



## **The Case for Culture for Children and Young People**

### **Cultural support and engagement of children and young people in the North East of England**

The North East is the only English region with a cultural strategy: the *Case for Culture* <http://www.case4culture.org.uk/>. One of its five aspirations is:

“Children and Young People - ensuring we continue to innovate and broaden access to culture for children and young people, for all the benefits this brings to future generations.”

The arts and heritage, at their best, help us to understand who we are, where we have come from and who we might become. Engaging imaginatively and actively is central to children’s growing understanding of themselves and the world around them. Our children and young people face significant challenge with the region scoring poorly on many indicators of disadvantage and deprivation. Our aspiration for this call to arms is that it brings the cultural sector together, harnessing its collective strength to meet the challenge facing children and young people in our region, by ensuring that they have access to ambitious cultural opportunities which will inspire their imaginations and enable them to reach their full potential.

#### **Where do we want to be in 2030?**

- All children and young people in the region participate in cultural activity.
- All children and young people in the region demonstrate higher levels of aspiration, and have developed transferable skills through engagement with culture.

In addition:

- Cultural funders’ budget allocations for work with children and young people to be in proportion to this audience as a percentage of the North East population.
- Children and young people will be able to describe how the cultural sector has supported them, and feel confident to challenge the sector to do more.
- The cultural sector will be able to articulate and demonstrate the positive difference they have made to children and young people through the quality of their work.
- The North East will be the international exemplar for engagement with children and young people in the arts and heritage.

## **The North East as a Centre of Culture**

The North East has a strong cultural identity forged across the centuries, from the writing of the first work of English History by Bede in the seventh century to critical mass of cultural and creative industries in the region today. Arguably the region has seen more significant inventions, from the railways to Lucozade, and from electric light to steam turbines, per head of population than any other part of the United Kingdom (<http://www.100objectsne.co.uk/> <http://www.100placesne.co.uk/>). The region still maintains this level of inventiveness and creativity today. Its cultural and creative legacy is a real wellspring to draw on when seeking to inspire the children and young people of the North East.

This region has traditionally had a strong cultural offer across organisations of all types and sizes including a number of internationally celebrated examples of best practice in the field of children and young people's arts and culture. We have three Arts Council National Portfolio organisations specialising in this work. Seven Stories, the National Centre for Children's Books, Juice Festival the award-winning arts festival curated for, by and with people under 25, and Theatre Hullabaloo, one of the UKs leading specialist organisations in childhood creativity which co-ordinates the TakeOff Festival, England's leading festival of theatre for children and young people, in venues across County Durham each year. In 2017, The Hullaballoon, the National Centre for theatre for young audiences will open in the Tees Valley. In addition, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums leads on co-ordination of children and young people engagement for the Major Partner Museums network nationally, (it also participates in national pilots such as 'My primary School is in a Museum' at Arbeia Roman Fort, part of Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, in South Tyneside) North Tyneside has seen the development of Historic England's Heritage Schools initiative, while Auckland Palace's young people led Heritage Hunters programme was nominated for a national award.

The North East has pioneered several initiatives with young people's engagement at their heart – from the Max Card, a cultural entitlement card for looked after young people and their carers, to a Young people's Charter for Arts and Culture, which arose from the legacy trust programmes in the region developed as part of the Cultural Olympiad of 2012. Libraries collaborate on the Northern Children's Book Festival reaching 15,000 children each year – including in some of our most deprived communities <http://www.northernchildrensbookfestival.org.uk/>. Museums across the region collectively welcomed 1,463,137 children and young people over 2015/16. This region also has the highest percentage of schools of any English region engaging with Arts Council England's (ACE) new Artsmark programme (11%, as against a national average of 6% at the time of writing).

