

**/LEAN**

Lewisham Education  
Arts Network



**A snapshot from the London Borough of Lewisham**

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## **Introduction**

In 2018 it was announced that the area of New Cross and Deptford in the London Borough of Lewisham would be one six of the Mayor of London's first Creative Enterprise Zones (CEZ). Creative Enterprise Zones are designated areas of London where artists and creative businesses can find a permanent and affordable space to work; are supported to start-up and grow; and where local people are helped to learn creative sector skills and find new jobs.

Lewisham Education Arts Network is leading on a creative careers programme for children and young people as part of the New Cross and Deptford CEZ. This programme will include:

- the commissioning of creative careers skills workshops
- creative careers focused events
- signposting creative opportunities taking place both locally and further afield to teachers and those working with young people
- a report from research looking at creative career's perceptions, provisions and gaps in the borough

This report is not a detailed list of every activity run by creative organisations in Lewisham, nor every artform where there are gaps in provisions. Instead it is a snapshot of views held by young people, teachers and career leads and by those working in the creative industries about:

- how the creative industries are perceived
- the role of schools in promoting careers
- work experience and placement opportunities in the creative industries
- creative development opportunities that are led by creative organisations outside of the school setting.

The information in this report is largely taken from interviews and consultation sessions, with supporting evidence from news articles, reports and policy guidance documents. No participant's names or school/venue names are used in this report.

It is hoped this document can be used as the basis for further discussion and potentially feed into the development of new ways of working to support the promotion of careers in the creative industries. Hopefully, the information in the report may also help to shape future programming decisions and fundraising attempts.

## **Methodology**

Research for this report was conducted with three groups:

- Arts and cultural organisations based in Lewisham who are known to provide creative career development opportunities for young people
- Career leads and creative subject teachers in Lewisham based secondary schools (largely concentrating on New Cross and Deptford area)
- Groups of young people already engaged with the arts or cultural activity

Arts/ Cultural organisations on the LEAN Youth Arts Network distribution list were sent a 10-question survey via survey monkey (see appendix A). Unfortunately, response numbers were low with only 3 organisations completing the survey. Interviews were conducted with 5 organisations working in a range of artforms based in the New Cross and Deptford area about their creative careers offer and gaps that they perceived in the sector.

Teaching staff on the LEAN Secondary School's distribution list were also sent a 10-question survey via survey monkey (see appendix B) with 5 responses received. This survey was also promoted in a newsletter that went out to a similar distribution list and promoted on social media. Further interviews took place with 5 careers leads and teaching contacts from secondary schools about their school's careers programme and difficulties/gaps they had found in regards to creative career opportunities.

4 workshops were run with 33 young people already engaged in youth panels, youth boards or youth ambassador roles for arts and cultural organisations in the borough. The workshops took place during their usual sessions and lasted approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes. The sessions were run as an interactive discussion, where no names were recorded and young people were encouraged to be open and honest with their views.

The sessions included:

- A warm-up game followed by an introduction to the session.
- A scale of agreement activity (where young people were asked to position themselves on a scale depending on how much they agreed or disagreed with a statement) with opportunity to discuss their opinions. (appendix C)
- Information was given about the meaning of the terms 'creative industries', 'creative economy' and highlighted key facts about jobs in the creative industries and the launch of coordinated efforts such as the Creative Careers Programme.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Creative Careers Programme is an industry-designed and led initiative to raise awareness of opportunities for work across the creative economy. The Creative Industries Federation, ScreenSkills and Creative & Cultural Skills are the lead delivery partners for the project, and will be working closely with The Careers & Enterprise Company, Speakers for Schools and creative enterprises and individuals across the country to ensure its long-lasting impact.

- A group activity asking the young people to reflect on their experience of creative careers opportunities, and to have their say about what they would do differently, followed by an opportunity to feed back to each other. (appendix D)
- A solo activity asking young people to put in order what key factors influence their choice to either attend or not attend a creative careers event. These were filled in on a form and put in a box. Names were omitted on the form so that young people could fill them in as anonymously as possible. (appendix E)
- Evaluation forms about the session were filled in anonymously and participants were thanked.

All worksheets and activities used in the consultation workshops with young people can be found in the appendices at the end of this report.

Most of the interviews and consultations feeding into this report took place prior to the onset of the covid-19 pandemic. The views and commentary the report contains do not refer to any developments, changes or new learnings that will have come about during this time.

## **Being Creative and The Creative Economy**

*“The term ‘creative industries’ began to be used about twenty years ago to describe a range of activities, some of which are amongst the oldest in history and some of which only came into existence with the advent of digital technology. Although they did not constitute an easily identified industrial ‘sector’ in the way that aerospace, pharmaceuticals or automotive are seen as sectors, one thing all these activities had in common was that they depended on the creative talent of individuals and on the generation of intellectual property.”<sup>2</sup>*

During our consultations with young people the question of what is deemed “creative” and what constitutes a career in the creative industries was explored. Many of the participants who considered themselves as being creative explained that this was because they had taken part in arts performances or had created their own visual arts/literary works. A few stated that they felt that their technical work – creating websites and creating their own games and puzzles highlighted their creativity, whilst others felt *“they probably were creative, but I don’t really know why”*. When asked *“what makes you creative?”* one participant responded saying her mind was creative as she *“saw things in patterns”* and that she enjoyed *“taking lots of different parts and bringing them together into a beautiful whole”*.

The Durham Commission on Creativity and Education Report includes a reference to the many ways that creativity is described, and how the wording used to describe creativity may change depending on the industry sector. *“Creativity, of course, goes by many names. It may be called intuition, enquiry, or expression; for business, it may be described as innovation, invention or entrepreneurship. In all areas of life, from the sciences and humanities to the arts, creativity is seen as the ability to think laterally and come up with imaginative solutions to problems, to work across disciplines or to enjoy constructive play”*.<sup>3</sup>

When we consider what the young participants stated made them creative, it is perhaps unsurprising that the majority saw roles in the creative industries as purely those of the performer, director or those who make things (craft makers, designers, artists, writers).

*“I didn’t realise that someone behind-the-scenes or just working in a theatre or something like that would be seen as a career in a creative industry. Obviously when you really say it out loud the theatre or space is the creative part not necessarily the job, but I wouldn’t have thought of that firstly.” (Young Participant)*

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<sup>2</sup> Newbiggin J – “What is the Creative Economy” - <https://creativeeconomy.britishcouncil.org/guide/what-creative-economy/>

<sup>3</sup> University of Durham & Arts Council England– “Durham Commission on Creativity and Education”, 2019, <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/creativitycommission/DurhamReport.pdf>

*"I am not sure what people mean by the creative industries. You instantly think of performing because that's what you see but never the other roles or people working them. I didn't think of a youth manager in a museum as a job in a creative industry but I guess it is. I think if you heard more about ways that my interests in law and my love of humanities and museums could mix, I would be much more interested in considering a career in a creative industry." (Young Participant)*

As discussions went on it was evident that different views on what could constitute as a career in the creative industries began to resonate with members of the group, with some highlighting family members or contacts that worked in HR and finance departments in creative venues. It is clear however that holding a narrow view of what constitutes as creative can turn young people away from actively pursuing a role in the creative industries.

*"I wouldn't probably get a job in the creative industries. I used to be creative but not so much now so will probably do more of an office role I think." (Young Participant)*

## Perceptions of the Creative Industries

The creative industries are the fastest growing part of the UK economy, with 1 in 8 UK businesses being a creative business. In 2016 there were 622,600 jobs in London's creative industries which is the equivalent to 11.9% of total jobs in the capital.<sup>4</sup> The UK creative industries are developing new jobs faster than any other sector, and when factoring in the wider creative economy (therefore including those working in creative roles but not within a creative industry) the total number of UK jobs is 3.2million - 9.6% of all UK jobs.<sup>5</sup>

However, the common perception of careers in the creative industries are often not nearly as positive as its growth has been. *“Young Londoners are not only aware of the challenges they face, but sadly now expect them as ‘just the way it is’ in the creative industries. It is expected that they would have to work for free for a long time, to build their experience or their portfolio. It was expected that they would be working freelance and face irregular and insecure employment.”*<sup>6</sup>

Many of these views were replicated by the young people we consulted with. The majority felt that that a career in the creative industries was riskier and more difficult to sustain than jobs in other sectors.

