

Access All Arts Fund Final Report

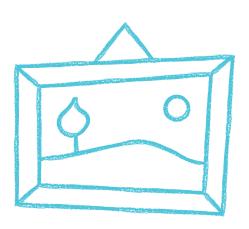
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Introduction

In 2021, Children in Scotland was one of five organisations selected by Creative Scotland to deliver the Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes programme.

The New Routes programme was created to test new approaches to support children and young people to apply for arts funding, in order to reach artists who were under-represented in the existing Nurturing Talent funding awards.

These communities included:

- Young artists from care-experienced backgrounds
- Young artists from rural communities and local authorities we get fewer applications from, specifically: Angus, West Dunbartonshire, Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, and Fife
- Young disabled artists, or young people who need additional support.

Children in Scotland was selected to test new approaches for young disabled artists, or young people who need additional support.

Central to all the pilot projects was that there must be a youth-led decision-making process for the applications and awards.

Children in Scotland delivered the Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes project between April 2021 and March 2022. The project involved co-designing a new fund – the Access All Arts Fund – with a panel of children and young people with additional support needs.

The fund was open for applications from 11 August - 13 September 2021 and received 236 submissions from children and young people aged between 11 and 26 years old. In November 2021, Children in Scotland distributed just over £68,000 to 106 children and young people across Scotland. The funded projects included a broad range of activities including visual art, music, film and TV, and creative writing.



Access All Arts funding gave one young person the opportunity to put on a dance performance

This report outlines project activity, explores the impact of the funding for children and young people, and identifies key learning and recommendations for Creative Scotland, policymakers and the wider creative sector to consider.

Context

Funding for the arts and the Covid-19 pandemic

In August 2020, the Scottish Government announced a £59m funding package for Scotland's culture and heritage sector to protect it from the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. This funding included £4.25m to support youth arts and ensure all children and young people in Scotland were able to access creative activities despite the pandemic.

£150,000 of this funding was allocated to boost the Nurturing Talent Fund – a youth-led fund designed to provide opportunities to young, emerging artists. The New Routes programme was established with this additional funding to explore new approaches to reach and support young people who Creative Scotland had identified as being underrepresented in previous Nurturing Talent Fund funding awards.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the lives of all children and young people across Scotland, affecting their education, their access to hobbies and sports, and impacting their social lives and mental health. Evidence shows us how Covid-19 has exacerbated existing inequality within Scottish society and how specific groups and communities have been more adversely impacted by Covid-19 than others – these include LGBTQIA+ children and young people, 1 care-experienced children and young people 2 and children and families from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds. 3



Access All Arts awardee

This project aimed to support a community of children and young people who have experienced significant challenges during the pandemic: children and young people with an additional support need or disability. Many children and young people with an additional support need or disability have found the impact on education particularly challenging. The project was also delivered against a backdrop of economic uncertainty for families, with significant rises in the cost of living being experienced across the UK.

¹How Covid is affecting LGBTQIA+ young people living in Scotland

²Coronavirus (COVID-19): children, young people and families - evidence summary - June 2021

³Covid in Colour Report

⁴Coronavirus (COVID-19): children, young people and families - evidence summary - June 2021

Children's rights, culture and disability

The Scottish Parliament has underlined its intention to incorporate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) into Scots Law. In line with this, and the ethos of the existing Nurturing Talent Fund, Children in Scotland adopted a children's rights approach in the design and delivery of the Access All Arts Fund. The Fund upheld many of the UNCRC articles, including:

Article 2 – Children should not be discriminated against because of ethnicity, gender, religion, language, disability or any other status.

Article 12 – Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously.

Article 23 – Children with disabilities have the right to play an active role in the community and society, and the government has a duty to support them and their families.

Article 31 – Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

Approach

Children in Scotland worked with a group of four children and young people to codesign the fund and used a participatory approach for project delivery. Owing to the Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time, the entire project took place online over Zoom.

