



GUIDED BY YOUNG VOICES

How to include young people on your board and in your decision making processes



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

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FOREWORD

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Quite possibly the most enjoyable and interesting part of my job at the Arts Council involves getting out and listening to people.

It's also a crucial part of what the Arts Council does – without hearing what artists, cultural organisations and council and community leaders have to say, we wouldn't know how we can best support them. Nor would I know first-hand what extraordinary new forms arts and culture are taking.

Above all, we hope that this guide to youth governance has demonstrated the importance and the impact of listening.

Over the last 10 years, the Roundhouse has reinvented itself by listening to young people. Each year around 3,000 young people aged 11-25 pass through the doors of its creative studios. There, below the main space, they can develop skills in music, spoken word, circus, radio and other disciplines: skills that give them the potential to make great art or find work in the creative industries.

What the casual observer might not realise is that these young people have a role upstairs too, not just influencing (and increasingly participating in) the performances put on stage, but having a real voice in how the organisation is run.

Of course, the Roundhouse is not alone in listening to young people. Increasingly, arts and cultural organisations are looking for ways to involve young people in decision making. Examples of these from around the country have been profiled here, including versions of the youth advisory model that the Roundhouse set up 10 years ago.

But we've also been keen to emphasise the significant and daring step that the Roundhouse took in its early days: putting two of its youth advisory members onto its main board, as full trustees. This guide has been about sharing the happy consequences of this experience – along with the hard lessons learned on the way – which should be of great use and inspiration to our own sector and beyond.

Reading this guide confirmed for me that having young trustees is a winning move for any organisation wanting a genuine relationship with its younger audiences and participants. It gives them a place at the top table. And, very importantly, having their voice at that level can reinvigorate governance, challenging received wisdoms and assumptions. By asking the unexpected question or offering a fresh perspective, the young trustee can make a real contribution to the effectiveness of an organisation and can help ensure it is prepared for the future.

Darren Henley OBE
Chief Executive
Arts Council England

WE BELIEVE NOT JUST IN WORKING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY WITH YOUNG PEOPLE TOO



INTRODUCTION

At the Roundhouse, we believe that listening to young people is only the starting point. Taking what they say seriously means that we can then work *with* young people, not just *for* them. And we believe that any cultural organisation that wishes to develop, foster progressive attitudes and remain relevant must include young people in its decision making processes. This applies right up to the top of the organisation. Put simply, your board of trustees should be representative of the people you serve. If your audience includes young people, then your board should too.

We've been recruiting young trustees to the Roundhouse board annually since 2005. We're keen to share our experiences and encourage other arts organisations to follow suit.

This guide, commissioned by Arts Council England, outlines the impact that organisations can achieve from bringing young trustees around the table. It also includes

practical tips on how to prepare your board, how to build a talent pool, how to support young trustees and how to overcome potential challenges along the way.

But not all young people can or want to become trustees, so recruiting a couple of young people to the board should not be seen as the beginning and end of introducing youth voices into your organisation. That's why we've included a section spotlighting other ways of involving young people in decision making too. Furthermore, although we think we've developed some very good practice over the years we recognise that different approaches work for different organisations and the more we can learn from each other the better. So throughout this guide we've also highlighted where there are different ways of doing things and included the experience of some of the organisations we know that are doing some sterling work in this field.

We've aimed this guide at Chairs, Chief Executives and existing board members, but to any young people reading this you'll find a section on how being a trustee can benefit you on page 24, and further information can be found at roundhouse.org.uk.

During what are increasingly tough times for young people it's more important than ever to provide them with adequate representation and a voice within our organisations. It's time to give the leaders of tomorrow a platform today.

Marcus Davey OBE
Chief Executive
and Artistic Director
Roundhouse

Does the audience you aim to reach contain anyone under the age of 30?

NO

YES

WHY SHOULD WE HAVE YOUNG TRUSTEES?

A question you might like to ask yourself and your board is how are you going to find the next cultural movements? What kind of experience do you need on your board to do this? Qualified accountants can look at accounts; lawyers can look at contracts, but who is going to help you stay on top – or ahead – while the world is rapidly changing?

According to the Charities Aid Foundation, despite making up 12% of Britain's population, 18-24 year-olds account for less than 0.5% of all charity trustees¹. We know that young people are willing to take on the leadership mantle – research shows that 85% of under 35s say they would consider becoming a trustee² – but clearly more needs to be done to pave the way.

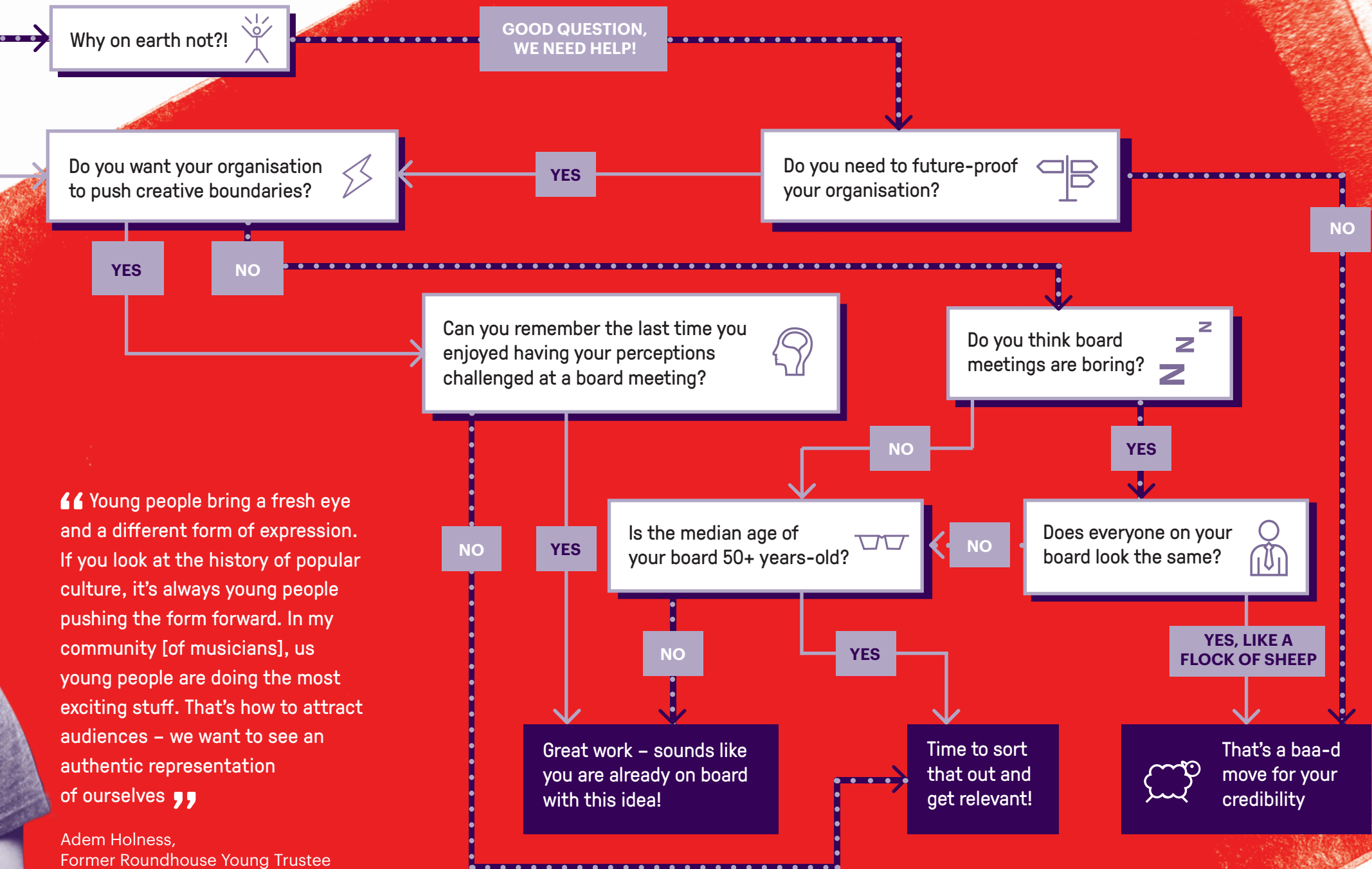
In this guide we put forward the case for affirmative action – setting aside seats on your board for 18-25s and actively recruiting – to help redress the balance. This isn't so much about preventing discrimination as it is encouraging inclusion. Many young people may not feel worthy or experienced enough to apply for a board position entirely off their own back, so having a specific role defined and reserved for their age group can give them the confidence they need to engage. We believe that greater diversity makes for better decision making.