*“Working in the creative industries isn’t really stable or secure and you kinda have to find other things to do too.” (Young Participant)*

Many of the participants understood that a significant number of roles in the creative industries are held by self-employed workers (27.8%, compared to 16.8% in the non-creative economy)<sup>7</sup>, however they often felt that this in itself was a difficult career choice and that they had very little access to information about how to make working for yourself a viable option.

*“It’s less financially stable, especially as a performer, because it’s job to job and you never get told anything about being freelance”. (Young Participant)*

*“Being freelance and juggling different contracts is tiring and not secure. You can’t plan forward living like that. It’s hard to get a house or know what will be coming next.” (Young Participant)*

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<sup>4</sup> DCMS Economic Estimates, 2017

<sup>5</sup> The Creative Industries - <https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/uk-creative-overview/facts-and-figures/employment-figures>, June 2019

<sup>6</sup> Walsham M, Partnership for Young London and Roundhouse – *“Self-Made Sector: Working in the Creative Industries”*, July 2019, [https://trustforlondon.fra1.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/Self\\_made\\_sector\\_PlmUv1C.pdf](https://trustforlondon.fra1.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/Self_made_sector_PlmUv1C.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> The Creative Industries Council, 2018 cited - DCMS Economic Estimates, 2017

A lack of understanding about portfolio careers or the possibility of working across various job roles was also expressed during the consultations.

*“There isn’t much information available about working as a contractor, or doing multiple part-time roles or different projects to make one career. It’s always focussed on full-time work in one job or with one company”. (Young Participant)*

*“I think I could be freelance or work multiple jobs but only for a short while or to lead into something bigger. You aren’t introduced to how to be freelance or work in lots of roles. There is more talk about being entrepreneurs but what does that mean practically. Like I know it’s not always a secure choice so what are the good reasons why people choose to do it?” (Young Participant)*

The perception of the creative industries being risky and unattainable was a view that many young participants felt that their parents would mirror.

*“My parents know that I enjoy music but see that as a something to do as a hobby, not a job though.” (Young Participant)*

*“I think most parents would want us to go into something like a lawyer or a doctor or in finance because it’s got more security.” (Young Participant)*

This was specifically raised by the BAME young people who felt their parents would not be supportive of them embarking on a career in the creative industries and that culturally this would not be a likely career route.

*“My parents are Nigerian so they absolutely don’t see it as an option and instead they want me to look at medicine or law. Its cultural. I might do law and have that as a backup and then look at photography, but I wouldn’t be able to do that without having a stable plan B.” (Young Participant)*

*“My black parents would say we don’t work in these roles, you need to be able to provide for and raise a family and need security from your work.” (Young Participant)*

The influence of parents and guardians was also mentioned by both creative and educational organisations as key to how young people make decisions about their career choices. One organisation highlighted that creative projects run with younger people, in primary school and such like, were much more likely to see parents/guardians join in the activity, come to performances or share in the creative experience, than those projects and opportunities run for

older young people. This in turn can make it more difficult to directly reach and engage with parents, and promote the realities around careers in the creative industries.

*Parents and supporters definitely have influence on their child's education and career choices. It is important to give them the skills to have these conversations and somehow support them with knowledge about different career routes. (Education Facilitator)*

The Self-Made Sector report highlights the resilience of young people who are still motivated to *“in the face of numerous challenges and the lack of support usually provided by teachers or parents ... despite knowing the risks involved, pursue a career that they are passionate about and have talent for.”*<sup>8</sup>

The perceived worth of the arts and creative industries was raised in our discussions with young people, schools career leads and arts organisations alike. Many felt that their colleagues, friends and family often downplayed creative subjects as ‘soft’ or ‘easy’ and that they would be ‘brave’ or even ‘crazy’ to embark on a career in a creative industry. It was often stated that those who worked in support roles within the creative industries (i.e. backstage or in production roles in comparison to being a performer) were viewed as having failed in their pursuit of an arts career, rather than these non-performance roles being a career choice in their own right.

*“Lots of people play down the arts as something fun or easy. The dedication, skill, effort and talent required to work in the industry are not promoted so people think it's an easy option. People think that those who work backstage or in other roles are just those that failed at being a performer.” (Young Participant)*

*“I am always given the impression from teachers, friends everyone that creative careers should be seen as a backup plan and there is this assumption that if you aren't world renowned then you aren't really a writer at all.” (Young Participant)*

The decline of performing arts education in schools and ministerial support for the Ebacc qualification has therefore seen a significant drop in the number of young people taking up creative subjects at GCSE and A-Level. The percentage change in GCSE entries from 2010 to 2018 shows a 22% drop in music,

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<sup>8</sup> Walsham M, Partnership for Young London and Roundhouse – *“Self-Made Sector: Working in the Creative Industries”*, July 2019, [https://trustforlondon.fra1.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/Self\\_made\\_sector\\_PImUv1C.pdf](https://trustforlondon.fra1.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/Self_made_sector_PImUv1C.pdf)

34.3% drop in the uptake of media/film/tv studies and 28.8% drop in uptake of drama.<sup>9</sup> Many feel that these changes further support the incorrect perception that the creative industries are unimportant and have little worth in the real world.

The value of creative education is one of the nine key skills and diversity challenges highlighted in the 'Skills, talent and diversity in the creative industries' report. *"While the creative industries are acknowledged as a vital part of the UK's industrial strategy, there are growing concerns about the devaluing and de-prioritisation of creative education. This starts in schools and runs right through to higher education, where there is an increasing emphasis on courses that offer strong economic returns, without recognising wider value of creativity and culture."*<sup>10</sup>

Interviews with arts teachers stated that some of their colleagues were just as likely to think that they were working less or that their subject was 'easy' as the mainstream public. They also highlighted the importance of a 'top-down' approach in schools and that if senior management did not see the worth in the creative subjects and thus tie it into the school's overall aims, it was an uphill climb to encourage students to pursue their creative ambitions.

*"We talk about the need to try and educate parents and pupils around the benefits of the arts and possibility of a career in them [the creative industries] but we are sometimes up against other colleagues. Other teachers see their subject as a priority and think that our arts subjects are an extension of playtime. Now with more arts subjects being cut it just supports their view."* (Teacher)

*"Luckily our senior management really pushes the arts subjects and celebrates their importance now, but previously if there were times that the students need to be off-site it was always scheduled so that our lessons were the ones cancelled and I always thought it was so other teachers and parents wouldn't complain, because maths is more important right?"* (Teacher)

*"There is so much focus on STEM and the Ebacc has affected how schools develop creativity. There needs to be a much more holistic approach to education overall."* (Creative Organisation)

This 'full school' approach to creativity, supported by senior management is a key recommendation of the Durham Commissions on Creativity and Education. *"The Commission recognises that teachers need their practice to be guided and supported by their school's leadership and governance. It is not*

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<sup>9</sup> Source: Cultural Learning Alliance, 2018

<sup>10</sup> Carey H, Florisson R and Giles L- *"Skills, talent and diversity in the creative industries, Evidence synthesis and scoping: summary report"* - The Work Foundation, Lancaster University, Nov 2019, [https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/media/549033/pec-evidence-synthesis-scoping\\_work-foundation-final-1-.pdf](https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/media/549033/pec-evidence-synthesis-scoping_work-foundation-final-1-.pdf)

*enough for a few individual teachers in a school to practice great teaching for creativity within their own classroom. If it is to flourish across the whole school, a voice for creativity is needed.”<sup>11</sup>*

When discussing why perceptions of the creative industries might be skewed, some of the young participants highlighted the focus of teachers, the lack of accessible information, the lack of people in the roles that ‘looked like or had a background like them’ and how the media often supported these skewed views.

