

BRIGHTBOX

FINAL REPORT

EXPLORING ARTS & CULTURE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE IN SHEFFIELD

CREATE SHEFFIELD

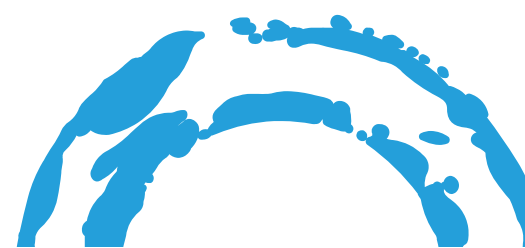

DECEMBER 2023





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Introduction

Research Aims: Children and Young People

This research project had a number of aims, covering both the Create Sheffield partnership and the experience of arts and culture for children and young people.

The primary aim for children and young people was to understand the barriers they face when accessing arts and culture in Sheffield.

To achieve this aim, we commissioned the The Care Experienced Voice and Influence Team, Sheffield City Council and the Student Participation & Careers Team, The Sheffield College. Both teams worked with young people to explore their experience of arts and culture. In addition, we interviewed and surveyed organisations working with children and young people.



A key part of this research was putting young people at the forefront. Both youth teams that we worked with supported young people to lead the research. They were provided with the resources needed to conduct their own interviews and focus groups with their peers. We gained insight from young people, into what they want and prioritise.

Research Aims: Create Sheffield partners

The focus for the Create Sheffield partnership was to benchmark the current partnership pool and explore how to expand the partner pool in an inclusive and accessible way.

To enable Create Sheffield to successfully expand the partner pool in an inclusive way, we needed to establish through this body of research who exists that has not joined the partnership, and understand what they want and need from a partnership with Create Sheffield. We conducted in-depth interviews with organisations across Sheffield.

To achieve these aims, we surveyed, interviewed, and conducted focus groups with current partners, associates and organisations that are not affiliated with Create Sheffield.

This research has worked with:

- 122 children and young people
- 13 non-partner organisations
- 28 partner organisations

122 Children and young people

13 Non-partner organisations

28 Partner organisations



Create Sheffield Partnership

Current Partnership

The current partnership consists of 80 organisations working for the benefit of children and young people in Sheffield, through work related to arts, culture, and heritage. The current partnership offer brings people together to share opportunities, network and learn from each other. By becoming a partner, organisations can attend regular Programming and Participation meeting, receive partner-only updates, and have a presence on the website and in the newsletter.

Through this research, we distributed a survey and invited partners to a forum event where they were invited to share their views on the current partnership offer, including what works well and suggested improvements. Of the partners who engaged with the project:

- 100% work with children and young people
- 67% involve children and young people in decision making.
- 96% think children and young people face barriers to accessing arts and culture in Sheffield
- 82% currently work with schools

Partner Satisfaction

Overall satisfaction with the Create Sheffield partnership is high among current partner organisations. In response to the question “How likely are you to recommend being a Create Sheffield partner to others?”, the partners rated Create Sheffield 8.75/10, with no partner scoring below a 6.

Organisations want continuing access to group events and networking opportunities, the schools newsletter, and training.

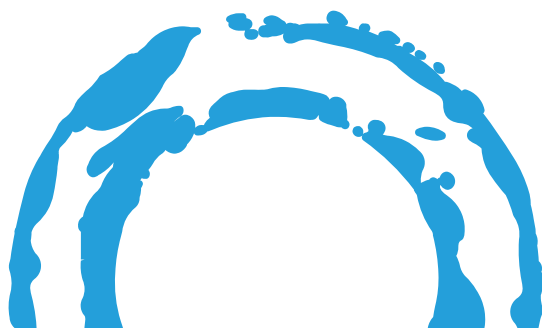
100% of partner organisations that responded to the survey think that the Create Sheffield partnership network is useful to them. Partners noted that they experience increased trust in their organisation as a result of being a partner. They value the exposure they receive by being on the website and the opportunity to share projects in the schools newsletter. They also value knowledge sharing, networking and accessing artists through the network.

Partners shared their thanks and optimism about the partnership:

“Thanks for everything you are doing to support arts and artists in this area!”

“We are looking forward to a strong future partnership with Create Sheffield.”

The perspectives of those who engaged with the research is promising. However, it is worth noting that there were a number of partners that chose not to engage with the research and share their perspective on the partnership.



Create Sheffield Partnership

What is most useful about being a Create Sheffield partner?



Being on the website



Knowledge Sharing



Trusted Brand



Promotion to schools



Newsletter



Networking



Finding Artists

What should Create Sheffield prioritise?



