

Arts Council England's Developing Your Creative Practice programme

Independent evaluation



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Date: 25/03/2022

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Executive Summary

Developing Your Creative Practice

1. Arts Council England introduced the Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP) programme in 2018 to support the development of independent cultural and creative practitioners. DYCP provides grants to enable practitioners to commit time and money towards developing their practice. DYCP aims to encourage creativity, research, experimentation and risk taking, to enable practitioners to progress and flourish with their creative practice and career. It is expected that this innovation will be of public benefit by leading to the production and dissemination of higher quality work.
2. Grants range from £2,000 to £10,000 (plus 'personal access costs'¹) and projects generally run for up to 12 months.² Over 11 rounds of funding, DYCP received over 18,000 applications, of which 3,713 (20%) were successful, receiving £33m across 3,670 individuals.

The context for DYCP

3. Data from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS) estimates that 49% of jobs in the 'Cultural Sector' were self-employed in 2019.³ The Creative Industries Federation⁴ identified common issues experienced by freelancers, including financial insecurity due to difficulties accessing work and funding, leading to challenges for creative and cultural practitioners to sustain and flourish in their careers as freelancers.
4. The COVID-19 pandemic presented "the biggest threat to the UK's cultural infrastructure, institutions and workforce in a generation"⁵ and risked "talent drain."⁶ The UK government responded with economic support for the workforce and businesses,⁷ but around 10% of the UK workforce were not eligible, with freelancers and sole traders particularly likely to be ineligible.⁸

¹ Costs needed to support any access needs throughout the activity.

² Where an extension is granted projects can run for up to 24 months.

³ Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Office for National Statistics. [DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates 2019: Employment](#).

⁴ Creative Industries Federation. 2017. [Creative Freelancers](#).

⁵ Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee. 2020. [Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report](#), p.27.

⁶ Ibid, p. 24.

⁷ Including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, as well as numerous other packages of support.

⁸ Henry, N et al. 2021. [Building Back Better? Creative Freelancers and Learning from the Covid-19 Experience](#).

5. Arts Council England's *Let's Create (Strategy 2020-2030)*⁹ presents a 'case for change' which includes two challenges facing the sector that are particularly pertinent to DYCP:
 - Many creative practitioners and leaders of cultural organisations report a retreat from innovation, risk-taking and sustained talent development
 - There remains persistent and widespread lack of diversity across the creative industries and in publicly funded cultural organisations.
6. There is also recognition that people from some backgrounds are more likely to sustain a creative or cultural career than others, and the strategy notes that some locations have historically benefitted less from Arts Council England funding, with a need to address this.

Evaluation overview

7. Arts Council England commissioned SQW in October 2021 to undertake a process and impact evaluation of DYCP, running to March 2022. The following evaluation questions were posed:
 - To what extent has DYCP achieved expected outcomes and met its original aims?
 - Has the programme helped individuals to sustain a career within the sector? Have different groups been impacted in different ways, how and why?
 - Did interim changes to the programme help to support individuals? (Round 8 onwards)
 - What can be learned from how the Rounds 1-9 were delivered? What is working well, and less well, for whom and why?
 - Are there specific barriers that cultural practitioners working in the Museums or Libraries sector face? What are the reasons they don't apply to the programme?
 - What could be improved and what recommendations are there for future development of DYCP? Are there gaps that could be addressed in future rounds?
 - What barriers did unsuccessful applicants face in reapplying? Would anything in particular have helped them to take the appropriate next steps?
8. To address the questions, the evaluation consisted of the following research strands:
 - Scoping interviews – with Arts Council England staff involved in DYCP, and two Arts Council England senior leaders.
 - Review of project documentation – a review of public facing DYCP materials such as guidance and application and activity forms, plus internal evaluation materials.
 - Analysis of monitoring data – monitoring data captured via the application process and the end of project activity form for Rounds 1-11 was reviewed and analysed.

⁹ Arts Council England. 2020. [Let's Create](#).

- Surveys – two online surveys were designed and implemented, one with successful applicants and another with unsuccessful applicants. A total of 548 unsuccessful and 785 successful applicants responded, out of a total of 3,955 survey recipients.
- Interviews – semi-structured telephone/video call interviews with 38 successful and 9 unsuccessful applicants to capture reflections on DYCP and emerging outcomes.

Key findings

Awareness

9. Arts Council England undertakes limited active marketing of DYCP due to limited resource being available for promotion and the already high level of applications received. The promotion that does take place is as part of the Arts Council's broader promotion of its sector support. In limited cases this is targeted at underrepresented disciplines, roles and groups.
10. Visual Arts and Music receive considerably more applications than other disciplines, and have some of the lowest success rates as a result; Museums and Libraries receive few applications, with relatively high success rates. London receives the most applications.
11. Applicants typically became aware of DYCP through Arts Council England's website; next most common were friends/family/colleagues/peers and organisations other than the Arts Council. Successful applicants are more likely to have heard about DYCP via word of mouth than unsuccessful applicants. The range of organisations raising awareness of DYCP is notable, with some running advice sessions and workshops on DYCP and how to apply. This highlights the important role that networks and sector support organisations can play in supporting those less aware of Arts Council England and its funding opportunities to discover DYCP.

Understanding of DYCP and motivations for applying

12. Motivations for applying to DYCP were perhaps unsurprising given programme aims. They included a desire for autonomy, to explore new creative and cultural practice, to progress or change their career, to develop new and existing relationships, to purchase equipment for development, to invest time/research into developing projects, knowledge and skills, to adapt to challenges posed by the pandemic, and/or reduce reliance on grant funding.
13. The vast majority of surveyed applicants reported that they understood both DYCP's eligibility criteria and purpose, with successful applicants more likely to report this. That said, there were some minor issues around understanding: some struggled identifying what would constitute a reasonable project, and some were reluctant to entirely forego outputs, public benefits and/or demonstration of value for money in their project plans. The guidance, case studies and support to applicants were all found to have supported understanding. However, interviews and survey responses point to concern amongst Museums and Libraries applicants that DYCP appears better aligned with other disciplines. This may be partially responsible for lower applications from these disciplines.

The application process

14. The application process is intended to be proportionate, straightforward, accessible and not overly prescriptive. The vast majority of successful applicants surveyed were satisfied or very satisfied, whilst only around quarter of unsuccessful applicants were. Satisfaction was high with the application process timings. Most applicants thought the information required was reasonable and the process proportionate.
15. However, there was less agreement about the application process being straightforward to complete and knowing how to write a good application, especially amongst unsuccessful applicants. There was a common request for assessment criteria to be more explicit. A small but significant proportion reported being unsure how to develop a budget and what constitutes fair pay for themselves and others, and therefore being hesitant to fully cost their own time. Grantium was also highlighted as an issue by many.
16. DYCP and Arts Council England's *Let's Create* strategy share an ambition to support practitioners with potential early in their careers, as well as those who have never applied to the Arts Council before.¹⁰ However, interviews indicated that these practitioners were most likely to report having struggled with their application. Applicants with a professional network reported being able to draw on this for support; those without may be at a disadvantage. This suggests there may be a need for further application writing support or guidance aimed at those who are more likely to need it, if successful applications are sought from a wide range of diverse practitioners. There remains a risk that those less able or confident to communicate their ideas in a written application will be disadvantaged (or at least deterred from applying due to perceived disadvantaged).

Application support

17. Applicants were asked whether they had received support with their application, and from what source. Successful applicants were more likely to have received support than unsuccessful applicants. The survey showed this support tended to come from contacts including friends, colleagues, mentors or peers in the sector, or from sector organisations.
18. A frequent comment in interviews was that the process of writing the application was formative in itself, regardless of its success. It was often seen as an 'impetus' or 'catalyst', which had pushed applicants to identify a vision, define a set of objectives and deliverables, and think about the actions needed to achieve it. It was seen as particularly formative for those who were less experienced in applying for funding, who also reported developing application writing skills. Given this, it is feasible that greater support around application writing could deliver value even if no more applications could be funded, as it may support the development of plans for enhancing creative and cultural practice and

¹⁰ Monitoring data shows that 80% of DYCP applications have been from first time DYCP applicants and 70% have not applied for National Lottery Project Grants or the Emergency Response Fund, although data does not show if their DYCP application came first. It is also unknown whether DYCP applicants had applied to Arts Council England for other funding.

support the development of application writing skills across the sector. It could also limit the risk of bias towards those with well-developed writing skills and/or networks.

Accessibility

19. DYCP is now collecting data on whether applicants consider themselves neurodivergent. Comparing the proportion of applicants who were neurodivergent in the successful and unsuccessful survey suggests that success rates are not significantly different.
20. However, in the unsuccessful applicant survey those who said they were neurodivergent were more likely to be dissatisfied with the application process and to disagree that they knew how to write a good application. The interviews included a small number of interviewees who were neurodivergent. They reported issues with the guidance, application form and Grantium in particular, and struggled in understanding 'what DYCP was really about' and communicating ideas in their application. The interviews found that the support offer for neurodivergent applicants was not clearly known or understood, and possibly inconsistently offered to neurodivergent applicants.
21. Suggested improvements included making the support offer clearer and an automatic triggering of an Access Support offer for those who say they are neurodivergent. A further suggestion was for the Arts Council to run a consulting exercise with neurodivergent applicants or sector representatives, to explore the DYCP application form/processes, and to test any changes. Use of video or audio guidance and application forms was also suggested.

Unsuccessful applicants

22. There is currently no systematic data collection on why applicants were unsuccessful, due to the quantity of applications and limited administrative resource. Most unsuccessful applicants did not know why they were unsuccessful and did not know how they would improve a future application. There is clear demand for feedback, as well as some good reasons to provide it. However, any solution needs to be mindful of the limited staffing resource available to manage and administer any feedback process.

Types of projects funded by DYCP

23. Monitoring data shows that most projects funded received £7.5k to £10k. Applications for the larger levels of funding were more likely to be successful, suggesting that the scale of activities/ambition may be a factor in the likelihood of success. Around one in nine grantees received funding for personal access costs, ranging from £13 to £12,300.
24. For successful applications, the most common focus was R&D. Least common was international travel, with the pandemic reducing applications for this type of activity.
25. Very high proportions of grantees responding to the survey undertook research, developed existing skills or new skills, and worked with new or existing collaborators and mentors. Considerable proportions accessed training/residencies or advice, or funded

workspace, studio time or equipment; around one fifth worked with communities. These types of activities were delivered by more grantees than initially planned, indicating how initial plans were often built on.

- 26.** DYCP allowed flexibility with plans. The reasons that plans changed for grantees varied: the pandemic; work or family commitments; and changes in personal circumstances such as health issues. A total of 53% of respondents reported some change of plan activities-wise; most common was a change in international travel plans. The flexibility of DYCP was highly valued. However, some reported being uncertain whether they could deviate from their activity plan and budget, and whether permission was needed.
- 27.** The survey showed around half of grantees used the funding to forgo the need to work, so that they could instead focus on their personal development. Grantees were able to do this by paying themselves a wage and/or through covering costs of development activities. There were however a small number of grantees who said that they had not paid themselves enough or had only covered part of their time spent on their project.

Outcomes and impacts for DYCP grantees

- 28.** The evaluation found that the time to impact varies widely, as does the magnitude of impacts. Positive outcomes have tended to yield further positive outcomes, and many of the impacts reported were unexpected and serendipitous. The attribution of impacts solely to DYCP is challenging though; the fund does not operate in isolation from grantees' existing contacts, knowledge, skills and circumstances.
- 29.** The survey results revealed a wide variety of impacts experienced by grantees – from self-belief to new skills, new and higher quality work, new relationships, better profile, and securing work opportunities and leadership roles. The most prevalent impacts were increased enthusiasm and confidence, which interviewees indicated were key to driving practice and careers forward and realising additional impacts. An initial boost came from the funding award itself, and the feeling of validation that provided. For some, the challenging nature of the pandemic meant this boost was particularly important and timely. Grantees reported recognising the value of development time, feeling more willing to invest in themselves, take risks, reach out to contacts and take on bigger challenges.
- 30.** Grantees also reported a vast range of learning. Some built on existing skills, knowledge and practice, whereas others went in an entirely new direction. Some reported plans to invest in and undertake more skill development, as their DYCP project had demonstrated the value of doing so. Grantees also reported improved knowledge and skills around project management, financial management, business management and leadership. This was expected to be beneficial for future careers.
- 31.** Grantees surveyed almost universally felt that the quality of their work had improved as a result of DYCP. Grantees reported improved recognition, visibility and reach; both within their sector and with audiences.

32. Grantees felt better equipped to secure opportunities – both new and existing. Many talked about their ‘new direction’ and ‘available paths’. Some had fully embraced these, but others were unsure which direction to turn. It is worth noting that some grantees did not want to take new practices forward following experimentation through DYCP. However, in no instance did grantees report that the experience was not worthwhile.
33. In many cases there had already been a public benefit due to new works being produced and engagement with audiences, while others expected this in the future. In addition, some grantees talked about teaching (or planning to teach) their acquired skills and knowledge to others. There were several examples of projects influencing the role grantees wanted to play in their sector, including taking on leadership roles and wanting to ‘pay it forward’. Confidence, networks, knowledge and skills were particularly important to this.
34. An interesting divide amongst grantees was on planned next steps. Some thought that their next steps should be about commercialising their practice and reducing dependency on funding; others that their next steps required additional funding. These may reflect grantees being at different stages in their journey, particularly in terms of readiness (and appetite) for commercialisation. Interestingly a lower proportion of successful applicants had applied for funding elsewhere since DYCP. However, those who had applied for other funding were more likely to have secured it than unsuccessful DYCP applicants.

Timing, sustainability and additionality of impacts

35. Positively, almost no respondents reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had entirely ended impacts of their DYCP project, although over half reported it had limited them.
36. Grantees were also asked whether they felt they were better able to sustain a career in their sector as a result of DYCP, to which the vast majority agreed. The greater opportunities and resulting financial security reported by many grantees, as well as increased passion and confidence, were seen as key factors in the likelihood they could sustain their careers.
37. The evaluation found good levels of additionality. Most interviewed grantees said they did not expect their activities and outcomes would have occurred without the funding. This was especially true for ‘riskier’ investments. Many would not have experienced the impacts they did, some of which were substantial and transformative. Being able commit time and not worry about other commitments was key to the value added by DYCP funding. The projects were also greater than the sum of their parts – with activities working in synergy, and impacts snowballing to yield further impacts.

Funding timing, amount and duration

38. The majority of grantee survey respondents thought DYCP funding came at the right time in their career, and 84% thought the level of funding was sufficient to deliver their plans.

That said, almost half indicated a preference for increasing the funding amount to maximise the impact of DYCP.¹¹

39. On balance, the evidence indicates there probably is a strong enough case for a small increase of £1-2k, noting that for most £10k would likely still be sufficient. It is worth noting that any increase to the limit would not automatically lead to everyone bidding up to the limit; 25% have bid for the maximum £10k to date. However, a higher limit would mean fewer grantees overall, may deter some less experienced applicants, and additional monitoring may be required. There may also be a risk of more innovative projects being less likely to receive higher amounts of funding. Therefore careful consideration is needed around any changes to the funding limit.
40. Most grantees were happy with the length of their project, including those who delivered a more compressed or intensive project. Those who said they would have benefitted from more time had mostly not used the full 12 months available.
41. The findings suggest the DYCP model is fundamentally working. In addition to those outlined above, other improvements suggested by grantees to maximise impact included: extending the funded time period; opportunities to connect with peers/leaders within their discipline; support with showcasing or space to share with other grantees; critical friend engagement/support post-project; networking opportunities; signposting to funding, training and resources; and follow on 'DYCP 2' funding.

Who is applying to DYCP, and who has received funding

42. *Let's Create* establishes the need for Arts Council England to support diversity within the creative and cultural workforce. DYCP guidance includes a commitment to funding a broad range of 'individuals and geographical areas',¹² and Decision Panels take these factors into account when making funding decisions.
43. DYCP supports a disproportionate number of grantees in the Midlands and North compared to the workforce, whilst DYCP receives 10% of applications from the Arts Council's 'Priority Places' and the success rate is equal to the non-Priority Places success rate of 20%.¹³ Through this geographical spread, the programme is supporting the government's Levelling Up agenda, which is highlighted in the *Let's Create* Delivery Plan as an objective.

¹¹ The full list of options was: (1) allow applicants to apply for more than £10k; (2) allow the activity to take place for longer or over a longer time; (3) opportunities to connect with peers and/or leaders in your discipline; and (4) opportunities for meeting/sharing with other DYCP grantees. It received responses from 700 respondents.

¹² Arts Council England. 2021. [Developing your Creative Practice: Guidance for applicants](#), p.38.

¹³ The Priority Places are 54 local authorities identified in *Let's Create* Delivery Plan 2021-2024 as "places in which our investment and engagement is too low" – see [here](#) for details.

- 44.** The data collected on the personal characteristics of DYCP applicants can be compared with data captured across Arts Council England’s programmes and on the national workforce. Compared to National Lottery Project Grants and the Emergency Response Fund, DYCP is similarly diverse in terms of ethnicity, but receives a higher proportion of applications from females, D/deaf or disabled applicants and LGBT applicants. DYCP funds a considerably higher proportion of D/deaf or disabled grantees (and to a lesser extent female grantees). Across DYCP and all the Arts Council’s programmes, Black and minority ethnic grantees account for a relatively high proportion of grantees compared to the broader workforce.

Contribution to *Let’s Create* Strategy and Delivery Plan

- 45.** The alignment with the *Let’s Create* Delivery Plan is clear. Through supporting individuals, access to international travel, networks and collaboration, and through supporting grantees to develop their practice and careers in response to the pandemic, there is a clear contribution towards the themes that the Delivery Plan sets out.
- 46.** For *Let’s Create* itself, the impacts demonstrate how DYCP is delivering against certain points in particular: greater innovation, development of talent, increased collaboration, access to international opportunities, more sustainable and resilient careers, supporting diversity in the workforce, and supporting progression into (or competencies for) leadership roles. These impacts are most applicable to the ‘A Creative and Cultural Country’ Outcome. DYCP also contributes to the other two *Let’s Create* Outcomes and aligns well with Arts Council England’s Investment Principles.

Conclusions and key points for consideration

- 47.** The findings indicate that the DYCP model is effective in supporting creative and cultural practitioners to develop their practice, through enabling them to build skills, confidence, knowledge and networks, and to invest in equipment and materials. Those in receipt of DYCP were grateful for the opportunities provided, and have been able to build on the impacts and seen them snowball – sometimes in directions not previously anticipated.
- 48.** The programme is seen to offer a unique opportunity for freelance practitioners. As a result of the impacts achieved, most grantees agreed that the funding had enabled a step change in (or accelerated) their career.

Elements working particularly well

- 49.** The reach of DYCP across the sector is to be praised, and the principles of potential, achieving a step change, proportionality, accessibility, diversity, flexibility and autonomy are apparent throughout the programme design and are key strengths. The limited level of staffing has been carefully thought through to ensure timeliness and quality whilst maintaining efficiency. The knowledge and dedication of those involved in the development and delivery of DYCP are to be credited. Importantly, they have drawn on

resources and expertise of colleagues throughout the Arts Council to deliver the programme and seek to ensure it works for all disciplines.

- 50.** The funding provided by DYCP enabled practitioners to develop. But the funding was not the only critical enabler; simply being selected for funding by the Arts Council proved to be a powerful motivator and confidence booster for some. DYCP can be a 'catalyst' through more than just its funding.
- 51.** If DYCP was not offering the funding to freelancers, it is unlikely most of the development activities would have happened, with many reporting that they could only have done so to a lesser degree or at a slower pace, if at all.

Elements with scope for improvement or refinement

- 52.** While the model is fundamentally working and proving effective in meetings its aims, there are some elements which could be considered for refinement or improvement:
 - Reach across the sector is broad, but there is scope to encourage further applications from Libraries and Museums practitioners
 - Although the application process was mostly viewed positively, there are possible refinements to be made to further improve accessibility and understanding
 - The absence of feedback means the process of applying to DYCP is not as formative as it could be, and possibly has detrimental effects on the number and quality of reapplications. It also limits information for internal decision making
 - The monitoring data is good quality. However, DYCP does not capture the types of activities delivered and outcomes achieved. Capturing this via the activity form would allow Arts Council England to better understand what is funded and its short-term impacts.
- 53.** A full overview of the key points suggested for consideration throughout the report is presented at the end of Chapter 8.

1. Introduction

Introducing the Developing Your Creative Practice programme

- 1.1** Arts Council England introduced the Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP) programme in 2018 to support the development of independent cultural and creative practitioners. Specifically, **DYCP provides grants that enable practitioners to commit time and money towards the development of their practice** through undertaking research, creating new work, travelling, accessing training and mentoring, and collaborating and networking. DYCP aims to encourage innovation, creativity, research, experimentation and taking risks, to enable practitioners to progress and flourish with their creative practice and career. The creation of new work does not have to be part of a grantee's project, though it can be included provided it fits with the DYCP ethos. Ultimately it is expected that innovation by cultural and creative practitioners will be of public benefit through the production of higher quality work.
- 1.2** The size of grant available is between **£2,000 to £10,000** (plus 'personal access costs'¹⁴ as needed) and projects generally run for up to 12 months, although can run for up to 24 months.¹⁵ Over the course of 11 rounds of funding, DYCP received over 18,000 applications, of which 3,713 (20%) were successful, **receiving £33m across 3,670 individuals**.
- 1.3** As of February 2022, Round 13 was open and scheduled to close for applications in March 2022. The programme's total budget for Rounds 1-7 was around £7m, rising significantly for Rounds 8-11 at £18m plus an additional £8m in Round 9.
- 1.4** This **report presents the findings from SQW's independent evaluation of DYCP**, commissioned by Arts Council England in autumn 2021. The section immediately below considers the rationale for supporting individual cultural and creative practitioners, including the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is followed by an overview of Arts Council England's strategic priorities around supporting individuals, the DYCP model and the evaluation of the programme.

A note on terminology

- 1.5** Throughout this report, we refer to those who have applied to, and received funding from, DYCP via a variety of different terms:
- The term 'applicants' is used to refer to those who have applied for DYCP. Where we are referring solely to successful or unsuccessful applicants (or any other sub-category of applicants), this is explicitly stated in the text
 - The term 'grantees' refers to those who were successful in securing funding from DYCP

¹⁴ Costs needed to support any access needs throughout the activity.

¹⁵ Where an extension is granted.

- At times we refer to potential applicants as freelancers, practitioners and/or individuals. These terms all hold the same meaning in respect of this report and the evaluation findings, Again, where we are referring to sub-categories we have made this explicit.