*“The media, mainly tv and film always shows creatives as struggling to get by, or giving up everything to go after their passion and instead the doctor, lawyer, finance manager is high-flying and happy. It never shows creative people being settled or making any real money.” (Young Participant)*

*“When you see a black person or woman in a creative industry it’s because they have won an award or at the top of their game, you never hear about those who are just working in a creative field like other people and getting on with it. It makes it seem like to be a black woman in a creative role is the exception and not normally what people achieve.” (Young Participant)*

*“Perhaps there could be a campaign in public on posters and across social media with professional creatives from all backgrounds with phrases like ‘we can’ or ‘it’s possible’ or even ‘I am X and I come from X and I do this job and love it’. These might catch the attention of parents as well as students too and make it feel like there are more options available.” (Young Participant)*

*“There are growing concerns that the opportunities created in this vibrant part of the UK economy [the creative industries] are ‘out of reach’ for many and that in some creative sectors and occupations the profile of the workforce looks dramatically different to the UK population”<sup>12</sup>. Many creative organisations have developed new diversity policies and support from the government and organisations for initiatives such as the Creative Industries Council (CIC) Diversity Charter<sup>13</sup>, are working to shake-up the face of the creative industries, ensuring that they are future-proofed and reflective of the society that they serve.*

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<sup>11</sup> University of Durham & Arts Council England– “Durham Commission on Creativity and Education”, 2019, <https://www.dur.ac.uk/resources/creativitycommission/DurhamReport.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Carey H, Florisson R and Giles L- “Skills, talent and diversity in the creative industries, Evidence synthesis and scoping: summary report” - The Work Foundation, Lancaster University, Nov 2019, [https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/media/549033/pec-evidence-synthesis-scoping\\_work-foundation-final-1-.pdf](https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/media/549033/pec-evidence-synthesis-scoping_work-foundation-final-1-.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Creative Industries Council, <https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/media/533578/creative-industries-council-diversity-charter-final.pdf>

## School

There can be no doubt that schools play an integral role in the shaping of a pupil's future career aspirations; inspirational teachers lighting a fire in their minds, career leads signposting opportunities and helping to mould their future direction, events and talks held in school to introduce them to the world of work and those in it. The role of schools to lead on supporting young people's development into work has been highlighted even more in recent years through the explicit reference of The Gatsby Benchmarks in the Department for Education Careers Strategy (2017)<sup>14</sup> and the new Statutory Guidance for Careers (2018)<sup>15</sup>. The Gatsby Benchmarks are a framework of 8 guidelines that define the best careers provisions in secondary schools and colleges, and which all schools should meet by 2020.

Although many of the best practice ideas within the guidelines may not be new to career leaders in schools, they may be seen as a way to gauge where schools should do more or what else they can do and prioritises the need for a structured careers programme supported by governors, senior management and staff.

Unfortunately, as one teacher commented, the benchmarks specifically state that '*STEM subject teachers should highlight the relevance of STEM subjects for a wide range of career paths*'<sup>16</sup> with no reference to the creative, arts or humanities subjects, therefore further devaluing the importance of these subjects within both educational settings and the careers guidance offer.

*"Want to be a journalist? Study Journalism, we're told. A Lawyer? Pursue Law. Not totally sure? Go into STEM (science, technology engineering and maths) ... and no matter what you do, forget the liberal arts – non-vocational degrees that include natural and social sciences, and the humanities such as history, philosophy and languages."*<sup>17</sup>

The focus on STEM subjects in schools career guidance was specifically highlighted during the young people's consultations. Some felt that they were made to feel that only STEM subjects were of any worth and the rest was just an extra, and that sometimes this was reiterated by the way arts and humanities subject teachers promoted their own courses.

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<sup>14</sup> *Careers Strategy: making the most of everyone's skills and talents*, 2017,

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/664319/Careers\\_strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/664319/Careers_strategy.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> *Careers guidance and access for education and training providers*, 2018

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/748474/181008\\_schools\\_statutory\\_guidance\\_final.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748474/181008_schools_statutory_guidance_final.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Sir Holman J, "*Good Career Guidance*" – Gatsby, 2014 <https://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Ruggari A – <https://www.bbc.com/worklife/article/20190401-why-worthless-humanities-degrees-may-set-you-up-for-life>, 2019

*“When picking subjects [for A-Level] even the humanities and languages seem to be falling off, not even just the arts subjects. The focus is all on STEM not ‘soft’ subjects. It felt like STEM teachers were able to say only do this course if you are good at it, we have such demand and it’s the best choice, whilst humanities and arts teachers were pretty much begging students to take their subjects which made me disappointed. It made it feel like a lesser option and every single teacher [of the creative arts or humanities] used the line that it would be a good fourth option to support our STEM choices, not that their course was good for development in its own right.” (Young Participant)*

Other participants said that they had seen some changes in the way schools valued the arts but that it was not necessarily a consistent approach across the entire school or having that much effect on the careers support provided.

*“I feel that perhaps there has been a changing towards some more of the arts and humanities being seen as useful but that only some teachers see it like this. There has been a move from STEM to STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and mathematics) at my schools, but most of the talks and careers sessions are still mostly around traditional jobs and if there is something creative or someone talking to us from a creative job its only once in a long while or just mentioned and not made a big deal about.” (Young Participant)*

The majority of young people in the consultations either agreed or strongly agreed that the careers advice they had access to was focussed more on traditional job roles rather than those in the creative industries. Some went on to explain that they felt some teachers were not supportive of a career in the creative industries and wanted to divert them to other options.

*“I feel like my teachers know that I want to work in the arts and tell me to have a Plan B which is fine, but it’s like they always focus on the Plan B rather than the Plan A.” (Young Participant)*

*“I’ve been told to look at other options because I can’t be a dancer all my life, but I think I can be a dancer, choreographer, teachers, lecturer and do more than one thing so that I am involved in dance all my life.” (Young Participant)*

It is however, positive to hear that other participants felt that schools were much more flexible, able and willing to offer support to young people whatever their career aspirations and that the young person could engage in their own research and reflect on it with their teachers or career leads.

*“I think that the information you get from schools is different based on your choices. So, for example if you choose to do a drama GCSE then teachers will tell you about drama opportunities and try to help you take it further because they know that’s your interest. But if you pick physics then they will focus on that. I think schools now will help you to look into whatever you are interested in.”*  
(Young Participant)

*“I think schools and their views on careers are much more modern now, but even if they don’t direct me to other creative roles, if I am interested in something then I will seek it out myself and find ways to research it. I don’t rely on what school tells me. I make my own searches and then might take it back to them in a meeting or something if I need advice.”* (Young Participant)

In line with The Gatsby Benchmarks and school’s career programme aims, many schools incorporate opportunities for students to interact with professionals from many careers sectors. This usually takes a variety of forms including school visits to work venues, special skills-based workshops or talks, organising or attending school fairs and inviting guest speakers.

Of the responses from teachers, 60% stated that they had arranged for their students to attend between 1-5 creative industry skills workshops or industry talks and also to attend at least one careers fair (with some focus on the creative industries) in the year. These activities were shown to take place both in school and outside of the school setting (60% of teachers said that their students attended 3-5 careers development opportunities outside of school in the last year, and 80% said that they had held at least 1 careers development opportunity inside their own school setting).

When teachers elaborated on these figures, some said that their students attended workshops or careers fairs run by arts organisations or further education settings, and that much of the activity run inside their own school were classroom workshops tied into the specific arts subject or speakers-in-schools sessions either in classrooms or during specially arranged assemblies.

*“[We have attended activity at] Peckham Levels, National Theatre, Roundhouse and linked to Creative Careers Week.”* (Careers Lead)

*“We send students on a range of different creative workshops offered by the local and London Art and design schools with the intention of them broadening their skills and understanding and giving them the opportunity of working with industry professionals.”*  
(Teacher)

*“[We have visited] Ravensbourne and Goldsmiths Universities. These were not solely career’s fair events but visits which will impact on their choices.”* (Careers Lead)

*“We have had speakers from various industries come in and speak to the students, or run a hands-on activity whilst giving some insight into their career progression.” (Teacher)*

Discussions with Further Education providers highlighted the breadth of different careers recruitment activities that are run both in schools and on-site at the university. These included parental talks, student talks, campus visits, workshops, out-of-school creative projects and specifically developed progression schemes to help more young people be able to access further education. In order to manage their own budget challenges, further education providers need to justify their spend on community participation work and ensure that their efforts feed recruitment for the university. Therefore, much of these creative opportunities take place with students in sixth-form or colleges, with less opportunities proposed for those in lower secondary or primary school.

Young people in our consultations mainly expressed positive views about schools attempts to promote a variety of careers.