Supporting networking



Promotion to schools



Opportunity for all



Information sharing



Advocacy



Funding

Create Sheffield Partnership

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The majority of the current Create Sheffield partnership are considering equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) as part of their work. When asked whether they have taken any steps to improve or implement EDI measures:

- 82% said yes, they have taken steps
- 4% said no, they have not taken any steps
- 10% said they want to but are unsure where to start
- 4% said they were unsure.

Partners who had taken steps to improve or implement EDI measures are considering EDI in relation to systems, policies, accessibility, content, hiring practices, representation, and training. However, the majority of partners feel like more needs to be done. 82% of partners said they want more support with EDI.

When asked what support Create Sheffield could offer the partners, overwhelmingly organisations responded stating that they want more training. The next most common responses included: creating and reviewing policies and procedures, sharing best practice, knowledge sharing, reaching diverse practitioners, and funding. Followed by: finding consultants, widening the partner pool, more resources, and increasing capacity.

As part of the survey, partners were asked to identify the percentage of their participants who are from a global majority background and the extent to which their board and senior leadership reflect this. This has become a metric used as part of funding processes, as a means of identifying leaders with lived experience. It is not the only metric, but forms a part of a wider conversation about equality, diversity and inclusion in the sector.

100%

Work with children and young people from a Global Majority background.

46%

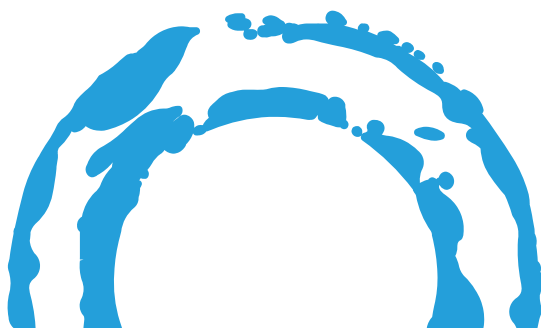
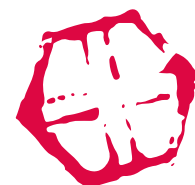
Have Global Majority representation on their board or senior leadership.

50%

Work with participants where more than 50% are from a Global Majority background.

4%

Have a board or senior leadership with over 50% Global Majority representation.



Create Sheffield Partnership

What can Create Sheffield improve?



Training

Access to free or low-cost training opportunities.



Clarify the offer

Be clearer about what the offer is for partners and what the role of Create Sheffield is.



Schools

Persuade schools to use the partner pool and support partners to connect with schools more frequently.



Funding

Link to funding and provide opportunities for joint bids. Support the partnership to move away from competing for the same pots.



Children & Young People

Connect programmes to children and young people.



Events

Provide access to more regular events and offer different kinds of sessions e.g. project sharing, evaluation.



Resources

E.g. templates, best practice, reporting documents.



Decision Makers

Connect the Create Sheffield decision makers to the partners.



Networking

Make networking more equitable for those who do not have salaried staff or are freelance, and offer networking in different formats.

Expanding The Partnership

Interviews With Non-Partners

To explore the possibility of expanding the Create Sheffield partnership, this research included interviews with organisations who meet the criteria for joining the partnership but who are not currently partners. We reached out to 40 organisations who met these criteria, with mixed responses. Of the 40 organisations contacted, interviews were completed with 13, 2 organisations were interested but unable to take part due to time constraints, and the remaining 25 did not respond.

Given that most organisations contacted were not already affiliated with Create Sheffield, a 38% response rate implies organisations were interested in the research. Jodie Gow, the researcher for this portion of the project, noted that:

“The response from non-partner, non-associate organisations being approached for the first time was generally really positive. That contributions and outcomes from the research would be heard, learned, and meaningfully responded to as much as possible, and that young people were involved, were some of the questions those I met with had. There was, understandably, some wariness of an organisation popping up out-of-the-blue and asking for time.”

Interviews were completed with 13 organisations, 4 already associated with Create Sheffield and 9 who were not associated with Create Sheffield.

The interviews explored how organisations feel about joining the Create Sheffield partnership. Most of the interviewees were not aware of Create Sheffield, or the partnership and sought further clarity on what it means to be a Create Sheffield partner.

Organisations' priorities include youth representation and decision-making and ensuring that learning opportunities are inclusive and representative – both in terms of who is running the provision and what content is included.

Overall organisations were positive about potential partnership and highlighted that they want more opportunities to collaborate, share knowledge, and are particularly interested in youth voice and equality, diversity, and inclusion.

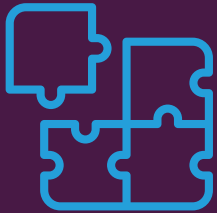
There were some reservations about partnership work in general, based on previous experience. Capacity, time, effectiveness, and the treatment of young people as 'hard to reach', or incapable of making decisions about what they want and need, were all concerns that were raised. There is a sense amongst non-partners that a partnership working in this area should:

- Champion young people making decisions.
- Value the contributions of young people.
- Challenge the myth of 'hard to reach' groups.
- Offer action-oriented meetings.
- Be clear about the offer for partners.
- Maximise information sharing.

