

CapeUK

Strong Voices

Regional Evaluation

Yorkshire and the Humber

Table of Contents

1. Enquiry Question	3
1.1 What this question means in our context.....	3
1.2 Aims.....	5
1.3 Assumptions.....	5
2. Lead Delivery Partners	6
3. Implementation of Action Research.....	7
3.1 Participants	7
3.2 Methods and Evidence.....	7
3.3 Initial approach	8
3.4 Revised approach.....	8
3.5 Reflections on the Action Research process.....	9
3.5.1 Other key learning about the Action Research process:	10
4. What we're learning & how practice is changing.....	11
4.1 What we hope to change.....	11
4.2 What is effective?	11
4.2.1 Understanding each other	11
4.2.2 The bespoke offer to young people.....	12
4.2.3 Access.....	12
4.2.4 Outreach	13
4.2.5 Progression	14
4.3 What is ineffective, less effective or challenging?.....	14
4.3.1 Capacity.....	14
4.3.2 Engaging the most hard to reach.....	14
4.3.3 Partnership working.....	15
4.3.4 Perceptions	15
4.3.5 Employment.....	16
4.3.6 Long Term Change	16
5. Conclusions & Next Steps.....	17
5.1 Return to our enquiry	17
5.2 Next Steps	18

1 Enquiry Question

We framed our Action Research around a central Enquiry, reflecting conversations with Strong Voices partners. These conversations suggested that there is a lack of direct communication between youth and arts sector organisations:

- The arts sector not fully understanding the existing infrastructure and ways of engaging with disadvantaged young people via youth sector organisations
- Youth sector organisations saying they didn't know where to look for or how to connect with quality arts and cultural provision and that Youth Workers didn't know how to find out what was available

We developed the following question with our partners:

“How can arts, cultural and youth sector professionals work together and communicate better to provide effective, meaningful and progressive opportunities for this target group of young people?”

Sub-questions

- *What are the key elements of effective partnership work in this context?*
- *What are the barriers to effective partnership between arts & cultural professionals and youth sector professionals?*
- *What needs to change to make effective partnership a reality?*

1.1 What this question means in our context

As the regional ACE Bridge organisation, CapeUK has undertaken an audit of arts and cultural provision for children and young people; a 'State of the Region' report. Through consultation and research, a number of common themes have emerged that led us towards the Enquiry Question:

- Yorkshire and the Humber are home to a wealth of artistic and cultural resources with the potential to enrich the lives of all children and young people in the region. However, some of the highest areas of deprivation in the country are recorded in the region, often side-by-side with affluent areas. Rural and urban areas exist within the same Local Authorities.
- During our consultation, we found that there is a strong and passionate commitment to sustaining and increasing opportunities for children and young people to engage

with arts and culture ***alongside*** a need for greater connectivity between providers and advocacy about the role of arts and culture in children's lives. There is a growing awareness that pooling resources and collaborative working needs to take place in order to meet the needs of children and young people.

"...creating a meaningful partnership does not happen overnight."

Creating meaningful partnerships and approaches is essential in this time of austerity. But creating a meaningful partnership does not happen overnight. Especially between the youth and arts sectors, both of which are facing drastic reductions in funding and capacity.

"The challenge thrown down by our Enquiry Question is to explore the key features of an effective partnership and how the barriers...can be overcome to redesign services..."

These factors can lead to protectionism, so the challenge thrown down by our Enquiry Question is to explore the key features of an effective partnership and how the barriers outlined above can be overcome to redesign services and opportunities for children and young people.

