

# Challenge London



## CULTURAL FREEDOM:

KEY THEMES THAT HELP OR HINDER YOUNG PEOPLE'S CAPACITY TO THRIVE THROUGH DEVELOPING THEIR CREATIVE POTENTIAL.

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# A NEW DIRECTION

We create opportunity

# Fairness

**Highlights the big gap between rich and poor in London and the impact on an individual's capacity to develop their creative potential**

**The high cost of living in London pushes people into poverty which in turn impacts on people's capacity to engage. Inequality not only relates to access and participation in existing opportunities. Research shows that cultural agency and the freedom to make culture are heavily influenced by environment including family & wealth, geographical location and the impact on perception and psychology (i.e. Sense of safety, psycho-geography), and access to information (Wilson & Gross, 2017).**

One indicator of engagement comes from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) Taking Part Survey which shows that engagement with the arts is significantly higher for the upper socio-economic group (84.4% in 2016/17) than the lower socio-economic group (67.4% in 2016/17) (DCMS, 2017).

"For many people, going to the theatre or to see an exhibition is a natural part of family life with few barriers to overcome. However, for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, these opportunities are not readily available" (DCMS, 2016).

It is still the case that those most actively involved in Arts Council England's (ACE) defined 'arts and culture' tend to be from the most privileged parts of society, with engagement still heavily influenced by levels of education, socio-economic background and where people live (ACE, 2016).

Disparity in opportunity is evident across the creative and cultural industries workforce. The arts & culture industry has grown by 10% in the last year (ACE, 2016). At the same time, unemployment in London remains above the national average with the unemployment rate for 16- to 24-year-olds in London being 2.6 times higher than for adults aged 25 to 64. Almost double the proportion of working-age disabled adults in London are workless, compared to non-disabled adults. British Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) Londoners have higher rates of unemployment and economic inactivity than other ethnic groups. Yet, only 22.4% of London's creative industries workforce are BAME.

27% of Londoners live in poverty after housing costs are taken into account, compared with 20% in the rest of England: high housing costs increase stress for people on low incomes. (Trust for London, London's Poverty Profile).

Young Londoners from poorer communities have been affected more deeply by benefit cuts than anywhere else in the country (The London Fairness Commission, 2016).

Furthermore, despite improved academic attainment young people from poorer backgrounds do not go on to achieve the same outcomes as their middle-class peers in terms of employment, health or security of housing (The London Fairness Commission, 2016).

Empowering youth voice around cultural learning is key. Research shows that in order to understand and co-manage young people's cultural learning ecologies effectively, a sustainable process of co-producing knowledge about that ecosystem must be in place, with many voices heard, on an ongoing basis (Wilson & Gross, 2017).



[www.anewdirection.org.uk/challenge](http://www.anewdirection.org.uk/challenge)

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# Wellbeing

Champions a happy and healthy London that provides emotional security for young people

**Research into the concerns of young people in London highlights a lack of physical exercise due to overcrowding, lack of access to green space, awareness and concern about high levels of pollution and some evidence of increased incidences of mental health problems.**

More than 110,000 children in London, or around one in 10, suffer with significant mental ill-health. Nearly 40,000 suffer from anxiety and over 10,000 from depression (Public Health England, 2016).

Rates of anxiety and depression in young people have risen 70% in the past 25 years (RSPH, 2017).

The percentage of 15-year-olds in London reporting low life satisfaction are higher than the England average in every London borough (except Havering). (Public Health England, 2016).

**There has been a shift from universal to more targeted provision, focusing on the young people who are perceived to have the highest needs. This has led to a lack of early help for young people and fewer opportunities for young people to engage in positive activities with peers.**

The shift towards more targeted, project-specific funding has also an impact on the continuity of provision for young people. Practitioners highlighted that it has led to more rapid turnover of projects as funding is typically shorter-term. As a result, it is now more difficult to sustain projects that young people may already be engaged in (London Youth, 2017).

Girls' reported happiness dips sharply around the age of 11-12, going from being higher than boys' mean happiness to lower. This may be due to the start of social media usage, which is more prevalent among girls at this age (The Children's Society, 2017).

Childhood obesity rates in London as a whole are higher than the England average (23% of children in year 6 compared to 20%). The negative effects of childhood obesity are not evenly distributed among children in London: children from a deprived background are more likely to be obese. Obesity rates are highest for children from the most deprived areas (Trust for London, 2017).

Despite 18% of London being publicly accessible green space, many people live too far away to enjoy those benefits. According to the London Plan, people should live within 400 metres of a small public green space, such as a local park. Currently, only 50% of London's homes are within that recommended distance (London Assembly, 2017).

