



# Youth Arts Development Sessions Recommendations Report

By National Youth Arts Wales in partnership  
with Youth Arts Network Cymru,  
commissioned by Arts Council of Wales

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## Introduction & Background

**National Youth Arts Wales** was formed in 2017 to bring together Wales' six different national youth ensembles. As well as offering annual memberships and residencies to Wales' actors, dancers and musicians of the future, including a substantial bursary fund, National Youth Arts Wales runs several development projects to provide routes for a wide range of young people to build confidence, creativity, aspiration and ambition and develop their lifelong engagement with the arts. NYAW is now particularly focused on work that increases participation from talented young people from under-represented communities in Wales. National Youth Arts Wales are committed to ensuring that young people are at the core of the organisation, offering a number of paid trainee producers roles annually which are reserved for young people from under-represented communities. The organisation has also under-taken a long term piece of work designed to fully embed youth voice at all levels in the organisation to ensure routes into the National Ensembles more inclusive and accessible.

**Youth Arts Network Cymru** is the Pan-Wales Network, which brings together youth arts workers, emerging artists, students and the key arts companies in Wales working with young people. They advocate for youth arts through a representative pan-Wales steering group to develop a long-term strategy for YANC and Youth Arts in Wales. For three years they supported RawFfest, a National Youth Arts festival for and by young people. The network exists to learn from one another, raise the profile of youth arts work and fight for a sector that they passionately believe in.

In November 2020, a joint letter from National Youth Arts Wales (NYAW) and Youth Arts Network Cymru (YANC) was sent to Nick Capaldi and Diane Hebb of Arts Council of Wales (ACW), outlining fundamental concerns for the future of the Youth Arts sector in Wales; predominantly surrounding the devastating consequences of Covid-19 on young people in Wales and the Youth Arts sector. It highlighted the historic lack of resource for Youth Arts, the impact of the pandemic on young people's wellbeing and future aspirations for careers in the arts, and the lack of voice that young people have had so far in the discourse during the pandemic.

For the purposes of this report and work undertaken, Youth Arts is broadly referred to as arts activities that young people choose to participate in of their own choosing, in their own time, rather than participate in as part of a school curriculum.

In March 2021, in response to these shared concerns, ACW invited NYAW and YANC to undertake a series of three online consultation sessions with young people, youth arts organisations, and practitioners. The aims and desired outcomes of these sessions agreed between ACW, NYAW and YANC, were as follows:



## Outcomes

- Exploring the viability and need for a youth forum in Wales to influence and inform policy (Welsh Government and the Arts Council of Wales)
- Sector is consulted on future of youth arts lottery funding due to the concerns facing young people in the arts and the youth arts sector. The needs of the young people are leading the discussion.

## Aims of sessions

- Collaboratively create a space to delve into key issues and concerns facing the youth arts sector in Wales
- Allow for a solution focussed discussion about what a post-Covid youth arts sector could and should look like.

*'I think conversation is great, but we are a nation of talkers and sometimes we can get wrapped up in talking about things, and action is always great too. And then holding people accountable when action doesn't happen.'* **Session 1 participant**

## Staffing

With support from YANC, NYAW led on the management and organisation of the sessions, spearheaded by Naomi McKenna Lawson, NYAW's Participation and Learning Producer. NYAW, YANC and ACW agreed on a freelance staffing structure of three arts practitioners to deliver the sessions, plus an additional 6 paid facilitator roles for young people aged 16 - 25 to ensure that youth voice was embedded in the process from the beginning. The three arts practitioners were:

- Jain Boon (Freelance Theatre Director and Arts & Health Creative Practitioner)
- Elgan Rhys\* (Writer, Director, Performer)
- Sita Thomas (Theatre-Maker, TV Presenter and newly appointed Artistic Director at Fio)

*\*Welsh speaker*

Practitioners came together with the NYAW Participation and Learning Producer for an initial meeting, agreeing an outline of each session and the key focuses for each workshop. They also agreed on a list of younger facilitators to approach for the sessions. It was agreed that it was important to ensure that this group of facilitators came from varied backgrounds and ensured diverse representation. The six facilitators brought on board were:

- Hannah Lad (actor, writer, co-founder of Of Ya Trolley Productions and former participant of Sparc Arts)
- Eden-Mae Davies (member of Caerphilly Youth Theatre and a Youth Worker)
- Fahadi Mukulu (Associate Director with National Theatre Wales and Common Wealth)

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- Jannat Ahmed (Subscription and Marketing Officer at Poetry Wales, and Editor-in-Chief of Lucent Dreaming)
  - Dyddgu Glyn Jones\* (actor and member of National Youth Theatre Wales)
  - Safyan Iqbal (filmmaker, photographer, camera operator, video editor, actor, podcaster, musician)

\*Welsh speaker

Young facilitators were brought on to board co-deliver sessions one and three. The young facilitators were asked to attend session two to feedback their findings from session one. In addition, this group were asked to attend planning and debrief meetings, to ensure that they helped shape the content of sessions and that youth voice was firmly embedded throughout the process.

## Participant Recruitment & Outreach

NYAW and YANC worked together to identify organisations and freelancers to contact regarding the sessions. Working within the relevant data guidelines, all three partner organisations shared contacts from across their networks to ensure broad representation within the sector and across Wales. These included national and local arts venues and organisations, youth arts groups and community groups. Those invited included:

*Aberystwyth Arts Centre, ACW Agent for Change, Afon Community Dance, Artis Community Cymuned, Arts Connection - Cyswllt Celf, Avanc – Trac, Ballet Cymru, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Blackwood Miners Institute, Bombastic, Butetown Youth Club, Canolfan Gerdd William Mathias Cyf, Canolfan Ucheldre Centre, Cardiff and Vale Music Services, Chapter Cardiff Ltd., Citizens Cymru, Community Music Wales, Creative and Cultural Skills, Cwmni Frân Wen, CWVYS (the Council for Wales of Voluntary Youth Services), Dawns i Bawb, Denbighshire Cooperative, Ensemble Cymru, EYST, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Ffotogallery, Flintshire Music Service/CAGAC, Fio Theatre, g39, Galeri Caernarfon Cyf, Gentle / Radical, G-Expressions, Glynn Vivian Art Gallery, Grange Pavillion, Grassroots CF10, Hafren, Head4Arts, Hijinx Theatr, Hummadruz, Impelo, Jukebox Collective, Leeway Productions/Lecturer Trinity St David's, Literature Wales, Live Music Now Wales, Llantarnam Grange Arts Centre, Menter Iaith Merthyr/Theatr Soar, Mid Wales Opera, Ministry of Life, Mission Gallery, MOSTYN, Music Theatre Wales, National Dance Company Wales, National Museum Cardiff, NEW Dance, Newport Live, NoFit State Community Circus Ltd, North Wales International Music Festival, National Theatre Wales, Omidaze, Operasonic, Oriel Davies Gallery, Oriel Myrddin Trust, Peak Cymru, Pontardawe Arts Centre, Pontio, Rain Drop, Rubicon Dance, Ruthin Craft Centre, RWCMD Junior Conservatoire, Sherman Theatre, Sinfonia Cymru, Sistema Cymru - Codi'r To, Sound Progressions, Swansea MAD, Taking Flight Theatre, Taliesin Arts Centre, The Aloud Charity, Theatr Arad Goch, Theatr Clwyd, Theatr Cynefin, Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru, Theatr Iolo, Theatr Na nOg, Tin Shed Theatre/Youth Theatre Riverfront, Upbeat Music and Arts, Urdd Gobaith Cymru,*



*Wales Millennium Centre, YANC, YAS, Young Music Makers of Dyfed, Youth Cymru, Youth Forum Grange Pavilion*

Invitations were also sent to freelancers and organisations who are currently part of the YANC membership. Each of the delivery practitioners and facilitators were also proactive in sharing registration details with their own networks.

Invitations were supported by the NYAW communications staff using a branded email campaign. Recipient organisations and freelancers were asked to register their own places on the sessions and were encouraged to circulate information to their networks and nominate young people to register for sessions one and three.

When deciding on the strategy for reaching out to young people, it was unilaterally acknowledged that the young people recruited represented a variety of social and geographical backgrounds, along with a wide range of interests and disciplines. Given the proposed topics, aims and outcomes for the sessions, it was determined that young people already engaged in the sector in some way would be approached to collaborate. It was also agreed that young people aged 16 – 25 would be the target age range for sessions.

A communications plan for recruitment was developed and delivered between YANC and NYAW, featuring a mixture of email campaigns, social media callouts and targeted individual emails.

<b>Session</b>	<b>Number of Sign Ups</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>
Session 1	21 (young people aged 16 – 25)	14 (young people aged 16 - 25)
Session 2	44 (organisations and freelancers)	28 (organisations and freelancers)
Session 3	42 (organisations, freelancers and young people)	25 (organisations, freelancers and young people)

### **Access and Inclusion**

£800 of the budget was made available to provide financial support for young people who might not otherwise be able to attend, and this message was given high visibility in the communication strategy.

As a measure to bolster inclusivity, this fund was available on a no questions asked basis, and young people could either email NYAW directly, or indicate on the registration form that they required financial assistance to be able to attend.

In addition to ensuring Welsh Language facilitators were part of the delivery team, Welsh Language interpretation was also made available across all three sessions.



British Sign Language interpreters were also brought on board for the second and third sessions, as well as Speech to Text interpretation, to cater for the access needs of participants and one of our facilitators. BSL interpretation was also ensured for any planning or debrief meetings attended by that facilitator. All participants were encouraged to describe any access requirements when registering for the sessions, allowing for bespoke support to be put in place if needed.

## **Session Methodology**

Sessions were planned collaboratively between NYAW and the entire delivery team and were designed to respond and adapt to the conversations that developed. Anchored in Youth Arts methodology, they made use of reflective discussion and creative engagement to facilitate inclusive spaces that were participant-centred to allow for participants to have their voices heard.

