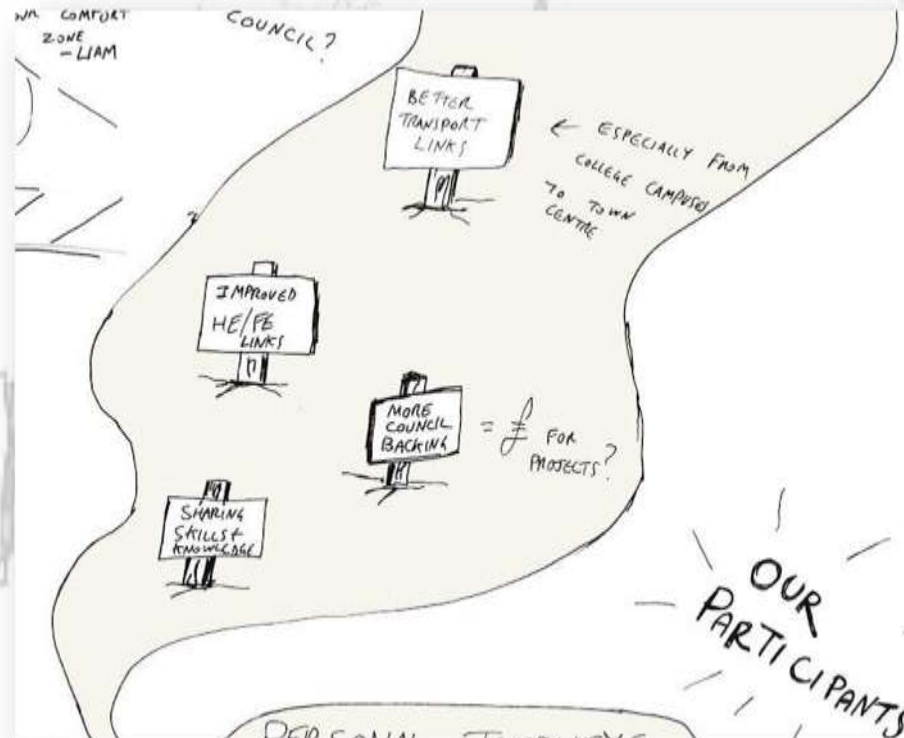


A Proposed Framework for Youth Arts in Dumfries and Galloway



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1. Executive Summary

Dumfries and Galloway has a significant artistic and cultural offer for young people. Based on the consultation commissioned by DG Unlimited, this document sets out the vision and framework for artists, creative organisations, service providers and young people. This framework captures the main findings of the consultation process, and full details can be found in the Consultation Report that supports this document.

Dumfries and Galloway is a thriving artistic and cultural region of Scotland, making a sustained and important contribution to the country's artistic output. There are high quality artists, venues and cutting-edge programmes with a wealth of festivals and major events that contribute positively to the region's economy. There are 1,136 people working in the creative industries, representing just under 1% of the total population of 149,000.¹ Young people aged 0-15 make up 15.8% of the total region's population which is slightly under the Scottish average of 17%. Young people aged 16-29 make up 14.5% of the total population which is below the Scottish average of 18.2% (further contextual data for the region is contained in Appendix 2).

Articulate was commissioned by DG Unlimited (DGU) to consider the views and experiences of young people in relation to youth arts provision in the region. We were also tasked with making recommendations for a framework for a youth arts strategy. The broad remit was to:

- Review of current provision (from 2012-2017) across Dumfries and Galloway for young people to access the arts.
- Conduct a literature review of research, a scoping and mapping exercise carried out on youth arts provision in Dumfries and Galloway between 2012 and 2017, including cross art form or art form specific offers.
- Review and analyse the findings to provide evidence of strengths, challenges, successes and opportunities.
- Recommend priority areas for development for the youth arts sector.
- Recommend priority activities for DGU to help support the identified priority areas.

Broad intended outcomes of the research and consultation were:

- ❖ consolidate strengths
- ❖ improve economies of scale
- ❖ plug gaps in provision
- ❖ nurture excellence
- ❖ enhance workforce development, and
- ❖ consider pathways into the creative industries.

We spoke with **5** national youth arts organisations, **30** representatives from the arts across the region and held four focus groups with young people.

We mapped activity, identified gaps and benchmarked with **15** other areas and strategy documents. We carried out **30** face to face and telephone interviews, produced two online surveys which were completed by **31** organisations and carried out four workshops with young people including a session that was visually captured by the artist Mitch Miller in a **Dialectogram**.

What we found:

1. That the need and desire for a youth arts strategy or framework was **clear** and **strong**.
2. That **leadership** by both adults and young people will be pivotal to the success of any youth arts framework for the area.
3. That **great work** is happening in Dumfries and Galloway, often in pockets, sometimes ebbing and flowing as the year plays out, and so more **cohesion** will be required for access to and participation in youth arts to be **fair, equal** and **sustainable**.
4. **Collaboration** between providers, including between Council and third sector organisations, between formal and informal education providers, could play a key role in supporting improvements in resourcing, accessibility, **progression** and sustainability.
5. There is a high level of **commitment** to youth arts in Dumfries and Galloway, this was most evident in the significant amount of voluntary support from which the sector benefits. Greater progress could be made if youth arts organisations did not feel they were constantly fighting for survival, but that **investment** sought and brought together from or into the authority could be dispersed in a way that impacted strategically on young lives, key policies and region-wide practices.

2. Developing the Framework

This framework for children, young people, youth arts and culture reflects a shared vision for cultural provision for children and young people region-wide. It is a framework which was developed in close collaboration with a wide range of partners, agencies, young people, parents and carers and it embraces the full trajectory and progression from pre-school experience of the arts and culture through to employment in the creative industries. The framework considers the needs of young people of all backgrounds as well as recognising the enormous value and potential of their cultural contribution to the future economic and social health of Dumfries and Galloway.

The benefits of engagement with and participation in the arts are well known. 'Time to Shine', the Scottish Government's national youth art strategy document has been used as a touchstone for the framework and should be used as a key reference going forward.

