

Arts Council - Young People, Children and Education (YPCE)

Professional Stakeholder Consultation

Report on Findings

Introduction

This report sets out the responses received from 40 professional stakeholders who engaged with the Arts Council policy development process, through participating in an on-line consultation survey, in the area of Young People, Children and Education (YPCE).

The consultation survey (see Appendix 1) was shared with a range of key stakeholders, including funded arts organisations, government partners, national agencies, local authority partners, higher education partners, and a range of individual artists, teachers, and Creative Associates.

The online consultation provided a link to a short video and background paper, which included information on the Arts Council's current work, strategic priorities and investment (see Appendix 2).

The professional stakeholder consultation coincided with a wider consultation with children and young people to inform the policy development process. Findings from the consultation with children and young people are detailed in a separate report.

All respondents were asked if they wished to remain anonymous or if they wished to be named as having participated in the consultation. Those who were happy for their contribution to be acknowledged are listed in Appendix 3.

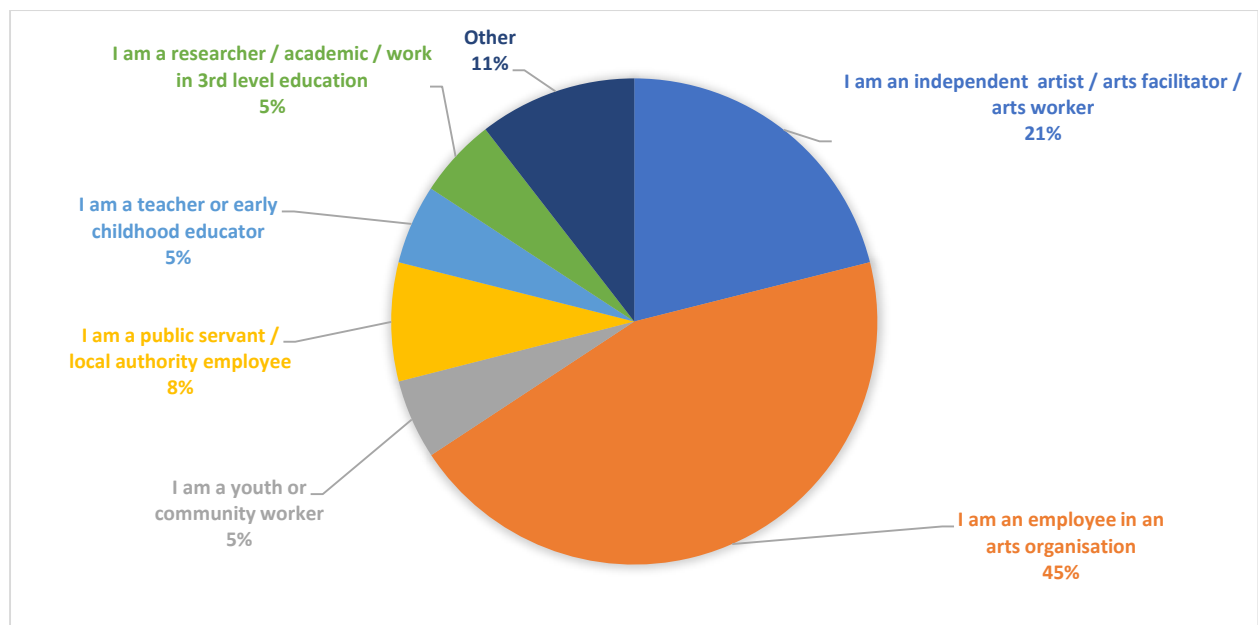
Purpose of the report

The findings outlined in this report, alongside the findings from the consultation with children and young people, provide insights to inform the review and development of the Arts Council's policy in the area of Young People, Children and Education. A policy paper for this area is currently being drafted.

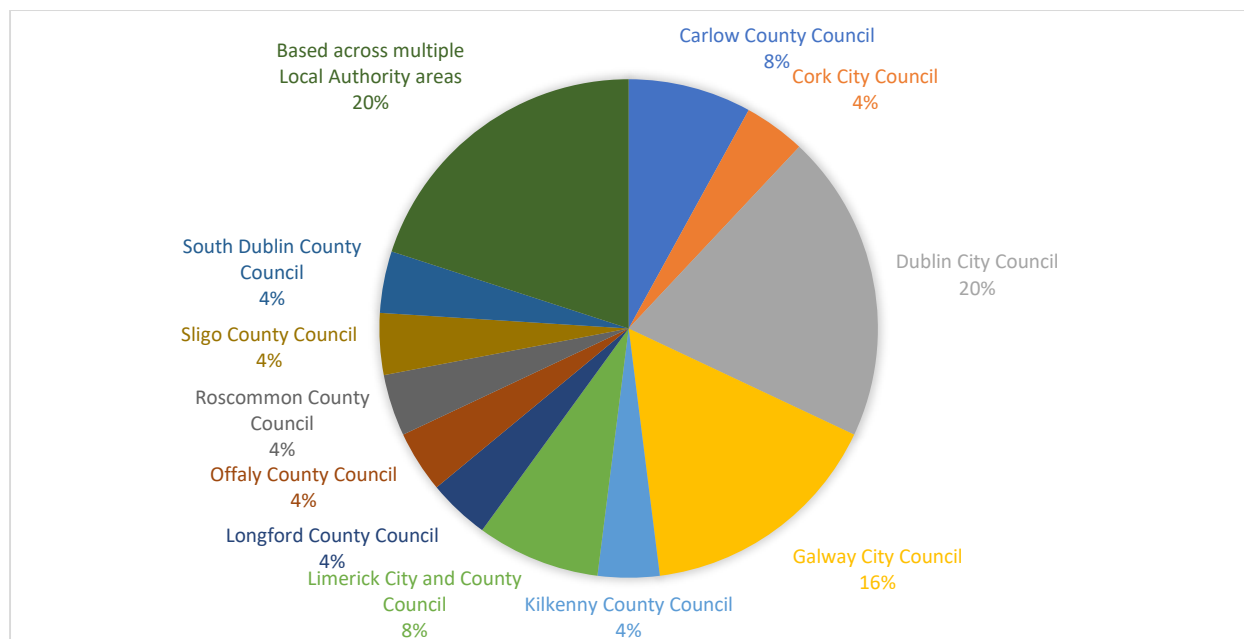
These findings are also being shared with government partners represented on the Creative Youth Working Group to support the development of the Creative Youth plan. The findings will continue to inform the Arts Council's partnership work in the area of Young People, Children and Education.

Responses from Professional Stakeholders through the online consultation

Section 1: Profile of Respondents



Spatial/Geographic Representation – where is your organisation based?

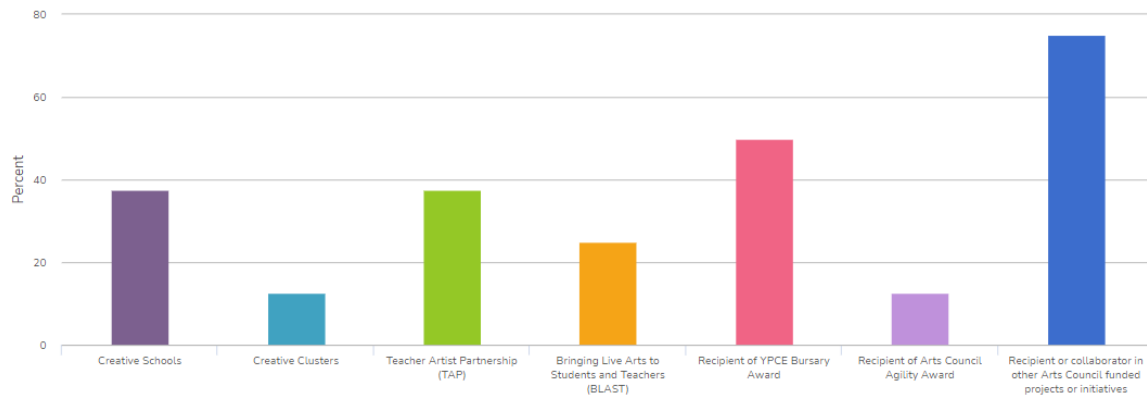


Twenty-five organisations reported where their organisation is based, reflected in the graph above. Five organisations worked across multiple local authority areas, while others were based in Carlow, Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick, Longford, Offaly, Roscommon and Sligo. Individual respondents were from Dublin, Wicklow, Tipperary, Galway, Cork and Kerry.

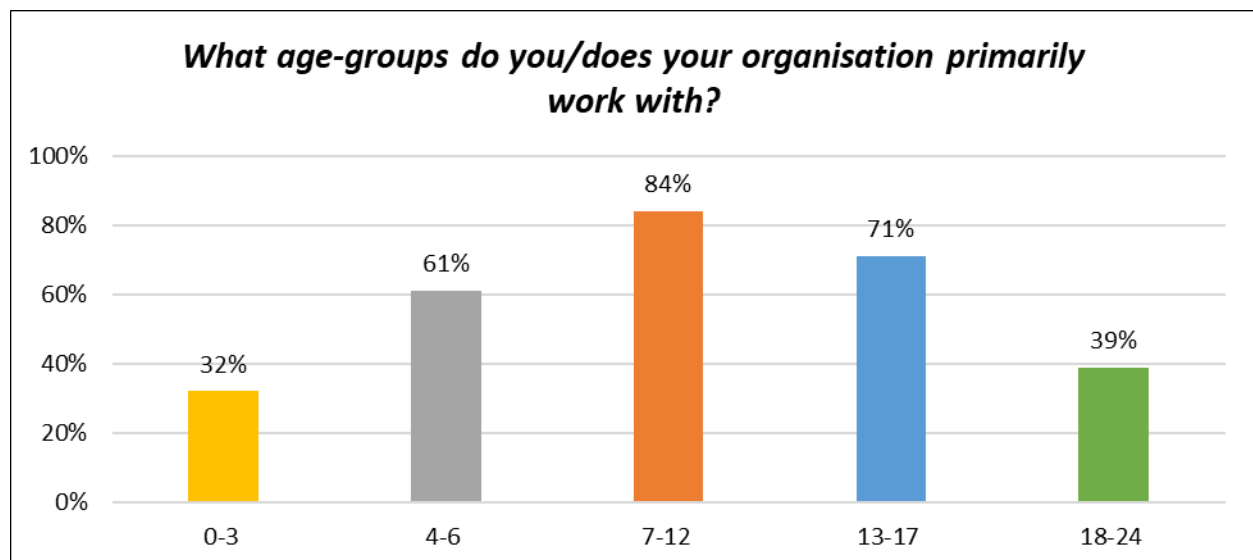
Independent artists - participation in Arts Council and other initiatives

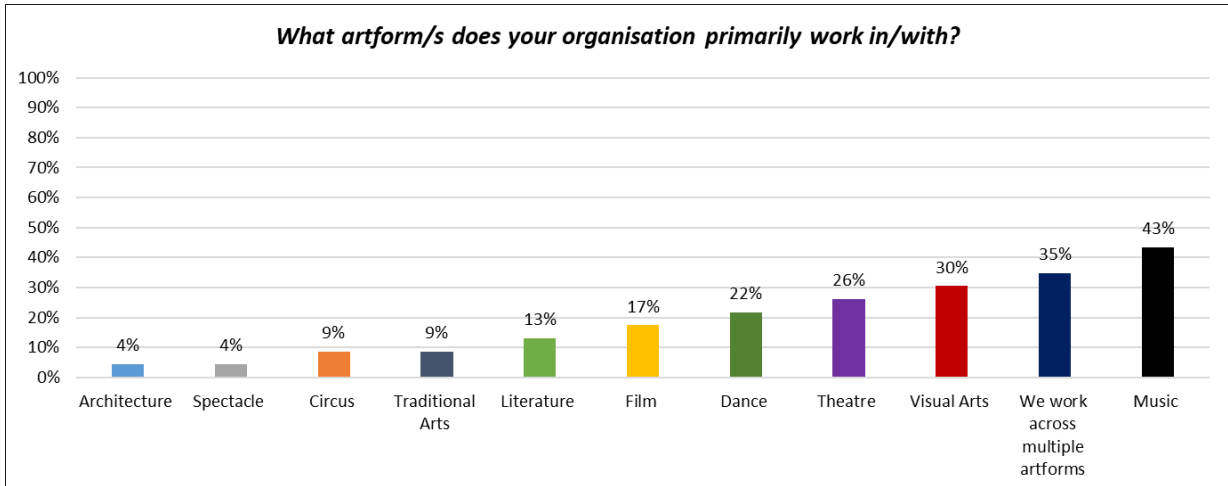
Eight respondents were independent artists, arts workers or arts facilitators. Three of these respondents had worked with Creative Schools. Three had worked on Teacher Artist Partnerships. Six were recipients or collaborators on Arts Council funded projects or initiatives, four had received a YPCE Bursary, and one an Agility Award. Two had worked on the Department of Education initiative BLAST (Bringing Live Arts to Students and Teachers) and one on Creative Clusters (also managed by the Department of Education).