### **Session One - Thursday 8th July, 5 – 7.15pm**

*For young people aged 16 – 25*

*Aims:*

- *To establish an open and relaxed space for participants to share their views*
- *To hear from participants about how they engage with the Arts, and how Covid has impacted this*
- *To hear from participants about how they think the Arts should look post-pandemic*
- *To provide information on examples of youth voice initiatives (youth board, youth steering group, youth forum) & how Arts Council of Wales currently support Youth Arts*
- *To hear from participants about how they want power-holders like ACW to engage with them more*

### **Session Two - Thursday 15th July, 4 – 6.30pm**

*For organisations and freelancers*

*Aims:*

- *To establish an open and relaxed space for participants to share their views*
- *To encourage organisations and freelancers to comment on how their work has been impacted by Covid, and what support they need from ACW in the future*
- *To begin identifying the fundamental needs and requirements for a Youth Arts specific lottery funding*
- *To encourage participants to sign up to the final session and continue conversations*

### **Session 3, Tuesday 27th July, 5 – 7.30pm**

*For organisations, freelancers, young people aged 16 - 25*

*Aims:*

- *To establish an open and relaxed space for participants to share their views*

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- *To further explore ideas and challenges discussed in the previous two sessions*
  - *To identify some areas for recommendations for Arts Council of Wales*
  - *To identify what we want the next steps to be from Arts Council of Wales*

## Key Recommendations

In order to ensure that recommendations were authentically derived from the conversations had over the three sessions, Zoom sessions were recorded and transcribed. All participants were informed that sessions would be recorded and given the opportunity to notify NYAW or the delivery team if they would rather not be recorded. All responses captured and featured in this report are anonymous, unless express permission has been granted.

To maximise feedback, in addition to the production of transcripts and notes from each session, the delivery team held an evaluation and debrief meeting. NYAW met separately with any individuals who couldn't make this meeting to ensure that their views were included in the debrief notes.

Despite the breadth and depth of the discussions that were had, it was made clear to all participants that these online sessions represented the beginning, not the end of conversations. Conversations that it is hoped will build into positive action to secure a more sustainable, accessible and inclusive Youth Arts sector in Wales.

Given the original aims and outcomes agreed by NYAW, YANC and ACW, we will identify key recommendations in the following areas, stemming from recurring main themes that arose from the discussions:

- Networks and Youth Voice
- Youth Arts Funding
- Next Steps

## Network and Youth Voice: Key Recommendation Summary

In the first session with young people, one of the main questions raised was 'How do you want your voice to be heard by organisations like Arts Council of Wales, who hold the power over what organisations and projects get funded?'

There was a general agreement that both Arts Council of Wales and Welsh Government need to do more to take the needs of young people more seriously and place them higher on the agenda, such as listening to young people, fostering better connections that place young people at the centre of work and more flexible and unrestricted funding for projects with young people. However, another key opinion raised was '*It's not always our responsibility to make change*'.



Rather, participants talked about wanting a network for young people to connect and collaborate with one another as well as supporting their engagement and careers in the arts through support, information and resources.

Directly after the session, one of the youth facilitators observed that:

*‘Interesting that what’s come out of that is that they just want to be with each other – they just want to collaborate and work with each other and not to be there to problem-solve, which I can totally relate to. Now that someone else has said it, it shouldn’t be on the young people to solve the problems, especially if they’re not being paid. Just offering them a network or community that they can be part of, whoever you are, wherever you are in Wales. I’m excited for that because like they said, about mental health – you need your peer group, and we all take advantage of the fact that we have peer groups because we’re part of organisations who are part of other groups and you get to meet other people and you have a support network’.*

In the subsequent planning meetings and delivery sessions, we then focused on how we might balance the idea of a network for young people, alongside ensuring that there is a platform where their voices are heard and centred in decisions made by Arts Council of Wales.

## The Network

Youth Arts is multi-faceted and works with a broad range of young people in a multitude of different ways. As observed by one participant;

*‘You’ve got participatory youth arts, which is much more wellbeing focused and about transferrable skills through arts as a medium for that, and then you have arts that are about nurturing talent and developing that...you’ve got those massive age categories, 11 – 16 is completely different, and even 16 – 20 is completely different to over 20. It’s so broad and it’s really important that whatever comes out of these sessions works for the entirety of the sector and acknowledges and embraces that this is a sector that does a lot for a lot people in a lot of different situations and a lot of different ages.’*

Suggestions were also made around **increasing funding and support for YANC**. A **strengthened YANC**, with **strengthened partnerships with arts and community organisations** across Wales could work with young people, organisations and ACW to develop such a network.

Over the course of the sessions, more questions were posed than answers provided on what this network would and could look like. It was recognised by all - young people, organisations and the facilitators - that creating such a network is a big undertaking, but that it should be made **by young people** rather than **for young people**, with the opportunity for **online and in-person engagement**. It was also recognised that the network should be **accessible** and **inclusive** for young people



from all communities across Wales, with different access points for young people at varying points of their journey within the arts. The network would offer opportunities including:

- **connecting with one another** and **organisations**
- support from **mentors** and **advice on career pathways and training opportunities** within the industry
- **paid opportunities** as **young emerging artists**
- support on **funding**
- **increased platforming** for young Welsh artists

The network must also be available **bilingually** and ensure that young people wanting to seek opportunities, support or connections in Welsh Language are able to do so through equal representation in Welsh Language. One young person commented in the first session;

*‘With working online via Zoom and being a Welsh speaker, sometimes it’s irritating to be placed in the room with Welsh speakers and speaking to people you already know about the things that you already know, and you don’t have the opportunities to speak to people beyond your own social circle, and that’s problematic. You can’t talk to people with wide ranging experiences’*

They highlighted the importance of young people from different communities across Wales being able to **connect with** and **learn from one another**.

There were also questions around how to engage young people in the network, and how to ensure that it can be accessible to young people who perhaps are not already engaging. Some of the key areas of conversation that arose from these were:

- How we can utilise existing social media networks to engage young people
- How to use a blended platform of information and opportunities, with the capacity for young people to communicate with one another in a more informal or collaborative nature (like an online forum)
- How arts and community organisations will be key in signposting the network to the young people that they work with
- How to work with schools, colleges and universities to signpost the network to their students, and how Arts Council Wales could have more of a presence in these settings so that young people are more aware of their role and are reassured that the arts are a viable career choice – something that people felt isn’t always promoted in school

## **Youth Voice and Representation**

One of the key outcomes for the sessions was: ‘Exploring the viability and need for a youth forum in Wales to influence and inform policy (Welsh Government and the Arts Council of Wales)’.



There were several ideas discussed in the sessions that would give young people the platform to be authentically listened to by ACW, without putting the onus on young people to *'fix all the problems'*. These included:

- A version of the network described above that is more externally focused. For example a youth collective that meets to discuss issues that directly affect them, has the ear of the Arts Council, can provide them with feedback and has the ability to request contact with member of the Council (similar to Cardiff Youth Council)
- A platform that utilises the frameworks already in place across different arts organisations (i.e., existing steering groups or youth boards) that can feed into a Wales-wide youth network in a more structured space

Learnings could be taken from existing structures like Cardiff Youth Council, Welsh Youth Parliament or Westminster's Youth Parliament:

*'So it's essentially different arts organisations, and the hope is that they have different connections with young people, some sort of youth group that's informal, but they also have the opportunity to appoint someone, a young person - to represent the organisation - but also the young people that they're friends with, or interact with - to sit on a board that is all about creating change within Arts Council Wales. And the hope is that they are embedded there as a ring-fenced function of Arts Council that would act as a sounding board in decision making and championing the voices of young people'*

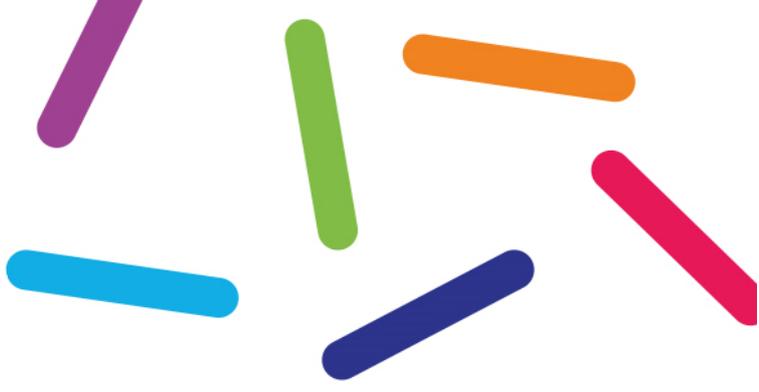
Points were also raised about the importance of this collective or group having real agency to influence decisions made that affect young people and their engagement in Youth Arts. This depends upon ACW placing the Youth Arts higher on the agenda and creating the space and opportunity to listen to the group.

One further suggestion that feeds into this idea is to **place two young people on the Council** itself – bridging the 'us' and 'them' divide.

It's important to note that we recognise that these young people should not be appointed solely to 'fix the Youth Arts problem'. The future of the Youth Arts should be a responsibility that is shared across all levels. Equally, it would be important to ensure that these young people don't feel solely responsible for representing all of young people.

One further suggestion would be to ensure that the young Council members develop a strong relationship with both the networks described above, running sessions to ensure that diverse voices are represented.

A second suggestion would be to develop **and initiate a skills and training programme** that actively seeks to invest in young people from a diverse range of



backgrounds across Wales, giving them the skills and confidence to become the next creative leaders of Wales and providing a pipeline to positions on the Council.

It is not within the remit of this report to outline the specifics of how such a network could operate. Its purpose is to highlight the fundamental needs and changes that organisations, freelancers and young people have identified, as well as the questions that they want to ensure are taken into consideration as the conversation develops.

The following captures some of our youth facilitators and practitioners' final thoughts on the network (view full Jamboard by [clicking here](#)):

What is YANC? What if people doesn't understand what that network is or what it involves. Increasing awareness. Maybe young people don't understand the context.

Internal and external function - for young people to collaborate and connect, and for there to be a communication outlet to ACW/orgs

Speed-networking!

Deaf people might not use much text - people might prefer to meet people or visuals. We need to think about how we meet people's needs.

Layers to the network - depending on what you need depending on the level you're on

Is it like NTW Community? More of a forum where opportunities are posted by YP can post too.