Freelancers in the creative and cultural sectors

- 1.6** Data from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport estimates that 49% of jobs in the ‘Cultural Sector’ were self-employed in 2019.¹⁶ This varies by subsector, and is as high as 70% for the ‘music, performing and visual arts’ subsector and just 7% for the ‘museums and galleries’ and 8% for ‘libraries and archives’.
- 1.7** Research by the Creative Industries Federation offers valuable insights into the role freelancers play in the cultural and creative sectors, based on interviews with nearly 700 freelancers and over 50 creative businesses that used freelancers.¹⁷ It found that over half felt it was necessary for their career; common reasons cited for freelancing include: working in roles too specialist to work for one company full time; a desire for greater creative control; to better fit work around family; pursuit of creative ambitions post-retirement; moving into freelancing following redundancy; and due to health conditions. Their research with creative businesses established the reasons that businesses use freelancers: to provide specific skills or greater capacity on a project-by-project or temporary basis; for access to a greater diversity of talent and knowledge; and for cost efficiency reasons.
- 1.8** The research found variation across sectors, but did identify common issues experienced by freelancers across different sectors (some to varying degrees). The foremost issue to highlight is **financial insecurity**, due to challenges accessing work, funding and finance. Securing a steady stream of well-paid work can be challenging, especially during the earlier stages of their career. Issues with timely payment and unpaid illness/absence can exacerbate this. The lack of financial security is **particularly challenging for those from disadvantaged backgrounds**, who are less likely to have savings or receive financial support from their family.
- 1.9** Developing new or existing skills and knowledge can help sustain a career by opening up existing opportunities to a greater extent or by allowing freelancers to access new opportunities. However, the interviews undertaken for this evaluation found that the **financial insecurity inherent to much freelancing disincentivises professional development that requires time out of paid work or financial investment**.
- 1.10** Further issues faced by freelancers identified by the Creative Industries Federation include:¹⁸

¹⁶ Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Office for National Statistics. [DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates 2019: Employment](#).

¹⁷ Creative Industries Federation. 2017. [Creative Freelancers](#).

¹⁸ Ibid.

- **Access to work or studio spaces** (this includes co-working spaces which can support networking) due to costs, quality issues, availability and location/transport challenges
- **Access to affordable and high quality training opportunities**
- **Lack of professional networks** – which can be important to identifying opportunities for work and funding, and for creative and professional development
- **Legal/financial advice and support** – especially around intellectual property and business arrangements.

1.11 These issues can be compounded by financial insecurity; all might require a financial investment, with returns on that investment not certain. There are also mental health implications of financial insecurity. Taken together, it is clear **there are challenges to creative and cultural practitioners sustaining and flourishing in their careers as freelancers.**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on freelancers

1.12 The COVID-19 pandemic presented what the House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Committee called **“the biggest threat to the UK’s cultural infrastructure, institutions and workforce in a generation.”**¹⁹ The series of lockdowns, restrictions and social distancing severely curtailed the ability of many individuals and organisations in the sector to open, perform to the public or otherwise continue to operate as normal. Despite the easing of restrictions, **many in the sector are still facing reduced demand due to a nervousness amongst audiences.** The DCMS Committee report highlighted the resultant negative financial impacts, and cited research by various sector bodies that showed many in the pre-COVID workforce had either left or were considering leaving, risking a “talent drain.”²⁰

1.13 A paper commissioned by the Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre involving research with freelancers found the negative impacts of the pandemic ranged from significant to minimal.²¹

1.14 Having set out the nature and scale of the challenge, the policy response is worth considering briefly. The UK government responded with a range of economic support provided directly to the UK’s general workforce and businesses.²² However, the paper commissioned by the Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre noted that exclusionary

¹⁹ Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee. 2020. [Impact of COVID-19 on DCMS sectors: First Report](#), p.27.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 24.

²¹ Henry, N et al. 2021. [Building Back Better? Creative Freelancers and Learning from the Covid-19 Experience](#).

²² Including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme, the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and the Bounce Back Loan Scheme, as well as numerous other packages of support

criteria to financial support meant around 10% of the UK workforce were not eligible, with **freelancers and sole traders particularly likely to be ineligible**.²³

The case for the Arts Council to support individuals

1.15 The case for Arts Council England to support individuals is set out in two key documents. The first is the Arts Council's *Let's Create (Strategy 2020-2030)*.²⁴ This was published in January 2020, based on three years of consultation, and therefore does not fully reflect the contemporary situation faced by the creative and cultural sectors. The second is the *Let's Create Delivery Plan 2021-2024* which was published after the start of the pandemic, and so reframes *Let's Create* in light of the change in circumstances.²⁵ It also explicitly considers the role of DYCP in delivering against *Let's Create*. Both documents are considered here as context before a more detailed overview of the DYCP model is set out. The penultimate chapter revisits *Let's Create* to consider the extent to which DYCP is aligned and contributing to the strategy.

Let's Create (Strategy 2020-2030)

1.16 The strategy revolves around three 'Outcomes' Arts Council England intends to deliver against – Creative People, Cultural Communities, and A Creative and Cultural Country. Of these, 'A Creative and Cultural Country' is most relevant to DYCP as it concerns the creative and cultural workforce. The strategy also sets out the four Investment Principles that will guide the Arts Council's investments in the sector – Ambition and Quality, Dynamism, Environmental, and Inclusivity and Relevance.

1.17 The strategy starts by setting out the 'case for change' used to shape it, which includes two challenges facing the sector that are particularly pertinent to DYCP:

- Many creative practitioners and leaders of cultural organisations report a **retreat from innovation, risk-taking and sustained talent development**
- There remains a persistent and widespread **lack of diversity across the creative industries** and in publicly funded cultural organisations.²⁶

1.18 In addition to innovation and diversity, the strategy reflects on the need to support greater levels of collaboration, research and development and access to international opportunities. It also recognises the role that individual creative and cultural practitioners play, and the need to support them to sustain and flourish in their careers:

"In realising the opportunities of the next decade, we must look to artists themselves. This Strategy deepens our commitment to supporting individual curators, librarians, producers and artists of every kind and from every corner of the country. We want them to learn, take risks, fail where necessary, and finally to flourish in pursuit of making new

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Arts Council England. 2020. [Let's Create](#).

²⁵ Arts Council England. 2021. [Let's Create Delivery Plan 2021-2024](#).

²⁶ Ibid, p.9.

*work. The support that we give to creative practitioners, particularly D/deaf and disabled people, those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, women, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, either at the beginning of their careers or at moments when they are seeking to test different paths, can provide essential time, space, and affirmation precisely when those things are needed most. For individuals, the significance of such support may not become clear until years later, but collectively, its impact across the cultural sphere is profound.” **Let’s Create, p.6.***

1.19 The difficulties in sustaining a career, rather than flourishing, are considered too under the ‘A Creative and Cultural Country’ Outcome. Again this is considered through the lens of diversity, with a recognition that **people from some backgrounds are more likely to sustain a career than others**. Diversity is further considered in relation to geography, with a key theme in the strategy being the recognition that **some locations have historically benefitted less from the Arts Council’s funding**, and a need to address this.

*“Many creative practitioners and cultural workers, especially those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, D/deaf or disabled people, and those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, continue to struggle to develop and sustain financially viable careers. Unless we address this, the cultural sector will fail to achieve its potential, and the global competitiveness of this country’s creative industries will come under threat. Currently, the opportunity to establish and sustain a creative career – as a freelance director, writer, maker, performer, designer, composer, producer, painter, curator, librarian, sculptor or choreographer – is unfairly dependent on personal background. We want to ... support everyone who embarks on such a career to remain in the sector and fulfil their potential, regardless of their background. The future success of the cultural sector depends on being able to draw on a talent pool that reflects society as a whole and is much wider and deeper than it is now.” **Let’s Create, p.41.***

1.20 Finally, the strategy makes a number of commitments around the Arts Council’s investment process that are relevant to DYCP’s operation, including:

- Ensuring application processes and monitoring and reporting requirements are as **accessible, easy to understand and inclusive** as possible
- **Linking investment decisions to *Let’s Create* priorities, outcomes, investment principles**
- Achieving a balance across disciplines and geography
- Achieving **additionality** (i.e. supporting activities that otherwise would not happen).

Let’s Create Delivery Plan 2021-2024

1.21 The *Let’s Create* Delivery Plan 2021-2024 sets out more detailed steps for delivery against *Let’s Create*, including the role of specific programmes and initiatives such as DYCP. Much of this reflects what has already been set out about the impact of the pandemic.

*“Cultural organisations will only ever be as strong as the individual talent and skills on which they draw. In this country, our cultural sector has historically been dependent on a freelance workforce to provide it with its talent and vitality and help it create and run its programmes. While this is especially true of arts organisations, we also know that both libraries and museums depend on a growing pool of freelancers to deliver a range of activities.” **Let’s Create Delivery Plan 2021-2024, p.33.***

*“The pandemic has had a particularly devastating impact on individual creative and cultural practitioners and the wider freelance community; and individuals from those communities who historically have had least access to public funding for culture have been hardest hit ... We will therefore work with a range of partners to ensure that organisations and individuals create a more equitable and sustainable ecology for all parts of the cultural sector.” **Let’s Create Delivery Plan 2021-2024, p.33.***

1.22 As well as the Outcomes and Investment Principles, the Delivery Plan introduces five new 'Themes' around which the Arts Council’s work is to be organised to deliver against the Outcomes:

- **Building a ‘fit for the future’ cultural sector** – with individuals “developing new skills, building resilience, and working in new ways to fulfil creative and cultural ambitions”
- **Strengthening our place-based approach and supporting levelling up** – this carries through the focus on investing across geographies, with investments in priority places
- **Increasing our support for individuals** – including commitment to increased financial support and better access to training and development opportunities, targeted at those in the early stages of their career and from under-represented backgrounds, with more funding to individuals rather than expecting ‘trickle down’ from organisations
- **Helping the cultural sector to work internationally** – addressing the need to rebuild international partnerships and trading opportunities, and to adapt to new arrangements resulting from the UK’s changed relationship with Europe
- **How the Arts Council will change** – covering changes to how the Arts Council will operate, including to its relationship with the sector, processes, and decisions making.

1.23 DYCP has a role to play across all of the first four themes, but appears most prominently highlighted within Themes 3, 4 and 2 (in this order).

1.24 The Delivery Plan also introduces further initiatives to support individuals, including training and development resources, funding new National Portfolio organisations supporting individuals, and undertaking research on talent development pathways for young people.

1.25 The Emergency Response Fund (ERF) was also introduced in response to the pandemic’s effect on the sector. This £160m fund for those needing immediate support included a

£20m fund for artists, creative practitioners and freelancers for grants of up to £2,500.²⁷ The Delivery Plan notes how the Arts Council's engagement with the sector expanded as a result; much of the funding was distributed to individuals and organisations that had not previously engaged with Arts Council England.

- 1.26** The other programme identified as playing an important role in supporting individuals is National Lottery Project Grants (NLPG). This is considered alongside the DYCP model below and throughout this report.
- 1.27** The DYCP logic model (see Annex A) and discussions with those involved in the development and delivery of DYCP highlighted additional points underpinning the case for DYCP:
- Cuts to public funding have fallen disproportionately on individual practitioners, via lower commission/presentation fees and more conservative programming
 - **Other Arts Council England programmes such as NLPG require public outcomes** (e.g. the creation of new work), which limits the opportunity for research and development, experimentation, creative risks and failure
 - Closure of the Artists International Development Fund meant a **gap in support focused on international travel and collaboration** that did not require public outcomes
 - **Success rates for individuals applying to NLPG** are lower than those for organisations.

The DYCP model

- 1.28** This section considers the DYCP model in light of the context set out above. Staff involved in the development and delivery of DYCP talked through the design process for the programme. It was considered to have worked well in part because the programme was designed around the logic model set out in Annex A, which summarised the rationale and goals of the programme.
- 1.29** The table below provides an overview of different aspects of the DYCP model, covering its eligibility criteria and the characteristics of projects. More is said on these aspects of the model, and what the programme has funded in practice, throughout the report.

DYCP eligibility criteria and project characteristics

Eligible disciplines:

Combined Arts, Dance, Libraries, Literature, Music, Museums, Theatre and Visual Arts. Disciplines that are ineligible include commercial fashion and narrative feature film.

Roles supported (inter alia):

Dancers, choreographers, writers, translators, producers, publishers, editors, musicians, conductors, composers, actors, directors, designers, artists, craft makers, curators, DJs, performer/creators, arts and cultural educators, community practitioners/engagement specialists, movement directors, cultural conservators, creative enablers, creative technicians.

²⁷ Arts Council England. 2020. [Data Report: Emergency Response Funds for Individuals and for Organisations outside of the National Portfolio](#).

DYCP eligibility criteria and project characteristics

Note this list was expanded from Round 8 to better reflect the diversity of roles DYCP wanted to receive applications from, though all of the additional roles were already eligible.

Who can apply:

Individuals or a small group of practitioners.

Length of experience required:

One year's creative practice experience outside a formal education context (Rounds 1-7: three years).

Types of activities funded:

The guidance provides the following examples, which are non-exhaustive:

- Building new networks for future development/presentation of work
- Creating new work
- Experimenting with new collaborators or partners
- International travel to explore other practice or work with mentors
- Professional development activities
- Research and development time to explore practice and take risks
- Taking time to reflect on the impact of Covid-19 on your practice and practical steps to support your work to be more sustainable in future.

Value of projects:

£2,000 to £10,000 plus personal access costs, with no requirements for match funding.

Length of project:

Up to 12 months, although some projects can be extended to up to 24 months

Reporting/admin requirements:

Light-touch, only requiring an application form and a final activity form upon completion.

Payment split:

90% upfront and 10% upon submission of the final activity form.

Application rounds:

Generally four application rounds per year, each with a four week period to submit an application.

Limit on number of applications:

This varied by Round:

- Rounds 1-7 – limit of two applications per 12 month period
- Rounds 8-9 – no restriction on reapplying
- Rounds 10-12 – no reapplications for those with 2 unsuccessful applications or 1 successful application from Round 5 onwards
- Round 13 – no reapplications for those with 2 unsuccessful applications or 1 successful application from Round 6 onwards

1.30 Further to the above, there are a few implicit principles that guide the DYCP model and its operation. The principles and their implications are returned to throughout this report. They are:

- **Focusing on potential:** Applicants are judged on their potential and quality of work, rather than track record or previous funding from the Arts Council. Essentially this means the decision process looks at what applicants *could* achieve rather than what

they *have* achieved. This contrasts with some of the Arts Council's other funding programmes, and reflects how DYCP is intended to accommodate individuals who may be early in their career.

- **Achieving a 'step change':** Ultimately the aim is for grantees to achieve a 'step change' in their practice through dedicated time and funding, and applicants must demonstrate that they have a plan to achieve this in their application. There is, however, a recognition that the process of innovating and taking creative risks will not always result in success; DYCP is intended to reduce the risks inherent to this process.
- **Flexibility and autonomy:** Project plans are designed by applicants to an open and flexible brief, meaning they are tailored to each individual's needs and situation. Once funded, grantees have some flexibility in following their plans, with the ability to diverge from their original plans within reason. The lack of expectation around outputs supports this ability to diverge where needed.
- **Recognising that opportunities may be international:** International travel can be covered by DYCP funding, and can play an important and formative role in expanding knowledge and creative practice. It is also recognised that this can lead to further international opportunities, expanding the reach of UK culture.
- **Proportionality and accessibility:** The individual grants are relatively small in size, and success rates relatively low, so the requirements on applicants are designed to be proportionate to this. There is no requirement for match funding; application and activity forms ask just a few questions; the final activity form is the only reporting requirement for grantees; and there are no mandated touchpoints with Arts Council England staff during projects. This also reflects the desire for the programme to be accessible, in line with the aim to attract first time applicants to Arts Council England and the priorities around accessibility set out in *Let's Create*.
- **Light-touch administration:** Staffing resource for DYCP administration and oversight is relatively light. The decision process entails Relationship Managers from across Arts Council England forming Decision Panels four times a year to review applications and making funding decisions, and is reported to be very staff intensive when the process is taking place. Beyond this, administration activities (and associated staff demands) are light-touch.
- **Spread/diversity:** The summary of priorities in *Let's Create* and the *Let's Create* Delivery Plan shows emphasis on diversity, in relation to disciplines, geography and practitioners themselves. This is carried through to DYCP. Each region and discipline has a portion of the DYCP budget to allocate in each round. Data is collected on characteristics of applicants, which is reflected on to ensure DYCP is funding applicants from diverse backgrounds. There is also focus on funding a proportion of first-time applicants.
- **Use of funding rounds:** The programme utilises funding rounds for two reason. Firstly, it is considered beneficial to have an application deadline, to instigate applications

that might keep being pushed back if the process was entirely open. Second, it reflects the level of staffing resource required for judging and awarding applications, which is easier to resource when planned for fixed times. The use of rounds contrasts with the NLPG application process, which is an open process that requires weekly decision meetings. There are usually four rounds per year (the pandemic meant this did not happen in 2020) that are sequential. Application windows typically run for four weeks, and the rounds and windows are published in advance.

1.31 Finally, it is worth noting how **DYCP has evolved during its lifetime**. Most significant were the changes made from Round 8, some of them in response to the pandemic. Some of changes were flagged briefly in the DYCP overview table above, but specifically these were:

- An **increase in the size of the DYCP budget** for Rounds 8-11 to a total of £18m, with an additional £8m in Round 9, so that more applicants could be funded.
- **Allowing more reapplications**, with anyone who had previously applied or been funded allowed to reapply to Round 8 and 9, on the basis that the pandemic may have nullified any benefits from previous rounds. Subsequently Rounds 10-12 only disallowed reapplications from those with two unsuccessful applications or one successful application submitted from Round 5 onwards
- **Lowering the length of creative experience** outside of a formal education context required, from three years to one year
- **Clarifying the definition of creative practitioners** to better reflect the diversity of roles DYCP wanted to receive applications from, though all of the additional roles were already eligible for funding in previous rounds
- **Adding reference to responding to the new environment** posed by the pandemic amongst the activities that could be supported.

About the evaluation

1.32 Arts Council England commissioned SQW in October 2022 to undertake a process and impact evaluation of DYCP. Specifically, the following evaluation questions were posed:

- To what extent has the programme achieved the expected outcomes and met its original aims?
- Has the programme helped individuals to sustain a career within the sector? Have different groups been impacted in different ways, how and why?
- Did the interim changes to the programme help to support individuals? (Round 8 applicants onwards only)
- What can be learned from how the Rounds 1-9 were delivered? What is working well, and less well, for whom and why? (e.g. funding level, length of time for development activity, and number of rounds)

- Are there specific barriers that cultural practitioners working in the museum or libraries sector face? What are the reasons they don't apply to the programme?
- What could be improved and what recommendations are there for future development of the programme? Are there any identified gaps in the programme that could be addressed in future rounds?
- What barriers did unsuccessful applicants face in reapplying? Would anything in particular have helped them to take the appropriate next steps?

1.33 This report presents the findings of the evaluation and explores their implications.

Methodology

1.34 The evaluation consisted of the following research strands:

- **Scoping interviews** – with Arts Council England staff involved in design and delivery of DYCP, and an individual with responsibility for the 'individuals' strand of the *Let's Create* Delivery Plan and an individual responsible for Arts Council England's strategy.
- **Review of project documentation** – public facing DYCP materials such as guidance and application and activity forms, plus internal evaluation materials.
- **Analysis of monitoring data** – monitoring data captured via the application process and the end of project activity form for Rounds 1-11 was reviewed and analysed.
- **Surveys** – two online surveys were designed and implemented, one with successful and another with unsuccessful applicants, which covered their experience of applying and receiving funding, activities funded and their impacts, and reflections on the DYCP model.
- **Interviews** – semi-structured telephone/video call interviews with 38 successful and 9 unsuccessful applicants, which covered the same topics as the surveys. Interviewees were offered payment of £50 as recognition for their time.

1.35 The table below provides more detail on what each of the three strands of research with applicants provided, and their relative strengths and weaknesses.

Table 1-1: Overview of the three strands of research with applicants

Monitoring data	Surveys	Fieldwork
Covers all applicants on factors such as funding round, value and length of project, discipline and characteristics	Designed to fill gaps in the monitoring data, with a focus on feedback, activities, impacts	47 interviews conducted, covering 38 successful and 9 unsuccessful applicants, with a broadly representative sample selected based on the available data, with some skewing towards variables of interest. Reserve participants were recruited where those initially approached declined
However details on the types of activity funded are limited and feedback and impacts are not captured at all –	Mixture of pre-coded responses plus a limited number of open text questions	

Monitoring data	Surveys	Fieldwork
these are contained in open text fields in application and activity forms and so not recorded systematically	Provides a good sense of scale of feeling and prevalence of activities and impacts	to participate or failed to respond to the invitation
Note the data used throughout is for Round 1-11 unless otherwise stated	Nearly 2,000 successful applicants from Rounds 1-9 were invited to respond	Provides deeper understanding of the responses to the surveys by capturing richer insights and stories, including due to the opportunity for greater probing by interviewers
	A representative sample of 2,000 unsuccessful applicants were selected from Rounds 1-9 – the entire population was not invited to participate given the resource that would be required to analyse so many open text questions for diminishing returns	Application and activity forms were reviewed before each interview, to provide relevant background insights
		Notes were captured including verbatim quotations.

1.36 Further details on the surveys are set out in Table 1-2 below, which shows the count of the population, invitees and respondents for each survey. Each survey achieved a good level of response and robustness, as reflected in the margin of error for each survey. In some instances responses can be combined, say when considering the characteristics of applicants, which provides a lower margin of error.

Table 1-2: Survey population, invitees and response rates

	Successful	Unsuccessful	All applicants
Population ²⁸	3,670	11,224	14,894
Invited	1,955	2,000	3,955
Responded ²⁹	785	548	1,333
Response rate	40%	27%	34%
Margin of error (95% confidence interval) ³⁰	± 3.1 percentage points	±4.1 percentage points	±2.6 percentage points

Source: Monitoring data and surveys

1.37 Note that the response rate (or denominator) above is not constant throughout survey. This is for three reasons:

²⁸ This is the entire Round 1-9 cohort, of which a portion either did not consent to being contacted for evaluation purposes or was not scheduled to have finished their project prior to the fieldwork.

²⁹ See explanation about the number of respondents just below the table.

³⁰ For the entire Round 1-9 cohort.