1.2 Aims

The Action Research undertaken for the Strong Voices programme aims to foster several changes:

- **changes to perceptions of cross-sector partnership working**
- **changes to the professional practice of those involved in the project**
- **changes to the opportunities offered to the most disadvantaged young people in Yorkshire and Humberside**

Our networks involve a diverse range of organisations including:

- Major Partner Museums
- Libraries
- National Portfolio Organisations
- Music Education Hubs
- Myplace Centres
- Theatres
- Local Authorities
- Youth Services

1.3 Assumptions

A number of assumptions have been made in developing the Enquiry Question:

- There are benefits to collaborative working for the arts, cultural and youth sectors.
- These sectors are not currently maximising the potential of collaboration to better serve children and young people.
- Creating partnerships to achieve the aims of Strong Voices would take time but be achievable; organisations would understand the needs of the programme and 'buy into' the process.
- Delivery partners would be able to deliver Strong Voices successfully.
- We have the capacity to manage the delivery of the programme in four areas.
- Partners would understand, value and embed Action Research.

2 Lead Delivery Partners

Calderdale - Orangebox Myplace Centre

A new state of the art centre for young people in the heart of Halifax. The centre has been designed by young people, for young people with facilities including a climbing wall, rooftop skate-park, recording studios, dedicated art room, rehearsal spaces and allotments. Counselling and support services are provided onsite.

Hull - Hull City Arts

City Arts aims to develop the arts through the support and encouragement of creative people and has a strategic brief that encompasses all art forms, amateur and professional levels of arts activity, community and youth arts, arts in schools, arts funding, advocacy work, and an advisory service. Their youth arts programme has brought many benefits for young people including many opportunities within major arts festivals. The partnership has also ensured that a positive working relationship has developed between youth workers, young people, arts organisations and artists, ensuring many taster and progression opportunities in the arts.

Leeds - Temple Newsam Learning Partnership Trust (TNLP)

A group of schools and partners who are working together for the benefit of the community as a whole. The Trust celebrates the differences and uniqueness of each school, under a shared vision and a common set of values. Based in East Leeds, one of the most deprived areas of the city.

Rotherham - Myplace Rotherham

Where young people can meet friends and take part in activities including dance, drama, music and art. It is a place where the talents of Rotherham's young people are developed, showcased and celebrated. It's managed by YMCA White Rose in partnership with statutory and voluntary sector partners including Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

3 Implementation of Action Research

3.1 Participants

The following people were identified to participate in Reflective Practice:

- Gemma Sergeant, SV Programme Coordinator for Temple Newsam Learning Partnership Trust
 - Sarah-Jane Mason, a Freelance Artist in Leeds
- Madeleine Irwin, SV Programme Coordinator at Myplace (Orangebox) in Calderdale
 - Kevin Mottram, Freelance Youth Worker in Calderdale
 - Elaine Duffy, Librarian from Calderdale Local Authority
 - Kathryn Pogue, Young Volunteer at Myplace (Orangebox)
- Nicola Harding, SV Programme Coordinator at Myplace Rotherham
 - Clare Haddon, Myplace Youth Worker
 - Peter Hurley, Freelance Circus Artist
- Ruth Drake, SV programme Coordinator at Hull City Arts
 - Sarah Daniels, Freelance Artist in Hull
 - Robin Hope, Youth Worker in Hull

3.2 Methods and Evidence

Reflective conversations have happened in formal scheduled sessions, and informal ad-hoc environments including:

- scheduled quarterly meetings
- open conversations about the programme
- interviews with key delivery staff
- creative activities that foster reflection
- cross-sector practitioner meetings to explore shared aims and discuss perceptions of each other's work

Evidence includes:

- reflective Logs
- spreadsheets of questionnaires and start-up meetings
- meeting notes
- evaluation materials from each local area evidencing impact on young people
- quarterly reports
- questionnaires
- flipchart notes
- audio recordings

3.3 Initial approach

We initially adopted a model where each of our lead delivery partners invited a group of cross-sector practitioners (comprising Arts, Cultural and Youth Sector professionals) to meet on a quarterly basis. The aim of this meeting was for operational staff from across the region to come together in a central location to discuss the successes and challenges of the programme, share learning, and to reflect upon their own changing perceptions and practice.

