the region. Utilise their consultation skills for future research.
- Support organisations to develop audience development strategies that focus on engaging the very young and consider how these audiences can transition to programmes for older young people.
- Help facilitate partnerships between the arts and youth sectors, and sport, health and commercial organisations, possibly through region-wide online networks.
- Invest in online hubs or networks, or raise profiles of existing ones, which are a one-stop place for young people to find out what is on offer in their area.
- Consider developing umbrella branding to bring a range of activities from different organisations together to raise profile and improve marketing.
- Develop or support access to funding pots for young people to plan and deliver their own creative activities.
- Promote the importance of evaluation of marketing to young people, so the sector can build up intelligence about what work.

5. Ambassador Case Studies

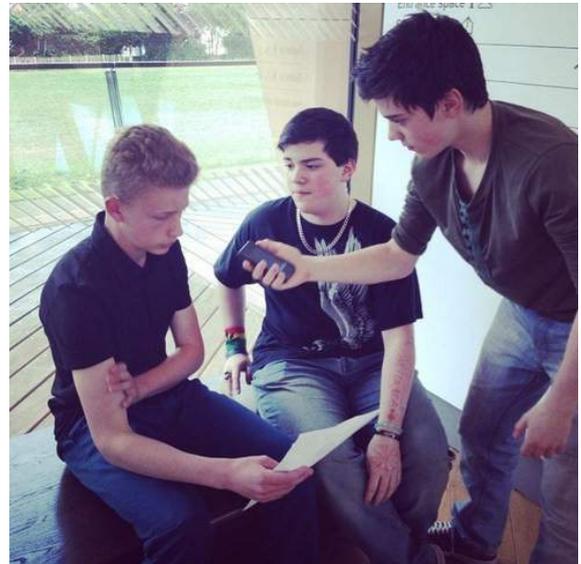
Albie, 15, Thurrock



Albie interviewing at Grays street festival, Thurrock

Well I can honestly say that Bridgefest was a great success, I learnt lots of new skills, with interviewing and the different types of apps that we could use to interview people with. It was great fun meeting and greeting new people. But all this made me realise, that in my area there are lots of people that do great things and what they do in their spare time amazes me and I'm so glad I was a part of a team. I would also like to thank all the team that helped out in the training to get us as ambassadors ready to go out to the public to ask questions. On the whole everything went really well and the team got lots of information and if this opportunity happened again I would more than be happy come and do it all again.

Louie, 14, North Kent



Louie, left, with fellow Ambassadors Brendan and Brad

During my time doing work experience with the Audience Agency I took part in interviewing at two Bridgefest events, at Firstsite Gallery in Colchester, and at the Village Green festival in Southend. At the Firstsite Gallery I helped to interview members of the Limitless breakdance group. I also took pictures to upload onto Instagram, so they could then be added to Storify where the pictures could be viewed online by anyone. I also helped interview at the Village Green Festival on its first day, which was for schools to visit and see other young people performing. The interviews were designed so we could have a conversation with the interviewee and talk in detail about their opinions on arts and culture. I thoroughly enjoyed my experience at the Bridgefest events. It was interesting visiting the Firstsite gallery in Colchester, an area I had not been to before, and seeing the music performances at the Village Green festival, which were also quite inspiring. I was quite nervous at the festival when I had to go up to people and ask them for an interview, but it got easier as the day went on and my confidence grew. The interviewing will surely be a useful skill in the future, since I had not done any interviewing before.

Rachel, 14, Thurrock



Rachel, right, with Ambassador Albie and Nicole at Grays street festival

Being an Ambassador is interesting and cool; it's a chance for your voice and other people's voices to be heard, so we can make improvements to the arts in our area. Through the process of Bridgefest I have learnt about using social media to advertise and connect to audiences. We made up some questions we wanted to ask the public to understand their views on arts opportunities. Going to the events and speaking to people was really interesting because you got to hear other opinions. However, I did feel as if people who were not interested in arts did not want to be interviewed about it. I feel as if my confidence has grown, from going out and interviewing people. I am more open-minded after hearing lots of different views. Being an Ambassador, who is interested in the arts, not only do I feel as if I am improving the availability of arts opportunities for me but also for a lot of other people. So far I have enjoyed being an Ambassador and I can't wait for part two where we share out project and organise an event.

Rory, 17, Southend



Rory, with the backpack, interviewing young people at Village Green festival in Essex.