## **The challenge for children and young people in the North East**

However, the North East is also a region with significant social issues. The region lags behind the rest of England on several indicators concerning children and young people (source ACE Cultural education profiles):

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>North East</b>	<b>England</b>
Children living in poverty	24.5%	20.6%
SEN* children in primary education	17.9%	16.6%
SEN* children in secondary education	18.6%	17.8%
Unemployment rate	9%	6.6%
Eligibility for free school meals	21.2%	17%

\*Special Educational Needs

Further, 6.2% of England's Looked After Children (LAC) are in the North East, whilst the North East has only 4.6% of the 0-19 population of England, that is to say the LAC population in the NE is 35% higher than the English average.

The situation was illustrated by the headline story in the Journal, a key regional newspaper, on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2016. 'North East teens' dreams are less ambitious'. A report by the City and Guilds found that young people in our region were the least confident in the country about their futures.

We believe that the cultural sector has a role to play in changing this. Our position is that cultural learning is well placed to develop skills and aspiration, and is a key element in creating lifelong personal resilience, enhancing employability.

We further support the view that access to culture and heritage is a right for all children and young people:

"Every child has the right to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts."

Article 31, UN convention on the Rights of the Child

'We will put in place measures to increase participation in culture, especially among those who are currently excluded from the opportunities that culture has to offer. In particular, we will ensure that children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are inspired by and have new meaningful relationships with culture.'

DCMS Culture white Paper March 2016

Children and young people are themselves a diverse group, something not always recognised in strategies. They vary according to their interests and social/cultural backgrounds. Therefore, there is no one size fits all solution to support their engagement with culture. Rather, the sector needs to come together collaboratively to deliver, develop, and sustain, a variety of approaches and programmes that collectively ensure that all children and young people are able to participate in the cultural life of the region for all the benefits that this engagement brings.

## Principles

To support this call to arms to the cultural sector to deliver on the aspiration of the Case for Culture we have developed a set of principles for the cultural sector (both the arts and heritage) to adopt in their work with children and young people. We believe that the use of these principles will ensure that the North East cultural sector truly harnesses its collective strength to have a positive impact on the lives of children and young people, particularly those from the more marginalised elements of our society.

1. Cultural opportunities for children and young people should always be of the highest quality (<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/quality-metrics/quality-principles>).
2. When developing new work for, by, and with children and young people, their voice shall be given weight. We recommend organisations adopt the North East's own Young People's Charter for Arts and Culture' developed by young people as part of the legacy of the Cultural Olympiad <http://youthfocusne.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/YPCAC-Nov2015.pdf>
3. Focus on engaging disengaged children and young people. Many children and young people are able, and confident either on their own, or with the support of family members, to engage with the offer from the culture and heritage sectors. While the principles of this document apply to them, we call on the sector to collaboratively focus on making a positive difference to those children and young people who are not in such positions and who, whether from personal circumstance or for societal reasons, have not had the opportunity to engage with culture on their own terms, to explore the potential it has for them.
4. Practitioners should always be aware of, and seek to support, the development of skills and confidence in the children and young people they are working with. This could include: indicating more advanced opportunities for children and young people to develop their skills and confidence in a particular area, signposting them onto a different part of the sector, or sharing awareness of career opportunities. Within this, the sector needs to develop a shared understanding of what constitute potential opportunities.
5. Work in partnership across, and beyond, the arts, cultural and heritage sectors. Where appropriate organisations should link to the work of the Local Cultural Education Partnerships (see appendix 2) to meet the locally identified needs of children and young people, and create activity that is rooted in excellent practice and regional and local distinctiveness.

## Pledging support

**We call upon all cultural organisations that work with children and young people in the North East to join our call to arms at the NECP Children and Young People's sub-group pages at:**

<http://www.case4culture.org.uk/necp/necp-sub-groups/children-young-people/>

We further ask that all who sign up pledge to share:

- their performance data, as appropriate, to allow as comprehensive a picture of culture and heritage provision for children and young people as possible;
- information on their forward plans for their engagement with children and young people to support sector wide development;
- their advocacy materials, and act as ambassadors, for children and young people work. This includes using the logo as appropriate, and hyperlinking back to the relevant section of the NECP website as relevant.