- Some questions had routing applied, so were only asked of respondents to which the question was relevant
- Respondents were able to skip some questions, which some chose to do
- The survey experienced attrition, with respondents dropping out as the survey progressed.³¹

1.38 Therefore, for each piece of survey analysis throughout this report the denominator is presented alongside the source.

Data caveats and limitations

1.39 The following points should also be noted about the data collection:

- The monitoring data used covered Rounds 1-11, whereas the surveys and fieldwork focused on those in Rounds 1-9; the majority of those in later rounds were mostly part-way through their project and impacts may not yet have been fully realised
- Successful applicants who were interviewed or responded to the survey included some with one or more unsuccessful applications; insights were captured regarding this where relevant
- For some interviewees and survey respondents, the application process was 3-4 years ago, which may have limited or affected recollections
- The variety in types of activities and impacts made it difficult to categorise and quantify them, though the survey did attempt to do so; any shortcomings in this are reflected in the relevant sections
- This evaluation has not sought to monetise any economic impact, nor perform a value for money assessment. No questions to this effect were explored in the research
- Cross-tabulations were performed on the survey data, however for the categories of some variables the numbers were very small. The surveys were anonymous and not linked to DYCP monitoring data, so cross-tabulation analysis was not possible in all cases.

1.40 Furthermore, there are numerous points to be noted about representativeness. For the surveys and interviews, those invited to participate were selected to be broadly representative of the wider population by discipline, round, project value and duration, and personal characteristics of applicants (as self-reported at application). However:

³¹ The last DYCP-focused question in the successful survey received 698 responses, equivalent to 89% of the number responding to the first question. This was followed by questions on characteristics questions that followed received just 689 responses for the final question.

- There was a purposeful attempt at overrepresenting some characteristics where they were of particular interest e.g. those working in Libraries and Museums, and where overall grantee numbers are small³²
- Personal characteristics data was provided separately to the main application monitoring data, and so could not be used for sampling, with representativeness on these factors only possible to test based on responses provided to questions on characteristics in the survey (e.g. after the survey was completed); this data was not captured for interviewees
- SQW was only able to sample from those who consented to follow up for evaluation purposes at the time of application to DYCP, limiting the overall population to recruit from
- Participation in the surveys and interviews was voluntary, and so ultimately the representativeness of participants could not be entirely controlled. For interviews like-for-like replacements were sought as far as possible in the case of declines or non-respondents; there was some divergence, particularly around some of the variables deemed less important
- There were (intentionally) fewer interviews with unsuccessful applicants than successful, so there are fewer rich insights into their experiences of DYCP
- The population is weighted towards recent rounds, due to their relative size, meaning that outcomes that require longer to materialise were less likely to be identifiable.

1.41 In addition to the points for consideration above, the actual achieved split of interviewees and survey respondents compared to the overall population is presented in Table B-7 which shows:

- More recent rounds were overrepresented in the surveys, whereas the interviews with successful applicants are slightly weighted towards earlier rounds – this was intentional to gain rich insights into longer-term outcomes
- Unsuccessful applicants with multiple unsuccessful applications are considerably overrepresented in the survey – applicants who applied once accounted for 31% of unsuccessful survey respondents compared to 80% of applicants in the monitoring data
- The surveys, and particularly the interviews, achieved a more even spread of disciplines than in the broader population, with disciplines that were underrepresented in the population intentionally targeted so that they were overrepresented in the research, although some were still small numbers. For example the interviews covered just one successful and one unsuccessful individual

³² Note that due to the small numbers interviewed (and application/funded numbers overall) any quotes from Museums or Libraries practitioners have been grouped together as Museums/Libraries to maintain anonymity as far as possible.

each from Libraries and Museums, despite attempts to recruit more individuals from these disciplines

- In general the research achieved a more even spread across regions than in the population, but the North is underrepresented in the unsuccessful survey at 10% of respondents, compared to 22% in the unsuccessful applicant population
- On personal characteristics the surveys are fairly representative – variables which have very small numbers in the population (e.g. specific ethnicity categories) are more likely to be under or overrepresented but this would be unlikely to influence the results overall
- Successful applicants who intended to partake in international travel as part of their project are intentionally overrepresented – they account for 51% of successful applicant interviews versus 25% of the successful applicant population, though in practice fewer actually did manage to travel than planned to
- Conversely, successful applicants who intended to create new work as part of their project are under-represented – they account for 57% of successful applicant interviews versus 79% of the successful applicant population.

2. DYCP applications, awareness and understanding and feedback on the application process

Application numbers and success rates

- 2.1** DYCP received 18,295 applications across Rounds 1-11, and funded 3,713 of those, equivalent to a **success rate of 20%**. A small number of applicants have been funded twice, so in total there have been **3,670 grantees** across the rounds.
- 2.2** The number of grantees and applications, and success rates by Round are set out in Table 2-1 below. It shows:
- The numbers of applications were fairly steady until Round 8, when they jumped from an average of 780 per round to over 3,500, subsequently spiking in Round 9 at over 6,100
 - However, success rates were lowest in the earliest rounds, with just 13% of applicants in Rounds 1-4 successful, as the rise in applications coincided with a rise in the available budget, so for Rounds 8-11 some 23% of applications were successful.
- 2.3** The spike in applications for Round 8 and 9 was likely due to the pandemic, although changes to the eligibility criteria did contribute as reapplications were allowed. However, whilst their numbers increased, reapplications accounted for a smaller proportion of applications than earlier rounds (at 11% and 20% respectively, versus 22-24% for Rounds 5-6 – see Table B-1 in Annex B) so increases in numbers were mainly driven by new applicants. Some restrictions were reintroduced for Round 10 onwards to help improve applicants' chances of success. Overall, 20% of applicants have reapplied; 3% more than once.

Table 2-1: Grantees, applications and success rates by Round

Round	Population		% of population		Success rate
	Grantees	Applications	Grantees	Applications	
1	103	894	3%	5%	12%
2	111	967	3%	5%	11%
3	135	887	4%	5%	15%
4	100	910	3%	5%	11%
5	98	503	3%	3%	19%
6	147	559	4%	3%	26%
7	107	745	3%	4%	14%
8	824	3,509	22%	19%	23%
9	1,298	6,135	35%	34%	21%

Round	Population		% of population		Success rate
	Grantees	Applications	Grantees	Applications	
10	375	1,455	10%	8%	26%
11	415	1,731	11%	9%	24%

Source: SQW analysis of monitoring data

- 2.4** The decision-making process entails all eligible applications being reviewed by Decision Panels in each area. The Decision Panels seek to achieve a balance of disciplines, geography and applicant characteristics. Geography and applicant characteristics are considered in Chapter 6 on who is applying to DYCP and being funded; discipline is considered here.
- 2.5** Table 2-2 considers the spread by discipline, and the disparities are very apparent. Visual Arts and Music receive considerably more applications than other disciplines, and have some of the lowest success rates as a result, while Museums and Libraries receive very few applications, and have high relative success rates. The interviews and research findings set out in Chapter 1 suggest that some of this reflects the different nature of the disciplines. Primarily, the lesser represented disciplines have fewer freelancers, and therefore there are fewer individuals likely to be eligible for the programme.

Table 2-2: Grantees, applications and success rates by discipline³³

Round	Population		% of population		Success rate
	Grantees	Applications	Grantees	Applications	
Visual arts	1,183	6,518	32%	36%	18%
Music	883	4,377	24%	24%	20%
Theatre	554	2,715	15%	15%	20%
Literature	482	2,095	13%	11%	23%
Combined arts	322	1,421	9%	8%	23%
Dance	207	757	6%	4%	27%
Not discipline specific	55	321	1%	2%	17%
Museums	24	65	1%	0%	37%
Other/Not Known	1	15	0%	0%	7%
Film	0	7	0%	0%	0%
Libraries	2	4	0%	0%	50%

Source: SQW analysis of monitoring data

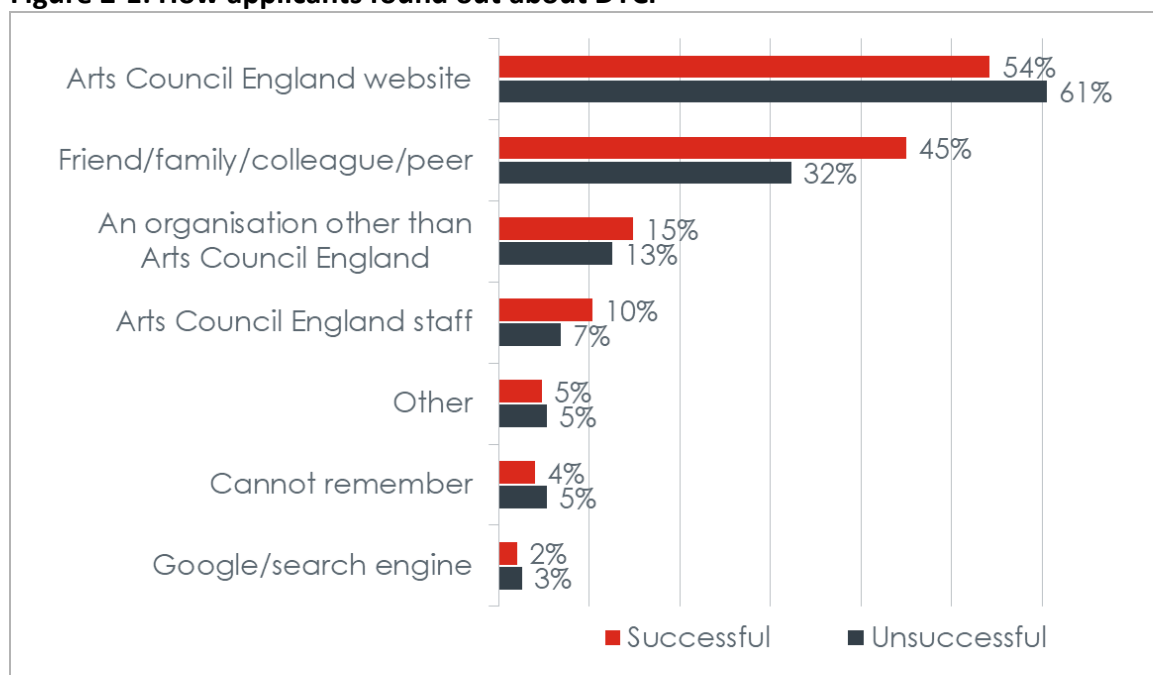
³³ Note that: the disciplines of some interviewees did not appear to fully align with their recorded discipline; and Film is not an eligible discipline for DYCP funding.

- 2.6** The split in disciplines is considered further in Table B-4, which compares the split for DYCP against ERF and NLPG funding of individuals. It shows that Visual Arts, Music, and Literature are overrepresented compared to the other programmes, while Combined Arts, Theatre, Dance and Museums are underrepresented on DYCP relative to the other programmes. Factors that might be driving this lower uptake, including level of awareness and the perceived relevance of DYCP’s focus and language, are considered throughout this chapter.
- 2.7** Looking at the prevalence of each discipline over time, the most notable change is for Music, which jumped from 13-16% of applications in Rounds 1-7 to 36% in Round 8 and has since remained high. Other disciplines have fluctuated without a noticeable trend over time.
- 2.8** The remainder of this chapter considers the level of awareness around DYCP, the level of understanding around its focus, eligibility and purpose, views on the guidance and application process, and the views from those who were unsuccessful.

Awareness of DYCP

- 2.9** Applicants were asked how they became aware of DYCP. Figure 2-1 shows the responses in the survey. The most common source of awareness was the Arts Council England website. Second and third most common were friend/family/colleague/peer and organisations other than the Arts Council. The survey also allowed for an open text response, which showed that social media and the Arts Council’s newsletters were other common routes through which applicants had found out about DYCP.

Figure 2-1: How applicants found out about DYCP



Source: Applicant surveys (successful=782 and unsuccessful=542)

- 2.10** These findings were reflected in the interviews with applicants, and demonstrate the two main routes through which applicants found out about DYCP – through pre-existing awareness of Arts Council England or via word of mouth from networks or organisations. Those with a pre-existing awareness of Arts Council England had generally been funded or applied for funding with the Arts Council before, and therefore knew to regularly check for funding opportunities, were signed up to the Arts Council’s newsletters, and/or had contact with a Relationship Manager. Some interviewees had previously been funded by NLPG, Artists’ International Development Fund, Elevate or Grants for the Arts, and at least a couple had first received Arts Council England funding 10-20 years ago.
- 2.11** Applicants who heard of DYCP via word of mouth did include some with pre-existing awareness of Arts Council England funding opportunities or longstanding relationships with the Arts Council, but also those without either. These applicants encountered it via their networks, including via social media, and via sector organisations. The range of organisations raising awareness of DYCP is notable, with some running advice sessions and workshops that cover DYCP and how to apply. This route highlights the important role that professional networks and sector support organisations can play in supporting those less aware of Arts Council England and its funding opportunities to discover DYCP. Interestingly, **successful applicants are more likely to have heard via word of mouth (61%) than unsuccessful applicants (42%).**
- 2.12** There did appear to be differences by disciplines, beyond the extent of freelancing in each sector. The different factors include the traditional reliance of each discipline on grant funding, with Visual Arts especially reliant on this; and the role of networks in each sector, and the extent to which DYCP is known within them. Of the 16 survey respondents from Museums, just 2 reported hearing about DYCP via an organisation other than Arts Council England and none said they heard about it via a friend/family/colleague or peer, compared to nearly half across all disciplines overall.

*“I heard about it through a literature arts organisation ... so it came through the arts network rather than through libraries. I think DYCP is not well known. Of the people I’ve spoken to, which is quite a large number, I’ve not met anybody who was aware of it prior to me talking to them.” **Unsuccessful applicant interview, Museums/Libraries***

*“DYCP was on my radar but not really something I was paying attention to until Museums Freelance flagged it up. Museums Freelance is an organisation set up by some freelancers – [they are] raising issues with organisations such as the Arts Council around supporting freelancers in the sector.” **Unsuccessful applicant interview, Museums/Libraries***

- 2.13** Arts Council England undertake limited active promotion of the programme. This is due to the limited resource available for promotion and the high level of applications received. Staff involved in the development and delivery of DYCP observed that further promoting the programme (under current arrangements) would simply lead to greater numbers of unsuccessful applicants and require greater resourcing. This is especially the case since

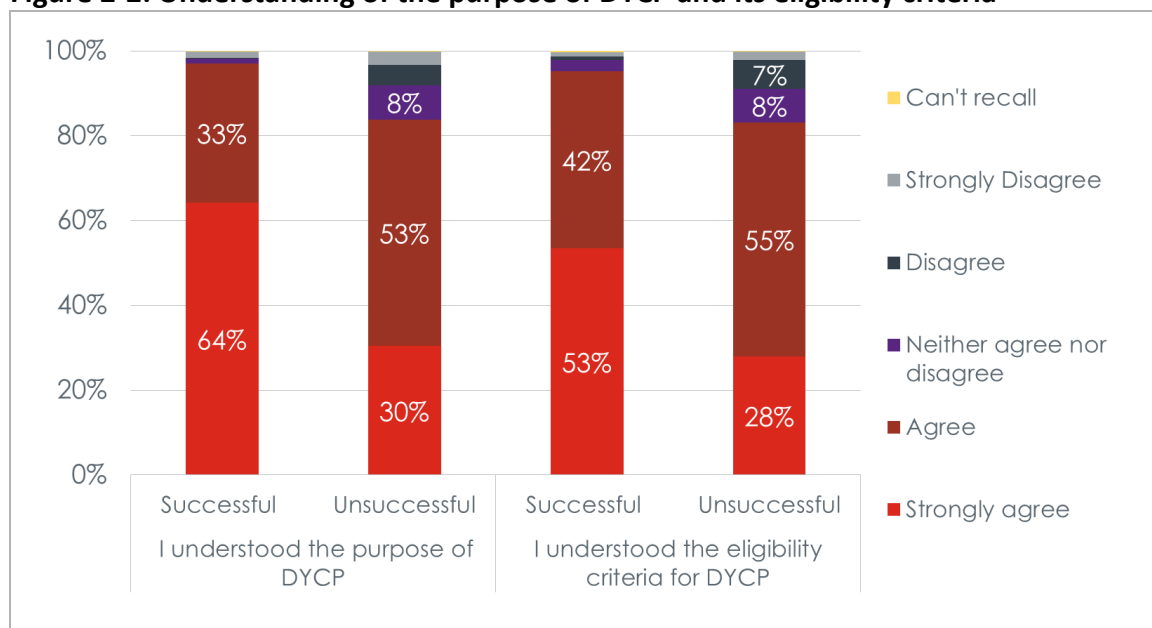
the Arts Council's profile in the sector grew during the pandemic, and more specifically due to its role in distributing the Emergency Response Fund and Cultural Recovery Fund, alongside greater need for support due to the pandemic's impact. The result was a massive spike in applications, from 638 in Round 7 to 2,685 in Round 8, with levels since consistently higher than pre-pandemic.

2.14 The promotion that does take place is on the Arts Council's social media channels and by Relationship Managers, both as part of the Arts Council's broader support offer for the sector; in limited cases this is targeted specifically towards underrepresented disciplines, roles and groups, including through events with other sector support organisations. Without some level of outreach the risk is that those in the sector who are unaware or less aware of the Arts Council will not encounter DYCP, as shown above by the key role of word of mouth and networks in spreading awareness. The first section of this chapter showed how certain disciplines are under-represented, and therefore there may be a need to more actively promote DYCP through sector support organisations and professional networks specific to those disciplines. This will help in widening the reach of DYCP beyond those already supported by or engaged with the Arts Council. More is said about the types of people DYCP is reaching in the Chapter 6 on who DYCP is funding.

Understanding of DYCP

2.15 The survey asked applicants how well they felt they understood the purpose and eligibility criteria of DYCP. Figure 2-2 shows the vast majority of applicants did feel they understood both DYCP's eligibility criteria and purpose. Successful applicants were more likely to strongly agree than unsuccessful applicants, and a small but sizeable proportion of unsuccessful applicants disagreed or did not agree/disagree, as might be expected given their lack of success.

Figure 2-2: Understanding of the purpose of DYCP and its eligibility criteria



Source: Applicant surveys (successful=752/760 and unsuccessful=520/522)

2.16 Interview insights mirrored these findings, provided greater insight into the results and showed broad buy-in to the ethos of the programme. That said, there were some identifiable minor issues around understanding:

- DYCP's **focus on development rather than outputs was considered distinctive**, and contrasted with applications that applicants were used to making for funding. As a result, some struggled identifying what would constitute a reasonable project, and a handful of interviewees said they were reluctant to entirely forego outputs, public benefits and/or demonstration of value for money from their project.
- Interviewees were not always clear about what types of project or inclusions were more likely to be viewed favourably, and particularly what would be viewed less favourably. Some applicants were unsure if they had allocated too much funding towards purchasing equipment, for example.

2.17 The **guidance, case studies and support to applicants were all found to have supported understanding**, and more is said on these later. Issues with understanding were considered more acute in earlier rounds, perhaps (at least in part) due to the relative newness of the programme, but the evolution and refinement of guidance and support helped over time.

“It was quite clear they were trying to offer something that would allow the possibility of development, whatever kind was applicable to your practice, without having to have the public facing stuff involved.” Grantee interview, Visual Arts

“It took me multiple applications to really zero in on the fact that this genuinely was about developing myself. With the earlier applications I would put in a lot of things about what would benefit other people” Grantee interview, Theatre (previously unsuccessful)

2.18 There are some differences in survey responses around understanding by discipline, but the differences are not consistent between questions nor sufficiently large to be reliable given small numbers. However, the interviews and open text survey responses do point to notable concern amongst Museums and Libraries applicants, who felt that DYCP was better aligned with other disciplines than their own. This is worth further consideration given it may be partially responsible for lower applications from these disciplines. Drawing on the expertise of discipline-specific Arts Council England teams and sector organisations could perhaps assist with addressing the perception of relevance. Additional case studies could be especially useful for developing understanding, by demonstrating how DYCP is supporting practitioners in these disciplines.

“I think the eligibility was clear. It was clear to me and I could make it work for what I wanted to do. But other Museum professionals definitely read it and think it doesn't apply to the work that we do. Even the name of it – ‘creative practice’ – feels as though it is not for us.” Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries

Point for consideration: Consider case study focus and coverage, and ensure the examples demonstrate the variety of activities that can be funded through DYCP.

Motivations for applying

2.19 The motivations applicants expressed for applying to DYCP included:

- To be autonomous and have creative control
- To explore new areas of creative and cultural practice
- To progress an early career or to take a new career direction
- To help move their career from part-time to full-time
- To establish new collaborative relationships
- A desire to invest greater time and research into developing future projects
- To purchase equipment that would support ongoing development
- Adapting to the challenges posed to their existing work by the pandemic, and/or making the most of spare time afforded by the pandemic
- A desire to get to a place where their practice was less reliant on funding or grants.

*“I was looking for a definite shift in my career and didn’t know how to go about it and suddenly I encountered this, and was talking to people who knew about it who were saying: ‘It sound like this would be perfect for the moment that you’re at, because it’s something that supports a real shift in the focus of what you’re doing’.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

*“My practice was quite affected by COVID-19. Over the last two years I haven’t been able to do anything face-to-face with people – I couldn’t run workshops, I couldn’t get in the rehearsal room to work with people on plays ... [so] I wanted to do something still sharing stories and communicating with people, but in a more distanced method. My aim was to learn how to make graphic novels, so I wanted to learn how draw again.” **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

*“The fact it would fund my time as an individual to develop my work and that I could direct some work around what I was interested in. As a Museum professional you’re always working with an institution and don’t have much autonomy with projects – even with freelancing you have more of a choice but it’s still working on something someone else has developed. The fact that it would give me some freedom to step back from work and think about what I wanted to do is something I’ve not really had the opportunity to do before. Because of my own financial situation I’ve not had the luxury of picking and choosing the most interesting work.” **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

“I really wanted to hone in on different skills that would allow me to have more autonomy in my creativity – focusing on production, guitar and song writing.”

Unsuccessful interview, Music

“I think it was the fact that for the first time there was a pot without any kind of external things attached to it in terms of working with a team or having KPIs that you needed to commit to – at that time I needed the flexibility to develop without that pressure for an output.” ***Unsuccessful interview, Literature***

2.20 The challenges applicants had faced in pursuing these changes reflected those set out in the introduction chapter; factors such as lack of sufficient finance, the matched funding required for other opportunities, the risk attached to development without a defined or guaranteed output, finding the time alongside paid employment, and a need to access to guidance and advice to progress their ideas.