*“It’s good to be introduced to different jobs which you might not have thought of before. Being able to try some of it yourself in classrooms is a good way for me to understand if it’s something I might enjoy.” (Young Participant)*

*“Having access to people who have made careers in the arts might help to show young people that it is possible and open them up to other options in the industry.” (Young Participant)*

*“Trips out to workplaces are fun and you get to access some spaces you wouldn’t think you could normally. I would love for there to be more visits to spaces that aren’t just offices or have a chance to work in the industry hands-on for like half a day to see what it’s really like.” (Young Participant)*

It was mentioned in multiple consultations that although hearing from speakers in schools was interesting, it sometimes left young people feeling no further along in their career progression or querying how relatable the speaker’s story was to the majority of workers in a creative career.

*“It’s fine having people talk to us about roles but when they walk out the door what then? It would be better if there were more actual opportunities that they can provide or direct us to, or even just advice of what we can really do next, because we get excited and then find that there isn’t an open door for us.” (Young Participant)*

*“I haven’t seen anyone who is local, you know that looks and sounds like me coming to talk to us about a creative job. Maybe they are harder to find, or not signed up on the list or something, but I think maybe I would relate more if their story felt more like mine and I could feed that back to my parents.” (Young Participant)*

*“I think meeting professionals is good and it can help to inspire you to look further at something. I feel that it would be worthwhile seeing more of the people who aren’t like the CEO or the top managers but just someone working day to day in that field and who can honestly explain what it’s like to kick-start a career in the creative industries. I want to hear a bit more from the 95% of people working the creative industries not just the top 5% who have been doing it years.” (Young Participant)*

The need for more interaction with creative professionals backed up by actual opportunities was supported by teachers/ career leads.

*"[There is a gap in] professional creatives that come into schools to discuss future opportunities with students. Offers of work experience is really lacking." (Careers Lead)*

*"Both at school and outside of school we are good at getting people trained but not so good at positioning them to find work in the creative sector." (Careers Lead)*

Both careers lead's and young people stated that the quality of the speaker/workshop leader and how the sessions were run were integral to keeping students engaged, excited and successfully promoting a career in the creative industries. Teachers highlighted that some of the best creative careers sessions they had taken students to were those:

*"Where the speaker really knows their field and knows how to work with young people." (Teacher)*

*"Speaking with further education students (at Goldsmiths) where they could hear first-hand about the course, why they picked it and what they wanted to do next." (Career's Lead)*

When teachers/career leads were asked "which (if any) of the creative careers events that you have attended were less successful and why do you think this might be?" responses included:

*"those that have talks which are longer than the age span of the group." (Teacher)*

*"those that had no interactive element and who didn't have a clear focus to the session." (Teacher)*

*"students have commented that some speakers are too focussed on talking about themselves and not the industry or skills needed." (Careers Lead)*

Similarly, young people raised the point that in many ways workshop leaders and speakers were acting as an advocate for their artform or job role and that if they didn't show passion for their work then it may turn-off young people from considering a career in the industry.

*“If it’s a creative job, then I want to see it talked about creatively.” (Young Participant)*

*“Some of the talks are boring, I haven’t had any talks from someone in a creative job, but I have had to sit through others. It would be good if workshop leaders could explain the skills they use in their job and where it might work somewhere else too or else, I just switch off.” (Young Participant)*

When teachers were asked “what gaps do you see in creative careers opportunities for young people you work with?” multiple comments discussed a lack of knowledge or understanding about the range of opportunities in the creative industries and the realities of working in these fields.

*“[There is a] lack of understanding in our school of the options available – the breadth of university courses in creative fields.” (Teacher)*

*“[There is a gap in] effective and age appropriate activities to understand the reality and skills needed in business and self-employment and range of creative careers.” (Careers Lead)*

Young people also emphasised that they felt that they were not accessing enough information about the range of careers that might be connected to an artform or skill-set, and that “non-creative” support roles in the creative industries were never highlighted as an option.

*“I don’t feel teachers drive young people to other roles within the creative industries that might suit them. They know that being a performer is competitive but perhaps they don’t know what the other roles that people can do connected to that artform.” (Young Participant)*

*“You never hear about the different roles that might use the same creative skills and might suit you better. You also never hear about how non-creative courses can still be useful in a creative setting. If you like say maths and drama it would be good to talk about being a finance person in a theatre, rather than in a finance role in a big office.” (Young Participant)*

*“I think a good thing would be for career advisers and teachers to know about other roles that have the same skills so the kids can look at having a plan B. So, like I want to go into football and be a footballer, but I know I might not make it though and I don’t know about any other roles that use football skills or sports related thinking. So, I might choose a plan B I don’t really like, or not have a plan B at all and just give up and end up not caring.” (Young Participant)*

The importance of building knowledge around the breadth of careers in the creative industries is more prevalent when we acknowledge that *“there is no shortage of performers, there are shortages in the associated roles. Raising awareness of other careers in the creative and cultural sector would help to boost a young person’s employment prospects while also addressing future skills needs.”*<sup>18</sup>

In the ‘Skills Needs Assessment for the Creative and Cultural Sector’ report, one arts practitioner highlighted her concerns about the creative career guidance taking place in some schools and more specifically the lack of focus on business-orientated vocations which may appeal to a more diverse range of young people.

*“I don’t want to put too much pressure on schools because they’ve got enough problems of their own, but I think career advice can be woefully uninformed about the creative industries. The obvious thing is, ‘Oh, you could be an actor. Oh, you could be a dancer. Oh, you could be an artist.’ Well, that’s fine, but what about being a producer? What about being an administrator in the arts? What about being a gallery assistant or a programmer or a curator? I could go on. Just looking at television, you see presenters, you don’t see the hundreds of people that go into putting that programme together in the control room, in the finance office. They see the creative industries as these wonderful front-of-house performers but it’s like an iceberg, isn’t it? ... I definitely don’t think it comes up on careers guidance at schools or probably even universities to think how you could apply your organisational skills to the sector.”* — (Scoping Interview, Employer, Dance)<sup>19</sup>

Speaking with career leads it highlighted just how much pressure everyone is under to support young people’s career aspirations within their current programmes and how information about careers in the creative industries and the routes to these careers were perhaps harder to come by than in other sectors.

*“More young people are coming to me with interest in creative fields and there is a pressure to understand the sector better. We are never going to know every job available in any field, but it is often easier to provide direction for the more traditional job roles because we are provided with the information and we can access opportunities connected to those roles easier for our students.”* (Careers Lead)

*“With certain interests you know that having a degree in X is useful and work experience with companies like Y is helpful. Many people who work in a creative career have lots of different qualifications and past experiences, so sometimes it feels that we can’t offer the same clarity to students as we would with other roles. Also, experience is often looked for in creative careers (sometimes above qualifications) but there is limited creative offers coming into the schools or work experience options in these fields.”* (Careers Lead)

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<sup>18</sup>Bowes L, Higton J et al. - *“Skills Needs Assessment for the Creative and Cultural sector – A current and future outlook”*, 2018, <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/SkillsNeedsAssessment.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Bowes L, Higton J et al. - *“Skills Needs Assessment for the Creative and Cultural sector – A current and future outlook”*, 2018, <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/SkillsNeedsAssessment.pdf>

*“There is an oversubscription on vocational college and university courses as they are perceived to have a job stickered to them. The creative and humanities courses are valuable across so many career sectors but it’s not a clear route and you can’t always see the end goal.” (Careers Lead)*

Young participants also highlighted that a lack of creative careers literature, clear information and opportunities, may be making it more difficult for teachers and career leads to support their career aspirations.