6. Please check which if any of the following initiatives you have worked on (check all that apply):

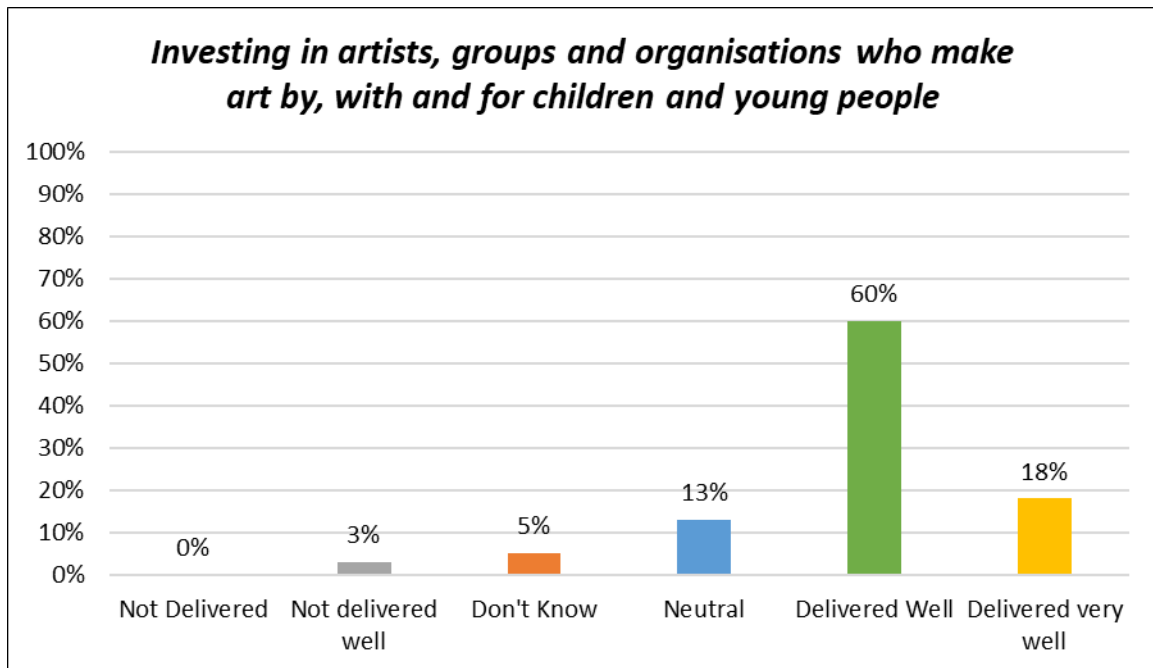


Section 2 – Current work and strategic priorities

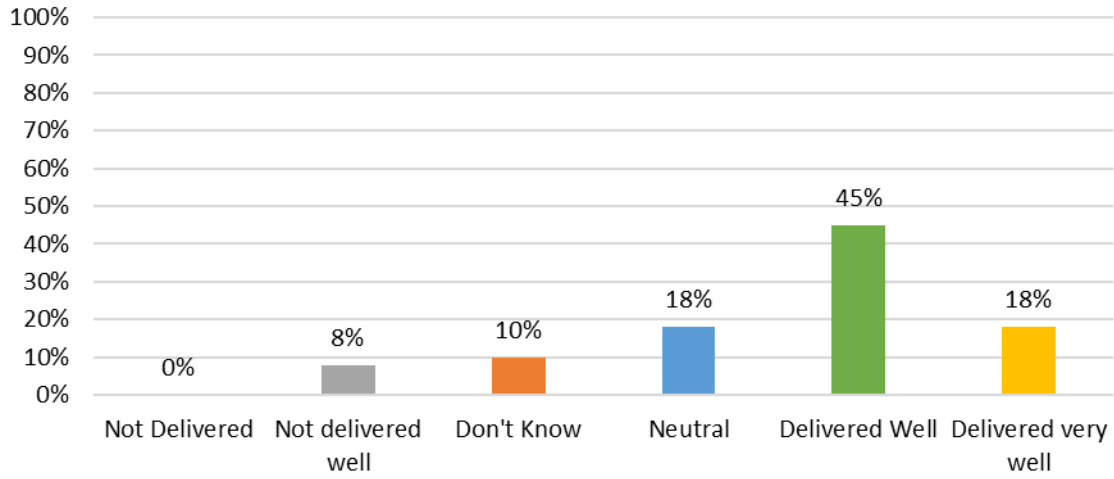




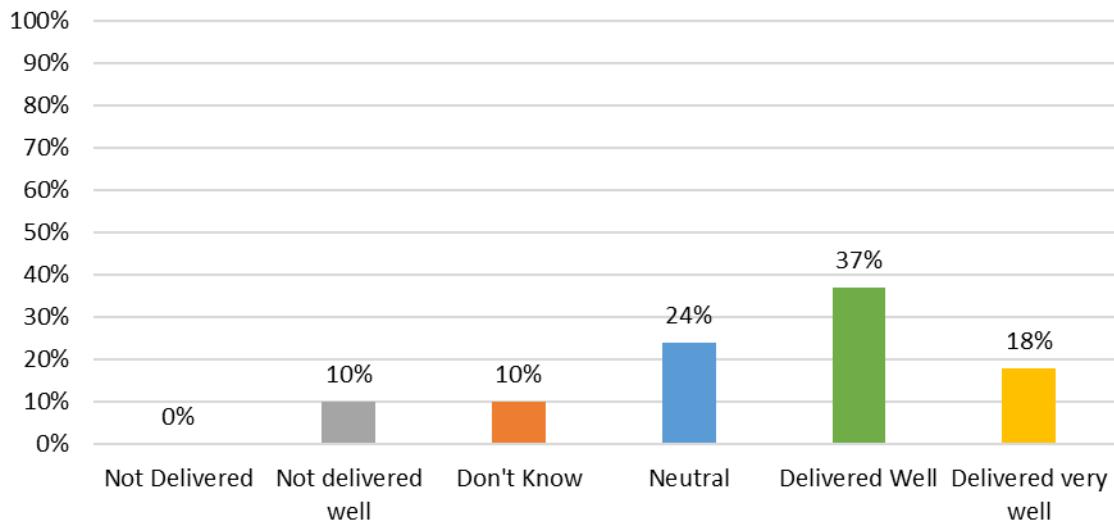
In your view, how well has the Arts Council delivered in the following areas of our work?

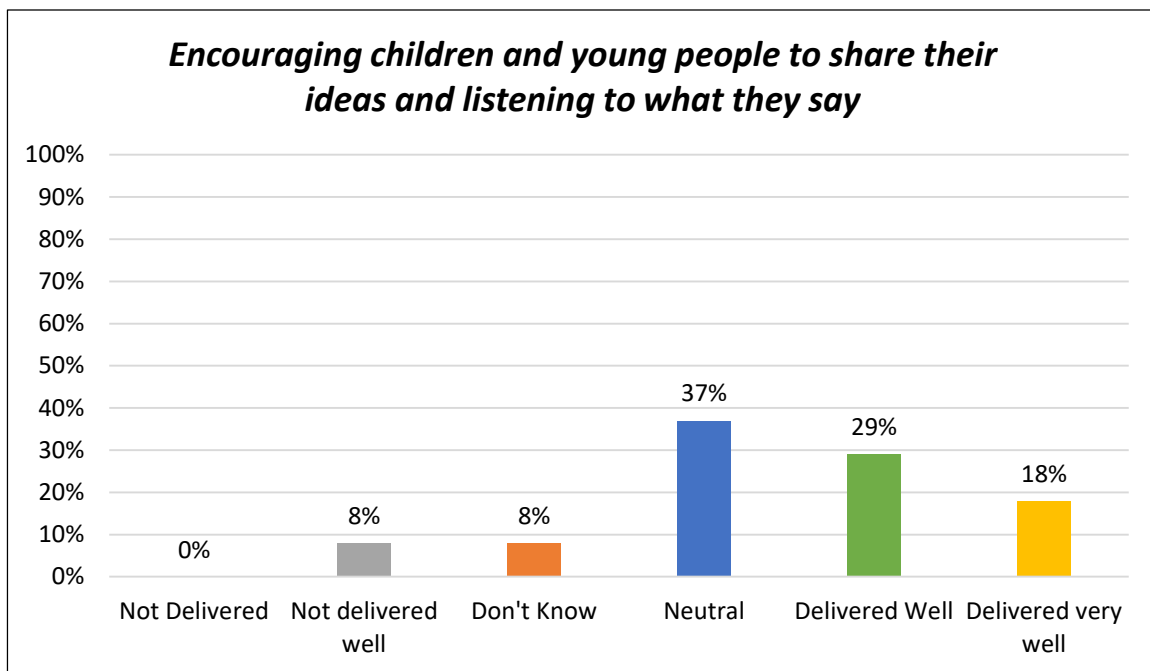


Working in partnership with government departments, local authorities, and others whose decisions impact on children and young people's participation in the arts



Investing in research and initiatives that improve our understanding of children's participation in the arts





Based on your response above - [what is the Arts Council doing well?](#)

Twenty-nine respondents commented on how well the Arts Council is delivering in these areas.

The majority of respondents felt increased investment in the YPCE sector was a positive including investing in work by artists who work with young people, supporting long term investment, investment in research and investing in very young children.

Partnership with the department was highlighted, specifically Creative Schools which has played a significant role in strengthening and deepening the participation and engagement in arts activities in schools.

Children as the focus of arts initiatives and processes was also commended by a significant portion of respondents in terms of ensuring the child’s voice is listened to and their ideas shared. Examples given included acting on input from young people and responding to their needs, advocating for the value and importance of children and young people as creators and audiences and participation in decision-making being actively promoted.

