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# **YOUTH MUSIC, CREATIVE APPRENTICESHIPS AND THE FUTURE JOBS FUND:**

**AN ANALYSIS OF STAKEHOLDER EXPERIENCES**

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## Executive summary

This report details findings from the interview stage of research into the Youth Music Action Zones' (YMAZ) experiences of the Creative Apprenticeship (CA) and the Future Jobs Fund (FJF) schemes, which was undertaken in September 2010. Interviewees were invited to discuss both the positive and negative aspects of the schemes at some length. They often made explicit associations between benefits, challenges and how such challenges might be addressed. For clarity, benefits and challenges of the schemes, both for organisations and participating young people, are discussed in turn below. The recommendations section at the end of the report reflects on this evidence to assess what the needs of the non-formal sector might be in relation to formal training of this type, and identifies the role Youth Music and policy-makers might play in addressing such needs.

### Benefits of schemes for organisations

#### Affordable support for small creative firms

- The provision of a few extra employees made a big difference to the capacity of the small creative organisations who hosted them.
- Employees made a valuable contribution, both to the running of the host organisations and to their wider creative 'ethos'.

#### Arts, technology and media savvy employees

- Value of finding 'fresh talent'; 'literate' and 'savvy' individuals who support the organisations to remain creative and at the cutting edge of creative developments.

#### Diversity

- Targeted assistance of both schemes had the potential to bring in a range of relevant skills and experiences into the creative industry sector.

### Benefits of schemes for CYP

#### Real pay and wages, real employment

- The explicit status as an 'employee', and the guaranteed offer of a minimum wage, are key features that give young people a genuine and (financially) valued role to play in the host organisation.
- Apprenticeship schemes were preferable to the internship system, which favours those with a privileged ability to work for free.

#### Supervised work experience

- A clear supervision and support structure was important.
- Sustained investment in the YMAZ infrastructure had helped ensure host organisations were able to support young musicians to experience a range of work experiences.

#### Access to a range of appropriate training opportunities

- Identifying, building and recognising skills through vocational work experience was key to meeting an appropriate range of training needs.
- Host organisations offered a careful balance between conceptual/applied, individual/collective, music/non-music and arts/industry training needs.
- Accredited training was a key means for ensuring quality of skills, and for recognising achievement.

#### Team work and leadership opportunities

- Team working and individual leadership opportunities were of immense benefit to the young employees.
- This also links to the benefits organisations might themselves gain with regard to diversity and fresh talent.

### Towards further employment, education and training

- Broader skill development in and beyond music offered choice in considering career options.
- Digital Media and Marketing Apprenticeships and other variants of the apprenticeship model signals how music might serve as an important means through which employees can gain essential skills for a range of roles within the arts and creative industries.

### Long-term progression

- Many participants had already been in contact with the YMAZ host organisations for a while as participants before they joined the organisation as an employee.
- Demonstrates the strength of relationships between host organisations and the vulnerable, challenged and at risk children and young people they support.

### Challenges of schemes for organisations

#### Capacity of small creative organisations

- By definition, such small organisations had real concerns with their capacity and resources to deliver the schemes as much as they would have liked.
- Reported experiencing high-levels of demand for their services, and many were consistently oversubscribed for the work experience positions they offered.

#### Bureaucracy and administration

- High-levels of bureaucracy and administration associated with taking on new employees through the schemes.
- Confusing relationships with the Job Centre and delivery agents such as 3SC
- Lengthy process of CRB checking.

#### Resource intensive nature of working with those 'at risk'

- Not only applied to meeting physical and financial needs, but also the length of time needed to secure a positive outcome during the employment offer.
- Careful not to attribute the problem entirely with young employees themselves; neither host organisations nor indeed the job centre, had had the capacity to work as effectively with these groups as would have liked.
- By making this extra commitment, the potential for nurturing personal and social development were considerable.

#### Managing the abilities of young people

- Challenge was in part about the kinds of expectations employers have and their own role in the supported development of young employees.

#### Providing a meaningful offer

- Challenge to offer a genuinely meaningful, authentic employment offer while under pressure to prioritise organisational and government needs.
- Anxiety that the schemes were ultimately about massaging national employment figures.
- Organisations wanted to be the point at which such cycles of deprivation, marginalisation and exploitation were broken rather than further reinforced.
- Some caution expressed over an undue emphasis on accreditation at the expense of wider skill development. A remaining challenge was to ensure a range of accessible, equitable routes into accredited training.

#### Tailoring a standard offer

- Challenge to tailor such schemes to meet the individual needs of employees.
- Genuine learning opportunities achieved through the mutual tailoring of the offer to suit the particular needs of both employee and employer.

### Challenges of schemes for CYP

#### Living in challenging circumstances

- Young people are the least well placed to secure a meaningful offer of employment when faced with challenging and complex circumstances.
- Young people from 'at risk' categories often experienced 'referral fatigue', whereby they were passed around 'the system' so frequently that they became unable to discern between meaningful and exploitative opportunities.

#### Understanding the employment offer

- Not knowing that such schemes exist and what they might actually entail was a major barrier for young people accessing them.
- Required clarity about what exactly the position was well in advance of it being filled.
- It was hard for professional arts organisations to comprehend, but was far harder for those young people in challenging circumstances to do likewise.

#### Employer and employee 'mind-sets'

- Current 'mind-set' of employers impacted on young people's ability to access these kinds of employment opportunities.
- Challenge rests with employers, and not with the young people keen to find work in the creative sector.
- Issue with the perceived value of such employees, and less so their actual abilities, (which were often precisely the kinds of skills that a cutting-edge creative organisation might want to secure).
- Also crucial role the employer can play in helping develop a positive understanding of employment for disenfranchised young people.

#### Finding work in areas of multiple deprivation

- Issues were widely replicated across local areas.
- Distinct challenges in sustaining progression beyond the schemes in localised areas experiencing significant and multiple forms of deprivation.
- While organisations made their best effort to support young people in contact with them, the lack of available and relevant opportunities beyond these projects was a serious challenge that rested outside of their control.

### Summary of Recommendations

Full recommendations are made in Section 6 at the end of this report.

- Explain the offer
- Support appropriate and accessible training
- Have realistic expectations of young people
- Recognise the value of diversity
- Support the needs of small creative organisations
- Understand the UK music sector
- Key stakeholders need to join up
- National government needs to take a lead







# 1. Introduction

This report details findings from the interview stage of research into creative apprenticeship (CA) schemes and the Future Jobs Fund (FJF), which was undertaken in September 2010. Five Youth Music Action Zone (YMAZ) managers and directors, whose organisations were participating in the schemes last year, were interviewed in depth. As with any initiative of this kind, there are a number of benefits and challenges associated with the implementation of these particular schemes. Interviewees talked frankly about both the positive and negative aspects of the schemes at some length, and often made explicit associations between benefits, challenges and how such challenges might be addressed. However, benefits and challenges are discussed separately in this report for clarity.

Supporting employment and training opportunities for all young people is a strategic priority for Youth Music, and this report aims to contribute to the growing evidence base supporting our work in this area. Much of Youth Music's current funded programme activity speaks directly to these recent policy initiatives. In particular, several Youth Music Action Zones (YMAZs) are participating employers on both the CA and FJF, and use music as a key pathway option within these initiatives. Moreover, reported evidence from the YMAZ programme showed their key role in supporting a range of independent schemes, internships, assistant roles, and work experience in the music business and wider creative industries. Following these experiences, there are a number of aspects of the YMAZ model that appear especially effective in delivery of these kinds of schemes:

- they represent a sustained investment in locally targeted areas
- they are already embedded in the partnerships critical for project delivery
- they continually develop relevant skills, training and work experience in the arts
- they are adept at working with at risk groups of children and young people

More broadly, Youth Music has also funded specific programmes designed to support all children and young people's access to work experience in the music and related sectors, including mentoring and peer-to-peer learning (Youth Music Mentors), volunteering in the music industry in partnership with the charity V (Voltage), and a range of MusicLeader 'continuing professional development' (CPD) packages for the on-going development of the musical workforce. All such programmes, alongside core elements of the Open Programme funding stream, demonstrate important intersections between young people's social mobility and modes of creative labour, and provide valuable insights for the work of the charity as a whole.

The following section sets out the policy context for both the Creative Apprenticeship and Future Jobs Fund, highlighting how such schemes have clear synergies with the current strategic priorities of Youth Music and its partner organisations. Section Three then details the methodology used to explore these schemes in detail, and outlines the various employment models used by participants in this research. Section Four presents findings on the reported benefits of schemes, both for organisations and young people; while Section Five details the challenges experienced, both for organisations and young people. To conclude, Section Six presents a series of recommendations for what Youth Music and wider policy making circles might now consider in light of these research findings.

## 2. Policy Context

### 2.1 – The Creative Apprenticeship

The Creative Apprenticeship aims to provide a combined offer of accredited learning and employment opportunities in the creative industries. They represent a non-graduate offer to meet the needs of those with relevant “ability and potential rather than qualifications, social background or who you know”, and ultimately, they “aim to break the vicious circle of ‘no experience equals no job’.”<sup>1</sup>

Those on placements are formally recognised as ‘employees’ of their host organisation and receive a regular, minimum wage. There is no fixed length for running placements, and timescales are intentionally flexible to allow for the range of prior experience of the apprentice, particular opportunities available within the workplace, and the levels of support available from employers and learning providers.<sup>2</sup>

Each placement has three elements. The first is ‘competence based’ and has six pathways leading to a qualification (National Award). These pathways correspond to particular creative interests: Music Business; Live Events & promotion; Cultural & Heritage Venue Operations; Technical Theatre; Community Arts; Costume & Wardrobe. The second element is ‘knowledge based’ and is built around the attainment of a technical certificate in ‘Creative & Cultural Practice’. The final element focuses on developing key level one transferable skills, based on the core topics of ‘Communication’ and ‘Numeracy’.