The meeting was poorly attended partly due to the logistical challenge of bringing them together from across the region. The capacity of practitioners, particularly those from the Youth Sector, has also been cited as the reason for non-attendance at key reflective practice meetings. Commitment from some operational staff has proved to be a major obstacle.

“When youth sector organisations are facing year-on-year cuts, they won’t send youth workers out to meetings that they don’t see as essential”

G.S, during reflective conversation

3.4 Revised approach

We adopted a new approach, working with smaller groups in each area. We offered to meet partners in their own environment. Recognising that budgetary constraints and capacity were an issue, we offered to pay cover for youth sector practitioners to attend reflective practice meetings. Despite this, attendance in some areas remained poor. This suggests that time and money are not the only drivers influencing practitioners’ engagement with the AR process. A lack of understanding or appreciation of the value of reflective practice must also be considered as a factor.

As of Quarter 5 we have adapted how we implement the AR process. We have taken a two-pronged approach to embed Reflective Practice more fully:

- The new model involves both strategic decision makers and operational staff. Strategic leads are now attending quarterly, regional reflective practice meetings, and operational staff are attending reflective practice meetings at a local level.
- Recognising that there was a lack of experience in Reflective Practice within the programme, we have commissioned an AR specialist to facilitate the Reflective process. Dr Anni Raw has a wealth of experience in the field, and her expertise and creative approach to facilitating RP sessions has already been a catalyst for better quality of reflection.

It is a contractual requirement for partners to participate in Action Research and we have reminded partners of our collective obligation. Whilst this is not the preferred way to manage delivery partners, it has proved to be effective in focusing certain partner organisations on contract delivery.

3.5 Reflections on the Action Research process

Delivery partners started late and were immediately ‘behind the curve’ in meeting quarterly targets. Due to a change of Programme Manager at CapeUK during Quarter 3/4, we were further delayed in implementing AR. The new Programme Manager had to learn about the programme ‘in-post’, and similarly prioritised quarterly targets. Through this combination of events, Action Research was not embedded from the outset.

Consequently we’ve learned that Action Research is difficult to implement after a programme has begun. Gathering learning and ‘historical’ reflection from practitioners retrospectively can be difficult. The new approach to Reflective Practice will kick start the process for year 2. Being more assertive with delivery partners about their accountability has improved attendance.

Working in four areas is challenging at the best of times, but the extra work needed to support delivery partners has been time consuming, given their geographical spread.

While there are different circumstances in each of our four areas, some common challenges have emerged:

- Many practitioners don’t have the time or capacity to attend meetings. Working at or beyond full capacity does not foster reflective practice – practitioners are only focusing on what they have to do, and ‘firefighting’, so reflecting on what they’re doing is a luxury they can’t necessarily afford.
- Even the offer of funds to cover staff attending meetings has been rejected, which leads us to believe there is a more deep rooted issue than just a lack of capacity at play. An emerging question is how do we convince organisations to see the value of Reflective Practice? If money won’t get people to the table, what will?
- Some practitioners are not used to Reflective Practice and therefore consider it to be outside of their ‘normal’ work.
- Due to ongoing budget cuts some staff are working under threat of redundancy. This has two knock-on effects. Firstly, they are more likely to focus on saving their core job, focusing entirely on their core work. This may exclude Reflective Practice. Secondly, it has meant that when staff do attend Reflective Practice meetings they are preoccupied and time-pressured, resulting in lower quality reflection.
- In one area, the original SV co-ordinator left to go on maternity leave, her replacement is relatively junior and has lacked the authority to ensure practitioners attend reflective practice meetings. This is a problem as we do not effectively control the attendance at reflective meetings. We have re-stated the importance of these meetings and have since had one meeting with improved attendance.