We are not saying, however, that young trustees will be able to represent all young people, and indeed – as we will make clear throughout this guide – there are additional ways to bring the voices of young people into your organisation too. Not all young people want or are able to become a trustee, but that doesn't mean they don't have an important contribution to make to your organisation. Additional platforms such as youth advisory boards (ours is known as RYAB, short for the Roundhouse Youth Advisory Board) offer the dual purpose of engaging a wider group of young people and providing a safe space for future young trustees to learn and grow.

1. CAF, 'Mind the Gap' (2012)

2. www.pilotlight.org.uk/blog/whats-the-benefit-of-young-trustees





“ Young people bring a fresh eye and a different form of expression. If you look at the history of popular culture, it's always young people pushing the form forward. In my community [of musicians], us young people are doing the most exciting stuff. That's how to attract audiences – we want to see an authentic representation of ourselves ”

Adem Holness,
Former Roundhouse Young Trustee

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HOW DO I PERSUADE MY BOARD?

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Before you get started you're going to need to bring your board with you, and you may need to educate existing trustees about the value of introducing youth voices at the top of your organisation. That's why we've started by providing you with two key arguments to help get everyone on side.

The "representation" argument

As an arts organisation your audience (hopefully) includes a variety of people from diverse backgrounds and of different ages. For a board to be as good as it can be, surely it needs to have its stakeholders' voices included? If everyone around your board table looks and sounds like you then chances are you've got some work to do.

Here at the Roundhouse, we believe that better representation of young people:

- enables conversations to be held *with* rather than *about* young people and discourages older trustees from comparing issues relating to young people with their own experiences as a youth or with the experiences of their children;
- brings relevant experiences of your programme and services right to the heart of your major decision making forum;

“If you want to stay in your comfort zone, then don't bother bringing young trustees on board. But if you want to remain relevant and be challenged then it's a no brainer!”

Afreena Islam,
Young Trustee,
Contact Manchester

- encourages other trustees to be champions for the voice of young people and increases accountability;
- shows funders and supporters that you take working with young people seriously.

The "resilience" argument

Your board – and the wider organisation – can gain considerable support from appointing young trustees who are able to challenge received wisdom, encourage innovation and drive change.

This helps to build organisational resilience by:

- bringing fresh perspectives to the full range of board concerns, from finance to marketing and beyond;
- fostering a relationship of trust between the board and younger audience members and programme participants. This leads to trustees, who are often people of considerable influence, learning more about the issues that young people face and building an intergenerational sphere of influence;
- enabling the board to support what might be seen as quite challenging commissions of work that appeal to new audiences, embrace new cultural movements and push artistic boundaries;
- Developing the arts leaders of tomorrow; for example, young trustees may go on to chair a subcommittee, work in a senior position within the organisation they were a trustee for or even start up their own organisation.

“Diverse decision making is always better decision making. Saying a board is too boring for young people is a terrible excuse! You'd never say 'it's too straight for you' or 'it's too masculine for you'”

Leon Ward,
Deputy Chair at Brook,
Former Young Trustee
at LEAP and Plan
International



Spoken word workshop at the Roundhouse (2016)

A HISTORY OF YOUTH GOVERNANCE AT THE ROUNDHOUSE



“ If you commit to engaging with the people you’re targeting you send a much stronger message than simply another policy statement. Bringing young trustees on board may put your organisation at risk of having some of its comfortable assumptions kicked about a bit. But it gives you a real political advantage in how you can tell your story ”

Baroness Genista McIntosh,
Former Roundhouse Trustee
and Vice Chair

2002

Roundhouse Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) set up to help shape our programme with young people, feed into the redevelopment of the Roundhouse and give advice on key issues as and when needed.

2005

A year before the Roundhouse reopens, the board of Trustees holds a facilitated away day to explore whether we can adopt and develop youth governance as part of our core operation.

A range of ideas are discussed with the outcome that two young people aged 18-25 will be recruited to join the board as full trustees for a two-year period.

2006

Two young people are appointed in time for the reopening in June 2006.

During the two-year period it becomes apparent that a shorter term will be more appropriate. Many of the young people we work with experience a lot of transition – between different forms of education or between education and work – so we settle on a one-year term to accommodate this, to share the opportunity and to bring maximum diversity to our board.

2007-NOW

With our young trustee scheme in place we still maintain a strong youth board through RYAB too.

This provides a talent pool of potential young trustees, but also gives a platform to those young people who don’t want or aren’t able to take on the role of young trustee.

WHAT IMPACT CAN YOUNG TRUSTEES HAVE ON YOUR BOARD?

Since the introduction of young trustees in 2005, we've seen a real transformation at the Roundhouse that is felt across the organisation. We now have a board that actively listens and is engaged; that's constantly challenged and challenging. Young board members bring with them innovative and fresh perspectives, pushing forms and approaches into new areas. They help us to remain relevant.

And the young people have benefitted enormously too. Our young trustees have developed a wide range of new skills in areas such as fundraising, finance and marketing. They've gained the opportunity to lead early on in their careers (or even while still in education) as well as access to senior leaders and representatives.

But don't just take our word for it! Here are a series of interviews, which shine a spotlight on some of the great work that's being done across our sector and beyond.

“ I really came to feel that I could contribute to – and question – anything that was discussed at board meetings. And some of it has been fascinating; for example, the discussion about security and health and safety after the Paris attacks was so interesting. I have never felt silenced or that I had to wait until it was time to talk about young people ”

Cecilia Knapp, Former Roundhouse Young Trustee





Matt Fenton
Artistic Director
Contact Manchester

What is your approach to youth leadership?