“For me money has always been a little bit tight, and a lot of the funding is match funding - and this wasn’t something I was able to do myself.” ***Grantee interview, Theatre***

“One of the things that is difficult sometimes – if you’re doing an R&D project – you’re trying to think about what the public impact is before you have the chance to develop new work. So this was a bit of dream scenario ... It did come at time when I needed to pivot and develop ... You don’t know which way it will go, and if you already do know then it’s not going to be very creative.” ***Grantee interview, Music***

“I had been doing some touring with other people, and I really wanted to go to what I could do next on my own and go back and regroup. To make sure I was pushing myself and developing, so I needed time and support to do that, rather than just trying to do more gigs to earn money. Just having that breathing space to try things. As a musician, you live by gig or record sale – it’s not something where you have a wage, and you never know what your income is going to be. At that point, it felt like I couldn’t afford to stop.” ***Grantee interview, Music***

“I was kind of in need of other start up support. It was very difficult to find studio space, I didn’t really need project money I needed development money specifically. I had it in my mind to set up another entity but wanted advice, mentoring and support, and wanted development time to think about what to set up.” ***Grantee interview, Combined Arts***

“We had recently created ... a new collaborative performance company which aims to explore, create and produce projects within theatre and film to bring up conversations about issues of social injustice, identity and equality in order to represent people who are currently unseen. But we felt we were lacking in the necessary experience/knowledge to be confident enough to start their own company, so we thought that the work funded by the DYCP fund would be a great opportunity to develop a practice model and lay the foundations of their company. Neither of us were in the financial position to do that

without significant funding, hence the application to DYCP.” **Unsuccessful interview, Theatre**

“I’ve always made my own work and exhibited, but because of the nature of some projects I was getting involved with I got sucked into doing loads and loads of paid work.

That was good and gave me loads of contacts, but I realised I needed to stop that and seeing the DYCP funding was the catalyst that let me do that.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts**

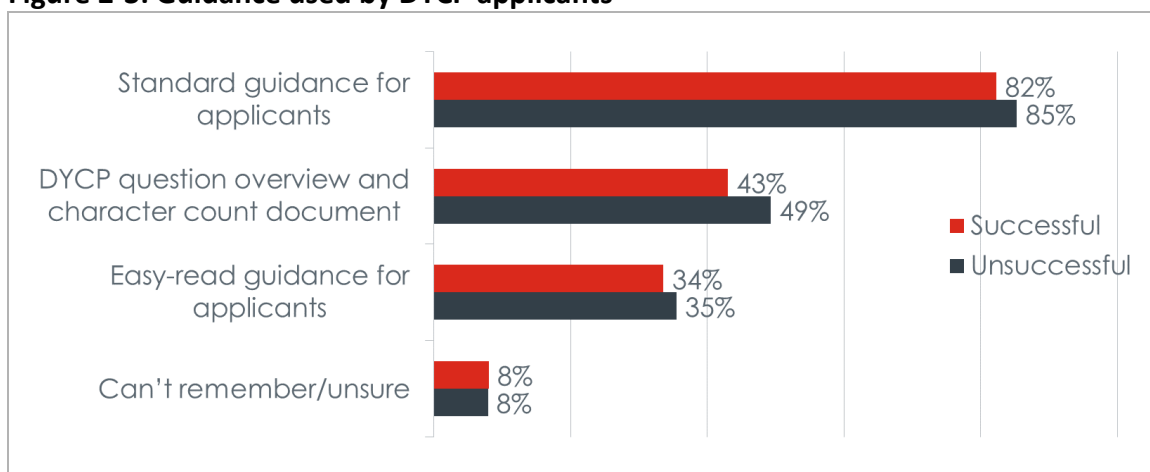
Feedback on the application process

2.21 The next few sections consider the feedback on the application process, covering the guidance, application form and support. These are followed by consideration of accessibility. Again, it is worth noting that not all those taking part in the evaluation had a good or accurate recollection of the application form or process; some referred to application form features which are not part of DYCP; these views have generally not been presented below, and recollection/details were probed where needed as part of interview questioning.

Application guidance

2.22 There are multiple pieces of guidance provided by the Arts Council for potential applicants: a standard guidance document, an easy ready guidance document, guidance on the application questions and character counts, a short ‘am I ready to apply?’ quiz, FAQs webpage, case studies, and prompts in the application form itself. The evaluation surveys found that 99% of applicants reported accessing guidance before applying, and most commonly it was the standard guidance that was used.

Figure 2-3: Guidance used by DYCP applicants



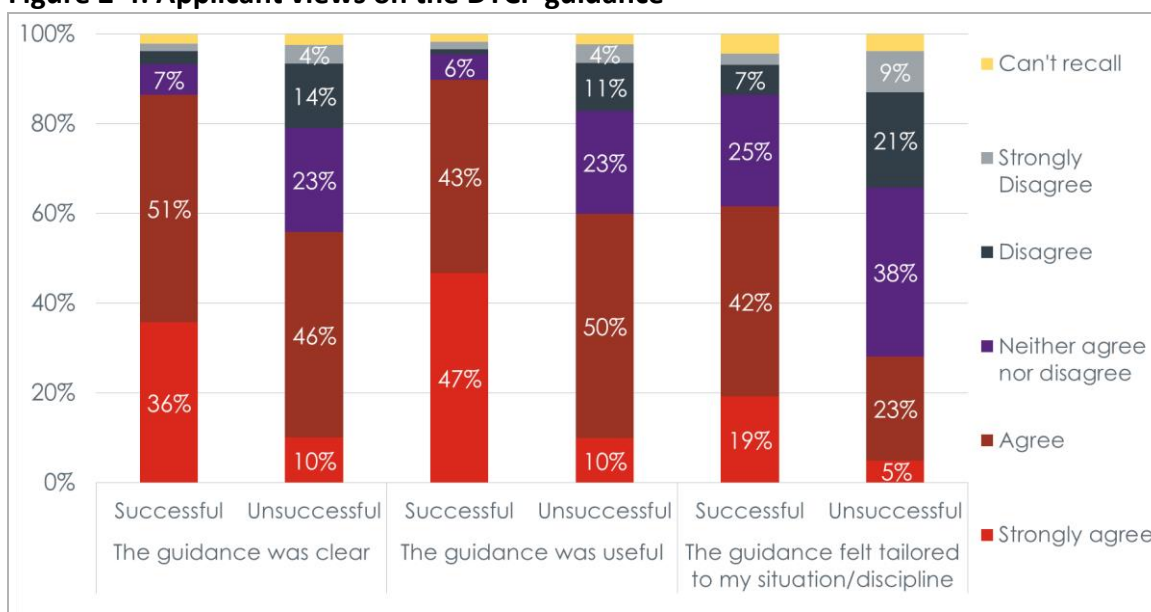
Source: Applicant surveys (successful=756 and unsuccessful=530)

2.23 The surveys asked applicants how clear, useful and tailored they found the guidance. The results in Figure 2-4 show that:

- Most thought **the guidance was clear**, although more agreed than strongly agreed, and almost half of unsuccessful applicants disagreed or did not agree/disagree
- Most thought **the guidance was useful**, with stronger agreement amongst successful applicants
- Views on **whether the guidance was tailored** were mixed, especially amongst unsuccessful participants.

2.24 It is worth noting the more negative views amongst unsuccessful may to some extent reflect the fact they were unsuccessful.

Figure 2-4: Applicant views on the DYCP guidance



Source: Applicant surveys (successful=755 and unsuccessful=525)

2.25 Interview insights again reflected these findings. Interviewees had found the guidance helpful for writing their application and generally thought it was of a **reasonable length and level of detail**. **Case studies were seen as helpful** by those who accessed them. However, a small but sizeable portion reported that the guidance could be clearer, more detailed, prescriptive or accessible. Specifically, issues and suggestions included:

- Practitioners in the cultural and heritage sector, namely **Museums and Libraries**, were more likely to suggest that **the guidance and DYCP as a whole was not sufficiently aligned with or reflective of their disciplines**. It is worth noting the numbers engaged in the evaluation were small, though this reflects that the numbers who have applied and been funded are also small. Criticisms included the language and focus, which were perceived to be better aligned with creative disciplines; there may be scope for better aligning the guidance and DYCP more broadly with the heritage and culture sectors. Reflecting on the language used in guidance, case studies and the application process may help to address this.

“None of those documents reflect the cultural heritage sector – they’re all written for the performing arts sector. They [Arts Council England] don’t know what they’re doing with

cultural heritage – they've made the decision to incorporate cultural heritage but they haven't put the support in place and they haven't thought the process through."

Unsuccessful interview, Museums/Libraries

- It was suggested others could **find it difficult to get sufficient inspiration** for a project based on the guidance, particularly for applicants in less well represented disciplines.
- A considerable number of interviewees felt that **more guidance and support** with the process of writing an application and around the budgeting would be beneficial (this is considered in more detail in the next section).
- One applicant was **unsure whether the case studies reflected the entirety of what DYCP might fund**, so it might be worth flagging that the case studies are merely examples, and that the scope of DYCP is much wider.
- Some applicants expressed an **appetite for video guidance** (more is said about this in the context of accessibility later in this chapter); this does exist, though perhaps could be more visible.

2.26 In considering these issues and suggestions, it is important to also recognise the **possible trade-offs**. The guidance is intentionally not overly tailored or prescriptive because DYCP covers such a variety of disciplines, roles and activities; to cover them all risks overly long guidance, which might not be proportionate or accessible. Being overly specific could also risk limiting the types of projects proposed, to the detriment of the richness of activities funded. Also, the programme receives more quality applications than it can fund already. Going forward the Arts Council may just want to focus on refining guidance for the disciplines from which it does not receive as many applications as hoped for.

2.27 If so, this might perhaps entail more case studies, advice and facilitated peer discussions for the underrepresented disciplines, to help increase the number and quality of applications from these disciplines. There is probably also a case for engaging with the Museums and Libraries teams within Arts Council England and sector organisations to better reflect these disciplines in the guidance, and also more widely within DYCP.

Point for consideration: If it is a priority to increase successful applications from less well represented disciplines (particularly Libraries, Museums and to a lesser extent Combined Arts) the following should be considered: the appropriateness and language of the application form and guidance; producing more case studies for these disciplines; more active engagement of these sectors. This could draw on relevant Arts Council England teams and sector organisations.

The application

2.28 The table below provides an overview of the different elements in the DYCP application form.

Application overview

Three open questions with a set of prompts each:

- Please tell us about yourself and your creative practice (1,800 characters)
- Tell us about the developmental opportunity you want to undertake, what you hope to get out of it, and how you will go about it (1,500 characters)
- Why is this important for your practice at this point, and how will this help create future opportunities? (1,500 characters)

A request for one example of their work

A request for a supporting document written by someone else to support the quality of their practice

Expenditure budget

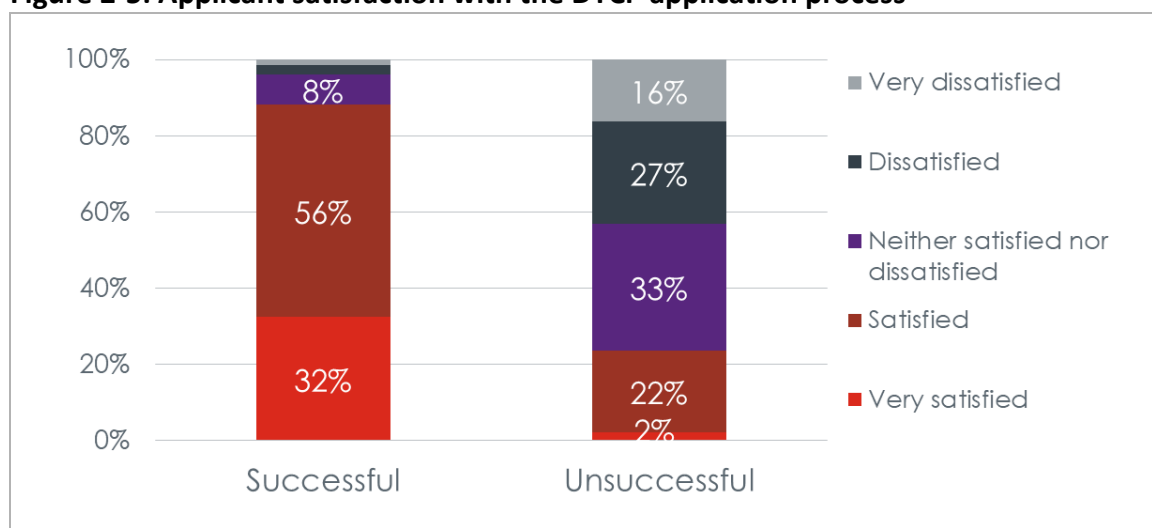
Activity plan table

Tick-boxes on the focus of the activity (viewed as helping to provide some steer) and anticipated future public benefit and contribution to *Let's Create Outcomes*

Source: Summary of DYCP application form with SQW interpretation

2.29 As already highlighted, the application process is intended to be proportionate, straightforward, accessible and not overly prescriptive. The survey asked applicants how satisfied they were with the application process. The findings show that **the vast majority of successful applicants were satisfied or very satisfied**, but only around quarter of unsuccessful applicants said they were satisfied or very satisfied. Again this is perhaps understandable given they were not successful. The survey also captured views from a disproportionate level of applicants who had been unsuccessful multiple times.

Figure 2-5: Applicant satisfaction with the DYCP application process



Source: Applicant surveys (successful=758 and unsuccessful=520)

"I found it very easy in comparison to other applications. You didn't have to get a back-up of funding, and there were so many things you didn't have to do you have to do for others, such as proving your audience, all your dates, partners etc. You didn't have any of that." Unsuccessful interview, Visual Arts

*“DYCP is more genuinely about convincing the Arts Council how the money is going to have an impact on you. It feels really clear and there’s no additional information you need to know about the Arts Council’s priorities or anything like that. The questions are all much more straightforward because it is just about you.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

2.30 Considering how satisfaction changed over time, there has been fluctuation between rounds but no obvious improvement or worsening. Applicants were also asked about their satisfaction with specific aspects of the application process. Figure 2-6 below shows that:

- **Satisfaction is high with the timings** associated with application to the fund; the use of rounds does not appear to be an issue – this was supported by the interview findings:
 - The deadlines, advance notice and access to questions/answers outside of application windows were repeatedly noted as helpful features, especially for prompting applications and allowing applicants to plan ahead and manage their time
 - However, at least a couple of interviewees with an unsuccessful application reported that they had rushed to submit because of the time window, rather than waiting until the next round – saying on reflection they recognised they should have waited to feel more confident in their application. There could perhaps be more emphasis on feeling confident in an application rather than rushing it given restrictions on reapplying. Also, while the timings for the next round is usually flagged, the guidance on Rounds 10-12 did not highlight when Round 13 would be.
 - Some survey respondents said that it had been difficult to know whether to accept or reject work while awaiting the DYCP decision, though others did say the turnaround was quick relative to many other funding they had applied for.

*“If it was a rolling programme where I could apply at any time I’d have kept putting it off – having a set deadline is helpful to plan around other freelance work – obviously you know when you’re going to have to set work aside.” **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

- Most successful and unsuccessful applicants thought **the information required was reasonable; the process is generally seen as proportionate**

*“Comparing it to Project Grants it was great. It’s three questions that feel manageable – it’s not an extravagantly long application and it’s about the art, the practice and why now. That felt quite clear.” **Grantee interview, Not Discipline Specific***

*“I feel like it was very direct. It wasn’t so long, it felt very doable. you look at the form and it feels like it isn’t going to consume so much of your time if you have an idea of what you’re going to develop.” **Unsuccessful interview, Combined Arts***

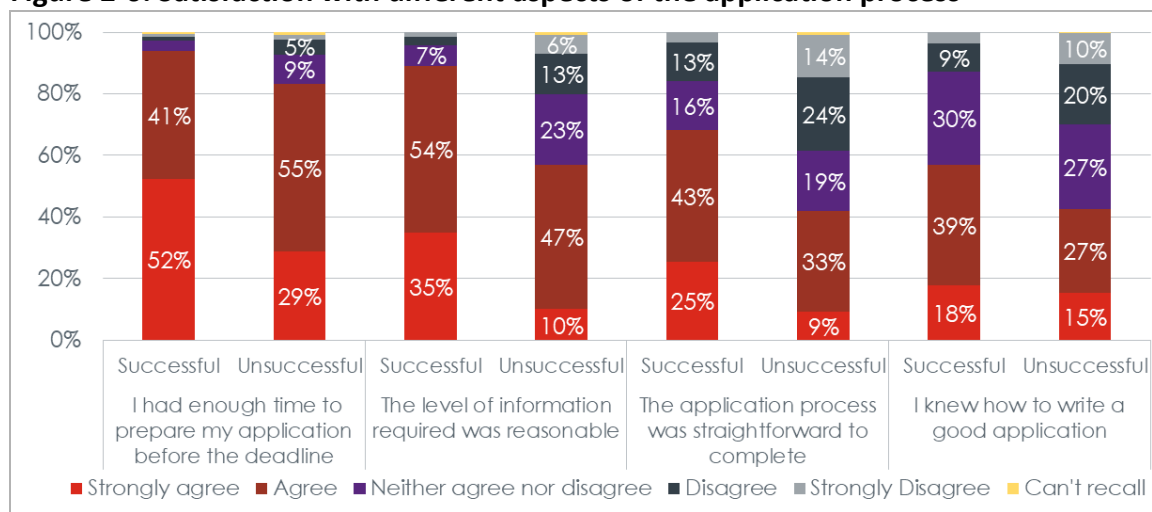
"Putting the project together was detailed – but it made the project quite tangible – the application process allowed me to think through what it was I wanted to do and how I would do it – step by step." Grantee interview, Literature

"I thought [the application process is] succinct, the light nature was absolutely fantastic. I thought that really encouraged you to go for it because you're already applying for something, which means that you're shifting from your natural sort of place to something that you're unfamiliar with - and to be faced with the possibility of doing that lightly rather than having to argue at length was a really encouraging aspect of it. I think it was very clear, it was very lean." Grantee interview, Theatre

- There was **less agreement about the application process being straightforward to complete**, especially amongst unsuccessful applicants
- There was **less agreement that applicants knew how to write a good application**, with under half of successful and unsuccessful applicants agreeing with this.

"I think what is really helpful is reading other people's positive applications, finding out what has been successful and if there is anything that might be received more favourably. I think the step change is the really important thing about it that you need to prove and show." Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries

Figure 2-6: Satisfaction with different aspects of the application process



Source: Applicant surveys (successful=758 and unsuccessful=520)

2.31 The issues that applicants cited around the application process, particularly its straightforwardness and knowing how to write a good application, were:

- Many interviewees, including those who were nonetheless satisfied, found it **time consuming to produce a quality application** that 'made every word count' (which the low character count necessitated), with a minority saying they could write their application in a short space of time

*“The Arts Council certainly don’t take on board that it takes weeks to write these applications, to do with the level of information you have to read in preparation, the guidance, the Arts Council’s agendas. It’s not as simple as ‘here’s some funding, what do you want to achieve and how will it benefit you’... To apply just for £10k, it does take artists weeks.” **Grantee interview, Dance***

- Unsuccessful applicants, and some successful, commonly reported finding it difficult to write and structure a clear and high quality application that communicated their thinking, reported struggling to express themselves, or felt **restricted by a written application** – with that more commonly seen as an issue rather than the substance of their application

*“It’s almost a tick box exercise, you’re thinking about what the Arts Council want to hear rather than what you want to say.” **Unsuccessful interview, Museums/Libraries***

*“The character count is always an issue – 1,800 characters to talk about a 20 year career is not ideal. It’s also quite a wide ranging question. Some people get really in knots about this, wondering what specifically they want to hear. Especially when you have a portfolio career like me it’s hard to pick out specifically. The Arts Council need to be really clear about what they want to know – I could talk for an hour about my creative practice. It’s not particularly accessible for people who are neurodiverse. It can lead people to feel quite lost about what it means.” **Grantee interview, Dance***

*“The word counts on all the answers were quite tight which made it challenging – part of this is because I used word count selling museums as creative practice as well as on my actual proposed project.” **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

- A common request in the survey was for the **assessment criteria to be more explicit** and, related to this, a few interviewees were suspicious that the questions and prompts did not entirely reflect how applications would be judged, and that criteria such as ‘who you know’ and an existing profile or relationship with the Arts Council were important factors in determining success

*“I don’t think the questions necessarily reflect what they are actually looking for, and I think there’s a certain strategy – there’s a certain way to fill in these applications that I wasn’t aware of.” **Unsuccessful interview, Theatre***

*“Clarity on how applications will be assessed and against what criteria. I had no idea who would be doing the assessing and how they would be judging it. You should have published assessment criteria to make clear how you are making decisions about vastly different applications otherwise it all starts to look very subjective.” **Unsuccessful survey, Museums/Libraries***

- Similarly, a few interviewees were unsure **how favourably the inclusion of certain components would be viewed** in an application, particularly the purchase of equipment
- A small but significant proportion reported being **unsure in how to develop a budget** and what would constitute fair pay for themselves and others, and therefore being hesitant to fully cost their own time in the application

“I found it hard to know ‘should I be paying myself at a full rate, should I pay myself for every bit of work?’ ... I probably put it at a minimum and kept the number of days I was being paid for at a minimum. If the Arts Council could be a bit firmer – if there was a breakdown of reasonable pay for a mentor or sliding scales that make it clear that ‘you might want to think about offering people who are supporting you a fee for what they are doing’.” Grantee interview, Theatre

- An interviewee pointed to a perceived **overlap** between “Tell us about the developmental opportunity you want to undertake, what you hope to get out of it, and how you will go about it” and “Why is this important for your practice at this point, and how will this help create future opportunities?”
- One interviewee, a conservator, flagged that the request for an example of their work did **not feel applicable to their role**, so the read-across of this section to some specific roles may need to be considered
- There were frequent comments about **issues with the Grantium platform**, including it not being user friendly, difficult to navigate, losing applications, and support not being responsive enough – though it is noted that those involved in the development and delivery of DYCP are not well placed to influence this.

2.32 DYCP, and the *Let’s Create* strategy, share an ambition to support practitioners with potential early in their careers, as well as those who have never applied to the Arts Council before.³⁴ The interviews found that **these practitioners, who tended to have limited or no experience of writing funding applications before, were most likely to report having struggled with their application**. Some applicants with a professional network reported being able to draw on these friends/colleagues/peers or sector organisations, which in some cases included previously successful applicants, to review and comment on their application. **Those who lack such a network may thus be at a disadvantage**, which was highlighted by some interviewees and survey respondents. Applicants who are neurodivergent, including those with dyslexia or on the autism spectrum, reported being further challenged by the application process; this is considered in more depth later around accessibility.