'Learning in, through and about the expressive arts enables children and young people to:

- *be creative and express themselves in different ways*
- *experience enjoyment and contribute to other people's enjoyment through creative and expressive performance and presentation*
- *develop important skills, both those specific to the expressive arts and those which are transferable*
- *develop an appreciation of aesthetic and cultural values, identities and ideas and, for some,*
- *prepare for advanced learning and future careers by building foundations for excellence in the expressive arts.'* (Creative Scotland, 2013)

The youth arts sector plays a vital role in supporting young people's enjoyment, well-being and success. We have identified four roles that children and young people should have the right to occupy in their engagement with the arts and culture:

As an **audience member**, a young person should have the opportunity to experience a range of high quality work, experience the work of their peers, and develop critical skills and vocabulary and to make informed choices about how they consume arts and culture in the region and beyond.

As a **participant**, a young person should have the opportunity to work with skilled practitioners, take part in the arts with their peers and with others and to improve their creative and cultural skills in line with the experiences of other young people.

As a **creator**, a young person should have the opportunity to make original work and share that work with a range of audiences.

As a **leader**, a young person should have the opportunity to organise, produce and manage their own work as well as support the creative talents, aspirations and opinions of others.

The framework sets out a model for supporting young people's progression through cultural engagement from first experiences through to independent participation.

We based our consultation on four key themes:

Cohesion – the extent to which activities, people and opportunities in Dumfries and Galloway 'fit together' to support young people to progress in the arts, the extent to which it was easy to find out what was happening across the region and how aware young people, providers and stakeholders are aware of the offer.

Collaboration – the extent to which organisations were able and willing to work together and the potential impact this has for youth arts provision.

Investment – the impact of the investment of both financial support and people's time to support youth arts to fulfil its potential in the region.

Leadership – the extent to which consultees thought there needed to be a leader for youth arts and the extent to which there was evidence that young people were taking lead roles.

Cohesion...

Pockets and Patches

In our consultation we spoke to people about cohesion as one of four investigative streams. We wanted to know how activity 'fitted together' and what the journey was like for young people wishing to develop their youth arts experiences, their skills and their creative talents.

There is a wealth and breadth of activity across the region. As would be expected, much of it is concentrated in Dumfries; however, there are opportunities to take part in youth arts across the region. It's fair to say that the most rural areas are not so well represented.

Although there is a lot going on, it happens in pockets, sometimes on the strengths of key advocates, activists and volunteers rather than statutory provision, and so there is not equal spread of activity. Whilst an equal spread of activity may not be expected, given the region's scattered population, this does create inequity and imbalance and barriers to progress for young people. This is compounded by the rural geography and transport issues mentioned frequently in the consultation. Within the pockets of activity there are some connections across the region. This tends to be linked to Dumfries and Galloway's festivals and activities associated with festivals and events.

Festivals and Events

By their very nature, festivals may not sustain year-round activity (with the exception of Wigtown Book Festival and the DG Arts Festival) and so there can be a sense of an 'ebb and flow' to youth arts provision as projects build towards something that can't or won't necessarily be continued afterwards. Some arts organisations pointed out that funding doesn't allow them to repeat or develop work beyond original festival aims and so they don't continue necessarily with the same group which has disadvantages for cohesion and progression for the young people.

Creative Pathways and Journeys

For young people, embarking on a career in the arts may not be straightforward. Much of the opportunity that is open to them is dependant on the school they attend and the value that school places on arts, creative learning and cultural activity. Practitioners described the full range of exchange, from very good and sustained relationships with schools to very little or no contact. The picture is patchy. Where good relationships do exist, these were described as hugely beneficial for all involved. Arts organisations have developed trusting relationships with schools and in some cases are delivering cultural activity within schools as part of the curriculum offer. However, where there is no relationship, and

the rural nature of the region means that young people cannot always travel to another school to pick up a subject/interest they wish to develop, this results in significant disadvantage for those individuals.

There was concern amongst practitioners that young people are forced to leave the area for further study. They are not always able to return to make a living in the area in their chosen field and this is something that concerns both current and aspiring young artists. The Stove, in particular, was cited by one young person as a factor in being able to live and work in the area and develop creatively. Upland is also committed to developing young talent in the area and, with their mentoring scheme particularly, are giving young people the direct experience of working with a practising artist and showing that a sustainable business is possible.

Amongst the arts community, knowledge of the Pupil Equity Fund (£2.8m direct to the region's schools) and the investment this has brought to education in the area is low. Practitioners are not regularly evidencing to schools the impact and contribution their work could make upon the achievement, attainment and well-being agenda.

Travel and Transport

Transport was rated as a significant issue for young people and by young people. This impact is two-fold. They are hugely reliant on parents/carers to drive them to where they need to go (if they have the means) and a lack of accessible public transport inhibits what they can attend and when, especially at evenings and weekends. For example, after-school programmes are not accessible if the young person has to get the bus directly after school. The value too that parents and carers place on the arts and creativity is a factor if the young person is reliant on them for transport.

Young people asked for more outreach, so that the onus is not always on them to travel to activity and this needs to be sustained over time, rather than from project to project or event to event. Some arts organisations have also worked with partners to provide transport and the Holywood Trust offered assistance to get to the Wigtown Book Festival. The voice of young people should be heard when transport is being planned. A new Government strategy to engage young people from rural areas in discussions about transport is important for this to improve:

<https://www.scottishruralparliament.org.uk/campaign-update-fairenough/>

Communication

Finding out what's happening is mainly succeeding at organisation level. Most will put fliers and posters into schools as a way of promoting each offer. There is also some social media presence. Young people commented that it's difficult to know everything that is happening and that it would be useful to have one place to find this out. Social media does have its place as a platform to communicate with a younger audience, however, young consultees noted that their feeds and notifications can become cluttered which means that vital information (e.g. where and when something is on) can become quickly lost. Social media remains a passive form of communication that does not translate into participation without additional reinforcements from peers, parents/carers, schools and trusted people.

Summary

A key strength for cohesion is the work that is already happening to support the development of the youth arts offer, for example through the Regional Arts Hub. There is the opportunity to engage more with young people to assist them to address issues, such as transport, (as evidenced

with the recent Catstrand survey in Glenkens). It's clear there are gaps in the range of opportunities for young people depending on where they live in the region. Smoothing out the patchiness of the offer remains a challenge.

