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# Doing it

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Jo Wheeler

Projects that involve the active participation of young people and partnerships can be complex. We can't say 'this situation will always be like this and here's what to do about it' but in this section we offer guidance for working with young people, working with a project team and best practice advice on what you should consider in managing your project safely.

If we want young people to feel that galleries have something to offer them as visitors, participants or volunteers then we need to involve young people directly in the process and view this as a two-way relationship with potential barriers, benefits and learning for both young people and galleries.

We need to acknowledge young people may have barriers to accessing our venues – and our venues may have barriers in engaging with young people.

There are a number of principles, legal child protection, health and safety and confidentiality considerations that you must ensure are in place when working with young people. Once these are addressed the best way to work with either groups or individual young people is to talk to them.

But don't underestimate the time it will take. If you want to genuinely involve young people in decision-making at your gallery it will take time, commitment and resources, but even seemingly very small steps, if done well, will begin a relationship, have value and could build the foundations for something more ambitious.

Although we're talking about working with 'young people' as a demographic group it's really important to remember that young people are individuals and are just as different and complex as the rest of us.

Which is why when programming work with a group of young people it's really important to get to know them as individuals and discover their own interests, ambitions, strengths, needs, skills and abilities. As gallery educators we shouldn't assume that all young people are into graffiti and DJ-ing and make the most of our unique collections.

Be aware that by consulting with a small group you will gain valuable insights into aspects of youth culture and be able to start addressing the basic barriers to access, but be realistic: this will not enable your programme to cater for every local young person.

## Tips on... working with young people

*Johnny Gailey, Opt in for Art Co-ordinator, Fruitmarket Gallery*

- Devise a programme of activity for all young people – targeted projects must always feed off, and into, a wider open programme and not stand alone. A open universal provision provides the foundation for effective work with targeted groups
- Don't define young people by their 'issue', or their 'problem' – it's not up to us to define that or worse try and solve it. Start from the basis that all young people have potential which we want to develop in an open-ended way
- Always put the young people and their interests first – focus on what the gallery can do for young people, rather than what the young people can do for the gallery
- Establish a direct and respectful relationship where the young people can challenge you, by challenging the young people
- The young people should decide for themselves if they want to take part or if they want to walk away – have a alternative space, such as a café, for individual young people to go to if they wish to disengage
- It's okay if they don't like the artwork – it's not about convincing them otherwise. Leave room for their own interpretation – don't be prescriptive about the artwork
- Always present with a lively mind. Be receptive, make connections and follow young people's ideas and responses – the job is to draw stuff out of the young people
- Make it fun. It's not what you are saying that's important, it's what they are hearing

“ The young people on the Opt in for Art programme were given control to develop their own projects, to represent themselves and only themselves, rather than to speak on behalf of young people per se. In the same way that one group of adults is not indicative of adult culture, this approach sought less to reflect a 'community' than to create a 'community'.”

*Johnny Gailey, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh*

“There is no doubt that galleries and museums are a fantastic resource for all of the community not just young people. However, there is a ‘way of being’ in a gallery that is not necessarily a social skill that all of us have acquired or are comfortable with. The silence, the white walls, the cameras, the climate controls and the gallery assistants who keep you under constant observation as if you intend to break something anyway. Often the very nature of a gallery space makes young people feel uncomfortable.”

*Clare Mitchell, Regional Youth Officer, Government Office West Midlands*

There may be many reasons why the young people you’re hoping to engage have never stepped foot in your gallery before or are not returning as independent visitors.

**What gallery educators say about the barriers they felt their organisations had in developing youth-friendly practice:**

- Facilities and resources are not equipped to meet young people’s needs – this could highlight the gallery’s shortcomings
- Additional demands on front of house staff
- Don’t want young people to be disappointed
- Not the gallery’s target customer
- Not knowing how to handle young people
- Fear of the unknown
- Working with disadvantaged groups would mean bringing in other agendas and expertise
- Disturbance to other visitors
- Fear of giving up control
- Diversity of the needs of the young people
- Clashes with the gallery’s other agendas

**What young people say about their experience of museums and galleries:**

- ‘They make you nervous, the other people there... watching your every move’
- ‘They are boring, exhibitions seem unapproachable and protective’
- Past experiences were not positive, especially enforced school visits with worksheets
- No age-appropriate activities for young people
- ‘Galleries are uninviting... boxed off... segregated’
- ‘The “approachable” staff don’t look approachable’
- ‘There is a stigma attached to them, which puts people off, kind of highbrow’
- ‘Really better than I expected’
- ‘It’s actually quite interesting once you get in there’
- ‘A bit formal and repetitive’
- ‘I wouldn’t choose to go to a museum or gallery for a day out’

You need to discover what the potential barriers are between your organisation and young people. Go and find out by consulting with your colleagues and young people in your community. If you don’t have an existing relationship with young people or want to conduct a wider consultation try:

- Local youth magazines
- Go into your local youth club or school
- Local youth radio stations
- Access a local youth websites forum
- Contact local youth organisations many of whom will have access to youth forums, youth councils, consultation groups and websites. There will be a team dedicated to this in your local Youth Service, usually called the Engagement or Participation Team.
- Your local Children and Young People’s Plan by the Children’s Services department in the local authority will include feedback from young people about what they want to do locally
- Your local Council for Voluntary Services



## Recruitment

Involving young people in active participation is all about building personal relationships with individuals and you'll need to think about working with small groups, probably a maximum of 10-12 young people, maybe less. Even with smaller numbers, recruitment can take time. Ideally meet young people on their own turf before any activity begins and before you work with them at the gallery, so that their interests and support needs can input into the planning.

