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# **Listening Project: Employment and Work**

**Report by Rocket Science for A New  
Direction**

March 2021



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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Context for the Listening Projects

A New Direction is a London-based non-profit, generating opportunities for children and young people to unlock their creativity. In January 2021, in a rapidly changing context, A New Direction commissioned Rocket Science alongside four partner organisations to listen to:

- Young Londoners to understand their experiences and concerns
- Organisations within the rich ecology that supports young people, creativity and culture in the city.

This work is called the [Listening Projects](#), and outcomes will feed into A New Direction's future planning and activity. The Listening Projects cover five themes: the experience of young Londoners, supporting organisations leading practice, the earth emergency, enabling cultural communities, and employment and work. Rocket Science has led the employment theme and inevitably this has included a focus on the impact of Covid-19 on the sector.

8% of the workforce (110,000 people) are reported to have left the sector within the first half of 2020, with 55,000 of these jobs losses in music, performing and visual arts.<sup>1</sup> In 2020, it was predicted that 409,000 jobs within the creative and cultural sector would be lost, 27% of these are in London, showing the significance of this sector within the capital.<sup>2</sup> It is predicted the impact of Covid-19 on the sector in London and its supply chain will cost the economy £16.3 billion.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, the sector has a higher proportion of self-employed workers than the national average, and it is known that this group will experience high rates of job losses, as well as not being covered by government financial support in many cases.<sup>4</sup> Across sectors, Covid-19 has negatively impacted the careers of young people and risks having a long-term impact on their prospects.<sup>5</sup> The latest government budget announcement committed £300 million to account for these negative impacts and boost the sector, however there remains criticism about the lack of government support for self-employed workers.

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<sup>1</sup> [Policy & Evidence Centre, A Jobs Crisis in the Cultural and Creative Industries, December 2020](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Oxford Economics, The Projected Economic Impact of Covid-19 on the UK Creative Industries, July 2020](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Mayor of London, Creative Industries Supply Chain Covid-19 Impact, June 2020](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Oxford Economics, The Projected Economic Impact of Covid-19 on the UK Creative Industries, July 2020](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Institute for Fiscal Studies, Covid-19 and the Career Prospects of Young People, July 2020](#)



## 1.2 Context for research questions

The overarching research question for this listening project was:

**How can young Londoners be best supported to thrive within the creative sector and wider world of work?**

We developed two themes to explore within this overarching research question, one focused on the future of the creative and cultural sector and the other on the support needed for young people.

- The theme on the future looked to understand the lasting impact of Covid-19 and other factors e.g., digital progress on the work available within the sector. **Questions have focused on the changing world of work:**
  - What has been the impact of Covid-19 on youth employment? What impact has it had on the creative sector and creative careers?
  - How is the world of work likely to change over the coming two years? E.g., new types of work, vacancies, reduced opportunities
  - How confident are young people to thrive in the sector e.g., to start their own business/initiative? How can young people be best supported in entrepreneurship?
  - What will be the new normal? What do we hope will change?
- The theme on support for young people looked to answer what could be done by stakeholders such as youth organisations, creative and cultural organisations, employability organisations and education institutions to best support young people in this changing world of work. **Questions have focused on how to best support young people to thrive in the creative and cultural sector:**
  - What do creative employers seem to look for in terms of skills and experience?
  - What are youth needs around support to gain skills and access creative careers? E.g., careers advice, CV help, work experience
  - What would these types of support need to look like to be most effective?
  - What do youth sector partners (schools/youth organisations) need to effectively support young people into creative employment? – e.g., written resources about training/roles, creative sector speakers, connections to creative employers



## 1.3 Methodology

### 1.3.1 Research framework development

Following an inception meeting hosted by A New Direction, Rocket Science drafted core research questions and sub-questions. Rocket Science met with A New Direction to refine research questions, ensuring they were aligned with A New Direction's aims.

### 1.3.2 Stakeholder roundtable

Rocket Science collated a database of stakeholders that were considered relevant to attend the stakeholder roundtable. These consisted primarily of organisations or people working on creative youth employment, youth employment more generally, or creativity more generally. Rocket Science advertised the event via social media and by emailing contacts directly to invite them to attend.

Nine stakeholders attended the roundtable which was held via Zoom on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021 and discussed topics including:

- Enablers and barriers for young people to enter the creative and cultural sector
- Factors that will impact the future jobs available in the creative and cultural sector e.g. Covid-19 and digital progress
- How these factors will impact the jobs available in the creative and cultural sector
- How we should support young people to thrive in the creative and cultural sector including at what point in a young person's journey support is needed and who should be providing support

### 1.3.3 Youth roundtable

Rocket Science recruited and trained four young people as peer researchers, two of whom went on to facilitate a youth roundtable. Peer researchers were recruited through creative youth organisations and local partnerships. Peer researchers were provided with incentives for their time, equivalent to London Living Wage (£10.85 per hour). The training took place via Zoom and consisted of:

- Explaining the project and the importance of youth voice
- Getting to know each other
- An introduction to social research including information on what a roundtable is, and what might make a roundtable a success
- Research ethics including consent and confidentiality
- Co-designing the roundtable questions to ensure that questions and exercises were planned in a way conducive to youth participation
- Assigning responsibilities for the roundtable
- Methods for recruiting peers to take part in the roundtable



- Summary tips and tricks for facilitating a roundtable and thinking through potential challenges and how to deal with these.

Following the training, the peer researchers recruited their peers to take part in a youth roundtable. The roundtable was also held via Zoom and was co-facilitated by the peer researchers and Rocket Science staff members. Six young people attended the roundtable. The session covered:

- Introductions to the project and each other
- Warm up games including creative word association and thinking about creative and cultural sector jobs
- Current and future jobs in the creative and cultural sector including which jobs are more or less accessible for young people and barriers to creative employment
- Support needed for young people to thrive in the creative and cultural sector including:
  - How young people currently find out about opportunities e.g. social media, employers, networks
  - What type of support would help them e.g. employability support, skills building, advice and guidance etc.
  - Who would ideally provide this support e.g. schools, youth clubs, creative employers

### **1.3.4 Interviews**

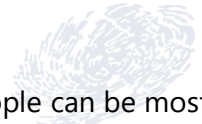
Following the roundtables, Rocket Science held interviews with three additional stakeholders to gain a greater understanding of research questions. Interviewees included a cultural policy officer, a school engagement officer for creative disciplines and a music programme manager. These conversations provided insight on how feedback from the stakeholder roundtable fitted into policy response, information on what worked with engaging students at school, and types of programmes that are most effective in supporting young people into careers into the music industry.