The current Creative Apprenticeship Framework was developed by Creative and Cultural Skills (Skills Council, UK), and was first implemented in September 2008. The scheme was born out of the core recommendations of the *Creative Blueprint report*<sup>3</sup>, which in turn was informed by research undertaken on behalf of CCSkills by the Work Foundation<sup>4</sup>. More recently, the Creative Apprenticeship offer was expanded to include a new Digital and Media Apprenticeship, which was implemented in late 2010. Both apprenticeship schemes feature strongly in the current reassessment of CCSkills’ ‘Sector Qualifications Strategy’ (SQS), an updated version of which is due for release in mid-2011.

Creative Apprenticeships were given support by the current Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne MP, in the spending review, but it remains unclear exactly what form this support will take in the coming months.<sup>5</sup> In the Treasury announcement on spending cuts in May 2010, he announced £150m to fund 50,000 new apprenticeship places, “focused on small and medium enterprises” but without specifying the extent to which these would include creative apprenticeships.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.creative-choices.co.uk/knowledge/creative-apprenticeships/>

<sup>2</sup> CCSkills suggest that Creative Apprenticeships should last for an average of 15 Months

<sup>3</sup> Creative Blueprint, CCSkills (2008). For a summary focused on England see: [http://www.creative-choices.co.uk/upload/pdf/Creative\\_Blueprint\\_England\\_20081013131117.pdf](http://www.creative-choices.co.uk/upload/pdf/Creative_Blueprint_England_20081013131117.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> The Creative Apprenticeship, The Work Foundation (2006)

<sup>5</sup> See for example the comments made by Iain Brinkley, associate director of The Work Foundation, in response to the Spending Review (October 2010): <http://www.theworkfoundation.com/pressmedia/news/newsarticle.aspx?oltemId=364>

<sup>6</sup> Press Release, ‘Action to cut Whitehall waste and protect schools spending’ (24/05/10). See [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/press\\_04\\_10.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/press_04_10.pdf)

Subsequently, Vince Cable, and the Minister for Skills, John Hayes, launched The Growth Investment Fund (GIF), a £50 million-a-year fund intended to “help businesses develop the skills they need to drive growth”. The fund “invites proposals from employer organisations such as Sector Skills Councils, professional bodies and trade associations”, and suggests that “funding could deliver new training to boost innovation and productivity, enable industries to set new professional standards, or support new or extended National Skills Academies”.<sup>7</sup>

In March this year, CCSkills published The Music Blueprint: a skills needs analysis of music in the UK.<sup>8</sup> This report proposes key actions in response to the identified skills needs in the UK music sector, and should inform consideration of the research findings presented here. At the same time, The Wolf report, commissioned by the Education Secretary Michael Gove, makes a series of recommendations about the future of accredited learning in the UK.<sup>9</sup> Its emphasis on reducing accredited pathways appears somewhat contradictory to the recommendations to the Music Blueprint,<sup>10</sup> though it is too soon to have fully assessed the details of this debate or where it may lead. Nonetheless, such recent publications point to the importance being placed on these issues, and the clear need for Youth Music to take a considered position on them.

## 2.2 – The Future Jobs Fund

The Future Jobs Fund was intended to support the creation of jobs for long term unemployed young people and others who face significant disadvantage in the labour market.<sup>11</sup> The Future Jobs Fund was initiated by the previous Labour Government in the 2009 budget, who allocated approximately £1 billion, and was seen as a “vital” part of the Young Person’s Guarantee, which was intended to “ensure that young and disadvantaged people do not lose touch with the labour market”. The aim of the FJF was to make an offer of employment, work experience or training to anyone between the age of 18-24 who had been on Job Seeker’s Allowance for over six months. The fund was run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG), and with input from Jobcentre Plus and Regional Government Offices in England.

In May 2010, the current Chancellor of the Exchequer announced his first round of efficiency savings in 2010-11; a reduction from the overall budget of £6.2bn that included “£320m from ending ineffective elements of employment programmes, including ending further rollout of temporary jobs through the Young Person’s Guarantee (the ‘Future Jobs Fund’) and removing recruitment subsidies from the ‘Six-Month Offer’.”<sup>12</sup> The withdrawal of funding was taken with immediate effect, though some of the placements already being processed as part of the third phase of applicants from employers were to be allowed to continue until the cut-off date of March 2011.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.bis.gov.uk/news/topstories/2011/Mar/growth-and-innovation-fund>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ccskills.org.uk/Ourindustries/Music/tabid/100/Default.aspx>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.education.gov.uk/16to19/qualificationsandlearning/a0074953/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report> and <http://www.education.gov.uk/inthenews/inthenews/a0064330/written-ministerial-statement-on-the-wolf-review-of-vocational-education>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2011/mar/08/enterprise-education-vocational-review>

<sup>11</sup> This information derives from the Guide to the Future Jobs Fund, DWP, September 2009. <http://campaigns.dwp.gov.uk/campaigns/futurejobsfund/> Accessed September 2010, though no longer available.

<sup>12</sup> [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/press\\_04\\_10.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/press_04_10.pdf)

The DWP has continued to produce official statistics on the FJF and Young Person's Guarantee scheme,<sup>13</sup> and released an Early Analysis of Future Jobs Fund Participant Outcomes in November 2010.<sup>14</sup> As the DWP stress on their website, "There is now an even greater focus on delivering high FJF performance and value for money."<sup>15</sup>

The overall impact of the FJF and Young Persons Guarantee are currently under consideration by the Department for Work and Pensions Parliamentary Select Committee. In October last year, the committee took formal evidence from a range of witnesses who had been instrumental to the development of the scheme at a national level.<sup>16</sup>

In December 2010, the FJF became a key element of the debates held during the Oldham East and Saddleworth bi-election. At a press conference during the campaigning, the Labour Leader, Ed Miliband, criticized the government for cutting the fund, claiming that to do so would worsen conditions for a "lost generation" of young people, and insisted that it should be reinstated.<sup>17</sup> Asked by the magazine Third Sector whether he thought the £1bn fund was affordable, Miliband said: "Yes, I think the fund should be kept at its current level."

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<sup>13</sup> <http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/index.php?page=yppg>

<sup>14</sup> [http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc\\_analysis/2010/fjf\\_nov\\_2010.pdf](http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd1/adhoc_analysis/2010/fjf_nov_2010.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> <http://campaigns.dwp.gov.uk/campaigns/futurejobsfund/>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmworpen/uc472-i/uc472i.htm> Witnesses included David Coyne, Executive Director of Glasgow Works, Tony Hawkhead, Chief Executive of Groundwork, and Betaie Mould, Director of Be Birmingham.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/news/Article/1048486/Miliband-demands-reinstatement-1bn-Future-Jobs-Fund/>





## 3. Methodology

Five telephone interviews were undertaken with project managers and directors involved in the implementation of these schemes via the Youth Music Action Zone (YMAZ) programme. They were selected based on their reported participation in the schemes in 2009-2010. These interviews were in-depth and semi-structured, and intended to give an initial insight into the main issues involved. Specifically, the five participants were asked to comment on the following:

- What are the benefits of these schemes? (both for your organisation and young people)
- What are the challenges involved in accessing and implementing these schemes? (both for your organisation and young people)
- What are the particular barriers and difficulties involved in getting young people from challenging circumstances into work within the creative sector?

The transcripts from these interviews were analysed using NVivo 9 software to explore the emerging themes and test the relationships between them. This report is a summary of the stronger themes from this wider data set, which can be re-examined should further research and analysis be required. Anonymised transcripts and the coding framework are available on request.

Conducive with best practice in social research, participant testimony has been taken in confidence and all identifiable references to the names of people and places have been removed. This not only protects the identities of the potentially vulnerable young people involved with these organisations, and whose individual experiences are discussed here, but it also enabled participants to be frank about the challenges they faced alongside the benefits of the schemes. Participants and their respective YMAZ host organisations will only be referred to throughout using the pseudonyms Alpha, Beta, Charlie, Delta and Echo.

It should also be noted that all participants have suggested that further interviews with CYP involved in these schemes would be feasible should they be required by Youth Music. To be clear, no children or young people were actually interviewed in this stage of the research. As a result, the evidence outlining the benefits and challenges for CYP derives from how they are perceived by the (adult) 'stakeholder' interview participants. There is inherent bias in this perspective, making it impossible to draw complete findings here. It is recommended that further research be conducted with participating young people if a reliable focus on the benefits and challenges that they themselves experience is required.

### 3.1 – Employment models used by interviewees

This section sets out the nature of involvement in these schemes for each of the five project leaders and directors interviewed. See below for a summary table of the models used by Youth Music Action Zone organisations consulted here.

#### Project Alpha

Project Alpha undertook its own creative apprenticeship model developed since 2004. They decided to reject both formal CA and FJF schemes because “they didn’t really satisfy our needs”. Their model began as a full-time, one-year placement. They then decided to stop full-time and go to a “sessional”, part-time model of 10 hours-per-week, to better suit the nature of work at a music organisation. At the time of research, Project Alpha had a Music Leader Apprentice and one new role; a Media and Marketing Apprentice. They currently take three sessional apprenticeships per year, each for a six month period. Project Alpha also regularly takes on work experience placements for Year 10 pupils in their local area.