Researching the artists and artworks before visiting the gallery can help to create a sense of expectation and anticipation, strengthen the context of a gallery visit and ultimately engage more young people.

“Arc (alternative education organisation) participants invited us to lunch, which they made themselves, where we presented the project and completed baseline evaluation. Part of this session was spent compiling a skills audit and establishing the participants' interests and previous experience. This allowed us to tailor the sessions to meet real need and helped us to identify what activities might be challenging or appealing.”

*Alice Walton, Education Co-ordinator, Living Art project, Metropole Gallery, Folkestone*

Broadly speaking young people are more likely to get involved in your activity if they have a sense of ownership in its process – that you are planning an activity with rather than for them. Design your work to allow young people to take responsibility for specific areas. Initially this may be a quite small role, developing into something larger with time. envision projects worked well where participants were able to input into the planning times, locations, dates, content and future facilitators.

Having said that some young people may not want to commit to planning and just want to turn up – as individuals you need to cater for a variety of interests, abilities and commitment, but you'll need to find this out first.

If physically meeting up with the young people prior to the workshop just can't happen try:

- Introducing the project and asking some questions via a phone call or, if appropriate, a referral form or written questionnaire
- A youth partner staff member could facilitate a consultation with the group for you
- If you can't ask the young people directly then try talking to staff, parents or carers who know them

At the very least you'll need to know if any of the young people have any access needs some time in advance to make sure you can support them to participate fully.

“Young people pointed to the need for galleries to vigorously advertise their youth activities in local schools and perhaps also in youth clubs and sports centres, and to make direct contacts with art teachers. Schools are familiar with giving out information about clubs and activities and would gladly include information on a gallery project. They said that direct contact with art teachers was particularly important so that teachers could encourage nervous young people to take part.”

*Dr Jacqueline Watson, Enquire East: Learning for Empowerment, engage, 2007*

## Ideas for recruiting and engaging young people

- Advertise through partner organisations who work with young people
- Produce flyers, which can be photocopied – they don't need to be expensive
- Use free distribution networks such as your local authority mailshots for the youth service and schools
- Youth websites
- Local radio
- Local youth magazines
- PR on the street – link up with detached youth workers
- Use creative PR or 'happenings' to publicise events with processional sculptures, placards, banners etc
- Community ambassadors – engage a key youth worker, artist or community leader who's well respected by young people to be an advocate for your project
- Use young people as ambassadors
- Host taster sessions prior to the start of projects so young people can sample activity before committing
- Word of mouth: perhaps the most important and successful strategy

## Communication

Agree with young people how you will contact them throughout the project. Some envision projects found texting a successful way to communicate reminders of forthcoming sessions and keeping young people informed of changes. If this proves a good idea, invest in a mobile phone for the project (never use your personal phone).

## Transport

How are the young people going to get to your venue? Some people might be quite capable and motivated to get public transport – others might need a bit more support. Will you or partners be providing taxis, minibuses or reimbursing bus fares? If working in rural areas where the travel time to the venue is considerable, acknowledge this. Maybe you or the artist could travel with the young people, providing informal contact time and use this journey to develop creative activity as part your project.

“ [It was my] first museum experience. I thought museums were just photos and paintings... yes it's given me a different idea of what museums can offer.”

*Participant, Wordz Out, Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery*

Case study:

## Wordz Out

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# Creating a welcoming environment

You may feel that you're limited by the sterile 'white box' gallery space or the 'intimidating' entrance hall, but there are small things you can do to make the space more welcoming to young people:

- Have the door open (obvious, but important)
- Ensure someone is there to meet and welcome the group at the door
- Encourage front of house staff – including caretakers and security staff – to be welcoming and friendly
- Bring a CD player
- Change the lighting
- Provide tea and/or juice and toast and encourage young people to make this independently for themselves and for each other
- Find ways that young people can make their own mark on the space
- Create a chill out or time-out space with cushions and beanbags
- Use the gallery café (if you have one) as a time-out/discussion space, which can encourage the young people to mix with other gallery visitors and feel comfortable about returning there on other occasions as a place to go
- Approach the project as a team with both staff and young people working together on an equal footing
- Use ice breakers and team building activities involving all the staff

Some of this will depend somewhat on whether you're working with young people in the gallery space when it's open for public access; this is something to bear in mind when you're planning. If you're proposing to do some really hands-on activity consider whether an alternative, neutral space, with few distractions, can be used. However be aware that part of your focus should be on the young people developing a relationship with and sense of ownership of the gallery space too.

Providing some kind of refreshments is especially important, whatever time of day you're running your activity. If you're planning an all day event you will need to provide a lunch – but even if you're organising a two-hour evening session it's good to provide something simple to eat and drink. Some young people might not have eaten a great deal before they arrive at the gallery. But do avoid fizzy drinks, too much caffeine and sugary food for obvious reasons! You will need to be aware of allergies though.

If you can make the refreshment area slightly separate from the workshop area it gives a secondary space for people to use if they need a break.