Additionally, Rocket Science identified that there was a gap in findings in relation to older young people. To combat this, Rocket Science held targeted interviews with three young people aged between 23 and 25.

It was challenging to recruit peer researchers to facilitate the youth roundtables in the short time frame that was available for this piece of work. Therefore, it may have been more beneficial to reach out to more young people individually for interviews, or to have worked together with the other Listening Project teams to reach young people to maximise their engagement in the work.

### **1.3.5 Analysis and reporting**

Once roundtables and interviews were complete, Rocket Science analysed findings by looking for common themes across responses. This report outlines current issues that young people face in



accessing creative employment, the future of work in the sector, and how young people can be most effectively supported to navigate, adapt to and thrive in relation to the following six themes:

1. Impact of Covid
2. Technological advancement and digital skills
3. The rise of insecure work
4. Recruitment and lack of diversity
5. Types of jobs available in the sector
6. Support for young people

Throughout findings quotes in **blue** are from young people and quotes in **pink** are from stakeholders.



## 2. Summary of findings and calls to action

The table on the following page summarises findings and calls to action for the six themes outlined above. Findings are explained in full in Chapters 3-8. The calls to action are linked to policy strategies because it is important that the changes made to support young people to thrive in the sector in London fit within wider system change. Given the impact of Covid on the creative and cultural sector, the Mayor of London's Recovery Strategy is of particular relevance here. This focuses on nine mission areas:

1. High streets
2. Strong communities
3. Digital access for all
4. A green new deal
5. A robust safety net
6. Young people
7. Healthy food and weight
8. Good work for Londoners
9. Mental health and wellbeing

The following calls to action tie into a number of these themes; most clearly 'young people' and 'good work for Londoners'. Additionally, the calls to action touch on 'digital access for all' (the importance of digital skills for young people going into the sector), 'a robust safety net' (the importance of financial stability, particularly for freelancers in the sector) and 'mental health and wellbeing' (by ensuring that young people have access to mentors to ensure that they feel supported and looked after in their journey towards or experiences of creative work).

In relation to the young people mission, across all calls to action, the importance of working collaboratively with young people and empowering them in this process was raised as particularly important. Stakeholders and young people alike spoke of the importance of the involvement of young people in decision making, the design of support programmes and development of advice. For work that is focused on young people, it is essential that young people are not consulted as an additional extra, or on the peripheries of a project, but are centred at the heart of the work through methods such as co-production and co-design. This will ensure that changes are coming directly from young people; those best positioned to know what change is needed.

- *"[We use] youth voice and participation meaning that we work collaboratively with young people, sharing power [with them]."*





Theme	Current issues	Future issues	Call to action	GLA Mission
<b>Impact of Covid-19</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Closure of creative and cultural spaces in London</li> <li>Loss of jobs, and opportunities, for young people</li> <li>Lack of financial support for freelancers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reducing income of individuals and organisations due to Covid recovery funding coming to an end and potential restrictions on capacity of events</li> <li>Closure of organisations due to Covid may have a longer-term impact and stunt the growth of the sector</li> <li>Lack of experience of the world of work for young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creative organisations working together to campaign government to offer substantial financial support to the sector, particularly during times when parts of the sector are not able to offer in-person events.</li> <li>Encouraging employers to offer virtual work experience placements for young people whilst Covid-19 restrictions continue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good work for Londoners</li> <li>A robust safety net</li> </ul>
<b>Technological advancement and digital skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creative and cultural work shifting to become more digital including jobs that have moved online due to Covid e.g., online theatre shows and jobs that are dependent on digital e.g., digital marketing</li> <li>Throughout the pandemic, some organisations have offered their services for free online, putting them at financial risk</li> <li>Requirement of digital qualifications for work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Blended model of working online and in-person</li> <li>Shift to doing things online well not just doing things online out of necessity</li> <li>More jobs created for young people to help creative and cultural organisations with their shift to digital working</li> <li>Increased combination of the arts with other disciplines</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing new roles designed for young people to provide digital support to creative and cultural organisations</li> <li>Ensuring that digital skills are a compulsory part of creative training courses, both to teach new skills and to nurture any existing digital proficiencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Digital access for all</li> </ul>
<b>The rise of insecure work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is instability of work in the sector, especially for freelance workers. A good hourly rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Freelance work has been growing and is likely continue to grow in the sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth organisations campaigning to encourage employers to advertise their work experience placements/trial shifts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good work for Londoners</li> </ul>

	<p>does not equate to a stable financial position. Many young people will have multiple jobs to be more financially secure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feelings of compromise between financial security and following their creative ambition</li> <li>• Workers' rights issues around the sector employing individuals as freelancers for roles that should have fixed term contracts</li> <li>• Issues particularly impacting young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns that organisations will have less money (e.g., due to Covid or reductions in funding) and therefore may offer more part-time or freelance positions because it is less of a cost commitment in the short term than taking on new full-time employees</li> <li>• As freelancing becomes more common, young people may have even less stable work lives and less of a safety net</li> </ul>	<p>and pay young people for their time for this work to provide them with financial stability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing training on practical creative business skills within creative and cultural training programmes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A robust safety net</li> </ul>
<p><b>Recruitment and lack of diversity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sector relies on networks and nepotism creating a non-diverse workforce</li> <li>• Recruitment is often based on personal preference rather than skills or qualifications</li> <li>• Qualifications could be limiting because they are not accessible to all young people, though could also be a leveller</li> <li>• Programmes focusing on increasing diversity not doing enough</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If interventions are not made, the sector will continue to recruit based on nepotism leading to a lack of diversity</li> <li>• Although there are current programmes that are working to increase diversity, these could be expanded to ensure significant change in the sector in the long term</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting young people to take the first step in gaining experience in the sector and campaigning to encourage employers to create and advertise entry level jobs for young people that do not require previous experience</li> <li>• Developing training and skills initiatives and programmes that target specific groups of young people to tackle the issue of diversity within the creative and cultural sector</li> <li>• Encouraging employers to enable multiple routes into careers in the sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good work for Londoners</li> <li>• Strong communities</li> <li>• Mental health and wellbeing</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers do not have flexibility to adapt job roles for different people</li> <li>• Competition acts as a barrier to recruitment</li> </ul>		<p>though valuing a range of qualifications, skills and experience and reflecting this in job requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through schools and youth organisations, connecting young people with mentors to support them with their journey into the creative and cultural sector</li> <li>• Establishing and supporting creative networks that are open to young people and actively encourage participation</li> </ul>	
<b>Types of jobs available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of knowledge of types of jobs available, particularly of non-creative jobs within the sector</li> <li>• Entry level jobs exist but are hard for young people without experience to access. Work available is often short term or does not include training meaning it can be difficult for young people without experience to access. This has been exacerbated by Covid-19 which has meant competition for jobs has increased</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government funding will impact types of job opportunities</li> <li>• The climate crisis may lead to more local, community-based roles focused on sustainability</li> <li>• Shortages of certain workers in the sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Through careers support at school or in youth organisations, raising awareness of the range of jobs available to young people within the creative and cultural sector, including non-creative jobs.</li> <li>• Offering work experience placements that are relevant to the specific interests of young people so that they can try out different types of jobs and gain experience of working in the sector and encouraging employers to offer entry level jobs that include training and support to improve access for young people without experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good work for Londoners</li> </ul>
<b>Support for young people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a negative perception of working in the sector meaning arts pathways were</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a range of skills that have been identified as important for young people to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing attitudes in school amongst staff so that young people are provided with better creative engagement and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young people</li> </ul>