Making sure that we're getting the word out via schools but also youth services - some sort of resource that then links into a speed networking type event

What if you have 100 turn up for a network event - what happens if you have a new young person, and we don't know who they are? How do we make them feel welcome?

Linked to YANC

Then an artist can be there to do a Q&A. With YANC, would people understand that? What does it stand for? What is it?

Centre point platform? Young people don't always know where to go. About information but also sharing opportunities

Partnering with orgs and putting a face to them. How do people know who to contact for mentoring?

Networks 'created by' young people as opposed to being created for young people

Not everything should be put on YANC in its current format as a project based network

We don't want the network to be too wide - how do we know if people who don't like to use social media. What if the network doesn't work well but we create a presentation for young people through schools

How we retain people's interests in these conversations. Aware that YANC is theatre-heavy. How do we engage those engaged in different art forms but not connected to a particular org

Who wasn't there at the sessions? We need to collaborate with as many different platforms as we can on this in order to platform. The external arm of this should be approached

ACW should be present at schools and Unis - in the same way you have police presence! If you want a career in the Arts, highlight the pathways

Missing leading national companies? They need to be a part of this and have a responsibility to shift and integrate

Outlining the pathways available for all artists. Mentoring - how do you get onto that next stage?

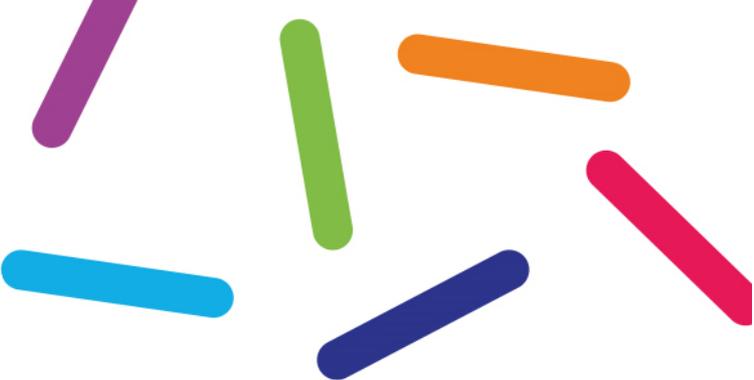
People don't just arrive on a website, you need to build up to that. Start on 'Discord' and then see what works. Trust in young people that they will build their own networks

Different people want different things from arts - different successes and outcomes

We need to be careful with acronyms - Youth Arts Network Cymru is much clearer than YANC!

Deciding whether you're using an established platform or whether we are going to create a new one. We'll need this development stage where we figure out what works.

How can we figure out what works best and implement different elements



## Youth Arts Funding: Key Recommendation Summary

Funding was the other major area of discussion across the sessions. The overarching message from all three sessions was ensuring that more resource, support, and funding is attributed to the Youth Arts sector.

This can be further broken down into the following areas:

- **Ringfenced funding specifically for the Youth Arts sector**

This again comes back to a strong collective opinion about Youth Arts needing to be viewed as more of a priority, for Arts Council of Wales to recognise it is an important part of the arts ecology and ensuring that funding is protected. Within this, it was highlighted several times that organisations, freelancers and young people want greater flexibility and trust so that they are given the opportunity to develop projects that work for the young people in their communities, rather than fitting projects to existing funding pots. Several people commented that sometimes it feels like things are the wrong way around when it comes to determining what gets funded, and they want the time and trust to engage meaningfully with their groups and determine what work they want to make. There was also a collective desire to include young people more in the process of securing funding for projects that they will be part of. For example, one participant from Session 2 commented on a funding model that they had recently engaged with, which was centred around co-design with young people:

*'National Lottery Community Fund are currently promoting very interesting models with the 'Mind our Future' programme which was co-designed with young people. They created a 'young people in the lead' team to design the whole programme. And what they're asking for this is that at the initial stage of application, you just have to put a partnership together that can engage with young people and makes sure young people are in the lead, but also can have the capacity to deliver the project. But what they don't want to know about is what that project is going to be. You get the first year to co-design it with groups of young people.'*

There were also discussions around how this funding should centre the voices of young people in both the funding and decision processes. Our youth facilitators had several thoughts about this, including the idea of a dedicated section for young people to contribute directly to the application, *'There should be a section in the funding applications that are written by young people – doesn't have to be long or written – young people should get to contribute'*.

Another youth facilitator put forward the following idea:

*'I imagined a fund of up to £100,000 that is available to arts organisations but it has to specifically work for young people, and be led by young people or employs young people. And the young people each year – perhaps the funding runs for two years –*



*the young people decide what that funding steers and directs. So if they want to specifically focus on arts projects that focus on environmental sustainability then they can decide that. And everyone who applies for that fund, has to come up with a project that deals with that specific issue, but it's the young people who decide the direction of that.'*

- **An overhaul of the current application processes with a specific focus on making them more accessible**

The overarching opinion is that the current model presents significant barriers for many young people, in addition to the points raised above about being restrictive for organisations looking to run projects more flexibly and responsively to the needs of their young people. One participant commented:

*'How do we make funding fun and accessible? A funding factory? Is there a department where the young people are doing R&D, and then an experimentation room and a learning room, a collaboration room – how do we make it more fun and accessible, rather than 'we're coming to the serious part of funding'. That's been a barrier for me sometimes and I think for the young people as well because they feel too removed from it'*

There were several calls to remove the 'jargon' of application bids, and re-examine the wording that is used and the requirements in place to submit ideas, '*does knowing and speaking that jargon make me more creative? Why can't we be creative in our applications when we're applying for a creative project?*'. Another of our youth facilitators commented '*Why do funding applications have to be a written document? Can it be reflected by the art form?*'.

It was acknowledged that change like this won't be immediate and whilst funding processes remain as they are then support for those making applications needs to be much more visible from Arts Council of Wales. For example there were calls to ensure that funding mentoring is a requirement for offering the funding in the first place. There were young artists in the sessions who commented on how much they benefitted from the advice and guidance from the organisations that they are involved with when trying to apply for funding, but there were also clear calls for a wider support from ACW. Importantly, this wider support needs to be accessible to those who perhaps don't have those pre-existing networks, for example one youth facilitator posed the idea of a day's training and guidance on how to apply for funding, hosted by ACW. Equally there were calls for the Wales-wide young people's network described in the previous section to be that platform that young people can access for support on funding and links to mentors who can offer that support. One youth facilitator commented that young people often don't know enough about funding in the arts, and that it can be confusing to access, which can be partially countered by the above suggestions.



Another youth facilitator spoke about the importance of providing detailed feedback to those who are not successful in funding bids, ensuring that people and organisations know what they can be doing to be successful in the future – something he felt was lacking from the current system.

Access was also a prevalent topic of conversations throughout the sessions and debrief meetings. The same youth facilitator commented that written forms can be a challenge to people with additional requirements; such as D/deaf artists and practitioners. He commented that a video application may be easier to produce for some. Although it's recognised that ACW does offer information on applying for funding in large print, Braille, audio, Easy Read and British Sign Language, the fact that there are D/deaf artists who are not aware of this, or what alternatives there may be for making an application, perhaps suggests that more could be done to increase the visibility of access support and guidance on making applications.

There were also several comments about how funding for access should be reviewed.

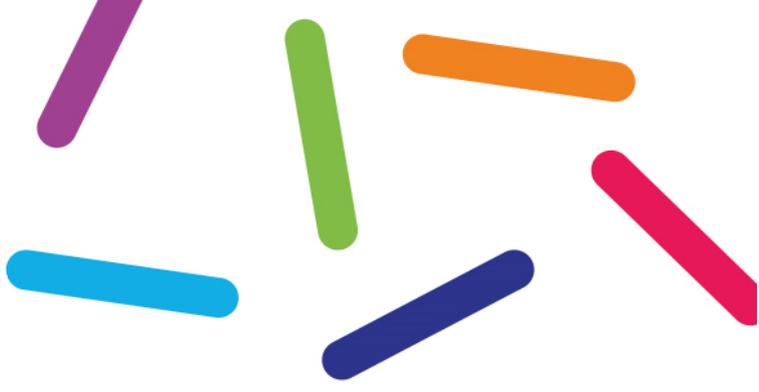
*'So if you have a Deaf practitioner, you can apply for the access costs in relation to employing them to have BSL interpreters, on top of the amount that you're applying for the project. But any access costs for audience or participants, have to be included in that project cost'*

When running projects with young people, it's not often known what potential participants' access requirements may be at the point of applying for funding. Calls were made for a separate 'top-up' fund that can be accessed to provide this support outside of project funding. One participant suggested that this support should be provided outside of ACW, *'This is a fundamental human right that we're talking about, so it should be a Government fund, not an Arts Council fund.'*

During the debrief meeting following all three sessions, the point was also raised that there are parallels between discussions and suggested recommendations around the accessibility and lack of support of the current funding models for the Youth Arts, and the Welsh Arts Anti-Racist Union Report's findings and demands for funding. Further detail on this can be found on the next page.

- **Funding made available directly to young people, with support for the application process**

There were multiple calls to make funding more readily accessible to young people and emerging artists to apply for independently, with the support of a mentor, ACW or organisations that they already engage with. Young artists acutely feel the impact of the pandemic on their career progression and opportunities for them to create their own work and want to be given the support and resources to help them do this. As noted by one participant:



*'Taking a risk on young people to enable them to take a risk on their practice – failure is a lesson. How are we expected to learn the ropes if there is no rope? Putting mentoring costs into funding as a requirement, as in additional and offer young people suggestions and stop working against us.'*

Integrally, this funding must be easy to access, whether that is through a simplified funding application, or support from a mentor or Arts Council, and must also include support for things like travel and access to free spaces. One of our youth facilitators commented:

*'The trust element is huge, I got £750 to start a magazine, and so giving the opportunity for a young person to apply for something along that £500 - £750 mark to invest in themselves, however they wish, and then also complement that with things like transport links – physical routes, or physical spaces that are free to access.'*

The following captures some of our youth facilitators and practitioners' final thoughts on funding (view full Jamboard by [clicking here](#)):

Foundation for funding being the WAARU report: Increase non-judgemental support for those unfamiliar with application processes; one on one sessions, public successful library

Ringfenced funding: specific for the youth arts. But also a pot of money for emerging artists to just apply for small R&Ds and have space to work on their own stuff. Currently challenging for those early on

I don't think that process should be too different from that process of applying for bigger grants as it's a learning opportunity

People not getting the support and funding they need - why aren't people being fairer with artists and giving to people who need it

Other ways of applying - not just written! Can you do an application verbally or visually?