"Cultural wellbeing is inherently social" and can play a role in children and young people's mental health through encouraging self-expression, showing them they are not alone. Cultural education structures can provide "'safe spaces', in which young people feel more secure, giving them the opportunity to relax, and make themselves vulnerable in creative ways" (Wilson & Gross, 2017).

Creative activity has been observed to stimulate an understanding of the process of making, giving rise to a greater sense of responsibility and self-reflection, increased confidence and self-esteem and better mental health (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing, 2017).



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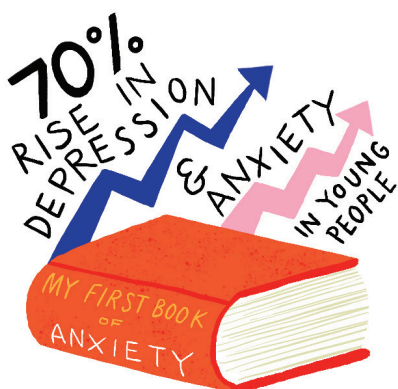
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# Influence and power

## Amplifying hidden voices

33% of Londoners are aged 0-25, yet young voices are typically underrepresented in policy decisions in and outside of culture. Without increased consideration of young voices we risk further isolation and disconnect between generations in London.

"Compared to 2015, turnout rose most among young people [in 2017], to match their estimated turnout levels in the EU referendum, while it fell very slightly among older people – but older people were still much more likely to vote overall" (Ipsos Mori, 2017).

18-24 turn out in 2017: 54%; 65+ turnout in 2017: 71% (Ipsos Mori, 2017)

"From a voting perspective, younger voices are being drowned out by older people..." (UK Young Ambassadors, 2017)

50% of young people felt that the world was changing for the worse and only 35% felt it was changing for the better. 34% of young people felt they were incapable of keeping up with this change, with young people from lower socio economic backgrounds more likely to feel this way (British Youth Council, 2017).

"From data submitted by National Portfolio Organisations in 2015/16, we see that: • 17 per cent of the workforce is Black and minority ethnic • 4% self-defined as disabled • 55 per cent of the workforce are female • the most represented age group is aged between 20 and 34, making up 29 per cent of the workforce". ("We welcome the continued progress with Black and minority ethnic representation across the workforce of the National Portfolio, which now stands at 17 per cent against the working age population average of 15 per cent") (ACE, 2015).

**Research has highlighted how the capital's young people are ambitious to succeed, aware of the chances that London might offer them and are specific about the support needed to achieve their goals; for example, through having spaces where they could work on creative projects or collaborate together (London Youth, 2017).**

**The shifting funding environment has placed a renewed emphasis on inter-organisational partnership and multiagency working to improve efficiencies and effectiveness. It has also emphasised the important role played by 'young cooperatives' in coordinating services. Such collaborative efforts are encouraged as they strengthen youth organisations and ensure their longer-term sustainability (London Youth, 2017).**

We have seen increased traction in recent years in models of youth governance, recruiting young trustees, and considering how young voices are heard across programming and organisational decision-making. As well as supporting relevance and 'live feed-back' mechanisms for programme development, being involved with organisational governance can support our future cultural and artistic leaders to build relevant skills and experience for their future roles, or in starting their own organisation.



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# New London

**Looks at the changing physical landscape of London and new opportunities to build-in ideas for developing creativity**

London's population is projected to increase by 70,000 every year, reaching 10.5 million in 2041. In order to meet demand, at least 66,000 new homes need to be built – along with space for tens of thousands of new jobs every single year (London Plan, 2017).

**The New London Plan emphasises the importance of planning social infrastructure which meet the needs of London's diverse communities (social infrastructure includes education, community, play, youth & recreation services and facilities). As the plan states, 'social infrastructure plays an important role in developing strong and inclusive communities. It can provide opportunities to bring different groups of people together, contributing to social integration and the desirability of a place.'**

The plan adopts a holistic approach to growth within which 'London's diverse cultural facilities and creative industries' plays a central role. For example, the plan emphasises the identification and promotion of Cultural Quarters, 'especially where they can provide an anchor for local regeneration and town centre renewal', as well as the identification of Creative Enterprise Zones (CEZs).

The response to local need is explicit – 'boroughs are encouraged to develop an understanding of the existing cultural offer in their areas, evaluate what is unique or important to residents, workers and visitors and develop policies to protect those cultural assets'. The plan also asserts that 'where appropriate, boroughs should use Cultural Quarters to seek synergies between cultural provision, schools, and higher and further education which can be used to nurture volunteering, new talent and audiences.'

When it comes to the issue of Play, the plan states that 'accessing opportunities for play, and being able to be independently mobile within their neighbourhood, is important for children and young people's wellbeing and development.' It recognises that 'there should be appropriate provision for different age groups, including

older children and teenagers. Particular consideration should be given to consultation with children and young people in the design of new provision to understand their changing needs' (The New London Plan, 2017).