Recruiting an arts practitioner and youth panel

In April 2021, Children in Scotland recruited an arts practitioner to support the design and delivery of the project. The intention of this was to share and learn different creative engagement approaches.

In May 2021, four children and young people with a range of additional support needs were recruited as panellists to lead the design of the fund. The panel comprised young people aged 12-25 from the West Lothian, Stirling and Glasgow local authorities. Project information and a short film was shared on Children in Scotland's website and via social media. Children in Scotland also targeted a range of schools and charities through our extensive networks to promote the opportunity. The final panel included one young person who had previously worked on a project with Children in Scotland and three other young people who were new to the organisation. Despite a wide range of activity, it was challenging to recruit panellists. This is covered in the key learning section.

Delivering the engagement sessions

The project team met over five sessions between June and October 2021. During these sessions, the young people discussed barriers for children and young people with additional support needs in accessing arts activities, created an identity for the new fund, discussed successful application criteria, developed promotional materials and helped to launch the fund. The group also assessed applications and made the final decisions over who would receive funding.

Children in Scotland has an established approach to engagement work with children and young people, which has been adapted to an online environment. The panel developed a 'group agreement' at the start of the project which helped to create a safe and respectful environment. Throughout the project delivery, staff helped to foster trusting relationships through icebreakers, discussions and games. We also used interactive online tools such as Jamboard, Miro and Menti to support accessibility and young people's engagement. Our approach to evaluating our work with the design panel is presented on page 17.

Designing the Fund

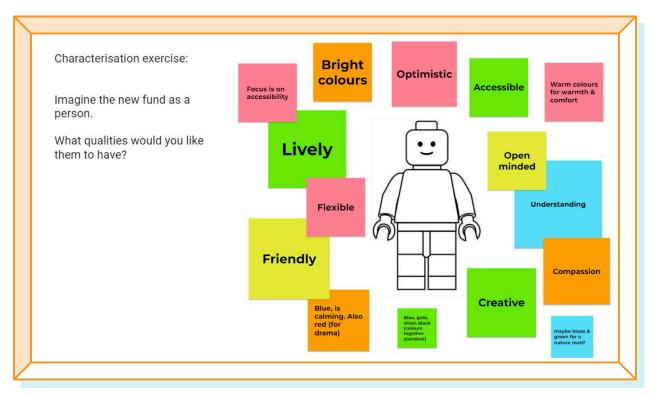
Early sessions focussed on developing a safe and enjoyable environment where the panellists felt comfortable working together. During the first two sessions, the group discussed creativity, art and explored barriers that might make it harder for children and young people with an additional support need or a disability to take part in creative activities.

We identified a number of key themes from these conversations. The panellists felt that many young people with disabilities face discrimination or stigma, which might prevent them from taking part in arts activities. They also said that young people might feel anxious, have self-doubt, or lack confidence which might prevent them from putting themselves out there and trying new creative activities. The panel also said that financial constraints were often an issue because not all families are able to pay for art classes or materials, so some young people are unable to access creative opportunities.

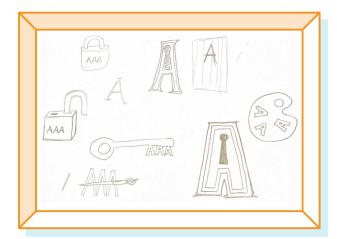


Barriers to creative opportunities identified by the Advisory Panel

During the second session, we were joined by a member of Children in Scotland's communications team who presented on the principles of branding and helped the panellists to design the fund's identity and its look and feel. Key themes that the panellists wanted reflected in the fund included optimism, accessibility, openmindedness, and creativity. They chose the name 'Access All Arts Fund' to highlight these themes. The panellists made sketches to develop a fund logo and promotional materials. Children in Scotland's graphic designer then took these sketches and discussion notes to create the graphics for the fund.



