

# Curious Minds

## Hope Streets Evaluation

End of project report

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**The following short evaluation reports are available from Curious Minds on request:**

Phase 1: Mobilise and Discover

Phase 2: Seeing is believing

Phase 3: Deliver and Embed

Phase 4: Inspire and influence

Hope Streets Hubs: Stories of Change

**Briest Dillon Ltd**

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# Thank you

## Funded by:



Hope Streets was a 'Kick the Dust' project with c. £1 million in funding (2017-2023)

## Commissioned by:



Curious Minds was the Hope Streets funding holder and commissioned this evaluation (2018-2022).

## The 'Hub' museums

Five 'Hub' museum and heritage services in the North West of England (10 sites). Five Hub Lead roles worked directly with young people, supported by five Senior Leadership Team members. Over 120 young people took part in at least 15 new groups. Hope Streets funded 7 Alternative Saturday Job placements and 2 apprentices.



## The Hope Happenings



Five events in spring 2019 created by young artist team 'Frog + Bone', based on research carried out by young people at each Hub Museum.

## The Festival of Hope



Five youth-led festivals from summer 2020. Over 35 examples of digital and in-person creative work and heritage on the festival website.

## Walking alongside

Five Youth Engagement Experts worked with each Hub Lead to create the Hope Happenings. Four experienced Festival Co-ordinators worked with young people to create the Festival of Hope.



Blaze Arts produced the Festival of Hope, commissioned new work from diverse artists as part of the festival, and continued to connect with the project as a producer, mentor and trainer.

## Project partners (Steering Group Members)



## Evaluated by:



Dr Cath Dillon (Briest Dillon Ltd) is an independent evaluator and researcher based in West Yorkshire, with over 20 years' experience in social research, and 13 years in the heritage sector.

Cath would like to thank all the people listed on this page for generously giving their time, reflections, and data to this evaluation.

# Foreword

## **Melissa Strauss (Head of Museums, Libraries and Archives), National Lottery Heritage Fund**

Hope Streets was part of Kick the Dust, the National Lottery Heritage Fund's strategic programme to transform the engagement of young people with heritage. Kick the Dust sought to make heritage relevant to more, and a greater diversity of, young people, by increasing the scale and quality of youth engagement with heritage.

Kick the Dust asked what 12 large-scale, long-term consortia projects could achieve, with up to £1 million each over 5 years? What might happen with an emphasis on reflection and the time to experiment and refine activities? What if we demanded organisational change, building staff skills and confidence and embedding young people in the wider work and structures of heritage organisations?

Hope Streets has shown what can be achieved. This report documents the strengths and impact of Hope Streets, including the benefits for young people and changes to the sector, ranging from paid work experience to museum governance. Huge congratulations to everyone involved in this wonderful project.

## **Kelly Allan, Executive Director: Social Justice & Inclusion, Curious Minds**

At Curious Minds, we dream of a future where being creative and experiencing brilliant culture is a regular part of every young person's learning and life. Hope Streets has been a rare and important opportunity for Curious Minds to work very deeply over a long period of time to achieve the kind of sustainable organisational change that takes us one step closer to that dream.

Museums that prioritise the engagement of teenagers and young adults outside of school settings are rare, yet we know these audiences are chronically underserved. We also know that interests developed during these influential years often last a lifetime and we have seen huge benefits to young people when this work is done well. Complimentary to this, we know that young people have rich and important things to offer that can help to future-proof the museum and heritage sector.

This project has allowed us to demonstrate that sustainable organisational change is possible, given the right time, resources, trust and commitment. We would like to sincerely thank the National Lottery Heritage Fund for believing in us and for investing in our work.

Throughout this work, we've relied on the unwavering commitment, energy and knowledge of both our museum partners, and our consortium partners. We understand that sustained

change is only possible when we actively work with nuanced understanding of current, everyday realities. It is also only possible with the skill and determination of a creative and skilled team of people across all our organisations and the energy and ingenuity of the young people who have been behind Hope Streets, every step of the way.

### **Alexander Bird, Museum Development North West**

The last few years have been hugely difficult for the museum sector, but despite this, the Hope Streets project continued and became a beacon of hope to all involved, showing the true resilience of the young people and the participating museums. Although the project didn't happen as we originally planned, I have been in awe at how much impact it has had on all involved.

We have seen museums deliver projects that they may never have been able to do had they not been part of this programme, we have heard stories about how new partnerships have been developed with local youth groups and artists' collectives and we have also seen how local authorities are looking to museums to support them to develop the future of their youth services.

All of this would have been unthinkable to many museums prior to participating in this programme. It shows how engaging with young people not only brings in new audiences, but can change the very way a whole organisation thinks and works from top to bottom.

### **Sarah Lanchin, Youth Focus North West**

Youth Focus North West have been a proud partner in Hope Streets, seeing the programme develop and grow over the past five years and hold firm to pushing young people's voice to the heart of heritage and cultural organisations.

Culture and heritage are fundamental parts of young people's lives and can play an integral role in young people learning about themselves as well as the spaces and places that they live, and tackle some of the big issues we face in our society. Giving young people a voice in curating and telling the stories of their places and identity is key to supporting personal, social and educational development, the corner stones of good quality Youth Work.

Creating long lasting links between the cultural and youth work sector is mutually beneficial; it enables young people to explore their view of the world, whilst also challenging the status quo within institutions and ensuring that there is authentic representation. For cultural organisations, having young people meaningfully engaged brings new ideas, creates legacy for the future workforce, audiences and supporters. And ultimately it just makes sense! Why wouldn't you want to have young people involved?

# 1. What is Hope Streets?

Hope Streets was a five-year programme of organisational change, led by Curious Minds in consortium with Museum Development North West and Youth Focus North West. Its aim was to connect the museum and heritage sector with the youth sector. Curious Minds saw that museums provide an excellent offer to young people when they visit with schools, however they recognised that there is work to do in order to better engage young people (aged 11-25) outside of school.

Curious Minds set out to model how youth work practices could be embedded in heritage: making young people feel welcome in heritage spaces when they visit outside of school; supporting young people to lead their own projects; and embedding youth voice in organisational planning and governance.

The ambition was to positively change the culture of five 'Hub' museum and heritage services, so that young people became a feature of strategic planning, no longer siloed within Education or Learning Teams. Instead, Curious Minds hoped a warm welcome for young people would become 'business as usual' across each service and its staff.

Hope Streets spanned the North West with the five 'Hubs' as the locus of activity, but with the aspiration that the good practice would spread like spokes on a wheel from each Hub across the five sub-regions of the North West.



Figure 1: Art work on display in the main gallery at Bolton, created by the Hope Streets youth forum with artist Tina Dempsey.