Case Study

'blueprint100 is an open and inviting group who provide creative experiences and opportunities for young people. By offering a diverse programme of workshops, events, and public arts projects in partnership with established artists, we aim to build a vibrant community which is both inclusive and inspiring. Our vision is to empower emerging professionals across the arts.

blueprint100 group is entirely run by and for young people. We offer a regular programme of activity to develop their own creative projects, we provide the framework and support, but all of the decision-making, additional fund-raising, programming and management are run by a core group of four under-30's. Our aim is to provide meaningful opportunities and experiences for young people.'

Collaboration

It was clear from our consultation that there is a degree of collaboration already happening across the region, partly due to the established programme of festivals and events that are a strength of the Dumfries and Galloway cultural landscape. Consultees were all keen on collaborative potential and can see the value of this for young people, particularly where it helps to tackle geographical barriers. Artists and practitioners, whilst keen to work with each other, do not necessarily want to see their art forms diluted and wish to collaborate in a manner that supports development but does not blur the perceived boundaries of their practice.

Opportunities to Collaborate

Collaboration is important for young people to be able to experience a broad range of activity. For young artists, the opportunity to work with others is important to develop their own practice and creative identity. There were examples of young people finding it easier to go out of the region to work with others, for example young people from Stranraer had worked previously with young people from the neighbouring Ayrshire authority, although this was more concerned with geography and area of interest than local unwillingness. Cross-border working is therefore a

factor for consideration and some consultees commented that current funding doesn't necessarily allow for this i.e. money from Dumfries and Galloway Council wouldn't support young people from another area and vice versa.

Barriers to Collaboration

Time is a critical factor in creating and supporting collaboration. Many adults and organisations volunteer their time and devote their efforts to deliver core programme activity, raise money and make connections to support sustainability. This leaves little time to look beyond their main activities and to foster new partnerships.

We found in a minority of conversations a sense that young people should remain as part of only one group i.e. the group they were already part of. This stance has the potential to get in the way of collaboration but also individual and collective progression. There are clearly competing demands on young people's time and so it's not always possible for them to pursue more than one interest at a time in a rural setting like Dumfries and Galloway.

Young People as Collaborators

The voice of young people as collaborators and as decision makers within the region is important. Though the picture is not consistent, there are good examples from Wigtown, Catstrand, Big Burns Supper and Youth

Beatz particularly where young people are gaining tangible, transferable skills through their participation and volunteering in the arts.

Funding can be an issue when it comes to collaboration, with the receipt of support from the Council creating a perceived imbalance between those who are in receipt and those who are not. Young people consulted didn't feel there is a level playing when it came to this resourcing new or emerging ideas. Where they are involved in programme groups or contributing to the delivery of festivals and events, they are aware that they are not as skilled and/or experienced as others at raising money and so feel at a disadvantage. One young person suggested that funding bodies should consider alternative styles of applications from young people, such as short films, infographics or other visual representation.

Summary

A key strength of the region is the existing opportunity to collaborate through the major festivals and events. We found a great willingness to work together with and for the benefit of young people. There is an opportunity to look at the good practice of some of the leading organisations and share knowledge and experience. This would support others who wish to collaborate either with organisations or with young people. Collaboration works best when there are no competing interests and where people have the time on top of their existing commitments.

Case Study: Wigtown The Festival (WTF)

‘It is a pleasure to watch young people become more confident individuals – the real test here is seeing them chair or host events within the programme, something many would not have done during their first year on the team. We receive information about opportunities for young people through various networks both regional and national. One of our young people is also on the Stage IT team for Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival, and a member of the National Youth Arts Advisory Group. We have created a Facebook page called WTF Young Creatives to share such opportunities, as not everyone follows the WTF Festival page and it gives a clearer cross-art form message.

We try to collaborate with others on all our YA projects. This includes cross-marketing with DG Arts Festival for young people’s events, hosting Hooked! at The Stove and working closely with Blueprint100, and utilising the skills of other organisations in the region when programming WTF each autumn e.g. we’ve had a graffiti event in the past run by Blueprint100, theatre supported by Dumfries and Galloway Arts Live, a play by Jack Finlay of Electric Theatre / Big Burns Supper, etc.’

Investment....

In our consultation there was very positive feedback about the Hollywood Trust which has been transformative in its investment and commitment to the arts, and youth arts, in Dumfries and Galloway. Whilst the considerable investment from the Trust is hugely positive, it does bring the potential for over-reliance on this funder locally. Work is required to map a wider range of trusts and foundations who can invest in youth arts developments in Dumfries and Galloway.

Support from Dumfries and Galloway Council is also evident and acknowledged. As part of our online survey and interviews we asked organisations about their knowledge and understanding of Council priorities and if they felt they were contributing to this. In most of our interviews, the interviewees did not feel a strong connection to the Council’s strategic priorities or for example the Community Learning and Development (CLD) Plan. Some interviewees were aware of and had

contributed to the [Year of Young People Plan](#) for the region and perhaps more of such collaborative attention to securing resource would be advantageous for the organisations and, in turn, the young people.

Sustainability

Sustainability of funding to develop programmes over time and to continue working with the same young people was an issue for some individuals and organisations in our consultation. The nature of project funding creates a pattern of short-term intervention and then moving on to something else which means that young people may not be able to sustain or progress from their first involvement.

Fund-raising

From discussion with local arts organisations and young people from WTF, there is a sense that you need to be good at fundraising to survive in the current climate and this is not related to the quality of the idea or the work itself. This is not unique to the region and consultees talked about resourcing in terms of their sector funding bodies as well as local support.

Strategically, the consultees we spoke with were not regularly or routinely evidencing the economic impact of their activity in Dumfries and Galloway and remain focussed on fundraising from funding bodies (which of course they must do to survive). Many did express interest in alternative models of creative business or enterprise that may be worth investigating together.

Economic Driver

Dumfries and Galloway Council has recognised the arts as a potential economic driver for the region and is keen to support people in creative industries to live and work in the area. However, the pathway for young people to follow to become an independent creative is not yet clearly defined, especially since the message around creative learning and cultural enterprise is not yet embedded in schools. Young people felt that their school did not always see their artistic work as leading to a career. Skills Development Scotland (SDS) is actively seeking to support young people and the cross-sector Creative Industries Working Group is looking specifically at these themes and issues.