I thought that Bridgefest was incredibly fun to be a part of. I think this for several reasons:

It enabled me to have more confidence in my opinions and thoughts and how to share them openly with other people.

It helped me (and I'm sure many others) to have more confidence in asking people questions and becoming better skilled at interviewing. The events all helped us to make new friends and contacts in music and other performing arts.

Bridgefest was helpful in many respects and gave lots of young people the abilities to help others and complete basic research in the form of interviewing. There aren't many of these events and organizations around and so this meant that Bridgefest was one-of-a-kind and, in my opinion, there should be more of this nowadays.

In addition, we got the opportunity to see behind the scenes at the Royal Opera House, something that most people only ever dream of doing. Overall it was really fun and I would certainly recommend taking part to anyone and I'd certainly do it again/stay involved!

Nicole, 17, Southend



Nicole, on the right, with other Ambassadors Chris, Charmine and Mary at Southend Youth Council

My experience in working with The Royal Opera House Bridge was a very thought-provoking and enriching one. We got a lot of training in May to equip us with the skills we would need to interview people, whether individually or in groups, on what they thought about arts and culture in their local areas. As Ambassadors we were highly involved in the planning of the research itself, which I thought was brilliant. We really got a first-hand look into how an actual research project is planned and executed. It was one thing to learn about research in school but it was another to get to use that knowledge so early on in my career. To me this was a great privilege. We also had great fun trying out numerous social media websites and apps which we would use as the research was being carried out. About a month after we planned the research we started going out to events in our local areas as Bridgefest Ambassadors. I'm not going to lie, the task seemed daunting at first. Even with all the training and rehearsal, I was still quite nervous. I went to 3 of the events where we were interviewing people and found that the more I interviewed people the more confident I got and the better I became as an interviewer. I thought it was also really great how

much trust the leaders of the project put in us, we went off to interview people and they trusted that we would do a good job even without their assistance. This really built my confidence up. Overall I really enjoyed my experience, I found it highly interesting to listen to the opinions of other young people. I learnt a lot more than I could ever imagine and feel that my confidence has grown immensely throughout my time assisting with the research project.

Sam, 19, North Kent, a Royal Opera House apprentice



Sam, centre, with Ambassadors Thomas and Maddie at Geek 2014 in Rainham, Kent

Hearing about this research initiative to look into young people's views on arts and culture that would culminate in a conference led by young people to me was an ingenious, exciting and creative idea that I simply could not resist being a part of.

Stage 1: Where it all began: Being part of the Ambassador training days held on May 29th and 30th was not only good fun, it driven with palpable enthusiasm that came from these young people. They were at the session because they wanted to be there and being involved on this project as a participant/observer, it was incredibly rewarding to step back and see these young people take complete control of the direction of this scheme and how to go about achieving the best results.

Stage 2: Consultation events: Being a busy apprentice has played its part in my lack of attendance to consultation events; however on August 30th I was very kindly offered the chance to attend the Geek Fest in Rainham, Kent. This extremely bizarre but exciting event was the perfect location to pick on the brains of these

young people and hear their views on arts and culture, whether good or bad. Some really interesting results were spawned and it helped me personally develop my interview technique to try and do the best qualitative research I could. As I am from Kent, it felt extremely relevant for me to be at this event with the other Kent ambassadors as I feel this area was quite neglected during the initial ambassador training. Working with Maddie and Thomas was good fun and besides playing on the many games that were there (VERY FUN!), it felt good to step back from being a participant and go into observer mode as I let them both take over the interviewing and recording of interviews, slowly but steadily showing them that people aren't so hard to approach when you put your mind to it!

Appendices

Appendix A- consultation question guide

<p style="text-align: center;">Are you involved in any creative / arts / cultural activities?</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This could be independently or as part of a club / organisation</p>			
<p>What do the words 'arts' and 'culture' mean to you?</p>	<p>If no: What keeps you from getting involved?</p> <p>Why are you not interested?</p> <p>Would you like to be more involved?</p>	<p>What creative and cultural opportunities are there for young people in your area?</p> <p>What are your views about the arts in your area?</p>	<p>If yes:</p> <p>What do you do?</p> <p>Why do you like it?</p> <p>What do you get out of it?</p> <p>How did you find out about it?</p> <p>What keeps you doing it?</p>

A final question was also added: What advice would you give to arts/cultural/creative organisations so they can reach out to and attract young people better?