Discussing ideas for the identity of the fund





Initial sketches for the Access All Arts Fund logo and graphics











Final Access All Arts Fund logo and graphics

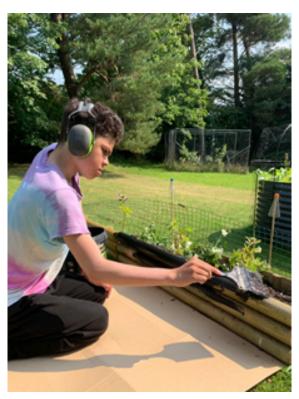
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Designing the application process

As part of the design process, the group discussed what information was needed from applicants, how applications would be judged and what a 'strong application' looked like. Key elements of a strong application included having a clear plan of what the funding was for, a clear breakdown of how the money would be spent, and an explanation of how the applicant would benefit from receiving a funding award. The panel also felt that applications should either be created by the child or young person or, in cases where the child was unable to do this, their views should be clearly included.

The group explored how to make the application process as simple and accessible as possible and decided that applicants could apply either via submitting an online form or sending in a video or audio file. Applicants were also invited to reach out if they wanted to apply via another method. To ensure we could fund as many applicants as possible, the group decided that applicants could only apply for up to £1,000. Extra funding was set aside to help cover the cost of adjustments children or young people might need to take part in their chosen activity. It was decided that this funding would be in addition to the £1,000, so that young people had the option to apply to use the full amount for their creativity, and not on support.

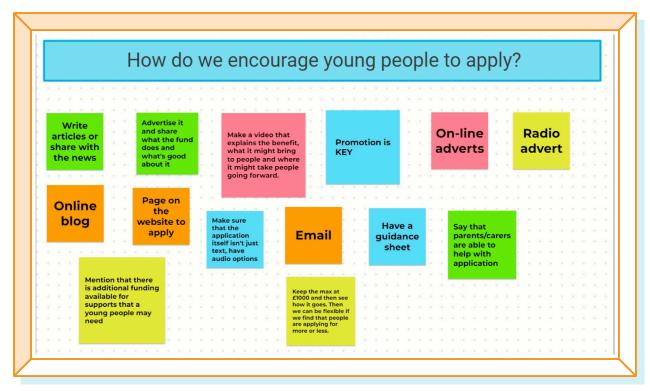
The group decided that applicants should be asked if they could share details of their additional support need, but they made it clear it should not be a requirement for applicants to receive funding.



Still from Access All Arts Fund video application

Promoting the fund

The group discussed different options for how we could promote the fund and ensure children and young people found out about it.



Jamboard exploring different ideas for promoting the fund

Again, the group said making the process accessible for children and young people and individuals with disabilities was key. To promote the fund, we created a webpage, an information sheet and a FAQ sheet. A promotional video and promotional images made using the graphics designed by the panel were also shared online.

Children in Scotland staff worked with the panel to make the application information as clear as simple as possible. All information was available in an easy-read format. Children in Scotland's website (where the application information was hosted) incorporates the 'Recite Me' accessibility tool which supports a range of needs by offering different accessibility functionality, including read aloud and text manipulation options. Telephone support for applicants and parents and carers was also made available.



Access All Arts awardee

The fund was open between 11 August and 13 September 2021. We promoted the fund on the Children in Scotland website and social media pages. We also contacted the headteachers of all the high schools in Scotland that had a department or focus on Additional Support for Learning about the fund. Facebook groups with a focus on supporting parents of children with disabilities were also contacted about the fund. We received 236 completed applications, which included videos and supporting artwork. Further information about the applications received is presented below.

Decision-making process

Originally, the fund had planned to distribute around £17,000 to successful applicants. Owing to the unexpected level of interest and the large number of applications the fund received, Creative Scotland decided to allocate an additional £50,000 to the project. This allowed Children in Scotland to fund a significantly increased number of projects.