If Contact was a stick of rock, wherever you break it you'd find young people leading – it's at the core of everything we do. Rather than just delivering for young people we empower and up-skill those young people to become leaders themselves. For example, all our staff are appointed by two panels – a staff or board panel and a young person panel – that have equal weighting. We have two young trustees on our board, and our programming team is made up of four staff and four young people who have equal say in shaping our public programme.

Why do you think it's important to have young people on the board?

For us it's about ownership, engagement and diversity – everything flows from there. We believe that this should start with governance; if you fail to diversify your staff and board, then you'll fail to diversify your audience. It's also about authenticity; if you're committed as an organisation to

engaging young people, then their voice has to be represented within your decision making structures.

What would you say to anyone who is concerned about bringing a young person onto the board?

I would say come and speak to our young board members – that will quickly allay any fears you might have! Some people are worried about breaches of confidentiality but we've never had a single example of this – our young trustees take their role very seriously. To those who think young people might find board meetings boring, young people aren't all the same! Some are really interested in the board role and how it works. And perhaps they'll change how your board operates – and make it more fun. The whole point is about driving organisational change.



Afreena Islam
Young Trustee
Contact Manchester

How did you get involved in Contact Manchester?

I joined the young actors company when I was 18 – I didn't have any acting experience and it was kind

of an act of rebellion. It was the first place where hard work didn't feel like hard work. It gave me discipline and a stake in something. I wasn't very well behaved at school, but Contact believed in me – enough to put me at the very top of their decision making – and it matters to me greatly that I don't let the organisation down. Now I want to give as many people as possible the opportunities I had.

How has being on the board helped you?

I work in the arts full time now. Being on Contact's board gave me credibility, respect within the industry and a voice – I'm so much more confident. And I've learned things I previously knew nothing about. For example, Contact is going through capital development at the moment and as a board we've had to look over the numbers and interview architects and construction companies – I've had to learn fast but it's been hugely insightful.

Why do you think arts organisations should appoint young trustees?

Young trustees keep the board and the organisation in touch with reality and the audience that it's designed to serve. They help you to keep a handle on what's going on in the arts locally and internationally, as well as bringing closer ties to the local community. The gut instincts of young people versus those of management are often better too – young people are better at reading people and cutting through the bullshit!



Leon Ward
Deputy Chair at Brook
Former Young Trustee
at LEAP and Plan
International

How did you become involved in LEAP?

I had been involved with LEAP from the age of 14 or 15. I was already on the board of Plan International, and then LEAP got in touch to say they were looking for a Young Trustee to come on board for a particular reason – to conduct an audit and look at whether the skills makeup of their board was right. They wanted my help defining what kind of young people they should look for to join their board.

What did you recommend for LEAP's board?

My recommendation was to make one skills based appointment – for example, a young accountant – but also at least three experience based appointments. The thing LEAP were really missing on their board was the voice of their service users. Perspective in decision making is always critical. We don't give enough credit to it. And when you're in the boardroom talking about the policy agenda, having people around the table who've experienced those

issues is really powerful. It should be noted, though, that LEAP's young trustees are there to reflect their experience and not all young people's experience – evaluation and research are important too. The young trustees really helped LEAP to address the accessibility of the board papers, which resulted in all trustees improving their contributions.

What impact did being a young trustee have on you?

When I first started I think I was just living life at the time – I didn't recognise that what we were doing was pretty impressive, important work. For example, on the board of Plan International I was involved in the merger of two charities with budgets that numbered into the tens of millions!

The benefits are multi-faceted. You get to meet incredible people when you're on boards – it's pretty useful when you're 18 and the person sat to your left who is your peer on that board is a lord or lady! But it's also about getting to understand the complications and complexities of running an organisation.

And it's another way of giving back too.

How do you see your role as a young trustee?

Trustees I think are there to act as catalysts. To start ideas, spark debate, challenge where necessary and to be a critical friend. They are the only people

in the whole organisation that have the complete freedom to say what they think and feel – what a member of staff would never say. I don't think I'm typical of many trustees, who see it purely as a risk management role full of process and bureaucracy. Which is fine, but really I'm here to push boundaries. It's very satisfying. And frankly, if I've rubbed someone up the wrong way then that's OK – changemakers always annoy people!

Leon co-authored the "Young Trustees Guide", which is available for download from the Charities Aid Foundation.



Sound Connections works in partnership to strengthen the music sector, bridge gaps in provision, and enable all children and young people to access music and progress. Sound Connections hosts Wired4Music, the network for Londoners aged 16-25.



Jennifer Raven
Programme Manager
Sound Connections

How does Sound Connections engage young people in decision making?

Sound Connections recognised some time ago that we needed processes in place to work collaboratively on a level playing field with young people; to hear their views, involve them in influencing music provision and create projects together. We've been researching youth voice and putting it into action for about 10 years now. As well as listening and responding to the needs of young people, Sound Connections staff do a lot of co-producing with members of Wired4Music. We have a programme called Generate through which people aged 16-25 can apply for funding and mentoring to develop projects and events.

What steps have you taken in terms of youth governance?

We have been working with former Roundhouse Young Trustee (now Wired4Music Producer) Adem Holness who presented recommendations to our

board. This led to a trustee working group who have put together a plan for recruiting two trustees aged 16-25 from Wired4Music.

How are you preparing young people for a potential trustee role?

Consulting with young people and creating a platform for them to share their ideas and opinions is the first step. Usually the next step for us is working with them to co-produce new projects and initiatives. Through doing so you get to know the young people and they get to know your organisation. It's at this point that members of Wired4Music tend to get involved with Sound Connections governance. We are very aware that it's not for everyone – becoming a trustee is a legal responsibility. For some it will be a positive part of their progression, but we need to make sure there are also other ways for young people to get involved; for example we ask Wired4Music members to sit on recruitment panels or attend business planning away days.

What are the challenges in bringing young trustees on board?

One of the things we have grappled with is trustee term. Based on Adem's experience at Roundhouse we opted for a term of one year. We are also mindful of finding a balance between treating the young trustees no differently because of age, but ensuring that appropriate support is in place for them to feel confident, welcome and involved.



Tyler Edwards
Participant
Wired4Music

What does youth voice mean to you?

To me, youth voice is about having a chance to prove to others and most importantly to ourselves that we do have a voice that can make a difference; breaking down the impractical barriers between educators and learners that stop the best work being made.

How have Wired4Music and Sound Connections helped you to find your voice?

I've had the chance to contribute ideas and facilitate events like Rising Futures, which is focused on empowering young people in their own music making. I've taken part in the leadership programme where we pitch our own music projects to be funded and brought to life. And through the rest of my time at Wired4Music, I've been given the opportunity to guide workshop discussions and share my opinions with people who have the power to make change in their own organisations.



The #iwill campaign promotes social action among 10-20 year-olds.
This includes activities such as campaigning, fundraising and volunteering.

#iwill

What has being involved in decision making meant to you?

As a creative young person, I've found it ever more important to have the courage to express my ideas, thoughts and goals. Being given a platform and an opportunity to take responsibility for the things I want to achieve has been vital for my first steps towards being an adult and a professional. The trust and belief that Wired4Music has had in me to take charge of roles that I would otherwise not have seen myself suitable for because I'm "young" or "might not be ready" has had a profound effect on the way I approach the challenges I'm faced with.