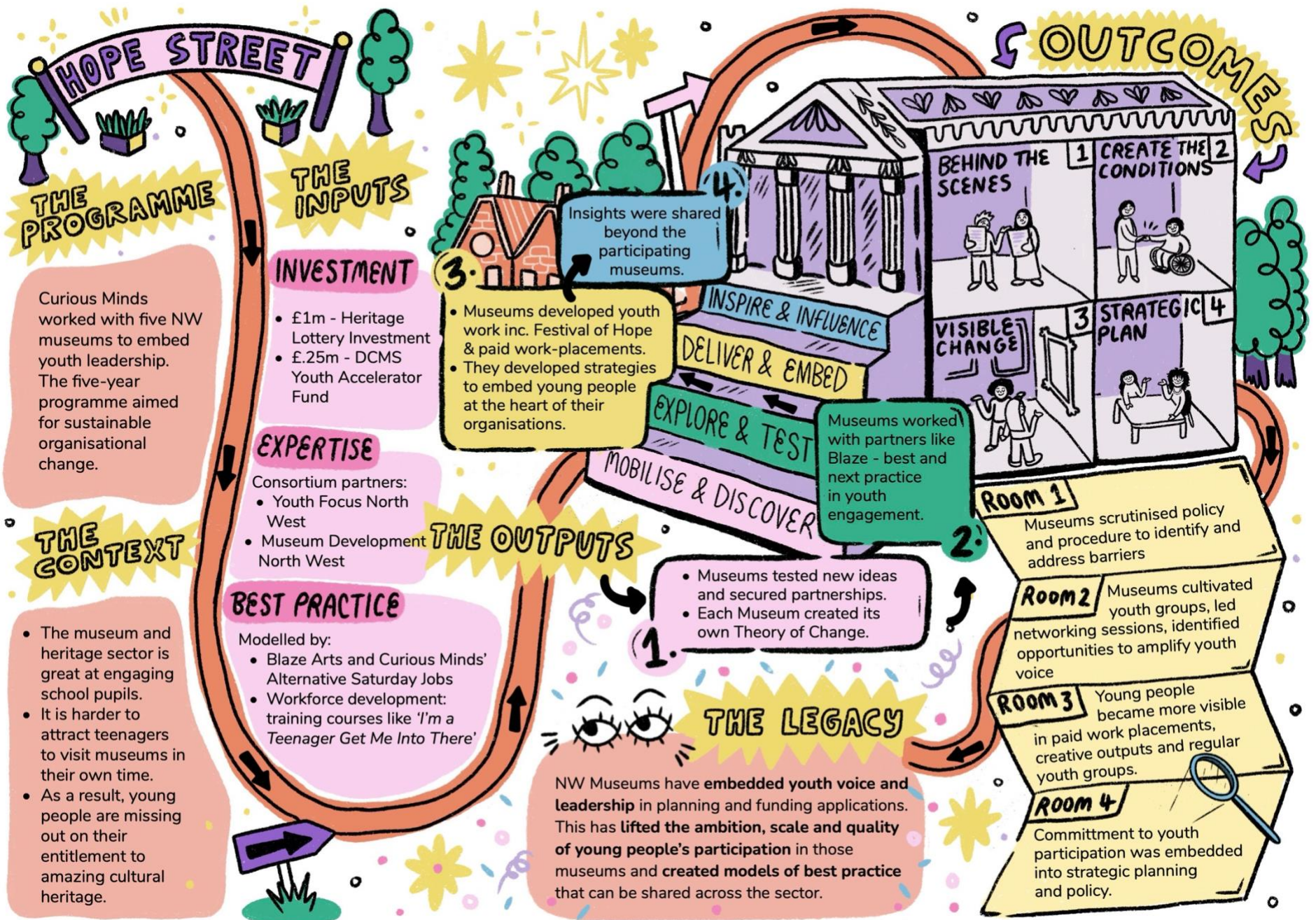


Figure 2: The Hope Streets Theory of Change.

## 2. The Hope Streets Journey

Curious Minds commissioned an evaluation of organisational change towards best practice in youth engagement over the course of the Hope Streets project. The evaluation included an independent assessment of change by the evaluator, alongside self-evaluation of change by the core project team (facilitated by the evaluator).

The role of evaluation in the Hope Streets project was to inform the future work of Curious Minds and its consortium partners, the Hubs and the wider youth and heritage sectors. At each stage of the evaluation, and for each expected project outcome, we asked – Where did the Hubs start? What happened? Why is that important? What learning was there? And what needs to happen next?

Results have fed back into the project at regular intervals and both Curious Mind and the teams at the five Hub heritage services have been involved in the interpretation of findings using reflective discussions.

This evaluation report represents the voice of the project team and their perspective on change in their organisations up to the end of the delivery phases in late 2022. The report recognises the strengths of the project, especially the effect that young people have had on the Hubs, what the project team have learnt on the Hope Streets journey and what they feel would help create an environment for change at other organisations.



Figure 2: The Hope Streets Project Lead (Kelly Allen), Project Manager (Saul Argent), the Hub Leads (engagement leads) and Hub Senior Leaders hearing from Andrew Strauss



(Tate Circuit project) at their first in-person meeting after Covid restrictions - The Atkinson, Southport, Sept 2021.

## Where did the Hubs start?

Across the Hubs, there were varying levels of experience with youth engagement, and varying levels and types of activity with young people. But all the Hubs wanted to develop their youth engagement activity further – and not just provide activities for young people, but to engage on a deeper level, with more opportunities for young people to influence their organisations.

Baseline data collection showed that young people were generally absent in strategy, plans and policies, amongst visitors and participants, and in the workforce. They were often not distinguished as different to children, families and schools. Their participation was rarely counted. There was some partnership working with local organisations, but not a consistent or long-term offer to the youth sector.

Baseline surveys and interviews also showed that the Hubs were most comfortable consulting with young people and inviting them to participate in creative work, marketing and exhibitions. But they were less confident in participatory ways of working with young people and less accepting of youth leadership, especially in specialist areas of museum practice.

How far did the Hubs travel from this point?

## There is more youth engagement at the Hubs, and it is wider and deeper.

Expected Impact	At baseline (November 2018)	Final phase (November 2022)
<p><b>Museums are sustaining a higher level of activity than before Hope Streets started.</b></p> <p><b>The opportunities for engagement have widened, to include everything from visits, to participation, to volunteering, to employment and leadership.</b></p>	<p>There was some out-of-school activity with young people, but young people were generally not recognised as a distinct audience group and tended not to appear as a distinct group in organisational data and documents.</p>	<p>All Hubs provide Young Producer or Youth Forum type activities.</p> <p>Hubs are trialling new activities such as Young Curator and Young Tour Guide groups.</p> <p>All Hubs have provided paid opportunities for young people and are increasing their volunteering offer.</p> <p>Fee structures and age limits for visits have been adjusted.</p>

## What happened?

During the Festival of Hope<sup>1</sup>, the Hubs turned ‘heritage’ and ‘museums’ into expressions of culture, creativity, politics, protest, the personal and community – making heritage relevant to young people, and young people relevant to museums. The Hub Leads were committed to youth-led ways of working and drew on external expertise. Young people expanded the idea of what is possible at their Hub sites, accelerating digital change during the pandemic.



Figure 3: The making of the ‘Culture of Freedom’ short film by Young Producers at Tullie House as part of the Festival of Hope<sup>2</sup>

As a legacy of the work on the project, all Hubs now have active Young Producer or Youth Forum groups and have trialled a range of activities such as Young Curators, Young Tour Guides and Young Directors. The offer to young people at the Hubs has increased and young people are having more influence over what that offer is.

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*“...it feels that what Hope Streets is doing... is actually creating a kind of band of young people that have all kinds of experiences. And as they grow in confidence ... they're not afraid to be asking for what they need. And one of the nicest things was when a young person they were doing something that was part of the festival and they approached us with a list and said right, we need that.” SLT Member*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://festivalofhope.co.uk/home/>

<sup>2</sup> Culture of Freedom: <https://youtu.be/cXWuJnbbmkg>

### Why is this important?

The Hub Leads were open to change. They now understand more about young people's needs and are skilled in youth-led work. They advocate for this way of working across their services.

