



Access All Arts Fund Final Report (Year two)

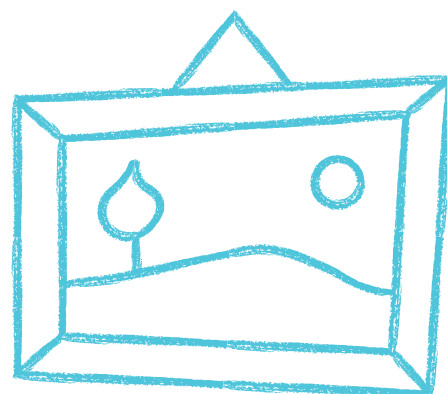
David Mackay
December 2023



Contents

Context	3
About the Access All Arts Fund	3
A rights-based approach to arts funding	3
Delivery of Year Two	4
Recruiting participants	4
Delivering the engagement sessions	4
Adapting the Fund	5
Launch of the Fund	9
Reviewing applications	9
Awarding funding	10
Applicant data	11
Impact of the Fund	14
Key learning and challenges	19
Conclusion	20
Recommendations	20

Children in Scotland would like to thank Ethan, Isaac, Max, Ryan, Sarah and Shuman for volunteering as Access All Arts Panel members in Year two. The project would not have been possible without their time, hard work and commitment.



Introduction

About the Access All Arts Fund

In March 2022, Children in Scotland received funding to deliver a second round of the Access All Arts Fund.

The Access All Arts Fund began as a pilot project in 2021 as part of the Nurturing Talent Fund: New Routes programme. The original aim of the Fund was to support young people with disabilities or additional support needs to apply for arts funding, recognising these individuals were part of a community under-represented in applications to Creative Scotland's existing youth funding strands. The response to the pilot project exceeded expectation, receiving 236 submissions from children and young people across Scotland. From these applications, 106 applicants received funding.

Following discussions with Creative Scotland, Children in Scotland submitted a proposal to deliver a second year of the Fund. Incorporating learning from year one, it was decided that year two of the Fund would explicitly focus on how access to the arts could support children and young people's wellbeing. This included providing opportunities for young people to try out new arts-based interests as well as supporting young people to develop existing creative passions.

In year two, we decided to broaden the remit of the Fund, recognising the wide range of barriers to accessing the arts that young people experience. In addition to considering additional support needs, the Fund would be available to support people experiencing other barriers, including poverty, poor mental health and geographical barriers. As a result, the amount available for funding awards increased from the £68,000 awarded in 2021 to £86,000.

Between July and September 2022, Children in Scotland worked with a group of six children and young people to lead the development of the Fund and assess the applications. Members of this group included members from year one, awardees from year one, and other young people who have experienced barriers to accessing the arts.

In year two the Fund was open for applications from 13 October to 14 November 2022 and received 340 submissions from children and young people aged between 11 and 25 years old.

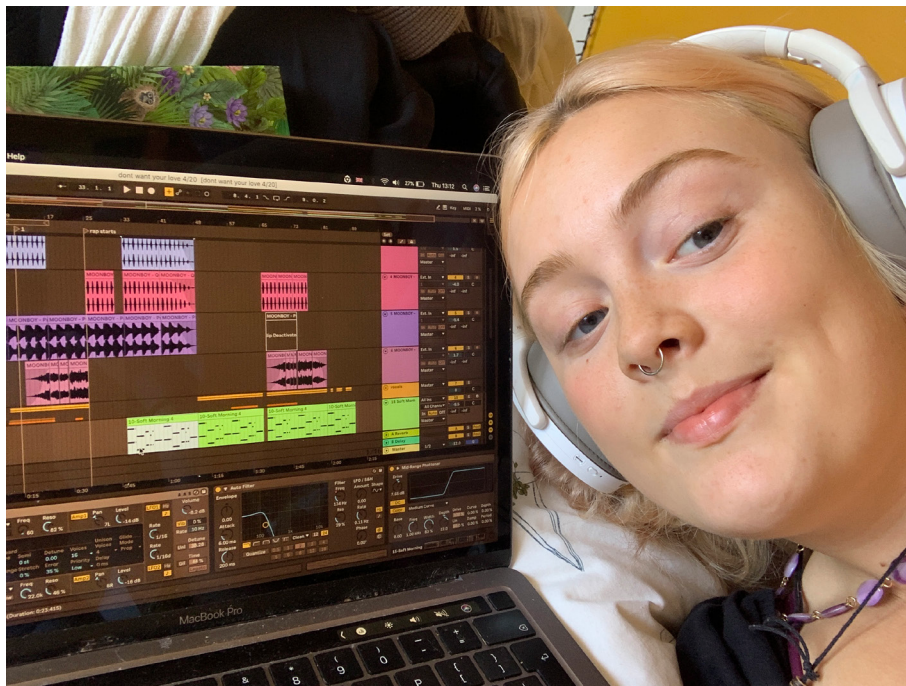
In February 2023, Children in Scotland distributed £86,000 to 161 successful applicants, supporting a range of creative interests including music, photography, dance, film and TV, drawing and painting, and creative writing.