Outward Investment – Leaving / Returning to Region

Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE) links are crucial for young people wishing to progress and develop creatively. Most young people are aware that this means they may need to leave the area to study. There is the potential for local arts organisations to consider what they can offer by way of more formal training in the arts and cultural sector and to improve links and partnership with the FE/HE sector to do so. The location of Dumfries and Galloway College, on the outskirts of the town centre, means that some students from outwith Dumfries never have to venture into the town. They could be missing out on the offer from The Stove or the Theatre Royal as a result. Big Burns Supper is also keen to look at how they can support young people into the creative industries as are the Dumfries and Galloway Council through the ‘Youth Beatz’ initiative.

Case Study: Catstrand (Glenkens Youth Voice Survey)

‘Glenkens Community and Arts Trust is raising funds for capital building costs for The Smiddy - a heritage centre and community hub in Balmaclellan which will create job opportunities for local young people in administration and management of the space, as well as proposed partnership with the Bridge project in Dumfries in which the Smiddy space could act as a satellite work space for young people engaged with the project but based in the Glenkens. CatStrand Youth Arts is continuing to fund internship placements in the creative industries - partnering with other D and G based creative businesses to be able to offer a wider range of opportunities as well as offering pots of funding for young people 16-25 to run their own creative projects or events.’

Strategic Savvy

Awareness of the strategic priorities for Dumfries and Galloway is low amongst some arts organisations. This means they're not making the best case for what they do and the positive impact they can and do make in young people's lives. There was awareness of the CLD Plan, for example, and the Year of Young People strategy, however, some people felt that this wasn't necessarily linked to them or representative of them or their work

Summary

A key strength with regards to investment is the impact of the Hollywood Trust and their support for youth arts. There are further opportunities to

Leadership...

Our approach to the question of leadership was two-fold: we asked organisations about their views of leadership across the region and what was important to them as adults and advocates. We also asked about views on young people as leaders and how this was being facilitated, to better understand young people's agency and their role in making decisions and influencing programmes.

Leadership across the Region

On the issue of adult leadership across the region, in general consultees felt that this it was both important and that it could be improved. It is

engage young people in fundraising. There is also the opportunity for creative organisations to evidence their impact to Dumfries and Galloway Council, showing how they are delivering against local and national strategic objectives, such as the attainment gap. A key challenge for investment is the project-to-project nature of arts funding. This can inhibit sustaining a young person's involvement.

Case Study: Big Burns Supper

'We engage with young people at school, entry and emerging level, who have come and taken part in our projects as participants, leaders or as artists in their own rights. We have a commissioning process worth £15,000 per year which young people can bid for if they want to collaborate with others. Our return rate to region rate is particularly strong. 87% of the young people we have worked with over the last seven years have returned to work with us on other projects upon graduation.'

intrinsically linked to connectedness and the desire for a more coherent picture of what's happening across the region. Consultees did see a role for DG Unlimited but questioned whether, as a membership organisation, this was a representative or best position for DGU. For example, there may be others who are not members but who would wish to participate. The ability of DG Unlimited to bring about change and their potential role to influence the Council on behalf of the sector was considered important. Some consultees felt they need a leader as an advocate for youth arts but also as someone who can support them around strategy, funding, connecting, resourcing and sustaining their work in the sector and region.

Young People as Leaders

There are good examples of young people as leaders in key organisations in the region. Two young people from Dumfries are represented on the new National Youth Arts Advisory Group. The Blueprint 100 programme and the WTF programmers group, Big Burns Supper, Youth Beatz and Catstrand all engage with young people in a way that allows them to shape work and deliver programmes. JMB Creatives is also working effectively with a younger group to help shape their activities.

Taking a more engaged approach to working with young people has proved beneficial for the young people and the organisations themselves. Consultees also spoke of positive engagements with Dumfries and Galloway Council's youth team to support this mode of working. This complements the position of the young people themselves, who are keen to develop as decision-makers and have their voice heard. However, they'd like to find a way to do this across the region and in a more

structured way. There will be opportunities to explore this potential through the Year of Young People programme. Not everyone we spoke with was aware of that programme and plan and had therefore not had the opportunity to consider how they might be a contributor or how to further engage the young people they represent.

Summary

There are some great examples of young people as leaders in the arts in Dumfries and Galloway. Not everyone is working in this way and there is the opportunity to build on the experience and knowledge of those who already do. There is a gap in identifying a clear lead for youth arts. The broad span of the creative sector and the geographical spread of the population will make this a challenge, but young people have expressed a desire to come together, to be involved in shaping youth arts and so organisations should look for the best ways to do this, in partnership with young people.

Case Study: Ryan Youth Theatre (RYT) and Performance Collective Stranraer (PCS)

'RYT senior members, aged 15 up, worked with Toonspeak young people from Glasgow to create a new play called 87 Miles. We commissioned a young (under 25) playwright from Glasgow, Rosanna Hall to write the final script.

PCS was set up in August 2017 under the direction of Drew Taylor, a professional director and playwright in his early thirties. It is a theatre production company for young theatre makers. PCS was selected to present a show, Remote Control, at the Chrysalis Festival, Traverse Theatre Edinburgh, in November 2017. The show was warmly received by a full house of mainly young people from Reading, Manchester, Inverclyde, Edinburgh, West Lothian and Glasgow. PCS aims to instil professional skills and attitudes in its members. Through devising, reflecting, refining and creating new scripts and theatre performances members increase their attention span and improve time keeping, team working, reliability and self-reliance. One member was employed as professional actor at a rehearsed reading event in Wigtown, an opportunity available through PCS.

That PCS is perceived as a professional young theatre company is evidenced by our recent funding award through DG Unlimited from the Regional Arts Fund. Remote Control has now been extended (with GU funding amongst other funders) into a full-length piece premiered at The Ryan Centre and accepted for the National Theatre of Scotland's Exchange Festival in July at the Eden Court Theatre in Inverness.'