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*"The most valuable thing I've learned is that museum staff shouldn't be the ones programming museum activity for younger audiences. I've also learned about how young people are looking to us for opportunities beyond what we already offer and feel underserved. I've learned about the many barriers young people face to volunteering, and how to facilitate sessions in a way that everyone's voice is heard. I've learned how to produce events that are audience centred and inclusive." Hub Lead*

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Despite the pandemic, young people's work has been visible to many wider staff and volunteers, who were impressed and inspired to support change. Having young people as a fixture of engagement and programming meant that young people were on site, visible and in a position to be influential.

Hope Streets expanded the types of experiences staff and volunteers have with young people, and many now see young people in a new light.

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*"[The Youth Engagement Expert] has been an amazing mentor for me. He has boosted my confidence with youth engagement, he offers me advice and has supported me to step back and think about the potential of the project. It's been a fantastic partnership and I have learnt that [our museum] IS the youth sector we refer to. We're filling the void for an inclusive youth project for people who feel like they don't fit in anywhere else." Hub Lead*

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### What learning was there?

This change was not without intense effort on behalf of the Hub Leads, who were described as having gone 'above and beyond' and to have worked with young people 'to a profound level' during the festival. It took time to test the right approach for their Hub, to recruit and maintain groups, and to make connections in their local area – the work of maintaining quality youth engagement is never finished. However, overall, at the end of the project the Hubs said that they are more confident to make an offer to the youth sector (rather than looking to the youth sector for support).

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*“...we've changed ... the way we do exhibitions, and it'll take a few years, it's a bit of a cultural shift ...what we've learned from Hope Streets is that it takes a long time to develop the trust with the community and groups that you're working with. And without that time allocated, without the investment of time, then it does tend to get a bit box-ticky...so that is our focus now.” SLT Member*

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## There are more opportunities for youth voice – it is becoming routine for young people to contribute to decision making

Expected Impact	At baseline (November 2018)	Final phase (November 2022)
<p><b>Young people are members of boards, steering groups and advisory groups.</b></p> <p><b>It is routine for young people to contribute to decision making.</b></p> <p><b>Museums feel more able to respond to new and pertinent issues arising for young people</b></p>	<p>There were no young people on boards. Two Hubs had youth panels.</p> <p>Hubs were introduced to youth-led, participatory, ways of working for the first time.</p> <p>Hubs felt that Hope Streets was an opportunity to improve the quality of youth engagement, including testing models of youth voice.</p>	<p>The are young producer or youth forum groups at every Hub that are designed to be responsive and well connected within their organisations.</p> <p>There have been young representatives at LCEPs and in local forums.</p> <p>The two Hubs with boards have either a young Trustee or Community Board representation.</p> <p>Consultation and co-creation have become a feature of youth engagement at all Hubs. Hubs say that young people have helped to shape the future of their organisations.</p>

### What happened?

Young Producers and Youth Forums have been consulted about programming, redevelopment and curatorial decisions. Exhibitions were co-created with community groups and curators. Young people in voluntary and paid roles, created through Hope Streets, designed projects, commissioned artists and led groups. As a result of Hope Streets, there have been young representatives at Local Cultural Education Partnership (LCEP) meetings, on community boards and at local heritage forums. A young trustee worked with the project at one Hub. At another Hub, a young people’s manifesto was said to hold senior leaders ‘to account’.

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*“The manifesto has been ... one of the most useful things we've done ... because it's come from the young directors...if I take it to people and say... 'this was from the manifesto', then it just feels like it's got quite a lot of weight behind it ... people are taking it seriously as something that's coming from the young people and saying 'well, we do have to try and to do something as a result of that'.” Hub Lead*

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### **Why is this important?**

Consultation and co-creation became a feature of youth engagement at all Hubs. The Hubs say that they now automatically consider young people when planning and making decisions. Importantly the Hubs say that young people have helped to shape the future of their organisations by feeding into major projects and decisions.

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*“...Hope Streets is putting it in our heads at the back of our minds to go, 'we need to think about young people', or 'we need to do this, we want young people', which I don't think necessarily we were doing before. Almost everything we've done since; we've thought that straightaway.”  
Hub Lead*

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### **What learning was there?**

Although the Hubs tested several models of youth voice, they said they remain most confident with participation when it is at the level of consultation (which is also often less time and resource intensive). A smaller number of young people were interested in progressing into leadership positions than were interested in creative activities or volunteer roles and placements. Young leaders also tend to be in the older age range. In addition, Hubs recognised that it can take specialist skill and extra effort to invite under-served groups of young people to offer their voice.

Hubs felt that young people need 'a mechanism to contribute, not just a seat at the table'. Both sides require preparation and a purpose. There should be time for young people to develop their ideas, and flexibility within the organisations to be responsive to young people's input (e.g., a willingness to wait for young people's input before finalising plans).

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*“Firstly, understand ourselves when/where those routine decision-making processes happen. Then ensure young people are invited to attend/send a representative/have a place within the agenda for their thoughts to be heard. Ensure young people are supported before any meetings and provided with any necessary context or information. Have a degree of flexibility within our structures to allow young people to have their say/come up with ideas, especially when certain decisions are made so far in advance.” SLT Member*

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The Hub teams now advocate for this way of working, such as ensuring that participatory ways of working are planned for in project designs and funding applications. Hubs are now less comfortable when young people are added to plans and bids as ‘dressing’ and ask for accommodations to allow more in-depth ways of working with young people.

A wider definition of ‘youth voice’ has also been developed, with Hubs recognizing that young people in the paid and voluntary workforce can be influential.

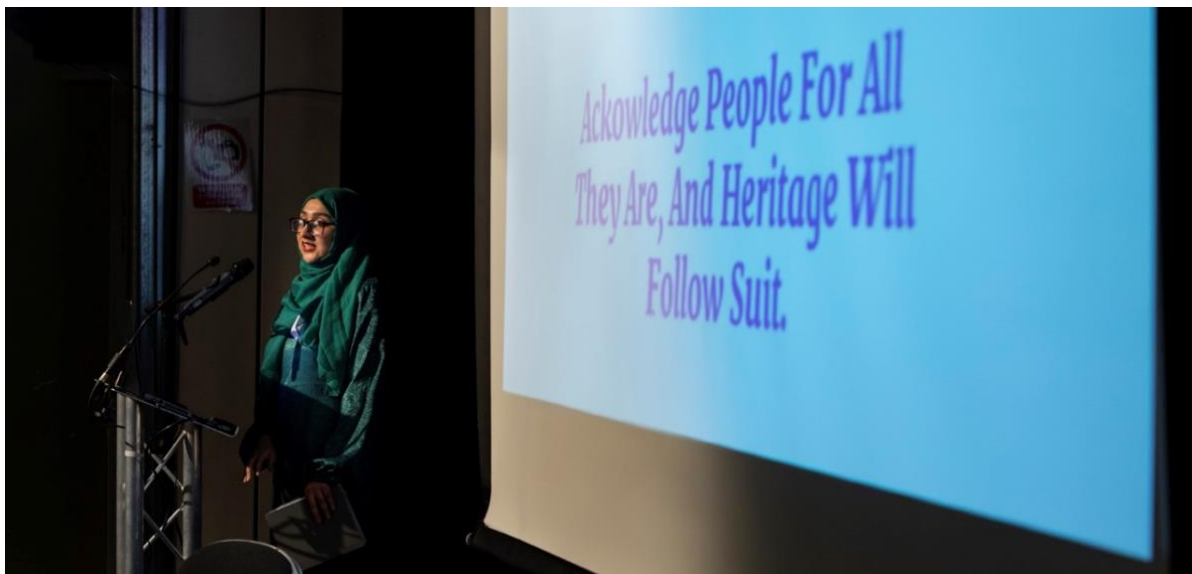


Figure 3: A Young Producer from the Lancashire Hub speaking at the Hope Evolves end of project event.