Many factors have affected how partners have engaged in Reflective Practice positively:

- in Leeds, AR has worked really well through 1:1 interviews
- some practitioners do place value in Reflective Practice, for example in Hull and Calderdale, where the people working on the programme value reflection
- it has been useful to involve participants of varying seniority, as it has provided useful insights for both delivery and strategic staff
- reflective practice as an agenda item at partnership meetings has helped us to explore perceptions around meaningful partnership working
- creative reflective exercises have drawn out deep meaningful thoughts from practitioners about their own practice and individual roles

“I chose the chess picture as it represents the strategic role I’m also playing...maybe I should start playing chess again to help strategize. I might be self-defeating sometimes as I question myself and lack the confidence to try something out...” - Youth worker

3.5.1 Other key learning about the Action Research process:

Loss of or changes in key staff is proving challenging. It is difficult to hold an ongoing reflective dialogue when staff leave or are under threat of losing their jobs. This has happened at both strategic and operational level. For example in Calderdale, one of the key youth workers is moving abroad and the SV co-ordinator is resigning, this means they will not be available to continue their Reflective Practice.

Having an experienced facilitator who understands the AR process is invaluable. Dr Anni Raw has made the process more effective and meaningful. She uses creative processes to help participants get beneath the surface of their thinking allowing them to reflect in a more deep and meaningful way. She is a skilled listener who helps people to articulate their thoughts clearly. Naturally (given the threat of job cuts for some) practitioners are distracted by immediate pressures, but having a skilled facilitator is helping to raise the quality of Reflective Practice, even at this tough time.

Implementing Action Research takes time, and everyone needs to accept this from the outset for it to work. We need to be realistic about how much time it takes to embed the AR process properly and make sure partners are aware that it’s not a bolt-on activity to core programme work.

4 What we're learning & how practice is changing

4.1 What we hope to change

- Organisations from youth, arts & cultural sectors to value each other as a mutual, strategic partners in achieving their goals.
- Organisations and practitioners to value Reflective Practice not only as a vehicle for service improvement but as a vital part of Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- That learning is shared between practitioners within each sector to help plan and deliver arts-based programmes for this demographic of young people.
- That partners learn to appreciate the positive impact reflective practice can have on delivery and planning.
- Practitioners within both sectors change the way they think and work with regards to engaging this demographic of young people in the arts.

There are some themes emerging that are fundamental to answering our enquiry question:

- **Building partnerships to achieve the aims of Strong Voices is not as easy as we believed it would be.**
- **Organisations have to want to work in partnership because they share values and goals, not because there is funding available for project work.**
- **The importance of creating shared values between the Arts and Youth sector and channelling this into a shared vision that leads to action.**
- **The need to address perceptions, issues and challenges with an open mind (for example, believing that libraries are no more than big rooms full of books).**
- **Building a community of best practice, owned by the practitioners, is vital.**

4.2 What is effective?

4.2.1 Understanding each other

Establishing a cross sector dialogue highlights different perceptions of Arts and Cultural engagement. One conversation challenged whether libraries and galleries need to become more informal and accepting of some young people's behaviour, or whether young people

need to learn how to behave in different contexts. The consensus was on the latter. However having venue staff develop an understanding of different behaviours was also seen as a step towards positive engagement. **This has led to the creation of bespoke training for Arts and Cultural staff.**

4.2.2 The bespoke offer to young people

We have developed a strong bespoke offer, which in practice is the immediate programme offer allowing partners to deliver to the SV target group and hit quarterly targets. This is easier to do collaboratively than alone and Strong Voices is enabling partners to work together to develop new approaches and relationships with voluntary and statutory agencies - engaging the most vulnerable and disadvantaged young people (Youth Services, Project Challenge, Young Carers, YOTs, PRUs, and schools). This is proving to work, as engagement numbers are increasing and we have been able to reach out to new groups such as young people from Roma communities.

One arts practitioner has a role to embed consultation through arts activities with young people and direct consultation with adults from Arts and Cultural organisations. She has set-up a campaign called 'Say Something Change Something' as a result of her findings from Strong Voices. This includes a [tumblr](#) account which demonstrates findings and includes extracts from her reflective log.