For those who were already aware of Create Sheffield, there was some confusion over what being a partner entails. A partner that had joined the network and left was interviewed, sharing that they didn't understand how best to utilise the partnership.

Expanding The Partnership

Non-partner priorities



Children & Young People

Value the contributions of young people and break down barriers to access.



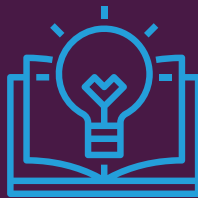
Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

Champion Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in work produced and representation in projects.



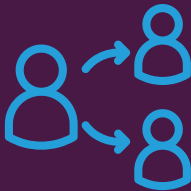
Challenge The Narrative

Challenge the myth that people are 'hard to reach'.



The Offer

Be clearer about what the offer is for partners and what the role of Create Sheffield is.



Knowledge

Maximise information sharing.



Events

Offer action-oriented meetings.



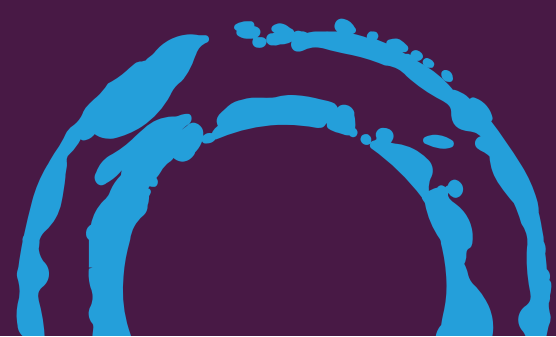
Funding

What an organisation can achieve, or has the time to do, often depends on their ability to get funding.



Capacity

Organisations often are stretched for time.






Children & Young People

Research Overview

To explore the priorities of children and young people, and what the sector is doing to champion arts and culture for children and young people, we spoke to organisations working with children and young people, conducted research with Sheffield College students and commissioned the Care Experienced Voice and Influence Team from Sheffield City Council to create a youth-led research project. What follows in this report includes data gathered from the Sheffield College students and local organisations, which has been compared to initial findings from the Voice and Influence team's research. The full report from the Voice and Influence team will be available by February 2023.

Student Voice: Sheffield College

To ensure we were working from a shared understanding, students were asked to define 'arts and culture'. Students felt that art is a way of expressing yourself, your thoughts and your feelings. There was a sense that art involves creativity. Culture was defined as shared beliefs, values, practices, and traditions.



Students were then asked to share their views of arts and culture. They were asked where they had and had not been, what they liked and what they did not like, and to share their recommendations for improvements.

21% of young people had not visited any arts or culture venues in Sheffield. The majority of those who had not visited a venue were not interested in more opportunities to get involved or they did not respond to the question. Of those who said they were interested, they listed Weston Park Museum, Botanical Gardens, The Crucible, and the National Videogame Museum as spaces they were interested in going.

21%

Had not visited any space they considered to be an arts or cultural venue.

33%

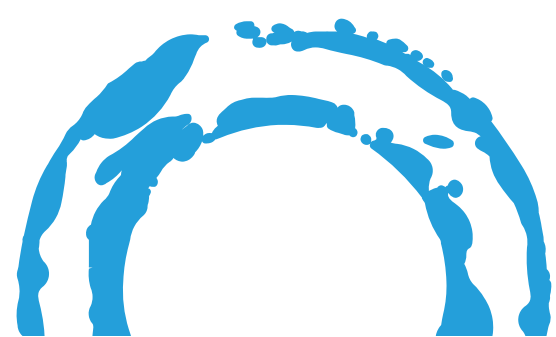
Said they are not interested in attending a new arts or cultural venue.

22%

Said they do not want more opportunities to get involved with arts and culture.

34%

Are unsure whether they want more opportunities to get involved with arts and culture.



Children & Young People

Student Voice: Sheffield College

When asked to share their reasons for wanting or not wanting more opportunities to get involved with arts and culture, young people had very different reasons for their responses. Young people said:

“Culture I would probably. Arts I am not interested. I do like videogames and social activities and interesting museums.”

“If it's a specific niche of arts and culture that I enjoy, then I definitely would.”

“They don't usually do interactive fun activities. Not many indoor sights so not suitable for cold weather. Tour guides are not always disability supportive and don't know ways to include them. Can be rude.”

“I have always been artistic and have recently got back in touch with this side and am very well connected in the street art scene.”