Based on your response above - [why do you feel the Arts Council is under delivering?](#)

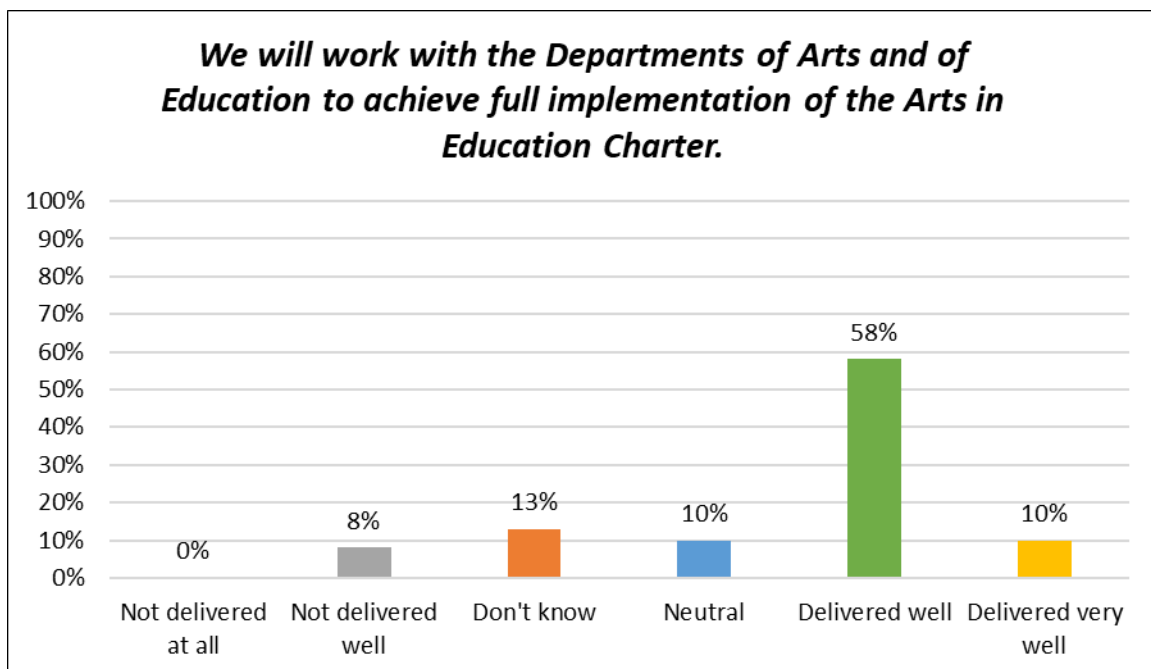
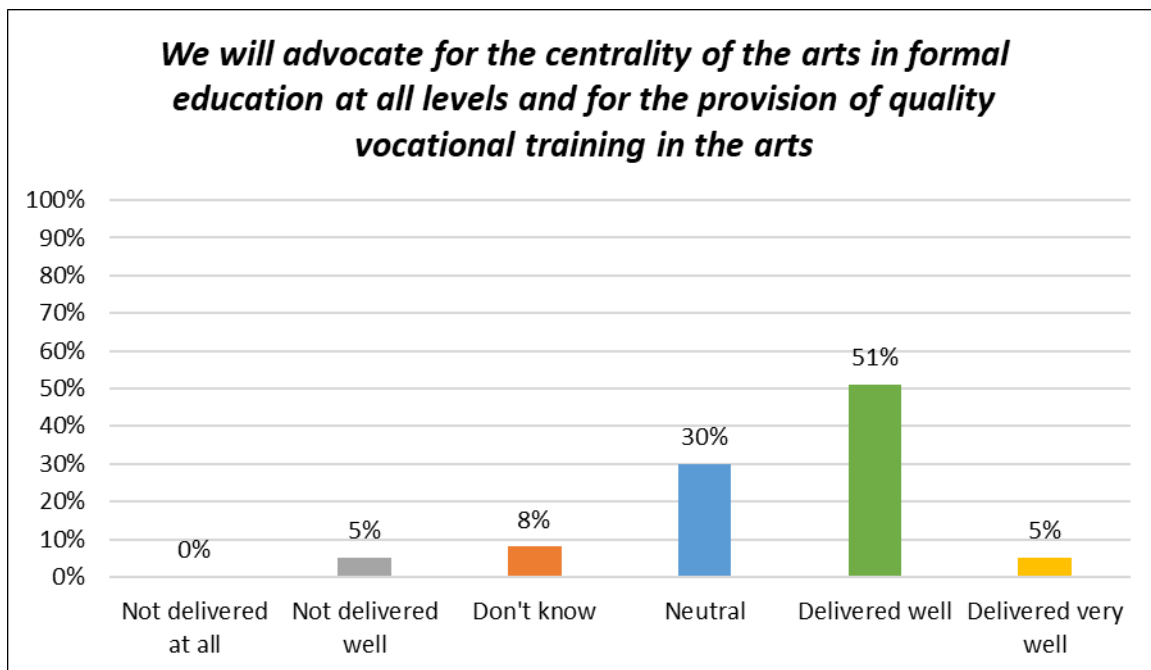
Of the eleven comments contributed, the vast majority related to inadequate investment covering areas such as the need for research into the benefits of the arts to support corporate/private funding; investment in salaried employees; developing PhD funding and changing the focus from projects to companies and artists.

Another theme highlighted the need for a change in the Arts Council’s research strategy which was considered to be too focused on evaluative research. Areas considered important included a collaborative approach to allow research and practice inform each other, inclusion of the HEI research community and the development of research networks and partnerships at the national level. The lack of arts provision for Irish speaking young people living outside the Gaeltacht was also mentioned.

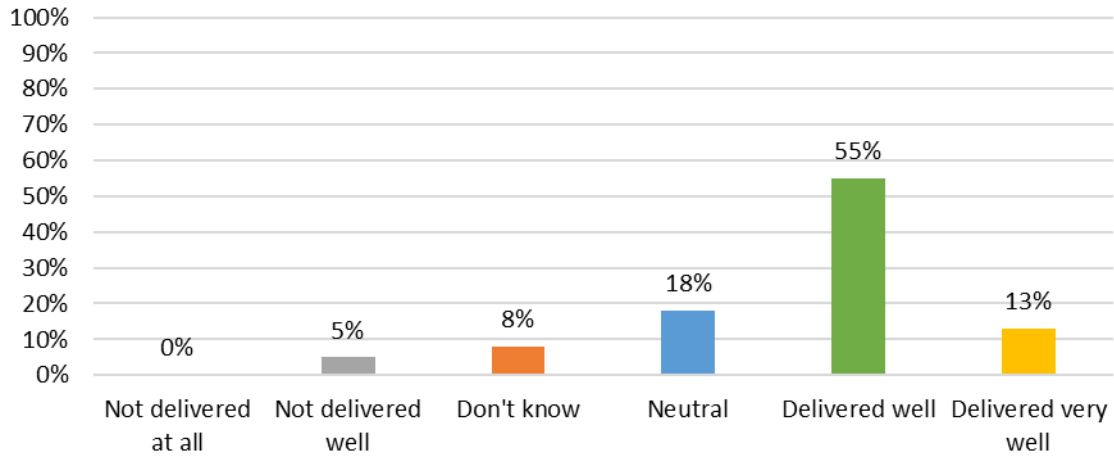
In your view, how well have we delivered on each of the commitments set out in Objective 8 of our current strategy - Making Great Art Work?

The majority felt the Arts Council delivered **well** as indicated in the charts below. There were a significant number of neutral responses for the following objectives:

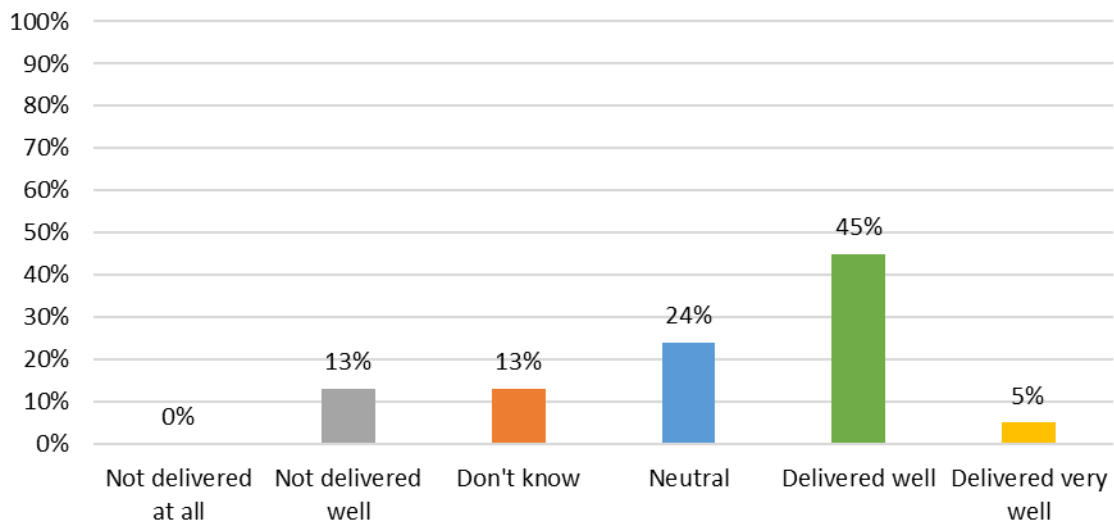
- *We will advocate for the centrality of the arts in formal education at all levels and for the provision of quality vocational training in the arts* - **30%**
- *We will incorporate our commitment to young people into the mainstream of our decision-making and, where appropriate, into our funding agreements with arts organisations* - **24%**
- *We will make provision for children and young people a key focus of our relationship with local government* - **24%**

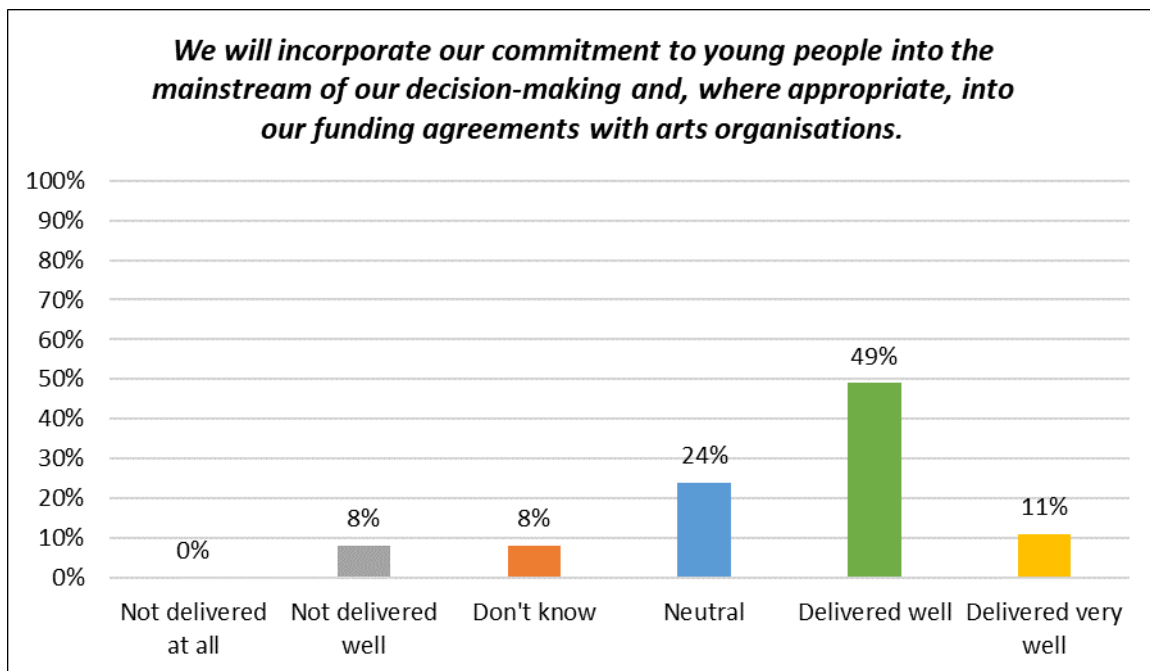


We will invest in artists, arts organisations and key programmes dedicated to developing high quality work in arts-in-education and youth arts, and we will support the provision of excellent arts experiences for young people in the public domain



We will make provision for children and young people a key focus of our relationship with local government





Based on your response above - [what is the Arts Council doing well?](#)

There were twenty-five comments made in relation to what the Arts Council is doing well with regard to Making Great Art Work. The key themes that emerged were an acknowledgement of the investment in the YPCE sector to develop high quality work and excellent art experiences as well as an increase in local government’s focus on children and young people and its partnership with the Arts Council. The other main area which was commended was the improved central role of the arts in formal education where it was felt that mainstream funding of children’s arts has made an enormous difference. Creative Schools was highly regarded. A respondent from Ealaín na Gaeltachta highlighted the opportunity to work together to expand Creative Schools to Gaeltacht Schools.