#### Project Beta

Participant Beta had spent the last three years working closely with both Creative and Cultural Skills and Skillset on developing the new creative sector apprenticeships, (the Creative Apprenticeship, and also the new Creative Media and Digital Apprenticeship). He had been involved in helping particular strategy groups of the two different Skills Councils, helping work up the frameworks for the apprenticeship, based on what the demand was, what worked for industry and for employers, as well as for participating young people. At the time of research Project Beta did not employ an apprentice, but they plan to recruit one shortly.

#### Project Charlie

Project Charlie had taken on eight FJF employees between 2009 and present. However many of these employees did not complete the placement. Project Charlie also reapplied for a further 25 places in a third phase bid to the FJF, but the announcement in May from the Treasury meant that they were unsure how many young people they would employ. Project Charlie also offered roles for young people as assistants, on assorted summer projects, and they ran the Leverhulme Trust Training Award.

#### Project Delta

Project Delta recruited two FJF employees in March 2010, for the standard period of six months. They started second phase recruitment in August 2010 for two further places, one of which was filled in September 2010. Participant Delta referred to these as ‘trainees’. Project Delta also regularly took on Work Experience placements.

#### Project Echo

At the time of writing, Project Echo employed two people on the Future Jobs Fund, full-time for 1 year (2010 – 2011). They had also developed an independent Creative Apprenticeship model, which is was funded by a local District Council. To date, 12 placements have been run on a part-time basis over a four month course (2010).

Project	Link to YM	Employment Scheme(s)	Duration	Total Participants to date
Alpha	YMAZ, ML	Independent Music Leader apprenticeship	1 Year, FT (2004, 2005)	2
		Independent Music Leader apprenticeship	Sessional, PT (2006 – present)	11
		Independent Music Leader apprenticeship	Sessional, PT (2010)	1
Beta	YMAZ	Participant B advised strategy groups for the Skills Councils developing both the Creative Apprenticeship and also the new Creative Media and Digital Apprenticeship	2008 – 2010	n/a
		Creative Apprenticeship	1 year, PT (2010)	1
Charlie	YMAZ	Future Jobs Fund	1 year, FT (2009, 2010)	8
		Internship	On-going, FT & PT	unknown
		Assistants, assorted summer projects, Leverhulme Trust Training Award	1-3 weeks	18 p.a.
Delta	YMAZ	Future Jobs Fund	6 Months, PT (2010)	3
Echo	YMAZ	Independent Creative Apprenticeship (funded by local District Council)	4 Months, PT (2010)	12
		Future Jobs Fund	1 year, FT (2010 – 2011)	2



## 4. Benefits of Schemes

### 4.1 – Benefits for funded organisations

#### 4.1.1 Affordable support for small, creative organisations

A fundamental benefit of these schemes was the way the provision of a few extra employees made such a positive difference to the capacity of the small creative organisations who hosted them. While they took a cautious tone with regard to sustaining their funding on a number of fronts, projects involved with these kinds of schemes recognised what they stood to gain at different levels of operation. This was almost taken as an obvious point, that “In terms of the stuff they do, of course, it’s a benefit to us.” [Echo]

A key aspect of this benefit was the affordability of quality provision, and interviewees had a good sense of value for money in participation. For example, reflecting on her experiences with the FJF, Delta made it clear that, “for a small organisation like ourselves who don’t have the money to employ a high level of salary, it’s incredibly useful to us” [Delta]. She went on to give an illustration of one of these employees, and how the FJF made the difference in securing that new position, adding that: “If somebody had said to me, ‘Would you employ him?’ I would say, ‘Yes’” [Delta]. Similarly, Alpha reflected, “So would we want to continue that? Yes. It’s certainly working at the moment and it would be great to be able to keep going with it, to have the money to do that.” [Alpha]

For all interviewees, there was a real sense that employees through the schemes had made a valuable contribution, both to the daily-running of the host organisation and to their wider creative ‘ethos’. As Delta elaborated,

*We have learned an awful lot from this process with the Future Jobs Fund and I wish it was continuing in some ways because we have had very positive experiences from the three young men that we have had. They have been incredibly giving in terms of giving back to us and slotted in incredibly well to what we do and they’ve just been really good. From my perspective if we could continue to have young people on that level, then it work incredibly well and if we were in a better position financially, I would seriously consider employing on that basis [Delta]*

This importance of such employees sharing the ‘ethos’ of the organisations in which they worked was also reflected in Echo’s experience of running an independent creative apprenticeship scheme,

*I’ve just been massively impressed with them. So in terms of for us, regardless of physical things that they are doing for us and the tangible outcomes, they are of benefit to us straightaway because they already own the ethos of what we are about here. [Echo]*

Both Delta and Echo identify good value in this contribution, which they see as separate from, and in addition to, the practical input their employees have. The affinity between the ethos of these kinds of organisation and the young people who work for them – in whatever capacity – establishes a mutual, committed relationship. This was exemplified by Echo describing his employees on the schemes as “brilliant” and “passionate”, adding that, “All of them have stayed those extra hours when they didn’t need to – out of choice” [Echo]



#### 4.1.2 Arts, technology and media savvy employees

A second key benefit identified by participants on all of these schemes was a clear sense of the value of 'fresh talent', of finding 'literate' and 'savvy' individuals who support the necessarily creative evolution of such organisations. Delta, for example, noted of the FJF that; "if you get young people who are bright and able and savvy around music and media – which a lot of young people are obviously, this is a great business for them to be involved in, and it helps us enormously" [Delta]. Likewise, Charlie who was also working with FJF employees, gave a strong example of an individual success in this regard,

*We managed to find a fantastic graphic designer called [Name] and he's now been with us for six months and we're actually going to keep him on for a few months because he's just been fantastic and dealing with all our graphic images and building web pages and that kind of thing. [Charlie]*

For Beta, who has experience advising on the development of the CA at a national level, there was something key about the unique skills offer of young people today that was of particular value to small creative organisations. For him, there was a significant demand for this particular offer, which "is about generational differences" [Beta]. As he explained,

*There's a lot creative sector employers out there who want young people who are more technologically savvy or digitally savvy than maybe they are. And that's what we're finding quite interesting at this particular apprenticeship. There is a big demand on it. And even from a kind of basic perspective, I mean, you know, lots of small organisations that we work with, often they just want someone who knows how to build a website or how to maintain a website. [Beta]*

Beta's point about the 'savvy' nature of young people's skills points to a significant mechanism within these schemes, by which small creative organisations can refresh and remain creative, and at the cutting edge of creative developments. It also suggests ways that an open approach to the employment of young people from a range of backgrounds can be of particular value to such organisations too.

### 4.1.3 Harnessing diversity in the creative industries

Beta, again, was explicit about how the targeted assistance of both the Creative Apprenticeship scheme and Future Jobs Fund had the potential to bring in a valuable range of relevant skills and experiences into the creative industry sector. For him,

*it's enabling young people to access work in the creative sector that otherwise they wouldn't be able to access. And that in itself is probably slightly changing the demographic of the kind of people that are employed in that sector in the first place. [Beta]*

So while these targeted, and in many instances 'first-access', employment schemes were intended to support the individual achieve progression in their career, Beta was clear that by doing so, the schemes offered an important means for sourcing talent in the creative sector overall. This was no insignificant benefit given the anxieties and challenges associated with this important stage of cultural production, and particularly for the kinds of smaller organisations dependent upon it. Crucially, this was achieved through the mutual approach to supporting diversity that lies at the heart of both schemes. On the CA, for example, Beta felt that the main benefit was, "really about addressing some of the skills and diversity issues in the creative sector and also understanding that by having a more diverse employee base you're gonna get a different set of skills into an organisation" [Beta]. Similarly, in reflecting on the benefits of the FJF in this context, he noted that such diversity had,

*...helped to change some of the perceptions maybe of some of those managers who maybe aren't quite as young as they used to be. And understanding a bit more about what's relevant or kind of what young people want and what kind of skills they want to develop and what they're interests are. [Beta]*

## 4.2 – Benefits for young people

### 4.2.1 Real pay and wages, real employment

For Beta, the real value of the Creative Apprenticeship was its provision of a real wage for economically disadvantaged employees. He felt this kind of employment offer was preferable to the internship system, which he felt favoured those with a somewhat privileged ability to work for free. For him, the whole purpose of such schemes was about making an offer that was appropriate and viable for those young people who are in challenging circumstances,

*what traditionally has worked prior to apprenticeships in this country is the whole internship system, that's great for, you know and I am speaking quite generally here in terms of what works quite well for well off, white middle class young people, but not so well for those who aren't necessarily in that category and therefore have less access as a result. And then you look at the facts across the creative sector in general in terms of the ethnicity of employees in that sector and that is why it's, you know, 99% white, predominantly. So, I would say that's the main challenge in terms of changing the perception of employers as to what they're getting when they take on someone who they might deem as different. [Beta]*

Thus, the status as an 'employee', and the guaranteed offer of a minimum wage, were key features of both schemes that interviewees cited as being of particular benefit to young people. Interviewees also expressed a sense of 'getting what you pay for' with this approach, in that by valuing their employees in this way, organisations secured a more committed workforce. For example, reflecting on the mutual successes of her organisation's independent apprenticeship scheme, Alpha explained that, "we were able to do that because we were paying a good wage to the young person, but we were also able to fully target it to our own individual organisational needs" [Alpha].

Perhaps unsurprisingly, interviewees also expressed a range of financial concerns about staffing, project development and funding sources. Organisations had a number of substantive and practical issues with the financial offer to the young people they employed, and all were cautious to avoid exploiting, or appearing to exploit, these employees. (This point is picked up below in the discussion about providing a 'meaningful' offer to young people). However, many felt that paying a real wage was a solid attempt to take these individual young people on as serious employees with a genuine and (financially) valued role to play in the host organisation.