A rights-based approach to arts funding

As highlighted in our 2021 report, from its inception the Access All Arts Fund project has adopted a rights-based approach, supporting a number of key articles of the UNCRC. In particular, the Fund has supported every child's right to express their views, feelings and wishes and to have their views considered and taken seriously (Article 12), the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities

(Article 31), and the right to not be discriminated against because of ethnicity, gender, religion, language, disability or any other status (Article 2).

At every stage throughout the project, the voices of children and young people have been central to its delivery - from the design of the Fund to the young person-led application process, and the decisions regarding funding awards. The panel has called this 'a fund created by young people for young people'.



An Access All Arts Fund awardee

Delivery of year two

Children in Scotland worked with a group of six children and young people between July 2022 and February 2023 to adapt the Fund and deliver the Access All Arts Fund year two. The youth panel met both online and in-person during this period.

Recruiting the youth panel

In May 2022, Children in Scotland recruited youth panel members to join the project. Two panel members from year one decided to rejoin the project. Another panel member applied because they had been awarded a grant in the previous round of Access All Arts funding. Several other young people applied because they were interested in the arts and were keen to get involved. Participants ranged in age from 10 to 26 and had a range of backgrounds and experiences.

Delivering the engagement sessions

The panel met eight times between July 2022 and February 2023. This included six online sessions and two in-person/hybrid sessions. The mix of online and in-person/hybrid sessions supported accessibility and gave participants the opportunity to build connections and work effectively as a group.

During these sessions, the young people discussed the link between wellbeing and creativity, discussed barriers to the arts, reviewed and made adaptations to the application process and awards criteria, developed new promotional materials, and discussed approaches to target young people experiencing barriers to the arts. The group also delivered online engagement sessions with young people, parents and carers, and professionals supporting young people. As in year one, the panel assessed the applications and made the final decisions on who would receive funding.

Children in Scotland supported participants to create a 'group agreement' at the start of the project to ensure there was a safe, respectful and fun environment where participants could share their views freely.

A range of icebreakers, games, discussions and arts-related activities helped the group to bond and work together effectively. Children in Scotland responded to young people's support and accessibility needs to ensure all members of the group were able to fully participate – this included giving participants choices about how to share their views, creating easy read documents, and having a scribe at our in-person sessions.

Adapting the Fund

In our first session, we spent some time getting to know each other and discussing our preferred working styles to help us work together effectively. We also talked about the project and gave everyone information about the first round of the Access All Arts Fund. Some members of the group had been panel members or had received funding from the Access All Arts Fund in its inaugural year, so they were able to share their experiences with the group.

Following this, we explored the topic of wellbeing. We asked the group 'What does wellbeing mean to you?' and discussed connections between the arts and wellbeing. We looked at examples of different types of art (including film, music and painting), and talked about how art can evoke different feelings and emotions when we experience it as a viewer. At the end of the session, we set the group 'homework' to find a piece of artwork that made them feel calm, or happy or energised to share as an icebreaker at session two.

For session two, we continued the theme of wellbeing. All the participants had different creative interests and were able to share some of their own reflections on making art. We discussed how making art and getting involved in creative activities can affect people's wellbeing. Participants said:

"I enjoy sharing my music, it gives me a sense of purpose. I find it hard to connect with people and sharing my music makes it easier. It's great to see people enjoying what you're doing."

"Making art is my happy place."

"It's a way to escape from general life. It gives me a thrill and takes my mind off things."

"It makes feel relaxed and energised and hopeful."

"It's hard to think of stuff sometimes, but art helps me to focus."