Based on your response above - [why do you feel the Arts Council is not delivering?](#)

Although responses were limited here (eleven in total) the main areas identified were

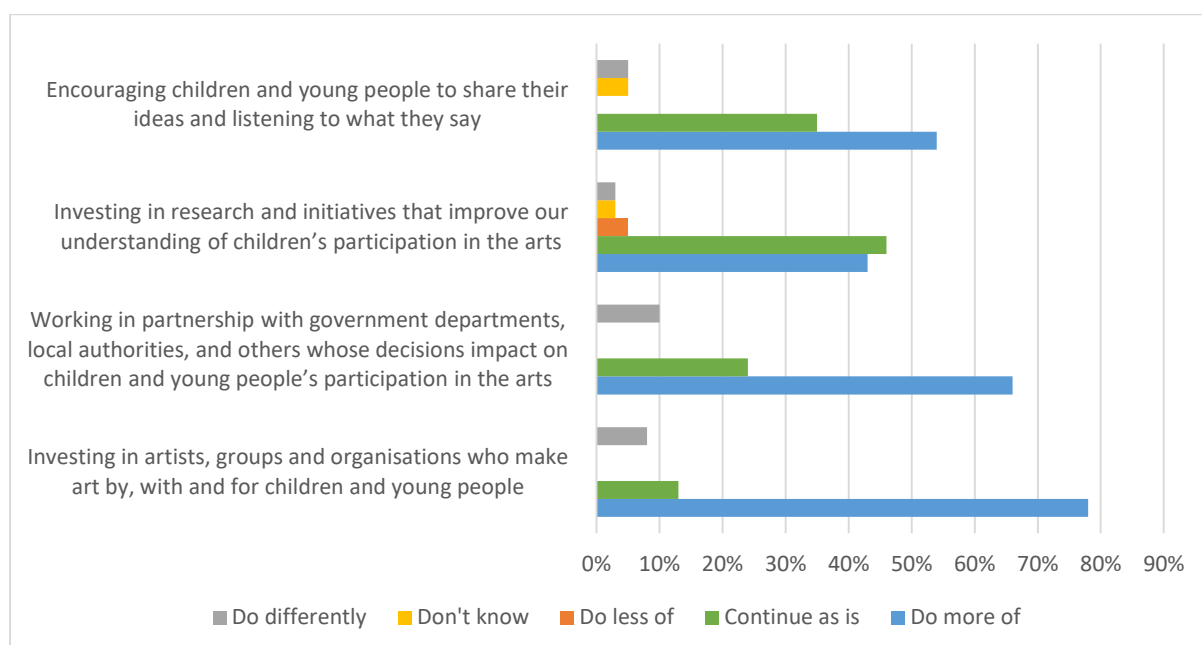
- The inconsistency in focus on children and young people across local authorities. Creative Ireland was cited as dominating delivery in this area. The local authority and the Arts Council need to make more of a case for focus on young people and children in local authority programmes.
- Developing partnerships with arts educators who have the skills and training needs to be recognised and harnessed.
- A specific comment was made in relation to strategic funding organisations not considering children who are being educated through Irish when developing their programmes.

Please share any further comments you have regarding the Arts Council’s current work in the area of Young People, Children and Education.

Key themes that emerged from responses (twenty-three) included a requirement for an increased emphasis on policy and programmes for the non-formal youth sector, an increased focus on marginalised, educationally disadvantaged and vulnerable people and a need for increased funding to match the unique programming demands for the YPCE sector. Other suggestions included better partnerships (such as with NCCA), improved links, better engagement across all networks in the sector and supporting more Irish language artists and performers.

Section 3 – Future Policy Priorities

Thinking about the future in which areas of our work do we need to do more, do less, continue as is, or do things differently?



You selected do more - please note any specific actions you think we should take to expand on this in the future.

There were twenty-nine responses in this area and they broadly fell into three areas:

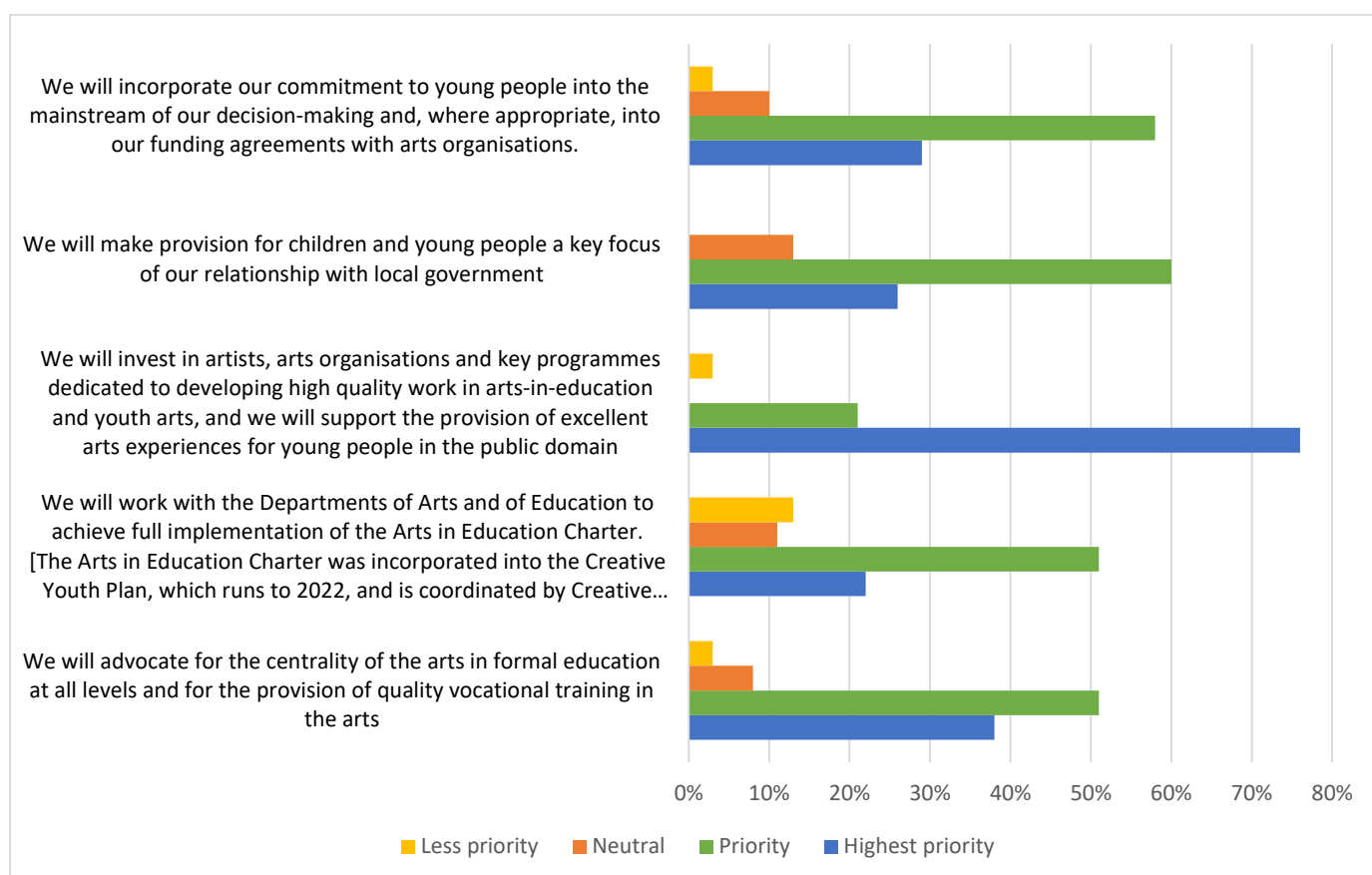
- Increase funding and investment (training, research, targeted arts programmes, non-formal sector),
- Continued partnership development (artists, organisations, teachers, DE and government agencies)
- Prioritise marginalised young people (Equality, Diversity, Inclusion, multi-cultural groups, rural access) and Irish speaking young people.

Other areas mentioned included raising the profile of this sector to become more centre stage nationally and the development of a dedicated arts centre for the sector.

Based on your response above - what should we be doing differently in the future?

There were ten responses to this question and the main area which was emphasised was long term and strategic investment in artists, groups and organisations. Research was another area highlighted (international benchmarking, more research partnerships, an analysis of the YPCE sector and how Irish speaking young people access the arts). A small number of comments mentioned proactive engagement with children to encourage them to share ideas and supporting artists to engage directly with children and young people. Greater communication around the sharing of research and making that research available in Irish was also suggested.

Thinking now about the future, which of the commitments outlined in Objective 8 of our current strategy, do you think need to be prioritised over the coming years for further development?



It is important to note that none of the respondents selected *Not a Priority*.

For those areas you have identified as a priority/high priority - if you wish, please specify any particular actions you think we should take.

From the twenty-one responses given, actions relating to a priority or high priority are outlined below.

- increased funding for artists, organisations and programmes through cross sector collaboration, high-quality long-term programmes, access in rural areas, training across the sector
- investment in strategic programmes that focus on inclusion, artist and youth work residency, high quality creative opportunities
- development of teachers' and artists' skills to deliver arts in education and address the challenges in schools in engaging with arts activities.
- Prioritise arts in education through DE
- Additional comments emphasised the importance of Irish language as part of overall approach

Based on your response above - what should we be doing differently in the future?

One comment related to how strategic funding organisations should report on provision of the arts to Irish speaking young people.

In the coming years what actions could we take to nurture and support an environment in which children's arts can thrive?

There were thirty-one comments outlined in this area. The main themes included

- increasing long-term investment and funding in artists; formal education; arts centres nationwide; skill development at all levels; research; and development of high-quality programmes
- strengthening practitioner and community networks
- building partnerships across the sector and targeting areas where participation is low
- training and mentoring support for emerging artists on working with young people

In the coming years what actions could we take to support arts experiences that are inclusive of all children, and remove barriers to participation where these exist?

Thirty - four respondents commented on actions which could be taken. They covered the following key areas.

- Identify the barriers that exist and invest in a long-term strategy to overcome them.
- Focus on inclusive youth arts practice. Target minority and marginalised groups directly with customised programmes that tackle barriers to participation. Engage with the systems and structures (community leaders, advocacy groups, family services, youth workers etc.) that support marginalised communities to overcome participation barriers. Invest in outreach officers to reach these communities.
- Continue to develop and invest in arts programmes as part of the main formal education system in a more structured way and support teachers to execute them to an excellent standard. Ensure all educational bodies include inclusivity in their arts programmes.
- One comment referred to the “normalisation” of provision of the arts through Irish

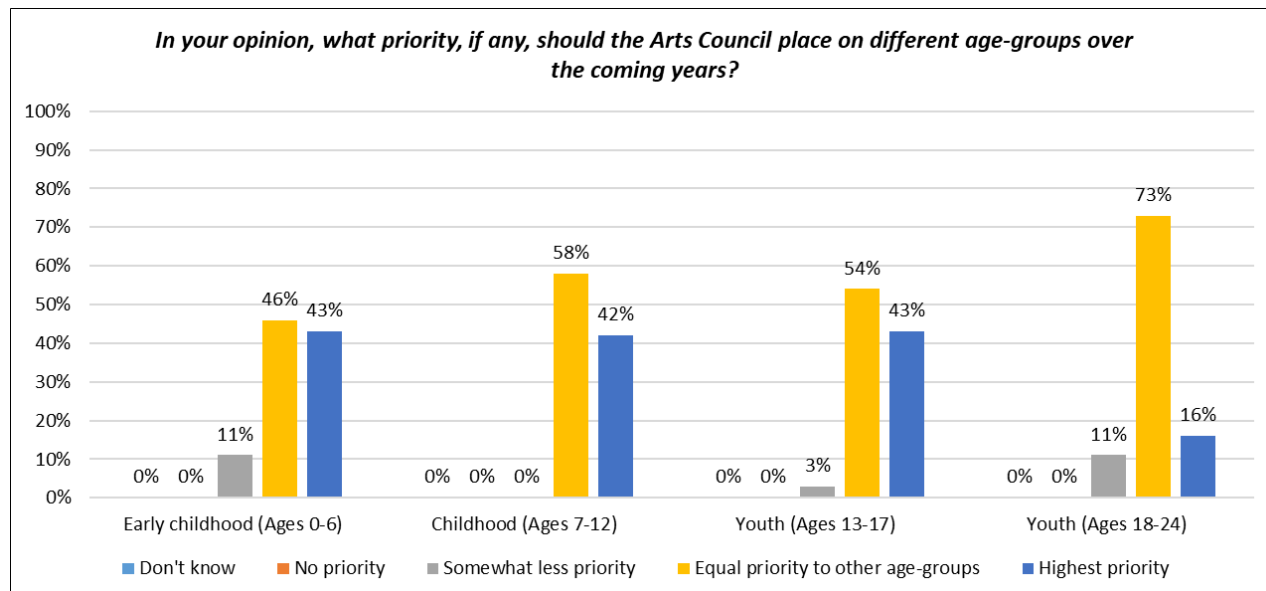
In the coming years what actions could we take to support and promote quality engagement in children and young people's arts?

From the twenty-five responses received, the following actions were recommended.