*“I am confused about my next steps and whether certain courses will be accepted at university. My teachers are looking into it but it’s all really confusing. I am having to choose between my passion for performing arts and languages at college, I think I would prefer the arts course but need to first be sure that its right.” (Young Participant)*

*“I kinda feel like if you say you want to work in something creative then they just fob you off or maybe just can’t help in the same way they would other jobs. For everything else there are the usual routes and literature and workshops and events you can go, but for a creative career I feel you just need to source all the information yourself and I don’t really know where to look and they probably don’t either.” (Young Participant)*

*“If I don’t know about the different roles in theatre how do I know how to research it?” (Young Participant)*

With the growth in the creative industries and its positive effect on the UK economy, as well as the launch of initiatives like the Creative Careers Programme<sup>20</sup> and the Discover Creative Careers<sup>21</sup> website, hopefully resources will be more readily accessible and shine a light on the variety of roles within the sector. *“Having a single point of entry for young people to explore the jobs available - many of which they may never have heard of - is a crucial first step in securing the skills pipeline.”* Seetha Kumar, ScreenSkills CE <sup>22</sup>

Introducing young people to the roles available in the creative industries and encouraging them to aspire to have a career in the sector is essential to ensure a pipeline of talent with appropriate skills continues. As highlighted in the consultations and interviews, increased opportunities to meet with creative professionals, and experience work alongside them, would help to support this. Some reports have highlighted that *“despite widespread reforms to different parts of the UK skills system – including to careers education, apprenticeships and technical education – there are concerns that these are*

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/publications/creative-careers-programme>

<sup>21</sup> <https://discovercreative.careers/#/>

<sup>22</sup> Kumar S - <https://www.screenskills.com/insight/news/discover-creative-careers-website-launched/>, 2019

*proving challenging to implement in parts of the creative industries. In particular, those working in the sector suggest they aren't sufficiently aligned to industry needs ... and are failing to create clear "future-proofed" learning pathways to support entry and progression within the sector."*<sup>23</sup>

Better links between creative businesses and individuals, schools, colleges and higher education providers may help to make sure that creative courses and careers information is more fitting for the needs of the sector in the future and support recruitment drives for careers in the creative industries.

*"If we want to develop the skills needed for our sector, why not work with schools? Why not work with colleges and universities, say, 'Look, this is what we want to do. We want to really make sure that they are aware of all the range of jobs and things that happen within our industry. How can we do it together?' There's that word again, the collaboration, but this time across two different sectors. So, you've got the arts and the education sector really working together." — (Follow-Up Interview, Sole Trader, Theatre)*<sup>24</sup>

Creative organisations and education institutions that we interviewed agreed that more collaboration between education venues and creative organisations was key, and also highlighted the need for those who are involved in business start-ups and new key sectors like Createch to work in a more joined-up method. It was felt that there were opportunities to develop the creative skills of young people, but that there may need to be more support from businesses and start-ups to understand the business skills required for a creative career.

*"Businesses are looking to diversify their workforce so more grassroot working with schools and universities is key. But I am not sure businesses are ready or set-up for that yet." (Careers Lead)*

*"More support is needed from businesses to inform young people about the creative industries. To really help [young people] understand the culture of business start-ups, a project facilitator might not be the right person to do that." (Creative Organisation)*

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<sup>23</sup> Carey H, Florisson R and Giles L- *"Skills, talent and diversity in the creative industries, Evidence synthesis and scoping: summary report"* - The Work Foundation, Lancaster University, Nov 2019, [https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/media/549033/pec-evidence-synthesis-scoping\\_work-foundation-final-1-.pdf](https://www.thecreativeindustries.co.uk/media/549033/pec-evidence-synthesis-scoping_work-foundation-final-1-.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> Bowes L, Higton J et al. - *"Skills Needs Assessment for the Creative and Cultural sector – A current and future outlook"*, 2018, <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/SkillsNeedsAssessment.pdf>

## Work Experience and the Creative Careers Sector

The majority of young people who participated in our consultations were of secondary school age with some making their GCSE or A-Level choices. Similarly, teachers and career leads from secondary schools were interviewed for this report and therefore it is unsurprising that work experience was a subject which came up in every discussion. All Key Stage 4 students in Lewisham secondary schools take part in work experience lasting 1 -2 weeks. These placements are sometimes arranged by the young person themselves, or they are encouraged to find support from the school's careers leads. Lewisham Education Business Partnership also provides support to school careers leads and can provide them with a list of local business contacts offering work experience opportunities.

The subject of work experience revealed some feelings of anxiety and stress for both young people and teacher/career leads, with many explaining that there was a lot of pressure to try and find a placement in the creative industries.

*“Trying to arrange work experience is extremely stressful for teachers and pupils alike. Trying to juggle an entire year group needing to find placements all at the same time and needing your guidance and support is difficult. For pupils wanting to experience work in a creative field the options are limited especially within the borough or nearby, and they end up looking for second or third choices. I sometimes fail to see the point of work experience especially if we send people to the same sectors constantly and their first choice in a creative field feels more unattainable than ever.” (Careers Lead)*

*“I really wanted to do work experience with links to technical theatre production but the places I applied to all said that they only offer work experience to the groups they already work with and I know my teacher tried to ring around too but in the end I just did my week working in a nursery because working with kids was my second choice.” (Young Participant)*

Careers leads stated that in many cases they would end up asking their own personal contacts to support students with their work experience, but with limited links, especially in certain fields, they felt that their only option was to direct young people to a different type of organisation.

*“I have definitely called in favours and used my own personal links to try and get work experience in creative roles, and asking round other teachers too. We don't have access in the borough to many big creative organisations and lots of the big theatres or venues in other boroughs either don't offer work experience or prioritise students from within the borough so we have limited options here.” (Careers Lead)*

*“There is always a number of students wanting work experience in creative industries and once you have contacted the usual links there isn’t much left. Fashion, photography and branding design is becoming more and more popular in my school but fashion houses won’t take work experience and even if they did it would inundate them. Working in a shop might give some insight to fashion but only if they show them that side. It would be great for students to see how small fashion businesses and designers work – even if it was just for a day or two – so they understand a bit more of the business running and the design process.” (Careers Lead)*

Creative organisations are often called on to not only provide work experience, but to feed into other career development opportunities. A consultation with industry champions run by the Policy & Evidence Centre stated that *“ though all panellists agreed that work experience was important, they expressed concern about the number of different ways in which businesses were being asked to support education initiatives - including school trips, T-Level experience, apprenticeships and university work placements”*.<sup>25</sup>

The sheer number of requests for work experience and the quality of the experience offered were points raised regularly in our interviews, with arts organisations specifically highlighting feeling responsible for making the experience worthwhile, honest, yet interesting and inspiring. Wanting to ensure a useful work experience; not just keeping students busy, but showing them how the company works and introducing them to new things, can in itself be a reason why creative industries may be reluctant to take on student placements. Planning and delivering these experiences are time-consuming and often requires buy-in from colleagues who are also busy. In the ‘Skills Needs Assessment for the Creative and Cultural Sector’ report *“approximately one third of respondents report that they would be unable to provide an apprentice with the necessary level of support because of a lack of time, resource and capacity.”* Some respondents also said a *“a lack of familiarity with the process or requirements are barriers to taking on an apprentice.”*<sup>26</sup> This report was specifically discussing student apprenticeships but it is interesting that many of these same points were replicated in our discussions about work experience for younger students.

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<sup>25</sup> Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre - *“Insight from our Industry Champions; The value of Creative Higher and Further Education”*, 2019  
<https://pec.ac.uk/assets/publications/PEC-Industry-Champions-Insights-Value-of-Creative-Higher-and-Further-Education.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Bowes L, Higton J et al. - *“Skills Needs Assessment for the Creative and Cultural sector – A current and future outlook”*, 2018,  
<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/SkillsNeedsAssessment.pdf>

*“We get so many emails asking for work experience and it’s hard enough responding to them all. We now only offer work experience to young people already engaged in our classes but even then, we are not able to take everyone. To get them to see more of the business than just what I do, it means other people also taking time out of their workload and we are a small team. It’s a big ask on organisations when we are already stretched and with lots of us working part-time its sometimes a logistical nightmare too, but if you offer a placement you want it to be a good one.” (Creative Organisation)*

The importance of quality work experiences was also raised by young people and career leads.

*“I did work experience and honestly it felt like they had forgotten I was coming and everything was just an add-on. I understand they were busy and everyone had their own work but I wasn’t really involved in any of that, I did lots of tidying things away and sticking envelope tasks without even being introduced to what it was. I definitely didn’t get much insight into how the place worked or what the different jobs were. I think I would have got more out of just spending an hour chatting with people.” (Young Participant)*

*“My concern is that there is a view that a badly run work experience is better than no work experience, and that just being out of school, in a work setting is positive. I agree that it can boost some students confidence and they are encouraged to be a bit more independent and out of their comfort zone, but a bad experience with nothing interesting to do and no time spent learning about why they are doing something, might just give a skewed view of the industry and direct them towards other things. We all know that no job is always exciting and it wouldn’t be right to show it as such, but just feeling that what they are being asked to do is important and being allocated some time to talk with staff about their career route could make the world of difference.” (Careers Lead)*

When discussing why there may be a lack of work experience opportunities in the creative industries locally, organisations and careers leads alike commented on the demands on staff time in these industries, flexible working patterns, the size of the organisations and an understanding of the requirements or needs to support a work experience placement.