Why are applications called for in a written format? More mediums to apply via to consider accessibility needs.

I think the problem is that young people don't know enough about the arts because they're not given the opportunity. Not sure therefore about young people being on panel

Funding to support 1-2-1 mentorships so they can develop their careers in the way they want to

Opportunities to include early career artists to work with you. With smaller orgs, artists wear many different hats. These need to be funded.

Disappointed. I know lots of people work really hard but there's an imbalance. We're not rich and famous and so we don't get the funding that we need

How can they evidence what they need, being asked to be video'd

ACW - if you don't get the money, you don't get the feedback on how to improve with your application.

It has to be cross-collaborative and not just one young person in the room as they are often spoken over so people are reticent to share their ideas

How do you fund something if you don't know what you're funding? How do you enable people to make something they don't know about yet?

Funding which includes supporting peoples mental wellbeing

Funding for interventions to keep young artists in Wales

No-one should have to do unpaid internships. If not this promotes the idea this is not a career option.

BSL/video application for Deaf young people would be beneficial? I'm not sure what's accessible for funding. I know that I've seen Deaf people apply for funding through BSL, but haven't seen different ways

Is there a specific R&D fund for orgs/practitioners?

Funding for access costs - these may not be things we know about until we have the conversation - people's needs change daily - it is not for artists to say what those are

Funding the impact not the target



## Next Steps: Key Recommendation Summary

As already established, these three sessions were designed to be the beginning of conversations around how to build a Youth Arts sector that is robust, sustainable, creative and young people focused – upholding inclusivity, accessibility, diversity and anti-racism throughout all of its practice and safeguarding the wellbeing of our young people, organisations and practitioners.

By focusing in on the two key areas of funding and a youth network, we have been able to identify some of the common ideas that would support the above, plus the original aims and outcomes of the sessions. These common ideas are proposed and detailed in the previous pages, and further examples of people's ideas and individual recommendations are included in the session breakdowns found in the Appendices.

It was not within the scope of these three exploratory sessions to identify or construct detailed timelines for the development and implementation of these ideas. It was widely recognised that this will be a large undertaking, but nevertheless that it's important to keep the momentum of these discussions going, which start by identifying main priorities and actioning them. As one participant stated, *'I think conversation is great, but we are a nation of talkers and sometimes we can get wrapped up in talking about things, and action is always great too. And then holding people accountable when action doesn't happen.'*

This report will propose a series of next steps that we believe will help ACW put together these priorities and establish accountability for these conversations to turn into action. Across all recommendations, we ask that ACW ensures that a diverse range of voices continue to be involved in the conversations and ensuing actions.

### Short Term Recommendation (within three months)

- **Publicly release report in both English and Welsh language, acknowledging receipt and issuing a response**

In addition to the report appearing on the ACW website, we recommend finding ways to engage young people with it via social media, for example Instagram stories, which will make the topic more accessible to them. We would like to see an invitation go out to young people engaged in the arts to respond to the key findings of the report via short videos or captured via Instagram story polls, which can be used to launch the report publicly on social media. This will include ringfencing funding to ensure that young people are paid, in addition to having the costs associated with filming, captioning, and editing covered. A suggestion from one of our youth facilitators was also to include costs to cover paid Instagram ads, ensuring that you can reach a wide range of young people.

**Estimated costs: £150 fee per young person, £500 - £750 for the filming and editing, £150 per month for paid social media ads and £750 for access (BSL and translation)**

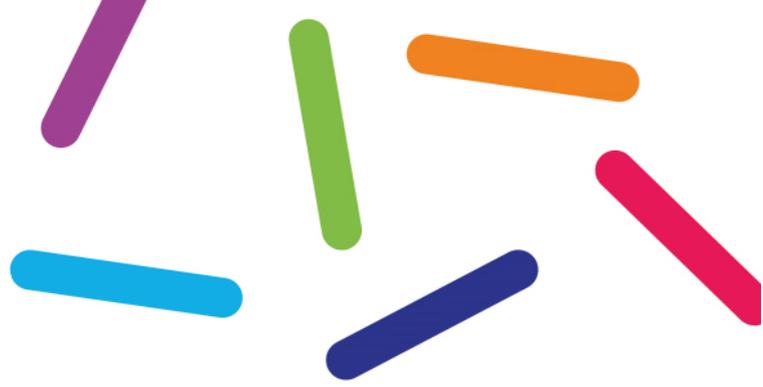


### **Mid Term Recommendations (within six months)**

- **Organise further consultation in both English and Welsh with young people (ensuring that they are paid for their time) on:**
  - Honing ideas and implementation on a youth arts network for and by young people
  - Honing ideas and implementation on a group or collective to feed into Arts Council of Wales' decision-making process
- **Organise further consultation in both English and Welsh with YANC, NYAW and other key arts and community organisations on what support YANC and NYAW might need to hold the framework of a youth arts network for young people**
- **Publish plans in both English and Welsh for an overview of funding applications; including the implementation of a youth panel, restricted funding for Youth Arts and increased accessibility of application models**

### **Long Term Recommendations (12 – 24 months)**

- **Have established a ringfenced amount of funding that is specifically open to the Youth Arts including:**
  - Opportunities for young people to apply for funding directly, with the right support
  - Opportunities for organisations and practitioners to apply for funding for projects that are flexible to the needs of their young people, and co-created with them
  - An accessible application process, that reduces inaccessible language and gives artists and organisations the opportunity to express the creativity of the projects that they are trying to fund
- **Have worked with the sector to establish a bilingual network for young people to connect and have easy access to information, opportunities, mentors and funding**
- **Have established a clear channel of communication between the above network and Arts Council of Wales, with a framework established based on the consultations carried out in the mid-term recommendations**
- **Place two young people on the Council**
  - Providing them with the support needed to have their voices authentically heard and listened to
  - Provide them with the platform and communication channels to feed into the young people network; ensuring that they are representing a broad range of young people's voices across Wales
  - Establish and financially support a training programme that will invest in young people as creative leaders of the future who can step into future Council roles



### **Additional points:**

There was a consensus that the Youth Arts sector needs better and more robust support from Arts Council of Wales and Welsh Government. Organisations and practitioners are keen to strengthen partnerships and relationships with one another to share best practice as well as support their young people. **Company Three** were mentioned multiple times as an organisation who demonstrates best practice within youth theatre, in addition to Scottish schemes such as the removal of charges for music lessons and materials in schools plus their 'Time to Shine' scheme (<https://www.creativescotland.com/resources/our-publications/plans-and-strategy-documents/national-youth-arts-strategy/evaluation-of-the-implementation-of-time-to-shine>).

The sessions revealed a desire from the sector to strengthen and work together to develop some sort of Youth Arts Manifesto, possibly interlinked with the Cultural Contract. One suggestion from one of our delivery practitioners was to commission a research-led piece of work around the future of the Youth Arts in Wales, which could contribute to a robust strategy for the sector.

**Rawffest** was also mentioned several times as a successful platform for young people to be able to connect with other young people engaged in different art forms, therefore widening their understanding of the sector in general and the opportunities that may be open to them.

The inclusion of those who are not currently engaged in the arts was also a common topic throughout the sessions. It is acknowledged that organisations and ACW could be doing much more to work with community organisations, as well as schools and colleges to reach young people who don't currently feel like the Youth Arts is a space for them. Conversations often centred around:

- Increased accessibility to funding
- Increased presence of Arts Council in schools and communities
- Increased platforming of Welsh young artists
- Ensuring that the proposed young people's network is layered, and enables access for young people who are at the very beginning of their journey on the arts

However, another important point was raised around establishing a sector that also works for those who are already engaged with it. One of our youth facilitators commented;

*'I think that the focus should instead be on doing things right for those who are already engaged in the arts, because in doing that, that's when people who aren't engaged in the arts can engage. So doing it right for example would be making sure funding is accessible, transport is accessible, mentoring is accessible, applications are easy to fill out. And then from doing that, young people and anyone else, that could be Global Majority backgrounds for example, will have created that art and*



*because they're part of their own communities, that will have engaged people who are not already engaged. So in fact I think ACW should focus less on getting 'unengaged people' interested in the arts, but actually do right by the people who are engaged and they will inevitably engage other people.'* So, whilst there are no explicit recommendations about engaging with new young people, the hope would be that the recommendations that are in place will allow for the establishment of a more inclusive and accessible sector, that will be a safer space for more young people to engage and succeed in. We would also hope that these conversations would be embedded in further consultation periods and part of the ongoing evaluation of the success of these measures.



## Appendices

### Appendix: Youth Facilitator Case Studies

We asked our youth facilitators to reflect on what some of these key recommendations would have meant, or will still mean to them as they progress in their own creative careers. This is what they said:

*All text below is lifted directly from written submissions or transcribed from audio or video recordings. Some paragraphs have been shortened for the purpose of this report, in which cases facilitators have been contacted to sign off what appears below, or a link has been provided to the full recording.*



**Jannat Ahmed:**

“Access to real funding, mentoring, expertise and networks as a graduate was the reason my own creative writing magazine Lucent Dreaming had a real chance of success. Everyone deserves the opportunity to participate in the arts, whether for fun, or for a career, but

young artists leave Wales in droves because they don't have access to the platforms or support they need at every stage of their journey.”

**Dyddgu Glyn Jones:**

“Completing these intriguing discussions have led me to concentrate on the benefits of the representation of young people on the Arts Council of Wales. As a young person myself, who is currently attempting to embark on a pathway to study to become an artist, the importance of young people and their voices in the arts are more crucial than ever. The benefits of including young people, and inclusivity amongst those members in the Arts Council would ensure stability, support and advice for many young people who need a helping hand to form a solid pathway into the arts in Wales.