Chloe Donovan
Young Trustee
#iwill

How is #iwill involving young people in its governance structures?

#iwill is a movement of organisations, employers, businesses, educators and individuals who are all working to get more young people involved in volunteering and social action. We started off with two young trustees – of which I was one – and we currently have five, all under the age of 23.

We're a strategic rather than a delivery organisation so it's especially important for us to engage with young people. We also have a group of 150 young people who have been nominated as #iwill ambassadors for their work in leading social action and projects in our communities.

What positive impact do you think young people bring to the boardroom?

The licence of youth gives a lot of freedom to ask questions. The other board members generally appreciate this because often they're sitting there thinking the same thing, but feel unable to ask

because of their 30 plus years of experience! We bring a fresh perspective and a less cynical viewpoint.

We also bring a difference in perception. This is often talked about in terms of technology, but it's more than that. Often the way in which young people see things is a lot less linear and we appreciate the world around us as a complex web of stuff that's happening. We're more connected with what's going on in the world as a result.

How does being on the board benefit young trustees?

Gaining exposure to experienced people who are usually pretty nice too – trustees tend to be altruistic people – is a huge benefit. Whether it's marketing, business management or finance you can say "I'm thinking about doing this..." and they always know someone who can help.

There's also the experience of seeing how a business is run – because a good charity is run just like a good business. The insight and skills you gain in areas such as strategy or accounting are invaluable.

And the biggest thing is the confidence you gain from seeing that your opinion is valid and valued. I can sit across the table from the Prince of Wales – he's one of our patrons – and share my opinions! This helps with public speaking too; #iwill sends me out to do a lot of advocacy work and I will now happily speak in front of a conference of 500 people.



Youth workshop
at the Roundhouse (2015)



“ What boards are often not so good at is taking a long, hard look at themselves. We think we are the good guys and – of course – we generally are.

But we probably also think we deserve to be there. We all need a kind of ‘check your privilege’ moment. Young trustees crash into that assumed corporate righteousness that boards can easily find themselves slipping into and keep us on our toes ”

Baroness Genista McIntosh
Former Roundhouse Trustee
and Vice Chair



GETTING STARTED: HOW TO PREPARE THE BOARD FOR CHANGE

1 Plan an away day

Before you decide to introduce young people into the mix there needs to be a consensus among your board members and support for the move. One productive way to begin the discussion is to hold an away day. This will give everyone the chance to air any concerns and to explore in detail the impact young trustees are likely to have on your board. You might want to bring along an external facilitator for the discussion to help you reflect on your strengths and also the challenges that you face as a board.

You'll need to ask yourselves what kind of board you have currently, what kind of board you would like to have and how well it is functioning, because if your board isn't functioning well to begin with then young trustees aren't going to solve all your problems. They may help you to reflect on your strengths and weaknesses, but it's not a fair exchange if you're only able to show them bad practice, or if you're unable to make the most of what they have to offer. So it's important to make

sure that you're happy with how your board is performing before bringing in young people.

An away day also provides a good opportunity to look at criteria for appointment and induction and to agree what kind of young people you're looking for in terms of skill, capacity and temperament. This will help you to create a role description that includes expectations as well as what is required of a trustee.

2 Put a process in place

Once your board has agreed to bring young people around the table the executive – if you have one – should be asked to devise a process for

appointing the young trustees. If you don't have an executive then the chair or one of the trustees can be delegated to work on this instead. Either way

it's important to make sure that you have someone who's able to drive the process forward.

3 Age brackets & the legal “ins & outs”

Being a full trustee brings with it certain legal obligations including legal liability for any issues that may arise during a trustee's term. For this reason, trustees must be aged 18 and over. So at the Roundhouse, when we talk about young trustees, we're referring to young people within the 18-25 age bracket.

The Roundhouse works with young trustees up to the age of 25 as this reflects the age of the young

people we work with. Some organisations recruit for young trustees up until the age of 30 or even 35. However, we believe that this is a bit too broad – there's a big difference between the experience of an 18-year-old versus a 35-year-old and we think that it's the younger age group who are in greater need of better representation. We also ensure that any young trustees we recruit remain within the 18-25 category for the duration of their term.

We believe that you should be clear about the legal responsibilities when discussing trusteeship roles with young people, but that the positives should be highlighted too; responsibility comes hand in hand with leadership, and that responsibility is part of what makes being a trustee such a valuable experience. Young people should also be reassured that the law generally protects voluntary trustees who act reasonably and openly.

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RECRUITMENT

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“ At the Roundhouse, in addition to our young trustees, we also have a youth advisory board. As well as giving us invaluable insight and informing the future direction of Roundhouse projects, the Roundhouse Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) provides an excellent training ground for future young trustees ”

Emma Gould
Head of Youth Policy and Engagement,
Roundhouse

The starting point for recruiting young trustees should always be the community which you serve. Just like any other trustee, your young trustees will need to be advocates for the work you do and dedicated to the aims of your organisation.

If you don't already have a youth engagement programme focused on your local community, or an existing platform for giving young people a voice within your organisation – such as a youth advisory board – we strongly recommend setting one up. Assuming you're looking for greater diversity on your board and beyond, those harder to reach young people might not feel ready in the first instance to become a full trustee. So giving them the opportunity to express their opinions in a safe space where they can learn about how to run and minute meetings – and get to know the organisation as a whole – can provide an excellent platform and recruitment channel for young trustees. See page 27 for more on the Roundhouse Youth Advisory Board (RYAB). We believe in open access, which means making the opportunity as widely available as possible and ensuring that every applicant is judged and selected on the same criteria.

It's worth working with other arts organisations in your area to help spread the word too – they may already have a suitable candidate within their network.

“ Young leaders emerge over time and with the right support. Like us, you could work with other arts organisations to build a city-wide pool of confident young leaders who could potentially start to populate the governance structures of different organisations across your region ”

Matt Fenton
Artistic Director and
Chief Executive,
Contact Manchester

You'll also need to decide how often you want to recruit. Different organisations have different models for this. At the Roundhouse we recruit our young trustees for a one-year period. Recruiting annually brings a greater and more diverse group of voices to the board and helps us to share out the opportunity. In our experience it also makes it easier for young people to commit when they are often on the cusp of doing new things – further education, their first job or a recording career, for example.

However, other organisations – such as Contact Manchester or #iwill – have had success in recruiting young people for a full three-year tenure, with some young people even being re-appointed at the end of their term. This has allowed their young trustees to build confidence over time and to gain a deep understanding of the organisation.



Young people
at the Roundhouse
(2015)

HOW WE NUTURE POTENTIAL YOUNG TRUSTEES AT THE ROUNDHOUSE

STEP 1

Reach out to young people in your community and build your networks

Our outreach activity includes working with schools, colleges and local community groups, alongside recruitment through social media and other marketing channels to raise awareness.

STEP 2

Offer them opportunities to get involved with your organisation

We offer a diverse programme of participatory opportunities to 11-25 year-olds, from workshops to space hire. Full info at roundhouse.org.uk/young-creatives.

STEP 3

Create opportunities for young people to practise decision making

Young people are given the chance to have a say on how the Roundhouse runs by joining the Roundhouse Youth Advisory Board where they hear from staff and give feedback.