often not valued by school or family members

- Careers support offered in schools for young people interested in going into the sector is lacking in specificity of how to access particular roles

thrive in the sector in the future. Without young people being offered support it will be hard for young people to attain these or to be prepared for the world of work

careers advice at school that is embedded and not dependent on the interests of individual staff members.

- Schools offering support for post-school options other than university, in particular apprenticeships or vocational training programmes
- Equipping youth organisations to offer arts provision by providing resources and advice on how to run creative sessions, and how to link these into career support



## 3. Impact of Covid-19

### 3.1 Current issues

Covid-19 has had a large impact on the sector, leading to the temporary closure of many creative and cultural spaces in London, and in some cases permanent closures. Despite some organisations being able to continue producing outputs online, these outputs were often offered for free throughout the pandemic (e.g., live streaming of performances which would typically be paid for) meaning organisations were not receiving payment for their work. Covid-19 has led to a loss of jobs, and opportunities, for young people and forcing them into other work.

- *"[In the] first lockdown, my entire team got made redundant which was quite stressful... So many of my friends are facing massive uncertainty, those who graduated from arts. Basically, everyone is going into teaching or admin, or customer service jobs. Especially people who graduated this year."*  
– Young person, aged 23

This loss of jobs was highlighted as particularly detrimental to people who were working as freelancers, given so many of them were not eligible for government support through the self-employment support scheme or the coronavirus job retention scheme and were left with no safety net.

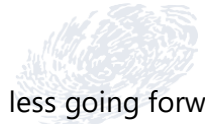
- *"[We are asking] how we can support the many freelancers who have lost work [due to Covid] and been unable to access government support. [There were] 300,000 Londoners who couldn't access support, a lot of who are in creative and cultural industries."*

### 3.2 Future of the sector

Covid-19 has already had a major impact on the sector, however stakeholders felt that the ramifications would be long lasting:

**Reducing income of individuals and organisations:** There was a concern that even when Covid-19 restrictions are lifted, the impact of the pandemic may still be felt by creative and cultural organisations as a result of lost income from recovery funding as it winds down and because people may not be able to afford to access events and theatre if they have lost their jobs:

- *"While there is the cultural recovery fund, once that money comes to a halt and we can go back to doing things in person, how do we think people are going to behave? People aren't going to be able to afford going to everything, people have lost their jobs. What is the economy going to be like for audiences? ... that's going to be a real challenge for organisations."*



In relation to grant funding, stakeholders predicted that organisations would receive less going forward, or that while the actual amount of funding might stay around the same, associated costs would go up over time e.g., rent of venues:

- *"[It is] not necessarily that organisations will have less money... but the pots of money that they're being funded with are not increasing... costs in 2022 are going to be greater than when they first applied [for funding] in 2017. It's the same amount of money, but it's not going to go as far."*

As well as general costs going up, there was a feeling that competition for funds would increase meaning it would be harder for organisations to attain funding. To compete, creative and cultural organisations may commit to delivering work at a lower cost than is feasible, putting them in difficult positions:

- *"[There will be] more competition for funds. People are trying to do the same amount for less money, while costs are increasing, it isn't sustainable."*

Additionally, even when things begin happening in person, there may still be reduced audiences due to social distancing measures leading to lower amounts of income for creative organisations:

- *"People are still doing theatre, issue of getting paid is different. People are still practicing but the amount of seats needed to get money is a large amount."*

Alternatively, it was hoped that lockdown would lead to an increased appetite for creative and cultural engagement, which would help the sector to bounce back:

- *"I'm hoping that things like music and museums will be appreciated more, as soon as we are allowed... That will be what [the sector] needs to get back on track." Young person – aged 18*

**Stunting growth:** One stakeholder explained that pre-pandemic the sector was growing along with the number of jobs available, though Covid-19 risks this progress being lost:

- *"Covid has clearly had a really significant impact on cultural sector in London, [it was estimated that] 150,000 jobs would be lost in creative industries in London. [This] would completely stunt the growth of the creative industries".*

As many organisations have been set back or even had to shut down, there was a fear that this would stunt growth long-term, particularly in the cultural sector:

- *"[Within] culture, so many organisations are in a really dire situation with Covid. It's difficult to see there be much growth in that part of the sector... [it will be] a few years until we return"*

**Lack of experience of the world of work:** The move to working from home for such an extended period of time and the closure of large parts of the economy has meant many young people have missed out on gaining important work experience or first jobs. This has left young people in a difficult situation in which they are lacking experience, whilst still being asked for experience by potential employers:



- *“Young people’s experiences in the world of work, that’s all gone. For example, [their] local cafe, cleaning cars, babysitting. They can’t do any of that [because of Covid-19], what are they now doing?”*

### 3.3 Changes needed and calls to action

To tackle the issues of reduced income of individuals and organisations, creative and youth organisations can work together to campaign to encourage government to offer substantial financial support to the sector, for example, by contributing to the #OurWorldWithout campaign led by the Creative Industries Federation. This is needed during times where the sector is working at reduced capacity due to Covid-19 restrictions, however will still be needed as lockdown ends, given the financial implications are suspected to be long-lasting. The latest government budget committed a £300 million boost to the Cultural Recovery Fund which is an important step in the right direction, however there are still claims from creative and cultural organisations that this is not enough. In particular there were concerns around the lack of backing for cancellation insurance schemes for events such as festivals throughout 2021.