Whilst young people appreciate development and growth in their local areas, they are increasingly worried that they will be 'priced out' of their own neighbourhoods (London Youth, 2017).

Cultural development can exacerbate this problem. How can cultural providers ensure local young people can access their provision? How can providers ensure sensitivity? Are cultural institutions drawing on the heritage of the local area or excluding it?

In addition, research has shown that cuts to local authority's budgets has resulted in the closure of youth centres and places for young people (Berry, 2017).





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# Preparing for work

**Argues for relevant skills and open entry to employment in the creative sector in the capital**

**Research has shown that the skills that are likely to be in greater demand in the future, include interpersonal skills, higher-order cognitive skills, and systems skills (Nesta, 2017). How can we ensure school and talent pipeline programmes help young Londoners develop these skills? Can all young Londoners access these programmes?**

There is also a lack of an effective careers information, advice and guidance offer for young Londoners, limiting the ability to upskill/reskill and progress in work.

The creative industries have long-standing skills shortages, also evident in the UK's digital tech businesses - 50% of which reported a skills shortage in 2017. Research has shown that these skills shortages stem from inadequate training and provision at schools in this country compounded by the ever-greater need for talent in a sector that is growing (Creative Industries Federation, 2016).

Industry has reported that students are graduating without the skills and attitudes needed to succeed in the digital and creative sector.

There are 800,000 jobs in the creative economy as a whole. Since 2011, the fastest growing sectors in the creative economy have been music, performing arts and visual arts. Growth is robust – film and TV production has grown 16.4% in the three months following the EU referendum, against 0.5% overall GDP growth (London First, 2017).

Yet, unemployment rates are above the national average with young people, disabled adults, BAME groups and women disproportionately under-represented in the labour market.

Despite outperforming other regions at GCSE (both for all children and for those eligible for free school meals) London fails to sustain this progress post-16. Inner London ranks second-lowest among the English regions for average points score at Level 3 among 16- 18-year olds in state-funded provision (Department for Education).

In 2015/16, London reported the second lowest number of apprenticeship starts out of the nine English regions.

And equality is an issue...

Young people aged 16 to 18 and from ethnic minority groups continue to be less likely to start an apprenticeship in London than their white counterparts (Mayor of London, 2017).

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds in London continue to be less likely to go on to higher education by age 18 or 19, than their wealthier peers (Department for Education).



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# Pressures on institutions

## A strong, sustainable ecology

**Children and young people are supported by a network of schools, youth clubs, cultural organisations and other providers who are crucial to helping young people develop their interests. In different ways these are under pressure.**

Data from councils show an average 36% cut in youth service budgets across London since 2011. Ten of the councils who responded to a request for information have cut youth funding by 50% or more over five years. 83% of young people said cuts were having an effect on crime and antisocial behaviour (Berry, 2017).

Education spending has fallen in real terms as spending cuts began to take effect from 2010 onwards. Between 2010–11 and 2015–16, it has fallen by about 14% in real terms, taking it back to the same level it was in 2005–06 and a similar share of national income to that last seen through most of the 1990s (Institute for Fiscal Studies, 2017).

Between 2010 and 2016, local authority investment in arts and culture declined by £236m – equivalent to 17%. London boroughs saw the largest cuts in arts and culture spending; 19 per cent between 2010 and 2015 (ACE, 2016).

Despite the need for arts subjects for a wide range of careers, entries for GCSEs in arts and creative subjects are continuing to fall (Cultural Learning Alliance, 2017).

Managing school budgets, staff recruitment and teacher workload have been cited as the top three challenges facing school leaders in London (London Councils, 2017).



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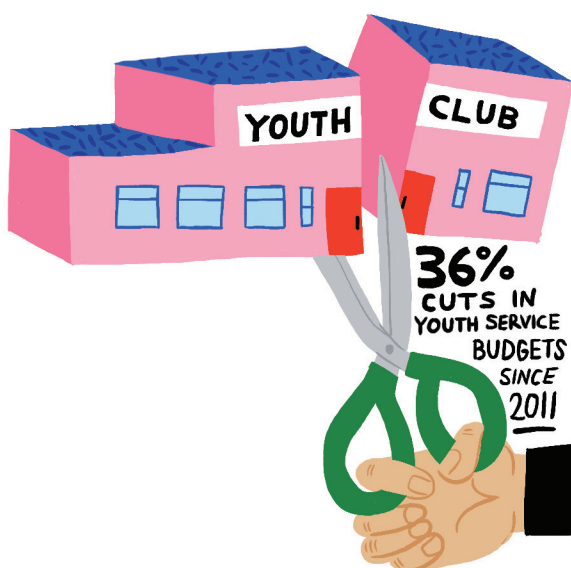
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