³⁴ Monitoring data shows that 80% of DYCP applications have been from first time DYCP applicants and 70% have not applied for NLPG or ERF, although the data does not show if their DYCP application came first. It is also unknown whether DYCP applicants had applied to the Arts Council for other funding opportunities.

“It [the guidance] definitely was helpful in terms of writing the first round, but I do think there could be perhaps a few more tips in there. I don’t know if they think people are used to writing applications but hints and tips on application writing would be useful – things like using bullet points rather than prose would be really useful.” **Grantee interview, Theatre**

“I got the sense that DYCP is for people who have degrees, know how to write and be a bit more independent in your application.” **Unsuccessful interview, Visual Arts**

2.33 This suggests there may be a **possible need for further application writing support or guidance**, aimed at those who are more likely to need it, if successful applications are sought from a wide range of diverse practitioners. Staff involved in the development and delivery of DYCP pointed to a conscious emphasis on judging applications based on substance, perceived potential, and the examples of their practice, rather than on the writing. That said, there remains a risk that those less able or confident at communicating their ideas in a written application will be disadvantaged (or at least deterred from applying due to perceived disadvantaged).

Point for consideration: Consider more guidance around writing an application, which might include sharing examples of successful applications, and include a more intensive offer targeted at those who are (or may be) disadvantaged.

2.34 The extent to which support is used is considered below. Then more is said on how support around applications could be implemented, and what value it would add.

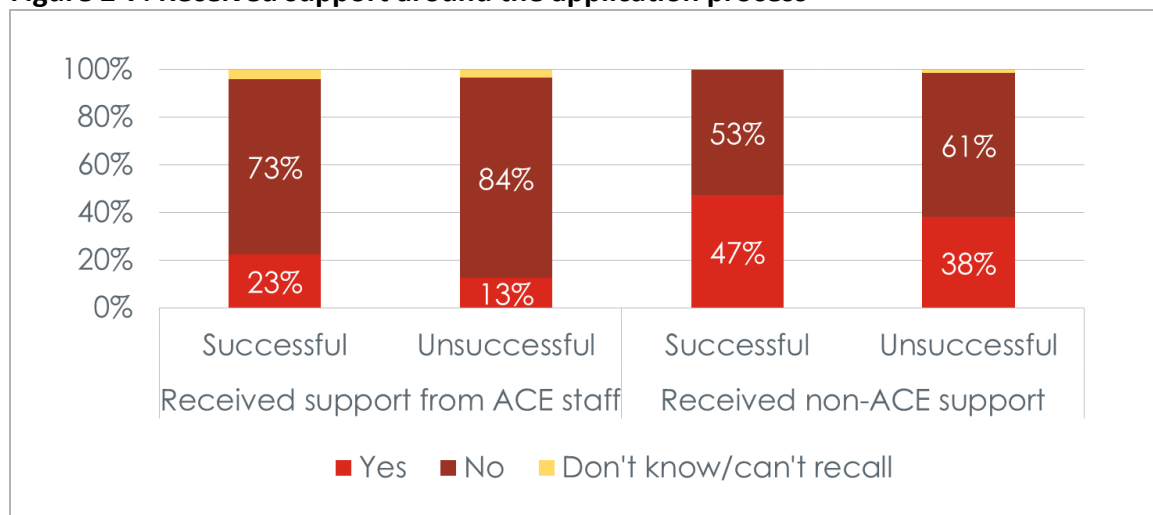
Application support

2.35 Applicants were asked whether they had received support with their application, and from what source. Figure 2-7 shows that **successful applicants were more likely to have received support than unsuccessful applicants**, and that applicants were more likely to receive support from somewhere/someone other than Arts Council England. The survey showed this **support tended to come from professional contacts, including friends, colleagues, mentors or peers in the sector, or from sector organisations**, but that some had used friends or family who were not in the sector for help. Generally this consisted of reviewing their application before submission. For some, organisations ran sessions about Arts Council England that covered how to write a DYCP application (at times with Arts Council England staff involvement), as well as running sessions solely focused on application writing. Some survey respondents said they received **support from professional bid writers**.

“There is no support – I had a couple of friends read through the application and someone with more experience with the Arts Council. There used to be a phone number that you could call and ask for support. Now all they have is email and it takes ages to get a reply. I felt very much on my own with it.” **Unsuccessful interview, Museums/Libraries**

2.36 The support from the Arts Council was generally reported to be either support from customer services in answering queries or Access Support. More consideration is given to Access Support in the next section on accessibility. A small number of interviewees said they had spoken with a Relationship Manager prior to writing their application.

Figure 2-7: Received support around the application process



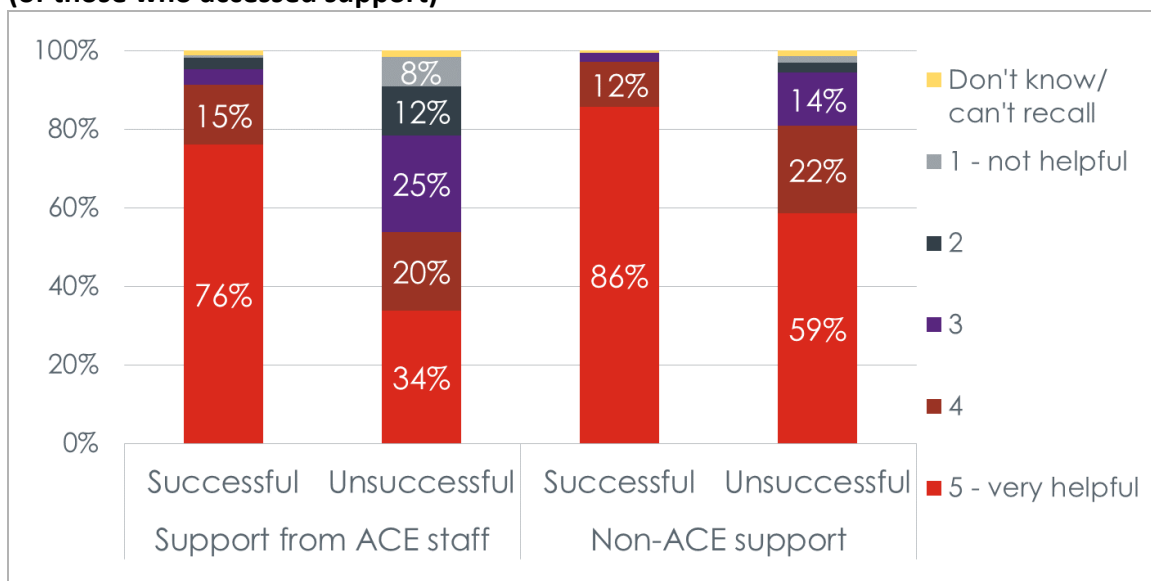
Source: Applicant surveys (successful=761 and unsuccessful=523)

*“When I did my first draft application and got feedback [from a friend] I ended up stripping it back. I know the Arts Council don’t offer feedback on applications, so if I hadn’t had help from someone in the know then I wouldn’t have known what I’d done wrong. I’ve never really applied for funding before so maybe it’s more clear to more experienced people.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

*“I have to stress this – I was lucky enough that because lockdown hadn’t started, I was able to call them [Arts Council England]. I got a lot of support over the phone. Without that support, I wouldn’t have been able to do it. Please put in giant letters ‘We need phone support’ because right now they don’t have it and it is complicated.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

2.37 The survey asked those who accessed support how useful it was. **Successful applicants rated the support received well, but unsuccessful applicants had more mixed views, especially on the Arts Council’s support.** A small but considerable number of interviewees were doubtful they would have been successful without the support they received.

Figure 2-8: Ratings of the helpfulness of support around the DYCP application process (of those who accessed support)



Source: Applicant survey (successful=171/354 and unsuccessful=65/198 – only covers those who accessed support)

2.38 Applicants who managed to get **support or feedback from previously successful applicants** were especially likely to have found the support helpful. In some cases, the individuals or sector organisations that provided support knew multiple successful applicants, so had very strong insights into how to write a successful application. It was striking how many successful applicants who were interviewed knew other successful applicants, or were supported by individuals/organisations that knew successful applicants.

“I’ve had a few friends who have been successful and unsuccessful in applying – through conversations with them I knew I needed to be at a point of transition – I think I was happy to work it out myself from there” Grantee interview, Literature

“I felt like that was all quite clear until I sent my application to someone else to look at. They had supported artists to make applications and had a track record of success and said that I was trying to do too much.” Grantee interview, Dance

2.39 One interviewee attended two events about DYCP for Museums which were attended by a representative from Arts Council England, but reported that most questions received the response ‘I will have to go away and check’ and were ultimately not answered. There might be a case for running short satisfaction surveys for events, to check the input was well received.

Point for consideration: Consider running short satisfaction surveys for any external facing events with practitioners/potential applicants. To manage resourcing demands, this might best be focused on events aimed at those from underrepresented disciplines.

2.40 As with other recommendations throughout this report, consideration needs to be given to **what is proportionate given the size of grant and level of demand**; more resource

intensive solutions would necessitate trade-offs. Specifically, more intensive support would ultimately mean less money being available as DYCP grants. More resource intensive solutions that were suggested included greater one on one application writing support, or running drop-in surgeries around application windows. Less intensive options include developing additional guidance, running a limited number of workshops per round that focus on the application writing process, signposting to support organisations, and publishing examples of well written applications for reference. This support may help to narrow the gap between those currently able to access this type of support via their networks and those who are unable to, but would need to be manageable within the Arts Council's resourcing for DYCP, and targeting may be appropriate to focus on underrepresented applicant groups.

- 2.41** In considering the value that application writing support might add, another benefit is worth considering. A frequent comment in interviews was that **the process of writing the application was formative in itself, regardless of its success**. It was often seen as an **'impetus' or 'catalyst', which had pushed applicants to identify their vision**, define a set of objectives and deliverables, and stimulate thinking around the actions and practicalities to achieve it. For those who were less experienced, it was formative not just because it supported them to think through their project, but because it **developed their application writing skills**. As a result, it is feasible that greater support around application writing could deliver some value even if no more applications could be funded, in that it may support the development of plans for enhancing creative and cultural practice, and the development of application writing skills amongst individuals in the sector. Most importantly though, it could **limit the risk of bias towards those with already well-developed writing skills and/or professional/personal networks**.
- 2.42** Another option could be the introduction for submitting **applications in video or audio format**. A few interviewees did express a preference for alternative forms of application, and in a couple of instances highlighted other funds that allowed non-written applications. This **may make judging more difficult** however, so would need to be considered from a resourcing and comparability perspective. Certainly, there would need to be limits on length, and these would need to feel fair versus character limits, and consideration would have to be given as to whether a written activity plan and budget would still be needed. Again however, given the volume of quality applications received, this may be a suggested revision that is not necessary for DYCP going forwards.

Accessibility issues

- 2.43** In the survey, **unsuccessful applicants who said they were neurodivergent were more likely to be dissatisfied with the application process** (56% dissatisfied vs 36% for non-neurodivergent) and to **disagree that they knew how to write a good application** (50% disagreed vs 22% for non-neurodivergent). These gaps in satisfaction and understanding are large, and therefore worth considering further.
- 2.44** The interviews included a small number interviewees who were neurodivergent, and they reported accessibility issues linked to this, and more specifically related to having dyslexia

and/or being on the autism spectrum. While small in number, the findings from these interviews may explain the survey findings above. They reported issues with the guidance, application form and Grantium in particular, and struggled in understanding ‘what DYCP was really about’ and communicating their ideas in their application. One did **comment positively on the simplicity of the ‘am I ready to apply?’ quiz and accessible guidance** though, and another on the **video guidance** - although others had not encountered the video guidance.

*“Arts Council need to be really clear about what they want to know.... It’s not particularly accessible for people who are neurodiverse. It can lead people to feel quite lost about what it means.” **Grantee interview, Dance***

*“I found the videos really helpful as with Dyslexia the way the Arts Council word things can be very academic. The videos not only explained what it was in more detail, it also mentioned that they’re opening it up to DJs and technicians, and it let me see that it was open to us and not just ballerinas.” **Grantee interview, Not Discipline Specific***

2.45 The survey found that the proportion of unsuccessful applicants who accessed support from Arts Council England (more generally, rather than necessarily Access Support) was similar for neurodivergent and non-neurodivergent applicants at 10% and 13% respectively. The interviews found that the **support offer for neurodivergent applicants was not clearly known or understood, and possibly inconsistently offered to neurodivergent applicants:**

- One of the applicants received Access Support with reviewing the guidance, proofing and budgeting their application, and throughout the delivery of their project. They valued it highly, especially the learning around project management and organisation skills
- One of the applicants reported repeatedly calling the Arts Council’s Customer Support to request help (which they report was not forthcoming), until they were signposted to an organisation that could help
- One of the applicants was entirely unaware of any support offer, and had struggled with their application – this experience was mirrored in the stories other interviewees recounted of neurodivergent friends or peers who either struggled with their DYCP application or gave up entirely.

“I had not realised that as an individual with a disability I was entitled to support. This should be more clearly signposted. I felt highly frustrated only to have learned this via social media after learning that my second application was unsuccessful. The retrospective changes to advertised eligibility criteria meant that I was unable to benefit from this in a future application and I felt and still feel considerably disadvantaged.”
Unsuccessful survey, Museums/Libraries

“The Arts Council were not allowed to give me support. It was up to me to find my own support. I’m very isolated in a provincial part of Britain, I didn’t have those kinds of people, I’m not part of an art community, I didn’t know what sort of person would support someone like me to write an application. They wouldn’t give me any guidelines, numbers or names.” Grantee interview, Visual Arts

2.46 DYCP is now collecting data on whether applicants consider themselves neurodivergent. This should help in understanding whether there are accessibility issues for neurodivergent applicants, and especially whether success rates are different. Positively, comparing the proportion of applicants who were neurodivergent in the successful and unsuccessful survey suggests that success rates are not significantly different – 21% of unsuccessful applicants and 17% of successful applicants identified themselves as neurodivergent. This should be monitored on an ongoing basis now that the data is being collected.

Point for consideration: Monitor applicant data on neurodivergence and whether there are any observable differences in experiences of applying to DYCP.

2.47 Ensuring that DYCP is as accessible as possible is an understandable challenge, but there was desire to achieve this amongst those involved in the development and delivery of DYCP, in line with the expectations in *Let’s Create*. Suggested improvements include the **provision of video guidance and allowing for video or audio applications**. Ideally video guidance would be ‘bite-sized’ so as to be more accessible and could cover topics such as common mistakes/misconceptions, how to answer each question, how to develop a budget, discipline specific project examples/recommendations – which may also benefit those without accessibility issues. Other suggestions **included making the support offer clearer and an automatic triggering of an Access Support offer for those who say they are neurodivergent** (if possible via Grantium). A further suggestion was for the Arts Council to run a consulting exercise with neurodivergent applicants or sector representatives, to explore the DYCP application form and processes, especially in testing any changes.

Point for consideration: Consider how to increase the accessibility of the DYCP application process. This might include introducing bite-sized video guidance, allowing video or audio applications, and reviewing how sufficient and prominent the support offer is for neurodivergent applicants. Co-designing and/or testing any changes or additions with practitioners with a range of identified access needs could help to ensure they are fit for purpose.

Unsuccessful applicants

2.48 Across Rounds 1-8 some 5% of applications were deemed ineligible for DYCP, most due to too many reapplications. Yet across Rounds 1-11 there were 14,582 unsuccessful applications, equivalent to **80% of all applications**, so around three-quarters are eligible but still unsuccessful.

2.49 Those involved in the development and delivery of DYCP identified a range of reasons that applicants were unsuccessful, including:

- Applications being **too focused on an output** and/or just looking to continue their existing practice, rather than focusing on their development
- Applicants **not being at the right stage of their career** for development time
- The examples of past work **do not show sufficient potential**
- **Not a strong enough case** for the activity and the step change it will achieve
- Applications being of **low quality in other ways**, including undetailed activity plans or budgets, or lack of clarity in the application.

2.50 Those involved in the development and delivery of DYCP acknowledged that there were more high quality, fundable applications than they were able to fund, due to the **volume of applications received**. This necessitates difficult decisions at times, including due to the aim of achieving a balance of discipline, geography and applicants.

2.51 There is currently **no systematic data collected on why applicants were unsuccessful**. Data on the reasons applicants were unsuccessful is not recorded because of the quantity of applications and limited administrative resource. This has two implications: there is a lack of data available for internal decision making, and applicants do not get any feedback. Both points are considered here, in order.

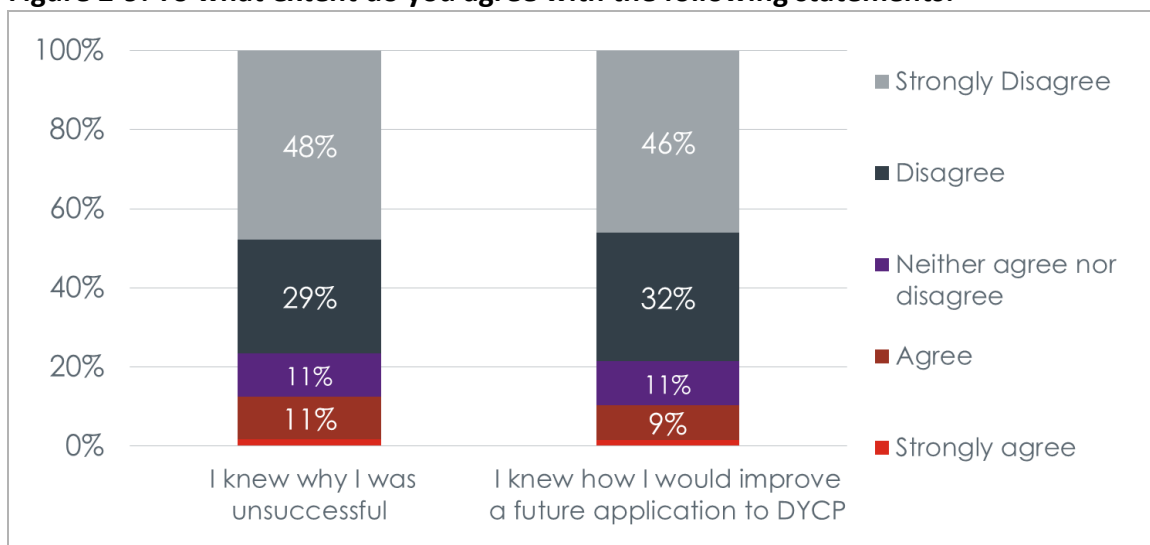
2.52 The only available data that offers any insight into the scale of fundable applications is data collected from Decision Panels in Round 10. This showed the proportion of applications that were marked as 'prefer not to fund' (which meant two decision makers had selected that option). The data showed 39% were marked as such, meaning that **61% of applications were deemed fundable by at least one decision maker, versus just 26% that were funded**. This ranged from 46% for the South West and South East to 27% in the North, and from 43% for Theatre to 26% for Dance. Those involved in the development and delivery of DYCP suggested that this does vary by round, and that over time the quality of application has increased, but this and the comments set out above suggest that **thousands more applications across DYCP's lifetime may have been of sufficient quality to fund**. A reasonable conclusion therefore is that if DYCP funding were to increase this would not be to the detriment of the quality of applications funded, at least within a certain limit. Quite to what limit is difficult to gauge though, due to the lack of more detailed reasons on why an application was not funded, and more importantly how it ranked against other applications. If such data were collected, it would help to inform internal decision making around application quality and appropriate levels of funding.

Feedback to applicants

2.53 Capturing reasons as to why applications were not successful would also enable the provision of some form of feedback to applicants. The survey found that the vast majority

of unsuccessful applicants did not know why they were unsuccessful and did not know how they would improve a future application.

Figure 2-9: To what extent do you agree with the following statements:



Source: Unsuccessful applicant survey (n=510)

2.54 This was reflected in interviews with unsuccessful applicants and successful applicants who had also submitted at least one unsuccessful application. Generally, interviewees were unclear as to why they had been unsuccessful. Those who were more experienced or who had professional networks to draw on (especially those who could contact successful applicants) were more likely to think they understood why they might have been unsuccessful, and therefore how to adapt a future application. Yet even those who did have ideas about why were not certain. **While some suggestions for their lack of success were reasonable, others were likely inaccurate** based on the design and ethos of DYCP. For example, some thought they had been unsuccessful due to a lack of profile with the Arts Council, not having previous funding from the Arts Council, or not appearing to ‘know the right people’ in their application; in the surveys some applicants blamed ‘diversity targets’ for their lack of success.

“I have no idea why it was unsuccessful – the people I showed the application to are successful in their funding bids and have been successful, and they didn’t pick up anything that was glaringly a black mark against my name. Why would I put in a third application without feedback? We’ve had to write it off as an, ‘oh, it’s competitive’.”

Unsuccessful interview, Museums/Libraries

“I was surprised, because it seemed to be what they were looking for in terms of digital learning, and it was linked to a piece of work, and I had a letter of recommendation from a major opera director which was really positive. So I was thinking ‘what is it they really do want?’”