STEP 4

Select young trustees from this talent pool of young people you've got to know

We promote the roles of young trustees when they become available throughout our youth networks. The roles go to young people who we've got to know through our youth programme or RYAB.



..... Ask questions like “what achievements are you particularly proud of?”

..... THE APPLICATION PROCESS

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It’s important not to make the barrier to entry too high when designing your application process. While you only want to encourage young people who will be committed to your organisation to apply, you also don’t want to put good candidates off.

We’ve found that a letter of application which is no more than one side of A4 suffices. You could consider allowing other kinds of applications – such as a two minute video – in place of a more formal letter too.

We recommend using the same interview panel as for any other potential trustee. Here at the Roundhouse we use someone senior within the organisation alongside the Chair or one of the other board members, but some organisations may choose to have a panel purely made up of existing

trustees depending on the relationship between board members and employees. They may also choose to have a current or former young trustee on the interview panel too.

The most important point is to take the whole process seriously. Exposure to more senior people will be valuable experience for the young candidates even if they’re not successful on this occasion. We’ve found that through this process we have also recruited new members for the Roundhouse Youth Advisory Board, so that even unsuccessful candidates remain engaged and involved.

At the Roundhouse, we ask questions like “why do you want to be a trustee?”, “what achievements are you particularly proud of?”, “what do you think you can bring to the organisation?” and “what do you hope to get out of being a trustee?” These sort of

questions should help you sort out pretty quickly who is ready and who isn’t.

Make sure you allow time for the applicants to ask questions, and that you’re clear from the outset on what will be required of them if they are appointed.

You may also want to discuss what the purpose of a board is; for example, highlighting that one of the board’s roles is scrutinising the activity of the organisation, but that this differs from say selling ideas for artistic programmes. Or that the board should act as a critical friend, which can include speaking out when they think things aren’t working rather than just telling directors what they want to hear. If the young candidate decides that being on the board isn’t for them then do make sure you suggest other ways in which they can get involved.

..... See page 26 for ideas

WHAT MAKES A GOOD YOUNG TRUSTEE?

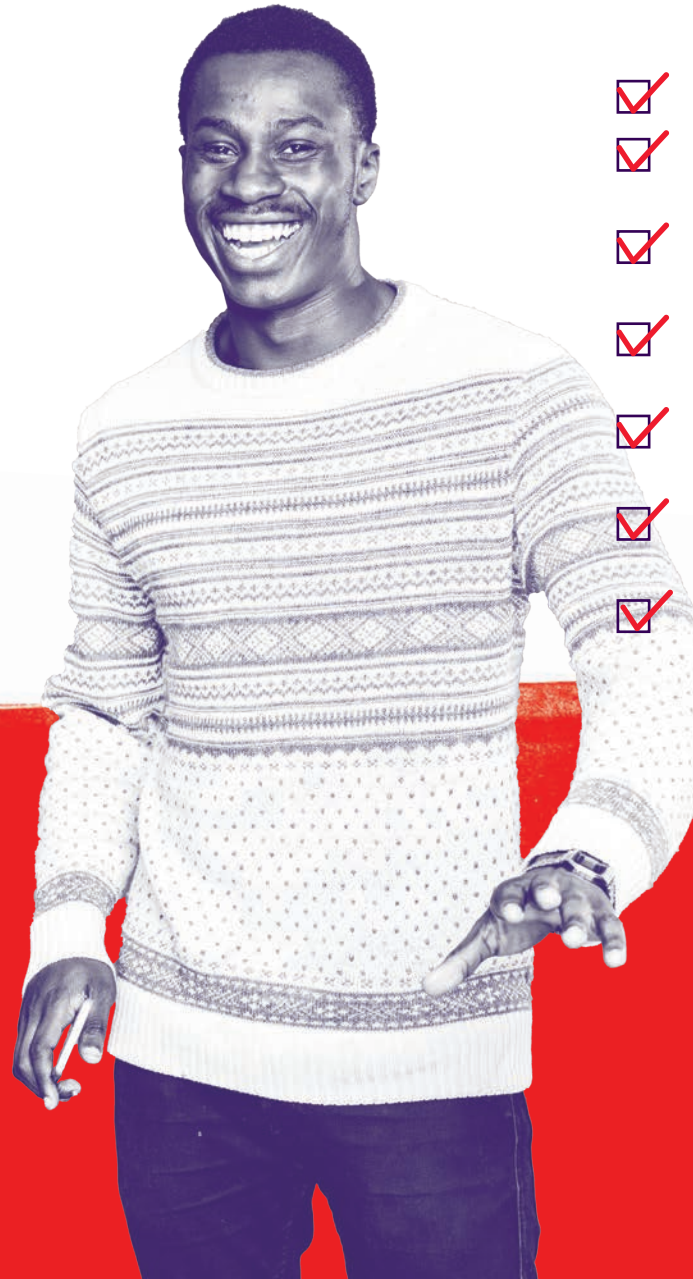
Although board meetings can be quite formal it's not necessarily the young person with the most qualifications, academic aptitude or relevant experience that makes for the best trustee. The most important thing is having the right temperament and the right level of commitment. Young trustees need to be able to hold their own in a meeting, but not in a bolshie kind of way; they have to be diplomatic too.

We believe that it's also important to appoint diverse candidates from different backgrounds. Socioeconomic background, disabilities, race, gender and sexual orientation should all be taken into account.

“ If you aren't engaging young people in your decision making I would say you're going to end up on the wrong side of history! If you purposefully avoid the opinions of young people you miss out on so much – in the long term it's just not a way to be progressive ”

Muyiwa Adigun

RYAB member and
Roundhouse Youth Marketing Officer (Trainee)



Here at the Roundhouse we use the following search criteria to help with appointment and retention:

- Fits the age criteria for the whole term of appointment (trustees legally must be over the age of 18; we suggest an age range of 18-25)
- Can commit to the whole term
- Understands the responsibility and the confidentiality of the role
- A user of the organisation's programmes or services
- Someone who has some confidence but is also a good listener and wants to learn
- Has an understanding of what they want to achieve through being a trustee
- Has a passion for the organisation's purpose
- Will be able to actively contribute as a trustee

RECRUITMENT DOS AND DON'TS

- Do** ensure a fair and transparent recruitment process that isn't nepotistic
- Do** appoint more than one young trustee. This will give you greater diversity and stop young trustees feeling exposed and isolated
- Do** appoint from your local community to reflect the diversity of the world in which you operate
- Do** take the time to give feedback to unsuccessful applicants and keep them engaged; for example, why not invite them to become part of a youth advisory board?
- Don't** appoint an existing trustee's or staff member's son or daughter and watch out for any conflicts of interest
- Don't** see appointing young people as a tickbox exercise or expect young trustees to speak on behalf of all young people
- Don't** just replicate what you already have – look for young people who are going to challenge you and what you do



SUPPORTING YOUNG TRUSTEES

To give the young people you're bringing on board the best possible experience you should plan for them to have the same induction process as any other trustee, but also provide more extensive support and mentoring in areas such as finance if it's needed.