## Flexibility

A flexible approach to facilitating the activity is absolutely crucial. Be aware that many young people will have had limited experience of galleries and education spaces beyond their school environment – you'll need to give them enough information and experience to make informed opinions. It's obviously difficult to make an informed decision about whether you like contemporary sculpture if you've never experienced it before, so as much as possible allow for the project to develop and grow with the young people's interests, ideas and commitment. Most funders will positively encourage young people's decision-making to influence the activity. See Getting started for more on fundraising for projects.

You'll still need initial activity to be structured. Start working with an activity that most of the group will be familiar and comfortable with (perhaps from a school experience) to let them find their feet with you and the building. Give them some confidence before offering a range of opportunities and choices.

Once you've got to know more about who you are working with, implement that knowledge into your planning.

## Timing

Timing will be somewhat determined by when you can get access to the gallery but you also need take into consideration young people's other commitments and issues, for example: medication, lie-ins at the weekend, exam times, travel times, rush hour traffic, other big events in your local area and holidays. If you're working with young people in full-time education are school holidays a good or bad time to programme workshops? You can programme longer blocks of daytime sessions but this has pros and cons:

### Pros

- Relationships and a sense of teamwork build more quickly
- You can create a more intense, experience
- It's easier to manage resources
- You can take over a space for the period of the project (leaving out resources so that there is no tidying up or setting up time)

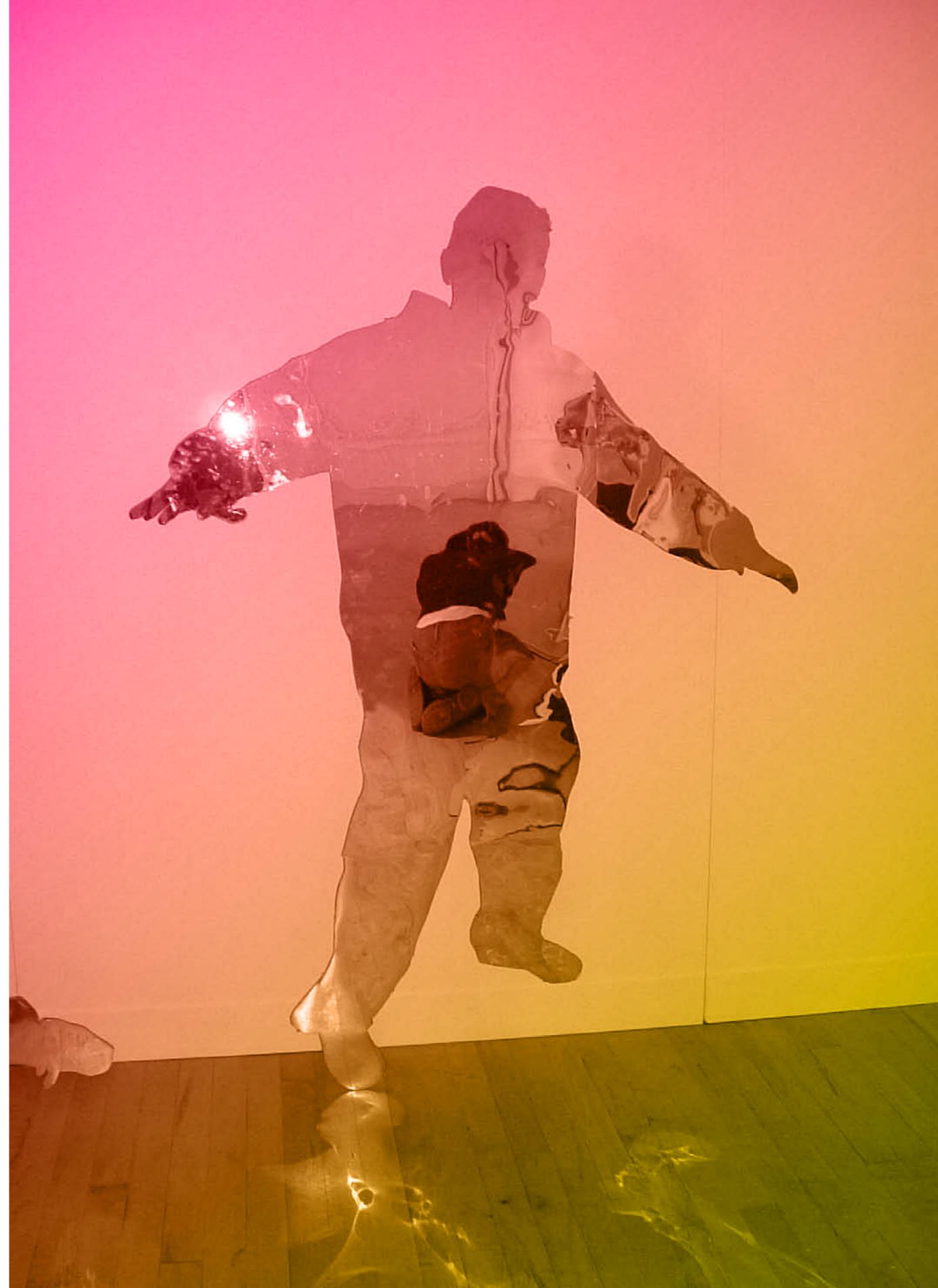
### Cons

- Inconsistency of participants and staff; some young people, youth partner staff and gallery staff may have booked holidays
- It will require lots of energy and commitment from you and the young people
- Young people feel they're entitled to time-out from learning
- Young people get distracted by what their peers not involved in the project are up to

City Art's Apt youth project have developed a successful approach, planning new projects in term time, meeting once a week in the early evening to build confidence and interest and to iron out any issues. During this time they discuss with participants times and days for a more intense block of activity for the approaching holiday period.

