

**Creative Scotland**

# Arts in Education Survey

**August 2020**



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**THE NATIONAL LOTTERY®**



ALBA | CHRUTHACHAIL

# Introduction

**1.1** Due to the impact of COVID-19, there have been many changes in Scotland's Youth Arts & Education landscapes, both respectfully and in how they intersect. Creative Scotland's Creative Learning & Young People Team - in partnership with colleagues from the Arts and Education sectors - set up a survey to gain an overview of where arts providers are playing a role in supporting learning within formal education, community and family settings.

**1.2** Creative Scotland recognises the recommendations made by the Children & Young People's Commissioner for Scotland in their **COVID-19 Independent Children's Rights Impact Assessment**, and that action is required in order to 'maximise all opportunities for children to enjoy their rights to rest, leisure, recreation and cultural and artistic activities and address structural inequalities that constrain these rights.'

**1.3** The survey ran from 3-21 August 2020, and sought to provide us with a better understanding of where the arts are well-placed to work with education and learning partners in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. We wanted to establish how best to support children and young people's access to artistic, cultural and creative opportunities during COVID-19 recovery, and where further support and advocacy could help to build capacity.

**1.4** The survey focused on the short term (academic year 2020/21) and was not intended to be a detailed statistical survey. Instead, it was intended as an opportunity to gain an overview of what has happened and what is currently happening in the wake of the pandemic, and to advocate for what support is needed going forward.

**1.5** We had 222 responses to the questionnaire from a mixture of individuals and cultural organisations.

# Summary of Key Findings

## 2.1 Impact of COVID-19

COVID-19 and its wider impact has created a shift change for most organisations and practitioners working within the Arts sector, many transitioning from face to face activity to working predominantly online. While this has presented myriad challenges, it has also allowed some practitioners to experiment with new ways of working and opened up interesting opportunities.

There has also been a significant drop-off in terms of children and young people being involved in creative activity. The speed at which changes have happened has left workers and participants struggling with new working situations.

## 2.2 Disparity between aspirations and what is currently achievable

The survey results detail many positive approaches and much potential despite the challenging current context. However, there appears to be a discrepancy between aspirations and the reality of the current situation. What most respondents identified as potential deliverables are largely dependent on certain needs being met.

Changes have come at a cost in terms of lost income and work opportunities for practitioners. There has been considerable negative impact on mental health reported for practitioners and participants alike, as well as the severance of relationships and connections which are so fundamental to all our health and wellbeing.

The needs that are most apparent from responses are threefold. Understandably, both training and funding are high in most respondents' priorities. There is also a demonstrable desire to connect more strongly with the Education sector as a whole:

## 1. Training Need

Several organisations highlighted the need for further training, to be delivered through different methods. This should support a digital pivot and help ensure child safety remains paramount in all delivery settings.

## 2. Funding Need

Funding is key to the development of proposed plans. However, risk to project delivery is higher than it would be under normal circumstances. Therefore making the case to potential funders for financial support becomes more complex.

## 3. Networking Need, specifically with the education sector

There is a clear desire for more links, networking and sharing of good practice between arts organisations and practitioners, though a more demonstrable aspiration from respondents was for the arts sector to have closer links to the education sector, from local connections with schools and early years settings to influencing at a policy level.

Arts education practitioners are committed to working in partnership with school and community settings for the benefit of children and young people. The number of projects planned for academic year 2020/21 as communicated in survey responses, despite current working environments and challenges, demonstrates this commitment. There is a rich resource present and waiting for schools, authorities and the education sector to connect with.

### 2.3 Constantly evolving landscape

With this survey, we set out to gain a snapshot of where arts and education were intersecting and what the impact of COVID-19 had been at that point in time. As the survey ran through August 2020, the information contained is now almost certainly out of date now that schools are back. However, many restrictions remain in place throughout the country and particularly affect performance and group-based activities.

As restrictions lift and tighten within Scotland and the wider UK, it is difficult to map the trajectory of when either the Arts or Education sector will return to 'normal'. However, these survey results highlight some important considerations around the needs of the sector to adapt to ensure the continuation and expansion of quality provision of arts education in both formal and informal settings.