Unsuccessful interview, Music

“I didn’t get any feedback from the Arts Council. I got some feedback from a friend who’s a creative artist – he said maybe I didn’t have enough names of people I was going to

*partner with that are known people within the Arts Council.” **Unsuccessful interview, Combined Arts***

*“I think if you have well-known or prestigious individuals or organisations mentioned in your application, that you hope to collaborate with or be mentored by, you’re much more likely to be successful.” **Unsuccessful interview, Theatre***

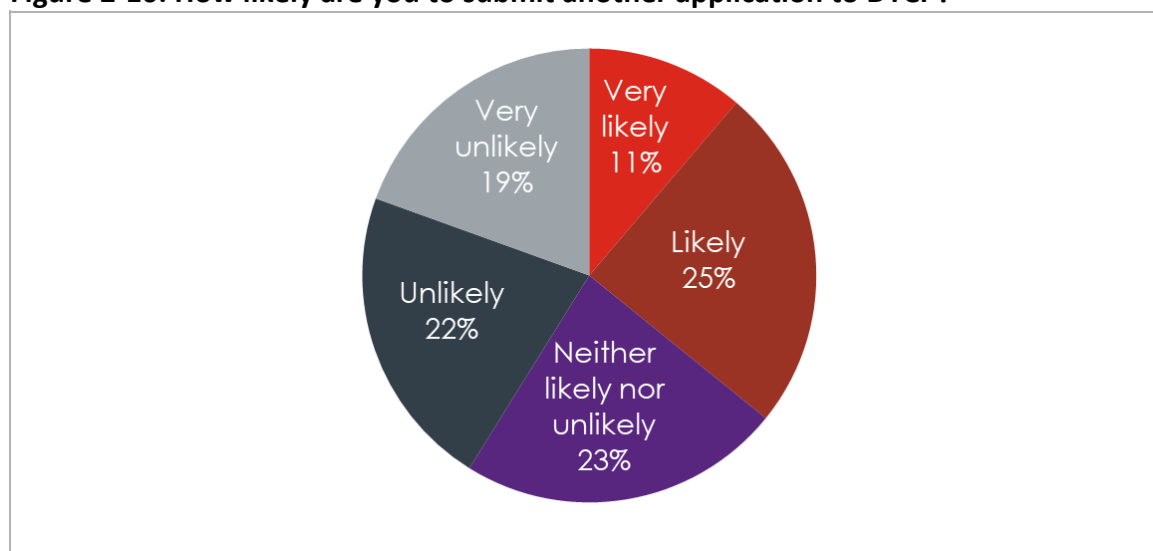
*“When I spoke with them [a sector organisation] it was after my second application around design and I had put in costings for IT equipment, and apparently that isn’t really viewed positively by DYCP. What I hadn’t done enough of which apparently DYCP really likes is connecting with other creatives as part of the skills raising. Things like that are useful to know and probably would angle how you positioned your application.”
Unsuccessful interview, Museums/Libraries*

*“[I would like] clarity on how you make decisions about geography and art form. A tiny percentage of your grants go under the 'museums' discipline compared with others, it looks like there is no point in applying particularly when you only allow a certain number of applications from each local authority area. It means the playing field is not level - if I happen to live in a local authority with a high proportion of people working in the creative industries I have less chance of success than if I live five miles down the road.”
Unsuccessful survey, Museums/Libraries*

2.55 The reasons unsuccessful applicants think they were unsuccessful might be correct, incorrect, or they might only be part of the reason. Their application may have been high quality and only just missed out, and could be funded if resubmitted without amendment in the next round, but they might think it needed scaling back or was entirely off the mark. Likewise, an unsuccessful applicant could have submitted a poor application, but think it only needs small tweaks (including the wrong tweaks) to have a chance if resubmitted. The lack of any feedback or steer means the wrong people and applications may be getting discouraged/encouraged. It was suggested that there are sometimes ad-hoc follow-up conversations with unsuccessful applicants, but this is not a widespread approach.

2.56 Across Rounds 1-11 there have been **reapplications from 20% of applicants**. Across Rounds 1-11 there were 3,348 reapplications from previously unsuccessful individuals, of which 23% are successful, which is slightly higher than the 19% success rate for initial applications. This means there are significant resource implications attached to not providing feedback. Further demonstrating this, the survey found that **36% of unsuccessful applicants said they were likely or very likely to reapply**.

Figure 2-10: How likely are you to submit another application to DYCP?



Source: Unsuccessful applicant survey (n=508)

2.57 Applicants called for feedback, despite it not being prompted in evaluation questioning. In the unsuccessful survey there were 141 respondents (26%) that mentioned feedback unprompted. Some applicants reported that they felt let down by the lack of feedback, which they highlighted as a key driver for unwillingness to reapply.

*"I would love feedback after the application. If there was a way of pinpointing what made your application weaker than someone else's. There's only so many spaces and I feel like they don't want people to know how to apply as it makes it harder for them to make the decisions about who gets funding." **Unsuccessful interview, Combined Arts***

*"The amount of effort required to get no feedback – you don't know which bits got knocked down – so why after doing it twice would I do it a third time? Something as basic as 'this is not a project which fits within our funding area' would be useful. I've raised this with the Arts Council. Particularly as a freelancer the application took about a week of my time, and the second one as well so it's two weeks – such a waste of my time – and then the lack of respect that you don't get any feedback." **Unsuccessful interview, Museums/Libraries***

*"It would be really helpful to have some level of targeted feedback, even if it is fairly broad. If they say 'we preferred other applications'. There is nothing you can carry forward in future to learn from and improve." **Unsuccessful interview, Museums/Libraries***

*"I took a lot of time scoping and costing the proposal, contacting people, asking contacts for assistance. The refusal to provide any feedback on why I was unsuccessful or how I might improve my chances left me feeling that the decision-making process was very arbitrary and that people simply thought my plans weren't worthwhile. That was somewhat depressing and completely put me off 'wasting' time applying again." **Unsuccessful survey, Museums/Libraries***

- 2.58** So there is **clear demand for feedback**, as well as some good reasons to provide it – to support the development of applicants, to address the possible advantage gap between those more/less experienced and networked, to increase application quality, to encourage resubmissions of quality applications, to discourage resubmissions of poor applications, and to provide data for internal decision making.
- 2.59** However, any solution needs to be **mindful of the resourcing requirements** to collect data and provide feedback. Tailored feedback would be too demanding given the volume of applications and DYCP staffing levels, and not proportionate given the individual grant amounts available. Arts Council England staff suggested that identifying reasons for applications being unsuccessful from a tick-box list of options may be manageable. Ideally this would be broken down to cover individual elements of the application. Scoring is one option that might be considered, given it would be helpful for comparing applications, understanding how fundable they were or the overall quality of the application. Yet, because the decision process involves preference modelling, making decisions to achieve balance, and decisions made by multiple panels with different compositions between rounds, the scores may not be as meaningful as it might be interpreted nor practicable. To ensure any solution is practicable, one option may be to pilot it in one region and/or for a single round.
- 2.60** The majority of demands for feedback from applicants were not for extensive tailored feedback, with an understanding articulated that this was unlikely to be feasible, and a shared view that a list of options would be sufficient, provided they were sufficiently instructive on positive aspects and shortfalls of applications. There were also some **requests for a ‘common mistakes’ factsheet** that could be used for easy reference when writing an application. This could also encompass a ‘myth buster’ component to counter some of the incorrect views applicants hold as to why they might have been unsuccessful, such as not knowing the right people or not having profile with the Arts Council.
- 2.61** There were some requests for one-to-one follow ups, but this was not a common request. Recognising resource constraints, consideration may want to be given to whether very specific groups, for example underrepresented disciplines, might be targeted for follow-up conversations.

Point for consideration: Consider piloting and introducing limited standardised feedback to applicants, based on tick-box recording by the Arts Council’s decision panels. Consider whether it would be feasible to include feedback on different elements of the application as part of this.

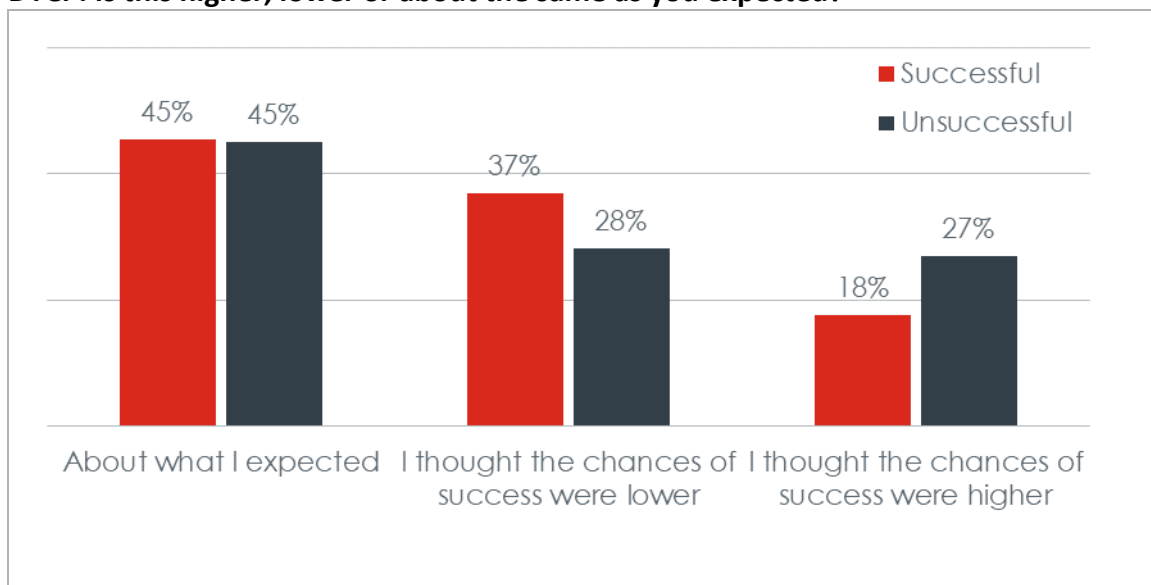
Point for consideration: Consider producing standalone ‘common mistakes’ and/or ‘myth buster’ factsheets.

Knowledge of success rates

- 2.62** Another issue explored with applicants was their knowledge of success rates. As Figure 2-11 shows, most commonly it was around what applicants expected, and of the

remainder unsuccessful applicants were about equally split on thinking it was higher or lower.

Figure 2-11: Only one in five applications have been successful across Rounds 1-11 of DYCP. Is this higher, lower or about the same as you expected?



Source: Applicant surveys (successful=678 and unsuccessful=502)

2.63 The interviews broadly aligned with this finding, with most thinking that the chances of success were fairly low, although many did say they were unsure. There were some notable misconceptions reported:

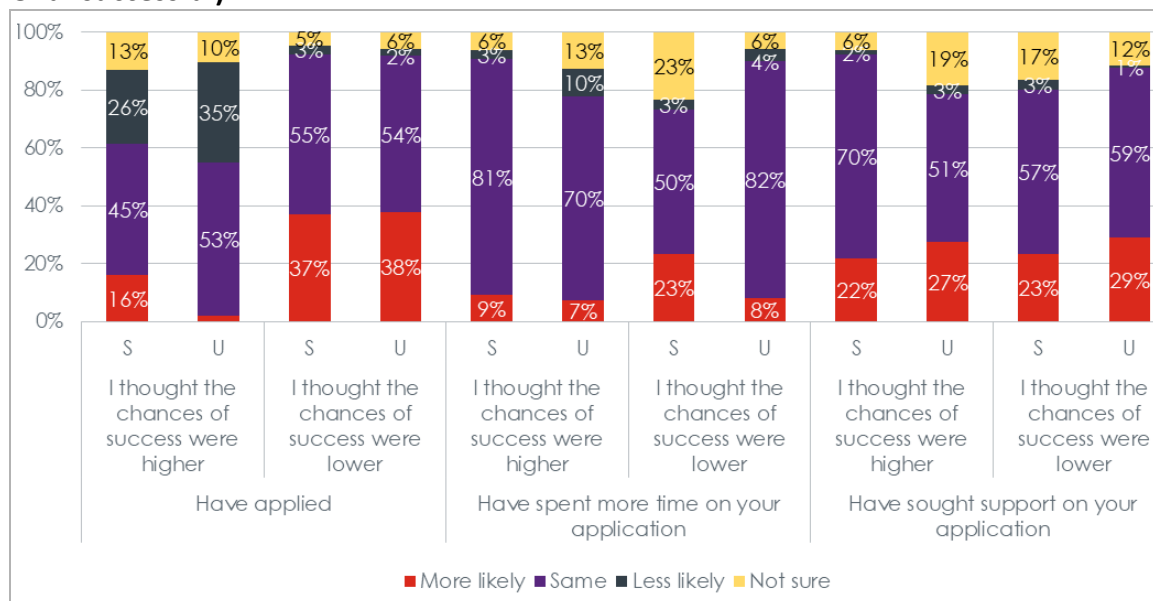
- A few applicants thought later rounds were more challenging, when in fact success rates for more recent rounds were higher than earlier rounds (as shown earlier in Table 2-1)
- A small number (who knew multiple successful applicants) thought the likelihood of success was far higher – *"from the people I know it seems like it's 50/50"* **Unsuccessful interview, Combined Arts**
- Some Museum professionals thought that the likelihood of success for their discipline was very low, because the proportion of funded projects from the discipline is so low, when actually the success rate is considerably higher than most disciplines (as shown earlier in Table 2-2)

"I looked at their published candidates list and looked at the ratio of museum professionals – I think it encouraged me and discouraged me – it made me take quite a pragmatic approach to the way I wrote the application because I knew that not many museum projects got funded. I knew I had to gear my application to make it more appealing to the Arts Council – I spent a lot of my time trying to show that what I do is creative practice." **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries**

2.64 The survey also asked what impact their knowledge of the actual success rate would have had on their application. Most (except in one instance) said they would have been just as

likely to apply, and to have spent as much time on their application, and to have sought support with their application. Then of the remainder, the impact was as might be expected – those who thought the chances were higher than they actually were on average less likely to have done these things, those who thought the chances were lower were on average more likely to have done these things. So better knowledge of success rates might impact on the behaviour of a minority of applicants.

Figure 2-12: Only one in five applications have been successful across Rounds 1-11 of DYCP. Is this higher, lower or about the same as you expected? (S=successful and U=unsuccessful)



Source: Applicant surveys (successful=31/65 and unsuccessful=138/135)

2.65 While not appearing to be an urgent area of need, for the reasons set out in this section it may be **worthwhile better publicising the likelihood of success**. Currently applicant numbers do get published but there is no explicit mention of “one in five are successful” for example. There may be a benefit to highlighting the high success rates for underrepresented disciplines in particular.

Point for consideration: Consider explicitly highlighting the success rates for previous DYCP rounds so that applicants are informed and can respond accordingly.

3. Types of projects funded by DYCP

- 3.1** This chapter considers the types of projects funded by DYCP. It starts by considering monitoring data on the value, length and focus of projects, before considering the survey insights into activities planned and delivered.

Value of projects

- 3.2** Monitoring data shows that **most projects funded had a value within the range of £7.5-10k**; few are below this level. Interestingly, applications for greater levels of funding are more likely to be successful, suggesting that the scale (if not the cost) of activities/ambition may be a factor in the likelihood of success.

Table 3-1: Project value (minus personal access costs)

Value	Grantees	Applications	Grantees	Applications	Success rate
£2-4.9k	246	1,564	7%	9%	16%
£5-7.4k	460	2,797	12%	15%	16%
£7.5-10k	3,007	13,934	81%	76%	22%

Source: SQW analysis of monitoring data

- 3.3** A breakdown of the different types of costs are set out in Table 3-2. It shows the most **common and majority of costs are artistic and creative costs**, though half or more have claimed costs for materials/equipment and overheads. Around one in nine grantees have received funding for personal access costs, ranging from £13 to £12,300.

Table 3-2: Average value of different project components

Cost type	Average	% claiming
Total cost (inc personal access costs)	£8,899	-
Total (exc personal access costs)	£8,709	-
Artistic and creative costs	£6,892	99%
Assets e.g. materials/equipment/instruments	£689	61%
Other	£545	59%
Overheads	£583	50%
Personal access costs	£191	11%

Source: Monitoring data

- 3.4** The average value of projects trended upwards over time, although Round 7 was the peak, with average costs falling in Round 8 but rising again since. Average values by discipline range between around £8,600 for Music up to £8,965 for Combined Arts and £9,550 for Libraries, so variation between disciplines is limited.

Length of project

- 3.5** The average length of a project is 7.5 months. Table 3-3 shows the spread of project lengths, with small numbers at the lower end of under three months, but then a fairly even spread within 3-12 months. There are some projects that ran for over 12 months, in agreement with the Arts Council staff involved in the delivery of DYCP.

Table 3-3: Project length

Length of project	Population		% of population		Success rate
	Grantees	Applications	Grantees	Applications	
Up to 3 months	362	2,103	10%	11%	17%
3-6 months	1,129	5,559	30%	30%	20%
6-9 months	976	4,253	26%	23%	23%
9-12 months	1,143	5,720	31%	31%	20%
12-18 months	92	545	2%	3%	17%
18-24 months	11	115	0%	1%	10%

Source: SQW analysis of monitoring data

- 3.6** Similar to project value, project length has trended upwards slightly over time, with Round 7 the peak; it fell in Round 8 but it has been rising since. There is variation between different disciplines in average project length, with Dance the shortest at 6.5 months and Literature the longest at 8.8 months.

Focus of activities

- 3.7** The application form asks applicants to tick which of six ‘foci’ their project is expected to cover. These are useful to consider, though the successful applicant survey asked for a more detailed breakdown and whether the intended activities were actually delivered, because that is not captured in the final activity reports.
- 3.8** Table 3-4 shows the prevalence of the different foci. For successful applications, the **most common focus is R&D**. Least common is international travel, with the pandemic leading to a drop from 35% of applications including this focus in Rounds 1-7, to 19% in Rounds 8-11. The other foci have generally seen increases over the rounds, with the largest increases (in order) for professional development, new networks and experimentation with collaborators. This reflects how on average the number of foci selected has increased over the rounds.
- 3.9** Focus on new work is interesting in that applications including this focus are less successful overall. This reflects the ethos of DYCP, which does not expect the production of new work, though it is permissible, particularly if it is innovative and/or the market for new work is unclear. If this is not the case, and the creation of new work does not sit alongside R&D or professional development, then applications are unlikely to be successful, which may explain this disparity.

Table 3-4: Project focus

Value	Grantees	Applications	Grantees	Applications	Success rate
R&D	3,508	16,758	94%	92%	21%
Professional development	3,255	14,868	88%	81%	22%
New networks	3,124	15,086	84%	82%	21%
New work	2,925	15,593	79%	85%	19%
Experiment w/ new collaborators	2,549	12,388	69%	68%	21%
International travel	914	4,394	25%	24%	21%

Source: SQW analysis of monitoring data

3.10 Differences between regions are minimal, except for applications from people in London being more likely to include international travel and experimentation with collaborators. The differences between disciplines for successful applications are more notable, and in particular, Literature is low for new networks/experimentation with collaborators and high for new work; Dance is low for new work and high for travel; and Music applications are low for R&D. The most common combinations more successful applications are R&D and networks (83%) and R&D and professional development (80%), reflecting their prevalence.

Types of activities

- 3.11** The successful applicant survey asked respondents to provide a greater level of detail on the types of activities they had planned and undertaken, based on a list of options. This helps in understanding the prevalence of different types of activities, and where there are differences between initial plans and what was actually delivered.
- 3.12** Table 3-5 shows the activities in order of prevalence of delivery. It shows **very high proportions of grantees undertaking research, developing their existing skills or new skills**, and working with new or existing collaborators and mentors. Over half also used the funding to spend less time working, and considerable proportions accessed training/residencies or advice, or paid for space/studio time or equipment; around one in five did work with communities.
- 3.13** Across all these types of activity, **more applicants appear to have delivered them than initially planned**. While the precise differences should be treated with caution – as there was a risk applicants misinterpreted the question, only ticking delivered and leaving expected blank for example – it does align with interview findings, and shows how initial plans are often built on. This means that **plans at application may not always reflect the entirety of activities undertaken by the end of the project**. The only activities that did experience a drop were international travel. More is said on this below.

Table 3-5: Activities expected and delivered

Activity	Expected	Delivered	Difference
Undertake research/developing my knowledge	66%	89%	23
Develop my existing skills/approaches/practices	67%	89%	21
Experiment with new skills/approaches/practices	67%	87%	20
Meet/work with new collaborators/networks	61%	73%	12
Work with existing collaborators/networks	45%	59%	14
Access mentoring/coaching (longer-term advice)	46%	57%	11
Free up time by spending less time in employment/working/touring	43%	55%	12
Undertake training/a course/a residency	38%	49%	11
Access advice and guidance (one-off advice)	30%	40%	10
Pay for new equipment	28%	38%	10
Pay for a space/studio time	24%	32%	8
Work with a community/communities	14%	19%	5
Travel internationally – to a single destination	15%	11%	-5
Travel internationally – to multiple destinations	10%	5%	-5

Source: Successful applicant survey (n=742)

3.14 Comparing the planned activities of successful and unsuccessful applicants (see Table B-2 Annex B) shows the differences between the cohorts. Interestingly, unsuccessful applicants were more likely to be seeking to access training/courses/residencies and experimenting with new skills/approaches/practices, though ultimately successful applicants delivered this just as much based on activities reported following project closure.

3.15 The different types of activities are considered in more detail below based on research with grantees. This is followed by a consideration of how their plans changed and evolved, and how DYCP allowed for this. It is worth noting upfront that there are substantial interlinkages between different activities, so multiple individual activities were usually delivered in combination.

Researching/developing knowledge

3.16 Undertaking research/developing knowledge was the joint most common activity according to the survey, with 89% of grantees saying they had undertaken it. Ways that applicants used the time and funding available for research included conducting desk research, paying for books, travelling to and attending exhibitions, shows and conferences, and via collaborators, mentors, training and advice. Topics of research included theoretical subject matter, how to develop a new area of work or practice, and how to realise a future project.

“The DYCP funding I got helped me build a starting block of a project which I just finished, so I used it as research towards that. My application argument was that I was in the process of transitioning into moving image. My grant gave me time to be looking at other artists’ moving image work, to travel to shows, and study what other people are doing ... It was a period of consolidation for me and a lot of development.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts**

“I’m in the North East so the level of touring that comes here is limited. Part of stimulating my creativity was that I could travel to see work that I couldn’t see here that I’d find inspiring or would support me in my creative practices. So ticket money and travel money.” **Grantee interview, Dance**

“I did some online stuff but I think most of the museum content was free so it was just my time, so in terms of paying for conference fees all of that would be pre-pandemic. I had also intended to do more site visits to other museums – instead [due to the pandemic] I spent time looking at what was available online.” **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries**

“I saw nearly 40 contemporary dance performances from artists such as Mette Ingvartsen, Pina Bausch, Boris Charmatz, Doris Uhlich and more. This gave me a wealth of inspiring inputs that have shifted my perspective and my practice, inspiring me to be more ambitious with my work.” **Grantee interview, Dance**

Experimenting with new skills/approaches/practices

3.17 The survey found that **87% of grantees had experimented with new skills/approaches/practices**. The interviewed grantees talked about how DYCP had de-risked this experimentation, by **providing the opportunity to risk failure** and the funding to make necessary investments in training or accessing collaborators or advice. This was particularly **important to practitioners who wanted to take their practice in a new direction** or substantially expand on their existing practice. Examples included learning to use new equipment or instruments, or transferring their practice and skills into another art form.