**Call to action: Creative organisations working together to campaign government to offer substantial financial support to the sector, particularly during times when parts of the sector are not able to offer in-person events**

For young people who have not been able to experience the world of work, it is important to offer alternatives whilst Covid-19 restrictions continue. Without this, young people may go over a year without work experience. This would be particularly damaging for young people who are in their last year of school or college and may leave their education institution with no exposure to employment. Offering options such as virtual work experience whilst young people are still within these institutions is important to make sure that they are not left without this engagement.

**Call to action: Encouraging employers to offer virtual work experience placements for young people whilst Covid-19 restrictions continue**



## 4. Technological advancement and digital skills

### 4.1 Current issues

Technological advancement is already having an impact on types of work within the sector and in turn the types of jobs available to young people. Stakeholders explained that this was the case pre-Covid, however Covid has exacerbated and sped up this process. It was felt that the move to offering products and services online could put some organisations at risk because it meant that they were offering their services for free, which without sufficient funding, is not a sustainable business model:

- *“In relation to our sector having to go digital as a result of Covid, there’s a risk around that. Organisations have made their offer completely free to access via online, [meaning] audiences expect to engage with art and culture for free online. It’s not sustainable for business.”*

Young people also spoke of this shift and highlighted that many jobs now require extra digital skills and qualifications:

- *“I think nowadays it is more technological, stuff like VR and digital art, advanced creative stuff. Those things will require qualifications, you have to understand technology to express yourself in that way.” – Young person, aged 17*
- *“[Now] jobs require extensive knowledge of Photoshop and InDesign... The requirements are so much more digital” – Young person, aged 25*

### 4.2 Future of the sector

Stakeholders expressed that post-Covid there would not be a full return to doing things in person, but rather a blended model of working online and in-person, further pointing to the increase in importance of digital skills in the sector. One stakeholder explained that Covid-19 had led to organisations doing things online, whereas now organisations need to figure out how to do things online *well*. As technological advancements continue, it was considered important that the sector can match digital progress and produce online work and events that are received well:

- *“It’s not just about doing things on Zoom, but how you can create events etc. online that are just as good as in person.”*

Stakeholders suggested there may be more jobs created for young people to help creative and cultural organisations with their shift to digital working. Additionally, it was reported that jobs in the





sector are not considered to be at high risk of automation and growing areas within the sector included screen, film, TV and gaming. Despite knowing that these would be a growing area of work, there was also some uncertainty over what exactly these jobs would look like due to the impacts of Covid:

- *“Digital is a really big growth area, [we] don’t know what those jobs are going to look like yet.”*

As well as development in digital work, there was also a sense that there would be increased combination of art with other disciplines more generally. Young people spoke of the important intersections of, for example, art and science; and art and politics. It was felt this interdisciplinary nature of creativity was important for both education and the workplace and was becoming more important as it was being increasingly recognised that creativity should be something that exists across sectors:

- *“There might be more job in terms of space programming, arts, more interior designers to design what rockets look like.” – Young person, aged 15*
- *“You should be helped to cultivate your creativity, [for example] seminars in school on how to use creativity across different types of careers to break down stigma of using creative skills... every job has an element of creativity in it.” – Young person, aged 15*

## 4.3 Changes needed and calls to action

To cope with the blended model of working virtually and in person it is important that organisations are offered support on how to successfully work well online. To make this happen effectively, organisations may need to recruit new support. To make this move as beneficial as possible, these jobs should be targeted at young people.

**Call to action: Developing new roles designed for young people to provide digital support to creative and cultural organisations**

To ensure young people are equipped for these roles as well as other roles that require digital ability, it is important that young people are trained in the use of digital software. One young person suggested that it should be a compulsory part of any creative and cultural training courses to gain basic proficiency in at least one digital software programme. In relation to digital skills, stakeholders and young people spoke of the importance of drawing on skills that young people already have, and nurturing these valuable qualities, rather than just focusing on new skills:

- *“It is about seeing potential creativity. To unlock new things.” – Young person, aged 18*
- *“Helping [young people] to see the skills that they already have and the skills that are transferrable, particularly around digital... There is a lot that they intuitively know how to do. How do they harness that and get work out of it?”*

**Calls to action: Ensuring that digital skills are a compulsory part of creative training courses, both to teach new skills and to nurture any existing digital proficiencies**



## 5. The rise of insecure work

### 5.1 Current issues

Young people spoke of the instability of work in the sector and that they had to compromise between earning money and following their creative ambition:

- *"It is hard to have the confidence to know whether to devote your life to it. When you're young you want to think you have a stable future to go into. You want to focus on what you enjoy. You don't want to stress about when you're 55." – Young person, aged 18*
- *"Most of my friends have to have a full-time job that is not in the creative sector and are trying to have creative pursuits by doing stuff for free" – Young person, aged 25*

Stakeholders echoed this sentiment, particularly in relation to the rise of freelance work. There was a sense that the sector employs people as freelancers for roles that should have fixed term contracts:

- *"Our sector doesn't really understand its obligations around working with contractors. We also call people freelancers when they should be fixed term employees."*

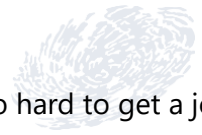
While freelance work might be paid a good hourly rate, this might not add up to be enough to sustain a young people, or alternatively if they were taking on lots of freelance work this may lead to them 'burning out' and in some cases leaving the creative industry. On top of this stakeholders reported that there were issues around pension rights, late payments, and lack of investment in training and in health and safety:

- *"We work with... artists on a freelance basis [and] I worry that artists are burning themselves out just to make enough money to get by. We pay artists a good rate but when you see it across a year people burn out and then they go and get a "proper job" and that's a real concern."*

Young people felt that this precarious nature of work impacted young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds. This was further exacerbated by placements that were not paid at all. Young people who could rely on family members for financial support could take these opportunities, whereas young people from disadvantaged backgrounds would not have the same option:

- *"If you come from a privileged background you can access an education and be employed. If you come from a lower income background, this plays a role in how accessible jobs are." – Young person, aged 18*

Due to these issues around freelancing or having to take jobs as they come in, young people explained the need to have a more permanent job on the side. They felt that this job often ended up being



something that was not creative (despite, hoping that it could be), because it was too hard to get a job that aligned with their creative interests and provided stable income:

- *“Even if you take Covid out of the picture, there has always been a concern of financial implications of taking a job in the creative sector; it’s competitive, lots of people want to go and do something like acting or film or anything like that, there is only so many spots. Often it doesn’t come down to whether you’re talented or not, it’s just luck. It can be hard money-wise. You have to do other jobs while you are waiting for jobs or even while you’re working.” Young person – aged 18*
- *“It feels like a necessity to have a part time job. The point of the side job is to get paid and have stability.” Young person – aged 18*

## 5.2 Future of the sector

Stakeholders reported that freelance work has been growing and will continue to grow in the sector, meaning more jobs may become available on this basis, rather than on fixed term contracts:

- *“Freelancing has been growing for past decade probably. More jobs are moving to freelancing than to be fully employed. I think that trend will continue but [there will be a] dip because of Covid because a lot of people couldn’t get work and have left the sector.”*

Freelancing was considered to be positive for a number of reasons, including the freedom associated with it, however there were concerns that as freelancing became more common, young people would have less stable work lives and less of a safety net. It was predicted that organisations would have less money (e.g. due to Covid, or reductions in funding) and therefore offer more part time or freelance positions because it is more affordable in the short term than taking on full time employees. There was concern that this would lead to greater insecurity for young people working in the sector:

- *“Freelancing is really positive but there are a number of jobs being done as freelance which shouldn’t be. [Organisations] put [jobs] as freelance because it’s cheaper for [them] to do it.”*
- *“Organisations are going to have less money, [there will be a] move more towards part time working and freelance working because it enables them to be more flexible... whilst that’s good in a flexible way, that will create more insecurity.”*

## 5.3 Changes needed and calls to action

**Mitigate financial instability of work in the creative and cultural sector by campaigning to encourage employers to offer paid experience:** It is important to ensure that young people are paid for their time in a way that provides them with stability. This could be done through supporting initiatives such as the No Free Work campaign started by the Freelancer Club, which asks people not to advertise or apply to unpaid work, or the Living Wage Foundation which is leading the movement to campaign employers to pay living wage, rather than minimum wage. Young people spoke of the concerns of having to work multiple jobs or not being paid enough within the sector to be financially stable:



- *“Worries for the future... money... how to finance working in the creative sector or worries about going into the creative sector because of money.” – Young person, aged 18*

Young people and stakeholders spoke of the sector taking on young people for unpaid roles, creating both financially insecure work for young people and a non-diverse workforce given many young people are not in a position where they can afford to take on unpaid work:

- *“Paid training experience, not expecting people to intern, but paying them. That’s really important from an ethical point of view and we need to address equality, diversity and inclusion; taking away the financial barrier by paying people to take part is key to that.”*

Additionally, it is important that work experience placements are well advertised so that young people can easily find out about them, rather than placements being assigned based on pre-existing networks:

- *I had an idea when I was younger that work experience was really important [and that] you could get a placement. It’s just not advertised as something workplaces offer. I’m sure places would let you if you went to them but there is no system of finding out where might offer it.” – Young person, aged 18*

**Call to action: Youth organisations campaigning to encourage employers to advertise their work experience placements/trial shifts and pay young people for their time for this work to provide them with financial stability**

**Skills support for young people: Business skills**, including time management, were mentioned as particularly important to help young people prepare for work in the sector, especially given the move to more freelance and entrepreneurial work. Time management was considered to be an important part of business skills because of the need to manage multiple jobs at once; without having a fixed time frame each day and week to work in, young people without experience or management skills can struggle:

- *“You need to know about promoting your stuff and how you can make money from it.” – Young person, aged 17*

One young person who studied a creative subject with business at university expressed that most of the knowledge and skills they needed when setting up their own business was not gained through university, but rather from learning as they went, demonstrating the lack of applicability of the information being taught. They explained that there was no focus on how to become a freelancer because they expected young people to go into employment:

- *“Being at university and studying business is interesting, but it gives you no life skills... [they] don’t teach you about freelance or how to manage yourself as a freelancer” – Young person, aged 25*

Stakeholders mentioned the importance of working with training providers to deliver freelancer creative business skills training programmes:



- *“Support on business skills, particularly for freelancers and general creatives. People are taught the creative skills they need but not taught the business skills e.g., negotiation, writing contracts, running [their] own small business. They need to be [taught these]. The pandemic has highlighted a lot of people don’t have those skills”.*

**Call to action: Providing training on practical creative business skills within creative and cultural training programmes**



## 6. Recruitment and diversity

### 6.1 Current issues

Both young people and stakeholders reported that the sector relied on **networks and nepotism**, which in turn led to a workforce that was not diverse and made it even harder for young people without connections or the financial backing of their family to enter this world of work:

- *“So much of the sector is run on who you know and who you’re linked into, particularly in freelance opportunities, [they’re] not advertised, people aren’t given a fair opportunity. It’s so detrimental to the diversity of the sector.”*
- *“A lot of it is nepotism and if it’s not nepotism you have to be really lucky.” – Young person, aged 25*

Recruitment was also reported often based on **individual preference and personality**, meaning that if an employer liked a potential employee, this was considered more important than their skills or experience. Some stakeholders felt that this led both to a damaging culture in which you had to try to fit in in the workplace, and a lack of diversity as many young people who would make good employees would be rejected early on in application processes:

- *“A good recruit is [considered to be] someone you would want to go to the pub with. [There is a] blokey pub type culture to it, that’s part of what needs to change. It’s about your attitude to what makes an acceptable colleague. This complete lack of diversity is partly because ‘someone you want to go to the pub with’ shouldn’t be a qualification”.*

There were contrasting views amongst stakeholders on the importance of qualifications for recruitment in the sector. Some felt that qualifications could be limiting, were not accessible to all young people and distracted from what was most important; the interest and passion of the young person:

- *“We don’t pay that much attention to formal qualifications, but try to nurture qualities... I view her as a person with an interest in music. I don’t know if she has qualifications, I don’t care.”*

Additionally, one stakeholder spoke of the risk of requiring non-creative qualifications, for example, maths and English being requirements to take on creative qualifications, because if young people were not able to pass these requirements it may end up “killing their creativity”. This was spoken of as a particular issue for young people with disabilities.