3. Strengths and Opportunities

Our consultation found a number of strengths and opportunities for youth arts in Dumfries and Galloway. We were impressed by the commitment of everyone involved. The timing of the consultation is opportune, falling as it does within the Scottish Government's Year of Young People and the drafting of the National Cultural Strategy. Dumfries and Galloway produced a [plan](#) for 2018, which has been very well received. It aims to increase engagement with young people and include their voices more. There is an opportunity in the creative sector to build on the momentum from this.

Range of Creative Organisations - There is a wide and varied arts offer for young people in Dumfries and Galloway. Our surveys noted more than 14 different art forms for young people to participate in. Initial mapping identified 45 organisations and individuals offering youth arts activity across the region. This includes theatres, galleries, shops and craft spaces. There are venues and spaces for creating. Young people can engage relatively easily (travel and transport issues aside) in visual arts and crafts, dance, drama, literature, music including traditional Scottish music. These are particular strengths in the area and further, that the activity therein is of quality, often produced locally but of national and international repute.

Festivals and Events - The region is known as a place for artists to live and work and the Council sees the arts as a major contributor to the economy as evidenced through its' [Major Festivals and Events Strategy 2018-2021](#). We were in touch with festivals such as Big Burns Supper, Wigtown Book Festival and the region-wide Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival. Festivals can range from one day to year-round. Visual art is supported by Wide Open, Spring Fling, the Stove and other providers such as the Kirkcudbright Arts and Crafts Trail. Theatre and drama are represented by groups with their roots in amateur dramatic societies as well as the venues such as Catstrand and the Theatre Royal. There are independent dance teachers with their own class programmes, independent music teachers in both classical and traditional instruments, as well as choral activity. Youth Beatz offers the opportunity to learn more about sound engineering and the music industry. Crafting, storytelling and puppetry are also represented in the area.

Relationship with Schools - We know from our conversations and surveys that most organisations have a schools or education programme. For some this is an ongoing relationship, whilst for others it is based on funding and runs from project to project. We identified that young people in the region would benefit from a more co-ordinated approach to the arts offer in schools. Many creative organisations have good relationships with schools and there is the opportunity to develop this further. We noted low awareness of the Pupil Equity Fund and the Scottish Government's attainment agenda for schools. There is the opportunity to capitalise on the learning and experiences that young people are engaging in through the arts to re-frame the conversation with schools. For example, Ryan Youth Theatre is enabling young people to gain their Arts Award.

Hollywood Trust - We also found that the Hollywood Trust is a particular strength, supporting numerous local creative organisations to work with young people in engaging and innovative ways. Consultees noted that the commitment of the Trust to the region and to young people is having a sustained positive impact.

Commitment - Above all the interest and commitment from consultees to find the best way to support young people in the arts was impressive. There is a willingness to work together to strengthen provision. The young people themselves are an asset to the region and we found examples of young creatives being involved in cultural activity at all levels of delivery, as technicians, workshop leaders or programmers, as examples.

Collaboration is key going forward. Young people told us they'd like one space to be able to find things out and connect with each other. They are also keen for a platform for their views to be shared. There is already good collaboration in the area, when organisations come together to produce the festivals, for example and the existing networks have the opportunity to consider how they can include the voices of young people.

4. Gaps and Challenges

The consultation looked at gaps through online surveys and through conversations with people. In the online surveys, the biggest gaps were related to:

Progression Pathways – This is perhaps an over-arching theme, touching as it does on all areas of accessibility that came up in our surveys and conversations. Young people need more support from the sector to define the progression pathways through their chosen art forms and to have the opportunity to experience other art forms to help them find the one they're most interested in.

Access to Information - One of the gaps in provision is the lack of one searchable place for young people to connect with other artists or to find out what is going on in the arts, and youth arts, in Dumfries and Galloway. Whilst there are some networks, they are not comprehensive. Cohesion in this area would be welcomed by the young people we consulted.

Geographical Accessibility - Whilst there is a wealth of high quality activity, we did find gaps in geographical provision and some areas would benefit from an improved and joint focus to improve the position. Much of the youth arts activity is focussed around the Dumfries area and transport across the area is an issue for almost everyone. It can be more challenging for young people in the more rural areas to get to opportunities, performance and/or events. There were examples of a subsidised transport scheme (Hollywood Trust) and some organisations had tried to 'buddy up' with others to ensure better cover. There were also some gaps in youth work provision, with some areas having no youth club or classes, which could serve as a

feeder and communication point for creative and cultural activity. The view from young people was that organisations should consider broadening the scope of what and where they do things so that young people do not always have to travel to engage with an activity that interests them.

Schools – We found that art organisations could be a more strategic in their approach to working with schools, enabling heads and teachers to develop a fuller knowledge of the offer across the area rather than being reliant on localised relationships. The area is well known for its wide ranging and vibrant festivals and events scene and the Council sees the arts as a positive economic driver for the area. However, the ‘pockets and patches’ of activity that were reported could be better connected if schools took a role in connecting with and supporting the wider provision. For young people this might address the gap in sustaining involvement in the arts, challenging the peaks and troughs in programme delivery and projects that are created through, especially but not restricted to, key festivals and events.

National Youth Arts Organisations - In our discussions with umbrella and national youth arts organisations (Scottish Youth Theatre, National Youth Orchestras of Scotland, Youth Theatre Arts Scotland, Y Dance and the National Youth Choir of Scotland) it was clear that their regional provision had reduced over the years due to pressures on resources. However, there remained a strong will and interest from them to connect regularly with the region and ensure information about training and pathways to their services was available to young people and adults in Dumfries and Galloway.

There are great opportunities and a wealth of creative talent to take things forward in Dumfries and Galloway, however our findings show some challenges which the sector will need to think about. The geography of the region and lack of transport are making it difficult for young people to participate. The nature of arts funding from project to project makes it hard for young people to participate consistently and this impacts on their pathway potentials. We found that defining clearer pathways through chosen art forms was a concern for all and is perhaps an over-arching priority.

5. Recommendations

Based on the consultation findings, six recommendations emerged that form the basis of the proposed framework. These six recommendations can be seen as a starting point to help prioritise any actions. We recognise that some organisations will already be delivering against some of these actions where others will not or may not be yet. We hope that these recommendations will frame the conversations ahead to establish ownership, leadership and to set measures and milestones around progress.