*“Many of those working in the creative industries are small one-person organisations, or working freelance or part time. To ask for someone to give up working to support a student for one or two weeks is massive when they are the only person who works full time. Also, we know we aren’t the only school asking and that’s lots of schools run work experience at similar times, so if they took on one student from four schools that’s a month of not completing their own work. We need to look at how we can be more flexible and work with creatives to make better experiences for everyone.” (Careers Lead)*

*“If I was a small organisation, I probably wouldn’t take on a student either, to try and plan and manage their time and then have the added extra of thinking about safeguarding because they are kids and making sure you are doing the right thing. I don’t know how much support they can get to help with this. Maybe work experience, the way it is arranged now isn’t made to work with smaller organisations.” (Teacher)*

*“I would love to be able to factor in some time to really plan a work experience programme that can be rolled out easily every time and is supported from management so that everyone buys into it because it is important for our industry. I know bigger organisations do this and make it clear how to apply etc. and that would also make sure that the students who were contacting us wanted this type of experiences. I feel it would be really useful to understand what schools actually require from work experience, what they hope organisations will be able to support or if there are any specific requirements that we need to fulfil. Also knowing where to get support on best practice and what students of this age can/can’t do.” (Creative Organisation)*

One creative organisation (based outside of Lewisham) that we spoke to, explained that they routinely offer work experience to students at nearby university and it is written into their wider organisational strategy. Knowing that delivering work experience was part of the organisations wider plans allowed the coordinator to position a young person with different staff members who had already factored it into their workload. This also meant the coordinator could spend more time looking at the young persons CV and creating a work experience that was more bespoke and based on their needs.

Some ideas and suggestions were raised during the discussions as to how work experience in the creative industries may work better for students, teachers and organisations alike. One idea that we would like to pursue is to try and bring together teachers/career leads and creative organisations/ individuals to openly discuss the difficulties and limitations of work experience in the area and whether there can be more flexibility built in to ensure more students are able to engage with the creative sector.

Some of the recommendations from young people included:

*“I would be keen to have a set time during any work experience where all the team come together, maybe over lunch and you get the chance to ask them questions and have each role explained a bit. The student would need to know in advance so they come prepared with questions and thoughts but I think it would help me understand how people got to where they are now.” (Young Person)*

*“Maybe an organisation could take on more students in you worked together with other people on work experience, like a team. That way you have support from other people too and we can take on more responsibility because there a more people available to help.”  
(Young Person)*

*“If we had work experience not in one office like its usual, but say 4 or 5 of us all have an interest in music, we could be set a work experience task by an organisation and have professionals visit and work with us from different organisations or different departments each day and we have to share back how we worked as a team and what we understand about the sector at the end of the week. That way we would understand a bit more how like the sound technician works with the producer, who works with the artist and be introduced to more roles in the music business and how they fit together in the real world.” (Young Person)*

*“The best work experience I think would be where you work with different team members and see more of the entire organisation, and where you feel like the work you are being asked to do is important to what they are doing right now.”*  
(Young Person)

Organisations and teachers/career leads echoed many of these points.

*“If there was more flexibility as to when schools could do their work experience, we would be able to give students more important tasks or more responsibility. When we have our busy planning periods it would be great to let schools know that we have capacity to take on more students at that time and that they could feed into the development of our marketing materials or costume sorting or something which is more useful. Unfortunately, lots of the times when we are asked to take on a student is during our busy times for delivery and then we usually don’t have the capacity to do anything very interesting.”* (Creative Organisation)

*“We would consider taking on work experience placements or an internship but would prefer to share the role with another organisation, or feed into a work experience programme where it takes up less of our capacity.”* (Creative Organisation)

*“Can the responsibility of arriving on time and being ready to work be found in a more flexible way than work experience as we understand it?”* (Careers Lead)

*“I would definitely be interested to look at ways we can work better with organisations and creatives to create work experience programmes that support these artforms. Is there a way of linking up work experience for more than one student so they work as an entrepreneurial team alongside mentors and industry professionals? This might be less of an ask on professionals as they feed into certain sections and not others, it might help students to really show off their talents to future employers and perhaps whatever is created could be sold/shared to use as marketing for the companies involved – like creating something that might give something small back to the company so they see work experience as worthwhile.”*  
(Careers Lead)

*“We need to find ways to spread work experience across more than one place or person so that students get to understand how small businesses, start-ups and freelancers also work and make a career in the creative industry. Why this might be a life choice not just a back-up option. If many creatives work in this way, it is important students see more than just the full-time office environment. We need to look at how it can all be more flexible to help take the pressure off all of us to deliver something in a way that doesn’t always fit.”* (Careers Lead)

## Out of School Training, Workshops and Development Opportunities

Lewisham is home to many participatory arts organisations running opportunities for children and young people to practice creative skills and develop their knowledge of roles in the creative industries. Some will run holiday classes, leadership and producing schemes, training opportunities, skills workshops and more. During Lewisham Live Festival 2019 alone, 14 industry skills workshops were organised by 3 partner organisations and in many cases, this is a small amount of their offering during the year.

Some projects run by local organisations are a resounding success; with good numbers taking part, good feedback and participants going on to embark on further creative training or job roles. With many programmes boasting training opportunities by leading industry professionals, it is disappointing however, that some opportunities were left with few or no participants and a high rate of drop-offs. There are any number of reasons for why this might be: current trends; marketing methods; programming choices; venue options; how an organisation is viewed; the weather; the price; lead-in times; timetable clashes with other things in the community or in the media; the current social climate or feeling in an area – the list goes on and on, and the effort to recruit young people can be an arduous task.

We asked some arts organisations how they recruit the young people that attend their creative development opportunities:

*“We work mostly with schools – so it will be an entire school class, or a community group visit. It means that we have good numbers as it is essentially a school trip but where we have open houses, we don’t get many young people just turning up. I think a gap in our provisions is things where young people without a link to a group or school can join in.”*

*(Creative Organisation)*

*“We try to build long-term relationships with participants as it makes for confident, capable practitioners.”*

*(Creative Organisation)*

*“We have partnered with youth clubs or other groups, put flyers in schools and book bags, send out e-flyers to the contacts we have, run taster sessions in community centres and use social media of course.”* *(Creative Organisation)*

*“We have built up a network of young people that we continuously connect with and provide opportunities and support for. Offering a workshop is fine, but keeping up contact and providing follow-up means that these young people feel invested in. If one of my girls hasn’t turned up for something that they said they would come to, I will call them and check-in and find out what’s going on. We promote a bit on Instagram and list events on our website but we never really need to recruit much because our contacts tell their friends and they want to be involved too.” (Creative Organisation)*

*“We might contact schools, we run events and we build up a membership of young people. We go out into the community, visit youth centres, church groups, and I spread the word wherever I go. When people see the contacts we have or the organisations we work with they spread the word too.” (Creative Organisation)*

When we asked about what difficulties creative organisations come up against when recruiting or running these activities for young people, we were told:

*“I think it is important to make it accessible so we make lots of these events free, but when doing that, you need to always remember that a large number of sign-ups will get to the day and not come. They haven’t made any investment so it’s easy to just not turn up.” (Creative Organisation)*

*“Not having a venue or being known in an area is a difficulty. For example, here [in Woolwich] we have a venue and a long history so recruiting in this area is pretty easy. Lots of parents or cousins or friends remember us always being here, so they know to direct their young people to us. [In Lewisham] it is different, although we have worked there for year’s we don’t have a base, and we have more competition. We work in partnership with youth services in Lewisham but there has still been very little uptake on our new dance courses.” (Creative Organisation)*

In our consultations with young people, we discussed where they look for opportunities, what difficulties they found engaging with events and what factors are most important when picking what opportunities they will go to. In every consultation the young people said that they wouldn’t always know where to access information about the opportunities being run in the area, but that perhaps they needed to make more effort to search them out.