## **Metrics**

As part of this strategy, NECP and its partners will monitor metrics drawn from a variety of sources on an annual basis, up to 2030, to quantify the impact of the arts and heritage sectors in working with children and young people. Key metrics already identified are.

- Artsmark school take-up
- Arts award take up
- Creative apprenticeships
- 'Takeover' events

We envisage adding to this as the LCEPs develop, and we create a cross sector understanding of the value of shared data in order to ensure we are truly working to deliver our vision for 2030.

## **Concluding remarks**

We believe that the combined efforts of the culture and heritage sectors have the potential to make real and sustained positive impacts on the lives of our region's children and young people now, and in future generations. We hope that arts and heritage organisations who work with children and young people will sign up to the above principles, and work in partnership with colleagues in their own and other sectors, including in the education sector, to make our vision for 2030 a reality.

## **Appendix 1: Information on consultees**

This document was developed by a small working group from across the cultural sector:

Bill Griffiths (Convenor) – Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums/Culture Bridge North East  
Richard Barber – South Tyneside Council  
Chris Batstone – Juice Festival  
Pat Chapman – Cleveland College for Art and Design  
Teresa Kirby – North East Cultural Partnership  
Emma Surtees - Independent  
Miranda Thain – Theatre Hullabaloo

In addition, the following people commented on earlier drafts:

Christine Chambers – Arts Council England  
Nicola Harrison – Historic England  
Matthew Jarratt – North East Cultural Partnership  
Leon Mexter – Youth Focus North East  
Ros Rigby – North East Cultural Partnership  
Tania Robinson – South Tyneside Council  
Clare Smith – Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums  
Margie Stewart-Piercy – Tees Valley  
Elvie Thompson – Culture Bridge North East  
Iain Watson – Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums

## **Appendix 2: Introduction to the North East Culture Partnership and the Case for Culture**

The North East Culture Partnership (NECP) consists of the 12 local authorities, the region's 5 universities, our colleges, the North East Chamber of Commerce, representatives of the cultural sector from across the north east, Historic England and Arts Council England.

Following consultation with more than 1,000 individuals and organisations, in over 20 sectors representing arts and heritage specialisms, the NECP produced a 15 year strategy in 2015 called: The Case for Culture, with a formal launch at Durham Castle in July 2015 and at the House of Commons in November 2015.

Out of the five aspirations in the Case for Culture, aspiration 2, is dedicated to children and young people:

“Children and Young People - ensuring we continue to innovate and broaden access to culture for children and young people, for all the benefits this brings to future generations.”

### **Appendix 3 Local Cultural Education Partnerships**

Across the country Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs) are being established, with the support of Arts Council England's regional Bridge organisations <https://culturebridgenortheast.org.uk/local-cultural-education-partnerships>. These are to be strategic bodies working to ensure children and young people in their areas benefit from access to excellent culture. They bring together the cultural and education sectors, and also the local authorities, local businesses, and any other bodies with an interest in seeing children and young people gain from cultural activity. The North East is the only region where LCEPs are being formed across every local authority area, further demonstrating that regional commitment to ensuring cultural provision has benefits for every child and young person.

We believe this emerging network will be well placed to implement and enhance the strategy for children and young people's cultural engagement across the North East.

### **Appendix 4: Culture Bridge North East**

Culture Bridge North East (CBNE) is one of a network of 10 Bridge organisations across England. Bridge organisations have been set up by Arts Council England to help them achieve their mission 'great art and culture for everyone'. A vital part of this is making sure that every child and young person has the opportunity to experience the richness of the arts and culture. We help Arts Council England achieve this goal by using our experience and expertise to connect children and young people, schools and communities with art and culture across the North East. CBNE is managed by Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums. We have pledged support to Culture North East with advocacy for, and monitoring of, this strategy, in particular through our role in supporting the LCEPs as they develop.