“Concern was raised in the planning stage about the workshop sessions being in the main gallery space while it was open to the general public but this did not worry the young people themselves. On the contrary, working with artists and Q Arts staff in a public forum appeared to raise their sense of legitimacy in occupying the gallery space.”

*Amanda McLaren, Programme Officer (Participation and Learning), Q Arts*



# Budgeting considerations

Where possible leave some flexibility in your budget to adapt your plans to respond to young people's interests and commitments. You will also need to put aside specific funds for support costs which you'll be able to allocate once you've talked to your partners and young people to find out their access needs. The following list gives some guidance on what to think about when planning your budget:

- Access needs: interpreters, personal assistants, child care or specific transport costs
- Transport: taxi, bus and train fares, minibuses
- Refreshments
- Artists' fees
- Materials
- Training: to address any skills or awareness gaps for yourself and colleagues
- Partnership development events: opportunities to share skills and build the partnership
- Accreditation
- Enhanced Criminal Record Board (CRB) checks for all staff (including volunteers) who are in direct contact with young people
- Support workers: if employing on an hourly rate, remember to factor in time for planning, setting up and packing away, feedback before and after the sessions, and evaluation meetings etc
- Volunteers: transport, refreshments and CRB checks
- Marketing
- Exhibition costs
- Celebratory event including invites and refreshments
- Contingency (at least 20% for flexibility)

Funders may want to see what your organisation is contributing to the project. So include venue hire, your time and other colleagues involved including your line manager's time. See Getting started for more guidance on fundraising.

# Taking risks: managing expectations and accepting limitations

Part of the benefits of working with a group of young people is about them informing our practice with their fresh and exciting ideas. It's about opening our doors and being open to the change that brings. Taking risks in the envision projects generally paid off. It demonstrated a commitment to and trust in the young people which was reciprocated. It challenged traditional ideas of what a gallery space should and could be.

If a project doesn't meet your expectations, don't give up hope and don't be afraid to risk doing something again, even if it went wrong before. If you know you managed the project to the best of your ability and have evaluated properly, it will provide a valuable learning experience and give you practical knowledge about how you plan in the future.

## Managing Expectations

In creating a youth-friendly gallery with young people be honest with yourself, your colleagues and young people about what you can realistically offer. Share your motivations, your restrictions and the potential of this work. Be honest about how much time and commitment this work needs, the activity may initially appear resource heavy for quite limited outcomes but if it is delivered well the investment should lead to bigger and better things.

Involve young people in the evaluation process rather than imposing it upon them – let them know why you're doing it – make it a shared process. They could have some ideas about how they'd like to feedback comments to you. See Wrapping up and Resources to get more advice on evaluation methods.

Relationship building can take time. If you want young people to offer their honest opinions it's vital to generate trust so that young people feel motivated and open about sharing their thoughts with you. Let them know what will happen to their comments, that their ideas may not be actioned immediately and that decisions may take time and need to be brokered. Acknowledge the learning you and your organisation have gained from the young people and be honest about any mistakes.

Is the programme time-limited because of funding? Can the young people help fundraise to continue and develop the project? If so how long will it take for funding decisions to be made? See Getting started for more advice on fundraising.

Case study:

## X-Panel

At Spacex in Exeter a group of nine young people aged 16–21 years old were recruited, given training and supported by gallery staff to budget and organise their own exhibition and event for other young people. The group took full responsibility for all aspects of organising an exhibition, selecting a local artist, organising an opening event, workshop sessions for other young people and a music event in the gallery space.

Some interesting issues arose about how the gallery balanced the needs of the emerging artists the gallery exhibits, and the idea of 'letting young people loose' on all the interpretation and marketing material for these shows. There was also concern about allowing the group the freedom to plan too much. Planning an exhibition and three separate events created lots of work for the project staff and the group themselves.



“[It was] really enjoyable, slightly stressful, but completely beneficial. Priceless experience.”

*Young person, X-Panel, Spacex, Exeter*

## Maximising outcomes

Where appropriate, make the most of opportunities to showcase the project – work as a group to publicise your achievements to local young people, your organisation, the community, funders and policy makers. Link up with websites, young people's magazines, community newspapers, radio and events.

As well as adding to a sense of achievement, sharing your project with a wider audience will also increase both the young people's and the gallery's profile locally and help to make the case for continuing the work. Good documentation makes a great impact and is a vital tool for communicating the value of your project. See *Wrapping up* for more ideas on promoting your project to others.