Initially, the group had planned to review all the applications together. However, due to the large number of applicants we received, we had to change our plans. Children in Scotland proposed a revised approach to the design panel, who agreed the process. The approach involved shortlisting the applications using key criteria the panel had identified during the design sessions. The criteria identified by the panel was:

- 1. Is the project related to art or creativity?
- 2. Was the application created by the young person or was their voice clearly represented?
- 3. Did the application include information about what the young person wanted to do?
- 4. Was it clear how receiving an award would benefit the young person?
- 5. Was the funding breakdown clear?

Applications that were not related to art were disqualified. For the remaining applications, those that received three or more positive responses to the questions above were shortlisted. This left us with 118 applications.

Those applications were then divided among the panellists and Children in Scotland staff, each reviewing approximately 20-25 applications each. Children in Scotland reviewed applications that contained more sensitive or distressing information or applications with adult themes. This was agreed with the panel.

The panel then decided on four additional questions and a ranking system to determine if the applications should be funded. These questions were:

- 1. What did you like about the application?
- 2. What could have been better?
- 3. Do you think we should contact this person for more information? If so, why?
- 4. Should we fund this person?



5 – Yes! It's a great application



4 – Yes. It's a good application



3 – Yes. The application is good enough to fund



2 – I'm not sure



1 – No. The application isn't strong enough

Children in Scotland staff maintained an overview of the process to ensure the scoring of panel-accessed applications was consistent. The panellists decided that 106 applications met the criteria and should be funded.

Distributing the funds

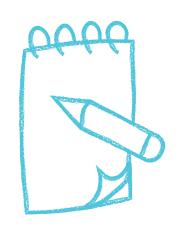
Every person who sent in an application, successful or not, was contacted by email in early November to be informed about the funding decision.

The majority of successful applicants received their funding awards in November 2021. Children in Scotland staff created a welcome pack for all successful applicants which was based on the information discussed with the panel during the design sessions.

Unsuccessful applicants were given an opportunity to request feedback on why their application was not selected to be funded. Children in Scotland received a number of requests for feedback and responded to these promptly.

Applicant data

We received 236 applications from across 29 local authorities and distributed funds to applicants from across 27 local authorities. We received three applications from island communities (Shetland and Argyll and Bute), as well as 36 applications from rural communities (Aberdeenshire, Angus, Moray, Highland and Dumfries and Galloway).



The average age of applicants was 16 and the average age of successful applicants was 15.9.

As highlighted above, young people were not required to give details of their additional support need in order to receive funding, however, 99.6% (234) of applicants did complete this information. The design panel had been keen that applicants were offered a free-text box for this, rather than a set list of support needs. This made it impossible to analyse applicant data, however, Children in Scotland staff noted the high proportion of applicants with neurological conditions such as Autism Spectrum, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, Tourette's and social anxiety. A significant number of the Access All Arts Funds applicants highlighted that they either didn't attend school or they found the school environment to be very challenging.

There was a huge amount of variety in the types of activities that children and young people applied for including dance, digital art, film and television, music and visual art. Drama and literature received the lowest number of applications.

A large number of applications included requests to purchase items including drawing and painting materials, musical instruments or photographic equipment. Many children and young people hoped to attend music, dance or drama tuition classes to build their confidence and develop their skills. Other applications saw young people keen to realise zine-making projects, develop flower-arranging skills, progress their song-writing ability, learn silversmithing skills and learn how to sew, embroider, and customise clothes.

A breakdown of applicant data can be found below.

- Total number of applications received: 236
- Total number of applications funded: 106
- Total amount of funding distributed: £68,177.42.