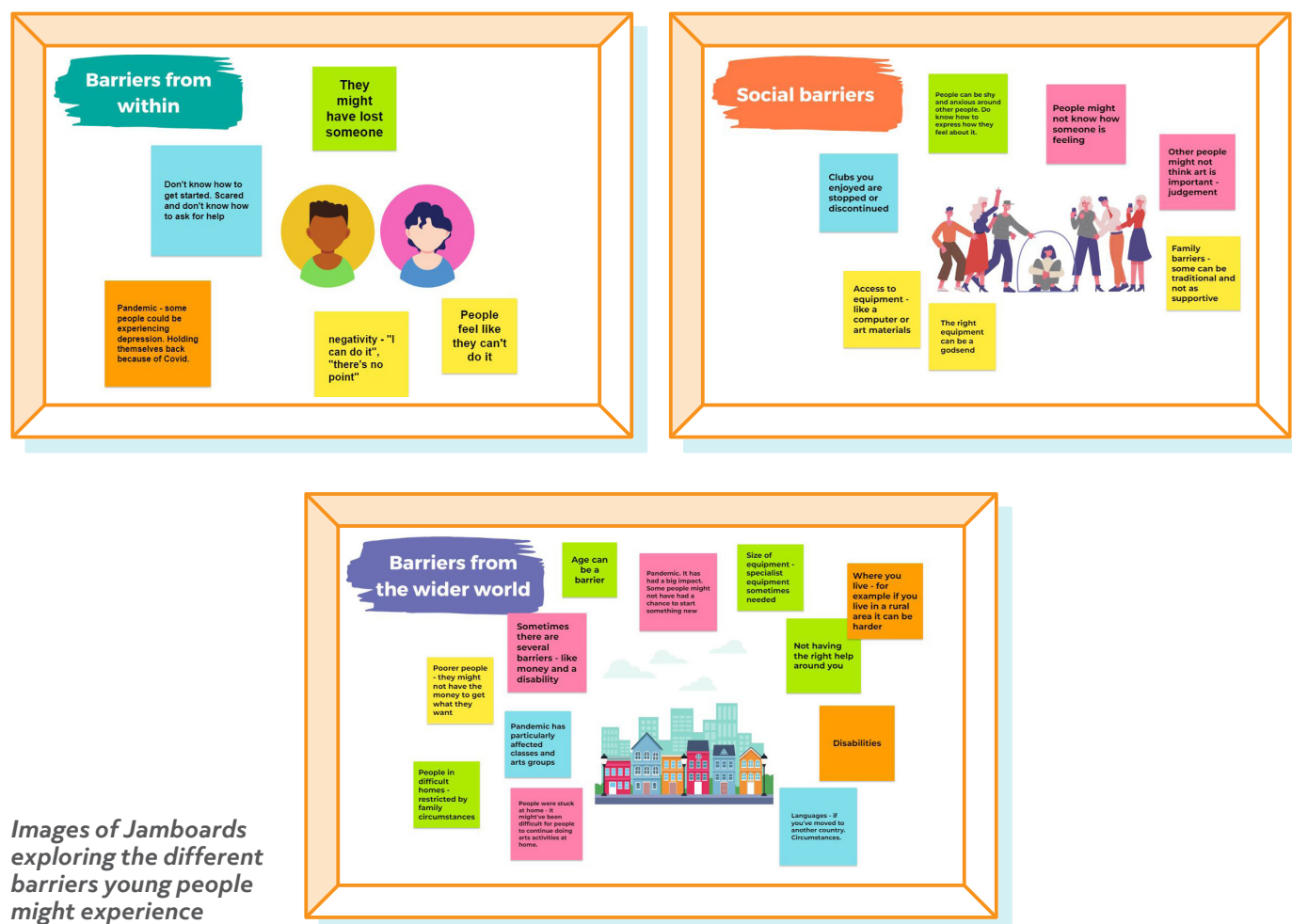
"It makes me really happy that I've done something colourful."

This exercise helped build an understanding of how creativity and wellbeing are linked and gave the panel the opportunity to consider how the Access All Arts Fund would be able to support young people's wellbeing.



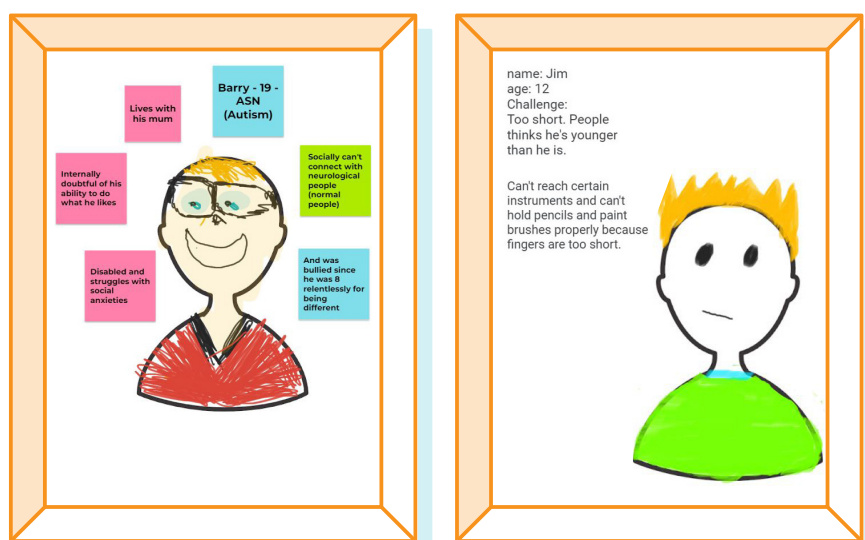
We then moved on to explore barriers to the arts. We discussed the different types of barriers young people might experience to getting involved in creative activities, including barriers from within, social barriers, and barriers from the wider world. The group was able to draw on some of the members' own experiences of barriers and expand upon these during discussions.