## Sharing information: confidentiality and marketing

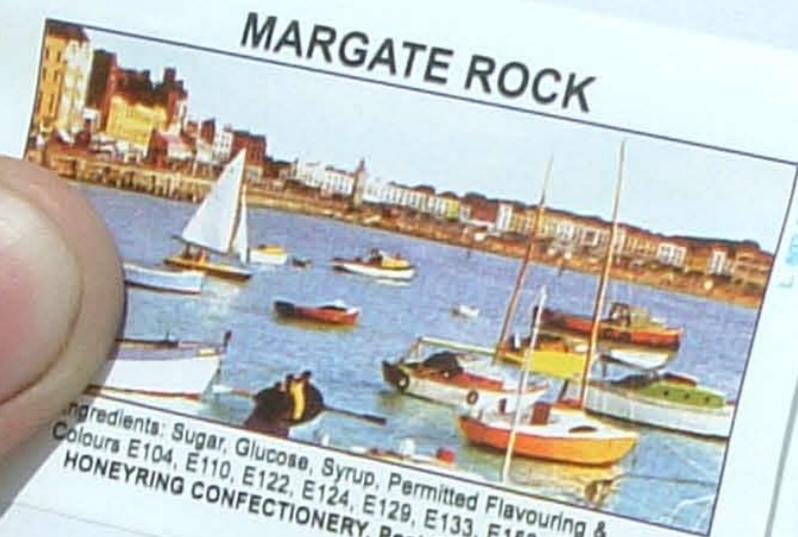
It is essential that you have written consent for any photographs/images taken of the young people from the participants and their parents or carers. Use images only for the purposes you specifically agree with the young people. In the case of young people in residential care, consent may not be possible to obtain. You can still document a project but only use photographs that do not identify individuals, such as images of hands and backs of heads. For an example of a photo consent form see the *envision* toolkit, *Templates and Guidelines* section at [www.en-vision.org.uk](http://www.en-vision.org.uk)

When working with specific groups be respectful about how you name and market projects. Ask the young people how they want to be represented in publicity. Young people do not often identify with or are proud of the labels they are given. Remember that information/publicity often has a long circulation so do not label young people in a way that they may regret in years to come if not right now.

Have a written policy and agreement about the publicity of the project that you share with all partners and your organisation's marketing colleagues – they may not have the same approach as you and you could find that young people are represented in a way that they would not have chosen.



“ Empower the teens but be prepared for what happens. There is a fine line between too much freedom and too much structure. The first year of the [young people’s] Council, we made the mistake of telling the teens they could do what they wanted without the caveat of ‘within the context and bounds of working in a public institution’. Some lengthy and powerful discussions about issues of censorship followed. The end result: both adults and teens realised that ‘empowerment’ means negotiation, dialogue and sometimes compromise.”



Ingredients: Sugar, Glucose, Syrup, Permitted Flavouring & Colours E104, E110, E122, E124, E129, E133, E153, E155.  
HONEYRING CONFECTIONERY, Post Code SS3 0PJ.



“ We have had some behavioural problems and on one occasion this presented a risk to the exhibition, which was very worrying and made us question the viability of working in such close proximity to the work in a small gallery. We transferred to a project workspace in conjunction with visiting the gallery, which worked better. This afforded us some peace of mind and gave the young people space to spread themselves out. It was also recognising that the young people were extremely lively, full of energy and curiosity and they helped us to work with it rather than having to place constant restrictions.”

*Mandy Roberts, artist and Co-ordinator on the NR5 into Outpost project*

When working with or providing services for young people you will need to understand the responsibilities that you, your colleagues and your organisation are taking on. Have a written policy and set of procedures in place. There are some very good resources and training available to help you do this. See Resources for details.

Although we are keen to celebrate young people and focus on the positives of engaging with them, we also don't want to ignore the fact that sometimes young people can present unexpected and/or disruptive behaviour.

Are you working with young people who are engaging on a voluntary basis (through a youth project for example) or are they attending as part of their education or because of a court order? This can greatly affect the way young people view the project, at least initially, and this is something you need to be aware of.

When working with excluded and vulnerable groups, young people's lives may be very chaotic, frustrating and stressful. They may see your project as a bit of a refuge and you may be offering some really valuable time and space away from their daily problems. There is also the possibility that some of those frustrations and tensions may lead to behaviour which is challenging and you and the staff involved in the project – including front of house – will need to have in place a practical strategy for dealing with this.

## Be prepared

In your planning you will need to address:

- How many staff are needed to support the sessions?
- Are partner organisation's staff going to be present to support the project?
- Who has 'duty of care' for the young people?
- Who will obtain parental consent for the young people to attend the project?
- Does your partner organisation work using specific ground rules for their group and will they be the same rules for this project?
- Do partners, and possibly parents, intend to use attendance at the project in their rewards and sanctions for young people? If so you'll need to persuade them against this.
- Who will you ask for relevant personal details about individual young people and how will you use this information?

## Risk assessment

It's vital to carry out a risk assessment for your activity with young people, identifying:

- Hazards
- Who or what is at risk
- The extent of the risk
- Measures you can put in place to minimise risk
- What action needs to be taken by whom and by when to put these measures in place

This can be used in your planning meeting with the project staff and give you, your colleagues and any project partners more confidence that you've thought everything through and prepared things to the best of your ability.

For an example of a Risk Assessment Form see the envision toolkit, Templates and Guidance section at [www.en-vision.org.uk](http://www.en-vision.org.uk)

## Managing a project team

In managing your project team you will need to consider:

- Who will take overall responsibility for the project?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of everyone involved in the project?
- How will new responsibilities fit in with existing ones?
- How will you communicate with all parties involved in the project?
- How will progress will be monitored and reviewed?
- How will you provide practical and administrative support for those involved in the project?