Newly appointed young trustees should be given the opportunity to meet with members of the senior management team so that they can understand the different facets of the organisation. At the Roundhouse we organise an induction day for all trustees – young trustees included – to meet and chat with each of the senior management team. This helps the young trustees to feel fully involved and gives a sense of equity among all trustees.

The induction process should also include preparing existing trustees for the arrival of the young trustees to ensure that the young people appointed are given a voice and supported, and that they don't ever feel patronised or undermined when sharing their thoughts.

Encouraging engagement

You'll need to make sure that meetings are held at a time of day that allows your young trustees to attend. For performers, evenings and early mornings can be tricky, but for those who work in

the daytime, evenings might be preferable. The important thing is to consult with all your trustees to find a time that works for everyone and to make sure that your young trustees aren't put in a tricky position with any employers or educators they might have.

During the meetings the Chair should feel ready to draw out your young trustees' opinions in case this is needed; especially in their first meeting. One way to ensure that young trustees feel comfortable and able to participate is to think about the seating plan. Sitting young trustees opposite the Chair, and asking the Chair to call on them to give their opinions on different discussion points can be a good way of doing this (as long as they are given the chance to prepare in advance so they're not put on the spot). A good Chair will do this very subtly and will already be adept at making everyone in the room feel able and willing to contribute. Giving your young trustees the first agenda item can also help.

Another way to make sure young trustees feel both included and prepared is to ask them to write a brief report ahead of each board meeting. At the Roundhouse we ask our young trustees to regularly consult with their peers on our youth advisory board and this forms the basis of their reports to the board. This helps our young board members to practice and hone their presentation skills too. For more on the Roundhouse Youth Advisory Board (RYAB) see page 27.

Finally, we involve our young trustees in subcommittees and on interview panels for senior appointments, such as the recruitment of a Director of Programming or new Chair of the board.

TOP TIPS



Think about the seating plan



Ask them to write a brief report ahead of each board meeting



Involve them in subcommittees and on interview panels for senior appointments

Providing ongoing support and mentoring

If a young person reaches out for support and doesn't receive a satisfactory response it can have a detrimental effect on their willingness and ability to contribute in the future. To ensure that young trustees have the ongoing support they need we recommend giving them multiple contacts or mentors within the organisation that they can go to with any questions or issues.

The Chair should provide a mentoring role too, and make themselves available to young trustees ahead of each meeting in case there's a particular point they want to raise and they need help developing a strategy to get that point heard. It's important to invest time in explaining anything that the young trustees might find confusing before the meeting starts so that they are able to participate fully.

Here at the Roundhouse we also conduct full exit interviews with each of our young trustees to ensure we're constantly working to make sure that they have the best possible experience. We share all feedback with the rest of the board and discuss how any improvements can be made for the next intake.

TOP TIPS



Give responsibility for overseeing youth governance and meeting with the young trustees to the Chief Executive or another senior director level person



Offer expenses to cover travel costs to meetings



Give free access to the organisation's work – for example concerts or shows. Here at the Roundhouse our young trustees are invited to all major events, such as our biennial fundraising Gala



Offer free governance mentoring



Invest time into developing young trustees and their ideas



Organise time for additional meetings with the young trustees and help them to find initiatives they would particularly like to champion

WHAT'S IN IT FOR A YOUNG PERSON?

Dear Potential Game Changer,

I hear you're considering the position of trustee in a cultural organisation. A good call, for sure! But before you take that step, let's look at what great things you could be getting up to and what can be gained by becoming a trustee.

First and foremost, becoming a trustee means getting a deeper look at what goes on behind the scenes in your organisation. Insights into the business and development within your organisation can be great assets to your skill base and CV. Furthermore, getting actively involved in the discussions can lead to improvements in other young people's experience of the venue and potentially set up incredible events in the months to come.

Your involvement will grow as you connect with senior staff and key figures in the community to help decide the direction your organisation is heading towards. You will form connections with an artistic board, veterans of their respective fields that can guide you further in your own journey.

Conversing with esteemed members of the community will help your confidence greatly; presenting your own views and the views of others in front of an audience is an essential skill in any career. In time, you will become more at ease with public speaking and develop an uncommon awareness of discussion technique.

Lastly, you will of course have the opportunity to give back to the organisation that has supported you in your ventures. It can be greatly rewarding to represent the voice of young people and support others with their involvement in the arts.

As a young trustee, you can make a real difference that can help countless others achieve their dreams. Being involved on the board of your cultural organisation is an incredible opportunity – grab it while you can!

Best of luck,

Jason Cheung
Roundhouse Young Trustee



Jason Cheung performing
with Roundhouse's Street Circus Collective (2016)

OTHER WAYS OF INVOLVING YOUNG PEOPLE

As we've already outlined we believe that all organisations that have any involvement with young people through their programmes or services should consider inviting young trustees to join their board. However, there are additional ways to bring young people's voices into your organisation too; to increase diversity, opportunity and participation, and as a training and recruitment platform for future young trustees.

There are a myriad of ways to involve young people in your decision making processes, so rather than trying to list them all here we've provided some examples of organisations that are engaging with young people in a meaningful way and achieving real organisational change as a result. This is by no means an exhaustive list – it's just a series of conversations we've had with organisations already known to us who are doing some great work around youth leadership.

We've also included more detail about our own youth board, which is one of the ways in which we bring a wider range of youth voices to the Roundhouse.

It should be noted that if you're involving young people in any kind of way you should also be committed to listening to what they have to say and giving feedback.

“It's very easy for professionals to lapse into the 'doing for young people' rather than providing a platform for those young people to do it for themselves.

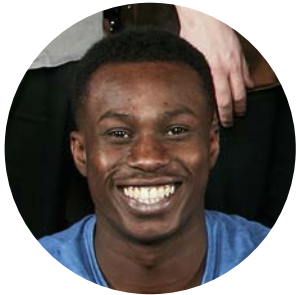
We need to get out of the way and let them get on with it!”

Pippa Jones, Director,
Create Gloucestershire



Roundhouse Youth Advisory Board (2017)

ROUNDHOUSE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD (RYAB)



Muiyiwa Adigun
*RYAB Member and
Roundhouse Youth
Marketing Officer
(Trainee)*

What is RYAB?

The Roundhouse has a dedicated creative centre for young people known as the Paul Hamlyn Roundhouse Studios where we can work on music, performing arts, film or media projects and meet other young artists too. The Roundhouse Youth Advisory Board is the voice of the studio. It keeps the staff informed and it's there to make sure that the people using the studios are being listened to.

RYAB has around 20 to 25 members at any given time, aged 16-25. We have monthly meetings and we're a kind of litmus test for everything that the Roundhouse does. For instance, for the Roundhouse's recent rebrand they went to RYAB first to get our feedback.

In a typical meeting we usually have a staff member come along and explain their role and talk about what's going on that month and how RYAB can get involved.

What made you join RYAB?

I was interested in the social advantages of meeting different people. From an employment point of view it's a great training ground to meet the staff, learn about their specialisms and hear it from the source. For example, I wouldn't have found out about the Youth Marketing Officer Trainee role if it wasn't for RYAB.

I also wanted to see how things are run from a governance perspective and to feel involved in that side of the arts.



Emma Gould
*Head of Youth Policy
and Engagement
Roundhouse*

How does the Roundhouse empower young people through RYAB?