Combining both consultation and action research elements of the programme supports strategic developments. **Delivery staff are now feeding directly into strategic partnership meetings where reflection and consultation are featuring as standing agenda items.** An example of this is in Leeds, where young people want to be able to use their electronic devices in an interactive way, to augment reality, use apps and to learn and discover in exciting ways. This is allowing us to explore joint approaches with cultural partners.

4.2.3 Access

We're taking steps to ensure that appropriate people understand how to support our target group, right from the person working on the reception desk to the key influential policy makers. We recognise that where these aims haven't been shared across an organisation, there is no guarantee that a young person will be supported with all stages of their engagement. We have provided cross-sector CPD opportunities for adults working in cultural and youth settings – to influence long-term planning and improve how Local Authorities and the wider youth sector commission cultural activity for high-risk families and vulnerable young people. **This has led to the creation of bespoke training for Arts and Cultural staff.**

Our proposal for Strong Voices stated:

“Informal learning opportunities leading to recorded and accredited outcomes will take place in world-class arts and cultural venues and/or be delivered by professional artists in outreach settings including the new MyPlace centres”.

We have found that providing a ‘safe-space’ to build relationships with some vulnerable young people is an essential step when introducing them to mainstream Arts and Cultural venues. Perceptions of social and/or economic barriers of engaging with a venue affect young people’s engagement. This step-by-step introduction has been successfully tested by carefully introducing young people to activities and artists in a controlled environment which is made both comfortable and safe for the individual. This process can help to build the confidence of young people before immersing them in something that would otherwise seem strange and unfamiliar. In contrast we have found some young people respond well to a new immersive experience i.e. introducing them to a venue as an audience member (including providing transport) can be effective in raising their interest. *‘Once they’re there and have a good time they will want to return’.*

We are using youth centres as a neutral meeting point - introducing young people to cultural activities in a familiar environment and developing some strategic ideas such as ways of developing incentives to encourage young people to visit galleries and cultural venues.

4.2.4 Outreach

Cultural sector partners are collaborating on joint-outreach activity to ensure that effective referral routes are developed for our target group of young people. In one locality we’re finding that the best way to raise awareness of the cultural offer with youth agencies is through outreach and demonstrating a willingness to understand and support young people to overcome barriers to accessing activities and venues. They are finding they need to extend and diversify their collective outreach efforts rather than expect people to attend regular meetings. **This has meant more young people are being sign-posted to new and existing opportunities.**

We are now seeing a move towards co-commissioning with partners who were initially disengaged with the programme. A gentle approach to build trust and show the value of Arts and Cultural activities with youth sector partners has been developed. Staff from youth agencies who were initially disengaged with Strong Voices are now learning about the value of cultural activities and how to better integrate our target group with the local cultural offer.

4.2.5 Progression

We want to ensure that personalised approaches are being offered to young people. Orangebox Steering Group and Youth Board are devising a young people's progression framework to map opportunities and progression routes throughout and beyond the organisation - encompassing young people as centre and service users, volunteers, peer-mentors, apprentices, staff and enterprise developers / leaders.

This will mean looking at the comprehensive offer of the existing partnership and whether this can be communicated to delivery staff in a clear coherent way. Partners actively involved with this development include Youth Works, Calderdale College and the head of Calderdale Council's Young People's Services. The legacy of this framework will have long-term impact for Calderdale's most disadvantaged and vulnerable young people.

4.3 What is ineffective, less effective or challenging?

4.3.1 Capacity

In Calderdale we are finding that we need to think carefully before convening joint meetings and events, given the pressures that practitioners are facing. Some organisations consider meetings to be "a waste of precious time", so building relationships and trust becomes even more of a challenge and care needs to be taken to ensure meetings are not counter-productive. This has been one of the challenges of working with youth sector partners who struggle to see how Arts and Cultural activities can contribute to their own objectives and targets.