To deliver your project you may find yourself working with a small team of artists, partner staff, gallery colleagues, volunteers, young people and support staff and you'll need to find ways of managing everyone's role. Get everyone involved in the planning and make sure all staff are kept informed, clear about their roles and responsibilities, and able to share their knowledge and advice.

## Support Workers

The role of a support worker is invaluable in providing pastoral support and duty of care expertise. It's important to maintain the same support staff throughout the project. They will have a deeper understanding of the aims, objectives and outcomes and feel a greater sense of investment in the project. This will help in developing the relationship between the staff team and the participants and crucially provide better, more consistent support for the young people. If that person is from a new youth partner then this could also provide a valuable learning experience for them in what galleries can offer young people and make them a champion for this work within their organisation.

For an example of a support worker's roles and responsibilities see the envision toolkit, Templates and Guidelines section at [www.en-vision.org.uk](http://www.en-vision.org.uk)

## Group agreement

In your first session with young people at the gallery it's important to discuss the practicalities of working in the building. It's a good idea to draw up a group agreement together about the way in which you all want to work as a team (for example, respect for each other, respect for the venue, guidance on

when you can have cigarette breaks or time-outs) which everyone can sign up to. Encourage participants and front of house staff to contribute to this and create the opportunity for everyone to discuss codes of conduct in the space and the front of house staff's role. Some envision projects made this a creative ice breaker exercise.

Pin the signed group agreement to the wall at every session and if any situations do arise you can refer back to the agreement as a reminder about what the ground rules for participation are.

If you need to intervene:

- Keep calm. By maintaining control you can help the young person to set limits for his or her behaviour
- Let other staff know about any concerns or developing situations as soon as possible, and call for support
- Treat young people as individuals. Even with prior knowledge of an individual's backgrounds be diplomatic: listen and respect a young person's viewpoint of the situation before making assumptions
- Debrief with the staff team after every session. Note any issues and discuss as a team how you will manage this at the next session and how this will impact on your planning for the rest of the project

## Professional boundaries

As a gallery educator your relationship with young people will not be easily recognised as that of a 'teacher' or 'social worker' and may be regarded more as a friendly adult. This may have great benefits, particularly for young people who have had a troubled family background or a negative experience of formal education. You could become a much needed positive role model and in some instances the young person's first positive relationship with an adult.

However with this comes responsibility. It is therefore very important to behave in ways that can't be misinterpreted and to keep to a professional code of conduct at all times.

Be clear about boundaries between personal and professional life and be prepared for the tensions that may arise between developing a caring, supportive relationship with young people and the need to maintain professional boundaries.

When there are no other support staff from partner organisations present, then you and your organisation will legally have 'duty of care'.

Some recommendations:

- Avoid situations when there is only one adult present with young people
- Be aware of the potential for abuse from other young people

- Work closely with partner agencies that know the young people to identify and reduce potential risk
- Ensure that all workers who have regular contact with young people receive child protection training in order to raise levels of awareness to enable them to deal with situations effectively and to protect everyone involved
- Ensure you have an incident reporting procedure in place and staff and volunteers are aware of it

## Avoiding vulnerable situations

Successful working with young people is built on relationships of trust. Young people need to trust that we will not talk about them with other people or share personal information. However if a young person discloses information about abuse or activity that is putting them at risk, then it is our professional obligation to share this with the local Children's Social Care Team, for investigation.

All staff should take particular care not to develop close personal or sexual relationships with the young people they are working with – it's exploitative and could be illegal.

Some strategies:

- Avoid being on your own with a young person behind a closed door
- Do not invite a young person to your home or visit them at their home
- Avoid touching young people unless it's part of your directed role
- Avoid giving young people lifts in your car
- Do not accept gifts

If you have reasons to believe a young person has developed a crush on you inform your line manager and partner staff at the earliest opportunity, and have your concerns noted.



## Staff behaviour

It's the staff's role to model appropriate behaviour and set a clear benchmark of what is acceptable, this includes: providing a positive and encouraging atmosphere, showing how an adult can be anti-oppressive and non-exploitative but still caring, assertive and willing to join in the fun. This promotes a culture that ensures everyone is listened to and respected as individuals.

## Emergencies

Ensure you have signed parental consent forms for the young people attending with emergency contact numbers. Inform the young person's parent or carer, your manager and any partner organisation staff at the earliest opportunity if an emergency arises.

## Child protection

Issues of child protection apply to working with all young people and some basic rules of good practice apply:

- If you do not already have one, instigate an organisational Child Protection Policy
- Ensure that all staff in contact with young people have a current Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) disclosure certificate. Disclosures can take weeks to be processed and returned; something to be aware of in your planning
- CRB checks can only be submitted through registered or 'umbrella' organisations

See the CRB website for more information and for details of local registered organisations at [www.crb.gov.uk/](http://www.crb.gov.uk/). Try your local Safeguarding Children Board for information about training and help with writing a Child Protection Policy. And see Resources for more information on Child Protection.

## Jargon Buster

**Duty of care** is seen in the eyes of the law as 'a duty to act as a careful parent would' by providing adequate supervision for the young people in your care.

This will depend upon things such as age, the maturity of the young people, the type of activity and numbers involved, which should be discussed in relation to a risk assessment for the project.

If you cause injury or loss because you were not working in a careful way, you could be held accountable by civil law for negligence. If a young person causes loss or damage to someone else or their property whilst under your supervision, you could also be liable.