- Provide clear strategic guidance on youth arts programming for long term funding.
- Prioritise funding for high quality children and young people programming.
- Increase funding to develop skills and competencies of artists and art organisations that meet best practice.
- Provide opportunities for shared learning of successful programmes across professional networks.
- Customise programmes and activities for marginalised groups.
- Expand Creative Schools for non-formal education.

Section 4 – Ages and stages

In your opinion, what priority, if any, should the Arts Council place on different age-groups over the coming years?



Do you have a view on what actions would most effectively support the Early childhood (0-6) age-group in their engagement with the arts?

There were 25 contributions in this area covering the following:

- increase arts and creative engagement training for practitioners/artists and for teachers/trainee teachers, for early years programming development.
- develop partnerships, better links and relationships across the sector (educators, early years professionals, caring roles, arts organisations and childcare settings).
- develop dedicated and customised arts programming (fused with Aistear) which is heavily subsidised.

Do you have a view on what actions would most effectively support the Childhood (7-12) age group in their engagement with the arts?

There were 23 contributions in this area covering the following:

- Fund YPCE artists for this age range to develop age-appropriate art experiences, develop dedicated arts programming delivered by arts professionals, focus on inclusivity.
- Strengthen out of school art experiences through subsidised / free after school access, engagement with schools and local arts venues to connect with local artists and more supports for events in Irish
- Collaborate with educational stakeholders to support teachers to implement new primary curriculum.

Do you have a view on what actions would most effectively support the Youth (13-17) age group in their engagement with the arts?

There were twenty-nine contributions in this area covering the following:

- Focus on a sustained approach to funding and programming across a wide range of areas that includes: increase funding for artists, core youth art experiences and skills development, fund dedicated youth workers to build relationships, increase investment in companies that create work for this group, support inclusivity for marginalised youth; provide free/subsidised access to after school programming, customised programmes that bring art to youth in the community, develop youth work sector connections, facilities and community arts.
- Continue engagement with the curriculum, dedicated schools arts programming delivered by professional arts teachers, further development of Creative Schools for second level, support schools to share good practice.

Do you have a view on what actions would most effectively support the Youth (18 - 24) age group in their engagement with the arts?

There were twenty-one contributions in this area covering the following:

- Funding: develop professional training programmes, fund artists that have appeal to this age group, support inclusivity, increase funding for artists and art organisations, develop mentorship and professional guidance, provide early career support, develop customised youth programmes (including international), invest in quality youth arts practice, provide access to third level training.
- Strengthen sector links: Continue advocacy and consultation. Support connections between youth services and art centres, youth participatory processes and structural inclusion and representation.

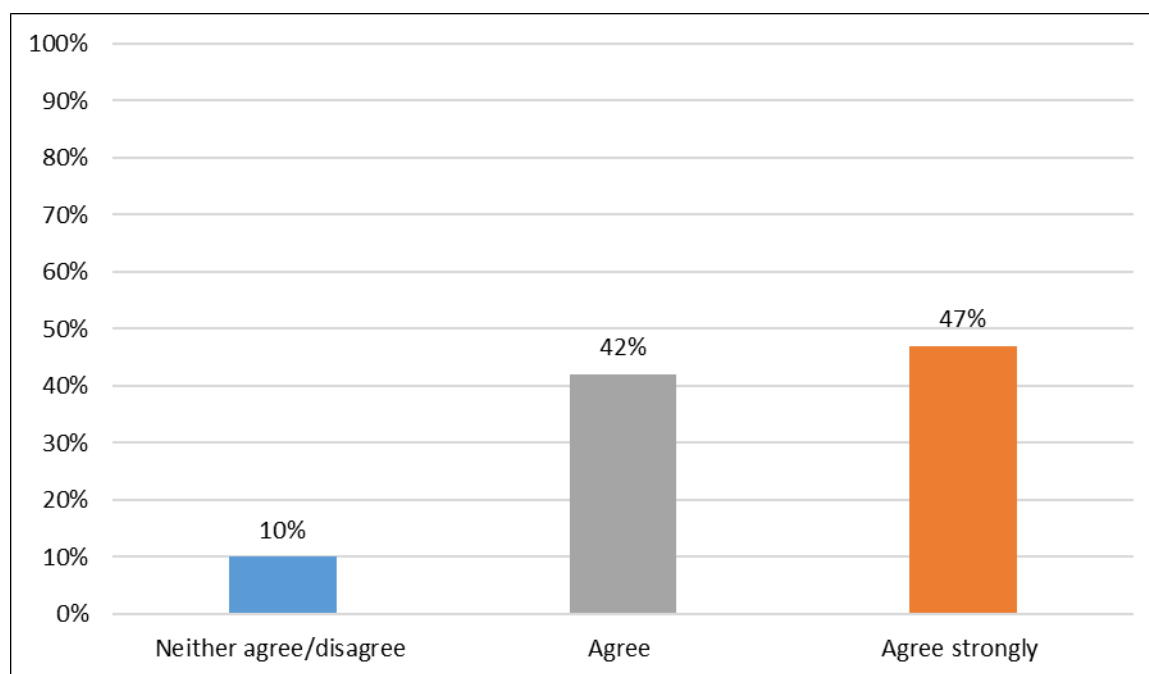
Section 5 - Quality

What is your view on the following statement about quality in children and young people's arts?

The Arts Council considers artistic work to be of quality when it is ambitious; original; technically competent; and connects with people in a lasting way.

We consider children and young people's arts experiences to be of quality when they are centred on the child's experience, are inclusive, and connect with children in a meaningful way.

We want to encourage children and the artists and other adults in their lives to be ambitious and try new things; to be original and bring their own ideas to their work; and to take time to learn the technical skills to make the art they want to make to the best of their ability.



If you wish - please comment on your answer above regarding quality in children and young people's arts?

There were a number of conflicting views in the responses received from the twenty respondents

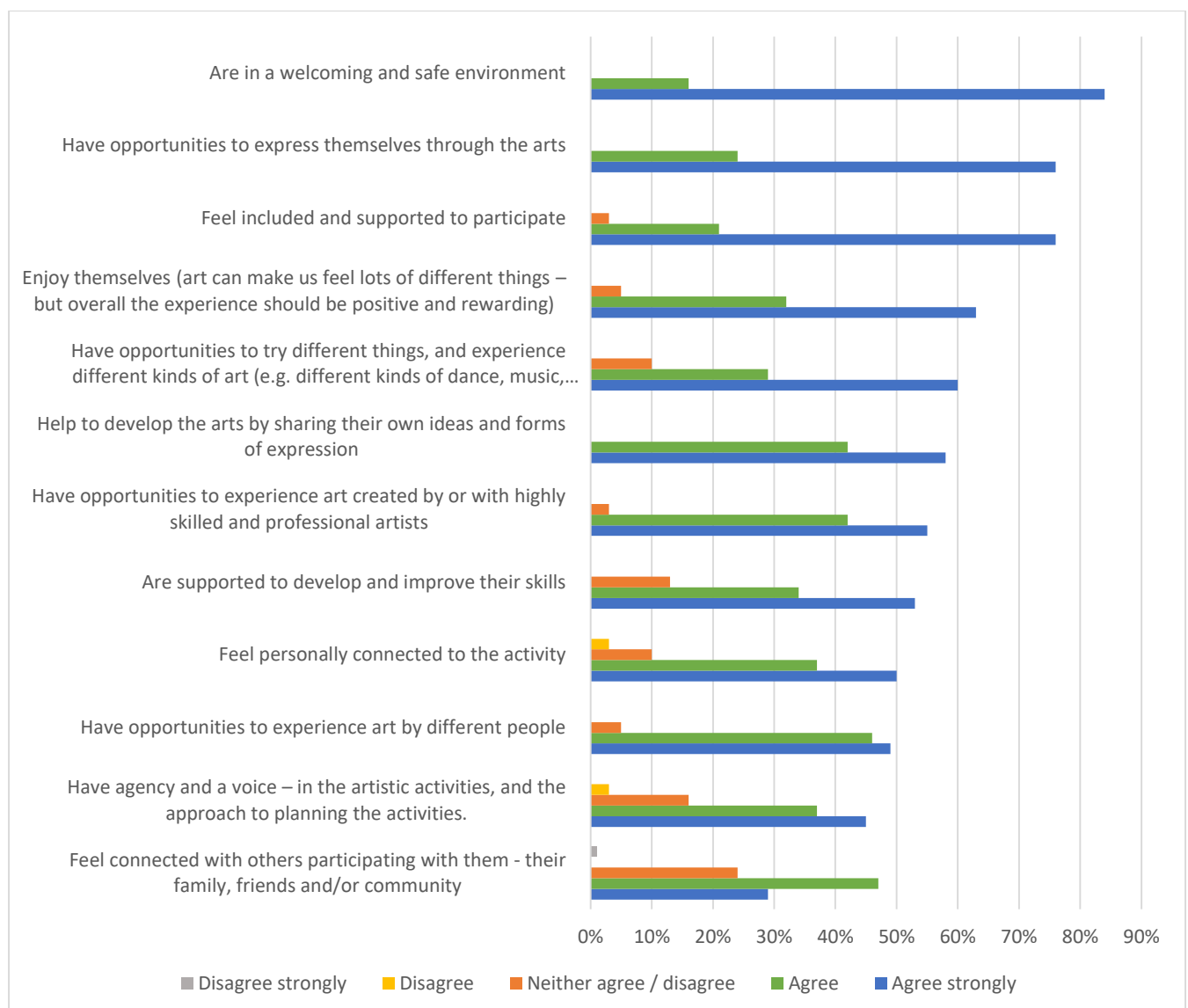
- **Technically Competent:** This was challenged by a number of respondents for the following reasons – not central to the experience, it should be the process not the final product that is important, ideas can be executed brilliantly but at a lower skill level.
- **Ambition:** This was also challenged where some felt it should not be the focus of participation as it should be ok to do something at less than the best of one's ability. It was also felt that originality can be overrated. However, other respondents agreed that children's art should be original and ambitious.

- **Quality:** Some respondents supported the view that quality arts can be achieved when it is centred on the child’s experience, is youth-focused but is part of a longer-term technical development process. However, this was also challenged where it was believed the power of the arts is to reveal different situations to our lived experiences. The quality of experience should not be measured by a list of things that need to be achieved but can include them.

Other areas which were highlighted included enjoyment / motivation which it was believed needs to be included as well as reflective practice.

One other comment was that the role of the artist needs to be distinguished from the role of the children in these statements.

Please mark the extent to which you agree/disagree with each of the below as features of quality in children and young people's arts.