Location of applicants

Local Authority	All Applications		Successful Application	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Aberdeen	3.8%	9	6.6%	7
Aberdeenshire	4.2%	10	3.8%	4
Angus	1.7%	4	2.8%	3
Argyll and Bute	<1%	1	<1%	1
Clackmannanshire	1.7%	4	2.8%	3
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	0%	0	0%	0
Dumfries and Galloway	5.0%	12	4.7%	5
Dundee	1.3%	3	2.8%	3
East Ayrshire	3.0%	7	4.7%	5
East Dunbartonshire	2.1%	5	2.8%	3
East Lothian	<1%	2	<1%	1
East Renfrewshire	4.2%	10	7.5%	8
Edinburgh	8.9%	21	4.7%	5
Falkirk	4.7%	11	5.7%	6
Fife	3.0%	7	2.8%	3
Glasgow	14.0%	33	11.3%	12
Highland	3.0%	7	<1%	1
Inverclyde	0%	0	0%	0
Midlothian	<1%	2	<1%	1
Moray	1.3%	3	0%	0
North Ayrshire	3.0%	7	1.9%	2
North Lanarkshire	4.7%	11	1.9%	2
Orkney Islands	0%	0	0%	0
Perth and Kinross	2.1%	5	2.8%	3
Renfrewshire	2.1%	5	2.8%	3
Scottish Borders	3.0%	7	1.9%	2
Shetland Islands	<1%	2	1.9%	2
South Ayrshire	<1%	2	1.9%	2
South Lanarkshire	8.1%	19	5.7%	6
Stirling	<1%	2	1.9%	2
West Dunbartonshire	<1%	2	0%	0
West Lothian	8.5%	20	10.4%	11
Unknown	1.3	3	0%	0

Table 1: Location of Access All Arts Fund applicants and awardees

Age of applicants

Age	All App	olications	Successful	Applications
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
11	14.0%	33	14.2%	15
12	12.3%	29	12.3%	13
13	8.5%	20	5.7%	6
14	14.0%	33	14.2%	15
15	10.6%	25	9.4%	10
16	8.5%	20	9.4%	10
17	7.2%	17	9.4%	10
18	4.2%	10	2.8%	3
19	3.4%	8	4.7%	5
20	3.4%	8	4.7%	5
21	3.0%	7	<1%	1
22	1.3%	3	1.9%	2
23	<1%	2	<1%	1
24	1.3%	3	2.8%	3
25	2.5%	6	4.7%	5
26	1.7%	4	<1%	1
Unknown, under 11 or over 26	3.4%	8	<1%	15
Total		236		106

Table 2: Age of Access All Arts Fund applicants and awardees

Amount of funding requested

Amount	All Applications		Successful Applications	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
£0 - £249	8.1%	19	10.4%	11
£250 - £499	17.4%	41	23.6%	25
£500 - £749	20.8%	49	21.7%	23
£750 - £1000	47.9%	113	42.5%	45
£1000 +	4.7%	11	1.9%	2
No amount listed	1.3%	3	0%	0
Total		236	9.4%	106

Table 3: Amount of funding requested from Access All Arts Fund applicants and awardees

⁵This application came from a group interested in setting up art rooms or arts programmes for children and young people with disabilities.

Type of creative activity funding requested

Art Type	All Applications		Successful Applications	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Creative Industries	13.1%	31	17.9%	19
Dance	4.2%	10	8.5%	9
Digital	9.7%	23	1.9%	2
Drama	2.1%	5	3.8%	4
Film/TV	5.5%	13	7.5%	8
Literature	<1%	2	1.9%	2
Multi-Artform/Other	17.4%	41	9.4%	10
Music	14.0%	33	21.7%	23
Visual Art	33.1%	78	27.4%	29
Total		236		106

Table 4: Type of creative activity that funding was requested for by applicants and awardees

Impact of fund

Feedback from successful applicants

In February 2022, we contacted all the successful applicants and asked them to fill in a survey asking about their experience of the fund. We received 66 responses (62% of awardees).

The responses from the survey indicate that the Access All Arts Fund has supported children and young people to overcome barriers to get involved in arts activities and learn new creative skills. The fund has also had a significant positive impact on children and young people's mental health.

Has the Access All Arts Fund helped you do any of the following?

	Responses (%)	Responses (number)
Try out a new creative activity	45.5%	30
Develop an existing creative interest	78.8%	52

Has the Access All Arts Fund helped you learn new creative skills?