*“I think if you want to find opportunities, they are available but you need to search for them. If you like theatre, look at all the theatres websites all the time. Or if you want music then find out what sort of organisations are working in that style and follow them on social media and sign up to their information. We use social media for friends but don’t follow companies so even if they do post about it, we won’t see it – we need to be proactive too.” (Young Participant)*

*“I think opportunities need to be promoted more broadly and just out in the community like Sainsbury’s noticeboards and places young people go to like youth centres and gyms and food places, rather than just online or in one venue. It’s easy to flick past something online or on social media when there is so much going on there all the time.” (Young Participant)*

*“Start with schools, that way teachers can also bring these opportunities to our attention and if they say it will be useful for us, we might pay more attention.” (Young Participant)*

*“I wouldn’t really know where to access information about the creative industries or what opportunities or events were available near me. There isn’t like one listing calendar for this sort of thing so I guess it means searching around.” (Young Participant)*

*“I don’t think a lot of projects are that well promoted. My mum knew of a company and had done some work with them and that’s why I heard about the opportunity, but I would never have known if she wasn’t involved with them.” (Young Participant)*

Some of the organisations we spoke to also agreed that links into schools would help them to promote the events or opportunities they were running, but stated that getting into schools or having things promoted via schools was often difficult.

*“It would be helpful to just get into an assembly or run a bit of a workshop with students to show what we do. We are relatively new but are growing fast. I want to make sure Lewisham schools and kids are involved because that’s where I am from.” (Creative Organisation)*

*“We don’t bother with much print marketing now because it’s costs money to get them designed and printed and they don’t bring in any increase on sign-ups. We are looking at going back to how we have worked in the past, running workshops in schools and building those links. That way young people are exposed to our work and then we might look at running summer schools or other events for them in our venue, when they are already interested.” (Creative Organisation)*

In our discussions, teachers explained that they are often bombarded with lots of free or discounted opportunities from both organisations and individuals wanting to run activity with their students, and explained why they often don’t take up the offer.

*“We get people emailing with ideas for a workshop or information about something they are running pretty much constantly. I try to read as many as I can but for me to even consider them it needs to be something we aren’t already getting elsewhere and at a time when it can fit into the curriculum. It takes a lot of time to arrange a school trip for students, or to arrange for someone to come in and lead a lesson. We need to know about opportunities many months in advance and a lot of what we receive doesn’t have that lead-in time. I do tell students about the odd thing I find but only if I know the organisation well enough to think it will be high-quality.” (Teacher)*

*“It would be brilliant if there was a central place online where teachers and career advisers could search what’s going on in the creative industry sector locally, that we could filter down by date or by artform. It would mean when there is budget available or a gap that teachers or students mention, we could actively look for things we think would be useful, rather than just ignoring most things that are emailed because it’s too much to sieve through. Right now, I mainly stick with programmes run by a few organisations like universities or certain arts organisations because it is easier to manage and get approvals for.” (Careers Lead)*

To try and further understand the factors that are most important to young people and teaching staff when choosing to attend a careers development opportunity, we asked them to put some key factors in order of importance, and to add any of their own factors as well.

Young participants stated the *'content of the event'* was the most important factor in their decision to attend, with 39% of all responses placing this as their first choice.

The second, third and fourth most important factors were stated as *'the location'*, *'the time of day/ day of the week it takes place'* and *'uniqueness of the offer'*. Interestingly, the majority of the young people stated that *'friends/peers' recommendation'* and *'teachers/career adviser's recommendations'* were less important to them, placing these in sixth and eighth position relatively.

Participants were also given space to list their own influencing factors, some of which included:

*"Opportunities after the event – work experience, jobs or follow up events"*

*"How much I think it can help in the future."*

*"What I think of the company who are running the event"*

*"What level the event is – do you need experience/ability or is it for my age?"*

*"Is it running just for one day or over a longer duration where I can learn more?"*

*"What my family think."*

Similarly, teachers/career leaders were asked what key factors influence their choice to take up a creative career development opportunity run by a creative organisation.

The majority said that the most important factor was the *overall content of the event* (100% agreed), followed by *the location, time of day* and the *price* to take part (60% agreement for each). The *marketing materials* provided and whether an event had a *high-profile speaker/workshop leader* were both deemed unimportant and received no votes.

Teachers/Career Leads also stated that when looking for creative career's opportunities for young people they primarily heard about them through recommendations or word of mouth, but that social media sites (specifically Facebook and Twitter) were useful too. 40% of respondents said that they sometimes used listing sites such as the *Discover Creative Careers* website<sup>27</sup> to look for opportunities, but that printed flyers and posters were not a key

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<sup>27</sup> [www.discovercreative.careers](http://www.discovercreative.careers)

source of promotion for them. Teachers said that advice from the Lewisham Education Business Partnership, from a Schools Enterprise Adviser or any listings/information on the Lewisham Council website were not something that helped them to find career development opportunities for their students at the moment, however it must be understood that this is not a key part of these organisations connection with schools.

In the consultations with young people we asked them to put themselves in the place of an event programmer and let us know what creative development opportunities or activity they would commission, and what should be important considerations in an event for young people. Some of their ideas included:

*“An event with a bit of everything. DJ’s and live music and performance, food and drink, chill-out spots and networking opportunities, hands-on workshops and Q&A’s with industry professionals and stalls to buy merchandise. Enough that people can feel like they are having a good time and not being pressed to think about it as work or a school event.” (Young Participant)*

*“Opportunity to try and see a demonstration, try something ourselves and then if interested be linked up to talk with someone about future training opportunities and work experience options etc.” (Young Participant)*

*“More workshops on life skills, first aid, starting a business, becoming self-employed, writing a budget, finding customers and marketing your skills.” (Young Participant)*

*“Live workshops with lots of hands-on activity. Rather than just stalls round the edge making it feel relaxed and chilled, with opportunity to try things out and have a space where we can chat and network with the professionals but in a relaxed way.” (Young Participant)*

*“An event to meet people that have jobs that are not recognised within a certain industry. Like the real behind-the-scenes theatre.” (Young Participant)*

*“Smaller groups in workshops makes it more comfortable for people to ask a question or to ask for help. Or if there is more than one workshops leader so an assistant can help to support some people.” (Young Participant)*

*“Something fun and chill, not a big hall with loads of people but no interaction.” (Young Participant)*

*“More youth led or youth programmed events – if we have helped run the event, we would help to promote it and excite others about it.” (Young Participant)*

*“Practical advice and help and opportunities.” (Young Participant)*

*“Opportunities where we can volunteer in the creative industries. A time-swap where we volunteer and get classes or workshops for free.”  
(Young Participant)*

*“Workshops that teach a new dance style each week, because I feel like lots of people want to try something new but don’t have the confidence.” (Young Participant)*

*“More awareness of careers in creative tech, Music production, design, photoshop, digital software, coding etc.” (Young Participant)*

*“ I think the title of the event needs to be something that fits with everyone and that everyone can relate to, and tap into current trends. If possible, link in with someone who has influence on social media and make it feel fun like using memes and videos to promote how this event is different to others.”  
(Young Participant)*

When young people specifically picked out a type of workshop or skill they would like to develop they listed:

- Help with starting a business
- DJ skills
- Dance styles from different countries and different styles
- Talent management
- Cooking with unusual ingredients, or cooking food from different cultures
- Cake decorating and sugar craft
- Spoken word and writing rap lyrics
- Theatre production and backstage roles
- How to use industry sound equipment
- Fashion design & pattern making
- Fashion PR, modelling and PR
- How to build your own podcast
- Coding, animation and games design

In discussions about perceived gaps in opportunities in the borough, some teachers and education leads repeated the workshop elements that young people themselves had commented on.

*“Specialisms in art are falling behind and schools just don’t have the capacity or equipment to introduce young people to all these different artforms. I think getting professionals in to run workshops or sending young people to try them out can help to support a revival of certain specialisms. I do look out for opportunities that are a bit different or fit a specialism and forward these to my colleagues.” (Teacher)*

*“Looking at how technology is being used in creative artforms is important to open up the industries to more people who may not see themselves as creative. It is also where lots of the job opportunities are being found.” (Careers Lead)*

*“We need more opportunities for young people to work with industry standard equipment and software.” (Teacher)*

In addition, some mentioned that education providers, creative organisations and businesses all need to promote the transferable skills that are gained through creative activity more, and look for ways that young people can make use of the tools they already have to support their career development. One example used was a smartphone, which most young people will have access to, can be used in more creative ways to develop visual art, film, theatre, music and creative tech skills, and that more creative opportunities on this element might be beneficial.