The group identified a wide range of barriers including self-confidence issues, bereavement, mental health issues, language and cultural barriers, financial barriers, lack of access to materials or equipment, disabilities, and geographical barriers.



Images of Jamboards exploring the different barriers young people might experience

Following this, all the members took part in a characterisation activity. This involved creating a character who had experienced barriers to taking part in creative activities. The group members were able to draw on paper or use a Jamboard template to create their character. Children in Scotland staff explained that we'd be revisiting our character when we were considering how to develop and promote the fund.



Images of characterisation activity considering the different barriers young people may experience

For our third session, we had an in-person meeting in Glasgow. We decided to visit the Gallery of Modern Art in the morning, then do some fund development work in the afternoon.

The panel enjoyed their visit to the art gallery. We gave everyone a quiz sheet with some questions and activities linked to the exhibition. This was the first time the group had met face to face, and it was a great opportunity for them to bond and build trust.

After lunch, we had a group discussion to consider the development of the Fund. We asked the group a range of 'who, what, how and why' questions as the starting point for these discussions. These included:

- What activities should we fund?
- Who can apply?
- How much should we fund?
- What should the application process look like?



The group had clear ideas about who they wanted to fund. They said the fund should be there for **"people who need it"**, which included people who had experienced a range of barriers. The group felt that the Fund was important because young people's wellbeing could've been negatively impacted by the pandemic.

The panel recognised that some young people might want to access funding to explore new activities and simply have fun, while other young people might be more interested in art as a longer-term career. They felt it was okay to support both types of application as long as young people could say how it would impact their wellbeing and confirm that they had experienced barriers.

The panel decided to keep the Fund as one pot aimed at ages 11-25, rather than splitting it up into different strands of funding for different age groups.

The panel thought it was important to celebrate creativity in lots of different forms – from more traditional activities like drawing, painting, photography, music and drama to things like baking and dressmaking. They felt each application should be judged on its individual merit, rather than imposing limitations at the start of the process.

The panel said they would be happy to fund materials, equipment, lessons, travel costs and other support costs (e.g. funding support workers). In particular, they felt travel and other support costs could be significant barriers for young people.

The group had a big discussion about the amount of funding young people could apply for and different panel members had different ideas about this. Some thought funding could be reduced to a maximum of £500 or £750 per award to ensure that more people could benefit. One panel member who had been funded in year one disagreed and said it was important that young people, especially those without much money, could apply for larger amounts to realise their ambitions. He also highlighted that some equipment (required for activities like music or photography) was very expensive. It was decided that we would keep the funding limit at £1,000 but we would be clear in the application that people should only apply for what they need, so lots of people could benefit from the Fund.

The group also discussed the application process. In general, the group was very positive about the year one questions. Some changes were made to the wording but the group made it clear they wanted to keep the format simple for young people to complete on their own and keep the friendly and supportive tone of the application.

The panel wanted to ask questions about the how the funding would support applicants' wellbeing and if they had experienced any barriers. They said that we should ask people about the barriers they'd experienced but that this should be an optional question because some people may feel embarrassed or upset by their situation and they may find it difficult to share this information.

The group then split up into smaller groups to discuss the launch and promotion of the Fund. We ask the group to consider the following questions:

- How can we share information about the Fund with young people?
- How can we make sure the Fund is accessible for young people?
- How can we support young people who experience barriers to apply?

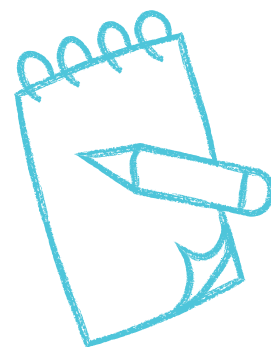
The group discussed a range of options for launching and promoting the Fund. This included creating posters and flyers for schools and community groups, creating an Instagram account, and developing a short video from someone who had been funded by the Access All Arts Fund last year, showing how it had impacted them.

We also spoke about running in-person events and online webinars to raise awareness of the Fund. The panel said this would help people find out more information and it would give them an opportunity to ask any questions.

The group highlighted the anxiety and low confidence some young people might feel about applying and said it was important to include positive messaging through phrases like "get creative!", "give it a try!", and "get in touch if you need any help".

We spoke about capacity and time to develop and deliver all this activity, and decided to take forward the following actions as the group felt these were most important:

- Creating a new poster and flyer
- Setting up an Access All Arts Fund Instagram account
- Developing a promotional video featuring members of the panel
- Developing a short video case study with Ethan, a member of the panel who was funded in year one
- Developing youth-led webinars for young people, parents and carers, and professionals who might be supporting children and young people to apply
- Targeted outreach to specific communities, including organisations supporting refugees and care-experienced young people.



In session four, we met online to develop these ideas further and prepare materials for the launch of the fund. We focused on the messaging and structure of the videos, and the design of the webinars. Following this, some individual follow-up sessions with panel members were required to finalise the content of promotional materials before launch, for example recording video and audio clips from participants.