“I worked in my studio on a computer and started learning Final Cut Pro, how to edit – I transitioned my computer and software – the first part was getting to grips with that [computer and software], and then afterwards it was about experimenting and doing the animation.” **Grantee interview, Not Discipline Specific**

“The video work was slightly more of an experiment ... I really didn’t know what would come out of the video side of it. That was a completely unknown area. But it did work out quite well.” **Grantee interview, Literature**

“I paid for people to mentor me, I paid for essentially developing and evolving [an innovative product], which took a lot of failed attempts, more than I had anticipated, so

*to have the money there to do that, I wouldn't have done that otherwise." **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*"DYCP has given me time to experiment in my studio, and to think. I don't feel I have had such a creative and developmentally rich period in my practice since my BA degree."
Grantee survey, Visual Arts*

*"DYCP gave me stress and worry-free time to really explore my practice without the usual commercial restraints. This meant I was able to take more risks and moving in directions where I was not sure of the outcome. I could do this with confidence and the results were excellent." **Grantee survey, Visual Arts***

Collaboration and networking – new and existing contacts

- 3.18** The survey found that **73% worked with new collaborators/networks and 59% worked with existing collaborators/networks**. This included paying collaborators in a project (for example paying for actors, dancers, directors, graphic designers and/or translators) and working on a project or piece of work together. Funding was used for expenses associated with the collaboration, including travel, while having time freed up (as a result of the funding reducing the need for paid employment during the project period) meant there was more time available to collaborate.

*"[I used it for] fees for a cinematographer to work with me to help develop ideas around landscape cinematography, so it was fees for other people as well as my own time."
Grantee interview, Visual Arts*

*"It paid for quite a small collaboration to happen remotely – I got to work with three other people." **Grantee interview, Not Discipline Specific***

*"I have worked with critical friends, artists, and specialists in order to learn, experiment, and exchange throughout the process and while creating new work." **Grantee survey, Combined Arts***

- 3.19** The networking aspect included attending events, conferences and festivals, or joining networks and groups.

*"I made contact with a prominent female-led UK-based comics forum – LDComics – and attended their monthly online meetings and talks, including their day-long Annual Comics Festival ... [Also] I joined the Society of Authors Comics Creators Network – and have attended various talks and networking events online ... including The Lakes International Comic Art Festival, and the Hackney Comics and Zine Fair, and talks at the London Cartoon Museum." **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

"danceWEB [a network] established new, international networks that have opened up the possibility for exciting collaborations. The group, which was made up of 45 artists from 36 countries, has indefinitely broadened my perspective ... [and] stimulated a lot of

*rich and provocative conversations about dance, art, politics and society, that came from international perspectives.” **Grantee interview, Dance***

Accessing mentoring/coaching

3.20 The survey found **57% had accessed coaching or a mentor** (‘longer-term advice’). The interview data indicates that in practice it can be difficult to distinguish between this and training/courses/residencies and one-off advice and guidance, but ultimately these activities were about accessing expertise and experience, and having the support to develop knowledge, practice and skills. This was around **creative practice but also about the practicalities establishing future projects or businesses**. Many of the interviewees talked about accessing mentors, with some using the funding to pay for their time and expenses. Grantees were able to work with leading and award winning practitioners in their field.

*“I had mentor fees for a number of one-to-one sessions with them across 12 months. I had a fair amount of travel expenses for visits to see my mentor and also for visits, principally to London to see exhibitions. Unfortunately it’s not something I do regularly because it’s a day you’re not working on, plus all the costs.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*“Most of it was mentoring and R&D stuff: I got some money towards some marcomms mentoring – a facilitated day for other artists that worked with me to thrash out what the brand is and what shared values we have; I got some mentoring from somebody who runs a big outdoor arts company; I got some travel and visiting things; and some more concentrated, focused time with people in the sector who knew about legal entities and setting up companies.” **Grantee interview, Combined Arts***

*“I met with several illustrator-mentors online on a regular basis, to improve and stretch my drawing skills, to experiment and develop my style. I took a basic six-week refresher art course from my key illustrator/mentor, then continued with monthly sessions. I had three one-off mentoring sessions with writers and artists who have worked with comics and sequential storytelling. As one of my planned mentors was unavailable for one session, I also attended some relevant online one-to-one sessions and courses run by my local Adult Education provider to develop my skills further.” **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

*“I got coaching and mentoring from a range of organisations and people. For example I spoke to Sweet Talk Productions about producing audio content and they’ve since invited me to shadow one of their forthcoming Radio 4 productions.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

“I had a three weeks mentorship with a director about capturing vertical dance on film. Each week had a different element to it. It included paying for studio space. Week 1 was discussion/exploring ideas, week 2 was capturing vertical dance ideas in a studio, week 3

was editing and dissemination ... The video and filming, and editing and disseminating it. It was all new to me.” Grantee interview, Dance

“I have been able to pay for a mentor, a coach and a therapist to support me in writing a creative non-fiction book. I have never written a book before, despite having written and devised plays, and written poetry ... I am able to take myself seriously as a writer and the coaching has been invaluable to support me in this transition.” Grantee survey, Literature

Freed up time from employment/working/touring

3.21 The survey showed **around half of grantees used the funding to forgo the need to work**, so that they could instead focus on their personal development. Grantees were able to do this by paying themselves a wage and/or through being able to cover the costs of their development and investment activities without needing to work. One interviewee had used part of the funding to pay for childcare one day per week to provide free time. Grantees also talked about the DYCP project itself providing the stimulus or excuse to actually set aside time for personal development rather than ‘keeping busy’. This aspect of DYCP was seen to work well.

“As a musician and your career being your only source of income, if you have to take time out to learn anything it means you’re not bringing in the money as well. So this helped in that I could concentrate on it, not worrying too much about who’s going to cover my travel expense, or my rent. It took away all those worries.” Grantee interview, Music

“I was so lucky with the timing because I had lost so much work in the last two years. Just to know I have £10k so I won’t be homeless this year – that was such a game changer. I could pay myself to read books and I didn’t have to be on tour to be paid.” Grantee interview, Music

“Without the Arts Council I never would have got to this point. I’d never have been able to sit down with this equipment and learn about it – with what I do I work a lot of hours and I don’t get the time to do this.” Grantee interview, Not Discipline Specific

“It bought me time, which bought me headspace – and those two things are the most valuable resources for creativity.” Grantee survey, Literature

3.22 There were, however, some observable issues around this component of DYCP. There were a small number of grantees who said that on reflection they had not paid themselves enough or had only covered part of their time spent on their project. In some cases this was intentional, to free up more of the funding to invest in other aspects of their project. However, in some cases this was because they had tried to be competitive when bidding or had underestimated the time requirements or money they required to sustain themselves for the project duration.

*“Sometimes I was paid for rehearsal and sometimes I wasn’t. I was paid for 4 weeks of full time rehearsals in Berlin and I had accommodation and subsistence. I didn’t pay myself for three weeks in the UK.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

*“£3,600 were my fees over the project ... In hindsight that was really poor. The Arts Council need to start giving guidance around how much they [applicants] should be paying themselves – artists will try and make it stretch and I don’t think that’s helpful. Even if guidance is in bands of payment [that would be useful].” **Grantee interview, Dance***

Workshops/courses/training/residencies

3.23 Just under half (49%) of grantees responded that they had undertaken training, a course or residency. These included one-off workshops, purchasing training resources or courses, guided long-term courses, bootcamps and residencies, and so covered low to high intensive training or courses.

*“I went on a training camp called Campaign Bootcamp. It was a six-day intensive [course] about campaigning.” **Grantee interview, Dance***

*“I think the title of my project was something like developing the scale and multimedia complexity and international scope of my collaborative practice as a female stage director. What it essentially worked out as was a bespoke residency with [an esteemed theatre director] who makes a lot of live video work.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

*“I took a couple of workshops in translation with the British Library, University of East Anglia and British Literary Translation Association.” **Grantee interview, Literature***

*“I have been having weekly lessons in the Senegalese talking drum and the Guinean balafon for the past eight months. This has massively helped my musicianship as a percussionist and has challenged me to learn these very different techniques of playing. Having this time to develop and practice with two exceptional teachers has been extremely beneficial.” **Grantee interview, Music***

3.24 The pandemic had a notable impact on these types of opportunities, either meaning they were no longer feasible, or more commonly that they took place online. Some grantees found the latter more convenient as it required no travel, was easier to fit in to their lives, and they could access courses they otherwise would not have been able to. However, a commonly held view was that online courses were **less valuable than if they had taken place in person**.

*“It was to relearn how to draw. I did Art at O level but haven’t done anything since then. I had online lessons, workshops, off-the-shelf online courses with Domestica. Most of it was self-driven, I bought a lot of materials and books and spent the time experimenting really.” **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

*“I probably took a little bit longer to get to those skills without the in-person courses, but at the same time I was able to learn by producing my own work, not just going to a class and learning the skill, so I was able to do it together.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*“The balafon [instrument lessons] did suffer a bit. I learnt on Zoom and there was a bit of delay which made it difficult. ... I think it did suffer a bit from that. If it had happened in person I would have picked it up a bit quicker.” **Grantee interview, Music***

Purchasing materials/equipment/other costs

3.25 An important aspect of DYCP for some was being able to purchase materials and equipment. The survey revealed that **38% of grantees purchased or hired equipment with their funding**. Examples of equipment purchased/hired by interviewees included instruments, adaptations to existing equipment, home studio equipment, a 3D printer and software, as well as hiring transport and props for an exhibition. Interviewees said that **without DYCP funding some of the more expensive or experimental purchases would likely not have happened**, and therefore they would not have unlocked the new possibilities they presented.

*“I bought equipment to set up a home studio – a microphone, external hard drive, recorder, editing software etc.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

*“Accommodation expenses were diverted [due to the pandemic] to purchase an audio interface, Dynamic Cardioid vocal microphone, cable, pop shield, rode arm, headphones and software to collaborate in real-time digitally.” **Grantee interview, Music***

*“The Arts Council allowed me to hire equipment and have it in my house. It let me sit and mess around with it all day. People I work with own a lot of this equipment, and DYCP gave me the chance to hire it to work on it. I did a week solid of messing around with it ... DYCP gave me the time to take it out of the warehouse for long enough to learn how to use it.” **Grantee interview, Not Discipline Specific***

Studio time and space

3.26 DYCP grantees also used the funding to pay for studio time or space, with around a third (32%) of respondents to the survey saying this. Having dedicated work/studio space and time is a key issue within the sector, according to the research around freelancers presented in the first chapter. Interviewees talked about how this, plus the lack of requirement to produce an output, had given them the time and security to feel able to create and experiment. By purchasing equipment for home studios, as above, some grantees had been able to limit the barrier this would present in the future too.

Work with communities/audiences

3.27 Around a fifth (19%) of grantees who responded to the survey said they had worked with a community or communities, which may also cover audiences. The interviews provided one notable example of a grantee giving a TEDx talk as part of their project.

International travel

3.28 Finally, some **15% of grantees who responded to the survey had undertaken international travel, compared to 20% who had planned to.** This masks the level of changes to plans around international travel, primarily reflecting the impact of the pandemic, but in some cases other circumstances were to blame.

3.29 Those that were able to travel did so to access the types of activities set out above, including accessing residencies and mentoring, but with the added dimension of learning from international practice, expertise, contexts and cultures. Many interviewees who travelled found this exposure **especially formative.** The DYCP grant was used to cover travel expenses, accommodation, plus other expenses such as residency costs.

*“In Nigeria, I was in Lagos, meeting artists but also checking out the scene there. Then I went to a cultural site in Ile-Ife, which is the hub of Yoruba spirituality and there is a school there which is an arts academy there to preserve Yoruba culture and art. I was learning more about Yoruba spirituality and arts for healing, and getting more involved in the practice of Ife through that. Working with the spiritual healers, who are spiritual leaders and staying with the head teacher. I was learning a bit more about the customs and cultures, seeing the spiritual dances. In Lagos, there was a spiritual community there I stayed with, and that’s when I was involved in some of the rituals, songs and chanting. Then I went to Senegal. I was on a two-week dance training, learning different African dances – like street, Afro contemporary and traditional dances of Ivory Coast and Senegal, as well as more modern ones. Overall, it was two months – I had one week downtime after Senegal to just look around.” **Grantee interview, Dance***

*“I went to Freemantle Art Centre [in Australia] and had a studio there for 8 weeks. I was part of a different network of artists – including indigenous artists. I was there as an artist and a facilitator – you’re there to enable people to become creative themselves.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*“I went to Berlin to see [my mentor] rehearsing a live video production at the Schaubühne, therefore introducing me to international theatre practice. They’ve got a very different system to the one that we have here.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

*“It is a chance to network. The people they invite are from all over the world and they have very different perspectives. The idea is that you get the chance to experience the festival but also come into contact with people who have very different experiences and from very different places in the world.” **Grantee interview, Dance***

Changes to plans

- 3.30** An important observation is how **DYCP allowed for flexibility with plans**. There were many reasons that plans changed for grantees: the impact of the pandemic; a need to fit plans around work or family; and changes in personal circumstances such as health issues. Some interviewees also found that their original plan was no longer possible, sensible or effective, was not what they wanted to do anymore, or that they needed more time to complete their plan.
- 3.31** The survey results show that **53% of respondents reported some change of plan activities-wise**, 39% delivered an aspect they did not plan to, and 29% did not deliver an aspect they had originally planned. Table B-3 in Annex B shows the extent to which plans changed around different types of activities. Most common was the change in international travel plans.
- 3.32** The **impact of the pandemic** was especially challenging for some grantees and activities. Most international activities had to be delayed or dropped. In the face of the pandemic, grantees were able to adapt either by delaying activities until they were possible, or by reorientating their project to what was possible. Some grantees highlighted that the **greater prevalence of online opportunities meant they undertook activities they could not have done pre-pandemic**, such as attending international conferences online.

*“I applied prior to lockdown, found out the results in January, then lockdown started in March. The process of how I was planning to do it [the DYCP project] changed because everything closed down, but what I wanted to do I managed to do just using online resources and time availability. There was a course I wanted to take, but I was able to do it online, and because I had the time, I was able to really focus. All I did was explain to them [Arts Council England] that instead of doing one thing I was doing another, but it didn't change much because it was mostly skills and research development.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*“Two weeks was supposed to be professional development training provided by an independent company in Italy. The pandemic prevented this from happening so instead I did two training courses in Brighton.” **Grantee interview, Dance***

- 3.33** The **flexibility of DYCP was highly valued** by interviewees because it allowed them to adapt, improve and evolve plans, and to take up new opportunities as they were presented rather than rigidly sticking to an outdated plan. In particular, interviewees highlighted how DYCP does not require the justification of expenses, arriving at an end product or permission for minor changes, and that permission for changes to project plans tended to be granted when sought. This allows for some divergence as necessary or desired. In at least one instant the grantee had purposefully left some ambiguity in their activity plan for this reason. Others who ended up taking longer than planned found the additional time meant their project was more beneficial than if it had progressed as they originally planned.

*"I wanted to go on a journey, so I had a few definite things pinned down in my application but I did leave aside a certain amount of time just to see where things might go spontaneously. That was really useful for me and it felt like a huge luxury, and it wasn't really something that I'd been able to do before." **Grantee interview, Dance***

*"By the end it was different to what I applied for. It's not until you enter the environment that you understand what the needs are ... you go on a journey with it. It's really nice that the Arts Council allow it to be open and flexible." **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*"It became clear that making that show might be too traumatic so we decided to pin it for another time. I think that's really, really useful to go 'I'm going to try something' and then to say 'actually it's not right for me right now' which you wouldn't be able to say if it was a Project Grant for example." **Grantee interview, Dance***

3.34 Interviewees who had contacted the Arts Council to ask about changes or extending their project commented on how **accommodating and supportive** those involved in delivering DYCP had been. However, some were uncertain to what extent they could deviate from their activity plan and budget, and whether (and in what circumstances) permission was needed. The terms and conditions for the grant do highlight the need for permission, but there may be scope to highlight this more prominently on the DYCP webpages for successful applicants.

Point for consideration: Ensure there is clarity around permitted divergence from activity plans and budgets, including by giving more prominence to the requirements to secure approval from the Arts Council for changes to project plans.

4. Outcomes and impacts for DYCP grantees

- 4.1** This chapter considers the outcomes and impacts that DYCP grantees experience as a result of their activities and DYCP funding. **Information on outcomes and impacts is not collected systematically through the Arts Council’s DYCP activity forms**, therefore this chapter is based on the surveys and interviews with grantees.
- 4.2** Before considering the specific outcomes and impacts emerging from DYCP, there are a few points to note:
- **The time to impact varies** – some grantees had only recently finished their project, and therefore suggested there was little time for any outcomes or impacts to materialise before the evaluation took place. However, the time to impact varied widely, with some experiencing significant or even transformative impacts within their project timeframe or immediately beyond it
 - **The magnitude of impacts identified by grantees varies considerably** – for some their DYCP project has been a catalyst or contained a ‘eureka’ moment that is having a radical effect on their trajectory and helping their career flourish, whereas for others the impacts are more moderate or part of an ongoing trajectory
 - **Positive outcomes tend to yield further positive outcomes** – for example a new contact can open doors that were either not open previously or not known about, and through this the positive impacts tended to gain more momentum over time
 - **Many of the impacts were unexpected and serendipitous** – with chance encounters or opportunities taking grantees in unforeseen and radically different directions
 - **Grantees did not necessarily want to take new practice/opportunities forward** – there is a recognition that DYCP allows grantees to try new things, which may or may not be successful or feel like a desirable path to continue down
 - **Attribution can be challenging** – it is unlikely that DYCP in isolation would have led to the full range of impacts grantees identified, as often they are also dependent on pre-existing contacts, knowledge, skills, personal attributes or wider circumstances
 - Quantifying the financial impact of DYCP is challenging, and has not been attempted – in particular due to the points above about attribution and the time to impact
 - There were no instances where DYCP grantees felt that their experience was not worthwhile, even where it had not led to significant impacts as yet.

“The funding is like the spark, then other things happen and there is a ripple effect.”

Grantee interview, Music

“I wrote an album [as part the DYCP project] which got played on BBC Radio 6 and Radio 3 and streamed all over Europe ... It led on to other projects as well, so someone heard

*my stuff, so I was able to do a sound installation at Hampton Court, but before then I didn't have the skills to do that necessarily. Then some people heard the album, and I wrote the teaser for a horror film which got them funding from the BFI. I know the BFI thing came from them hearing that album, and I've done playlist things for BBC Radio 6. ... If I hadn't had done the album, some of those things wouldn't have happened like that." **Grantee interview, Music***

*"DYCP was at the very beginning of it all – it wasn't something I wasn't doing before, but it was a point of identifying this where I wanted to go, so it was pivotal point where things could step up a gear. A lot of other things have come in as well ... [that are] not DYCP specific, but DYCP was at the beginning and an important step in the process." **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

4.3 The survey asked grantees to score a list of potential impacts on a scale of 0 to 5 to indicate the extent to which they had experienced them as a result of DYCP. Table 4-1 below presents the results, and shows:

- The breadth of **variety of impacts experienced** and relative prevalence – from self-belief to new skills, new and higher quality work, new relationships, better profile and securing work opportunities and leadership roles
- The most **prevalent impacts are enthusiasm and confidence** – which interviews indicate are key to driving practice and careers forward, and realising additional impacts – closely followed by increased skills and knowledge in the chosen discipline
- The **magnitude of impact** – scores of five were given across all impacts, with many of the impacts given a score of five by the majority or significant minority of respondents.

Table 4-1: Grantee scored outcomes

Outcomes	Score						
	Average	0	1	2	3	4	5
Increased passion/motivation/enthusiasm for your practice	4.6	1%	0%	1%	6%	23%	68%
Increased confidence/self-belief in your practice	4.5	1%	0%	1%	7%	27%	64%
Increased skills and knowledge in your discipline	4.4	1%	0%	1%	7%	33%	58%
Adopted new techniques/practices/approaches in your discipline	4.4	2%	0%	2%	7%	32%	58%
Created higher quality/more innovative work	4.3	2%	0%	2%	9%	30%	57%
Developed your portfolio	4.1	7%	1%	3%	10%	28%	52%
Developed new relationships/networks/collaborations	4.0	4%	2%	6%	12%	29%	48%

Outcomes	Score						
	Average	0	1	2	3	4	5
Led to further development/learning opportunities	4.0	6%	1%	4%	14%	29%	47%
The creation of new work/output for the public	3.9	7%	2%	6%	13%	24%	48%
Strengthened existing relationships/networks	3.7	8%	3%	7%	14%	29%	40%
Improved profile/recognition/credibility	3.7	7%	3%	7%	18%	28%	37%
Reached the public in new ways	3.0	17%	6%	11%	19%	18%	30%
Created paid work/opportunities for other professionals	2.8	27%	5%	6%	12%	18%	32%
Enabled you to take on a leadership role	2.4	35%	5%	7%	13%	14%	26%
Identified a new career direction	2.4	30%	6%	9%	18%	19%	18%
Secured paid work/opportunities in the UK	2.2	35%	6%	12%	15%	17%	16%
Secured paid work/opportunities outside the UK	1.0	69%	5%	7%	7%	5%	7%
Secured an agent/representation	0.7	77%	4%	6%	4%	3%	7%

Source: Successful applicant survey (n=730)

- 4.4** The remainder of this chapter considers these impacts in more detail. In doing so, they have been grouped rather than using the more granular breakdown in the table above, recognising some are about mindset, some about skills, knowledge and practice, others are about outputs, contacts, profile and visibility, the ability to secure opportunities, and some about broader benefits to the sector and/or the public. It is worth noting that there is overlap between impacts so they are not entirely distinct categories.
- 4.5** Following this, the chapter then considers the sustainment of impacts, implications for careers and resilience, and additionality.

Passion, motivation, enthusiasm, confidence and self-belief

- 4.6** The survey shows these to be the **most prevalent impacts amongst grantees, with no survey respondents reporting no impact in this respect**. This was reflected in the interviews with grantees. An initial boost came from the funding award itself, and the feeling of validation that provided, as well as from having the opportunity to focus on new, interesting and/or exciting areas of their practice rather than being restricted to day-to-day (paid) work.

“They [Arts Council England] believed in what I was doing, and this was a confidence boost. As artists you doubt yourselves sometimes, so just having the backing of the Arts Council was really important.” Grantee interview, Visual Arts

*“DYCP gave me the confidence to keep pursuing a career that was becoming incredibly difficult to continue to pursuing. The fact alone that the Arts Council believed in me enough to finance this development for myself meant too much more than I can really articulate in words.” **Grantee survey, Music***

- 4.7** Frequently survey responses talked about ‘finding my voice’ and ‘seeing myself as an artist/ writer’. Some grantees had been reflecting on whether they wanted to remain in their line of work or were looking for change. The resulting change in mindset had clearly given drive and momentum to either sustain their practice or make the positive change they were considering. For some, the challenging nature of the pandemic meant this boost had been especially important.