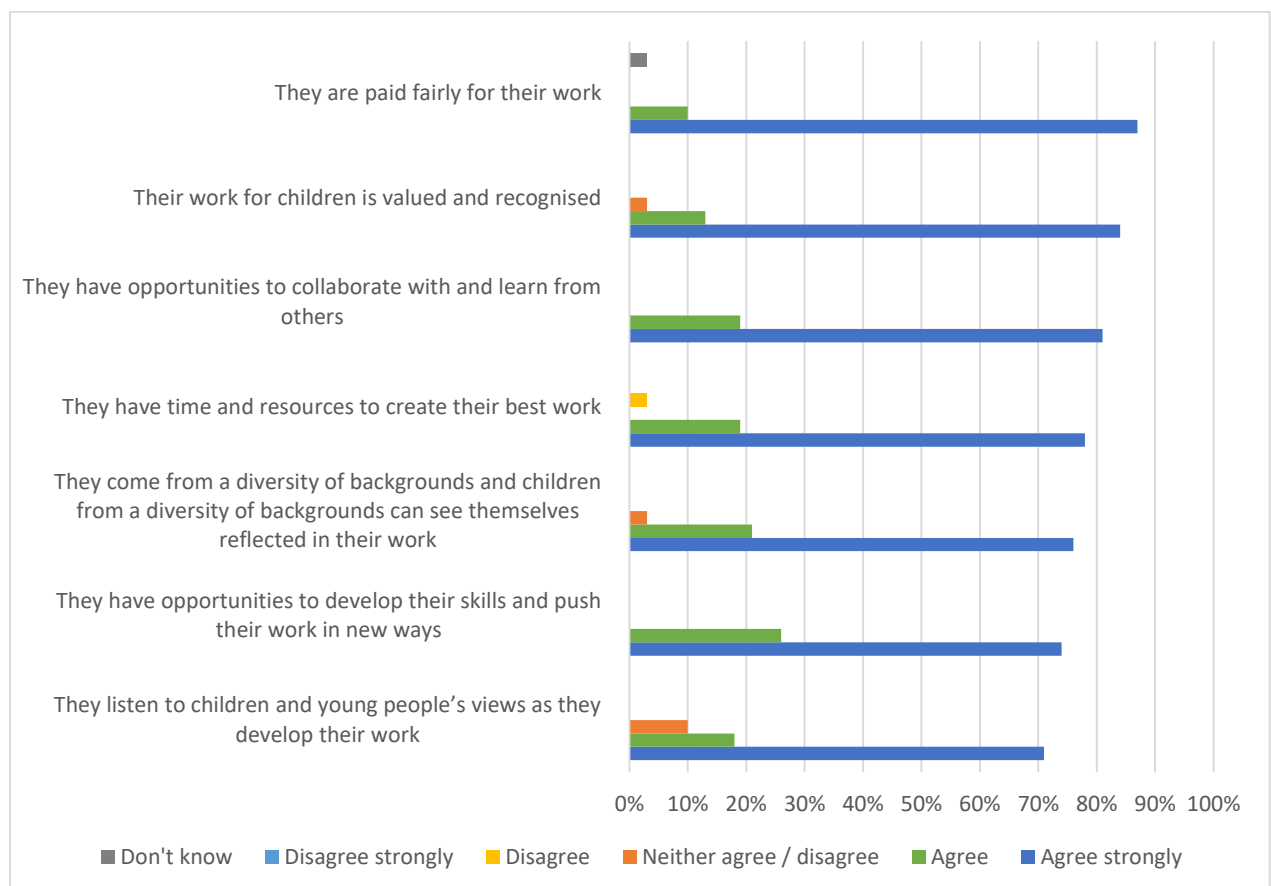
In your view, are there any other features of quality in children and young people's arts that we have left out?

From the twenty responses given, the main features mentioned included:

- They are allowed to experiment.
- Recognition of introverted approaches, an opportunity to contribute a voice but not a requirement.
- Should include the power to move the viewer/participant.
- To have fun/enjoyment.
- An openness to failure.
- An opportunity to perform or display their art.
- Feel their art is valued, they feel proud and this can develop personal confidence.
- Mentoring and coaching opportunities for older age groups.
- Youth art practitioners and non-professional artists can also achieve high quality arts for children not only artists.

Please mark the extent to which you agree/disagree with each of the below. Artists and arts organisations can make and share their best work with and for children when:

A number of respondents (10%) answered Neither Agree nor Disagree to the statement: They listen to children and young people's views as they develop their work



In your view, are there any other conditions needed for artists and arts organisations to make and share their best work with and for children that we have not included on the list above?

Six main conditions that could be included in the list are the following:

- They get feedback for their work.
- Long term development of their work is supported with access to expertise and training
- They get opportunities to experience challenging work in different roles and settings.
- Their work is more visible in the public domain and greater public understanding of the importance of working with young people
- International best practice is used as input.
- They act as mentors.

Section 6 – Final Comments

What would you consider a successful outcome of the Arts Council Young People, Children and Education Policy in three years' time?

A wide variety of successful outcomes were outlined by respondents which are summarised below.

High Profile

A number of respondents focused on elevating the profile of this sector with successful outcomes described including:

- Ireland to become a world leader in policy making for children and young people in the arts.
- Children's work is displayed nationally and centre stage in theatres, galleries etc.
- Young people self-identify as creative to the same extent as they identify with sport.
- CYP is not in the outreach space but in main programming.
- Young people are more inspired to have a voice within the arts in Ireland.
- Work in this sector is valued. There is an understanding amongst the public and the government around the importance of the arts in this sector.
- There is explicit policy focus on the non-formal education sector.

Part of Formal Education

This was considered important going forward by a large number of respondents who felt arts programmes should remain part of the main formal educational curriculum. They felt the DE should commit to equality in provision of basic artistic skills in the education system. Other successful outcomes described were that every school had a creative associate or were enrolled in a creative programme, that there was more freedom in and respect for the arts in secondary schools and that there would be increased teacher education initiatives for the arts.

Another area highlighted was connectivity and alignment between national government policies to ensure high quality experiences for all children, that there would be meaningful children's engagement with the arts and the Arts Council and that the YPCE Policy would connect to the principles of Aistear, the draft primary curriculum framework and Junior and Senior cycles skills areas.

Funding

This was also an area mentioned by many respondents and successful outcomes included: a radical increase in funding across the board, long term funding leading to long term participation, increased investment in artists and arts organisations, that funding reflected the YPCE population and that artists are fairly paid.

Better Access and Inclusivity

This was an area that was strongly considered the mark of a successful outcome with statements of success including:

- There is better access for all children and young people to the arts through coordination across the sector.
- There is increased participation and engagement nationwide.
- There is equality within arts provision.
- All children have access to multiple arts experiences each year.
- There is increased programming across all artforms across all sectors targeting the marginalised and minority groups.
- There is improved access outside of the formal school setting.
- Participation in all aspects of the arts by a large sector of young people with Irish as their everyday language

High Quality Programmes

Excellent quality programming was also considered a good mark of success with the outcome of developing a vibrant sector where children and young people access excellent arts programmes across the country.

Appendix 1: Invitation to participate in professional stakeholder consultation

YPCE survey

Introduction

Please read this before starting the survey

What is this consultation?

This consultation survey is issued by the Arts Council.

The Arts Council is the national agency for developing the arts. We want to make sure children can make, share and enjoy all kinds of art. We are currently reviewing and developing our policy in the area of Young People, Children and Education (YPCE) and we are seeking the views and ideas of a range of stakeholders to help us to plan for the coming years.

This consultation is designed to gather input from professional and other adult stakeholders. We are separately consulting with children and young people. If you would like to share copies of our survey for children and young people with the groups you work with, please contact ypce@artscouncil.ie.

Is there a background paper I should read?

Yes. In order to participate in this consultation, we ask that you read a brief background paper which provides an outline of the Arts Council's current work to plan and provide for children and young people. This is available to [read here](#) (it will open in a new window). You can also see a short video about our work below. Please then use this form to share your views about the Arts Council's work, and to help us plan for the coming years.

What will we do with your answers?

We will analyse and report on the responses we receive. We will consider these responses as we develop a policy paper focused on children's engagement with the arts. We will publish this on our website. We will also share what we learn with policy partners who can help children take part in the arts.

Who should fill out this survey?

This survey is for artists and arts organisations who programme work with and for children and young people; for early childhood, youth, community and education partners who play a key role in facilitating children's engagement with the arts; for local authorities, national agencies and government departments who can help children take part in the arts; and for any organisation or individual aged 18+ who wishes to influence the Arts Council's work in this area.

How long will it take?

We estimate it will take up to 30 minutes to read the background paper, and up to an hour to complete the form. You do not need to complete every section - we encourage you to respond to the sections that you consider most relevant. You can click between the pages to see the different sections. Please note - once you select certain options more questions may appear requesting a bit more detail. You can save the survey and go back to it later by clicking the save and continue button at the top of each page.

Do I have to answer all the questions?

No - Although there are some mandatory questions at the start and end.

What if I can't answer a question?

Not all questions will be relevant to you. If you don't understand or don't have anything you want to say - that's ok - just move on.

Is the survey anonymous?

We are giving you the option to decide if you want your contribution to be anonymous or if you want to be identified. If you choose to be named this means we will simply list you or your organisation as having been consulted as part of the policy development process. Any responses you give won't be attributed to you.

We will also ask you at the end of the survey if you are willing to let us use any quotes from narrative responses you may have provided. Any quotes used will not be attributable to you and we won't use anything that identifies other people or organisations.

How will the Arts Council use the information I provide?

We will use the data we collect to inform our policy development work. We won't share your data with third parties. We will share anonymized and aggregate data with policy partners. We intend to publish and share the findings of this consultation and will report at an aggregate level.

What is the deadline?

The deadline is **Friday 6 May.**

We hope you will be able to take part and we appreciate your time.

If you have any questions or want to verify the validity of this survey please contact the Arts Council at ypce@artscouncil.ie

Before you begin, we encourage you to:

- [Watch the short video about our work](#)
- [Read the background paper here.](#)

1. I am aged 18+. I have read the introduction and want to participate in the survey. *

Agree to continue

Next

YPCE survey

How is the consultation organised?

There are 6 sections in this survey

Section 1 - About you. This asks about you and/or your organisation - it helps us understand your perspective and ensures we are capturing feedback from different stakeholders.

Section 2 - Current work and strategic priorities. This includes questions about the Arts Council's current work and strategic priorities.

Section 3 - Future policy priorities. This includes questions about potential priority areas for the coming years.

Section 4 - Ages and stages. This includes questions about actions relevant to the different ages and stages of children's lives.

Section 5 - Quality. This describes features of quality in children's arts, and asks for your views.

Section 6 - Final Comments. This allows you to share any final comments.

Back Next



The short video about the Arts Council's work can be viewed [here](#).

Appendix 2 - Background Paper

The Arts Council - Young People, Children and Education (YPCE)

Contents

1. Overview	23
2. Our strategy	23
3. Children’s rights and the state’s responsibilities	24
4. National legislation, policies and cross-government initiatives	24
4.1. Children First.....	24
4.2. Better Outcomes Brighter Futures.....	25
4.3. National Framework for Children and Young People’s Participation in Decision Making....	25
4.4. The Arts in Education Charter and the Creative Youth Plan	25
5. Growing up in Ireland	26
5.1. Arts Council/ESRI Research.....	26
5.2. Growing up in Ireland - Impact of Covid-19.....	27
6. Investment	27
Appendix (i) YPCE - Report on investment.....	28
Appendix (ii) YPCE – Examples of how we work	31

1. Overview

The Arts Council wants to make sure children can make, share and enjoy all kinds of art.

The arts include dance, music, stories, poetry, film, painting, putting on plays, going to shows, making and building, and much more...

Children have a right to participate in cultural life and the arts. This is part of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which was ratified by Ireland in 1992.

The Arts Council's ten-year strategy [Making Great Art Work \(2016-2025\)](#) includes a key objective to plan and provide for children and young people.

We do this by:

- Investing in artists, groups and organisations who make and share art by, with and for children and young people
- Working in partnership with government departments, local authorities, and others whose decisions impact on children and young people's participation in the arts
- Investing in research and initiatives that improve our understanding of children's participation in the arts
- Encouraging children and young people to share their ideas and listening to what they say

2. Our strategy

The Arts Council has demonstrated a commitment to support children and young people's engagement with the arts over many decades since the 1970s. This has been articulated in its strategy documents, and evidenced in its investments and partnerships.

The Arts Council's current ten-year strategy [Making Great Art Work \(2016-2025\)](#) includes a key objective to plan and provide for children and young people. The actions in this area are as follows:

Objective 8 – Plan and provide for children and young people

- We will advocate for the centrality of the arts in formal education at all levels and for the provision of quality vocational training in the arts
- We will work with the Departments of Arts and of Education to achieve full implementation of the Arts in Education Charter
- We will invest in artists, arts organisations and key programmes dedicated to developing high quality work in arts-in-education and youth arts, and we will support the provision of excellent arts experiences for young people in the public domain
- We will make provision for children and young people a key focus of our relationship with local government
- We will incorporate our commitment to young people into the mainstream of our decision-making and, where appropriate, into our funding agreements with arts organisations.

All of the Arts Council's work is guided by cross-cutting policies to [Pay the Artist](#) and to promote [Equality, Human Rights and Diversity](#).

The artist and public engagement are at the centre of the Arts Council strategy. These are inter-related, and the line between them is fluid. Children and young people participate in the arts as co-creators, artists, learners and audiences. The artists, groups and organisations that make and share work by, with and for children and young people play a key role in nurturing and supporting their engagement with the arts.

3. Children's rights and the state's responsibilities

Our work takes place in an international and national legislative and policy context in which Ireland has a duty to uphold children's rights, including their right to participate in the arts.