Launch of the Fund

The Fund was open for applications between 13 October and 14 November 2022. The main application process was an online form, with Word, easy read, and audio versions of the application form and Fund information available to support accessibility. Applicants also had the option of submitting video applications, but this option was not taken up by any applicants in this round of funding. Several applicants did submit hand-written applications.

We asked all applicants to read an information sheet before applying to the Fund. This outlined what panel members wanted to see in the applications they would be reviewing.

We promoted the Fund on the Children in Scotland website, on our social media channels and across our wider networks. A range of content was also shared through the new Access All Arts Fund Instagram account. As highlighted above, targeted emails were sent to organisations supporting refugees, care-experienced young people, and young people and families with children with a range of additional support needs.

Through our targeted outreach work, we promoted a series of free webinars where young people, families and professionals could find out more about the Access All Arts Fund and the application process. These were scheduled at evenings and weekends for young people and families and on weekday lunchtimes for professionals. The panel members planned the structure and accessibility of these sessions and helped us to deliver these webinars, so they could share their enthusiasm and answer any questions people had about the Fund.

In addition to the webinars, we included a telephone number on the application page to ensure people could get immediate support from Children in Scotland staff if they had any questions. We received a range of phone calls from parents, carers and professionals asking about the Fund and the application process and received positive feedback about the benefits of being able to talk things through.

The Fund was open from 13 October to 14 November 2022 and received 340 submissions. Detailed information about applicant data can be found later in this report.

Reviewing the applications

The panel met several times to discuss the shortlisting and assessment process. The panel reviewed the shortlisting criteria from year one and was happy with the criteria. These were:

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?

Applicants who received three or more positive responses were shortlisted for review. The shortlisting process reduced the number of applications to 246.

The group decided that each application should be scored by two members of the group to ensure consistency of approach and that it was a fair process. Due to the large number of applications, panel members decided they were happy for Children in Scotland staff to support as a second reviewer on applications, as long as each application had been assessed by at least one young person.

Each panellist reviewed around 40 applications from early December to mid-January. Before sending young people the applications, we delivered an online session to discuss the review process and to try it out as a group. During this session, we also focused on the panel members' wellbeing to ensure the participants were able to manage the workload and the content of the applications.

Children in Scotland staff double reviewed several applications containing potentially upsetting information where it was deemed inappropriate for the panel members to review them.

A similar scoring process to year one was implemented. Panel members also gave feedback about what they liked about the applications and what could have been improved. The applications with the highest scores were funded. In some cases, panellists took the decision to part-fund some of the applications received.

Awarding funding

In January 2023, the group had an in-person session to discuss and provide feedback on the review process, to explore the evaluation of the Fund, and to share their hopes for the future of the Fund.

Panellists reflecting on the process of assessing applications said it was challenging to read and score so many applications. They also felt that the wide age range and the diversity of applications made it harder to compare one application to the next.

Panellists were very empathic, and some could directly relate to the barriers applicants had faced. One member of the group said that **"a lot of the applications mentioned poverty and little-to-no income"**. Another panel member said it **"was a lot to process"**, and that reading the applications in batches had been a helpful suggestion. Panel members said that **"some applications were easy to approve, but others were more difficult to decide on"**.

The group talked about how the news about their funding decision should be shared with applicants. We reflected on the different emotions young people might feel when they received the news, and panel members provided suggestions for two sets of wording for those receiving either good or bad news. They also wanted to create a video and welcome pack for successful applicants. They said all unsuccessful applications should be able to receive feedback about their application if they asked for it.

We discussed ideas for how to evaluate the success of the Fund. The group focused on individual applicants telling their story. They liked the idea of sending a survey to participants after a few months to see how they were getting on. In addition to questions related to wellbeing and barriers, the group wanted to know what the awardees enjoyed about receiving funding and if their confidence had improved. They thought Creative Scotland could produce some video case studies to showcase a range of stories from people who had received funding. They thought this would be a good way to promote the Fund if there were any future rounds.

Following this discussion, we asked panellists about their hopes for the Fund. Everyone in the group said they hoped it would receive funding from Creative Scotland in the future.

We looked into the future and imagined that the Fund was celebrating its 10th anniversary. The group said it would be great to celebrate this with a big showcase event including an exhibition of artwork and live performances from awardees from across the years. Panellists thought there might be some famous people who had received Access All Arts funding who might be able to say how the funding had helped them. The group was also keen on having a big mural or billboards about the Fund and having Access All Arts merchandise.

Applicant data

We received 340 applications to the Access All Arts Fund in 2022. After removing duplicates and applicants who did not provide consent for Children in Scotland to hold on to their personal data, the final number of applications was 328. This represented a 39% increase in applications from year one of the Fund.