We have grounded each recommendation in our findings and also considered the role for DG Unlimited. We have listed associated actions which can deliver on each recommendation. In the final table (see appendix 1) we set out these actions against some potential outcomes.

Strategic Recommendation 1:

Create opportunity to experience high quality arts and cultural provision as audience members, participants, creators and leaders.

We are recommending this theme based on what we found from the consultation. Dumfries and Galloway, as a region, has a large number of artists and creative organisations across a broad spectrum of provision. Our online survey showed at least 31 organisations operating across 14 different art forms, with music, drama and visual arts best served. During our meetings with consultees we were told of the importance for young people to have direct knowledge of artists and to know that it's possible to pursue a career in the creative industries. The region has much to offer through high quality arts provision and a reputation to match. Young people should be included in this at all levels. 97% of those working with young people offer them the opportunity to be a participant but only 43% offer the opportunity to be young leaders. There is less provision for younger children and therefore less opportunity to progress from an early age. Our findings showed a small number of targeted arts providers, e.g. Paragon Ensemble and some anecdotal evidence of working with care experienced young people. This suggests that the sector should think about better targeting and increasing inclusivity to ensure that a greater number and wider range of young people get to experience the wealth of opportunities that exist.

There is a role for the Regional Arts Hub, with the support of DG Unlimited to support the sector to promote high quality arts experiences and support the sector to develop practice that takes young people beyond the role of participant.

Associated actions:

- *regularly map arts and cultural provision as well as take-up and impact across the region*
- *programme provision which will close gaps, improve accessibility and ensure that young people have the opportunity to work with a range of arts and cultural specialists across a breadth of art forms and in their local neighbourhoods or communities*
- *target provision for young people with additional challenges and barriers*
- *offer specialist provision for young people with identified talent*
- *increase access to high quality early years cultural provision*
- *increase access to high quality cultural provision for families and carers*
- *build opportunities for increased networking and training for professionals working in and through the arts with young people.*

Strategic Recommendation 2:

Ensure access to high quality cultural education in schools and other educational settings, both formal and informal.

The relationship with schools and education is crucial as an entry point into the arts. Young people told us that they find out about activities at school and through school. Other consultees told us that the relationships with schools varied and were dependent on personal relationships with individual teachers. Where this was working well and creative organisations could evidence impact, however in other areas this was non-existent and therefore inhibited the opportunities available to young people. We think that to strengthen these links the arts sector should try to co-ordinate activity and define the offer it has for schools across the region. The findings show that progression pathways are a concern for young people as well as for the creative organisations. Part of the progression pathways should be concerned with the options for attainment and qualifications. There is the opportunity for creative organisations to position themselves as providers of arts learning, linking with schools and colleges. We know, for example, that the Theatre Royal is interested in a model that would see them as a 'teaching theatre' like a 'teaching hospital'. Big Burns Supper and Youth Beatz already have training opportunities for young people.

There is a role for DG Unlimited to broker the relationships between education and arts providers and to assist with promoting a co-ordinated offer.

Associated actions:

- *support robust networks which enable meaningful dialogue and effective partnerships between schools and arts providers, both local and national*
- *develop cohesive high-quality arts and cultural opportunities for young people outside of and beyond the age of mainstream education*
- *improve understanding of effective use of arts and culture in schools in support of the curriculum but also in respect of global shifts in the value and prominence of creativity in the economy and to benefit the wider society.*

Strategic Recommendation 3:

Develop clear progression pathways for young people to broaden and deepen arts and cultural engagement.

We found that pathways in art forms and across the arts are not clear for young people. We also found that developing pathways to support progression is a priority for people in Dumfries and Galloway. National arts organisations acknowledged that their work in the region had reduced over time, although they remain committed to that outreach. We noted that the nature of project funding and the coming together to create work for festivals and events can create an 'ebb and flow' that makes it difficult for young people to sustain their involvement. If they cannot participate regularly, then it's harder to develop their experiences, skills and knowledge. Our survey showed just over half of the respondents offering activity on a weekly basis. That's not to say that everyone should be working weekly or in schools, however, there is the opportunity to connect with those that do e.g. youth clubs, to help develop consistent pathways as well as address gaps in art form or local provision. Young people are aware that the opportunity to progress may be dependent on what their school is offering, for example the Higher in Dance or the geographical location. This also contributes to making pathways less clear. The festivals in the area offer good opportunities for cross art form working and collaboration and do allow young people to be exposed to a range of art forms, following up on this post event is key.

There is a role for DG Unlimited to assist the sector to collaborate and to help the sector promote the progression pathways to a wider audience.

Associated actions:

- *adopt effective use of online communication resources and other innovations to support an integrated approach to information for young people and help young people to navigate as well as create arts and cultural opportunities and offerings*
- *create robust signposting for young people between creative organisations, local and national, and to wider youth provision across the region and the country*
- *invest in digital and physical spaces for emerging young artists to experiment, share and promote their artistic practice with others.*

Strategic Recommendation 4:

Increase access to high quality, impartial and specialist creative careers advice, education and guidance and support for accessing employment opportunities within the creative industries.

Our consultation found that the progression pathways for young people are not clear. If young people wish to work in the creative industries they should have the opportunity to experience the work of professionals and where appropriate, participate alongside them. This could include volunteering, formal and informal training, internships or work experience. This will allow them to develop knowledge of work practices and be exposed to people who are making a living within the creative sector. In some cases, this will mean travelling outside of the area, for example the Wigtown Book Festival's young programmers visited a literary festival in Oxford. Young people told us that they know they may have to leave the area to progress in their chosen field. This is possible for some but may not be for others, therefore, to ensure sustainability the sector should look to build as many opportunities within the region as possible. Existing organisations should consider the learning opportunities that they have to hand or what they could provide or evolve. Some organisations, for example Big Burns Supper and the Theatre Royal, are thinking about the learning offer they can develop and where they can engender and augment relationships with education. This work could be taken forward by the Dumfries and Galloway Creative Industries Working Group.