Appendix B – A list of organisations the young people we consulted with, are linked to

Note, not all young people mentioned the name of their groups, plus this list reflects the fact we did more consultation events in Essex and more of the Ambassadors were from Essex, but it still gives an overview of some arts organisations that engage young people:

YMCA Switch 2 Music, Southend	Creative People and Places Swale and Medway young people's group - Impact
Metal Culture (for Arts Awards), Essex	
Young Producers, Thurrock	Leighton Buzzard Youth Theatre, Central Bedfordshire
Limitless Breakdancing group, Essex	New House Youth Centre, Kent
Mercury Youth Theatre, Essex	Hertsmere Youth Connexions, Hertfordshire
Southend Boys Choir	Southend Youth Council
Essex Concert Orchestra	
Southend Young Men's Choir	
South Essex Youth Symphony Orchestra	
Circuit at The Waiting Room, Essex (art workshop and a community space)	
Firstsite YAK (Youth Arts Kommunity), Essex	
Thurrock Asian Association Dance Group	
Celebration Theatre School, Thurrock	
Thameside Theatre, Thurrock	
Cally Davies drama group, Southend	
Chelmsford Dance Centre, Essex	
Essex Marching Corps	
Creative Blast Academy, Thurrock	
Watford Palace Youth Theatre, Hertfordshire	
Stage Arts Theatre School, St Albans, Hertfordshire	
Herts Young Cultural Ambassadors	
Luton Allstars performers	

Appendix C - A list of organisations connected

We made contact with the following organisations (those in italics are organisations we heard about but did not communicate with)

Bedfordshire

- Full House Theatre, Young Producers
- Central Bedfordshire College
- *Bedford College*
- *Leighton Buzzard Youth Theatre*
- Rifco Arts
- Bowes Lyons Group who run After Dark event, a monthly youth led live music event

Luton

- Luton All-star Performers
- Luton Culture, museum Re-Created Youth Forum
- Ashcroft High School
- *Luton Sixth Form College*
- *Watford Palace Football Club*
- *Watford Borough Council Arts Development Officer*
- *Channel Mogo* <http://www.mogozout.org/>
- *Youth Connexions*
- *Heart of Flame festival* <http://heartofflamefestival.com>
- *Heart of Flame Ambassadors* <http://heartofflamefestival.com/hoff-ambassadors/> run by Inspire Enterprise group <http://www.tiegr.co.uk>

Hertfordshire

- West Herts College, GAP Lounge (volunteering and job club) and Creative Employment Programme
- Herts 1125 <https://www.youthconnexions-hertfordshire.org/youth-work/young-peoples-democracy/herts1125/>
- Herts Youth Parliament, UKYP
- Herts Creation, Herts Young Cultural Ambassadors
- Watford Palace Theatre, Youth theatre
- Hertfordshire Music Service
- Creative Hertfordshire <http://www.creativehertfordshire.com/>

Essex

- Billericay Community Trust Teaching School Alliance
- Epping Forest District and Lowewood Museums, Young Curators
- Firstsite Gallery, Youth Arts Kommunity, Limitless Dance club, Flow circus skills, and Circuit art workshops
- The Waiting Room
- Gibberd Gallery, Young Curators
- Mercury Theatre, Young Company and Fresh Play workshops

- *Essex Library Service young consultants*
- *Chelmsford Dance Centre*
- *Essex marching Corps*

Essex – Thurrock

- *Thurrock International Celebration of Culture?, Grays Street Festival*
- *South Essex College*
- *Creative Blast Academy, Young Producers*
<http://www.cbacademy.co.uk>
- *Karis May Darling Foundation*
<http://www.karismaydarlingfoundation.org.uk/>
- *Thameside Theatre*
- *The Big Lunch*
<http://www.thebiglunch.com/> (community arts event)
- *Celebration Theatre School*

Essex – Southend

- *Metal Culture, Village Green festival*
- *Southend Youth Council*
- *Cally Davies Dama*
- *Southend Young Men's Chorus*
- *Southend Boys Choir*

- *South Essex Youth Symphony Orchestra*

North Kent

- *Swale and Medway Creative People and Place, young people's group - Impact*
- *Geek Festival*
- *Just Films, Isle of Sheppey*
- *Kent Council Arts Development Officers*
- *LV21*
- *Soup Festival*
- *Six Ways to Wellbeing, 3 organisations working with young people across Dartford, Gravesend and Swale, including Icon Theatre, LV21, Cohesion Plus, Gravesham Healthy Living Centre, Ideas Test and Swale CVS*
- *New House Youth Centre, Sittingbourne*

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