We received applications from across 29 local authorities and distributed funds to applicants from across 28 local authorities. The average age of applicants was 16.

Applicants were asked to provide details about the barriers they had experienced. As highlighted above, this was an optional, free-text question. Detailed analysis of the responses to this question have not been undertaken, however a significant number of applicants identified physical disabilities, long-term illness and neurological conditions as barriers. Many respondents also identified financial barriers and mental health challenges including depression, low confidence and anxiety. Some young people highlighted the challenges they faced as a young carer or as a result of their experience in care.

Young people often referenced multiple barriers to engaging with the creative arts. For example, one applicant said they faced barriers as a queer person of colour, and another applicant who is an asylum-seeker said they faced both language barriers and a lack of money. Several applicants highlighted the need for inclusive arts opportunities in their applications.

As with year one, there was a wide variety of applications received, with the most popular application categories being visual art and music. Similar to year one, many applicants requested funding to purchase materials, equipment or musical instruments. There were also a wide range of applications from young people hoping to attend professional dance, music, visual arts or drama classes.

The percentage of people requesting smaller amounts of funding (£499 or under) increased this year to 34.7% in comparison to last year's figure of 25.5%. This could be due to the messaging the group developed for the information sheet and the application form.

- Total number of applications received: **340**
- Total applications after GDPR review and removing duplicates: **328**
- Total number of applications funded: **161**
- Total amount of funds distributed: **£86,040.89**

Location of applicants

Local authority	All applications		Successful applications	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Aberdeen City	3.6%	12	5.0%	8
Aberdeenshire	4.3%	14	5.0%	8
Angus	1.8%	6	1.9%	3
Argyll and Bute	<1%	3	<1%	1
Clackmannanshire	<1%	3	<1%	1
Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (Western Isles)	0%	0	0%	0
Dumfries and Galloway	7.1%	24	9.3%	15
Dundee	2.4%	8	3.1%	5
East Ayrshire	3.4%	11	1.2%	2
East Dunbartonshire	1.5%	5	1.9%	3
East Lothian	<1%	1	<1%	1
East Renfrewshire	4.3%	14	2.5%	4
City of Edinburgh	10.3%	34	8.7%	14
Falkirk	4.6%	15	3.7%	6
Fife	5.5%	17	5.0%	8
Glasgow City	22.0%	72	21.1%	34
Highland	1.2%	4	1.9%	3
Inverclyde	1.5%	5	1.9%	3
Midlothian	<1%	2	0%	0
Moray	<1%	1	<1%	1
North Ayrshire	<1%	1	<1%	1
North Lanarkshire	6.7%	22	5.0%	8
Orkney Islands	0%	0	0%	0
Perth and Kinross	<1%	2	<1%	1
Renfrewshire	2.4%	8	2.5%	4
Scottish Borders	<1%	2	<1%	1
Shetland Islands	0%	0	0%	0
South Ayrshire	2.4%	8	3.1%	5
South Lanarkshire	4.0%	13	6.2%	10

Local authority	All applications		Successful applications	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Stirling	2.4%	8	3.1%	5
West Dunbartonshire	<1%	2	<1%	1
West Lothian	3.4%	11	3.1%	5
Total		328		161

Age of applicants

Age	All applications		Successful applications	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Above/below age range	4.0%	13	0%	0
11	9.1%	30	8.1%	13
12	9.5%	31	10.0%	16
13	9.8%	32	10.0%	16
14	11.6%	38	13.7%	22
15	7.0%	23	5.0%	8
16	6.7%	22	8.1%	13
17	8.8%	29	7.5%	12
18	10.0%	33	12.4%	20
19	3.4%	11	2.5%	4
20	3.4%	11	4.3%	7
21	3.4%	11	3.1%	5
22	3.4%	11	3.7%	6
23	3.7%	12	4.3%	7
24	3.7%	12	4.3%	7
25	2.7%	9	3.1%	5
Total		328		161

Age of applicants

Funding request	All applications		Successful applications	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
£0 - £249	15.5%	51	16.8%	27
£250 - £499	19.2%	63	23.6%	38
£500 - £749	22.6%	74	26.1%	42
£750 - £1000	34.1%	112	30.4%	49
£1000 +	8.5%	28	3.1%	5
Total		328		161

Type of creative activity

Art type	All applications		Successful applications	
	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number
Not creative/arts- based	>1%	2	0%	0
Creative industries	14%	46	13.0%	21
Dance	4.9%	16	4.3%	7
Digital	5.8%	19	6.2%	10
Drama	3.7%	12	3.7%	6
Film/TV	7.6%	25	5.6%	9
Literature	3.7%	12	3.7%	6
Multi-artform/other	16.8%	55	13.7%	22
Music	18.9%	62	23.6%	38
Visual arts	24%	79	26.1%	42
Total		328		161

Impact of the Fund

Feedback from successful applicants

Children in Scotland received some very positive comments from young people, parents and carers when we sent out the emails in February 2023 confirming the funding awards. We created a short video for the panellists capturing some of this feedback.