These rights, set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Ireland is a signatory, include:

- Children and young people have a right to participate in the arts and cultural life
- Children have a right to express themselves in the medium of their choice, including in the form of art.
- Children have a right to a voice in all decisions that affect them [including decisions that affect their participation in the arts].
- Children have a right to an education that enables them to meet their full potential. [For the Arts Council, we consider opportunities to experience the arts, to be creative, and develop skills in the arts are important aspects of an education that supports children to meet their full potential.]
- Children have the right to be safe and protected from harm.

4. National legislation, policies and cross-government initiatives

The Arts Council advises government in relation to the arts, and is mindful of cross-government strategies and commitments in which the arts play a central role. Some key cross-government initiatives that impact on children's participation in the arts are outlined below, along with the Arts Council's role.

4.1. Children First

It is everyone's responsibility to protect children and young people and to do our best to keep them safe. The Children First Act 2015 includes specific information for the professionals and organisations that have legal obligations to keep children safe. [Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children](#) sets out the steps which should be taken to ensure that children and young people are protected from harm. The Arts Council requires all artists and organisations in receipt of funding and who provide cultural services for children and young people to complete a self-audit to assist them in ensuring they have policies and procedures in place that comply with national legislation, and can keep children safe from harm.

4.2. **Better Outcomes Brighter Futures**

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures was The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020. Led by what is now the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, it set out the Irish government's key commitments to children and young people aged 0-24 across five key outcomes. Outcome 1 – that children are active and healthy, with positive physical and mental wellbeing – included a specific aim for children to enjoy play, recreation, sport, arts, culture and nature. In relation to the arts, it committed to:

1.14 Enable greater access to sports, arts and culture for all children and young people, including through facilitating collaboration between sports, youth, arts and cultural organisations and schools and preschools to enrich the educational experience of all. (DES, DCYA, DAHG, DTTS, Arts Council)

A [report](#) on Better Outcomes Brighter Futures is available, which will help to shape any new national policy framework for children and young people.

4.3. **National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making**

The **National Framework for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making** supports departments, agencies and organisations to improve their practice in listening to children and young people and giving them a voice in decision-making. It is underpinned by:

- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).
- The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006).
- The National Strategy on Children and Young Peoples Participation in Decision-making.

The Framework is based on the child-rights model of participation developed by Professor Laura Lundy, Queens University, which provides guidance for decision-makers on the steps to take in giving children and young people a meaningful voice in decision-making.

Hub na nÓg, which was set up by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, leads out on the National Participation Framework and supports organisations to develop their work in this area. The Arts Council provides information on these resources to the artists and organisations that we fund. We encourage artists and arts organisations to ensure children and young people have space, voice, audience and influence in programmes that are developed with and for children and young people.

4.4. **The Arts in Education Charter and the Creative Youth Plan**

The Arts Council strategy states that, “we will work with the Departments of Arts and of Education to achieve full implementation of the Arts in Education Charter”. The Charter was published by what is

now the Department of Education and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media in 2013.

Creative Ireland was launched by government in 2016 and includes 'Creative Youth' - a plan focussed on children and young people. This plan committed to fast-track and resource the Arts in Education Charter. Cross-departmental implementation of the Arts in Education Charter is now part of the Creative Youth plan.

The Arts in Education Charter set out that the Arts Council would promote, in partnership with both Departments, a national scheme to incentivise and recognise schools which make the arts a key part of school life. With additional investment from government, the Arts Council developed and piloted this programme, which is now called Creative Schools. Creative Schools is led and managed by the Arts Council in partnership with both Departments. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth have provided training in young people's participation in decision making for Creative Associates and school coordinators participating in the programme. Creative Schools is a key aspect of the Creative Youth Plan. The Arts Council executive now includes a Creative Schools team which leads and manages this national programme. More than 600 schools have engaged with the programme to date.

The Creative Ireland programme runs to 2022. It has been agreed to extend the programme for a further five years and a new Creative Youth Plan is being developed.

5. Growing up in Ireland

5.1. Arts Council/ESRI Research

The Arts Council worked with the ESRI to carry out two pieces of research on arts and cultural participation among children, drawing on the Growing up in Ireland National Longitudinal Study. The first of these, published in 2016, provided us with insight on children and young people's participation up to the age of 13. The second, published in 2020, provided us with insight into the participation of young people between the ages of 9 and 17/18. From this research we know that there are a range of positive benefits for children who participate in the arts, while some groups of children have more opportunities to participate than others. Some of the findings include:

- Participation in arts and cultural activities supports a range of positive child outcomes, including children's socio-emotional wellbeing, cognitive development and attitudes to school.
- Girls are much more likely than boys to participate in the arts. This begins as young as three.
- Girls' schools are more likely to offer arts subjects and extra-curricular arts activities, thus perpetuating this pattern.
- Those who participate in the arts at a younger age are more likely to participate when they are older.
- Children who participate in the arts at school are more likely to engage outside of school.
- Deis schools and Transition Year have a positive impact on young people's participation in and perceptions of the arts – and the role their school has played in shaping this perception.

- Young people attending fee-paying schools, girls' schools, and large schools are more likely to have opportunities to participate in extra-curricular arts activities at school than those attending other schools.
- Language is a barrier to participation for immigrant families with younger children.
- There are relatively low levels of participation in structured cultural activities by children with disabilities.
- For younger age-groups, arts activities outside of school must be paid for, and household income represents a barrier.
- Overall there is a decline in participation in the arts from ages 9 to 13 and again from 13 to 17, particularly for those approaching their Leaving Certificate.
- Young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds are less likely to take up music at Leaving Certificate level.

Arts & Cultural Participation among children and young people – insights from the Growing up in Ireland Study (Smyth, 2016) is available [here](#).

Arts & Cultural Participation Among 17-Year-Olds (Smyth, 2020) is available [here](#).

5.2. Growing up in Ireland - Impact of Covid-19

Separate to the above studies, the ESRI carried out a *Growing up in Ireland* special COVID-19 survey, which was published in March 2021. This showed that participation in organised cultural activities (e.g. music, dance, drama) declined over the course of the pandemic: fifty-nine per cent of twelve-year-olds and thirty-two per cent of twenty-two-year-olds participated less often than before the pandemic, with only very small percentages participating more often. Children in the lowest income groups were more likely to say they had participated less than usual in organised cultural activities. The biggest decrease for 12-year olds across a range of activities was their participation in organised cultural activities.

This report is available [here](#).

6. Investment

The Arts Council has increased its investment in children and young people over the course of its strategy. An overview of investment patterns is included in Appendix 1 below – Report on Arts Council investment in children and young people 2017-2021.

Appendix (i)

Report on Arts Council investment in children and young people 2017-2021

Section 1 – Annual trend

The Arts Council has increased its investment in children and young people over the course of its current strategy.

Fig 1.1 shows Arts Council investment specifically targeted to support children and young people’s engagement with the arts since 2017. The Arts Council’s overall investment also increased during this timeframe, particularly following an uplift in exchequer funding in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in the latter half of 2020. Fig 1.2 shows overall Arts Council investment through the full range of funding programmes and across all arts teams from 2017.

Approved Amount by Year



Fig 1.1. Annual trend – YPCE targeted schemes and awards

Approved Amount by Year

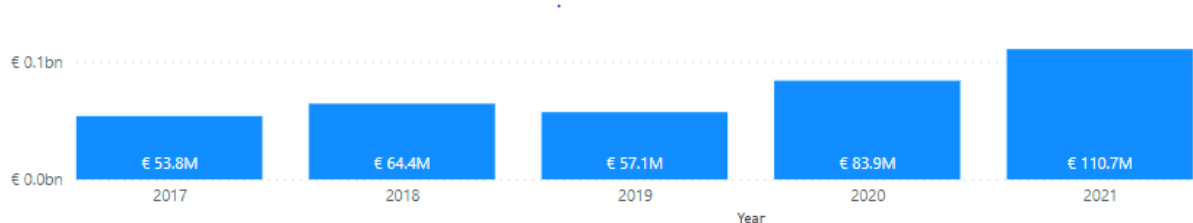
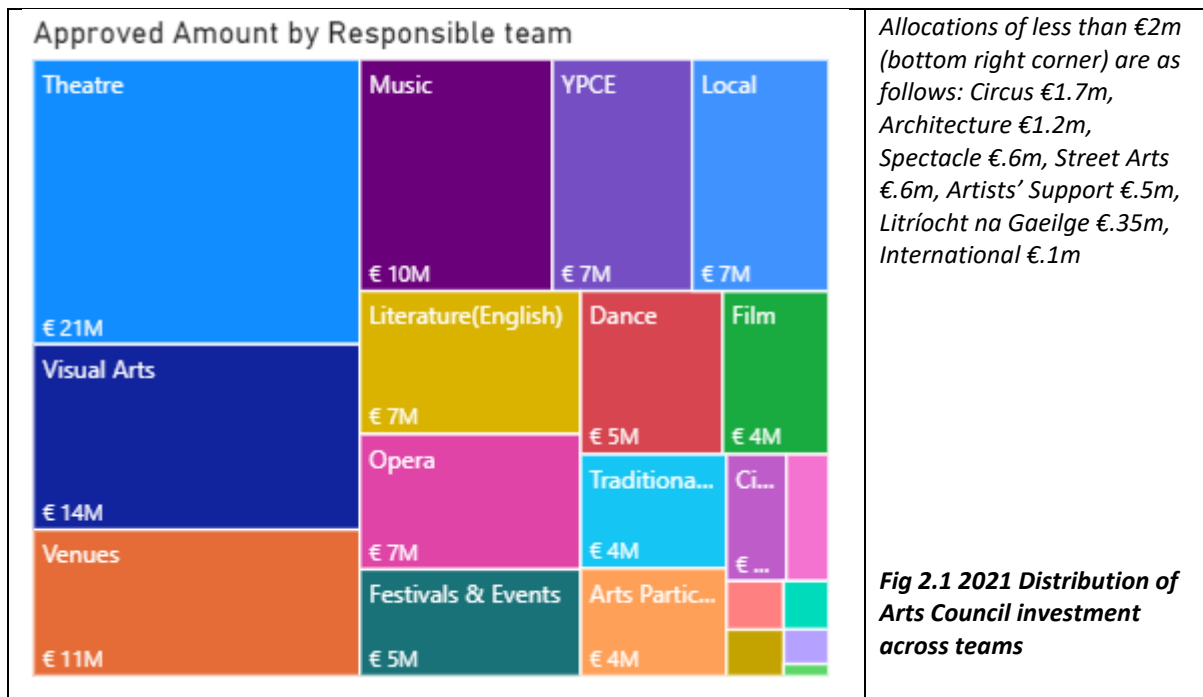


Fig 1. 2 Annual trend – Arts Council – all schemes and awards

Section 2 – YPCE investment in context

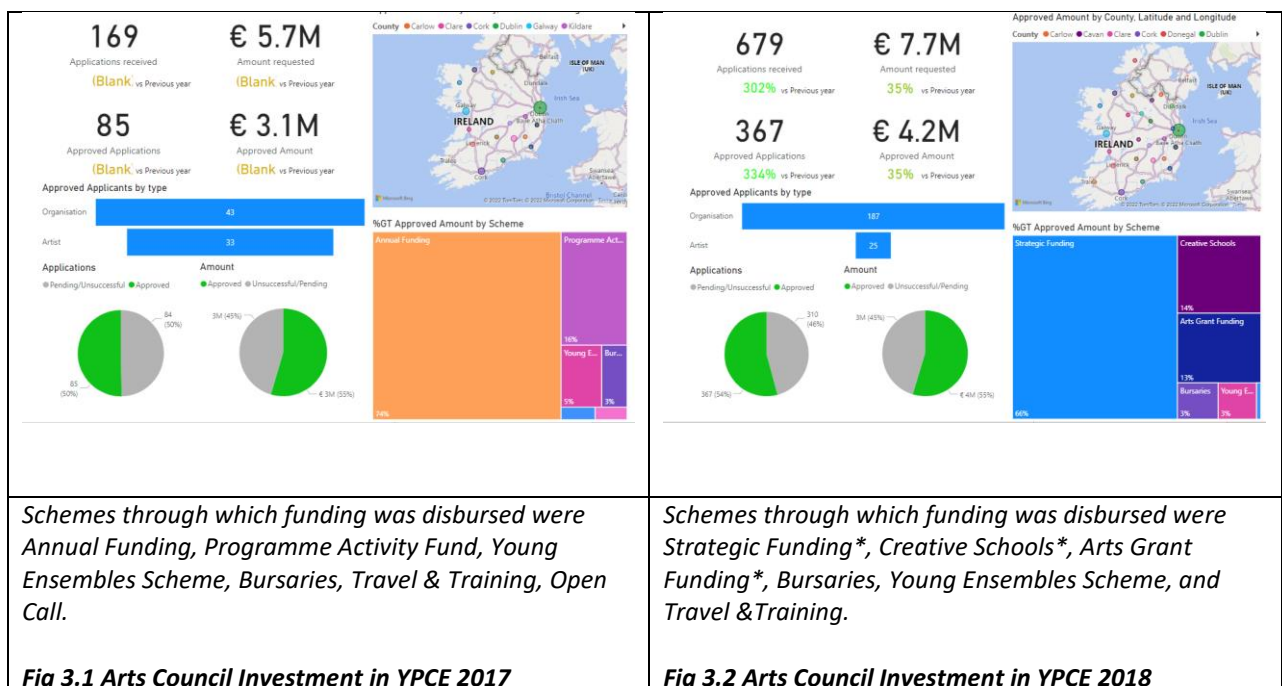
Fig 1.1 in the previous section shows targeted investment in children and young people, which is managed through the Young People, Children and Education (YPCE) team. This does not include investment in children and young people’s arts which is channelled in other ways – and through which the YPCE team plays a supporting and advisory role. For example, the Arts Council invests in every local authority arts office in the country, and in arts centres across the country, all of which provide programming with and for children and young people. Investment in art form-specific organisations which serve a wider public, and whose work includes but is not exclusively focussed on children and young people, is managed through the relevant art form teams. Current systems do not allow for full analysis of investment in children and young people’s arts through these channels.