Others felt that qualifications were a leveller, meaning recruitment was not essentially a personality test, but rather gave young people some equal footing. Additionally, some felt that it was important for qualifications to be valued given that young people have often devoted time and energy to achieving them:



- *[For young people in their] early twenties, a qualification is important if they've been disaffected by education."*
- *"Young people will work really hard, and then when these qualifications are dismissed by employers, they think why am I doing this?"*
- *"Formal qualifications can avoid [recruiting based on personal preference], it doesn't matter what background someone has"*

One stakeholder suggested that employers are **not willing to adapt job roles for people who may need additional support**, particularly for those with special educational needs or disabilities. This lack of flexibility leads to exclusion of some groups of young people, further exacerbating issues around diversity:

- *"Employers don't want to change job roles for people, [for example it is not considered that there may be] certain parts of the job role that you want to do with support."*

Young people highlighted that **competition acted as a particular barrier to recruitment** because they felt that a large number of people applied for the jobs that were advertised. Although one young person explained that this barrier exists across the sector:

- *"It can feel like as a musician there are so many talented people and not enough space in the industry." – Young person, aged 18*
- *"It is difficult business to be in, it is so competitive, in arts or music. The population is growing so much, all fields are becoming really competitive, it is hard to make an income." - Young person, aged 18*

## 6.2 Future of the sector

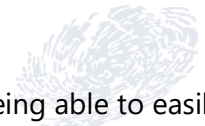
Stakeholders expressed concern that immediate action was necessary to tackle the lack of diversity in the sector or it would be set to continue. Without interventions, there is no reason to think the systems currently in place would shift, leading to a sector even further compounded by nepotism and lack of diversity. One stakeholder explained that current **programmes focusing on increasing diversity** with the sector, were **not doing enough** meaning young people were missing out on opportunities that would be important to their future:

- *"Lots of development and money, but still not seeing the sorts of young people that I work with getting opportunities. It's who you know, the opportunities are not advertised, you just hear of something."*

## 6.3 Changes needed and calls to action

**Create and advertise entry level jobs for young people that do not require previous work experience:** Young people and stakeholders expressed the issue around entry level jobs or education





and training courses requiring or expecting experience, despite young people not being able to easily access these experiences, often due to issues mentioned above including networking, lack of advertising of experiences and unpaid experiences:

- *“It feels like there is a barrier of experience. It feels as though some [university courses] are looking for more experience than others.” – Young person, aged 18*
- *“Not just a Covid thing, there was already a sense that the arts sector was a really tough work environment and that you had really overqualified people doing really menial work. It was really hard to even get an entry level position. Everything closing has just massively amplified that. [It’s] the final push to push people away from those kinds of jobs.” – Young person, aged 23*

To mitigate this, there is a need to support young people in gaining experience, as well as campaigning to change the requirement for experience. To support young people in gaining experience, it is key to help them take the first step on their creative journey. **Creative organisations can effectively do this by offering platforms for young people to take part in the sector for the first time**, for example to create their first podcast, produce their first EP, run their first event or perform their first virtual show.

It is also important to remove the requirement for experience to make work more accessible for young people:

- *“A blueprint for the future... Barriers that young people access to the music industry [include] nepotism and unpaid internships. From that we launched a fund... [for] industry organisations to create these entry level roles for 18-25 year olds.”*

It was felt that changing the requirements around entry level jobs would also lead to a more diverse workforce because these jobs would become available to people without prior experience and allow them to begin a career journey within the sector. One stakeholder mentioned the importance of supporting people on Universal Credit into work in the sector:

- *“There are plenty of entry level jobs that people on Universal Credit could access and provide a long and good career.”*

**Call to action: Supporting young people to take the first step in gaining experience in the sector and campaigning to encourage employers to create and advertise entry level jobs for young people that do not require previous experience**

**Increase diversity by targeting funding at specific programmes for specific groups:** Lack of diversity within the sector was often mentioned as a problem, and in some cases was thought to act as a barrier for young people to entering the sector. It was felt if sufficient work was done in improving diversity, that a different culture within the sector could emerge in the long term:

- *“The sector needs to change how it recruits so it can change who it recruits.”*





Stakeholders suggested various methods that could be used to tackle the lack of diversity within the sector, all of which focused on targeting specific groups of young people. The importance of using training and skills interventions was also raised as an important element of improving diversity within and access routes into the sector and continuing to grow creative and cultural industries:

- *“Diversity is rubbish. People have been trying to improve it but it’s been rubbish. Training and skills interventions are a good way to [change] that.”*

Other suggestions included funding targeted job creation programmes, mentoring schemes, programmes leading to qualifications (especially for young people not in employment, education or training), improved advertisement of opportunities within Job Centres:

- *“[There is] a lot of need to open up the workplace and make it more accessible people through funding specific programmes that work to increases diversity in different parts of the sector”.*

**Call to action: Developing training and skills initiatives and programmes that target specific groups of young people to tackle the issue of diversity within the creative and cultural sector**

**Value qualifications and skills alongside each other:** Despite differences in opinion on the importance of qualifications, there was acknowledgement that a recruitment system based entirely on qualifications, or that entirely disregarded qualifications would end up leaving some young people out. There was recognition that recruiting based on skills or qualities could turn into recruiting based on whether an employee felt they might get on with a potential employee, leading back to the original issues with recruitment that young people currently face within the sector.

There was a call for **job recruitment to focus on skills** rather than just qualifications, and for education and training qualifications e.g. degrees, to focus more on applied skills, rather than just knowledge:

- *“Jobs shouldn’t just hone in on specific things like degrees, they should think about skills. There is a discrepancy between university and a job; university gives you skills in a subject but doesn’t always harness your existing skills or help you market yourself.” – Young person, aged 15*

**Call to action: Encouraging employers to enable multiple routes into careers in the sector through valuing a range of qualifications, skills and experience and reflecting this in job requirements**

**Improve access to networks and mentors:** Networks were repeatedly mentioned as one of the biggest issues for young people in trying to access work within the sector:

- *“Getting into the industry, it is about who you know. If you don’t have those connections, it is very hard to get in there. You need to have institutions in schools so people can get into the industry more easily.” – Young person, aged 16*



- *“In terms of support I’ve had zero. I don’t know anyone in the industry. I didn’t have a way in. I felt lost, I didn’t know what to do” – Young person, aged 25*

To help young people develop their networks and to prepare them for work within the sector, mentors are key. Mentors can pass on information about skills and experience needed to thrive in the sector, introduce young people into networks and share opportunities with them:

- *“Networks is absolutely a key one and there is definitely space for organisations to run more networks and invest in networks and open those networks out. Not about bringing other people’s networks down but giving other people space and the keys to those networks.”*

Successful mentoring could include the provision of informal advice and creating spaces where young people can easily reach out with a question, particularly during the pandemic where they might feel more confused about decisions or pathways or have queries such as how to do a job interview online. Young people expressed that mentors would be useful when completing education, training or employment applications and stakeholders suggested that mentors would be useful to provide advice on freelancing work. To ensure that interaction with mentors is actively engaging for young people, one stakeholder spoke of the importance of collaboration between schools, career leads and external organisations:

- *“How it will work – collaboration. Schools need to support their career leads and their career leads need to actively work harder to bring in externals, externals need to work harder to make it interesting.”*

**Call to action: Through schools and youth organisations, connecting young people with mentors to support them with their journey into the creative and cultural sector**

Collaborating with creative and cultural organisations, creative youth organisations, and creative employability organisations to provide mentoring will enable young people to access existing networks which in turn will make work more accessible for them. Networks can be used in a positive light to engage young people and open up opportunities for them, but it is important that these networks are equitable and do not rely on exclusive connections. Supporting creative networks that are open and encourage young people who do not have prior connections in the sector to participate is key for this.