In April 2023, Children in Scotland contacted all the young people who had received funding to find out how receiving funding had impacted them.

In our email we used the friendly and positive language that the panel had suggested – this included “share your story” and “tell us how you’ve been getting on”.

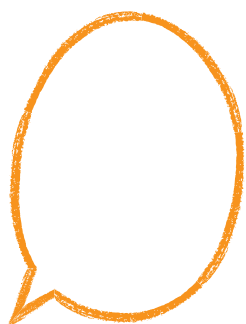
Successful applicants were asked to complete a short survey, and share pictures and videos of what they had been doing with the funding. We received a total of 73 responses to the survey (45% of awardees).

Nearly 92% of respondents said the Fund had had a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing. Many respondents said the funding had supported them to do something they enjoyed which helped them to relax and feel good about themselves.

Eighty-two percent said that receiving funding had helped them to overcome barriers to the arts. The most common barriers highlighted were financial barriers and disabilities or other additional support needs. Lack of confidence and geographical barriers were also identified by respondents.



Panel members had suggested we ask awardees what they had most enjoyed about receiving money from the Access All Arts Fund. For this question, most respondents highlighted the chance to buy new materials or equipment, or to attend classes. Respondents also told us that the Fund had created new opportunities for them to explore their creativity.



"I've really enjoyed the creative freedom I feel from not having to worry about the financial aspect of art."

"It has given me possibilities...I am able to buy nicer materials for my work and be more creative."

"The ability to buy stuff I would never have been able to afford and learn new skills and talk to more people about music."

In addition to the wellbeing benefits, respondents highlighted several other ways the funding had helped them, citing confidence in particular. A number of awardees also said the funding had helped them to launch or develop creative careers.

"I have become much more confident around new people and more confident to try new things."

"I am becoming a positive role model as a performer, inspiring other young people."

We also received positive feedback about the Fund and the application process.

"I liked how straightforward the application process was."

"I am very grateful for the fund. I hope I get better at taking photographs and keep getting more confident. I think this is a good way of helping other people too, and I like that it is run by children for children."

"I think this fund is absolutely amazing as it can provide opportunities for young people who are limited in accessing the arts industries simply because of their financial situation."

"It has all been made so easy! And the people emailing have been really lovely!"

Feedback from the survey indicates that the second year of the Access All Arts Fund has been successful in its aim to support young people to overcome barriers and experience improved wellbeing by taking part in creative activities.

Quantitative data from the survey and some additional quotes from respondents can be found below.

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

	Responses (%)	Responses (number)
Try out a new creative activity	41.1%	30
Develop an existing creative interest	79.5%	58

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

	Responses (%)	Responses (number)
Yes	78.1%	57
No	6.8%	5
Don't know	15.1%	11

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

	Responses (%)	Responses (number)
Yes	82.2%	60
No	5.5%	4
Don't know	12.3%	9

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

	Responses (%)	Responses (number)
Yes	91.8%	67
No	1.4%	1
Don't know	6.8%	5

Has the funding helped you in any other way? (increased confidence, met new people, etc.)

	Responses (%)	Responses (number)
Yes	72.6%	53
No	6.8%	5
Don't know	17.8%	13
Not answered	2.7%	2



"I am autistic, ADHD and Tourette's so find accessing classes for guitar very difficult, but now I have my own one I can learn at home. I am chilled and do not tic when I am playing guitar. I feel I have been acknowledged and listened to."

"It has made a difference to the barriers I have faced as a young care-experienced person with mental health problems. Being able to access the new skills and have the right equipment makes a huge difference. I can see that with support to develop I do have the opportunity to make good progress."

"Music makes me happy. I love the feeling when I can play and relax with the notes put together. Music is healing to me and in addition to that, not putting that pressure on my parents makes me feel better. I am anxious about asking them to pay for things when I know they are struggling."

"The fund has opened up amazing opportunities for me."

"I feel like I have a new community who share my new skill and I have something to focus on when my mental health gets bad. It's a good distraction and a fun way to be active while at home."



"It was amazing to be able to get funding to help me learn the keyboard and I feel proud of myself when I can show people what I am working on."

"I wouldn't get to do what I love without the funding."

"Thank you so much for this opportunity, this is honestly a lifeline."

"It's made a difference in my life to have been picked to receive the funding which was a boost to my confidence. Now I'm busy drawing which is helping my art and my jewellery making which I'd like to make a little business out of. So thank you for your help and belief in me to award me the money."

"Before when I was overwhelmed and nervous, I used to hit myself a lot. Now I just go and play my guitar."

"It has allowed me (as a 16-year-old) to attend my dance class with personal assistants who are nearer my age rather than having to go with my mum. The fund has allowed me time to be independent with my peers. That is a huge benefit to my mental health... it's also great for my physical health as it keeps my muscles moving."