## The workforce at the Hubs has a greater youth focus

Expected Impact	At baseline (November 2018)	Final phase (November 2022)
<p><b>Job descriptions have been changed to require skills, or a willingness to develop skills, in working with young people.</b></p> <p><b>Changes in the behaviour of all staff towards young people are sustained (especially visitor services staff).</b></p>	<p>The Hub lead was the only youth-focused role at each Hub.</p> <p>A baseline survey showed that staff have many positive experiences with young people, but staff also experience challenges.</p>	<p>All Hubs have more than one youth-focused role.</p> <p>Job descriptions ask staff to be empathetic to young people, or to understand diverse audience groups.</p> <p>Hub Leads are spreading best practice in youth engagement.</p> <p>Staff took part in the 'I'm A Teenager, Get Me Into There!' training.</p> <p>There are new positive experiences with young people due to the project, and Hubs say that their organisations feel different on the ground.</p> <p>There is ongoing work to reframe perceptions of young people.</p>

### What happened?

Across the Hubs there are more staff identified as working with young people, and Hubs have secured youth-focused roles beyond the end of the project. In addition, across the Hubs there are more young people in paid, trainee and voluntary roles, with permanent additions to organisational structures for both youth-focused roles and roles specifically for young people. Some of the young people who took part in Hope Streets as group members or on placements went on to be long-term volunteers or staff members.

Hope Streets funding meant that this youth focus bridged the pandemic, against a backdrop of contraction in paid and voluntary hours across the museum and youth sectors. The long-term project funding for the Hub Lead role meant that work with young people's groups could continue while sites were closed and many staff were furloughed. The project was able to offer remote paid placements and other opportunities to young people during a time of restrictions on venues.

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*"If we didn't have Hope Streets? We wouldn't have been able to prioritise having a member of staff working with young people, it might be a small part of roles, but not really a focus. We would have still been quite stretched, I suppose we would still be coming up with the ideas and making the decisions for young people. I don't think any of it would have happened." SLT Member*

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### Why is this important?

As a result of the Hope Streets project, career opportunities for young people became more of a priority at the Hubs. The Hubs now feel they can respond to what young people have told them about the need for more opportunities at entry level for creative and heritage careers.

In addition, the Hubs said their sites feel different on the ground. Young people were placed in positions of influence – as participants, as colleagues, as group leaders and as project designers.

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*“I think it feels a lot more youth-oriented, not least because of placements that we've got on the go...it's just altered the demographic ... in the office or working around the galleries and the kind of work that they're doing, you know that they [staff] are thinking about a younger audience and how that work is going to be received.” SLT Member*

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### What learning was there?

Retaining youth engagement expertise in-house is important. Hubs worked to develop key project staff and thought about how they would be resilient to change. A commitment to youth-focused roles in the organisational structure was an important element of this.

Hubs also recognised that while those who have worked most closely with the project have absorbed the Hope Streets ethos, work may always be needed to reinforce positive perceptions of young people in museum and heritage settings amongst wider staff (e.g., 'front of house'). Hubs also feel that they need marketing and communications professionals on their side to keep making young people's work visible, especially on digital channels.

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*“Some of the thinking was there, but we didn't have the impetus. What's really exciting is that this is going beyond museums to the wider service. The service is excited about youth engagement. But we need to change the whole approach, and embed practice, not just make it tokenistic. “*  
*SLT Member*

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This is likely to be ongoing work, given that workforces are always changing, and organisations may have competing priorities. Making youth engagement awareness part of training plans and inductions may be useful (similarly to other audience groups with particular needs), as may managing performance around interactions with young people



(e.g., highlighting where behaviour that can be perceived negatively, could be reframed more positively, and indeed accepted and catered for).

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*“... I just want them to understand that our role both as a library and museum is changed. And we offer a modern service and actually that service is now ‘experience’ and that experience is what the visitor wants it to be really, and if that's coming in and talking to some mates that's perfectly fine...If you just want to come in the galleries and...be in the space. That's you. That's perfectly fine. ... our whole function has changed.” SLT Member*

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## Young people appear in policies and procedures

Expected Impact	At baseline (November 2018)	Final phase (November 2022)
<b>Policies make specific references to young people.</b>	<p>Policies and procedures (e.g., safeguarding) were not suitable for older age groups and out of school working.</p> <p>The pandemic revealed that digital and social media policies and procedures were needed.</p> <p>Hubs had not previously targeted paid roles at young people.</p> <p>Admissions fees and policies potentially discouraged young visitors.</p>	<p>Hubs have updated policies and procedures (e.g., safeguarding, safe working, social media/digital).</p> <p>Hubs have trialled new processes and have templates for future work (recruiting roles targeted at young people).</p> <p>Young people should start to appear across all key organisational documents, once Accreditation renewal is initiated.</p> <p>Four Hubs now have youth-friendly admissions (e.g., lowering the age for unaccompanied visits; revising entrance fees).</p>

### What happened?

Recruiting young people required a great deal of ‘behind the scenes work’ – such as reaching agreements internally to lower age limits for paid employment, target age ranges in advertisements and dropping requirements for experience and qualifications.

The Hub Leads were also busy adjusting a range of other plans and policies to make sure they were fit for out-of-school work, especially with older young people. In addition to recruitment procedures, this included updating, or writing from scratch, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding, safe working (out-of-hours, transport, off-site work,

medicine etc.), risk assessments, remote/digital working, social media, admission fee structures and age limits for unaccompanied visits.

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*“It was brand new to the service, we've never offered that apprenticeship... they don't have any equivalence within the council. So, it had to go through quite a rigorous process. But what's great now is now that it has passed the job evaluation, we've now got this apprenticeship within our team's hierarchy, which means it's always there...we can just go ahead now and start recruiting apprenticeships in the future.” Hub Lead*

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### **Why is this important?**

Hubs said that the groundwork they undertook will make youth engagement much easier in the future - there are procedures that can be easily referenced, there are roles in the organisational structure that can be filled again, it is easier and safer for young people to be on site.

### **What learning was there?**

Change is slow and complex (especially for multi-site organisations and large local authority museum services). Change projects may also need to span institutional and other cycles of change, to ensure that new ways of working and new priorities are embedded in strategy, planning and policies.

One thing the Hope Streets project has demonstrated however, is that individual staff members (i.e., the Hub Leads, and the linked SLT members) can be supported to make change. Curious Minds provided the training, mentoring and strategic support that enabled Hub Leads to test new approaches to their work with young people, and bypass institutional barriers (e.g., to remote working and employment of young people). Senior leaders were key in identifying what needed to be changed for their context, navigating organisations, demonstrating this to the Hub Lead, and keeping young people on the agenda.