## Overview of Respondent Practice

**3.1** Respondents were asked to supply an overview of their practice, noting whether they are an organisation or individual practitioner. 204 respondents completed this question and were evenly split, with just over half (51%) responding on behalf of organisations and the remainder responding as individuals.

**3.2** Responses were received from a range of organisation types and sizes. These included arts organisations and venues, such as theatres or multi artform organisations (including Creative Scotland Regularly Funded Organisations) that have dedicated learning and education programmes. There were also responses from development organisations, public sector ALEOs (Arm's Length Organisations), and a mix of charitable and non-charitable organisations.

**3.3** Those responding on their own behalf represented teachers, freelancers, practitioners, and students amongst others.

# COVID-19 Issues and their Impact

**4.1** Respondents were asked ‘How have you as an organisation/individual been affected by COVID 19 issues and their impact?’ 164 responses were received.. Almost every respondent agreed that their work had been impacted to some extent. For individuals, work for some freelancers has ceased and alternative methods or opportunities had to be pursued, in some cases, working outwith education.

*“Initially all my freelance work was cancelled or postponed, as much of it was based in schools. Over time, opportunities to work differently arose including developing short films of workshops and using zoom and outdoor spaces.”*

*“My youth music project has to stop face to face weekly sessions. For me, it’s difficult to not be on site with participants every week - for me personally it was a highlight of my week and seeing the community we created have to cease meeting was really disheartening. I obviously also lost pay as did my colleagues.”*

*“All teaching work has moved online. This has meant retraining, investment in hard and software (all self-funded as time critical). Adapting my own practice and supporting students into online tuition has been exhausting...”*

The biggest impact has been the move to predominantly working online, the drop-off of young people being involved, and the need to change the way projects are delivered. The speed at which this happened left some organisations and individuals struggling with the changed working situation.

**4.2** The challenge of self-isolation and lockdown has also impacted upon individuals emotionally, with concerns around returning to work. Some respondents also mentioned challenges to mental health for both practitioners and young people.

*“I cannot see or teach pupils either online or face to face. Social distancing and self-isolating at home has been very challenging emotionally and I’m afraid that when I return to face to face teaching, the pupils won’t respond / engage as they will have been affected emotionally by self-isolating at home.”*

**4.3** The key challenges for organisations come from the temporary closure of buildings and/ or the abrupt cancellation or postponement of activity. In many cases, this has resulted in children and young people being left without formal creative education. Some organisations mentioned that more than 50% of their young people had dropped off creative programmes since lockdown.

*“Our entire 2020/21 output has been cancelled thus far. This has impacted over 500 young people that were intending to participate in one of our residential programmes. We have also cancelled all of our YMI delivery in this year thus far, affecting 100s more young people.”*

*“We have stopped all classes and performances. This has left children without tutor led creative work, and a loss of creative projects they had previously been working on. This has also led to a huge loss in income personally and professionally.”*

**4.4** Closure and a lack of activity also presented financial implications for organisations due to loss of income. This was especially true for individuals and freelancers, who faced an almost immediate loss of income.

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*“The pandemic has hit us hard, turning off our income generation streams overnight (around 70% of our income is earned). We’ve been doing everything we can to retain income, raise funds and reduce outgoings...”*

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**4.5** However, some groups strongly felt that despite the difficulties and challenges, there was still valuable work taking place, and that the move to predominantly online work hadn’t necessarily affected the quality of what they were able to deliver.

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*“(COVID) has enabled us to engage with local artists in new ways, and reach communities we have previously not engaged with. Whilst this has had its challenges, it has offered us an opportunity to step-change as an organisation.”*

*“(we) have continued to deliver our programmes throughout the lockdown period, with a considerable amount of planning, development and implementation of a virtual learning approach replacing the previous face to face delivery in schools.”*

# Awareness of COVID-19 Issues and their Impact on Children & Young People

**5.1** We asked respondents how they were collecting information on how children and young people they work with have been impacted by COVID-19<sup>1</sup>. 33% became aware of impact through direct discussion

with the children and young people, 28% through direct discussions with the families of children and young people, and 16% from gathering structured feedback (**Table 5.1**).