**Call to action: Establishing and supporting creative networks that are open to young people and actively encourage participation**

# 7. Types of jobs available in the sector



## 7.1 Current issues

There is a lack of knowledge of the types of jobs available for young people in the sector. In particular, the sector is dependent upon a host of non-creative occupations, however these are often not talked about meaning both young people do not know about these jobs, and that these jobs are undersubscribed:

- *“Young people don’t really know what jobs are available in the sector. [For example, on a] film set you know so many different people with so many different skills. [We need to] work to advertise what those jobs are... to show to young people in schools these are the kind of jobs that are available and how you get them e.g. runner, cooks, security, lawyers, make up.”*

## 7.2 Future of the sector

**Availability of jobs dependent on funding:** Where the government chooses to place its funding and focus its support will impact the types of jobs available in the sector. One stakeholder gave the screen industry as an example of this, explaining that the tax relief that the government put in place meant that large screen organisations would choose to base themselves in the UK, which has in turn grown the sector and the number of jobs available. It was also commented on that the government’s levelling up agenda may lead to the focus on the sector moving away from London. This was recognised as a potential positive, however also concern because:

- *“London is the engine for the creative and cultural industry... [the levelling up agenda] might mean a level down to London.”*

**The climate crisis:** Stakeholders expressed the climate crisis was a factor that would have a strong impact of the type of work available within the sector in the future. As there is a necessity to reduce carbon emissions, it was felt that business models would change. This was particularly mentioned in relation to fashion, an industry which is one of the biggest contributors to the carbon emissions. Predictions of how work might change included a shift to working more locally with emphasis on community and culture, an increase in organisations that are recycling, repurposing and reselling, and a move away from big brands holding power. It was felt that young people would be driving this shift, and therefore feel a sense of ownership over the sector as it transitions in this way:

- *“[There will be a] real implosion coming back to local, community and own cultural heritage and [a change in] perspective on how you look and what you wear and how you look after what you wear.”*
- *“There will be more ownership for young people in driving their own world. There will be a revolution in that sense because we as adults haven’t done enough. Supporting them to deliver that change is key.”*



## 7.3 Changes needed and calls to action

**Raise awareness of the range of jobs in the sector:** Within careers support for creative and cultural careers it is important to raise awareness amongst young people of the types of work (creative and non-creative) that are realistically available across the sector, and in particular the types of jobs accessible for young people. Raising awareness of non-creative jobs and attributing value to them will help young people feel more able to enter the sector and will help to tackle some of the issues around lack of staff for certain roles. Stakeholders felt it would be beneficial for young people to learn about these types of roles from a young age, to ensure that they aren't hearing about them for the first time as they enter the world of work:

- *"Aspiring to be an awesome administrator, fundraiser, front of house etc. These are absolutely essential and should not be dulled down as career occupations."*
- *"Need to help young people understand where the real jobs are in our sector. In the education system [we are] trying to progress young people into specific sections of our sector e.g. applied arts. We don't realistically need to train lots more people in acting, dancing or the applied visual arts etc. We do need and have for ten years to train people in off stage technical and production crafts (e.g. props, costume, make up, prosthetics, lighting, sound, stage, set construction)."*

Additionally, stakeholders spoke of the importance of changing the narrative from having a linear career or a "job for life", to one that was focused on portfolio working and freelancing. It was felt this is a much more realistic sense of what young people will be doing in their future if they go on to work in the sector:

- *"It's about demystifying what jobs there are and what skills you need for them. It's not that clear cut anymore, not like you've got a job for life. It's much more about portfolio working now, things are different and continue to change, it's hard to get a foot in the door but having experience and running your own stuff is really beneficial for young people to develop their skills."*

**Call to Action: Through careers support at school or in youth organisations, raising awareness of the range of jobs available to young people within the creative and cultural sector, including non-creative jobs**

**Offer relevant work experience options for young people:** Positively, stakeholders spoke of the Gatsby Benchmarks, which were leading to a better relationship between schools and industry and exposing young people to the world of work. There was a feeling that the direct encounters with industry required by the benchmarks would help young people who otherwise might not think of entering the sector to consider it as an option, with one stakeholder describing these engagements as "life affirming" for some young people:

- *"We want to see reaching out to those who wouldn't normally see our sector as a valid route and help support their education to get into that sector so we do believe very strongly in getting that"*



*kind of career education into schools and areas where there is greater disadvantage e.g. free school meals, pupil premium etc.”*

However, young people spoke of the concern that whilst schools may offer work experience placements, these are often not targeted at young people with interests in the sector. Therefore, it is important that schools offer placements that are aimed specifically at these young people:

- *“Even if schools were offering work experience, it feels like it was for medicine and law, [there’s] not as much of an emphasis on creative industries.” – Young person – aged 17*

**Call to Action: Offering work experience placements that are relevant to the specific interests of young people so that they can try out different types of jobs and gain experience of working in the sector and encouraging employers to offer entry level jobs that include training and support to improve access for young people without experience**



# 8. Support for young people

## 8.1 Current issues

**Negative perceptions of the sector:** There is a negative perception of working in the sector and that this pathway was often not valued by school or family members, creating barriers and challenges for young people including:

- It is harder to find advice e.g. at school, because careers support is not targeted towards the creative and cultural sector
- Having to prove to others e.g. family members or teachers that it is a worthwhile pathway adding to the pressure of looking at other careers
  - *“Family can be one [a barrier]. Families or parents might oppose it” – Young person, aged 18*
  - *“A lot of my family put more importance on careers in STEM.” – Young person, aged 15*
- Being in a creative and cultural pathway ‘pigeonholes’ young people and stops them from being able to do other things
  - *“[I was told] if you do a degree in music, it would narrow [my] options. [I] needed to decide whether to go down this really narrow route and then have the perception that I can only do music for the rest of my life. [There’s] a perception that if you are a creative you are only a creative, there is an idea that you couldn’t then go and do law or biology.” – Young person, aged 18*