4.3.2 Engaging the most hard to reach

Personalised approaches are essential for engaging some of the hardest to reach young people. This approach can require intensive 1-to-1 support which is expensive and resource intensive. **This will present a challenge as we explore the long-term sustainability of Strong Voices.**

Legitimising an activity or venue (making it "cool" to be somewhere to go or something to do) is an ongoing challenge. If we are able to engage one member of a disadvantaged group, peer-pressure can become a barrier to ongoing engagement:

*"How do you legitimate a place or activity to a disengaged group...
 '...one lad really interested in book, other lads walk in, [1st lad, embarrassed] chucks book on the floor and says 'fucking book'"*
 - Librarian

Regarding young people being involved with consultation, there is concern that this should be done in a meaningful way - allowing young people to inform real change. Some partners have been through extensive consultation with young people without any concrete outcomes and have found this to be a disempowering experience both for themselves and the young people they consulted with.

The identified need to provide young people with personalised opportunities is positive. However with the recently opened Myplace centre in Halifax, there has been a lack of baseline activity and a subsequent challenge of attracting our target group into the centre.

There are opportunities working with inclusive/mixed groups to break down barriers, to help people realise they are not defined by their race, colour, profile (e.g SEN, NEET) or social stereotype. There may be opportunities to break down barriers and remove informal social segregation. In turn, this will help engage young people with a more culturally diverse by learning from the young people they interact with.

4.3.3 Partnership working

There is an emerging culture where some organisations only operate as traded services and where the intrinsic value of partnership working isn't fully realised. We have a challenge to avoid Strong Voices becoming a bespoke programme dependant on funding, rather than impacting on long-term change. This is as much about creating institutional change with the partners involved, as delivering programme targets. **We are learning that we need to articulate the outputs of Strong Voices in a way which partners and other key organisations can understand the value of.**

Some partners have a grasp on the concept of partnership working - developing/seeking joint approaches to shared goals. Whilst they value cross sector dialogue to discuss the programme objectives, their differing priorities and language means that it takes time before effective joint commissioning moves forward.

4.3.4 Perceptions

Partners need to articulate their offer in a way that challenges how they might otherwise be perceived, to young people and supporting adults. For example, the perception that a library is just for reading books presents a challenge. Libraries have a perception of being for a 'certain' type of people.

“People see me as someone who reads books, other professionals see me as this as well...youth workers will assume young people wouldn't be interested.” – Librarian

4.3.5 Employment

One lead partner has been concerned about not being able to progress our target group to a point where they are ready for the transition into full time employment and that a step-by-step approach with opportunities such as AA Gold, traineeships and signposting to other progression pathways requires further investigation. It is useful to discuss how partnerships can embed appropriate progression opportunities for disadvantaged young people. There is also a need to carefully manage how dependent young people become on youth sector support and knowing when and how to progress/sign-post them to other opportunities. Arts Award is a good way to help make sure that the young people are engaged in a meaningful way.

4.3.6 Long Term Change

What happens when Strong Voices funding disappears? It is through asking this question that we are able to challenge the long-term change which is not wholly dependent on target specific funding. By asking partners to agree a joint vision, we are bringing about systemic change within organisations, to place value in collaborative working and finding shared values and goals. For example, in Leeds we have a diverse range of Arts, Cultural and Youth Sector organisations meeting regularly to discuss the delivery of Strong Voices. As a result of these meetings, a greater awareness of local opportunities is being developed. Where activities will be unsustainable in the future (taking groups to see world-class productions at the Alhambra, Bradford) we are finding alternative opportunities – such as linking with the West Yorkshire Playhouse to engage with their Youth Theatre programme.

5 Conclusions & Next Steps

“How can arts, cultural and youth sector professionals work together and communicate better to provide effective, meaningful and progressive opportunities for this target group of young people?”