**Table 5.1: ‘How you became aware of how Children & Young People you work with have been impacted’**

How you became aware of how Children & Young People you work with have been impacted	Number of Responses
Observed through direct discussion with the Children & Young People	99
Direct discussion with the families of the Children & Young People	84
You have gathered structured feedback (via surveys, online forms etc.)	48
Other	72

**5.2** Of the 72 respondents who selected ‘Other’, cited methods included peer discussion (with teachers, youth workers, public body staff etc.) via online platforms, and social media feedback.

**5.3** Looking at the individual responses, one of the key takeaways was the impact COVID-19 was having on mental health for children and young people due to the stress of lockdown and isolation.

*“The young people we work with have been isolated in their home environments, anxiety has increased and there is a growing sense of uncertainty - what started as something that would eventually be over, has developed into an endless and uncertain saga. There is a sense of frustration and also fear for the future.”*

*“Mental and physical health declining, isolation, boredom, lack of future prospects, motivation low, stress about school, health, family and money.”*

*“...I also found that stress and anxiety within young people was more transparent, and a focus on nurture has to be key when we return.”*

*“Additional family stress/ considerations e.g. Working from home, home-schooling. Changes to childcare and no provisions for EYFS other than paid nursery places. Tension and pressure on families to provide activities and all stimulation- eases with the extension of where one can exercise.”*

<sup>1</sup> This was a multiple-choice question, and more than one response was allowed

**5.4** The impact of not being able to socialise with friends and family was also noted.

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*“A loss in confidence from not seeing friends, engaging in activities such as attending youth theatre and losing the structure of school. Also, the changes to everyday life have been daunting and contributes to this lack of confidence.”*

*“Their mental health and wellbeing have been affected. Their social network has become their world and they have been too bored to connect with others. They have missed seeing us at the centre and feel disengaged from the world.”*

*“Not being able to see friends and family. Not taking part in their usual activities. Most of the young people we have been in contact with are the ones that have been impacted the least - i.e. they are in contact with us, have supportive parents, have internet access etc.”*

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**5.5** The loss of access to creativity and resources was also acutely felt, with organisations mentioning that while online options were better than nothing, young people were noticeably missing the in-person, physical aspect of learning. Many also noted that this had a more profound impact on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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*“Limited opportunities for creative learning. They have missed out on the social aspect of summer schools, Art Labs and workshops. Young people are out of the habit of attending workshops and Art Labs and it may be difficult to re-establish connections with them.”*

*“No interaction other than online. No access to art resources.”*

*“A lack of routine, pressure from schoolwork, isolation, lack of communication with family and friends, diet and access to nutritional food, lack of motivation, struggles with anxiety and mental health over online engagement, lack of outdoor access.”*

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**5.6** The respondents felt uniformly that young people were being negatively affected by COVID. However, several also mentioned how well some had adjusted to online life, even if it was clearly no-one's preference. A few groups highlighted how important interactions with cultural programmes had been for many of the young people, and how much value they found in them.

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*“They enjoyed the online contact and enjoyed receiving activities, but some young people who lack the confidence to be creative independently took longer to engage in our usual activities. Other young people flourished in the new online environment, supporting their peers and responded by becoming very creative and physically active.”*



# Working in an Arts in Education Context

**6.1** Respondents worked in a wide-range of arts in education contexts prior to COVID-19. Examples include delivery of physical tuition, such as music tuition, workshops and projects in schools, community settings and art galleries, physical drama workshops and performances. Many of the responses provided noted physical classes or workshops carried out in schools, nurseries and higher and further education settings. Several organisations detailed their arts in education programmes for children and young people across a range of artforms and disciplines.

**6.2** When asked whether they plan to work in an 'Arts in Education' context for academic year 2020/21, 97% said that they do.

**6.3** Work to be delivered in 2020/21 ranges in form, across digital, physical, and recorded

delivery etc. There are examples of physical and digital workshop delivery that are planned across multiple artforms and disciplines, residencies in schools, planned pre-recording of performances and classes, development of online resources for use in schools and other education settings.