If you are taking on duty of care for a young person you also need to be aware of their personal details and how you use this information. Some of this information will be confidential and you will need to make professional judgements about sharing information with colleagues on a need-to-know basis. For example, you might need to let project staff know that 'Sarah' is uncomfortable about working with male staff members, but not disclose details of what has happened in her life that has led to this.

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# Working with artists

“The use of a dedicated project artist is successful for the duration of the core project but does not allow for long-term contact with young people who locate the gallery as a place to return to. Building this transition period into future work will give young people enough time to develop long-term relationships with permanent staff. The gallery is also considering using a rotating 'bank' of artists so that young people and partner staff can develop more sustainable relationships with freelance artists facilitating gallery projects.”

*Nathalie Palin, artist, Every Drawing Matters project, Orleans House Gallery, Richmond*

However skilled an artist may be, their attitude and understanding of engaging young people is what will help decide who you work with.

Often the most talented and intelligent artists are not the best teachers – you need someone who is able to connect with young people and translate ideas and skills.

Finding an artist you trust will be a big relief and could be the key to your project's success. However working with the same artist again and again will restrict the artforms you introduce to young people. To avoid this you'll have to take some risks in working with new people. To limit these risks ask around, get recommendations, get references and involve young people in the recruitment process.

To give less established artists the opportunity to gain experience and an opportunity for you to see them interact with young people, you could offer shadowing or volunteering opportunities.

## Involving young people in recruitment

In many instances young people will know better than gallery staff what sort of artist they and their peers might want to work with.

Some ideas:

- Young people could meet and greet candidates as they arrive for an interview and show them round the building
- One or two young people could help in shortlisting and interviewing – you'll need to brief the young people first about their role
- Ask the artists to facilitate a short exercise with the young people as part of the interview

## The role of the artist

The role of the artist might vary from project to project with a different emphasis on different roles. You might choose someone who's more of a youth specialist than an artist. To create more of a direct link to the gallery, and/or due to limited resources, you might be the facilitator yourself.

Using professional artists and technicians can add value, impact and credibility to the project. You might decide to employ someone for a very specific purpose but usually an artist will be asked to meet a number of the following roles:

- As facilitator: introducing artforms and new skills, encouraging and supporting young people's own creativity
- As a creative consultant
- As a role model and inspiration for a creative career
- As collaborator on a specific piece of work
- As motivator, trainer, teacher, mentor, adviser

There are also some fantastic web-based resources to use with young people to explore the world of contemporary artists and people working in the creative industries. Some of these include: DCMS Culture Online website with links to projects and interactive sites including ArtisanCam, a video and interactive resource for young people including interviews from artists, curators and gallery technicians, at [www.cultureonline.gov.uk](http://www.cultureonline.gov.uk). AccessArt, a website made with young people for young people called Teenage Creativity and the Immersive Learning Space, which is a great site to explore the creative processes of different artists, dancers, architects and graphic designers, at [www.accessart.org.uk](http://www.accessart.org.uk)

## Contracts

To ensure a professional working relationship, all work should be contracted properly with a written and signed agreement which considers dates, times, payment details, insurance, the roles and responsibilities of the gallery, support staff and artist, copyright, resources and what happens in the event of cancellation. Once you have a template it won't take much time to maintain this important part of administration. For an example see envision toolkit Templates and Guidelines section at [www.en-vision.org.uk](http://www.en-vision.org.uk)

## Fees

There are various guidelines on rates of pay for freelance artists. Artquest's website currently suggests: 'Self-employed artists (when taking on short-term contracts of between one and five days and with experience of their field) should be offered a daily rate set of around £175-£300 per day. This rate decreases when the contract stretches beyond a working week up to twenty-one days. Artists should work for no less than £20 hour; artists in London should charge around 7.5% on top of this for London Market Allowance.'

## Briefing notes

It's also important to have a thorough set of best practice guidelines for freelancers you employ to work with young people. These should include a job description, the aims and objectives of the project, reference to your child protection policy, CRB checks, professional boundaries and expected codes of conduct.

## Issues

To really commit to sustainable youth-friendly practice be aware that young people's relationships need to develop not just with a freelance artist or partner staff but also with the gallery, its space and its staff. So make sure you have a presence within the activity – maybe you'll be leading it. Introduce the front of house staff – give them a role and get them involved. Young people are more likely to make independent return visits if they make a relationship with someone who will be there to welcome them when they come back.

Youth-friendly practice is about organisational change. The idea is not just about creating a youth-friendly education policy but an accessible youth-friendly space which is embraced and has impact across the whole organisation: on programming, on front of house, on marketing, on management – on every aspect of the venue. See Wrapping up for more discussion about organisational change.