The support that could be offered by a young group of members in ACW, including funding, creating connections and useful resources for young artists, would introduce valuable opportunities in Wales, without having to search elsewhere. The most engaging and informative changes to create an arts scene that is accessible for all young people across Wales, will derive from a younger generation who recognise the challenges and obstacles of being a young person in modern-day Wales. Representation for young, Welsh creatives has appeared to be scarce over the years- an increasing challenge to gain jobs, experiences and entering the arts in its many forms has emerged. However, our opinion and experience (especially over the last 18 months) is a crucial resource that





is needed in order to modernise and update the arts scene in our country. Whether it be through networking, mentoring, facilitating, contacting an audience directly through social media, newsletters or emails, support from young people to other young people is an advantageous tool that creates passionate engagement, encouraging stable support amongst Welsh youths; a youthful team of creatives as a part of ACW would increase opportunities for young people, ending the lack of representation for Welsh youths in the national and international arts scene. Young people recognise each other's needs and interests, and therefore, an organisation that recognises an understanding for change, diversity and inclusivity by including young people, shall form solid pathways that will lead to a bigger, brighter future for the arts in Wales. In order to move forward, the arts society need to depend on and trust the knowledge and experiences of young people, in order to place our talented young artists on the global map."

**Eden-Mae Davies:**

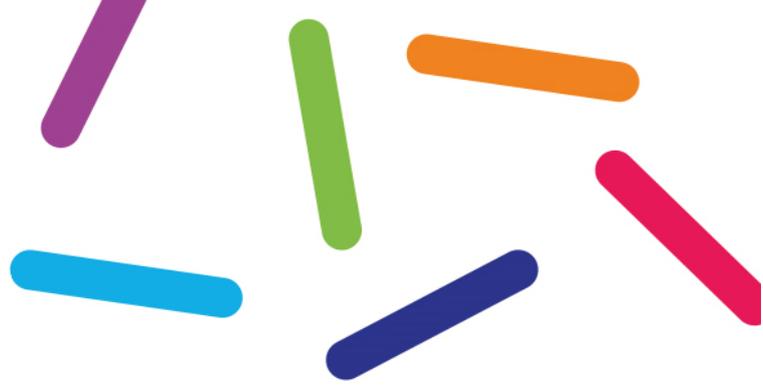
"I believe that the most important thing that can be offered to young people in the arts is: opportunities. Opening up opportunities and options for young people creates different pathways and revenues. This is important to know only protect the future for the arts but to ensure that it continues to exist. I can only imagine what my life would currently be like if I felt there were more accessible options when I was younger. Creating networks, easy applications and funds that are open and useable will lead to a future lead by young people. I wish this was something that was available when I was younger, and in today's times, it seems more important than ever."



**Fahadi Mukulu:**

"One of the most important things that really stuck out for me was the importance of a strong network of young people and giving them the ability to be supported in a space where they can talk about important issues. Casually talk about issues - social life, their network - but also come together and really think about what's important to them and using themselves as a network to challenge power. This reminded me of

my time with Cardiff Youth Council and what that network meant to me. We used to focus on social issues that were important to young people at the time in Cardiff. We would come together, we would discuss the important issues and then we would formalise and strategize and come up with ways of how we could change things to make things better for people...I feel like having that strong network around you of like-minded people was very supportive in creating real, tangible change...we had structures to access higher level power...So for me what a strong network within the Arts would mean is young people getting their voices heard within the sector...Young people feel that they have a platform to share their voice and share what is important to them, and that no matter what the issue is, there's an avenue to get that issue heard" **You can find Fahadi's full video here:**



<https://drive.google.com/file/d/10D4Z-f0UmiPkqha2zMCKQNBMC34531ip/view>

**Hannah Lad:**

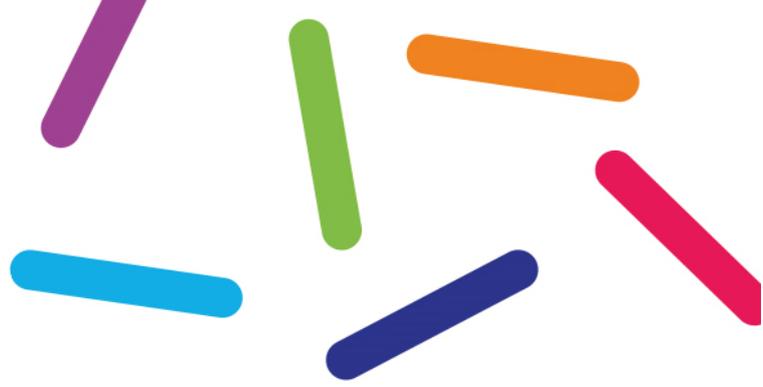
“Young people want a youth led network that could provide opportunities through all levels, from young people who are just getting into the arts through to emerging artists who could have more of a strategic role in that network. I personally think that this should be linked to YANC, because they’ve already got that infrastructure of what a network is and it’s already nationwide...and I think that network should be youth led...it needs to be multidisciplinary and needs to be what the young people want...There’s something that needs to be thought about in terms of engagement of young people with Youth Arts, because we can see the benefits, we don’t need to talk about the benefits – they’re there in black and white - but we need to be thinking about where people might be able to get involved where they aren’t already. I think people also need to be doing more in their own arts organisations...I agree that things need to change on a funding body level...but I do think that lots could be done within organisations that people aren’t already doing and those changes fundamentally need to come from the organisations. If Arts Council open up funding, that funding needs to be put in the right places by organisations.”



**Safyan Iqbal:**

“Opportunity, network, showing a full of the passionate hobby it would be amazing to show, it helps me know what it is like know what I want after I have tried it, for an example a festival, networking etc have allowed me to enjoy what I like to do. I like to continue to show hobbies that I fully enjoy doing. As I couldn’t do it before because I didn’t know how to do it or the barrier I have in my past but now see where I am after I go to network, opportunity and showcasing and support I have always.

But my view of funding, mentoring, real opportunity, networking as an interest of type of art like media intrigued me to it. I felt without funding to access would be a lack of showcase, dream job, hobby, feeling limitation of work - for me meaning a role model would be good for Deaf people to sees it and allow it. Without role model for Deaf people would be lots of lack seen it meaning won’t be able to show or do. I am proud of being Deaf no matter what, it would be good to have access to support and a platform fund to help make happen.”



## Appendix: Session One notes

**Thursday 8th July, 5 – 7.15pm**

*For young people aged 16 – 25*

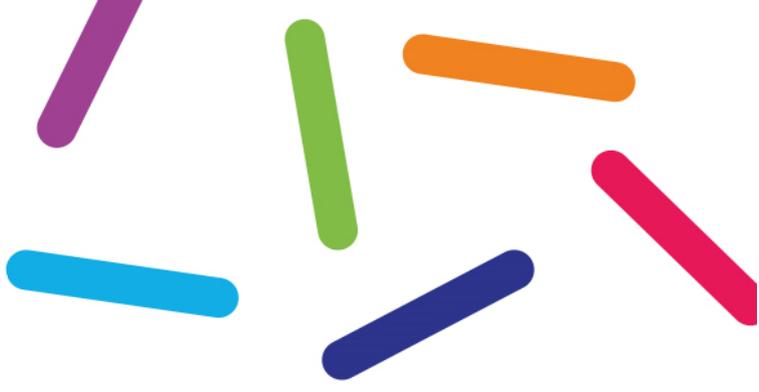
*Aims:*

- *To establish an open and relaxed space for participants to share their views*
- *To hear from participants about how they engage with the Arts, and how Covid has impacted this*
- *To hear from participants about how they think the Arts should look post-pandemic*
- *To provide information on examples of youth voice initiatives (youth board, youth steering group, youth forum) & how Arts Council of Wales currently support Youth Arts*
- *To hear from participants about how they want power-holders like ACW to engage with them more*

After a series of introduction, icebreakers and a wellbeing check-in, the session opened discussion around the arts in Wales and how young people have engaged in the arts throughout the pandemic. In smaller breakout rooms, different groups discussed the following:

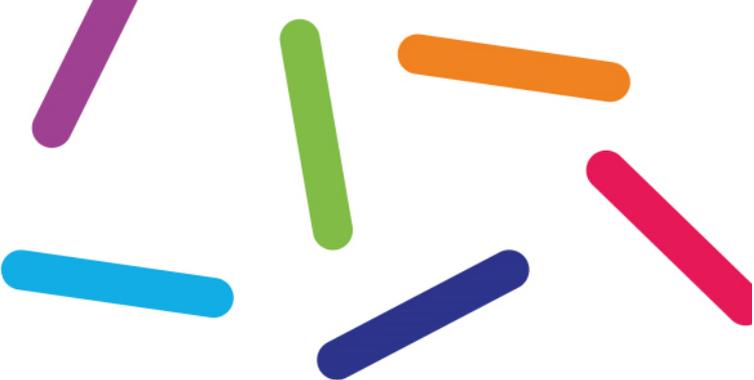
1. What arts opportunities are there for young people in Wales? In creative writing, music, theatre, dance, anything else?
2. What creative things have you engaged with throughout the pandemic? What do you feel like you've missed out on?
3. How has the arts impacted your experience of the pandemic? Mental health, expression, building/maintaining relationships?
4. How has COVID impacted your experience of the Arts in school/college?
5. How has COVID impacted your idea of your future in the Arts?