#### 4.2.2 Supervised work experience

A distinct aspect of the offer to participating young people on all schemes was a clear supervision and support structure. From the interviews it was readily apparent that the sustained investment in the YMAZ infrastructure had helped ensure these organisations were able to support young musicians to become employees and remain so. Alpha, for example, set out the supervision offer on their independent creative apprenticeship scheme: "we have proper supervision once a term, and we have appraisals at the end of the year. We have exit interviews and any time they have any problems we have an open-door policy" [Alpha].

Similarly, Echo had established a clear supervision package for both his FJF employees and those undertaking the independent creative apprenticeship that his organisation was hosting. He called these 'personal progression plans', which were developed as a working plan in a fortnightly meeting between employees on the schemes and an experienced supervisor. As he explained, these contained a requirement for employees to take a 'reflexive' approach to their own development by keeping a regular journal and using it within the meeting context. For him the value of this method was clear,

*we've just found that a really good way to [...] have a look back in four month's time at your first week; and that first time you went to the workshop; and the first time you were asked to lead that song; or the first time you were asked to help that lad write his lyrics; in comparison to what you felt last week when you did it [Echo]*

For Beta, the value of the Creative Apprenticeship in this instance came from host organisations being genuinely committed to the individual needs of the people they chose to employ through the schemes. As he made clear in his illustration of one such employee, "it's about us as an organisation being prepared to invest the time into his professional development and give him the core and training that he really needs" [Beta]. Again, this kind of sentiment was expressed by all participants with reference to the ways the proper implementation of such schemes mitigates for otherwise more exploitative forms of employment (see below).

#### 4.2.3 Access to a range of appropriate training opportunities

Training was another central element to the offer that interviewees cited as being of particular benefit for the young people they worked with. All noted too that identifying, building and recognising skills through work experience was especially key for securing progression routes beyond the schemes. With pre-existing expertise in supporting music related pathways, YMAZ hosts appeared to be very good at employing holistic pedagogical techniques that balanced theoretical and applied modes of training. For example, Alpha explained that her organisation had designed their independent creative apprenticeships as a chance to "learn all the different aspects of what it means to be a music leader in terms of theory as well as practice" [Alpha].

Similarly, Beta gave the example of a particular progression route for one of his creative apprentices who attended a special training provider in music technology, noting that, alongside providing practical, music-focused experiences, this individual also encountered a smaller, class-room element that offered more formalised learning:

*So most of his learning is kind of 'on the job' but then a day a week he goes and joins other Creative Apprentices in the classroom, and is given more of a theoretical training. So what's useful about that is it connects his day-to-day work at [Organisation Beta] into what's the kind of wider picture. You know, what is the creative sector? [...] His units will include things like project management, co-ordination, health and safety, working with diverse groups, marketing, how to target particular audiences, but that kind of stuff. All of which he is doing anyway. [Beta]*



By routinely bringing apprenticeships together as peers, host organisations achieved a careful balance between individual and collective training needs too. This kind of balancing between theoretical/vocational and individual/collective training was also reflected in the training employees received with regards to the skills they developed through direct work experiences with both music/non-music and the arts/industry sectors. While much of this training was undertaken on the job, informally and in-house, some interviewees reported using third parties to offer designated training too. However, this was viewed in terms of complementing not replacing the everyday learning that took place, which included first aid, child protection, creative consultation, behaviour management, as well as music and music leadership skills. As Echo noted,

*They have upped their IT skills, their skill set across a lot of things and working with young people as well as actually understanding the impact of what we do in the community. There's a huge amount of learning that's gone on for them, which most of it is not officially tick-boxed so to speak, but you can really see that if you look back over the months they have been here. [Echo]*

Interviewees widely recognised that accredited training was an especially key means of ensuring quality of skills, and recognising achievement. Delta, for example, felt that "You can't get much better than having somebody for six months who actually completes a Gold Arts Award in that time" [Delta]. Responding organisations regularly encouraged their employees to undertake Arts Awards at all levels, while Organisation Alpha trained their community musicians to become community music leaders accredited with OCN levels 1-3. However, interviewees were also clear that a remaining challenge was to ensure a range of accessible, equitable routes into accredited training. On this, participants had a developed sense of practical steps forward, notably through the kinds of vocational approach outlined above, as Beta reasoned,

*if a young person wasn't academically minded, there wasn't really a lot else for them to do, apart from going to get a job, whereas this is a much more a sort of vocational approach and alright it's about that young person being employed, but also about them getting that training, and not just for a year. Often these apprenticeships can go onto a level 3, level 4 or Foundation Level apprenticeships, which is something that's in development now and could end up being a 2 or 3 year programme that in itself can then actually enable that young person to go on and access a degree if they so wish, but they are much more vocationally focused. [...] I think they've removed barriers for lots of young people, probably because they are enabling young people who want to access the creative sector, to access it in a way that they would have never been able to before. [Beta]*

Thus, while interviewees recognised the importance of attaching accreditation to the training of employees, they also expressed some caution over an undue emphasis on accreditation at the expense of wider skill development. Accreditation was not always felt to be the best benchmark of success with regard to the schemes, as it did not fully account for the distance travelled by individual employees. Interviewees stressed that emphasizing accreditation above all else could also be demotivating.

#### 4.2.4 Team work and leadership opportunities

The organisations consulted were already well practised at supporting on-going team work opportunities for their employees. Beta made this point well with one example, summarising that, "He is learning how to develop his skills in the workplace really, how to work as part of a team" [Beta]. Likewise, all interviewees set out how they supported leadership opportunities, such as 'chaperones' and mentors, or what Organisation Alpha describes as 'pioneers': "so we're actually being able to give them some leadership opportunities as well, which is quite an unusual thing to be able to offer a young person at that high level of learning really" [Alpha].

All interviewees recognised that these team working and individual leadership opportunities were of immense benefit to the young employees, but were also linked to the benefits organisations themselves might gain with regard to diversity and fresh talent. For example, Beta noted of one employee,

*he's developing project co-ordination skills; he's started to lead on one or two smaller initiatives; he's been quite engaged with the [Youth Music Council] that we've developed as kind of distinct product over the last year or so. [...] it's bringing forward maybe a different perspective and a different set of ideas, which maybe differs from a senior management team who are all in their mid to late 30s. [Beta]*



#### 4.2.5 Towards further employment, education and training

Implicit in the above section is a sense of broader skill development beyond music, and many of the roles offered by host organisations only in part focused on musical skills. As Alpha confirmed, "That's the idea, that it's been more than music for them, its getting the business skills" [Alpha]. Indeed, the emergence of Digital Media and Marketing Apprenticeships and other variants of the apprenticeship model signals how music might serve as an important means through which employees can gain essential skills for a range of roles within the arts and creative industries. For example, Beta noted of the Creative Apprenticeship that, "actually a lot, kind of, doesn't include music in its pathway", but that, "it's equally as relevant I think [...] because it's all about digital industries and creative media, multi-media, which is obviously very relevant with everything to do with music" [Beta]. He went on to give a sense of the kinds of progression routes that such schemes can open up over the course:

*So by the end of that year you pretty much get a good idea of whether that apprentice is going to be any good as a music leader and whether they can be taken on and if they're going to be successful or not in all those different areas. And even if they don't go on to become successful music leaders, because the apprenticeship programme also focuses on teaching them to run their own business essentially, to become sole traders, it's teaching them about employability, life skills, work skills, you name it. So there's a sense that they then go on to more personally engage in their own career development through other areas that they wish to pursue, even if it's not in the music leading field. [Beta]*

This view was based on his experience that,

*what we are also starting to find is that those young people who have been taken by creative sector employers are either being kept on by those employers and employed beyond the Future Jobs' six month period, or then going on and finding other work. So, again the big advantage there is that it's a lot easier for that young person to find longer-term, sustainable employment when they're already in employment. Otherwise the big barrier to that young person is that they just can't get a job in the first place and then they end up in that cycle of long term unemployment and employers not being interested because they've got no recent work experience to offer. [Beta]*

From an individual perspective, Charlie concurred with these findings, noting of one young man he had employed through the FJF that,

*[Boy Name] who was a success story turned round and said on Friday: 'Oh, you know just spending time with you I really want to go into back stage work and I want to do that techie kind of stuff.' So again, from somebody who didn't know what he wanted to do, all of a sudden maybe thinking, sound technician; whatever. So it is opening the door and giving them an insight into work. In the same way [diff. boy name] probably thought: 'OK, admin probably isn't my best thing, but let's go into IT.' [Charlie]*

#### 4.2.6 Long-term progression

Another benefit to young people on these schemes was the long-term nature of development on offer. Indeed, many participants had already been in contact with the YMAZ host organisations for a while as participants before they joined the organisation as an employee. Such sustainability demonstrates the strength of relationships between host organisations and the young people they support, and their particular ability to sustain support for vulnerable, challenged and at risk children and young people throughout their lives. Alpha gave a compelling illustration of one individual who had been involved with her organisation for seven years and another for over four years. She noted that "there's been quite a learning curve for them in terms of just changing from participant to employee" but also explained that,

*they've really done a lot of their development here already, and it's just keeping that going in a different format. The same happened with one of our apprentices in the past, [girl name], had been a participant and then went on to become a music leader apprentice, then she went on to become a music leader, and now she's gone off to London to a vocal academy to become famous and has completely abandoned us. [...] We're hoping that they progress so far that they don't want to know us ever again ... <Laughs> But we're hoping to reap the benefits when she does her album! [Alpha]*