The opinions of young people were not necessarily consistent when talking about the arts and culture. A number of young people used negative language when talking about arts specifically but explained that they have had fun in an arts space.

One person said “Arts activities/spaces take up a lot of space and waste my time. I don't find art interesting, culture is a maybe” and “National Videogame Museum was fun. Lyceum Theatre is usually funny. Sometimes it's fun to just walk around in art galleries.”

Another person said: “Most of the time arts is boring. Somethings are only ever interesting when there is a holiday e.g. Christmas markets in town. They can be boring and repetitive.” And “I enjoyed the theatre. Weston Park Museum bored me. I love the Leadmill.”

74%

Said something positive about arts and culture.

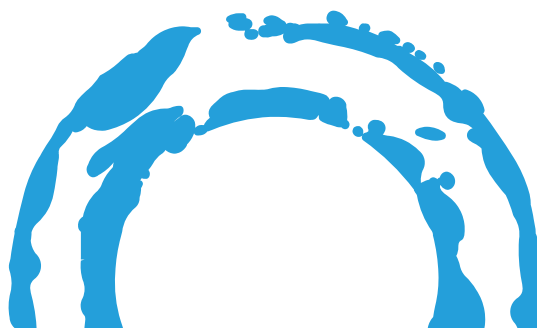
The young people who said negative things about the arts seem to have very fixed ideas about what it is. There were a number of responses that equate the arts to any space they find uninteresting, and the spaces they have found interesting appear not to challenge their perception of the arts.

32% of participants described art as ‘boring’. Where young people called art boring, they explained that they did not like:

- Weston Park Museum
- Repetitive activities
- ‘Old fashioned’ activities
- Too much text
- Bad transport

However, they did like:

- National Videogame Museum
- Kelham Island
- Botanical Gardens
- Theatres
- Galleries
- Leadmill
- First-time visits
- Places that are peaceful



Children & Young People

Accessibility: Youth Perspective

How can we improve arts and culture spaces or make them more accessible?



Relevant

Make activities appealing to young people and their interests. Arts/culture is geared toward small children or older people.



Advertisement

Better advertisements of events and activities so that young people know they are happening.



Welcoming

Young people raised concerns about places being 'snobbish' or said going for the first time was overwhelming.



Inclusive

Young people said that activities and venues are not welcoming to people with disabilities and learning difficulties.



Interaction

Make activities and events more interactive and reduce text.



Cost

Make activities and refreshments cheaper. Consider allowing young people to bring their own food.



Transport

Improve transport or make sure activities and venues are easy to get to. The cost of transport is too high.



Repetition

Make events and activities less repetitive.



Warmth

Provide warm spaces in winter that welcome young people.

Children & Young People

Accessibility: Organisation Perspective

What barriers exist for children and young people when accessing arts and culture?



Money

- Transport, free events, food, snacks, drinks.
- Free resources needed to take part.
- Provide high quality provision for free or low cost.



Spaces

- Meet people where they are physically, offer local provision.
- Show young people they are allowed inside spaces.
- Familiarise young people with new spaces.
- Expand the spaces that are available to people from the Global Majority.
- Make spaces bright, colourful and comfortable.
- Consider whether spaces feel safe e.g. city centre in winter.



Advertisement

- Increase awareness of events, activities and spaces.
- Advertise opportunities in one space, or ensure young people know where to find them.
- Use accessible language, no jargon!



Relevant

- Make sure activities are culturally relevant.
- Young people given the power to design their own activities.
- Include art that young people are interested in e.g. Henna, graffiti.
- Ensure art is relevant to where people live and their experiences.
- Increase awareness of inclusion and accessibility.



Family

- Encourage parents to see arts and culture as useful.
- Introduce children and young people to arts and culture through different connections. Relying on parents to have the time and resources results in inequality of access.

Children & Young People

Accessibility: Organisation Perspective

What barriers exist for children and young people when accessing arts and culture?



Holistic Support

Support with anxiety, isolation, confidence building.

Help young people feel comfortable trying something new and understand that it's difficult.

Support with English as a second language.

Be flexible around other time commitments e.g. caring responsibilities



Schools

Encourage schools to prioritise arts and culture.

Support schools to understand how they can facilitate opportunities for students through promotion.

Champion inclusion of arts in the curriculum at the earliest possible stage.

Work toward consistent provision across schools.



Youth Leadership

Provide children and young people with opportunities to design programming from the start.

Help children and young people see that they are allowed in spaces, and help spaces to encourage children and young people to use their spaces.

Spend time building rapport.



Representation

Support underrepresented artists to lead provision.

Encourage representation in leadership.

Champion representation in artwork.

Contributors

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Youth Voice Researchers

Student Participation & Careers Team, The Sheffield College

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