Participants were encouraged to contribute their thoughts verbally, via the Zoom chat function, or using an interactive Google Jamboard (example below):



Other key points raised in these breakout rooms included:

- When young people get to experience big opportunities (like working on a national level), they really stick with them
- Within big opportunities for young people, we must look at how we are engaging more diverse communities
- Opportunities stem if you're involved in one company – but where do we find the people who are not involved in any of these core companies
- Young people value multi-disciplinary working, Rawffest works in a multi-disciplinary way so young people get to see different kinds of art forms

- 
- Young people have missed the connections that art gives them, and identify that they have missed out on opportunities because of the pandemic because of lockdown
  - There are often opportunities that get your foot in the door in Wales, but you can't really get a lot further – we need to look at that missing link between getting your foot in the door and progressing in a career
  - The pandemic impacted negatively on mental health, including self-esteem and motivation
  - Perhaps if work had been in person there may have been more discussions around career pathways. Sometimes young people are left to make those decisions themselves and there was a question thrown up about whether they might have ended up on the path that they're on. Some people might have gone through that career change because they're not sure what's happening to the future of youth arts
  - There was another conversation again about schools and how important schools are because sometimes people don't get to hear about what is happening in their local communities so the idea was that perhaps someone could talk about youth groups to schools and then stay behind to have conversations with young people.
  - Young people identifying how hard it was to graduate last year, and how it made them change what they thought they would be doing. Perhaps the Arts Council and other organisations could provide more opportunities for emerging artists and graduates, and not just opportunities that give them skills, but also pay them and allow them to make their own creative work
  - It's also not only helping artists in the creative sense but also writing applications for funding bids and perhaps having a mentor that can support you early on, or in the last year of your graduation – supporting you and teaching you those skills
  - Developing a platform where artists can have a roadmap, so that when they're out in the world they know what's available to them and where they can go
  - Arts Council could do a bit more work on platforming Welsh artists and giving them a platform and supporting and highlighting the artists that are around in Wales and what they do and their work
  - With working online via Zoom and being a Welsh speaker, sometimes it's irritating to be placed in the room with Welsh speakers and speaking to people you already know about the things that you already know, and you don't have the opportunities to speak to people beyond your own social circle, and that's problematic. You can't talk to people with wide ranging experiences.
  - Identifying how you can be isolated in more rural communities – lockdown has made me realise that I'm rare as a facilitator who lives in the North of Wales. There aren't many people similar to me locally so I find that quite isolating, especially in lockdown. But it's also a pro that I can meet people like you on Zoom without having to catch a train to Cardiff.



- Businesses and companies and projects can be flexible, but also need to offer stability for those who live in the North – that gamble of are you going to be working remotely or in a space? It's not worth it to just move to Cardiff if you don't know.
- We have to be aware of digital poverty – when I go back to North the internet is rubbish. How do we expect our young people to create quality work if the digital provision isn't there?

As a group, participants also thought about the following points:

- What do you want to change or continue post-pandemic within the Arts in Wales?
- How do you want your voice to be heard by organisations like Arts Council of Wales, who hold the power over what organisations and projects get funded?

As well as group discussion, participants were encouraged to take part in a free writing exercise to help develop their thoughts. Some key reflections included:

**Lack of clear pathways or guidance around pathways**

We need more unrestricted/flexible funding - to be trusted to utilise that funding directly to meet access needs transport/ meals/ support

**Youth groups should liaise with schools more**

We need to put pressure on WG not just Arts Council to take needs of young people seriously and to put this much higher up the agenda

**Covid has pushed people to make decisions about their future – sometimes with career changes because of the uncertainty about the industry**

**Listen**

Much better connections and make sure young people are at the centre

**Covid has made people miss out on social aspects**

**Need to provide more (paid) opportunities for young emerging artists. There is a lack of opportunity to make work as early career artists**

**Create a roadmap or platform for what funding is available**

**Schools are focusing on catching up on maths and English**

**Mentors!**

**Platform Welsh artists**

**Network for young Welsh facilitators that leads to paid work**

**'It's not always our responsibility to make change' – how do we balance this with getting young people's voice heard and supporting them in the way they need?**



## **Appendix: Session Two Notes**

**Thursday 15th July, 4 – 6.30pm**

*For organisations and freelancers*

*Aims:*

- *To establish an open and relaxed space for participants to share their views*
- *To encourage organisations and freelancers to comment on how their work has been impacted by Covid, and what support they need from ACW in the future*
- *To begin identifying the fundamental needs and requirements for a Youth Arts specific lottery funding*
- *To encourage participants to sign up to the final session and continue conversations*

The youth facilitators and three participants from Session One fed back key points from the previous week's discussions. All were paid a fee to attend and feedback and were then encouraged to stay and observe the remaining conversations.

In smaller breakout rooms, organisations and freelancers were then encouraged to discuss the following, contribute their thoughts verbally, via the Zoom chat function, or using an interactive Google Jamboard.

- Share a passion project, or something that has worked well for you during Covid?
- What do you need from the Arts Council to make more of this work? What do you need to help overcome the challenges that have arisen?
- Of the things that you've identified, if you could tie these things to a specific area, what would that be? I.e., funds, digital, personnel/networks.

Key points raised around the above topics included:

### **Breakout Room 1:**

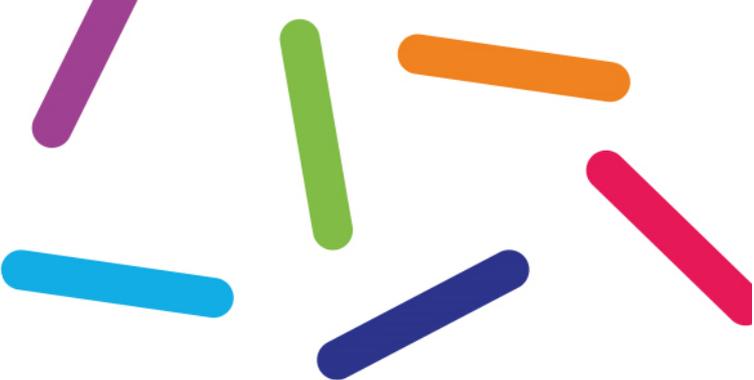
- During lockdown, people undertook lots of different projects, playwriting, music mentoring – showcases and exhibitions. The key thing that came out of that was about the resilience of young people and the bounce back - yes it's been difficult and challenging but the creative drive hasn't gone away
- Digital Poverty – there's a need to think about the digital space and how people access technology and data.
- Funding – need more of it! Need flexibility with it in order to wriggle and make connections to do different things
- Reflections – reflect on what has worked well and hasn't and how to best serve young people
- Time – we've had the luxury of time to be able to do deep and meaningful projects. Some of that time is going away now but we need that to come back

- Representation – the need for young people to see diverse role models. They need to see themselves in the things that feed them
- All of this will be supported by stronger networks
- Flexibility of funding – sometimes projects are put on young people rather than giving young people the time to develop ideas themselves

## Breakout Room 2:



(View full Jamboard by [clicking here](#))



## Breakout Room 3:

**Interventions so that people don't leave Wales to pursue training or opportunities**

Gaps in pathways where people are having to leave, and often they don't come back

What can we learn from the work Company 3 is doing? Monthly gatherings, time capsule, young people writing, workshops with guest artists etc

Networking opportunities for young people in the Arts seems to be a strong theme

**Youth communities in Wales to met other people and work together**

Brilliant work from Ballet Cymru in 7 schools funded by Paul Hamlyn - let's be working with more schools, this needs more funding

**Bring back Youth Clubs!**

Networking and learning, short courses, workshops

**Buildings are being removed from community usage. Arts Council could do more to support buildings, ensure they remain for the purpose of arts and creativity**

I would agree that for youth projects to take place in a physical building space, which is competing for space with commercial opportunities, it needs funding support.

Worried about lack of opportunities - lack of access in Uni, lack of access to perform in general, worry that deaf young people may feel they have to move from Wales if they want to progress in their careers

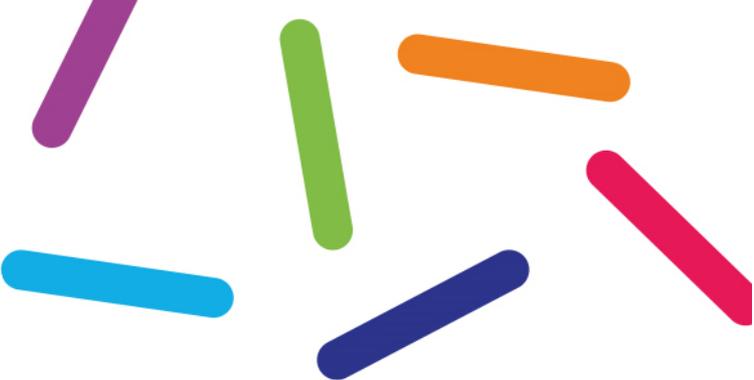
Across Wales, deaf young people are quite isolated, let's bring people together!

Excited about face-to-face experiences, being together, summer schools!

(View full Jamboard by [clicking here](#))

The group then came together to discuss funding in closer focus, considering what they would want from specific Youth Arts Lottery Funding. Some key conversations and comments included:

- I imagined a fund of up to £100,000 that is available to arts organisations but it has to specifically work for young people, and be led by young people or employs young people. It would be a fund that organisations could apply for, but the young people would say, this fund is specifically for projects that focus on this
- Maybe individual young people should be able to apply for that funding themselves, or for their own organisations/collectives that they've formed themselves. The most successful young people led organisations are the ones that are created by young people, and who have involved them from the very beginning

- 
- Giving the opportunity for a young person to apply for something along that £500 - £750 mark to invest in themselves, however they wish, and then also complement that with things like transport links – physical routes, or physical spaces that are free to access  
I think it's about removing barriers for young people. And the application process, all the written elements, I think it's a huge brick wall for young people... Maybe young people submit a video saying what they want to do, and then they get put through to the next phase and get support from a mentor so then they're honing in on those skills and ideas, and working towards leadership for the future so they are learning how to write bids
  - How do we make funding more fun and accessible, rather than 'we're coming to the serious part of funding'? That's been a barrier for me sometimes and I think for the young people as well because they feel too removed from it.
  - We could build a network of places to signpost people to spaces that are free and available.
  - Funding that isn't language specific, does knowing and speaking that jargon make me more creative? Entry points, why can't we be creative in our applications when we're applying for a creative project? Appreciate authenticity – why does having a weighted name give me more credibility, not all young people have the right networks. Taking a risk on young people to enable them to take a risk on their practice – failure is a lesson. How are we expected to learn the ropes if there is no rope? Putting mentoring costs into funding as a requirement.
  - Youth Arts needs to be valued as much as 'Adult Arts'. And that when young people make work it gets seen, that funders do see the level of quality of the work (particularly over lockdown and moving forward), if there could be some kind of shift in the value of youth arts and adult arts being equal, rather than Youth Arts and then the Arts.
  - We have big pictures on how we can change the funding process, but for now it's not changed, and it's not developed and as an emerging artist I still need access to that money, so for you as youth arts organisations to open your doors and welcoming in young people to be part of that process would be really beneficial in the interim until big changes happen.
  - I think ACW are always too concerned with reaching 'unengaged' people but should be instead focused on making it right for the artists people who ARE engaged, and when that is done right, will engage all people who aren't already engaged. So doing it right for example would be making sure funding is accessible, transport is accessible, mentoring is accessible, applications are easy to fill out. And then from doing that, young people and anyone else, that could be Global Majority backgrounds for example, will have created that art and because they're part of their own communities, that will have engaged people who are not already engaged.