So much space is adult space, created and managed by adults, marketed for adult use. The Roundhouse as a whole, and RYAB as a part of that, is all about providing young people with a safe space that they can call their own and influence. At the start of the year RYAB make their own contract and outline the rules for how they want

the board to run. They also have a pot of money and they can decide what they want to spend it on. We hand responsibility over to them.

What sort of things does RYAB get involved in?

We consult with RYAB about all sorts of things; for example marketing, food and beverage, branding and our recent Next Generation campaign too. Over time they get to know many Roundhouse staff and the different roles within the organisation. Quite often when we're recruiting we ask a member of RYAB to sit on the panel for interviews, which shows our commitment to ensuring young people are central to all that we do, and also provides a valuable learning opportunity for young people.

How do young people benefit from being involved in RYAB?

We offer RYAB members many different development opportunities, and we always make sure we give them the support and mentoring they need to make the most of these opportunities. This may be invitations to internal or external events, training, participation in workshops, sitting on interview panels and networking opportunities. We give them access to senior team members; the Chair and heads of department. We give them space to do things their way – to have a meeting while eating pizza and getting to know each other – rather than feeling like they have to stick to the formal setting of a square boardroom.

Burnley Youth Theatre produces work and provides activities aimed at children, young people and their families. Their mission is to creatively inspire children and young people to take their next steps.



Karen Metcalfe
Artistic Director
Burnley Youth Theatre

How do you involve young people in your decision making?

We have a youth board that's made up of 12 young people. They are mostly under the age of 18 so wouldn't be eligible to be full board members. The youth board meets with me – the Artistic Director – every week. This means that they don't have to go through lots of levels to get their voice heard by management.

Youth board meetings are different to other sessions we run with young people which are very practical and arts based. The youth board is much more about decision making and planning – they look at things like fundraising, funding applications and events organisation as well as programming.

What are their responsibilities?

In addition to our weekly sessions the youth board come along to different sessions that we run with young people and talk to their peers to make

themselves approachable and get regular feedback. We also have a white board in the foyer which they use to ask a different question of their peers every week, and then they collate the responses. And they come along to full board and staff away days along with adult board members.

How do they know their feedback is being taken seriously?

Our youth board can see how their feedback directly equates to action; for example in our programming. It's not a tick box exercise – they aren't a "sit around chatting" kind of group – they are very proactive and I'm trying to give them the leadership skills that will help them develop not just in the drama world but in any future career.



Ollie Daley
Former youth board member & Theatre Practitioner

How long have you been involved with Burnley Youth Theatre?

I've been coming to the youth theatre since I was six – I was one of its youngest members – and then I

joined the youth board from the age of 11 onwards. I began an apprenticeship in marketing here aged 16, and now I freelance as a Theatre Practitioner.

How did being involved in the youth board benefit you?

On the youth board you see the arts from a different angle. If I'd only gone to drama sessions I might have thought I just wanted to be an actor, but I saw the other side of the arts that I really enjoy as well; project management, fundraising and events planning.

I think the leadership skills I gained were also key – being able to run and manage events aged 14 or 15 – that's something you don't get at school. And the direct link with a senior member of staff was really powerful. It allowed me to get a job and get set up as a freelancer. Now I work here and at other arts organisations, and I don't think I would've got that opportunity otherwise.





The Geffrye Museum explores the home and the way people live. The museum and gardens are brought to life with a programme for schools, colleges, universities, community groups and young people.



Kelly Robinson
*Young People's &
Secondary Schools'
Manager
Geffrye Museum*

How does the Geffrye Museum engage with young people?

We aim to engage with young people at all levels, from workshops to creative projects to our Youth Advisory Panel. Our Youth Advisory Panel Members are responsible for programming events for their peers, planning takeover days for families and working on the marketing side using social media and blogging. Young people also run tours and object handling sessions and we have paid Young Consultants and internship programmes too.

How are those young people given a voice within the organisation?

Our Young Consultants meet with the senior management team on a regular basis as well as talking to funding partners, helping us to evaluate the work we do and supporting us to ensure the needs of our younger audiences are met. All the meetings with our young consultants are minuted and at the start of the each meeting we feed

back on what can be achieved and what can't. We're completely honest, and because we often get them to do research into funding our Young Consultants understand the reasoning behind those decisions too.

How do you recruit young people to the museum?

Our Young Consultants have to have volunteered with the museum first – it's a responsible position so they need to understand what we do. We work closely with other arts organisations and local schools to ensure we always have a pool of young people who are actively engaged, and the young people we're working with help to recruit their peers via social media. Advertising opportunities on vInspired.com works well too.



Orlane Doumbe
*Former Young
Consultant and Youth
Advisory Panel Member*

How did you get involved with the Geffrye museum?

I saw the opportunity on vInspired and started going to the monthly Youth Advisory Panel meetings when I was 14. Then at 16 I became a Young Consultant.

What did this involve?

On the Advisory Panel we ran events for other young people. We would come together every month, set a theme and plan events. The Young Consultant programme is more behind the scenes – so we got to engage with the governance of the museum. We learned how the museum was run, worked with the arts council, wrote applications for HLF funding and spoke to the council about getting planning permission for the extension that's now underway.

What were the benefits for you?

We got to see the museum from a difference angle. For example, we spoke to the architects working on the new extension and were able to share ideas on how they should be looking at the spaces young people will be using. It also helped me with my public speaking – I ran tours of the museum over the summer, which really improved my confidence. I'm studying chemistry at university now, but in the future I'd like to do something involving both science and the arts.

Why involve young people in governance structures?

I think young people will quickly start to disengage with organisations that are disengaged from them. The arts are for everyone and the voices of young people really matter – especially if you want young people to take on the mantle and lead in the future.



Tate is a family of four art galleries providing free events, festivals, opportunities and resources for young people to experiment, create and innovate through art and ideas.



Anna Cutler
Director of Learning
Tate

How does the Tate involve young people in its decision making?

The involvement of young people in decision making at Tate centres around the Tate Collective.

The Collective is over 100 strong and across all sites, composed of a diverse range of young people aged 15-25. They have the opportunity to address the most senior staff and the bodies governing the Tate. Its work was very influential in establishing Tate Exchange, a new interactive education centre in the Switch Building. Tate has also employed members of Tate Collective to work in our Marketing, Digital and Learning teams.

How do you recruit?

In London, we recruit through an annual Taster programme hosted by Tate Collective. Young people who have taken part in the programme and attend local schools and youth organisations are invited to a free evening of activity to find out more as well as a free three day multi-art form project across both Tate Britain and Tate Modern. Activities span art, music and performance along with staff introductions across departments to demystify Tate.

What responsibilities does the Tate Collective have?

Tate Collective have run festivals at Tate, notably Hyperlink, which took over most of the spaces at

Tate Modern – including the Tanks and the Turbine Hall – for three days. It drew enthusiastic audiences of all ages, not just young people. High profile events like this have several beneficial effects.

Firstly, they afford young people the chance to engage with the whole organisation; from curators and marketing teams to security and cleaning staff.

Secondly, they earn greater trust from the organisation and the senior people running it.