As well as the schemes supporting the key transition for young people from project participant to employee, interviewees were also explicit about the ways they sought continuation of employment on the schemes and into further employment. The contact with the scheme thus provided a valuable two-way transition, both as a way into paid work experience and then onto a range of longer-term employment, education and training opportunities. As Echo put it, "we've opened that door for them to actually then run through it and keep going" [Echo]. He went on to give some examples of this offer to his young employees,

*we've had people go on to now be radio presenters in [Town] and stuff. We've been lucky enough, actually, to be considered that our course was good enough at level 3 to be a conditional offer for a university placement in Music Industry Management. [...] And the guy got it and now I think he's in his third year now, but he's now also running his own club nights all around [town] and [county]. [Echo]*

For Alpha, this ability to support and sustain long-term progression routes in the arts and creative industries was something that the YMAZ hosts were particularly good at, given their significant experience in localised outreach work. As she explained,

*we were able to target the people who use our facilities who are ex-participants for example. And because 90% of what we do in our delivery as an organisation is actually targeted provision with hard to reach youngsters, we're able to enfranchise those young people so to speak, and be able to talk to them and say, 'Oh, this opportunity's coming up'. So I think we probably were able to do it slightly more than any other organisations who didn't really have that kind of outreach were able to do. [Alpha]*





## 5. Challenges of Schemes

### 5.1 – Challenges for funded organisations

#### 5.1.1 Capacity of small creative organisations

By definition, as smaller creative organisations, the YMAZs had real concerns with their capacity and resources to deliver the schemes effectively, and all interviewees expressed a need for careful balancing to avoid serious implications. They all reported experiencing high-levels of demand for their services generally, and many were consistently oversubscribed for the range of work experience positions they offered. For example, Delta noted of her organisation's intake of work experience from secondary schools,

*We could fill this place every week of the year with work experience young people. We don't because we haven't got the capacity or the resources to do it [Delta]*

Similarly, Charlie, who regularly took on interns, pointed out that, "Every day I get anything between one and three internship applications [...] so there is a need there" [Charlie]; while Alpha reported that her volunteer, apprenticeship and work experience opportunities were all oversubscribed to the extent that "when you wanted to put people into sessions, to have learning opportunities, you would find that there was more people doing that than participants! <Laughs>" [Alpha]. These kinds of pressures had clear implications for the kinds of learning experience organisations intended for young people, as well as their ability to control these groups effectively. As such, interviewees had tended towards prioritising the quality over the quantity of the kinds of work placements their organisations offered.

However, despite achieving notable successes in terms of the outcomes achieved for individuals on the schemes (as outlined above), this approach was felt to conflict with the approach advocated for by the organisations and government departments handling the schemes at a national level. In particular, interviewees were well aware of the kinds of financial and other very practical resources needed to offer a work placement of any value to both parties. For example, Alpha reflected on how this kind of scheme was pitched to her organisation,

*There's always a sense with these sort of schemes, 'oh you can get a young person to come to work for free in your organisation' ... and then they don't actually think about well 'actually what happens about line management?' [or] the actual costs that are involved with having another member of staff in the building [...] so it really becomes an issue. [Alpha]*

This situation was a significant factor in Organisation Alpha deciding to opt out of these Government-led schemes altogether and undertake their own creative apprenticeship model instead. She was especially wary of this situation because she felt that it negatively affected those organisations who were trying to be financially sensible in the sector. As she set out,

*most of us in the creative sector were moving toward things like full cost recovery models and trying to be really sensible about our costs, recoup our costs where necessary, blah-de-blah, and then you had a Creative Apprenticeship model which in fact wasn't really allowing organisations to do that. It was almost becoming like a cheap labour sort of thing, which we just weren't really interested in. [Alpha]*

For Beta, a key way to head-off many of the capacity and resource issues felt by those adopting the schemes was for more sector-led joining up at a strategic and policy level to ensure the networks of small organisations were able to function most effectively. This point gives clear scope for the role of national development bodies such as Youth Music, and on this he was explicit:



*I think Youth Music would be very well placed to look at developing a National consortium to drive Creative Apprenticeships as a kind of agenda at a policy level but also in terms of numbers delivered. But in order to be able to do that they've really got to start thinking about some kind of distributed college or training model and, you know, that's exactly what I've been doing for a couple of clients over the last 2-3 years as a piece of work and it's very interesting because it's about how do you get the non-formal learning or community sector able to engage and access mainstream funding. That's actually the subtext of what we're talking about here and I think there's some interesting challenges there but it's certainly do-able. We already know at [YMAZ] it can work, there's a business plan for us, but it's something I think we'd wanna do with some strategic partners. [Beta]*

### 5.1.2 Bureaucracy and administration

A related challenge for small organisations was the levels of bureaucracy and administration associated with taking on new employees through the schemes. As Delta commented, "The bureaucracy attached to young, unemployed people is ridiculous" [Delta]. She went on to retell her experiences in attempting to take on one particular individual on the FJF scheme, explaining that her company manager had liaised with the Job Centre on many occasions to talk through what they wanted, only to discover that this person was deemed ineligible for the scheme by the Job Centre but that they could not explain why. This was a particularly frustrating outcome, especially because of the lack of clarity as to why this decision was made. As she went on,

*it's not for us to try and unravel the different systems in a way. And you could easily see, as an employer (we are a small business, a small organisation, a voluntary sector organisation) why we would perhaps at the first hurdle say, 'We just can't be bothered with this.' [Delta]*

Another practical issue many of the organisations had encountered, which had hindered their ability to implement the schemes and fill placements properly, was the lengthy process of CRB checking that was required of all employees. While interviewees were all clear on the need for such a process, such delays had themselves rendered the purpose of the process pointless in their view. For example, Charlie noted that of the eight employees he had taken on through the FJF, and who had all now finished their placements,

*"I've only had three CRBs back; the other five are still processing. So it's absolutely insane. How are you supposed to make a system work?" [Charlie]*

Charlie also gave an example of these kind of bureaucratic challenges from another perspective, namely in his organisations relationship with 3SC, the umbrella body hosting the FJF scheme at a national level. He recalled how, on the one hand, 3SC had been keen for his organisation to submit an explicit number of participants and a detailed schedule of start dates well in advance of the schemes implementation. This for him was a very target-driven approach to delivery, which took little account of the pragmatics of employing young people in a meaningful way. Indeed, on the other hand, he felt that the details and paperwork attached to these proposed placements had remained unconfirmed by 3SC until very late in the preparatory stages, leaving many of the organisations charged with delivery, including his own, being unprepared and confused.

Having allowed for the scheme to settle in, and equipped with the experience of hosting several placements, Charlie felt that an effective resolution of this situation was to be clearer on what exactly the advertised roles should include, and be more flexible on when they are taken up, so as to ensure the right people fill them. As he explained,



*we've now identified specific roles that we need, such as a video editor and technician; specific things. If we put those adverts out there – as long as we don't have the 3SC gun to our head thing, 'You have to employ somebody by December' – if we can have this rolling process of we've got a pot of five or six people which we can identify different roles with. [Charlie]*

Also reflecting on the target-driven bureaucracies of the national bodies overseeing the scheme, Echo felt uncomfortable with an overwhelming focus on 'hard outputs' as success measures. In his experience, this approach defined the working culture behind the apprenticeships at the National Apprenticeships Service and the Skills Funding Agency, and was something that conflicted slightly with the proven outcomes approaches adopted by smaller creative firms such as the Youth Music YMAZ programme.

### 5.1.3 Resource intensive nature of working with those 'at risk'

Interviewees were also explicit about the particularly resource intensive nature of working effectively with 'at risk' groups of young people. Delta articulated the aspects of this challenge well, noting that this was especially pressing for small organisations such as her own,

*I am not sure we would be very well equipped to deal with those that are incredibly hard to engage in an employment situation, because our resources are limited to do that intense, one-to-one training or support. We are just not equipped to do that. But it has not been our experience to date. [Delta]*

However, she also made it clear that by making this extra commitment, the potential for nurturing personal and social development were considerable,

*It does stretch us a bit. We are pretty lucky, although one of the trainees needed more support than the last two, in that he came from an 'at risk' background, but he grew enormously in the time that he was here. A lot of us were involved in what I would say was basic life skill training as well for that young man. He grew enormously. When he first came to us as a volunteer he was in a whole different place from when he left. [Delta]*

This resource intensive way of working not only applied to meeting physical and financial needs, but also related to the length of time needed to secure a positive outcome during the employment offer. For example, Beta noted that,

*it's a process that takes at least a year, if not longer, because often a lot of these individuals are starting from quite a low base and having to deal with all sorts of issues, for example, just in terms of maybe developing their confidence to be able to speak out and do meetings, things as basic as that. And that's not the kind of stuff that happens overnight necessarily, that's a kind of longer, longer-term development for that individual. [Beta]*

Echo concurred with this point, and described the progression achieved through employment as being like a 'journey'. He was also careful to suggest that employers need to be reasonable with what they expect such employees to be able to achieve over the full-course of this journey if it is to be successful,

*you can almost have no expectation in those things, so when kinda these guys started – lovely guys, really into music and passionate about that – at that point, clueless about being involved in what we were taking them onto, and that was fine, and that was obviously part of the journey. [Echo]*

Delta was also careful not to attribute the problem entirely with her young employees themselves, noting that neither her organisation, nor indeed the job centre, had had the capacity to work as effectively with this groups as she would have liked,