### Notes from the Zoom chat included:

“The young people at Sparc launched a campaign called #OurSpace #LlenNi - to highlight the closure of their youth club they took this to Tate and pushed the Local Authority to re-open the club at least one night a week but again they needed the support of an organisation - they led it all but they needed access and resources”

“Start up project or fund, if we can't get rid of this applying for funding. Training in how and why we apply for funding.”

“A shift towards work that is led and conceived by young people but they are supported with resources and it's accessible - where the gaps are identified where they is little or no provision and addressed. Where young people can challenge the 'norms' of arts funding and influence change - there is a network that young people shape but don't have all the hassle of administrating / there are different groups - facilitator networks/ special interest groups - they can access ACW and Welsh Government and are the go too place to be heard”

“Rolling pots of money for projects and development. Decision panel are made up of young people peers. There is room to reflect at the end, but not a formalised evaluation/justification process – things can, will and should go 'wrong'. Strategic flexibility pot to respond to live issues/situations. Commitment from organisations to attend/view sharings of the work, but also not the pressure of having to share, an opportunity to see the work being developed and meet the artist – organisations come to the artist.”

“Arts Council Wales funding has been wasted by portfolio organisations funding orgs that prioritise their most expensive staff who are only now scrabbling to make 'accessible' opportunities in a bid to keep their funding. We need to make sure that grassroots orgs get more funding that will actually be distributed to the people who need it.”

“We are at a crisis point with young peoples mental health and wellbeing, youth arts is so crucial in helping to tackle this.... The pandemic has isolated young people and exacerbated this and now we need more funding and support to reach more young people!”

## Appendix: Session 3 Notes

**Tuesday 27th July, 5 – 7.30pm**

*For organisations, freelancers, young people aged 16 - 25*

*Aims:*

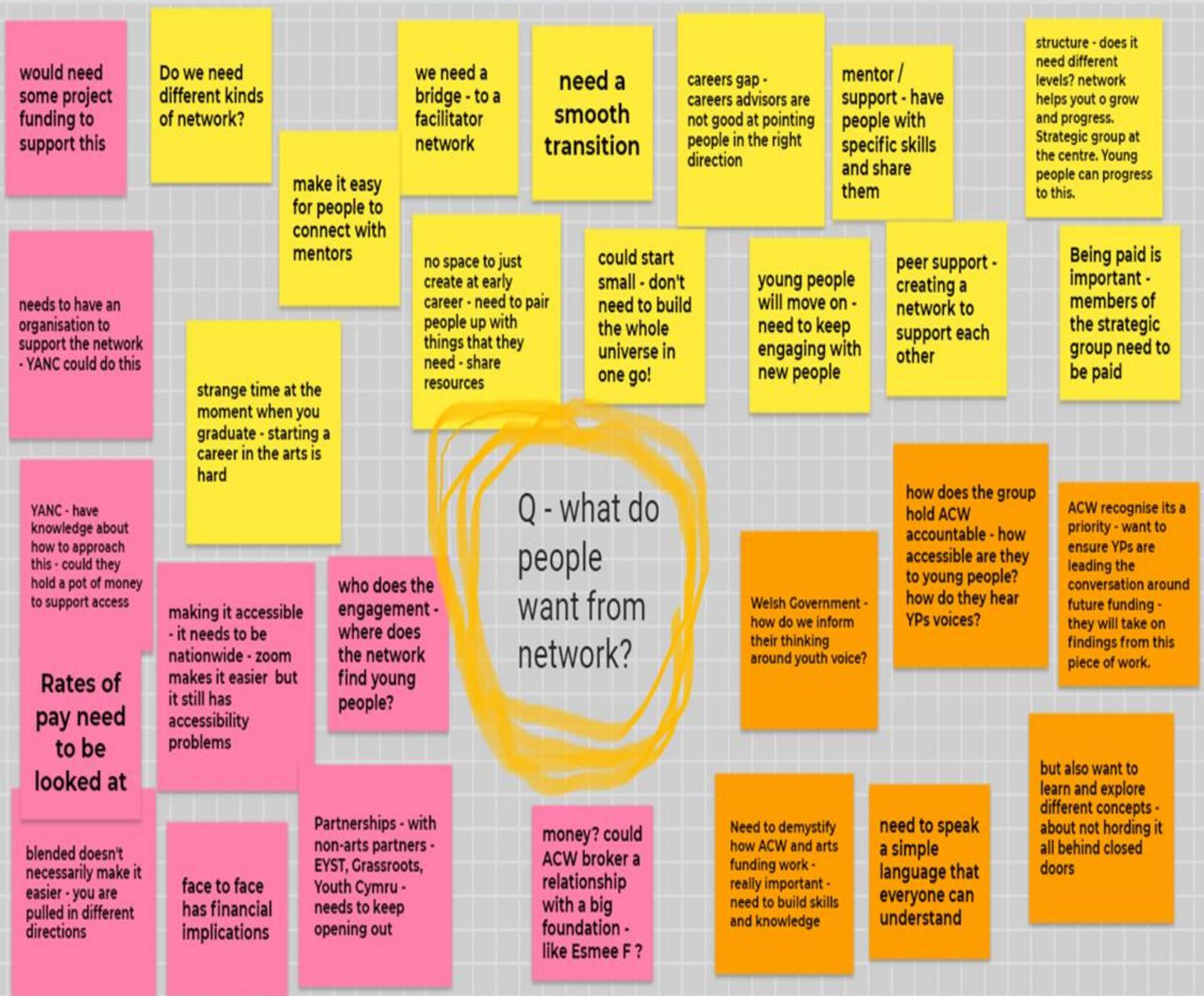
- *To establish an open and relaxed space for participants to share their views*
- *To further explore ideas and challenges discussed in the previous two sessions*
- *To identify some areas for recommendations for Arts Council of Wales*
- *To identify what we want the next steps to be from Arts Council of Wales*

The final session began with a summary of the conversations had so far, led by two of the youth facilitators. Building on the ideas that had developed throughout the previous two sessions, participants were then put into smaller breakout rooms with facilitated discussions under the following headings:

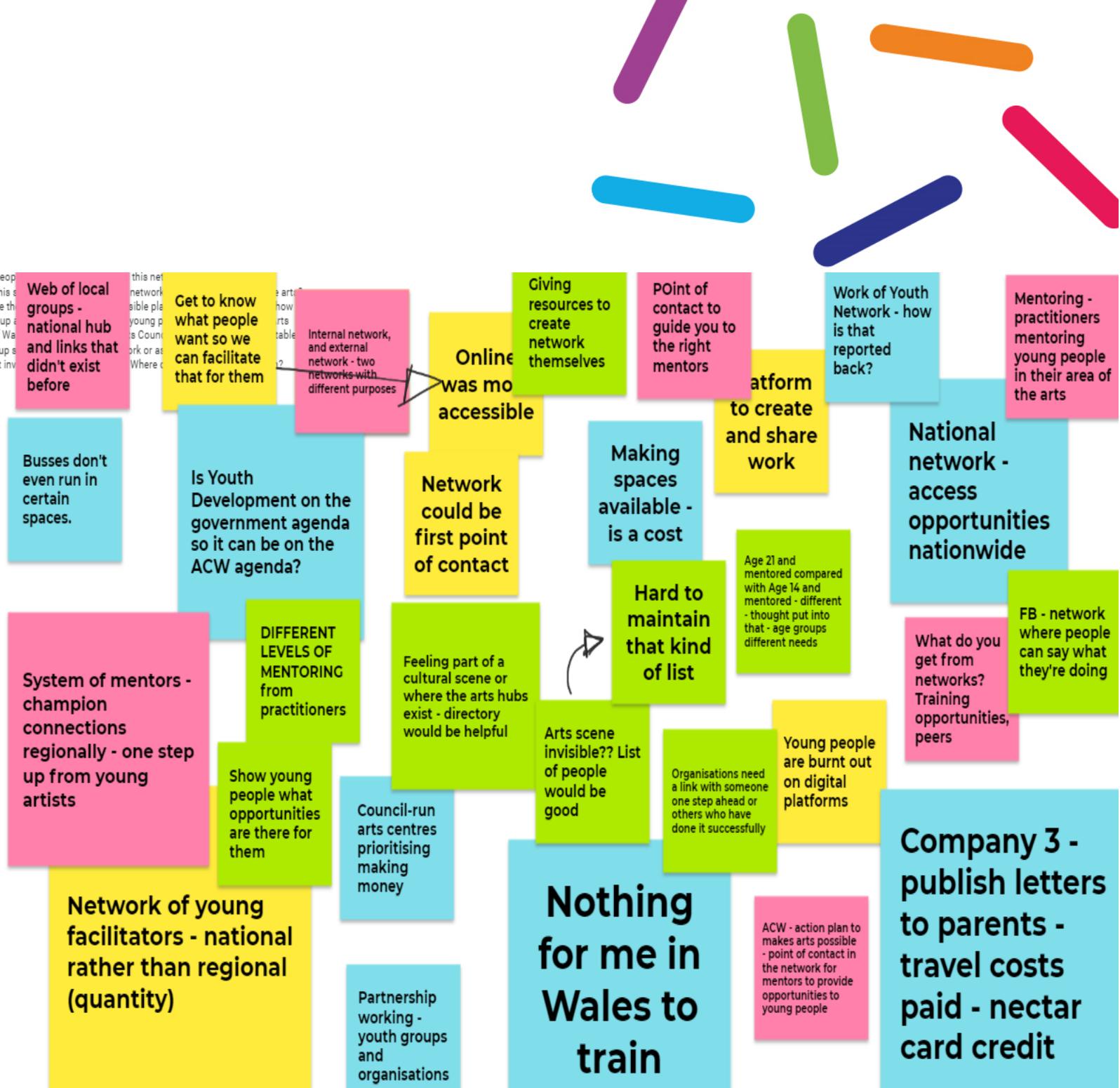
- Network for Young People
- Organisations, Young People & Arts Council relationship & roles
- Funding