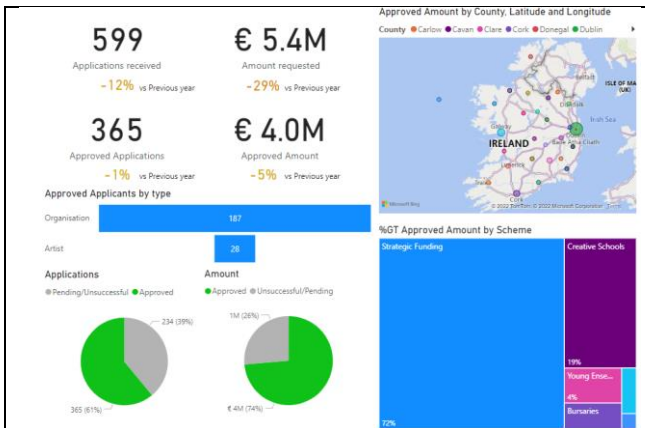
Fig 2.1 provides an illustration of how the Arts Council investment in 2021 was distributed across all teams or areas of work by way of context.



Section 3 – Schemes and awards through which YPCE funding was disbursed 2017-2021

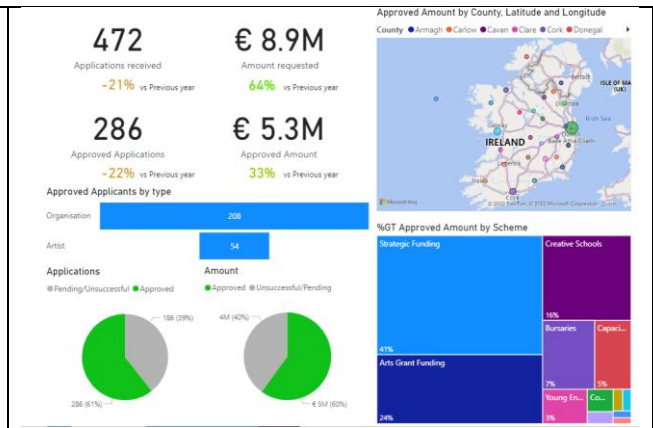
Figures 3.1 to 3.5 show the annual pattern of investment in YPCE from 2017. New schemes were introduced over this period. The level of demand for funding increased as did the Arts Council's available funding. An apparent decrease in 2019 is due to the manner in which multi-annual funding awarded in 2018 through Arts Grant Funding was captured – that investment is included in 2018 figures.





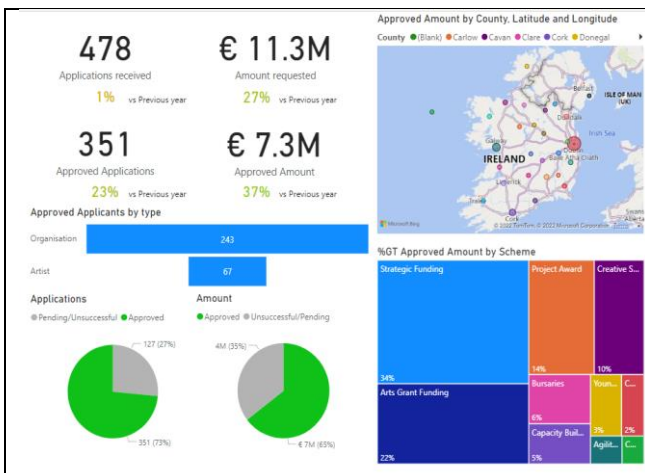
Schemes through which funding was disbursed were Strategic Funding, Creative Schools, Bursaries, Young Ensembles Scheme, and Travel & Training.

Fig 3.3 Arts Council Investment in YPCE 2019



Schemes through which funding was disbursed were Strategic Funding, Arts Grant Funding, Creative Schools, Capacity Building Support Scheme*, Bursaries, Young Ensembles Scheme, Commissions*, Professional Development Award*, Covid-19 Completion Funding*, Travel & Training, Covid-19 Response*.

Fig 3.4 Arts Council Investment in YPCE in 2020



Schemes through which funding was disbursed were Strategic Funding, Arts Grant Funding, Project Award*, Creative Schools, Bursaries, Capacity Building Support Scheme, Young Ensembles Scheme, Covid-19 Strategic Funding*, Agility Award*, Commissions.

Fig 3.5 Arts Council Investment in YPCE in 2021

* Indicates a newly introduced scheme in that year

Appendix (ii)

Young people, children and education – examples of how we work

Table 1 – Examples of how we work

The table below provides examples of how we currently work.

How the Arts Council does its work....	Examples
<p>Investing in artists, groups and organisations who make art by, with and for children and young people</p>	<p>Examples of this work include:</p> <p><i>We run a range of schemes of awards specifically targeted to support children’s engagement with these arts.</i></p> <p><i>We encourage all Arts Council funded organisations – in particular those in receipt of Strategic and Arts Centre funding – to develop programmes with and for children and young people.</i></p> <p><i>We place particular priority on children and young people in some awards and initiatives</i></p>
<p>Working in partnership with government departments, local authorities, and others whose decisions impact on children and young people’s participation in the arts</p>	<p>Examples of this work include:</p> <p><i>We have invested significant time and resources in developing and leading Creative Schools</i></p> <p><i>We have invested in and led pilot initiatives with education partners that are now supported elsewhere (e.g. Arts in Junior Cycle)</i></p> <p><i>We support artist residencies in Initial Teacher Education (In 2022 this has expanded to settings offering a qualification in Early Learning and Care)</i></p> <p><i>We have worked with DCEDIY to support research regarding good practice in facilitating the arts in early learning and care.</i></p> <p><i>We have a partnership with Music Generation</i></p> <p><i>We have highlighted children and young people as a priority in partnerships with local government</i></p> <p><i>We provide advice and input into the development of national government plans such as Creative Youth</i></p>
<p>Investing in research and initiatives that improve our understanding of children’s participation in the arts</p>	<p>Examples of this work include:</p> <p><i>We worked with the ESRI to publish two research reports on arts and cultural participation among children drawing on the Growing up in Ireland National Longitudinal Study</i></p>

<p>Encouraging children and young people to share their ideas and listening to what they say</p>	<p>Examples of this work include:</p> <p><i>We are consulting with young people as part of our policy development process. We have participated in training with Hub na Óg and have engaged specialist services to assist us with this work.</i></p> <p><i>We prompt funded artists groups and organisations to consult with young people, and our funding guidelines refer them to the national framework for children’s participation in decision making</i></p> <p><i>We place priority on children and young people’s voice in schemes such as the Young Ensembles Scheme and YPCE Project Award.</i></p> <p><i>We include young people aged 16-24 in the peer panels that make funding decisions for these awards.</i></p>
---	--

Table 2 – Objective 8 – Plan and provide for children and young people

The Arts Council’s current ten-year strategy [Making Great Art Work \(2016-2025\)](#) includes a key objective to plan and provide for children and young people. The actions in this area are outlined below, along with notes on our work to date. Through our survey, we welcome your views on whether the actions set out in our ten-year strategy continue to be relevant, and which of these, if any, we should prioritise over the remainder of the strategy.

<p>We will advocate for the centrality of the arts in formal education at all levels and for the provision of quality vocational training in the arts</p>	<p>Notes:</p> <p>We have contributed to NCCA consultations regarding arts education and curriculum reform.</p> <p>Gaps in this area were particularly pronounced during the Covid emergency. Young people’s access to training in dance, which happens largely outside of the funded infrastructure, was particularly impacted. We advised Government in relation to these gaps, and developed Guidelines to assist the sector to safely re-open.</p> <p>We are currently working with the dance team to explore new opportunities for advanced training in dance.</p> <p>We provide Strategic Funding to Galway Community Circus, which is pro-actively working to improve opportunities for vocational training in circus.</p> <p>We have a partnership with Music Generation, which has significant reach in providing music education for children and young people.</p>
<p>We will work with the Departments of Arts and of Education to achieve full</p>	<p>One of the key actions for the Arts Council in the Arts in Education Charter was to promote Arts Rich Schools, in partnership with our parent department and the Dept of Education.</p>

<p>implementation of the Arts in Education Charter</p>	<p>We have invested significantly in what is now called Creative Schools, and we continue to lead out on this initiative.</p> <p>We continue to advise government in relation to the Creative Youth Plan which has overtaken the Arts in Education Charter.</p> <p>We are continuing to support artist residencies in Initial Teacher Education, which was a commitment in the Arts in Education Charter. In 2022, we have expanded this to settings offering a qualification in Early Learning and Care.</p>
<p>We will invest in artists, arts organisations and key programmes dedicated to developing high quality work in arts-in-education and youth arts, and we will support the provision of excellent arts experiences for young people in the public domain</p>	<p>We have continued to increase our investment in children and young people’s arts across a range of funding programmes. See Appendix 1.</p>
<p>We will make provision for children and young people a key focus of our relationship with local government</p>	<p>This remains a key focus of our relationship with local government.</p>
<p>We will incorporate our commitment to young people into the mainstream of our decision-making and, where appropriate, into our funding agreements with arts organisations.</p>	<p>All strategic and arts centre funded organisations are asked to report on their work with/for children and young people, and the extent to which they include children in decision making, as part of their annual application to the Arts Council.</p>

Appendix 3: Individuals and organisations who contributed to the consultation

<p>Aideen Howard, The Ark Anna Newell Baboró International Arts Festival for Children Backstage Theatre Children’s Books Ireland Colm Ó Cuanacháin, Education Director, Fighting Words Deirdre Enright, Kerry ETB Denise McDonnell, Belvedere Youth Club Ealaín na Gaeltachta Emma Martin, United Fall Eoghan Doyle, Youth Theatre Ireland Fidget Feet Galway Community Circus Gerry Horan –NOISE Music Hollie Kearns, Learning and Public Engagement Curator, Butler Gallery Irish Association of Youth Orchestras</p>	<p>Joanna Parkes Joanne Beirne Margaret Callan Bergin, Garbo Productions Margaret O’Sullivan, Music Generation Ireland Mary Moynihan, Smashing Times International Centre for Arts and Equality Mieke Vanmechelen National Council for Curriculum and Assessment National Youth Arts Programme, National Youth Council Nurrures Best Creche Saoirse Reynolds, National Youth Arts Programme Seán Ó Coinn, Foras na Gaeilge The Board and Executive of Branar Tríona O’ Connor, EY Inspector, DE Veronica Coburn – Tenderfoot @ The Civic</p>
--	--