**6.4** Respondents also gave feedback on delivery setting for 2020/21. These ranged across multiple contexts, including early years, additional support needs, primary, secondary, further/higher education, out of school activity and community hubs.

**6.5** Table 5.1 shows the Scottish Local Authority breakdown for 140 'Arts in Education' projects to be delivered in 2020/21. Of those that selected 'Other,' the majority were due to projects being delivered in multiple Scottish Local Authority areas by the same respondent.

**Table 5.1: Location of Arts in Education Project Delivery in the academic year 2020/21**

Local Authority	Number of Responses	Local Authority	Number of Responses
Aberdeen City	8	Midlothian	2
Aberdeenshire	2	Moray	0
Angus	3	Na h-Eileanan Siar	1
Argyll & Bute	1	North Ayrshire	7
City of Edinburgh	18	North Lanarkshire	3
Clackmannanshire	1	Orkney Islands	1
Dumfries and Galloway	1	Perth & Kinross	5
Dundee City	3	Renfrewshire	1
East Ayrshire	2	Scottish Borders	3
East Dunbartonshire	1	Shetland Islands	0
East Lothian	4	South Ayrshire	2
East Renfrewshire	0	South Lanarkshire	1
Falkirk	1	Stirling	3
Fife	2	West Dunbartonshire	1
Glasgow City	19	West Lothian	2
Highland	1	Other (please specify)	39
Inverclyde	2		

**6.6** Table 6.2 shows the age ranges that projects are being delivered to in 2020/21 (from those that responded to the question

*‘What is the age range of the Children & Young People you are delivering to?’*).

**Table 6.2: ‘What is the age range of the Children & Young People you are delivering to?’**

What is the age range of the Children & Young People you are delivering to?	Number of Responses
Early Year (0-4 years)	7
Children (5-17 years)	114
Young People (18-25 years)	15

**6.7** Respondents are hoping to work with a range of partners to support delivery of ‘Arts in Education’ projects in 2020/21. These include:

- Arts and Creative Industries Organisations (charity and non-charity organisations)
- Schools
- Education departments
- Educational psychologists
- Social work
- Care support services
- Public bodies (local authorities, national funders, government etc.)
- ALEOs (Arm’s Length Organisations).

**6.8** Whether they intend to deliver ‘Arts in Education’ projects in 2020/21 or not, respondents were asked what additional activity they could be delivering and working on. Several respondents felt that their existing work and projects could be delivered and extended to other regions.

*“We could be delivering more of what we are doing currently in Glasgow in other authorities across the central belt and further afield in Scotland.”*

*“We are looking to expand work with hard to reach communities, such as those who are food insecure. We cannot expect young people and families to engage with creative and cultural activities if their basic needs are not being met, which is why we hope to partner with CFINE to ensure they are given the support and necessities to facilitate this...”*

*“Our digital programmes can be sent out to other local authorities and to other schools. We could create a digital program for nursery schools in the future.”*

**6.9** Respondents also cited additional utilisation of digital platforms being feasible. This ties back to the view that while challenging, COVID has allowed some practitioners to experiment with new ways of working and opened some new possibilities.

*“I could be teaching online.”*

*“I am thinking digitally deliverable performances and activities.”*

*“I could provide drama lessons through zoom or any other relevant online platforms.”*

*“Online and virtual sessions for schools and young people with other arts partners...”*

**6.10** We asked respondents if they are working with communities or families in a

learning context. Table 5.3 shows that 72% of respondents are.

**Table 5.3: ‘Are you working with communities or families in a learning context?’**

Are you working with communities or families in a learning context?	Number of Responses
Yes	<b>96</b>
No	<b>38</b>

**6.11** We also asked about additional support and resources that may be required to deliver ‘Arts in Education’ projects and work in 2020/21. Responses included the following:

- Funding (to support staff, for equipment, training etc.)
- Networking and contacts
- Common and shared platforms (e.g. a common online platform across Local Authorities)
- Help in outreach
- Dedicated spaces
- IT resources.



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