*the problem is that they are in the Job Centre and they are all at the same starting point for them. They are all bunched together [...] maybe it's a practicality for Job Centres, they just do the number crunching. They don't have the time or the resources, presumably, to spend more time on these young people. But then, having said that, nor do we. We are not geared up to do apprenticeships as such, we just have our own way of working and we give them a model and say we'd like you to do this but it doesn't always go to plan because that's the nature of our business. [Delta]*

In light of these resource pressures, some interviewees reported that making a full-time offer was especially problematic for small creative organizations. One workable solution was the use of a sessional employment model, as had been adopted by Alpha's organisation. As she explained,

*a culmination of learning made us realise that actually a full-time apprenticeship position did not work for this organisation, the reason being when the person, the apprentice, was not in a session we then had management issues, 'cause we'd think what are we going to do with this young person when they're not in a session, in terms of task allocation etc. etc. So that became a real drain on us as an organisation and just became too onerous to be honest. [Alpha]*

#### 5.1.4 Managing the abilities of young people

Given the resource intensive nature of supporting young employees, the organisations consulted felt that a certain level of independence in their new employees was desirable. As Delta explained,

*if you get good trainees your life is so much easier. In a small organisation, you need to have them so that they are pretty sound and that's the one thing I would say because that makes your life easier because you're not doing hands-on, day-to-day management, because if they get on and do stuff then obviously your life's a whole lot easier. [Delta]*

That said, interviewees also pointed out that this level of independence was rarely to be relied upon entirely, as Echo set out,

*"These courses have been running for the last four years and I've never had a cohort that I just could completely know that they would get the job done. They are passionate, they're into it, and we've got that" [Echo].*

Likewise, Charlie had mixed expectations of his FJF employees and their role in his organisation, admitting openly that,

*our main worry to begin with was that we would get the down and outs; we would get people with no qualifications and that scared us a little bit but then we thought well even if they're good enough to photocopy or file or whatever, at least they will be of value to us in the office, because we needed people that we could train and hopefully teach. [Charlie]*

He went on to explain that his hesitation derived from what he felt to be a tendency towards an instrumental use of the arts sector on these schemes,

*we take a large scale of work experience every year and it seems to me that we always [...] get the people who don't know what they want to do, [...] so we're used to having people in the office who don't even know what corner of an envelope a stamp goes! [Charlie]*

Charlie was also clear on the specific kinds of strengths and weaknesses of his individual FJF employees, for example,

*the main problem with [Girl name] was that her time management was absolutely awful and because she had never had a job, she just drifted in and you would try to educate her, you'd try to say how important timekeeping was that kind of thing and as far as her work went, once she was in, we gave her jobs to do and even if it was basic data entry or photocopying or filing, she did them all. She used to fly through the jobs and everything was done correctly, it was just the etiquette of being in an office [Charlie]*

So while these employees might have completed work quickly or were deft with technology, they also had basic issues with time-keeping, office etiquette and written English. Alpha recalled a similar problem with one individual in particular, who had been employed as an apprentice music leader,

*what was really difficult in hindsight, looking back, he just didn't have the maturity. <Laughs> So in the end you're like, 'Oh lord' and you start pulling your hair out thinking grow up, grow up! Because music leaders are expected to do really quite big things, as you can imagine, because they're using music as a transformative tool with hard to reach youngsters, so the idea of having a very young person ... them being in that sort of role by the end of their apprenticeship, that really is quite a big thing, so that mix of musical, professional and social skills, and personal skills is really quite crucial. [Alpha]*

Nonetheless, Alpha's point about the expectations of employees of this kind echoes Delta's view that, rather than the deficit being placed on the employee themselves, actually this challenge was in part about the kinds of expectations employers have and their own role in the supported development of young employees. Indeed, a key reason for creating such employment schemes in the first instance was due to the recognition of a need to develop these skills where they did not already exist. Alpha's approach here was deliberately reflective, offering a working solution to moving forward with such challenges,

*We've been working on learning some lessons for us in the area of managing that relationship between music leaders and music leader apprentices. At the beginning I really don't think we thought enough about that, and suddenly we're putting an apprentice into sessions where effectively music leaders were managing the apprentices during that session, and I don't think we had enough foresight at the time to say, 'Oh gosh, how's that going to work? Does that music leader have the management skills,' for example, 'to manage another young person's development in that sort of area?' [Alpha]*



#### 5.1.5 Providing a meaningful offer

Another challenge expressed by all respondents was the ability to offer a genuinely meaningful, authentic employment offer to young people in a context where there was considerable pressure to prioritise organisational and government needs. Those interviewed expressed their support for forms of mutually beneficial employment situations, and reiterated Delta's sentiment that, if the scheme was intended simply to gain as an organisation, "We would rather not have the young people on that basis" [Delta]. Alpha was also very clear on this point, explaining that while it was important that the schemes satisfy organisational needs, their adoption was also very much about,

*having young persons' development at the forefront of our minds and linking into that wider empowerment agenda [...] and how we can build new ways of making that young person's involvement much more authentic, [...] so you've got a sense of progression routes throughout the organisation. [Alpha]*



This commitment presented further challenges, including many of those outlined above. Yet it was clear that interviewees felt that this was a challenge to be met head on rather than one to succumb to. Given the nature and long history of their work with young people from a range of backgrounds, and particularly those in challenging circumstances, organisations of this kind very much wanted to be the point at which such cycles of deprivation, marginalisation and exploitation were broken rather than further reinforced.

This expressed sense of unease with undertaking employment schemes that threatened to exploit the young people who participate on them in favour of the short-term gains available to individual organisations, was also articulated towards the national agencies charged with their coordination and ultimately, the central government too. A clear anxiety that the schemes' intended goals were ultimately about massaging national employment figures was a recurring theme in the interviews. For example, reflecting on previous initiatives of this kind, Delta explained that,

*massaging unemployment figures, for whatever political purpose it is, creates the danger of exploitation of young people just being thrown into jobs that they don't really want to do, and they are doing as a means to an end. And employers using it, if you like. The old Manpower Services Commission used to just literally employ for six months and get rid of them and take on a whole load of new people, pay the minimum wage and say, 'Thank you very much – off you go!' [Delta]*

Yet, while respondents were cautious on this point, only Charlie viewed the current situation as disingenuous, bluntly referring to the FJF as a “scam” intended “to get the numbers down”. His comments were based on his direct experiences with the administration of the Future Jobs Fund at a national level from an early stage, and his critique was limited to larger employers who were prepared to pay minimum wages and allocate minimum resources through economies of scale. Recalling one meeting in London with 3SC and a group of potential employers, he noted how “they were all seeing pound signs”. Thus he argued that this kind of exploitation also affected smaller organisations too, because they tended to be the kinds of creative organisations most invested in putting forward a meaningful offer.

#### 5.1.6 Tailoring a standard offer

Related to the expressed need to provide a genuinely meaningful offer, interviewees outlined their efforts to tailor such schemes to meet the individual needs of their employees. These organisations appeared to be well-practiced at working in this way, especially with at risk groups of young people, as Echo set out,

*we've got six people who are all very different skill-wise, all very different musically, all very different ages, even; all very different experiences some have been at uni, some have just finished GCSEs, some didn't even do GCSEs and they've been doing nothing for two years, so it's really a personal journey. If I said, the barriers for [Participant Name] are this, actually the barriers for [Diff. Participant name] are very different [Echo]*

This issue was another key factor for Alpha's organisation deciding to adopt an independent apprenticeship scheme that allowed for a 'sessional' mode of employment. Thus her desire to create what she described as “genuine learning opportunities” was achieved through the mutual tailoring of the offer to suit the particular needs of both employee and employer.

*It just didn't work for us, and we just weren't willing to jump on board for that for the sake of it. We were much more interested in highly tailored, high-quality schemes that would suit us down to the ground and be a really tremendous learning opportunity for the young person involved. [Alpha]*



Similarly, Charlie explained that he felt that tailoring the employment offer was key to its success, though this was dependant on his organisation's ability to resist the top-level administrative simplicity he had experienced so far,

*we just thought OK, rather than advertising for just a normal, basic admin role, let's now move up a gear or two and advertise for specific roles. So we put a specific role out there for a graphic designer; we put a specific role out there for a marketing assistant; fundraising assistant; and then, we also thought OK, now we know there are people out there with nursery or childcare skills, let's ask for an assistant chaperone. So in each of those roles we did a little bit more work and plotted out a six-month plan. [Charlie]*

This kind of sentiment was echoed by Delta, making clear the significant personal commitment necessary to ensure that each and every employee had a rich, diversified experience through the scheme. As she made clear,

*I would be very disappointed if they left and said they hadn't got something out of it, or that they hadn't learnt something from us. And that works both ways because on a couple of occasions we have said to them (particularly with one of them) 'This is how we work and this is what you are going to have to do. You haven't got anything out of this if you don't do this, this and this [...] in the long term it won't help them in the long term if I say, 'Oh, well, OK, don't bother.'. [Delta]*

When asked to outline why their organisations were effective at taking a tailored, youth-led approach to the placements, interviewees explained that this was very much derived from an informal, tacit ability to engage young people. Delta, again, pointed out that,

*I am not a trainer. I have never done any formal thing about working with young people in that sort of environment, so it's very much a suck-it-and-see process for us. It is part of what we do with young people in a workshop environment, so it goes with the territory to some extent. [Delta]*

## 5.2 – Challenges for young people

### 5.2.1 Living in challenging circumstances

All interviewees were unequivocal in confirming that perhaps the single most significant challenge to all young people accessing these schemes, was less to do with the intrinsic nature of the schemes themselves, than it was simply the challenging and very complex circumstances they might face in their everyday lives. Charlie gave an example of just one of several individuals who, despite having strong abilities, had been unable to complete her FJF placement due to very serious factors beyond her control,