There is a role for the Regional Arts Hub to broker opportunities for young people to meet professionals in the sector by supporting members to bring them in or to support member organisations to support young people to travel out of the area. There is also a role for DGU to continue to represent the sector's views at the Creative Industries Working Group.

Associated actions:

- *support programmes and initiatives which enable greater understanding among young people and professionals of the employment (including self-employment and entrepreneurialism), training and development opportunities within the cultural and creative industries, including clear signposting and effective provision of high quality, impartial creative careers advice*
- *co-ordinate approach to engaging Further and Higher Education and creative businesses to support young people's access to and understanding of placement, work experience, apprenticeship, traineeship and sustainable employment and enterprise opportunities within the cultural and creative sector*
- *co-ordinate approach across the creative sectors and including schools, Further Education and Higher Education establishments to ensure that young people can access information about progression and career development easily.*

Strategic Recommendation 5:

Children and young people should have the opportunity to receive recognition and accreditation for their achievements within the arts.

Recognition of young people's achievements through participation in the arts links to the attainment challenge, a Scottish Government priority for education. We found that young people in the region are doing amazing things in the arts. However, if this takes place outside of school there isn't the opportunity for them to evidence their learning and skills. An example would be the level to which the young programmers group from Wigtown take responsibility for Wigtown The Festival (WTF). They are supported to operate as programmers, project planners, promoters and venue managers to a high level. This work isn't formally recognised as part of their education, although they were able to articulate their skills when we spoke with them. Recognising such achievement supports the progression pathway which has emerged as a priority in our consultation. We suggest the Arts Award as an accessible way of doing this for both arts providers and the young people themselves.

There is a role for DG Unlimited to help the creative sector to come together to recognise young people's achievements and to help raise the profile of what they have done.

Associated actions:

- *programme arts activity that enables young people to work towards accreditation within the national framework of qualifications, including consistent, high quality delivery of the Arts Award and its non-specialist equivalents*
(Awards Aware: https://www.awardsnetwork.org/awardsaware?dm_i=LQE,5AT3Y,JJ9734,KG75C,1)
- *create programmes that celebrate young people's achievements and attainment within arts and culture and offer platforms to share and promote success.*

Strategic Recommendation 6:

Develop and build on opportunities for children and young people to have a meaningful voice in cultural planning and provision.

Less than half (43%) of the respondents to our short online survey were supporting young people as young leaders. However, there are examples of good practice in Dumfries and Galloway, through Blueprint 100, Catstrand, Wigtown, Big Burns Supper and Youth Beatz to name a few. Where this is happening, consultees spoke about the value of this work and the positive impact for young people. We also looked at other examples as part of our benchmarking exercise and noted that other areas have created a local network for young people in the arts. Dumfries and Galloway's Year of Young People plan is explicit about listening to the voices of young people. The young people we spoke with, as part of the consultation, told us that they'd like a place where they could connect and meet other young creatives. Young people wish to be able to influence the development of the arts across the region. This supports the sustainability of the sector and strengthens the need and desire for young people to stay in the area.

There is a role for DG Unlimited to support sharing of best practice in the region to help organisations wishing to boost their engagement with young people.

Associated actions:

- *create opportunities for young people to occupy board or advisory positions in key organisations and on key committees (including for creative learning, travel and transport, etc.)*
- *explore new ways of involving young people in decision-making and commissioning processes, at a local and regional level, including the establishment of a diverse, inclusive and representative youth arts panel*
- *develop initiatives which increase understanding of best practice in youth-led approaches among the young people's workforce.*

6. Conclusion

The further engagement of young people is of critical importance to the integrity of this evolving framework. Having heard their voices through this initial consultation stage, their role as facilitators and leaders of youth arts could and should be developed further as stakeholders continue to shape the strategy further.

Going forward we offer this document as framework upon which to build. In the next section we have detailed the outcomes that could be achieved from the suggested actions. We note that for each proposed action, there may already be people and organisations delivering well and therefore these actions will not need to be a priority for some. We suggest that the creative contributors in the region would wish to review the actions and decide their own priorities first and then perhaps as a network. There is a wealth of talent and experience across many creative sectors and the opportunity to share practice and learn from each other cannot be under-estimated.

Time needs to be taken with stakeholders to analyse and agree upon the recommendations and ownership of these actions; timescales and milestones for implementation as well as how to measure impact will need to be addressed.

It is an exciting time for youth arts in Dumfries and Galloway and we see no impediment to the community leading the way in Scotland as the nation also continues to hone its creative practices and potential for and with young people.

Appendices



Appendix 1

Dumfries and Galloway – Proposed Framework for Youth Arts

This table maps the recommendations to associated actions and the potential outcomes. Measuring the outcomes with young people will help to understand and evidence the impact of the work.

Recommendations	Associated actions	Potential outcomes
<p>1. Create opportunity to experience high quality arts and cultural provision as audience members, participants, creators and leaders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>regularly map arts and cultural provision as well as take-up and impact across the region</i> • <i>programme provision which close gaps, improve accessibility and ensure that young people have the opportunity to work with a range of arts and cultural specialists across a breadth of art forms and in their local neighbourhoods or communities</i> • <i>target provision for young people with additional challenges and barriers</i> • <i>offer specialist provision for young people with identified talent</i> • <i>increased access to high quality early years cultural provision</i> • <i>increased access to high quality cultural provision for families and carers</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>improved understanding of the whole offer across Dumfries and Galloway</i> • <i>young people with challenges in their life have more opportunity to experience the benefits of engagement with the arts</i> • <i>young people who identify a creative interest can better navigate a progression pathway within the region and beyond</i> • <i>the pathway to creative activity will start in early years and allow children and families to have sustained engagement with the arts</i> • <i>the region will support more arts activities that encourage families and carers to be creative together and to experience high quality arts</i> • <i>young people have more opportunities to meet with creative leaders in their chosen to field to improve</i>