	Responses (%)	Responses (number)
Yes	87.9%	58
No	6.1%	4
Not sure	6.1%	4

Has the funding helped you overcome any barriers to getting involved in creative activities?

	Responses (%)	Responses (number)
Yes	81.5%	53
No	1.5%	1
Not sure	16.9%	11



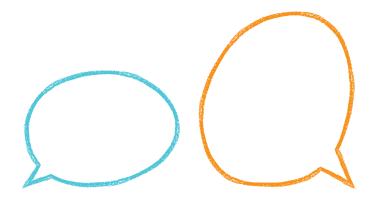


Access All Arts awardees

Has the Access All Arts Fund had a positive impact on your mental health and wellbeing?

	Responses (%)	Responses (number)
Yes	90.8%	59
No	1.5%	1
Not sure	7.7%	5

Tables 5-8: Access All Arts Fund evaluation data



We received a very large volume of positive feedback on the fund, including emails and photos, as well as comments in the survey. We've included a collection of some of this feedback below.

"I am growing in confidence not only at dance but life in general. I am still nervous around new people but have managed to perform on stage in front of a big audience. I am proud I can do this."

"Thank you so much! I am so glad that funds like this exist to help people who are just starting out and often feel as if the art world is exclusive and not accessible for them. This was a great push in the right direction for the future of accessible arts."

"We are absolutely delighted to be granted such a gift – thank you from the bottom of our hearts it is so greatly appreciated. Thank you just seems too small for what you've done for our family and my daughter."



Painting created by Access All Arts

"Thank you so much. My son will be delighted. The funding will be a great help in developing his drumming skills and allowing him to try some drama/performance classes too."

"I wanted to just write back to express my gratitude and thanks for the opportunity and recognition. This is such a wonderful way for people like myself to be able to go forth and achieve their potential regardless of barriers."



Access All Arts awardee: Funding helped this young artist buy materials to grow their sewing skills

"It has relieved significant pressure on my mental health in regard to financial hardship the past few months. I rely on my creative work for my wellbeing and this fund was able to facilitate that for me."

"Having tuition helped me get back to school to do art and I've joined an art group. I would have struggled to do this before because of severe anxiety."

"I never had the money for any activities before, money is tight in my family and this was the best opportunity ever. I really enjoyed it, I wouldn't have been able to experience it without the funding."

"I do struggle quite a lot with my mental health but going to drum lessons has helped get me out of the house and also being able to play drums in a small band with my friend has helped me feel a bit more positive about things."

Feedback from panellists

After each session, we sent our panellists a short poll to gather their feedback. Their responses are as follows:

Feedback about the sessions

Question	Yes	No
Did you enjoy the session?	100%	0%
Did you feel included?	100%	0%
Did you have a chance to share your views?	100%	0%

Table 9: Panel feedback about the sessions

At the end of the project, we sent our panellists an End of Project survey to understand their experience of working with Children in Scotland. Two of the four panellists completed the survey. The responses are as follows:

End of project survey

Question	Yes	No
Did you enjoy the session?	100%	0%
Did you feel included?	100%	0%
Did you have a chance to share your views?	100%	0%
Would you work with us again? Table 10: Panel feedback about the sessions	100%	0%

Panellists were also asked the following qualitative questions about their experience:

- 1. What did you enjoy?
- 2. What could have been better?
- 3. Is there anything else you want to tell us?

They told us:

What did you enjoy: "Not only did I like working with the staff and young people, but also feel that I learned a lot about managing conversation style, debating topics in a responsible manner but also keeping track of workloads."

What did you enjoy: "Learning about different disabilities and projects that people were planning. It was really refreshing to see young people so passionate about the arts! I also enjoyed meeting the panel and team."

What could have been better: "I think it was great, so nothing to add here."

What could have been better: "Maybe an occasional phone-in to remind me of meeting dates and just some general chit-chat."