*So we literally spent all that Monday sitting down with her, because I was really concerned and it was true that she was being forced into an arranged marriage by her brothers; her mother was terminally ill in hospital which I knew about that as well and that didn't help the whole process. And then we spent two or three days having to counsel her; getting hold of various hostels and organisations who could support her better than we could. We got the police involved because obviously, we were concerned about her and then, it came out that she'd been in this position and she'd run away. [Charlie]*

As should be clear from much of the discussion above, when faced with such severe problems in their lives, young people themselves are usually the least well placed to secure a meaningful offer of employment. Given that the organizations consulted have struggled to ensure the provision of a meaningful, (financially) valued work placement, it is little wonder that such challenges become far more acute for young people seeking to become employees. Reflecting on this situation, Echo highlighted how young people from 'at risk' categories

often experienced a kind of 'referral fatigue', whereby they were passed around 'the system' so frequently that they became unable to discern between meaningful and exploitative opportunities presented to them,

*being 'in the system' so to speak, when they've been referred already, they've finished that opportunity, they are back in the referral system, 'Ah, this opportunity has come up at [local YMAZ], why don't you apply for that?' And don't get me wrong, 80, 90% of the time, they are genuine applications. [...] But there is that small percentage where it's just passed through because they need to get those young people onto something next [...] Some of them are either pushed into it through organisations that need to pass signposting opportunities for young people or that part of their remit is to make sure that young people get onto courses or opportunities like this. It's then my job to realise that and feel that it's not right for them and they're just there because they've been told to come and unfortunately, they may not get the place. [Echo]*

Likewise, Delta reported very similar experiences,

*we've had experiences before where young people come along because they are forced to – because they are on Job Seekers Allowance or whatever – and they are just not interested, and it happens right down the chain if you like, with work experience as well. They are forced into a position and they don't want to do it, and then neither party gets anything out of that experience. [Delta]*

Thus, the negative implications posed by such experiences should not be underestimated, both for small creative organisations and the young people they might take on as employees. As discussed already, interviewees were very keen that the employment schemes should be an opportunity to break cycles of deprivation and disadvantage, and not serve simply to reproduce them.

### 5.2.2 Understanding the employment offer

Another major barrier for young people accessing the schemes, as identified by interviewees, was simply the knowledge that they exist and what they might actually entail. Alpha, for example, felt that

*the main barrier is just actually knowing that they exist. I mean the Creative Apprenticeship scheme is a typical example, it's something that I think was rushed out, rushed through quite quickly, and I don't know if a young person would know what creative apprenticeship means. [Alpha]*

Similarly, Beta felt that ensuring universal access to the employment offer was about being clear about what exactly the position was well in advance of it being filled, an issue he felt was as yet to be addressed properly,

*accessing this scheme I think is really about those young people getting the support; and really understand what that apprentice can offer them, and that's almost like a bit of work that kind of needs to happen and be there for them prior to them enrolling as an apprentice and that's not kind of readily available. [Beta]*

Alpha reflected Beta's comment in this regard, making clear that by not articulating the employment offer clearly, those most likely to gain from it are also likely to not even apply,

*it's about making the opportunity understandable so people know what on earth it is, where it's likely to go, creating an opportunity that doesn't seem completely beyond them, so it's*

*pitched at the right level so they're not thinking, 'Oh god, I couldn't possibly do that. Not got a degree in music,' when of course a degree in music is just not necessary. Also the idea of what the music leader actually is. I don't think normal people, so to speak <laughs>, actually know what a music leader is. It's not like a doctor or a dentist or a lawyer that people instantly recognise. [...] So it's about trying to explain that opportunity somehow, so that a young person might actually think, 'Oh that sounds interesting. Quite like to do that!' [Alpha]*

In making this point, Alpha highlights how these concerns about understanding the offer seem to relate to wider shifts in employment patterns and particularly to generational perspectives,

*I'm going to turn into my gran for a minute, in those days there was that obvious idea of apprenticeships being about skills development and attaching to a particular profession to develop the skills, and they've kind of brought apprenticeships back but I don't think they've brought them back in the same way. I personally don't think that they're as clearly understood by young people as they were by our parents' generation for example. [Alpha]*

Delta linked these challenges with the administration and bureaucracy challenges discussed above. She explained that on a general level, the administrative barriers faced by those young people deemed 'at risk' were especially hard to negotiate,

*it's hard to try and attract young people from 'at risk' backgrounds, because there is a lot of brickbats along their way. They have to go through an awful lot of hoops to get to the point where they can even get to us because of the system that is set up [...] they get utterly confused. First of all, they were coming to us and saying, 'Well, we really like what you are doing and we want to be here', but you can see why they would go away and in the end think, 'I just can't be bothered'. I mean, they are a sector of young people that are often - if they have been long-term unemployed - they've got self-esteem issues anyway. They are going to have problems about whether they should stick with something. [Delta]*

On this point, Delta returned to her example of the struggle her organisation had had in communicating with the Job Centre. Her ultimate point was that "The system is not geared up to be young people-friendly", and that if it was hard for a professional arts organization to comprehend, it was far harder for those young people in challenging circumstances to do likewise,

*if we don't understand it and some of the people that we were talking to at the Job Centre were equally perplexed about some of the systems in place, then those young people have got to be sufficiently motivated to stick at it, i.e. to get through the system in the first place. And I suspect - and I would have been the same at 16 or 17 or 18 - that I would have drifted off and thought, 'Oh God, it's just too much like hard work.' And that is exacerbated if you've had a long period of time where you have been unemployed and you are just feeling a bit worthless anyway, which is often the case. [Delta]*

Delta went on to give a telling example of one individual who had struggled in this way,

*We actually had a recent young man that has joined us, had been a carer and had not been in the job market for two years or so. Completely and utterly capable, but just not in that arena. And he had to try and unravel it and he's a very bright young man and he kept coming to us saying, 'I am completely confused as to why I can't come on this, but I am being told I can't.' [Delta]*

### 5.2.3 Employer and employee 'mind-sets'

Another core challenge faced by young people was what might be termed the current 'mind-set' of employers, and the ways this impacted on their ability to access these kinds of employment opportunities. As Beta set out, employers often seemed somewhat out-of-step with the inclusive aims of the schemes,

*the main challenge is the kind of willingness of employers to take those individuals on for employment in the first place. That is probably the biggest barrier, mainly because most employers are [...] gonna be faced with taking the young person that they feel is best suited for that job, not necessarily the young person who might come with other challenges. [Beta]*

In Beta's experience, this was a challenge that rested firmly with employers, and not with the young people keen to find work in the creative sector. Moreover, for him, the issue was more to do with the perceived value of such employees, and less so their actual abilities which, as discussed above, were often precisely the kinds of skills that a cutting-edge creative organization might want to secure;

*Part of the work we are doing with apprenticeships is really about trying to change what the employer mindset is. So they don't necessarily pick, you know, high flying graduates who are coming out of college with a first and looking to do work experience for a year with a particular employer in the creative sector whilst living at home. [...] the challenge in changing the employer mindset is actually taking on a non-graduate, who might not be as academically proficient, but may bring other skills and qualities to bear [Beta]*

For Echo, a related issue was the mindset of the young people on the schemes too. While he acknowledged there was a job of work to be done in helping employers to see the value in these schemes, he also felt that this was a two-way situation,

*sometimes there's underlying reasons behind that rather than just the fact that they were naughty at school or they couldn't engage with education, or they just aren't set up for business in the sense of sitting in an office or working in Tesco, or whatever it is, but they are an amazing MC or they are really good on guitar, but actually trying to get them out of that mindset of 'work and education don't work for me', and putting them into a place that's vocational and that's actually all about them, which is what the apprenticeship is about [Echo]*

Nonetheless, Echo's point still returns to the crucial role the employer can play in helping develop a positive understanding of employment for disenfranchised young people, and he was clear that they should lead by example on this issue. As a possible solution, Beta went on to suggest that some kind of mentoring would support this process well, both for employers and for young people struggling to access employment. His point links to the idea that someone who "gets it" is best-placed to offer the right form of support, and act as a bridge between their current and future employment prospects,

*I think there's a real need to look at how some kind of mentoring support can come on line. And again that's not really part of the apprenticeships programme as it stands right now, but I think it would help. [...] I think a kind of peer mentor who is able to steer the course and say, 'Look, I know what you're going through. I've been through the same thing; I've had the same challenges and the same struggles but you know, I've done it and look at where I'm at now.' It's just incredibly useful. [Beta]*

#### 5.2.4 Finding work in areas of multiple deprivation

Given that all respondents operated as part of 'Action Zones', they were particularly conscious of the serious issues that were widely replicated across the local areas in which they worked. These complex challenges presented barriers for marginal young people even accessing the schemes in the first place. Alpha, for example, discussed how she had set about advertising for a new independent Creative Apprenticeship post in her area,

*I was really trying desperately to get somebody from the local area, which is called [Town Name], really trying to get a young person to apply. And that was actually really difficult because we wouldn't just take somebody on board just because they were from [Town Name] <laughs>. We needed a bit more than that [Alpha]*

This common dilemma, that an 'all else being equal' approach to recruiting a local young person was hoped for but unlikely, meant that her organization ultimately chose someone more suitable from outside the area;

*we did some development work in that area and we had a number of people applying actually from the area, which for us was a mark of success in some sense, because it raised aspirations in the area. We still took the decision not to have those particular young people as the apprentice, because compared to the field they weren't appropriate to what we needed, but we then tried to signpost them onto other training that we had, training opportunities through our skills programme for example. [Alpha]*