Recommendations	Associated actions	Potential outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>build opportunities for increased networking and training for professionals working in and through the arts with young people.</i> 	<p><i>their understanding and confidence that there are sustainable jobs within the creative industries in Dumfries and Galloway.</i></p>
<p>2. Ensure access to high quality cultural education in schools and other educational settings, both formal and informal.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>support robust networks which enable meaningful dialogue and effective partnerships between schools and arts providers, both local and national</i> • <i>develop cohesive high-quality arts and cultural opportunities for young people outside of and beyond the age of mainstream education</i> • <i>improve understanding of the effective use of arts and culture in schools in support of the curriculum but also in respect of global shifts in the value and prominence of creativity in the economy and to benefit the wider society.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>pathways through the arts and progression routes for young people are clear and sustained</i> • <i>young people are more confident and knowledgeable audience members, choosing what they like and may become lifelong patrons and participants</i> • <i>the curriculum is enriched, engaging and enjoyed, and attainment /attainment improves</i> • <i>D and G grows and maintains its status as a place where cultural activity and enterprise thrives.</i>
<p>3. Develop clear progression pathways for young people to broaden and deepen arts and cultural engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>adopt effective online communication resources and other innovations to support an integrated approach to information for young people and help young people to navigate as well as create arts and cultural opportunities and offerings</i> • <i>create robust signposting for young people between creative organisations, local and national, and to wider youth provision across the region and the country</i> • <i>invest in digital and physical spaces for emerging young artists to experiment, share and promote their artistic</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>better online channels are available to young people to find out what is available to them in the area</i> • <i>improved online channels for use as a creative tool, for artistic collaboration and for discussion with and by young people</i> • <i>better help is available to young people to build their artistic journeys regionally, across Scotland and beyond</i> • <i>clearer routes to engagement with national</i>

Recommendations	Associated actions	Potential outcomes
	<p><i>practice with others.</i></p>	<p><i>organisations are supported.</i></p>
<p>4. Increase access to high quality, impartial and specialist creative careers advice, education and guidance and support for accessing employment opportunities within the creative industries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>support programmes and initiatives which enable greater understanding among young people and professionals of the employment (including self-employment and entrepreneurialism), training and development opportunities within the cultural and creative industries, including clear signposting and effective provision of high quality, impartial creative careers advice</i> • <i>co-ordinate approach to engaging Further and Higher Education and creative businesses which support young people's access to and understanding of placement, work experience, apprenticeship, traineeship and sustainable employment and enterprise opportunities within the cultural and creative sector</i> • <i>co-ordinate approach across the creative sectors and including schools, Further Education and Higher Education establishments to ensure that young people can access information about progression and career development easily.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>more young people can articulate their interests, experiences and talents to make progress towards training and jobs in the creative industries</i> • <i>more young people can articulate the transferable skills they have gained through engagement with the arts and how it has augmented their education and employment options</i> • <i>more young people can plan a career or progression pathway in the creative and cultural industries.</i>
<p>5. Children and young people should have the opportunity to receive recognition and accreditation for their achievements within the arts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Programme arts activity that enables young people to work towards accreditation within the national framework of qualifications, including consistent, high quality delivery of the Arts Award and its non-specialist equivalents</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>more young people's artistic endeavour is recognised through accredited awards</i> • <i>more young people proudly express their achievement, this contributes to their positive image as well as that of the artistic community</i>

Recommendations	Associated actions	Potential outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>create programmes that celebrate young people’s achievements and attainment within arts and culture and offer platforms to share and promote success.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>the region’s profile is raised through the celebration of young people’s creative and cultural achievements.</i>
<p>6. Develop and build on opportunities for children and young people to have a meaningful voice in cultural planning and provision.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>create opportunities for young people to occupy board or advisory positions in organisations and on key committees (including for creative learning, travel and transport, etc.)</i> • <i>explore new ways of involving young people in decision-making and commissioning processes, at a local and regional level, including the establishment of a diverse, inclusive and representative youth arts panel</i> • <i>develop initiatives which increase understanding of best practice in youth-led approaches among the young people’s workforce.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>more young people can develop leadership skills through their engagement with the arts and services become more responsive too</i> • <i>young people can better and more easily influence the future of arts direction and provision within the region</i> • <i>the approach to engaging young people as leaders and influencers is better aligned to the National Standards for Community Engagement.</i>

Appendix 2

Facts and Figures

Dumfries and Galloway has a population of approximately 148,000. The largest town in the region is Dumfries with a population of 31,600. The two other main towns are Stranraer (10,800 pop.) and Annan (8,300 pop.). All other settlements have populations of 4,500 or less. Population density is 60 people per square mile compared with the Scottish average of 168.ⁱⁱ

There are more than 1,136 artists registered on the Cultural Map of Dumfries and Galloway. Four of the seven major festivals and events funded by the Council are arts-based (Big Burns Supper, Spring Fling, Wigtown Book Festival and Dumfries and Galloway Arts Festival). It is estimated that each of these generate at least £250,000 of economic benefit.ⁱⁱⁱ

Young people aged 0-15 make up 15.8% of the total region's population which is slightly under the Scottish average of 17%. Young people aged 16-29 make up 14.5% of the total population which is below the Scottish average of 18.2%. The largest demographic group is those aged 45-59 at 22.9%, slightly more than the Scottish average. Residents 60-74 and 75+ make up a combined 32.1% of the population, almost the same number of people aged 0-29 years of age.^{iv}

On average between 2012 and 2014 there was a net inflow of 53 people into Dumfries and Galloway per year, meaning that more people entered Dumfries and Galloway (3,951 per year) than left (3,898 per year). The 16 to 29 year old age group accounted for the largest group of in-migrants into Dumfries and Galloway. The largest group of out-migrants was also the 16 to 29 year olds. The population aged under 16 is projected to decline by 9.5% until at least 2037.

Appendix 3

References:

ⁱ <https://info.dumgal.gov.uk/culturalmap/Home/SearchList?page=7>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.dumfries-and-galloway.co.uk/facts/info.htm>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://community.thirdsectordumgal.org.uk/sites/default/files/0300-17%20Major%20Events%20Strategy%20Summary.pdf>

^{iv} <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files/statistics/council-area-data-sheets/dumfries-and-galloway-factsheet.pdf>

<http://egenda.dumgal.gov.uk/aksdumgal/images/att45079.pdf>

<https://www.dumgal.gov.uk/media/17799/Strategy-Major-Festivals-and-Events-2018-2021/pdf/FinalStrategy.pdf>