Is there anything else you want to tell us: "Well, just to say that I've had a great time working with the organisation but also collaborating with other young people along the way. It has also given me a lot of insight into what makes up a creative process."

Is there anything else you want to tell us: "Thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to partake in this journey, I really enjoyed it!"

Challenges

Recruiting young people for the design panel

Children in Scotland found it more challenging than anticipated to recruit children and young people to join the design panel.

During outreach discussions with partner organisations several highlighted that many of the children and young people they work with lacked the confidence to put themselves forwards. Additional time in the project setup phase would have allowed time for more relationship building in the recruitment phase.

Coronavirus pandemic

Covid-19 restrictions were in place for the duration of the project, so all the project meetings took place online. Children in Scotland had hoped the group might be able to meet face-to-face towards the end of the project to review the applications, but this wasn't possible. Although the panel achieved a lot within a small number of online sessions and were able to bond as a group, many aspects of the design process would have been more enjoyable, collaborative and effective if we had been able to meet inperson.



Access All Arts awardee

Volume of applications

While we were delighted to receive such a large volume of applications, this presented challenges in terms of making the funding decisions. Although the young panel members said they enjoyed the review process, it was not as fun and collaborative as Children in Scotland had originally planned. The high volume of applications and the short turnaround time also meant the process felt less youth-led because Children in Scotland had to lead discussions and apply more structure to the panel's decision-making in order to avoid lengthy funding award delays.

The large number of applications also meant increased administrative time to process applications.

We were pleased that Creative Scotland was able to increase the amount of funding available to the pilot project in response to the high level of demand.

Conclusion

Children in Scotland is delighted that the Access All Arts Fund has been able to support children and young people with disabilities or additional support needs to access creative opportunities.

We believe a large part of our success in reaching this underrepresented group was due to our wide membership and partner network and the direct outreach we undertook in promoting the fund. This included social media posts, e-newsletters and direct communication with charities and schools.

We also believe that co-designing the fund with children and young people with experience of disability or additional support needs was a key strength. The project upheld a range of children's rights including the right for children to participate fully in cultural and artistic activities (Article 31), their right to share their views and experiences (Article 12) and the right for children with disabilities to live a full and decent life, and to play an active part in the community (Article 23).

The Access All Arts Fund provided opportunities for children and young people to explore their unique personal interests and passions. It gave them autonomy and agency to develop projects and learn new skills while supporting their wellbeing. In some cases, the fund did help to support career development opportunities but, more generally, it created opportunities for children and young people to overcome barriers and try new creative experiences.





Artwork created by Access All Arts awardees

Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

The Access All Arts Fund has been successful in reaching a previously under-represented community and, from our evaluation activity, it appears to have had a positive impact for many children and young people. Creative Scotland should commit to supporting further development work by children and young people to build upon the success of the pilot project. Any future Youth Arts Fund offer should include funding for the Access All Arts Fund or similar models.



Recommendation 2:

Creative Scotland and Children in Scotland should share key learning from the project with policy leads and decision-makers across Scotland and identify opportunities to influence other initiatives designed to support children and young people's learning and wellbeing following the pandemic.

Connecting with other initiatives designed to support children and/or young people with additional support needs, like the **ILF Scotland Transition Fund**, could offer further insight into best practice as well as identify opportunities for future project development.

Recommendation 3:

If additional rounds of the fund were to take place, Children in Scotland would recommend increased time and financial resource for outreach work and building relationships with organisations supporting specific communities (for example, deaf children and children and young people with a visual impairment). This would encourage a wider diversity of applications to join the design panel and increased diversity in terms of applications to the fund.

Recommendation 4:

Children and young people should be involved in evaluation of future funding rounds of the Access All Arts Fund. The limited scope of the project meant Children in Scotland developed the evaluation questions that were sent to successful applicants. While these questions were based on the key elements identified by the young design panel, it would have been preferable for the panel to have been more actively involved in designing how to evaluate the success of the fund.