5.1 Return to our enquiry

We are finding that cross-sector professionals **can** work together to provide effective, meaningful and progressive opportunities and that frequent communication between a range of professionals is crucial. There are a range of approaches that can help to develop and support best practice within this context, such as:

1. **The development of progression frameworks** that represent a diverse local cross-sector offer. At a basic level partnerships can develop effective sign-posting tools - helping practitioners understand the range of opportunities available, who key staff are within organisations and how to access meaningful activities appropriate to our target group of young people. The exercise of identifying this combined offer can help show gaps in provision which in-turn the partnership can seek to resolve. At a deeper level, this process has the potential to help professionals examine what they really mean by ‘progression’ and instigate the development of a shared philosophical approach.
2. **Providing immersive activities**, not just for young people but also the adults that support them. In practice, if a youth worker or teacher doesn’t appreciate the cultural offer of a museum, then it is unlikely they will encourage young people to access it. Artists are often frustrated by this and verbal/written communication can have a limited impact. If however we can gain enough leverage (often from a strategic level conversation) to allow us to take supporting adults into an immersive cultural environment, then we can communicate the opportunities in a far more powerful way. For example, facilitating Arts Award training in a museum and allowing youth workers to explore the venue from a young person’s perspective, can help open minds and communicate the value far more effectively than a meeting at a youth club.
3. **Sharing of expertise.** The wealth of cross-sector expertise is great, however simply offering a training day without consultation can result in low take-up. To build communities of best practice, professionals must communicate about the issues they face, whether it’s a lack of behavioural understanding (of our target group) or a need to explore digital solutions to cultural engagement - if the topic is discussed as a partnership then we are more likely to develop appropriate CPD with better take-up and impact.

4. **Making time for stories**, which might be young person focused and/or the learning of a practitioner. Providing the space and time for practitioners to talk about the excitement of a cultural experience or the challenging journey of a young person, can drive and open new opportunities both for young people and the adults that support them.

5. **Developing a shared vision**, this can be empowering to the partnership as a whole and can have more impact than imposing headline programme objectives. Developing a shared vision also helps organisations to challenge and reflect on their individual contributions to a partnership and what they mean by ‘partnership working’. We have begun exploring a shared vision through simple reflective questions such as:
 - In pairs think about your journey individually over the past 8 months, what has changed? What do you value and want to sustain into the future?
 - Where would you like to end-up with this partnership? What are our next steps? What are the challenges?

6. **Identifying the target group**. With ongoing changes to local infrastructure including changes in personnel at LA referral agencies, there is a need for partnerships to have dedicated outreach time. Where ambassadors can champion the value of Arts and Culture and the effect it can have on young people’s lives. Organisations need to step away from the ‘build it and they will come’ mentality and move towards ongoing advocacy at a range of levels with key individuals (including parents, youth and social-care workers, teachers etc) who can make and justify educated, well informed choices to support our target group to access meaningful Arts and Cultural opportunities.

5.2 Next Steps

Programme Management

We have found that there are many contributing factors beyond our control which interfere with the development of strong communicative partnerships. The constant restructuring of organisations, reduction and changes in staff, lack of capacity and funds mean that even with the best intentions it is difficult to ensure that opportunities for our target group remain consistent. Moving forward, we will support ‘weaker’ lead-coordinators to adapt how they articulate the aims of Strong Voices and enable them to influence partners at a strategic level.

We will continue to promote the value of Action Research, not just as a part of Strong Voices but as a means to great CPD. We are commissioning an experienced Reflective Practice practitioner to ensure integrity to this aspect of the programme in the second year.

We are exploring how regular partnership meetings can sustain beyond April 2015, such as through Hull City Art's new Creative Voice Network, Temple Newsam Learning Partnership's Operational Community Provisions Group and Rotherham Myplace Youth Arts Strategy Meetings.

We will identify opportunities to influence and communicate the success and learning of Strong Voices so far, to key initiatives and bodies such as Hull's City of Culture status, Talent Match, The Pan Calderdale Arts Network, the Creative Employment Programme and the engage International Conference in Leeds.

DRAFT