However, this particular situation was one that caused her organisation to reflect on the overall purpose of scheme. While she had struggled to resolve the consideration, the question she posed was both very typical of these kinds of small, creative organisations and their dedication to working with at risk CYP, but furthermore, should be a central concern of all future developments of the schemes as they stand;

*It became quite difficult for us because we had to think about well, what was the purpose of our apprenticeship programme? Was it purely for workforce development or was it something that really was about targeting hard to reach youngsters and young people and giving them the chance? [Alpha]*

Similarly, Echo discussed the distinct challenges in sustaining progression beyond the schemes in localised areas experiencing significant and multiple forms of deprivation. While he noted that his organisation had good relationships with two local colleges, he remained unconvinced that there was the provision to ensure progression beyond contact with a project and into 'actual employment'. As he explained,

*their local organisation cannot employ them, the likelihood is neither can any of the other two that are kicking around the [County] area. One, because they are slightly smaller, got less funding, they don't do as much business-wise because they haven't put themselves out like that. The next one along is [Project Host/YMAZ] but that's miles away. So what's the reality of that happening? It's very slim. We can take them on as workshop leaders, but that might be a workshop here and there and that might be a couple of hundred quid a month. The reality of actual employment is very slim and I think that's a massive barrier for us and obviously for the people coming on those opportunities. [Echo]*

Echo also went on to outline aspects of the labour market that particularly affected those employees in challenging circumstance who are keen to work in the creative and community sectors. His sense was of a weak offer of progression beyond the schemes, especially in relation to other more conventional forms of entry-level jobs on offer,

*the struggle that you've got in terms of a lot of creative sector is that of course there's jobs out there that are full-time or part-time or a set number of hours, but the difficulty – particularly in community sector work – is that a lot of it relies on self-employment to earn money. Therefore, if we're gonna pitch that to someone to look to employ them beyond the apprenticeship scheme, then actually, it's not as strong as saying 'but if you walk down to the job centre and you find a job that is right for you, and that you get, then you've got a full time job that that thing is for' because most of them are looking for that. [Echo]*

To illustrate this, Echo gave the example of a conversation he had had with one of his recently completed apprentices;

*He phoned me up and said, '[Manager Name], I've just been offered a job that I applied for several months ago, which at the time bizarrely I got rejected for but they have phoned me and said that the position is open again now and they'd like to offer it to me.' I said, 'Oh right, that's really good news. On a professional level, I will support you, push you, encourage you, whatever, and my only concern, though [His Name] is what is that job?' And he said 'It's working for a builders in their administration department.' So, I've got no right to tell him not to do that but my knowledge of him and his desire in terms of where he would like to go to which is why we've taken him on the apprenticeship is actually that that isn't what he wants to do. So I challenged him in the sense of, well, is that what you want to do, and he said 'Well not really but it gives me money straightaway.' [Echo]*

These concerns were reflected by all interviewees, who shared a sense that while they made their best effort to support young people in contact with their organisation, the lack of available and relevant opportunities beyond these projects was a serious challenge that neither their organisation, nor the vulnerable young people seeking to engage with them, had much ability to resolve alone.

## 6. Recommendations

### 1. Explain the offer

Findings presented here demonstrate a need for improved clarity regarding what schemes like the CA and FJF actually are and what they might entail. A lack of understanding appears to have been a significant barrier for appropriate young people taking up the schemes on offer. Equally problematic is the lack of clarity that YMAZ hosts have encountered when trying to establish precise details of the schemes from the Job Centre and with scheme administrators such as 3SC. It will remain a challenge for host organisations to properly articulate the offer to young people, and manage expectations of those interested in participating, without the bodies charged with administering these schemes at a national level taking steps to address this issue first. It is recommended that improved information, advice and guidance (IAG) be developed for use by those organisations working directly with young people.

### 2. Support appropriate and accessible training

It is apparent from the findings that a whole range of skills are developed by young people participating on these schemes. These include personal and social skills, alongside more directly musical ones. Moreover, the kinds of musical skills developed extend far beyond simply performing music, to include backstage, production, events, IT, working with children, health and safety and so on. Future training and CPD should sustain, nurture and enhance this diversity, and not seek to artificially limit progression routes within the music sector.

Moreover, evidence presented here makes a strong case for training methods that balance theoretical/vocational and individual/collective approaches carefully. Following from recent policy debates and announcements, it is important that the value of multiple modes of learning styles are accounted for, and not obscured by perennial 'either-or' arguments about the appropriateness of vocational versus academic training.

Accreditation was deemed an effective and important aspect of the employment offer, precisely because of the kinds of training and skill development it sought to acknowledge. Accreditation must therefore continue to remain relevant, industry focused, accessible and diverse. The caution expressed over an undue emphasis on accreditation at the expense of wider skill development should also be noted, particularly for organisations attempting to break cycles of unemployment with some of the most marginalised young people.

### 3. Have realistic expectations of young people

Evidence makes clear that attributing a deficit in education, employment or training entirely with young people themselves is ineffective because it is misplaced. While young people should be empowered to act upon their own situation, it is rarely the case that not being in employment, education or training is a favoured choice for young people. Approaches must be adopted that acknowledge the critical roles of employers and government agencies, and the instability of regional employment opportunities.

In this light, 'signposting' young people is often not enough to ensure improvements in the quality and quantity of youth employment. Helping identify possible progression routes has a key role, but without relevant and meaningful options, signposting can lead to referral fatigue, especially with at risk groups of young people. If there is no prospect of employment, signposting is a weak and confusing offer, and it may be better to think about the value and quality of progression routes on offer to CYP.

It is also recommended that further research be conducted with participating young people to develop a reliable focus on the benefits and challenges that they themselves experience.



#### 4. Recognise the value of diversity

The intention of employment schemes to support those most 'in need' or 'at risk' should be maintained in order to reduce inequalities in skill development and employment prospects. Working with a diverse employee base is not an overall drain on resources, but supports the essential diversity of skills needed to fully ensure the creative evolution of the sector as a whole. Being able to source 'fresh talent' and 'savvy' individuals is essential for creative organisations to remain creative and at the cutting edge of developments. An open approach to the employment of young people from a range of backgrounds is a good means to ensure this process happens.

#### 5. Support the needs of small, creative organisations

Small, creative organisations often possess dedicated and innovative expertise that should remain a vital part of the sector. Limitations of what host organisations were able to do often related to challenges that were beyond their control. Nonetheless, such organisations appeared resourceful and problem solving in the way they implemented the schemes. Youth Music's sustained investment in the YMAZ infrastructure had meant that host organisations were already well placed to work with at risk young people, and were able to target provision to particular local and regional needs. Such organisations also showed deep commitment to providing a meaningful, tailored, and relevant employment offer, with 'genuine' learning opportunities, for all young people. A situation where only large-scale organisations take on the efforts to develop the next generation of creative workers would risk losing this 'grass-roots' expertise and commitment.

#### 6. Understand the UK music sector

Findings here and elsewhere demonstrate that music is an extremely wide field, and one that has many cross-overs with other art forms and industry practices. Performing music is only a small part of working in the UK music sector, and a far greater number of people work in a range of back-stage and off-stage occupations. Training, progression routes and employment schemes work best when they acknowledge this situation. It is therefore important that Youth Music and policy makers understand the role of music in the UK through a holistic and cross-sector perspective; one that accounts for the multitude of ways music intersects with dance, visual arts, design, media technologies and so on. Given this rich diversity in the UK's musical landscape, neither formal nor informal music education can fully offer the appropriate skills and infrastructure to address contemporary employment and skills issues, and a genuine cross-sector approach would be advised going forward.

#### 7. Key stakeholders need to join up

Following the recommendation in the Henley Review to adopt a 'National Plan for Music', there is an emerging need for a national plan to tackle the identified skills shortages in the creative sector, and especially where these offer solutions for addressing growing youth unemployment. Youth Music has the potential to play a key role in supporting the practical steps of joining-up, by liaising with other national charities and employment providers, national administrators such as 3SC, The Job Centre, and a range of government departments. Again, cross-sector solutions to tackling youth unemployment would appear most effective here.

While it falls beyond the scope of this report, it should be noted that there is sustained and relevant debate about the significant intersections between 'social mobility' and employment issues in the creative industries, that should be brought to bear on the findings presented here. In particular, as a leading and independent national charity, Youth Music appears to be in a good position to offer a view, since these debates reflect the cross-overs between Youth Music's



strategic priorities 'challenging circumstances' and 'workforce development'. Youth Music should also take immediate steps to audit current skills needs (e.g. MusicLeader CPD needs, Sing Up's Beyond the Mainstream work with school teachers and partners), and take into consideration existing skills-gap audits and other recent policy developments (see pp.10-12 of this report).

#### 8. National government needs to take a lead

Small projects and their participants are looking forward to the coming years with considerable caution and uncertainty. With many aspects of policy changing, under review and subject to on-going announcements, it is essential for the national government to co-ordinate policy from its departments and take a clear lead in efforts to guide the appropriate next steps for all stakeholders. In particular, there is an emerging need to synthesise the aspiration to encourage the breadth and depth of creative skills necessary to maintain the creative industries in the UK, with efforts to prioritise traditional forms of learning, education and skill development.

Moreover, evidence presented here makes clear that despite the best efforts of a range of local and regional partners to tackle creative skills gaps and significant levels of youth unemployment, there is much that lies beyond their spheres of influence. Unchecked market forces are unlikely to break localised cycles of deprivation, and indeed, often compound regional inequalities because the lack of incentives to work in such areas. The central Government is in a unique position to intervene in these distinct and complex regional contexts to ensure all young people in the UK have an equitable and prosperous future.

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