Key topics of conversation under each of these headings included:

## Network for young people



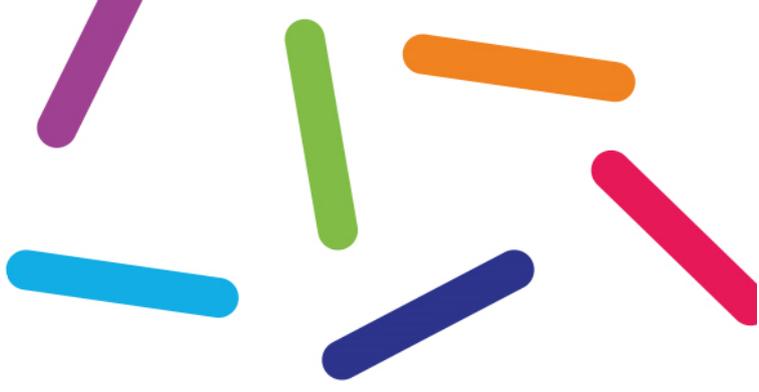
(View full Jamboard by [clicking here](#))



(View full Jamboard by [clicking here](#))

### Organisations, Young People & Arts Council relationship & roles

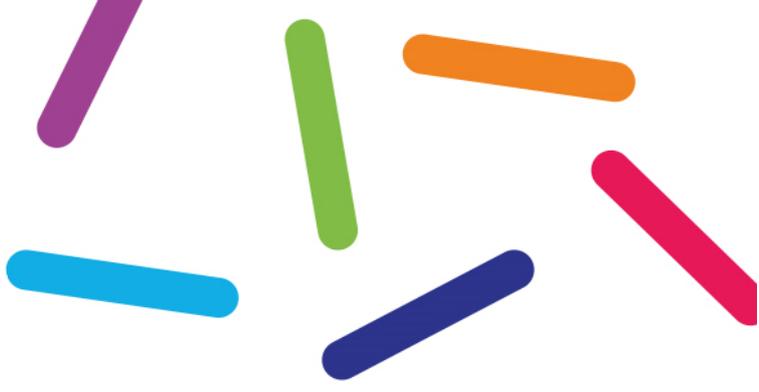
- I'd never even heard of a youth board before kind of joining in these meetings. And I don't know if that's just because I've grown up in like a small community dance group in Llantrisant. I think initially, I'd probably find it quite daunting. I'm not quite confident in speaking in front of a lot of people, but I think is something I would have pushed towards. But I think that's also just because it's something I want a career in. Whereas people who do it as a hobby, how can they get involved, and I think they'd be less confident to push themselves forwards to get involved. I think, particularly when I was younger and before I knew I definitely wanted to be involved in the arts as a career, I think a social network or just kind of a group discussion would have been more useful for me initially.



- So the idea would be perhaps every small arts organisation has a youth board or youth group that engages with young people in an informal way and would have the opportunity to nominate a young person to sit on a larger board. That would be essentially the Arts Council Wales board, where they act as a sounding board to Arts Council Wales, they perhaps meet every three months, and they would act as ambassadors for young people and the arts for the organisation, but also young people in Wales as a whole.

(View following three Jamboards by [clicking here](#))





Allow young people TIME - developing young people over a longer period of time, genuinely accruing skills that they can take forwards

More bursaries and paid opportunities, apprenticeships

Paid internships (delivered through Connect and Flourish), they were PAYE too

How do we support young people's pathways with creative careers?

Which age groups are we focusing on, and are we thinking beyond 16-25 too?

Diminishing of funding for training limiting possibilities for careers

Realism around careers in the arts

Arts isn't necessarily about careers. How it informs who we are in society. Culture is a part of everybody's life

Use the cultural contract. That will become a useful way of working - mutuality, sharing how we move forward together.

Engendering conversation and listening on many sides - e.g. council, committees, Arts Council needs to be responsive to the needs of communities, the listening needs to happen at their end

Have young people on the list of consultants

Arts Council seek council/advice of young people that things are for young people

Should it be a government fund? Rather than ACW? We just need the pot of money for access

Transparency!

Publicly admit what has been achieved!

Not simply being told by the Arts Council what we can and can't do. Collaboration and co-creation between us as sector at ACW to make it happen.

In Scotland they have additional legislation around BSL, I'm hoping we'll be able to do something here in Wales and that would achieve

Encourage deaf young people

How can you use your organisation to hold Arts Council of Wales accountable?

Arts Council need to say - we want this project to do X - we've sought advice from young people about whether it's wanted - if we don't deliver it please tell us why so we can achieve the aims next time

Additional pots from ACW to support access costs on top of what is there - commit to this, regardless of their barriers so all young people can access - a TOP UP FUND

We have 4 things that we will be doing, publish it, and account for it

New forum, new means of communicating

Disrupt/change the usual transference of power

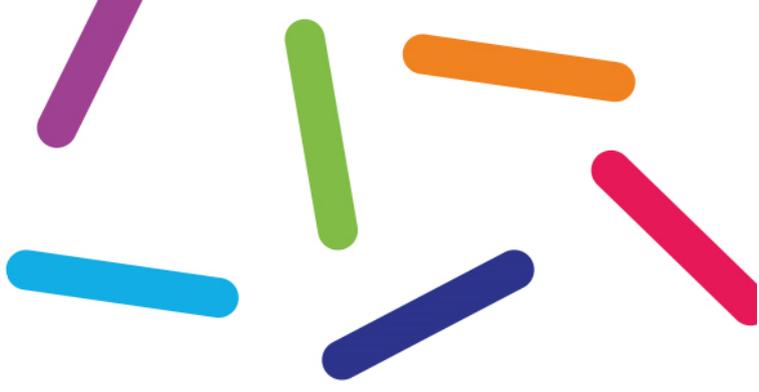
I know a lot of young people who are often refused and they don't have those opportunities

How can ACW make that change - we need legislation to make sure we have famous deaf young people, deaf actors

Asking young people in terms of barriers

In terms of access to theatre, deaf people and their access to theatre

Funding for access costs - access costs for practitioners different from audience and participants



## Funding

Access - barriers to access - getting people through the door

Relevance-creating what young people want to create

Exchanging work with young people nationally & internationally - that has been a turning point.

1-2-1 Mentorship to develop their career in the way they want

what are all the barriers? Many barriers we haven't even had the conversation with people - childcare costs!

funders need to change with the time

So many rules, seems complex

Opportunity to invite a young person or early career artist to work with you

funding allows young people to come to us...

People's needs are changing daily - doesn't fit into a list or box

Relevance - what is the art that young people want to do? What's the impact, quality over quantity!

Access requirements should be standard

No-one should have to do unpaid internship on living wage

Take away the limitations (\*\*having to work) age, groups, categories -remove restrictions. One day - wellbeing, one day specific communities

How do people find out about funding opportunities? Who judges who should get funded (young people)? Who supports young people to apply (other fundraisers?)

quality not quantity - why should you be excluded?

(View full Jamboard by [clicking here](#))

- Sometimes you have to go through the tick boxes, to be able to make your project fit to the money. So it's not always about not having the money, but it's about being restricted in what you have to spend it on. Imagine if that was lifted, and then you could just yet let young people do what they want to do and create wonderful art.
- There's that assumption from funders perhaps or from some of the larger organisations, perhaps that the access funding is to allow young people to come to us, as opposed to thinking about where are those young people? What are they already doing? And how can we help them? It feels like the wrong way round sometimes.
- There's a disparity between access costs for practitioners and participants in the way that Arts Council funding works at the moment in that paid practitioners can include access costs for themselves on top of project funding, whereas any access costs for audience or participants has to be within the project funding.
- There should be a more responsive model for access costs because when you're running a participatory arts project with young people, when you come



to design a project and apply for the funding, you don't know what the access needs of your group are going to be so you're kind of plucking a figure out of the air really about how much you can put it. It would be much more sensible to be able to apply to that on a demand basis once your project gets started.

- I think with this idea of funding, young people's opinions do matter, and young people are passionate and who are going into the arts they're looking for these opportunities and it's hard out there at the moment. Funding shouldn't be daunting, every young person should feel like they have a right to this funding and to the arts in general. Because the arts give people hope and it's about creativity and it should be accessible to everyone.

The session culminated in more focused discussion on how these conversations could be honed into key recommendations that should be fed back to Arts Council of Wales, around what organisations, freelancers, and practitioners want next from the Arts Council. Participants were asked to reflect on what their one key recommendation would be, and to share this in the chat.

#### **These were the final recommendations put forward:**

- Provide a platform for young people to express their Art
- A little more conversation, (and a little more action please!)
- Young people to have real agency in the decision making in the youth arts sector - not just "advising" or "influencing"! Making decisions on youth arts project funding, producing their own projects with the support of orgs, accessing their own funding pots with the support of orgs, sitting on ACW Council, sitting on orgs boards as full members
- Multiple opportunities and pathways that allow the Youth Arts sector to be what it needs to be for all young people, which is different for each individual and not one size fits all!
- Make young people aware of the opportunities there are for funding etc.
- Create space for emerging artists
- Young people. Inspiring. Designing. Deciding. Changing. Thriving.
- A network for young people to access opportunities that also allows for more diverse arts. Run by young people
- Increase and develop progression routes, specifically for dance. We need the young people to be able to stay and train in Wales.
- FAFF-FREE FUTURES (FUNDING, FRIENDSHIPS)
- More opportunities for collaboration, training in Wales, funding for young people to have mentoring whilst approaching/developing their project.
- Have young people \*genuinely\* involved in decision making and have agency
- ACW youth board made up of young ambassadors from different arts organisations
- Building a web of mentors, groups, young people
- Young People on ACW Council - Holding each other's hands - These relationships are crucial!
- Accessible Wales based training for aspiring artists.