## Strategic documents and plans reflect an increased, and ambitious, commitment to working with young people

Expected Impact	At baseline (November 2018)	Final phase (November 2022)
<p><b>Museums have developed and articulated new, ambitious plans for work with young people.</b></p> <p><b>Strategic documents and plans reflect an increased commitment to working with young people.</b></p> <p><b>Standing agendas for internal meetings refer to young people.</b></p> <p><b>Board minutes reflect increased discussion about young people's involvement by Trustees.</b></p> <p><b>Museums have been supported to seek funding to resource plans and have developed new relationships with funders.</b></p> <p><b>Partnerships with youth sector organisations will have been solidified, so new projects are jointly initiated.</b></p>	<p>Young people were generally absent in strategy and business plans, and their participation was not prioritised or monitored.</p> <p>Young people were sometimes referred to (e.g., in Activity Plans), but not necessarily planned for as a distinct audience group.</p> <p>Where young people were already an audience priority, Hubs wanted to make sure they could support this.</p> <p>The Hope Streets funding was intended to keep a youth focus through the Hub Lead role, and through funding for activities and roles for young people.</p> <p>There were a few examples of short projects with the local youth sector.</p>	<p>Hubs say that young people are now a higher priority at their organisations.</p> <p>All Hubs were developing a youth engagement strategy at the end of the project.</p> <p>One Hub has written young people into business planning. Two Hubs have young people central to major capital projects. One has put youth voice at the centre of their museum vision and mission.</p> <p>Hubs have received fundraising training from Curious Minds.</p> <p>All the Hubs have found ways to increase or maintain youth-focused roles.</p> <p>Hope Streets has been cited as an example of expertise in several large successful funding applications, and also in major capital projects.</p> <p>Hubs have made links to the local and regional youth sector and see their role as making an offer to the youth sector.</p> <p>The pandemic disrupted the potential for partnership working, but there are several new collaborations.</p>

### What happened?

To make sure that young people don't fall off the agenda, all Hubs worked on their very first youth engagement strategy. Young people were central to some major redevelopment projects; they were being written into missions and values; youth engagement was integral to some funding applications and young people appeared as an audience group in business plans. There was consultation with young people to inform these strategies, bids and plans.

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*"I think for me, strategically, the Hope Street project, working with young people in general, has really influenced [our] capital plans...it really is a whole building approach. And I don't think... going back they would have made that...space the way it's going to be....So for me, that's the biggest impact." SLT Member*

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### **Why is this important?**

Young people are now prioritised as a distinct audience group with particular needs within core organisational documents. This should support institutional memory and provide prompts for future planning and monitoring. Importantly, this should communicate throughout the whole organisation that young people are valued and included. Young people should be on the agenda and their participation should be tracked. Hubs want their new engagement strategies to be treated as living documents, and the overarching strategies to be translated into action.

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*"...I hope that it will continue to be embedded within the service, that the young people that we've talked to about these projects are inspired and creative with what they do, that the ideas or suggestions they have, that we can make happen. And something is meaningful in there...we can work with them...and they can help us shape some of our plans for the future."*  
SLT Member

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### **What learning was there?**

The governance type and complexity of organisations may affect the ability of museum and heritage services to determine their own priorities (e.g., single-site independent museums, compared to multi-site, local authority cultural services). Having a senior influential voice connected to the project, who was able to set organisation-wide priorities, was a key success factor at some Hubs.

While Hubs actively planned for the sustainability of youth engagement, some Hubs were concerned that projects like Hope Streets 'just end', with nothing to make sure that youth engagement is resourced and supported in the future. Some Hubs were able to assign internal budget to the continuation of quality youth engagement (in the form of roles and activities). Being able to tap into external strategic support, partnerships, networks and funding will be more important to other Hubs.

A longer-term evaluation follow-up may best show whether project achievements have been sustained over time and which factors have supported sustained change.

## The Hubs have become experts in youth engagement, and are a resource for the sector

Expected Impact	At baseline (November 2018)	Final phase (November 2022)
<p><b>Resources, including training courses, which have been developed through Hope Streets will be made available to other museums, potentially providing an income source for continuation of the work.</b></p> <p><b>Case studies, evaluation resources, methods and processes will be shared freely.</b></p> <p><b>Dissemination events will be well documented, and the documentation will be shared.</b></p> <p><b>Museum partners will have been identified as experts in youth engagement, and therefore a permanent resource to the sector.</b></p> <p><b>Young people will have had the opportunity to critically engage with the processes of heritage management at a national level.</b></p>	<p>Hubs took part in preparatory workshops with Curious Minds and 'I'm A Teenager, Get Me Into There!' training for wider staff at the start of the project.</p> <p>Curious Minds collected case studies of inspiring projects and places during preparation for the project.</p> <p>It was felt that the network of expertise in heritage youth engagement in the North West needed to be highlighted and strengthened.</p> <p>Kick the Dust funded projects across the UK and supported some networking between the projects.</p>	<p>Curious Minds have developed their 'I'm A Teenager, Get Me Into There!' training course further and are now offering this to the cultural sector as online and in-person training.</p> <p>Evaluation reports and an evidence bank have been provided to Curious Minds to build on their work as providers of organisational change.</p> <p>Hubs have been asked to contribute to fundraising proposals and have been invited to a range of events to talk about the project (e.g., Kick the Dust joint learning).</p> <p>The Hope Evolves event in November 2023 showcased young people's work and publicised the Hope Streets network as a source of expertise in change.</p> <p>The event brought together Kick the Dust projects with local and national professionals across the cultural and youth sectors.</p>

The evaluation concluded by asking the Hubs and Curious Minds which elements of the project were important in driving change, and what they would keep if designing a project to create change at another organisation. When we looked at all the evidence from the evaluation, some factors stood out as important for creating a fertile environment for change. In summary:

- **There was a strong vision for change from Curious Minds** that set out how change was going to happen, providing the Hubs with a roadmap.
- **The initial Activity Plan flexed in response to challenges** such as the pandemic, and to accommodate the different needs of different Hubs. However, the core mission of promoting organisational change through exposing individual professionals to best practice in youth engagement was retained.
- **The Senior Leaders at the Hubs translated the vision into action** at their Hubs, keeping young people front and centre. If they weren't before, young people are now their business.

- **The Hub Leads were open to change and dedicated to driving change** – they learnt new ways of working which were then passed on; they worked persistently to change policies and procedures to make work with young people easier.
- **The Hubs benefitted from the strategic support of Curious Minds** – external funding and project management helped to bypass some institutional roadblocks and carried the project over the pandemic and other challenges (such as restructuring and movement of key staff).
- **Curious Minds also provided access to expertise**, advice, guidance, mediation, facilitation, and connected the Hubs in joint learning. Hubs appreciated the responsiveness and openness of Curious Minds.
- **Together this ensured that the project created quality activities and roles for young people** that increased young people’s visibility and influence at the Hubs.
- **It was acknowledged that this takes time** – time to test out ideas and new ways of working, time to build relationships and develop groups, and time to explore networks and partnerships.

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*“Hope Streets has been instrumental to the increased visibility and influence of the learning team, and the practices that we embody - like cooperation, participation, everything. So that's really been a big shift I think at an organisational level ... So now it's quite a different place, in terms of our emphasis.” SLT Member*

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### **What can organisations do now?**

Organisations interested in starting a similar journey to Hope Streets could ask themselves what healthy youth engagement should look like in key areas of museum practice for their own setting (e.g., governance, collections, audiences, fundraising, learning etc).