**Lack of support in school:** Young people spoke of the need for serious change in creative and cultural career support at school because they felt that lack of support was a barrier to entering the sector:

- *“The most glaringly obvious thing is most of the people who are interested in creative [work] did not feel looked after by school, individually [by staff members] or by the system.” – Young person, aged 18*

For example, stakeholders felt that careers advice in schools was often not specific enough to showcase the different routes that a young person might take in the sector or the variety of roles they may be able to take up:

- *“Within the theatre industry there are so many different issues within each segment [and amongst different] role types. [For example,] people trying to get into the industry as a performer has completely different barriers and routes to a technician”.*

Young people spoke of having to look for information themselves by looking online or reaching out to people who might be able to help them:

- *“It is so important that young people get experience in creative industries, schools don’t advertise this pathway, it is always about being a doctor or lawyer. This [creative pathway] should also be*

*projected for young people. I have had to find all the opportunities I've had myself." – Young person, aged 16*



## 8.2 Future of the sector

A wide range of skills are important for young people to thrive in the sector in the future, including both 'soft' and 'hard' skills:

Soft skills	Hard skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Curiosity</li><li>• Risk taking</li><li>• Being critical</li><li>• Active listening</li><li>• Personable</li><li>• Communicative</li><li>• Flexibility</li><li>• Collaboration and ability to work with others</li><li>• Enthusiasm</li><li>• Proactive attitude</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Digital and technological skills</li><li>• Social media skills</li><li>• Entrepreneurship</li><li>• Business skills</li><li>• Operational skills</li><li>• Technical skills (specific to certain roles within the sector)</li><li>• Responding to job applications</li><li>• How to apply learning from education and training in the world of work</li></ul>

Stakeholders also spoke of the **importance of young people recognising their skills as skills**, even if they do not have an external qualification, and making sure they put these things on their CVs or in applications. One stakeholder explained that due to the pandemic, young people were no longer accessing typical experience in the world of work and so were having to find their own experiences:

- *"What are young people doing now? For example, pimping trainers [e.g. painting on old trainers to resell as a way to make money], entrepreneurship, using social media to sell, having a local market stall. [They're getting] that kind of experience and [it's about young people] recognising that that kind of experience should go on your CV."*

If sufficient support e.g., from schools or youth organisations is not provided, young people will struggle to attain these skills and as a result will not be prepared to work in the sector. This could lead to a future workforce that is not ready for or equipped to deal with the changes that are expected in the creative and cultural sector.



## 8.3 Changes needed and calls to action

**Change attitudes in schools and amongst young people and staff:** Changing attitudes about creative and cultural careers was felt to be an important first step in providing effective support for young people. Opinions of the sector as not as valuable meant some young people would not even consider it as a potential career path, immediately limiting the number and type of young people who might begin a journey into this sector:

- *“It really depends on each school [and] what their attitude and view is on the sector. There’s something nationally about how society views these things, and parents and carers. People view it just as a bit of fun.”*

To ensure that more young people were able to consider the sector as a potential career option, stakeholders felt attitudes had to change and myths about the creative sector, for example that it is not possible to be well paid, had to be dismissed. It is also important to highlight the positives of the sector to change attitudes, for example by highlighting the growth of the sector, its contribution to the economy, and the range of jobs that it offers:

- *“For me overall, regardless of when interventions take place, the biggest task is myth busting around what it means to work on our sector.”*

Where young people had received support from a school staff member to pursue creative higher education or careers, this was often dependent on the interest or enthusiasm of an individual teacher. To improve equity of access to support, schools can develop resources, systems and guidance alongside encouraging a culture where creative careers are valued:

- *“I knew I wanted to do something artistic and creative, I did my own research using the internet and asking people. I got information from my film teacher; I would email her with every question I had. Not every teacher is the same, I think I’m just lucky! In the past, during my GCSEs, [I had an] art teacher who understood the way I worked, but she left and that was hard.” – Young person, aged 17*
- *“How does information reach schools? If a teacher is interested, they contact you, not the career lead or the headteacher. That teacher leaves and the school hasn’t got a clue. Systems that aren’t reliant on one person is key.”*

**Call to Action: Changing attitudes in school amongst staff so that young people are provided with better creative engagement and careers advice at school that is embedded and not dependent on the interests of individual staff members**

**Offer support for pathways other than university:** Young people spoke of the need for them to carry out independent research, typically online, to figure out what they would want to do after finishing school because their schools were lacking in advice on how to enter the sector:





- *“My school haven’t been great with university, they have just said ‘apply. We are so lucky to have the internet, you can find everything about university, youth groups [and] career opportunities.” – Young person, aged 18*
- *“[It’s been] lots of individual work, it takes time away from school but it is also super important. It feels like it should be easier.” – Young person, aged 18*

Some young people spoke of the lack of support from school to consider post-school options other than university. Although information on university is key for many young people, it is important for young people to consider alternative options to higher education including apprenticeships or part-time work whilst studying. Young people felt more awareness raising of other options and signposting to how they might access these would be useful:

- *“Something that would be really good to help young people would be support from schools and colleges for people on alternate paths other than university. There is such a focus on university... There should be more on what else you could do. It should have been more readily available at transition from secondary to further education and also when you are leaving further education at 18. At 16 most people are made to feel that there is only A-Levels but there are apprenticeships. There are so many other opportunities that are really good, but they are sold as the second option.” – Young person, aged 18*

**Call to Action: Schools offering support for post-school options other than university, in particular apprenticeships or vocational training programmes**

Young people spoke of the significance of their local organisations and youth clubs in first piquing their interest in the sector. This demonstrates the importance of recognising the work that youth organisations do, and supporting them in this delivery, to ensure that they have the resources needed to continue to offer this important assistance to young people. This support could be resources to run arts sessions e.g. equipment or ideas, alongside advice on how to link these sessions to careers and entry into the sector:

- *“I first hand started doing creative arts, because I went to my local youth club. There I got into acting and drama, if I didn’t have that opportunity I most likely wouldn’t be here. It is really good for young people to have experiences and opportunities.” – Young person, aged 18*

**Call to Action: Equipping youth organisations to offer arts provision by providing resources and advice on how to run creative sessions, and how to link these into career support**

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