Thirdly, they introduce a more contemporary, youth oriented approach to marketing and promotion at Tate, with a greater emphasis on social media. In practice, a core team of approximately 10 Tate Collective members might spend months to research, plan and deliver a large scale event. The wider group meets monthly and breaks off into smaller project teams meeting more regularly, depending on what’s coming up. It is peer-led practice, but carefully managed.





Pippa Jones
 Director
 Create Gloucestershire

How has Create Gloucestershire helped to increase youth representation in the county?

We’re an umbrella organisation for the arts and cultural sector in Gloucestershire. Our members identified a lack of youth representation in the audiences, workforces and at leadership levels in the sector in Gloucestershire, so we developed a range of programmes to address this, including a consortium of creative interns and apprentices, and support to members to grow youth-led programming and producing groups. This is really helping to change both the workforce, programmes and audiences across the county and thereby increase diversity. By working together we had strength in numbers (which is one of the benefits of bringing small organisations together to collaborate on youth-led initiatives) and were able to support each other and share learnings about what worked and what didn’t.

What has been the impact of this work?

The young people we’ve been working with have developed specific producing and programming

skills as well as more general leadership qualities. This in turn provides a talent pool of skilled-up young people for other organisations to draw from. We’ve had 40 apprentices and interns across the county and so far 20 have gone on to get in-house employment within the organisations in which they were based. Three others found jobs externally and two went into training. Apprentices have sat on interview panels, and one of our apprentices was recruited onto the board of the arts organisation they were working with. So we’re starting to dissolve the boundaries between where people come in and where they can end up across the sector.



Rosanna Thorn-Lees
 Young Trustee
 ACP Festival
 Former Creative Intern

How did Create Gloucestershire help with your career?

I studied Fine Art at university, but as soon as I graduated I started working in an insurance company which lacked the creative stimulation that I was used to on my course. I applied for a position with ACP (Arts Couture Painswick) as part of Create Gloucestershire’s Creative Employment Programme. While I was based in the gallery, my role also included organising events and even creating some

exhibitions! After the internship ended, I was offered the role of Gallery Assistant, and then Gallery Assistant Manager and finally Gallery Manager. When I finished working at ACP, I was invited to join the board as a trustee.

What was it like joining the board?

The other board members were able to dedicate a lot of their time to ACP and worked extremely hard on pulling it all off! I was a little worried that with a full-time job I may not be able to offer the level of commitment that ACP really deserves, but the existing trustees were very supportive and reassured me that my input could be as much or as little as I was able to contribute. Although younger than most trustees, it was really nice to be considered as a valuable member of the board due to the experience and knowledge I had already gained through working with ACP.

What do you bring to the board as a young trustee?

I am able to offer a lot of assistance with marketing and social media. The existing board members are very willing to learn, but sometimes it’s a bit of a generation thing with regards to understanding hashtags and trending. I helped with the job description for our new gallery manager and with the knowledge gained through co-organising the ACP Festival, I am currently helping to organise a Bollywood event this Spring and a big Summer Exhibition with a focus on Shoes and Handbags!



Chris Satterthwaite
Chief Executive, Chime
Former Roundhouse
Chair

How do you give young employees a platform within your organisation?

As the former Chair of the Roundhouse board, I was inspired by our young trustees; so much so that I took a question back to Chime Director Joanne Parker: how could we involve young people more in our decision making processes?

Joanna came up with the idea for the "Chime Innovation Board", and every year we invite 15 Chime employees under the age of 28 to take part. The board's responsibility is to help us innovate across the business.

How do young employees get involved with the Chime Innovation Board?

Any employee under the age of 28 can take part from across the globe. They start by putting forward an idea, and then 15 young employees are chosen to work on those ideas further and detail any budget required. The decision is made by 50% peer review and 50% by the Chief Executive and senior staff members. The Chime Innovation Board then get together and have an away weekend to work up their ideas to pitch to the main board.

How do the young employees know that their voice is being heard?

Each year we pick one idea to be implemented, so they get to see their work become

a reality. We've implemented lots of great ideas. But the Innovation Board also functions as a leadership development programme, allowing us to mentor young people within the business, give them exposure to senior decision makers and cross fertilise knowledge. It helps us to build young employees' careers with Chime and cement their long term loyalty to the company.

What's the benefit of getting younger employees involved in innovation?

Chime is a communications business and young employees have an innate competitive advantage as digital natives in a company that's currently being run by digital immigrants (myself included!) They have the social skills that are key to the future of our business and they bring a breath of fresh air and a novel perspective.



Members of Chime's
Innovation Board with
Director Joanne Parker



IT'S TIME FOR MORE INITIATIVES THAT HAVE HAD A YOUNG PERSON IN THE POSITION OF ARCHITECT



THE FUTURE

Now you've read through this guide the fun part begins: working with young people and making decisions alongside their unique insight, experience and viewpoint. Being a trustee for a year with the Roundhouse was really immersive, learning a lot about the functions of the charity and projects going on, plus a real chance to represent my friends and fellow students from the studio. The board really listened to what we had to say and I had the chance to contribute towards shaping the Roundhouse's proposed Youth Strategy.

The youth of Britain are shouting loud and clear about what they enjoy and what things inspire them to be creative, develop and produce; it's just a case of having that platform to be heard on a level playing field by those in positions of power. Many organisations are criticised for being old-fashioned and static in their processes and ways and I feel that the conduct and

approach of arts organisations can help break down these barriers across the industry. Going forward I'd love to hear more "first of its kind" initiatives that have had a young person as the architect. Things that might seem very experimental or "not usually done by big institutions" are the things that will be the most valuable to young British creatives and act as a big signal to others to evolve.

The UK has always valued arts and creativity and showcased artists from across the disciplines. It's vital for places like the Roundhouse to not only give an opportunity for tomorrow's artists to hone and develop their skills without fear of criticism or mockery, but to also give them the chance to carve out new segments of the arts with the advances of technology and changing attitudes to expression and community. Young people are not tarnished by years of working culture or expectations, they have very blunt and unrestricted ideas, viewpoints and ways of thinking. If you want to be a leading arts organisation that really inspires and resonates with youth culture, they have to be a part of those conversations and be listened to. It will be an invaluable experience for both yourself and those you appoint.

Elise Cobain

Former Roundhouse
Young Trustee,
Broadcaster and Writer

NOW THAT YOU'RE READY...

Whether your focus is art, charity, commercial or a mix of all three like here at the Roundhouse, we believe that bringing young trustees around the boardroom table isn't just good for those young people and their peers; it's good for business too.

We hope that you've found this guide useful and that you now feel prepared to take the next step on your journey towards involving young people fully in your decision making processes. Below you'll find contact details for our Youth Policy and Engagement team at the Roundhouse and instructions for getting in touch with the leads on Children, Young People and Learning at the Arts Council – please drop us a line if you have any questions, thoughts or comments.



To contact your local Arts Council lead on Children, Young People and Learning, call the Customer Services team on 0161 934 4317 or 0845 300 6200



To speak to a member of the Roundhouse's Youth Policy and Engagement Team about youth governance email young.voices@roundhouse.org.uk

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Cover features
Roundhouse Youth Advisory Board members, 2017
(left to right) Kieran, Muiyiwa, Ayesha, Jason, Ozel,
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