Organisations may be able to self-assess how well they feel they are doing in these areas, and what could be changed with low resource. This may involve identifying where young people are, or are not, in an organisation, monitoring the extent and level of young people’s participation, and assessing resources assigned to informal work with young people. Some organisations may feel that they can assign time specifically to young people, make space in programming and adjust policies and procedures for easier working with young people.

### **What needs support?**

However, working with young people is a specialist skill and not all organisations will be able to self-assess best practice, or identify the steps needed to move towards best

practice. Developing an understanding of youth engagement internally was important during Hope Streets. Access to networks, mentors, practitioners, facilitators and learning opportunities may be vital.

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*“This is the kind of thing that we want to be able to share with our partners ... what we've learned from Hope Streets and how to adapt... not just to expect young people to turn up to what you currently offer, you have to be willing to be flexible and adapt to them as well, if you want their involvement.” Hub Lead*

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Larger organisations may be able to develop their own youth engagement practice and include a youth focus in one or more roles. But smaller, regional organisations that are interested in long term transformation, that goes beyond simply providing activities for young people, may benefit from external support to bring expertise into their organisation (e.g., in the form of externally funded roles or partnership working).

Running quality creative activities for, with and by young people also requires resources, not only in terms of venues, staff and materials, but also in terms of the extra time that may be needed to co-create and work in participatory ways.

To keep young people prioritised over the time needed to effect organisational change may require a new commitment from funders and strategic bodies to continue to support work in this area. This may be through future programme design, but also through recognizing the value of long-term project funding.



Figure 4: Four Hub Leads taking part in a panel discussion at the Hope Evolves event, Pyramid Arts Centre, Warrington, November 2022

## Young people have the opportunity to influence heritage management at a national level

Without the enthusiastic involvement of young people, the Hope Streets project wouldn't have happened. It is because of young people's impact on the project team that change has been possible. They have influenced their Hub museums. They have also been able to influence heritage at a national level - through the advocacy work of their Hubs, and also directly at the Hope Evolves end of project event<sup>3</sup>. The event attracted in-person and online attendees from across the heritage and youth sectors, working at local, regional and national levels.

Young project participants, volunteers and employees are best placed to comment on how the Hubs now welcome and work with young people. While external project evaluation centred the voice of the project team in order to illustrate organisational change in the Hope Streets project, please do look at some of the end-of-project resources<sup>4,5</sup> to find out more about young people's experience of the project and how they feel about their museums.



Figure 5: The marketplace of ideas at the Hope Evolves end of project event, Nov 2022.

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<sup>3</sup> Hope Evolves, event recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2KXXgFJ-QDk>

<sup>4</sup> Hope Evolves, young people's film: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-v0UU0kVfl&t=2s>








<sup>5</sup> The 'I'm a Teenager Get Me Into Here' online training, developed by the project team: <https://curiousminds.org.uk/im-curious-about/im-a-teenager/>



### **3. Evidence for Organisational Change**

The following pages highlight some of the key evidence from the Hope Streets evaluation.

## Summary of evaluation methods and participants

Activities	Description	Timetable							Participants					
		Baseline (start of Pjase 2)	Hope Happenings	Festival preparation	Festival of Hope	End of Phase 2	Start of Phase 3	End of Phase 3	Hub Lead (10)	Hub SLT (6)	Hub staff & vols (P2 -123; P3-144)	Curious Minds (3)	External youth experts (15)	Project Partners (2)
	<b>Organisational Data</b> Collecting together operational data, strategies, business plans and policies.	■						■	■	■				
	<b>Survey</b> Asking about attitudes, skills and behaviours around youth engagement	■						■	■	■				
	<b>Diary</b> Reflecting on achievements and learning in response to a set of guiding questions	■							■			■		
	<b>Site visit</b> To meet project staff face to face, see the project in action and put context to data.		■					■	■	■			■	
	<b>Telephone interviewing</b> Regular check-ins with Hub Leads and including all stakeholders in evaluation	■							■	■		■	■	■
	<b>Online facilitation/ interviewing</b> To elicit the post-festival vision, and self-assess progress against objectives				■				■	■		■		
	<b>Workshops (in-person and online)</b> Evaluator participated in learning workshops organised by Curious Minds			■					■	■		■	■	

## Organisational data

**Table 1: Operational data**

By the end of the project there were more Young People (11-24yrs) present in the Hubs, involved in a range of different activities, and more youth-focused and youth-targeted roles.

Data	Hubs 2018/19	Hubs 2021/22
Workforce <25yrs	3	5
Youth focused roles	0 (Except Hope Streets)	5 (Additional to Hope Streets)
Volunteers <25yrs (rebuilding numbers following loss of volunteers during Covid)	4	4
Trainees, Interns and Apprentices <25yrs	2	5
Trustees <25yrs	0	2
Out of school engagement/informal learning (Heritage/Creative)	3	5

**Table 2: Plans, policies and procedures**

By the end of the project 'Young People' were referred to, planned for and accommodated as an audience group in overarching plans and strategies and in on-the-ground engagement (but not always monitoring or audience research).

Document Category	Hubs 2018/19	Hubs 2021/22
Forward plan (FP) available (updates disrupted due to Covid)	4	3
FP or equivalent Wordsearch Child/ren, Family/ies, Kids vs. Young/th/teen	2	4
FP Values, Purpose & Priorities	1	2
FP Aims & Objectives	4	3
Activity Plan	2	3
Youth Engagement Strategy	0	5
Youth Sector Partners (disrupted due to Covid; new partners post-Covid)	4	3
Target Audiences (updated Audience Development Plans available for only 2 Hubs in 21/22))	4	2
Data Collection	1	1
Audience Research	0	0
Feedback & Consultation	2	5
Youth Involvement/ Co-Production	3	5
Marketing Material	2	5
Staff structure	1	5
Recruitment & HR	0	3
Visitor Services	0	2
Safeguarding/Safe working	0	5
YP-Friendly Admissions	2	4

## Diary entries

How would you define best practice in youth engagement in a museum setting?

BASELINE (BEGINNING OF PHASE 2)



END OF PHASE 2 (FESTIVAL OF HOPE)

"Providing young people with something **interesting** and **relevant** to them in a **friendly** and **welcoming** space".

"We have a lot of work to do on this...We need to **make the buildings more approachable**. Staffing is also important... **we should just be friendly, have a chat**, rather than straight away antagonising them. We need staff training to feel **more confident with young people**, not all guns blazing when they raise their voices."

"All of the **decisions have to come from young people** from the very beginning... Other projects get handed down to us, it's an organisational priority, or it gets funding, it's not **young people taking ownership**, or given a brief. We have been **given a brief by young people**, there's a lot of freedom."

"Not wheeling young people out to tick a box. **Sharing ideas, ambitions and what they want to achieve**. So much to offer, trying to **help them achieve** that. Can see why Hope Streets is youth-led. Working with milestones and parameters but to keep it **as open as possible**."

"The difficulty is that I didn't do much youth engagement, previously mainly schools. Really important to let it be **led by young people**. Important to have a **framework and timetable** but to as much as possible to **lead with their ideas** and **let them be as creative** as possible. Very much listening to their ideas as much as possible."