"The arts often get overlooked as non-important subjects. Thank you very much for helping me and many other children to develop their love for the arts and music. Hopefully, there is something like this for next year for me to continue studying the violin and taking the grade 7 and 8 in the future. Thank you!"

"I have been learning new styles of dance. The funding has allowed me to make friends and take part in ASN [additional support needs] classes with my peers. I have new friendships, gained confidence, independence and kept active and healthy."

"It has helped me so much to express how I'm feeling. When I can't find the words to explain, it allows me to take my mind off what I'm thinking and focus on something much more positive and productive."



Pages 18-20:
Images from awardees showing a
range of art and activities funded
by the Access All Arts Fund.

Key learning and challenges

There were several key learning points from the delivery of the second year of the Access All Arts Fund.

The panel all enjoyed being creative in different ways and weaving creativity throughout the project was an important aspect of project delivery. This included talking about favourite artworks in our early sessions, incorporating creative icebreakers into our meetings, exploring an exhibition together at the Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow, and visiting a ceramic painting studio together in our second in-person session.

The panel really enjoyed meeting up and doing face-to-face work together. Panellists said, ***"it's easier to talk in person"*** and ***"the activities were fun"***. Owing to Coronavirus restrictions, this had not been possible during year one of the Fund. Some participants highlighted the challenges in-person activity brought because of anxiety or other additional support needs. Children in Scotland was able to mitigate this by producing visual timetables, creating quiet spaces, providing fidget toys, and offering other additional supports such as providing a scribe. The project demonstrated the benefits of a hybrid approach to supporting accessibility, creating safe spaces, and encouraging collaborative teamwork.

There were several safeguarding issues identified by Children in Scotland staff during the initial shortlisting of the applications. Children in Scotland followed our child protection and vulnerable adult protection processes in these instances, assessing risk and contacting parents and carers where appropriate. This was anticipated and was included in our risk assessment, but it is something worth noting for future consideration.

As highlighted above, the volume of applications received was a challenge and, ultimately, there were a number of good applications that we were unable to fund due to the quantity of applications and the limited funds available. The panellists took their assessment responsibilities very seriously and worked hard to review each application. Young people said it was ***"difficult to get the gist of someone on paper, when we want to make sure we've made the right choices for everyone"***. We received positive feedback from panellists who said, ***"the end result was worth the hard work"***.



The panellists had lots of good ideas to promote the Fund and support outreach work however, in some cases, time constraints meant certain aspects of activity were not as youth-led as we would have hoped. A good example of this was the Access All Arts Fund Instagram account. We discussed young people creating a range of content for this account, however other life and education commitments limited the time the young people had to contribute to this. It is important to recognise the valuable time the panellists committed to the project. If future rounds of the Fund are confirmed it would be worthwhile considering whether young people are paid for the time they contribute.

Conclusion

It is clear from our evaluation activity that year two of the Access All Arts Fund has been successful in supporting children and young people's wellbeing by improving access to creative opportunities.

Children in Scotland and the Access All Arts panel have been successful in encouraging applications from young people from a wide range of backgrounds and experiencing a variety of different barriers. Many applicants identified multiple barriers to engaging with the arts and it is evident that the funding received has helped create opportunities for more inclusive arts experiences.

The development work on the structure of the Fund in year two has been more limited than anticipated, with panel members only suggesting relatively small changes to the Fund's existing approach. However, there was a lot of work undertaken to develop the identity and voice of the Fund, to promote the Fund and make it accessible for children and young people, and to develop outreach work to encourage a diverse group of applicants. Based on feedback from awardees and applicant data, this activity has clearly been successful in developing a friendly and accessible Fund created by children and young people for children and young people.

If funding for the Access All Arts Fund is to continue, one of the big challenges for the Fund will be to maintain a youth-led approach to making funding decisions while dealing with a high number of applications.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1:

The Access All Arts Fund has been successful in supporting children and young people's wellbeing by improving access to creative activities. Creative Scotland should commit to funding this Fund or similar projects in the future to ensure children and young people experiencing barriers can access the wide-ranging mental health benefits associated with engaging with the creative arts.

Recommendation 2:

If additional rounds of the Access All Arts Fund take place, careful consideration must be given to children and young people's involvement to ensure they feel ownership of the Fund and they are meaningfully involved in making funding decisions in the context of high demand and a high volume of funding applications. Consideration should also be given to whether panellists should receive formal remuneration or rewards for their involvement in the future.



Recommendation 3:

As highlighted by the Access All Arts panel, Creative Scotland should develop a range of short video case studies to tell the story of the Fund and highlight its impact for children and young people.

Recommendation 4:

Creative Scotland and Children in Scotland should share evidence from year one and year two of the Access All Arts Fund to inform early intervention and prevention policy and practice development in relation to children and young people's mental health and wellbeing.