## Where to look for artists

### Websites:

The Ann Peaker Centre has a database of artists and organisations working with the criminal justice system. Go to [www.apcentre.org.uk](http://www.apcentre.org.uk)

Aliss is a database of artists working in participatory arts in the West Midlands. Go to [www.aliss.org.uk](http://www.aliss.org.uk)

The Voluntary Arts Network is a national directory of artists. Go to [www.voluntaryarts.org](http://www.voluntaryarts.org)

### Organisations:

Your regional Arts Council email groups

The engage forum

Local arts organisations

Your local authority Arts Development Officer

### Advertise:

Artsjobs is Arts Council England's free daily email for creative opportunities

engage monthly e-newsletter (free to members)

ENYAN (English National Youth Arts Network) website and regional groups [www.enyan.co.uk](http://www.enyan.co.uk)

a-n Artists' Newsletter magazine

Local press

Notice boards in studios, galleries and arts centres

“It was felt that this shift in opinion or [increased] level of involvement from the young people was nurtured by having a connection with people at the gallery... rather than any real shift in the beliefs they had before. In other words, they now come to the gallery and are interested because they know people here and want to continue that relationship rather than because they think the art is really good. Inevitably they see and are exposed to contemporary art on their visits so slowly their opinions may shift we hope.”

*Victoria Mayes, Offsite and Outreach Education Co-ordinator, Milton Keynes Gallery*

Case study:

## Living Art

The Metropole Gallery worked in partnership with Arc 25 and Pathways (both alternative curriculum providers) to introduce young people to creative ways of expression whilst exploring unfamiliar experiences.

The project was developed and lead by artists, Alice Walton and Abi Gilchrist and Natasha Kidd who's creative approach meant that every element of the project became a creative experience and opportunity for participants to make or think in a creative way, helping develop self expression and confidence.

“We attempted to take a quirky approach to the mundane activities that featured throughout the project, regardless of the setting, such as travelling, having tea or stopping for lunch. We introduced playful activities that challenged the group's expectations of an arts based project, which further served to change preconceived attitudes about certain places, people or modes of behaviour.”

*Alice Walton, freelance Education Co-ordinator, Metropole Gallery, Folkestone*

The project was clearly valued by the young people:

“It was really good and I liked going to London for the day and creating loads of things I had never done before and making our own cups was really cool and I really liked going to Margate but it is so crap because it has to end! It was great!”

*Young person, Living Art, project, Metropole Gallery, Folkestone*

The partners were exceptionally positive about the impact and value Living Art had in re-engaging the young people with learning:

“This particular student's attendance level was very poor, attending only when there was a threat of a visit from the Educational Welfare Officer. His self-confidence was very low and he was finding it very difficult to join the main group. When he did communicate he was barely audible and mumbled, making understanding him very difficult. I recognised that this student had an interest in the art sessions (as he attended school on those days) so this was an ideal opportunity to do some effective youth work. Since taking part in the project the change in this student has been remarkable! His self-confidence has grown; he is able to join the main group around the table and is happy to contribute to discussions and able to initiate conversations. He regularly has lunch and offers to make hot drinks for others. His attendance is 100%. The art project has been a vehicle in which positive relationships with staff and peers were established and reinforced, promoting his self-esteem and self-confidence.”

*Sandra, Co-ordinator, Pathways*



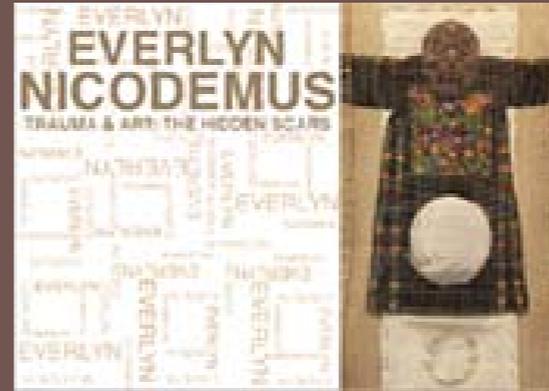
Volunteering should also be recognised as an important two-way relationship between the organisation and the individual. Many projects rely on volunteers; their skills and assistance can bring valuable support to a project, whilst providing them with valuable experience and an opportunity to contribute to their community.

When employing a volunteer ask for references and use an application form to formalise the arrangement and to clarify expectations of the volunteer and the organisation. Involve volunteers in team planning and training and let them know their contribution is valued.

Volunteering provides an opportunity for artists and youth workers to gain experience to develop their careers and it can also provide a significant opportunity for young people to progress from participant to a staff team member. This can offer young people fantastic learning opportunities, new responsibilities and key transferable work skills, whilst the gallery gains a valuable asset in a peer support worker. Participants are more likely to engage with a project if they can see other young people committed and supportive of the activity. If working with young volunteers you may want to consider some form of 'reward' for their time, for example gift vouchers, accreditation or a good reference.

Case study:

## Excelerate



198 Gallery in London developed opportunities for a group of young people outside of formal education who were attending 198's digital media education programme. Excelerate opened up 198's adult volunteering programme to the younger group and gave the young people valuable work based learning opportunities.

“Using artists and their work to inspire and motivate young people is well established, but Excelerate aimed to give young people more responsibility and for the artistic programme to benefit from their ideas and energy. The gallery has a long history of working with volunteers but this project provided the opportunity for a different kind of young person to get involved in the exhibitions.”

*Lucy Davies, Director, 198 Gallery, London*

Participants' involvement varied between two days and two weeks depending on their availability, the area of work and their level of commitment. Young people worked on exhibition installation, curatorial consultancy, PR, marketing and event management, promotional material design, photographic documentation and web page design.

“We have seen that we can have a changing pool of talent and enthusiasm that can contribute to the programme and extend the central role of volunteers to the organisation. It also gives young people the 'real' experiences they want to help them move forward with their careers and shows that their contribution is valued and recognised.”

*Lucy Davies, Director, 198 Gallery, London*