"A **reciprocal meaningful relationship**. They could bring ideas to us and be **received positively and openly**. We should be **approachable, trustworthy, genuine and fun. Honesty and trust** and being a real person, **within boundaries**, but give of yourself – a warm **two-way relationship**. The work should **have an impact** that translates into the group members, that also has **outcomes for the whole service...**"

"The young people have **a great relationship with at least one person** who works for the organisation, and engagement is not reliant on freelance practitioners who come and go. There is **always continuous activity** instead of self-contained projects which often leave the young people involved feeling abandoned when it's finished. I would also say that **the museum listens** to young people and **engages in dialogue** when young people want to challenge us, a rule, a procedure etc. Lastly, **the museum believes that young people genuinely improve the programme** and **contribute to...change**."

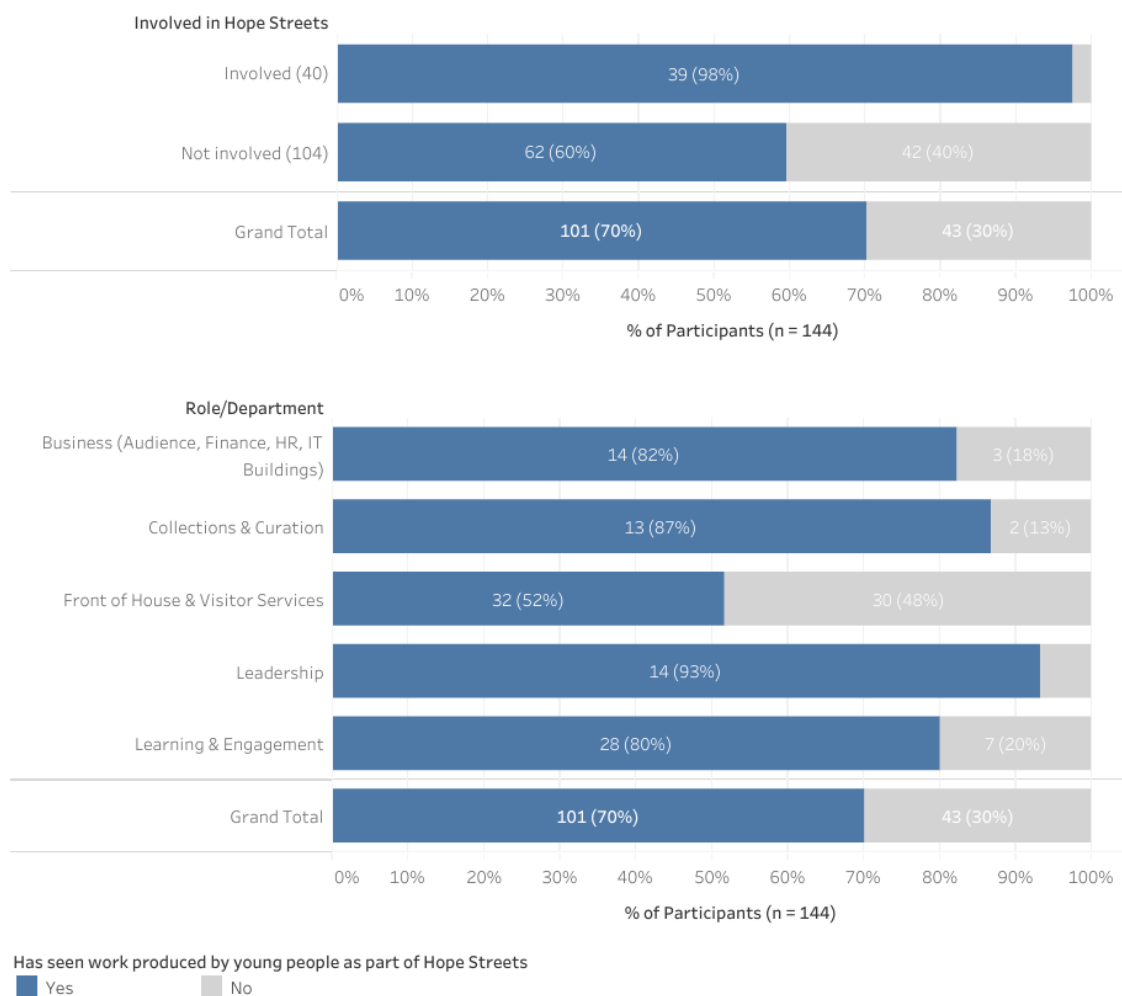
".. providing a **welcoming environment** where young people have an **active say** in what they participate in and how they interact with the museum. It usually involves a **shift in thinking** on the museum's part, and a **shift in how museums operate** so that they can **accommodate youth voices**. It means treating young people as **creative collaborators**, rather than a tick-box exercise in visitor demographics."

"Best practice in youth engagement has to be grounded in **trust, transparency and consistency**. Facilitators must work to **manage expectations, listen** and keep **communication** channels open, enabling all **voices to be heard and respected**; giving young people **a range of pathways**, and **scaffolding their activities**, ... allowing them to **safely make mistakes** and **be successful**. In providing a **safe environment**, young people can **lead their own learning**, have space, time and **support to develop ideas... learn, reflect, grow and develop**."

## Awareness and influence of the project

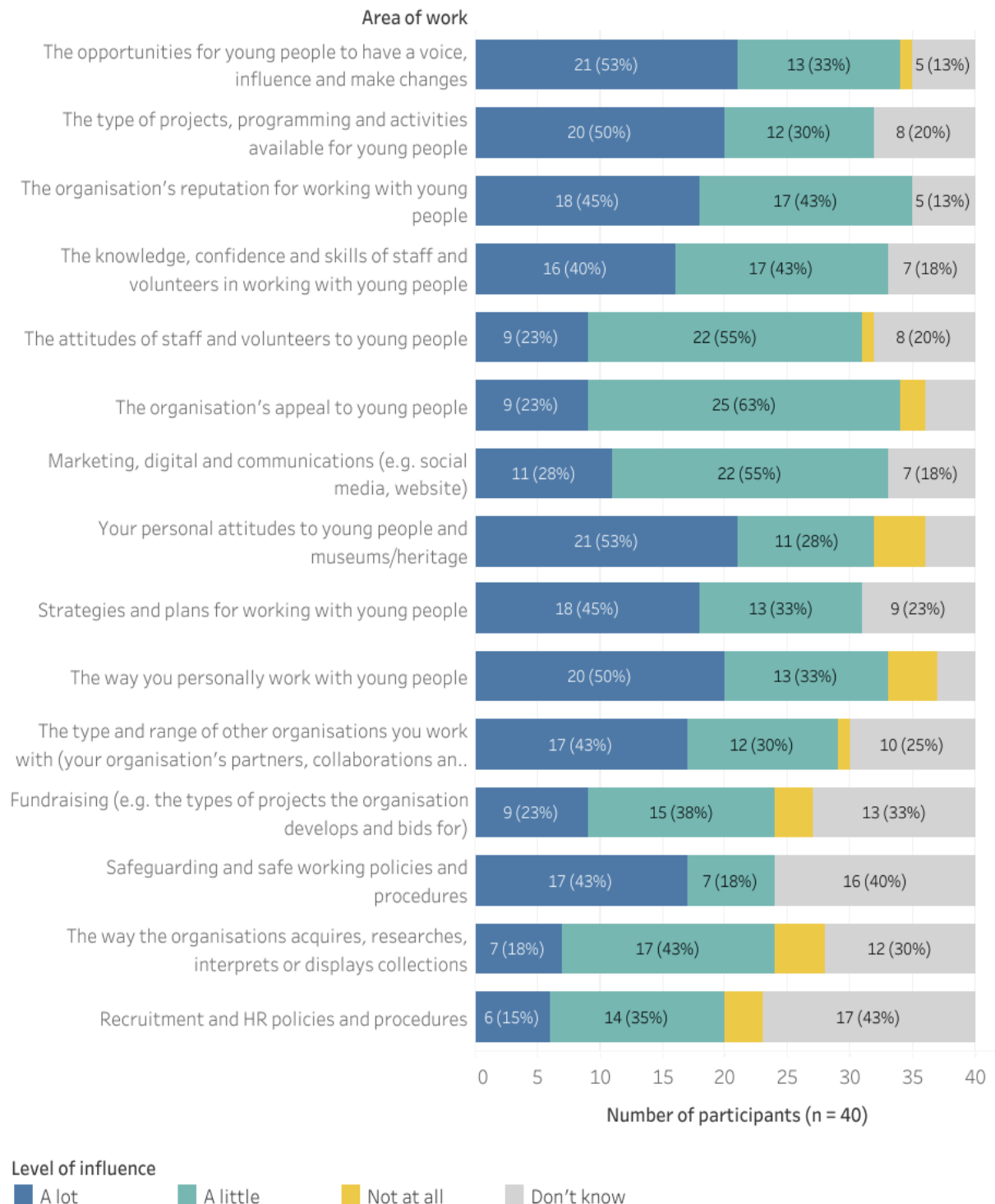
**Chart 1: Have you seen work produced by young people as part of the Hope Street project?**

