

Response to the Cultural Commission from West Lothian Youth Theatre

Education: How do we develop artistic, cultural and social skills and provide cultural knowledge for young people in Scotland?

- Provide artistic, cultural and social experiences to children at a young age so that these experiences become a part of everyday life
- Engage with children and young people through school
- Develop techniques in which the arts can be used to deliver subjects across the curriculum
- Engage artists to work in schools to deliver these techniques. These artists should have experience of working with children and young people in informal out of school hours settings, but with a well developed sense of the educational benefits of the work they are doing e.g. West Lothian Youth Theatre, National Youth Choir of Scotland.
- Develop continuing professional development programmes for teachers to enable them in the longer term to deliver the curriculum using the arts.
- Through the development of the use of artistic and cultural experiences in schools, encourage children and young people to take part in informal, out of school hours activities
- Develop and fund a wide ranging provision of arts activities for children and young people out of school hours
- Develop the training of artists to be able to work with children and young people in a meaningful way (rather than just delivering a younger version of community arts)

The institutional infrastructure: How best to organise and support the cultural sector in Scotland to deliver the maximum value in the most effective manner to young people?

- Provide networks for marketing etc which are accessible and known by young people e.g. websites
- Coordinate and deliver targeted training to ensure that all arts and cultural experiences delivered to children and young people are appropriate
- Encourage strategic thinking by organisations that results in best practice being implemented across Scotland

The delivery of services and access to them: How best to provide cultural facilities and ensure the widest access for young people?

- Make venues more children and youth friendly
- Involve children and young people actively in venues
- Target more funding at participatory youth arts activities – the Youth Music Initiative has not been matched by similar funding streams for youth theatre or youth dance, despite the clear evidence of the huge benefits to young people of taking part
- Commission a wider range of theatre, music and dance that is accessible to and appropriate for young people to take part in and to watch/hear.
- Consult with children and young people about the facilities they want

Marketing and promotion: How to increase and broaden the profile of the young audience and the young people engaging with cultural activity in Scotland?

- Most importantly, deliver a genuinely high quality activity that young people will want to come back to again and again
- Get the interest of young people by targeting them in school
- Maximise the use of word of mouth publicity to generate audiences and participants, through bring a friend schemes, young reviewer schemes etc
- Encourage high levels of participation, both in and out of school (this will result in greater attendance as audience or participant in later life.)
- Use marketing techniques appropriate to children and young people – websites, e-mail, text messaging

Encouraging creativity: What is the best way to maximise the creative potential of the young people of Scotland?

- Through participation in high quality out of school hours arts provision, especially theater and dance, where creativity is developed through devising and improvising
- Through the relaxation of parts of the educational curriculum to allow time for more creative approaches to teaching and learning in schools
- Through the use of creative/artistic techniques in the delivery of the curriculum
- Through the celebration of all types of creativity, encouraging the development of a sense of achievement in arts participants.