The link between technology and the creative industries, or Createch as it is known, is the area of the creative industries that is seeing the largest job increase. Creative roles such as architecture and brand design regularly look for potential candidates to have experience of digital programming, and many creative roles are utilising computer programmes, coding and specialist technical equipment to support their work. In the past ten years there has been changes to the school’s curriculum for ICT and policy around skills training, but it is often felt that development around Createch is still lagging.

In 2011, NESTA argued in their report ‘Next Gen’ that *“the curriculum in England’s schools needed to be overhauled so that the computing and artistic skills that are vital to high-tech creative industries are given the impetus they need. In 2012, Michael Gove (and his adviser, Dominic Cummings) accepted our recommendation to reform the ICT curriculum to include coding, and in 2014 the curriculum changed. But our emphasis on the combined importance of creativity and coding was ignored.”*<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Bakhshi H and Livingstone I, *“We need a creative EdTech Revolution in the COVID-19 lockdown”*, 2020 <https://pec.ac.uk/blog/we-need-a-creative-edtech-revolution-in-the-covid-19-lockdown>, cited Livingstone I and Hope A, *“Next Gen”*, 2011, [https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/next\\_gen\\_wv.pdf](https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/next_gen_wv.pdf)

Similarly, with the arrival of T-Levels being developed in England *“as a technical equivalent to A-Levels, there is a Creative T-Level and a Digital T-Level. Research suggests that not only should digital skills be embedded in many creative courses, but that course designers should consider how the two may have, for some roles, become inextricable from one another.”*<sup>29</sup>

With more creative roles requiring specific technical knowledge, it is important that education centres are not only aware of changes in the equipment/software being used, but that young people are somehow provided access to try them out. This is just one more argument for closer working and collaboration between the creative industries and the educational sector.

Although it was always unlikely that every workshop listed by young people would be taking place locally, it was evident that some of the activity that they had expressed interest in was being run by Lewisham based organisations and that they were unaware of these opportunities. Speaking with one organisation, it was suggested that the amount of opportunities taking place wasn't so much the problem but ensuring that young people who were interested and motivated enough to take part were given the chance to.

*“I don't think that Lewisham as a borough has a lack of creative opportunities for young people but where they are located is important. Most of the activity runs in this small area [New Cross, Deptford, Catford] but much less in other parts of the borough so not everyone who might want to engage will do. I think perhaps we have too much going on that is too alike, because we never fill all the slots on our programmes and then we see other organisations come along and try to do something similar and it's the same.” (Creative Organisation)*

*“I see opportunities I would like to try and that I thought I would be a good fit for, but because I have a degree I am not even considered. I see lots of opportunities directed to NEETs or sometimes younger age groups. I assume it's to stop them getting into gangs or because of how organisations are funded, but it's really frustrating because even though I have a qualification I am still without any experience to try and get into the career I want. I guess I would just like to be able to access these opportunities too.” (Young Participant)*

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<sup>29</sup> Bakshi H, Djumalieva J, Easton E – *“The Creative Digital Skills Revolution”*, 2019, <https://pec.ac.uk/assets/publications/The-Creative-Digital-Skills-Revolution-the-PEC-and-Nesta-24-Oct-2019.pdf>

## **Conclusion**

Although this report is merely a snapshot of the views held within the borough, and we recognise that the sample size is limited, there are still elements which can be drawn from the discussions that could benefit from further exploration.

How young people find out about creative careers and what more can be done to ensure those who are interested are signposted to careers opportunities, was a key discussion point. Many of the opinions shared, highlighted the need for more collaboration; both between creative businesses, start-ups and educational settings, as well as more join-up amongst the creative sector in order to direct the young people that they connect with to opportunities run by other groups.

Building up work experience opportunities in the creative sector is integral to supporting the career aspirations of young people. Finding a space for schools, further education sites, creative businesses and local authorities to come together to explore more flexible ways of running work experience may help to ease pressure on all parties involved and build capacity for more young people to engage in their first-choice option. In an age where the creative industries are needing to develop ways of working more online, perhaps these aspects can also feed into the future of work experience or creative industry development.

The views of young people have been paramount in this report and perhaps in order to see these motivated young people spreading the word and engaging more with creative careers opportunities, we need to encourage them to be part of the process and take some responsibility for what they feel they need to see more of.

As one interviewee stated “[perhaps] we need more connected thinking in a small space and sector like this.” (Creative organisation)

## **Thanks**

All information and feedback in this report have been included anonymously.

Our thanks to all the young people, teaching staff, career leads and representatives from arts and cultural organisations who donated their time to partake in interviews and consultations. Thank you for your honest opinions, ideas and recommendations.

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## **Appendix A – Question used on e-survey for Creative/ Cultural Organisations**

The e-survey sent to creative and cultural organisations can be found here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8YGNGLC>

Any further responses to this survey that are collected may not be included in this report but may still be used to shape future activity programming and exploration.

## **Appendix B – Question used on e-survey for Teachers & Career Leads**

The e-survey sent to teachers and career leads can be found here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8YHMQH8>

Any further responses to this survey that are collected may not be included in this report but may still be used to shape future activity programming and exploration.

## **Appendix C**

### **Statements used for ‘Scale of Agreement’ exercises during consultations with young people.**

Participants were asked to position themselves along a ‘scale’ from ‘I disagree completely’ to ‘I agree wholeheartedly’.

#### **Creative Careers Scale of Opinion**

- I would say I am a creative person?
- I would consider building a career in a creative industry?
- Careers in creative industries are less financially stable than careers in other fields?
- There are less opportunities to work in the creative industries than in other fields?
- If I don’t sing, dance, act or make something then I don’t think a job in a creative industry is for me?
- To have a career in the creative industries it is not what you know it’s who you know?
- The careers advice I get now is focussed too much on “traditional roles and trades” and not enough on roles in creative industries?
- I know where I would look/go to find out advice and information on careers in creative industries?
- I wouldn’t know how to get into a career in the creative industries even if I wanted to?

## **Appendix D**

### **Challenges set to young people during consultations**

#### **REFLECT**

- What creative careers opportunities (workshops/ masterclasses/ Q&A's/ industry talks/ creative careers fair/training programmes etc.) are we MISSING locally?
- Where would you look or who would you speak to, to find out about creative careers opportunities (workshops/ masterclasses/ Q&A's/ industry talks/ creative careers fair/training programmes etc.)?
- Think about creative careers opportunities (workshops/ masterclasses/ Q&A's/ industry talks/ creative careers fair/training programmes etc.) that you have attended. What elements of the event did you find most useful and most interesting?

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#### **HAVE YOUR SAY**

- Your team has a budget of £5000 – with this money, what 10 workshops/masterclasses/ industry talks, would you programme for young people in Lewisham?
- Your team has been asked to help promote creative careers opportunities to other young people – what elements would you want to include in your website, newsletter or app?
- Your team has a budget of £8,000 to plan a creative careers event for young people – think of at least 10 elements that you would make sure to include?

## Appendix E

Sheet used during consultations with young people looking at factors which influence event attendance.

Below is a list of factors that you might consider when deciding to attend a creative careers opportunity.

Put the factors in order from most important when making your decision to least important.

You will see there is an extra box – if there is something else that is important to consider when making your decision then add your own ideas to the scale.

	MOST IMPORTANT	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Deciding Factors</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>* PRICE</li><li>* LOCATION</li><li>* TIME OF DAY/ WEEK</li><li>* SIZE/STATUS OF THE COMPANY RUNNING THE EVENT</li><li>* QUALITY OF THE MARKETING &amp; PROMOTION</li><li>* FRIENDS/PEERS RECOMMENDATION</li><li>* TEACHERS/CAREER ADVISERS RECOMMENDATION</li><li>* UNIQUENESS OF THE OFFER</li><li>* CONTENT OF THE EVENT</li></ul>	1. <input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	6. <input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>
	2. <input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	7. <input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>
	3. <input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	8. <input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>
	4. <input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	9. <input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>
	5. <input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>	10. <input style="width: 100%; height: 40px;" type="text"/>

**LEAST IMPORTANT**