Despite pandemic closures and major changes to staff and volunteers (especially 'front-of-house'), most staff and volunteers (70%) saw work produced by young people, including the Senior Leaders who responded to the survey.



## Chart 2: The Hope Streets project has influenced...

Participants involved with the project (40, including 11 YP) perceived the greatest influences of the project to be opportunities for youth voice and the organisation's reputation for working with young people. Those who worked most closely with young people also felt the project had influenced their personal attitudes towards young people and the way they worked with young people. They were also more aware of the 'behind the scenes' influence of the project (e.g., on safeguarding, safe working and recruitment).



**Wordcloud: What three words come to mind to describe the work by young people that you have seen?**

The final evaluation survey (144 participants) showed that staff and volunteers who saw work by young people described it as ‘creative’ (25) and ‘inspiring’ (17). The work created a strong impression – described as vibrant, exciting, bright, colourful and passionate. The effort and skill to produce the work was also recognised: young people were described as professional, hard-working and diligent.



## Quotes from the end of project survey

### The best thing about working on Hope Streets...

#### The opportunity for change.

*Being able to challenge ourselves and think outside the box whilst getting support from Curious Minds and other Hubs.*

*New ideas and an incentive to review our working practices and policies.*

#### The opportunity to increase youth engagement.

*Getting more young people into our spaces.*

*Opportunity to increase Youth Engagement.*

#### The project enabled a greater focus on young people.

*Moving our practice more toward deepening engagement with YP rather than focused on numbers of young people engaged.*

*Watching young people interact with staff and visitors.*

#### Showcasing young people and increased visibility.

*Seeing young people learn, develop confidence and deliver exciting projects.*

*Showcasing what young people can achieve when supported and invited into museums.*

#### Young people inspired the staff and volunteers.

*Seeing the YP excited about creating their own event and creating new social bonds.*

*Engaging with young people and seeing them light up when they find something that interests them.*

*Continuously and consistently being inspired by the creativity of young people.*

#### The voice and influence of young people at the Hubs.

*Talking and listening to young people – feeling like their voice is being heard.*

*Seeing what the future generation would like to happen in our venues.*

*The young people who have brought fresh eyes and ideas to the table.*

*Meeting young people as part of the Community Board and seeing how they are empowered to participate.*

*I took on a Work Experience...it was amazing to have a young voice at meetings, s/he saw the museum's offer very differently to how many staff see it and came up with some fantastic changes we could make.*

#### The project has helped to widen participation.

*The diversity of the students on the project some of which may not have worked so closely with a museum or on a project such as this before.*

*Development of an Apprenticeship, creation of the Young Tour Guides and Young Producers.*

#### A transformative project for some Hubs and staff.

*The complete shift in my thinking towards collaborations with young people and ensuring there are opportunities for them to lead.*

*It has made me and other colleagues completely rethink how we welcome all visitors and what our overall offer is.*



## Through working on Hope Streets I have learnt...

### Quotes from the 40 survey participants who were part of the project team or worked closely with the team.

#### ...about young people's needs.

*More about museums, how they work and the opportunities they can offer especially to young people in the community.*

*How young people think and work and how the heritage sector can become more accommodating.*

#### ...participatory ways of working.

*That there is no one way to work with, or engage, young people – you need to be flexible and let them lead.*

*How to facilitate youth-led projects, and how to 'let go' when needed.*

*To work with young people's strengths to engage with their enthusiasm and knowledge.*

*... I helped to organise a taster event for a new Exhibition project...we had 30 young people turn up on a Friday night... I really enjoyed our conversations, their enthusiasm, creativity, and their willingness to come and try something new when they could have been doing something else.*

#### ...that youth voice is important.

*To see what young people really want from our venues.*

*That young people can often get to the heart of a problem quicker than adults can.*

*The voice of young people is essential to the social and economic vitality of our city.*

#### ...how to drive change.

*It takes time and effective collaboration to embed youth engagement in an organisation.*

*To be more proactive in challenging received ideas.*

*There may be stumbling blocks and issues but there are ways to work around them if you really try.*

*That our organisation can adapt and change policies if given the lead in time and support.*

#### ...about ongoing barriers to engagement.

*That there is a demographic of young people who already frequent museums and are the easiest to get involved in this kind of project, but reaching those from other less represented demographics is difficult.*

## **What effect, if any, has the Covid-19 pandemic had on your experience of working with young people/on the way your organisation works with young people?**

### **Digital Gains**

*It allowed me to work more closely with young people during the first lockdown and therefore get to know them better. It has made me realise what support young people need to gain work experience and just what they're up against!*

*Moving to digital allowed us to expand our access...Although we have done 'less' we have more impact. We have been able to capture the work in a way that we may not have done with a one-day festival. Producing the festival webpages is the best achievement.*

*The digital festival forced us to troubleshoot and learn lots about digital - and fast... We were forced to think about the safeguarding implications of having our content online, and considered new issues such as trolling, bullying, tracing participants ... Prior to the festival there was a lot of organisational fear around Facebook groups, who would monitor them etc. We managed to troubleshoot all of these issues...*

### **Digital Pains**

*We just haven't been able to work physically and produce the types of activity and work we have wanted to. Both because of my caring role ..., but also because of restrictions, staffing issues and public safety concerns.*

*Large impact on my traineeship as about half was working remotely as an Alternative Saturday Job post. Since reopening...it is clear that young people are happy and excited to be back IRL!*

*The restrictions brought about due to the pandemic over the last two years have made things more frustrating and difficult to effectively collaborate with Young People. It was a great shame that our Festival of Hope couldn't happen as planned. This would have inspired many more youth engagement opportunities and increased awareness to our staff and local communities about what young people can do.*