*“It feels to me like the trajectory [of my career] has gone back up – that’s really exciting for someone in my stage of career – I feel like I’ve had a whole new lease on life. Pre-applying for the grant I was really getting sucked into spending time on projects, but it’s made me realise that I want to do my work. It’s been a massive change.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*“I am now confident that I can make art to a high level. Although I had always enjoyed art at school, my belief in my artistic ability was destroyed by a former boyfriend who would constantly belittle my attempts, so I stopped trying to make art for over 30 years and focused in on my writing. The DYCP process has been amazing in that it has reawakened my passion for art and has shown me that I don’t have to choose between writing and drawing – that they can nurture each other. I now call myself a writer/illustrator.” **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

*“I had a psychological boost, having felt disconnected from his work due to COVID and being rejected by DYCP before. I would say it renewed my sense of purpose.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

*“It’s strengthened me as well. In terms of my character. I’m determined to succeed in this industry.” **Grantee interview, Music***

- 4.8** This increased or renewed passion, confidence and self-belief was **important for achieving the other impacts experienced by grantees**. They recognised the value of development time, felt more willing to invest in themselves, to take risks, to reach out to contacts and to take on bigger challenges.

*“I’m now paying to go on writing courses – I have the confidence to invest in myself, and I think that comes from being invested in [by Arts Council England].” **Grantee interview, Literature***

*“It’s the sense of feeling that you can do these things, and that will extend to so much beyond this.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

*“Permission to play is a really important concept for a creative mind – I found my DYCP really helped to illuminate that idea.” **Grantee survey, Combined Arts***

Skills, knowledge and practice

- 4.9** Grantees reported a vast range of learning. **Some built on existing skills, knowledge and practice, whereas others went in an entirely new direction.** This included practical skills such as playing instruments, production skills for audio content, directing skills, using studio or crafting equipment, and using editing software – these were described by a couple of grantees as ‘another string to my bow’. Adoption of technology, either novel or mainstream, was common. It also included areas of knowledge or practice that they could adopt going forwards, such as a dancer who accessed a course around dramaturgy, a curator who researched the practice of the decolonisation and democratisation of museums, and a visual artist who adopted the use of novel scientific equipment that creates visualisations of sound into their practice. Some practiced new art forms that opened up cross-discipline practices and opportunities tangential from their usual art form; for example a playwright developed their art skills and was developing graphic novels, and a visual artist learnt animation.

*“Both of the instruments I chose to learn are melodic. I have never learned a melodic instrument previously, so I think this period of development has drastically improved by musicianship by adding that missing element to my practice. With continued practice and refinement this will open me up to opportunities of performing in collaborations, creating new music inspired by what I have learned on this journey.” **Grantee interview, Music***

*“I had a little bit in the budget around editing software, so I was learning new post-production techniques and self-teaching myself on colour grading in video. So there is a whole load of stuff I was able to teach myself through self-directed learning in a way that was responsive to my practice. My toolbox has moved and evolved as a result.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*“I went to Australia as a mixed media artist and then I started doing these massive paintings. I hadn’t painted in a long time but I have carried on doing it. My whole practice has completely changed – paint has become the medium that I use and now I’m trying to exhibit the pieces.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*“I went into the project with [few] directing experience or skills. But through mentoring and research I was able to develop it, and put it into practice directing my audio drama podcast.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

*“It’s a step change because I was able to focus quite intensely on an area of work that otherwise I wouldn’t have been able to. That’s quite a major thing. It broadens one’s repertoire, broadens your sense of what you can do, what you have available to do. With the video work as well, that was something that I hadn’t previously explored as an artist.” **Grantee interview, Literature***

“It has made me review my practice and adapt it for the future, upskilling me and allowing me to move forward with my former practice and new practice combined”

Grantee survey, Visual Arts

- 4.10** Some grantees reported plans to invest in and undertake more skill development, to continue building or expanding their learning, as their DYCP project had demonstrated the value of doing so. This included some who had gone on to undertake a Masters or PhD.
- 4.11** There were, however, grantees who found that some of skills and practices they had sought to develop were not actually what they wished to continue with post-project. Having the opportunity to try these areas of practice was highly valued, and despite **not all pursuing the areas they explored**, the projects were still reported to have provided a wealth of other benefits. Most did intend to continue with the areas they developed.

“The other thing I did was coding, which wasn’t quite as fruitful. I had no experience, I had worked with a coder on previous projects, and I wanted to get more of a handle on it. I definitely have that, but I don’t think it is quite my bag and I’m more of a physical person. Having the time to look at that, figure some of it out to really help me know that isn’t my path and I’m happy to work with coders in future.”

Arts

- 4.12** Grantees also reported **improved knowledge and skills around project management, financial management, business management and leadership** as a result of their DYCP project as well as from accessing advice, mentors and peers. This was especially true for grantees who had limited or no experience of leading a project or business previously. This improved knowledge was **expected to be beneficial for future projects and careers**.

“I’ve been able to step more comfortably into a leadership position with confidence, develop others and grow my own practice as well as others.”

Grantee survey, Theatre

Production of new or improved works/performances/outputs

- 4.13** Interviewees reported producing new, innovative and more distinctive works, performances or outputs as a result of their project. Some of the works produced were from ideas that grantees had long held, whereas others were entirely new ideas developed during or after their DYCP project. Some of these were public facing; others had been used to add to grantees’ portfolios.
- 4.14** Some grantees reported that they produced new work during their project, as part of their creative process and/or through using DYCP funding to purchase the necessary materials and equipment. Others had only used their new skills, knowledge and practice after the project to produce new work. Others were still in the process of trying to produce their output. Examples of outputs reported that were already achieved or planned included writing novels and play scripts, producing albums and an audio drama, developing short animation films, creating graphic novels and paintings, and staging exhibitions, dance performances and plays.

4.15 The survey shows **grantees almost universally felt that the quality of their work had improved as a result of DYCP**. Interviewed grantees identified examples of their works achieving recognition, such as an animation being shown in London Film Festival and a graphic novel being longlisted for a debut comic award, while survey respondents highlighted winning photography prizes and being longlisted for a BBC National Short Story Award.

*“It gave me the time to develop skills and develop a film and do all the ground work for another film. Two animation films in such a short period of time is pretty unheard of. DYCP gave me time, and that is a luxury ... [then] once lockdown began, there was nothing for me to really do, so I started to send out the digital content to international short film festivals and they ended up being screened at about 30 festivals, winning some awards along the way.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*“I do really believe it has provided me with a step change. I am adapting a play that I wrote and making it into a graphic novel. It [an in-progress version] has already been longlisted in a debut graphic novel competition.” **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

Improved profile, credibility, recognition, visibility and reach

4.16 Grantees almost universally reported **improved profile, credibility, recognition, visibility and reach**. This included within their sector and with audiences, with grantees reporting having secured a greater following, especially on social media. These outcomes were the result of the producing higher quality and more innovative work, attracting awards or preview opportunities, the collaborators and mentors worked with, the networking opportunities accessed, and learning new ways to disseminate work to audiences.

*“It’s starting to be that people are coming to us rather than that we’re going to them.” **Grantee interview, Dance***

4.17 Grantees who were less experienced or who had moved into a new area of practice noted how the time to focus on researching the landscape and networking had opened their eyes to what opportunities there were to raise their profile, such as submitting works to competitions they were previously unaware of, or speaking at conferences. **The funding from Arts Council England, and the credibility this provides, was also a key component.**

*“I do think it has had a massive impact and it enabled me to do things I wouldn’t have been able to do. Partly because of time and partly because of the Arts Council’s stamp of approval. I’ve been asked to do talks and webinars on sharing my practice – this is helping to raise my profile more.” **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

4.18 These **outcomes are especially important for yielding future opportunities**, as with visibility and credibility grantees were finding future opportunities are more likely to be attainable and more likely to present themselves, via existing contacts and through approaches by people who encountered their work.

"I feel more established now. Other people now recognise my work and know what direction I'm going in. This had led to more professional approaches of people suggesting potential work for me. I suppose it's given me visibility." Grantee interview, Dance

Improved networks and access to collaborators and mentors

4.19 Many of the grantees who had connected with **collaborators or mentors reported an ongoing or strengthened relationship**, and some of were still working together or planned to work together again in the future, some with concrete plans and others more a vague ambition. Collaborations included putting on joint productions and exhibitions, establishing a business or charity, and playing together in a band. Grantees had also developed relationships with organisations.

"The longer-term outcome is definitely an improved network of people. There were some people I got in touch with during that time who have been really important for me in the last couple of years." Grantee interview, Music

4.20 Additionally, many grantees had grown their networks beyond those directly collaborated with, through **active networking and chance encounters**. Grantees reported a better understanding of how to identify, tap into and benefit from such opportunities, and how having their **improved profile and credibility had 'opened doors' to contacts and collaborations that would not have been possible previously**. Interestingly, a few interviewees specifically highlighted a **greater drive and confidence to actively approach people** they were interested in learning from or collaborating with.

"I feel empowered to just contact anyone I want and say 'I'm trying to develop my practice' because I felt very accredited by the Arts Council" Grantee interview, Theatre

"I dared approach people over the level and calibre than I would have [done previously]" Grantee interview, Theatre

Opportunities for future work, commissions and funding

4.21 The survey found less impact around securing paid work/opportunities than many of the other outcomes, but still some 68% of survey respondents did report some impact. Paid work/opportunities in the UK were reported as more common than outside the UK, although of those who undertook (rather than just planned) international travel 54% reported paid work/opportunities outside the UK.

4.22 This **ability to secure opportunities for work was the result of the interplay of the various outcomes** set out above. For example, Grantees reported being better equipped to secure existing opportunities and opportunities that were not open to them previously, due to improved or new skills, knowledge and practice, improved profile and credibility, having access to equipment on an ongoing basis, or because they were able to publish or exhibit new work developed during their project. Grantees were also more likely to be presented

with opportunities due to their improved profile, credibility and networks, or more likely to know where to identify opportunities and how to secure them.

4.23 Further examples from the of outcomes around new opportunities, and how other outcomes led to them, include:

- Many **grantees had set up new businesses or charities**, including one grantee who was applying for National Portfolio funding from Arts Council England, with networks, advice, mentoring and business knowledge especially important to realising these outcomes
- Many grantees said their DYCP project had grown their portfolio, which had led to them being commissioned for art installations
- Some reported having exhibited their works internationally or curating international exhibitions as a result of the contacts they made
- Some grantees had been able to move into their practice full-time
- Grantees who had developed in-demand knowledge or skills were able to work as freelance consultants, most notably a curator who was working on a decolonisation project with a museum

*"I got a commission from HOME in Manchester, and another commission from Islington Mill. This was due to having the portfolio of work to show people." **Grantee interview, Not Discipline Specific***

*"I went into the process having produced a few moving image works, knowing I had produced a couple of decent works in that field, but feeling like a bit of an outsider. Coming out the other side, the process has led to a piece of work ... that is now being installed next week and on for four months, being seen by an awful lot of people and featured in a Sky Arts programme. I've moved from being an outsider to knowing what I'm doing in this area and people now recognise me for working in that area." **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*"I can say to publishers that the comic has been longlisted in a really prestigious competition." **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

*"[DYCP] enabled me to increase writing time, develop an award-winning story and develop my novel, and attract several literary agents. I now have a publishing contract." **Grantee survey, Literature***

*"Last year I ended up co-writing a score for a Netflix. This was on the software purchased through my DYCP project, and it came from immersing myself in the different programmes I'd learnt from DYCP and having the ability to pay myself. I've been getting quite a lot of audio commissions from that. This all comes from the skills I learned with the DYCP, and having the website that I made during DYCP [for visibility]." **Grantee interview, Music***

“DYCP gave me the confidence to describe myself as an ‘artist’. It has opened up lots of opportunities for me. Before the grant I had an arts degree but worked in the hospitality sector. The grant allowed me 6 months to create work and submerge myself in my practice. This allowed my confidence to grow as an artist and for me to volunteer delivering creative workshops. I now work full time as a freelance creative (including a dream role for the arts charity I volunteered with). I have gone on to do various funded residencies and have two upcoming exhibitions and a photography book that is being published this year.” **Grantee survey, Visual Arts**

“It allowed me to develop my puppetry skills and begin a new relationship with my mentor which is still ongoing. It gave me time and space to take risks without pressure, and the R&D I undertook as a part of it led to me getting a £10k commission from the Wardrobe Ensemble and a £7.5k commission from Sky Arts and Coventry City of Culture.”
Grantee survey, Theatre

4.24 Many grantees talked about their ‘new direction’, ‘transition’ and ‘available paths’. Some had fully embraced these, but there were grantees who were still unsure which direction to turn, so planned on taking further time to think and explore. Other grantees talked about DYCP accelerating their career in the direction they were already committed to.

“I’m just doing what is right for me in this moment and making more powerful work because it is much more focused ... I’m happy I’ve moved away from community engaged participatory work – that was coming out of my practice so this was a good transition period for me, to develop a style and vision that was autonomous and didn’t involve loads of people and staying in places for long periods of time. I can’t do that anymore. So that has been very important for me. DYCP definitely played a part in that transition to the artist I am now.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts**

“I realised which parts of my practice are no longer useful to me, and what direction I want to take.” **Grantee survey, Combined Arts**

“It has now opened up so many paths. I don’t know which will be the biggest of those, but it’ll be exciting to find out.” **Grantee interview, Theatre**

“I wouldn’t say it was a step change, because I wouldn’t say I was going somewhere then and now going in a different direction now, but I’d say it was more a leapfrog.” **Grantee interview, Dance**

4.25 An interesting divide amongst grantees was on their next steps. There were two lines of thought that were apparent, which appeared to be roughly evenly split amongst grantees: one was that **their next steps should be about commercialising their practice and reducing dependency on funding**; the other was that **their next steps would require seeking out additional funding**. These are not necessarily opposed, and it may reflect grantees being at different stages in their journey, especially as were a small number of

grantees that wanted to find additional business-focused funding in order to take that commercialisation step.

*“During the mentoring sessions [my mentor] always said to me ‘there’s the art, the politics and the business of being an art director’. Let’s Create highlights that artists shouldn’t be just relying on subsidised work and I’m learning how.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

*“There’s been such a long period of not knowing what I was doing, now it’s like I’ve transitioned to becoming more commercial but at the same time remaining experimental. I couldn’t see how that would work, but now I can. For a long time, that was difficult space to inhabit.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*“I’m launching a podcast series in April or May 2022 with the equipment and skills from DYCP. This should provide a few revenue streams – Patreon, advertising, further writing and production opportunities. So launching the podcast is my main focus right now, and I’m hoping it will lead to future opportunities.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

*“It made me realise [before] I was putting a lot of energy in for little money, whereas now I have a business model where I’m getting a lot more out of it. It was a false economy almost because I was doing projects to gain status. You get into the project cycle, and I think DYCP landed in a moment where I had to rethink that and how I approached it.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*“I’ll also be a more sustainable artist. I was not making ends meet to stay in theatre but I will be able to do that now because ... this has taught me what I need to make use of the fact that virtual production is exploding right now. As an artist I’ll still always have my cultural mindset and my subsidised routes, but I’m beginning to see how I might be able to use what I’ve learned to work in a more commercially sustainable setting.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

4.26 Applicants were asked if they had applied to other funding since DYCP. It showed that interestingly a **lower proportion of successful applicants had applied for funding elsewhere**, possibly because DYCP has led to a reduced reliance on funding. However, where they had applied for other funding **they were more likely to have been successful than those who were unsuccessful in applying to DYCP**. This might reflect a positive impact from DYCP, or it might reflect them being better at applications, hence being successful with DYCP. Examples of additional funding included Arts Council England funding from NLPG and ERF, the Art Fund Headley Fellowship, a BBC grant, a Paul Hamlyn award, a Clore Transform Fellowship and local bursaries.

Table 4-2: Applied for other funding

	Successful	Unsuccessful
Applied for Arts Council England funding since	31%	42%
Applied for other funding since	43%	60%

	Successful	Unsuccessful
Of which, successful	59%	48%
Receiving other funding for creative practice	39%	48%

Source: Successful survey (n = 710/374) and unsuccessful survey (n=499/334)

“I was awarded a Paul Hamlyn award during the pandemic, which has helped set up my business and the commercial side of my business. But DYCP is allowing me to be experimental ... as I don’t want to be stuck in making the same thing over and over again, so DYCP has also shaped the commercial side of my work. ... I think that it is a really positive outcome of not only DYCP but also COVID-19 – pushing me to be more autonomous and self-sufficient ... I went to college when it was a dirty word to think about commercialisation of your work. I’m now going back on that – there’s nothing wrong with making things that people want, that will enable me to do things on my own terms.” Grantee interview, Visual Arts

“It has given me credentials to apply for other funding, so it is a stepping stone - not only in the skills it provides, but also in terms of your relationship with funding as a practitioner.” Grantee interview, Visual Arts

“Off the back of doing DYCP I could get onto the NEA [New Enterprise Allowance] fund to start a business, which is offered through Universal Credit. Before DYCP I would never have been in the position to do that. But now I’ve got a studio, done some training and experienced the practical side of the audio industry – so I can look to do some production jobs in the future ... DYCP and NEA have been massively complimentary. DYCP got me out of a hole and set me up to be forward facing and NEA is all about starting a business. DYCP has given the equipment, skills and experience; NEA business sense and market awareness.” Grantee interview, Theatre

4.27 Ultimately, DYCP had provided successful applicant interviewees with greater financial security during the project, and in most cases beyond. This was particularly important during the pandemic.

Benefits for the public and sector

4.28 In many cases there had already been a public benefit due to new works being produced and engagement with audiences. For others, there was not an expectation of immediate benefit to the public, **but there were clear expectations amongst grantees that ultimately there would be a benefit.** The creation of higher quality, more innovative and interesting public facing work was seen as a key outcome for some grantees. Grantees also talked about having **improved reach with audiences**, including due to new and more interesting methods of disseminating their work and engaging with audiences directly. One grantee highlighted how their ambition to focus much more on accessibility going forwards, hoping to be able to incorporate integrated captioning and British Sign Language interpretation into all of their shows.

4.29 A few of the interviewed grantees talked about **having taught or planning to teach their acquired skills and knowledge to others**. This included teaching school children to play traditional West African instruments and teaching workshops on writing fiction for audio and writing illustrated short stories.

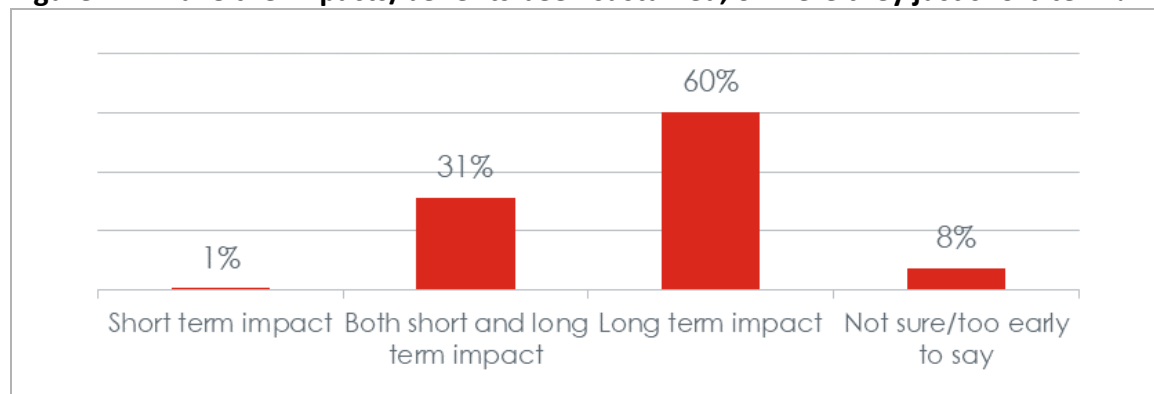
4.30 There were also individual examples of DYCP projects influencing the role grantees wanted to play in their sector. This included **grantees training others, aspiring to leadership roles, greater levels of activism, influencing change and ‘paying it forward’**. Confidence, networks, knowledge and skills were particularly important to this. Specific issues that grantees were working to address included diversity in the sector, sexual violence, and the lack of space for artists and the need for better planning and solutions to address this.

“I think it has really focused my thinking now in the organisation that I run ... certainly [on] the relationship between inclusive cultures and fair and equitable practice that’s needed in the visual arts.” Grantee interview, Visual Arts

Timing and sustainability of impacts

4.31 The survey asked whether the impacts reported by grantees had been sustained. Figure 4-1 shows **impacts were rarely just short-term**. There were also some grantees whose projects had only recently finished, and therefore they thought it was too early to tell or were unsure.

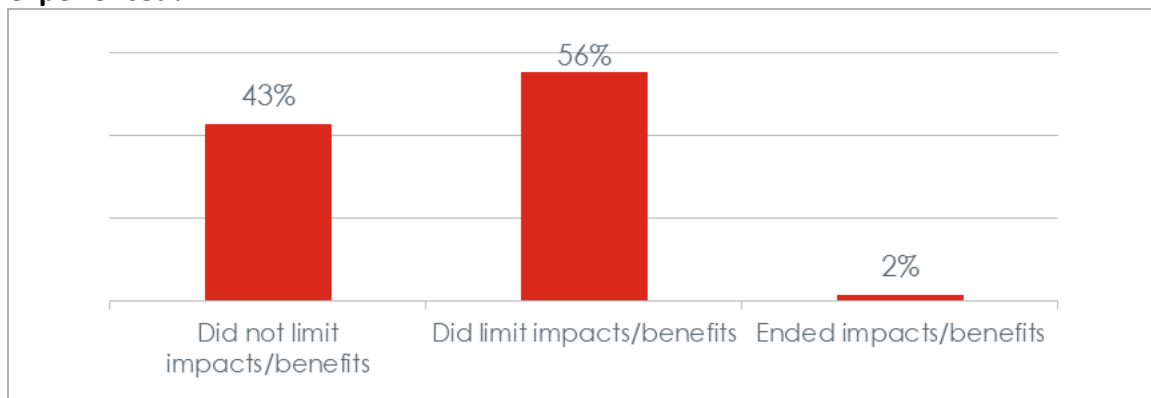
Figure 4-1: Have the impacts/benefits been sustained, or were they just short-term?



Source: Successful survey (n= 730)

4.32 Grantees were also asked about the impact of the pandemic. Positively, and perhaps surprisingly, **almost no respondents reported that COVID-19 had entirely ended positive impacts of their DYCP project**, although over half did report that it had limited them. The interviews highlighted examples of this, such as practitioners who had produced work, such as a play, that could not be staged during the pandemic. Still, just under half said it had not limited the impacts of their project.

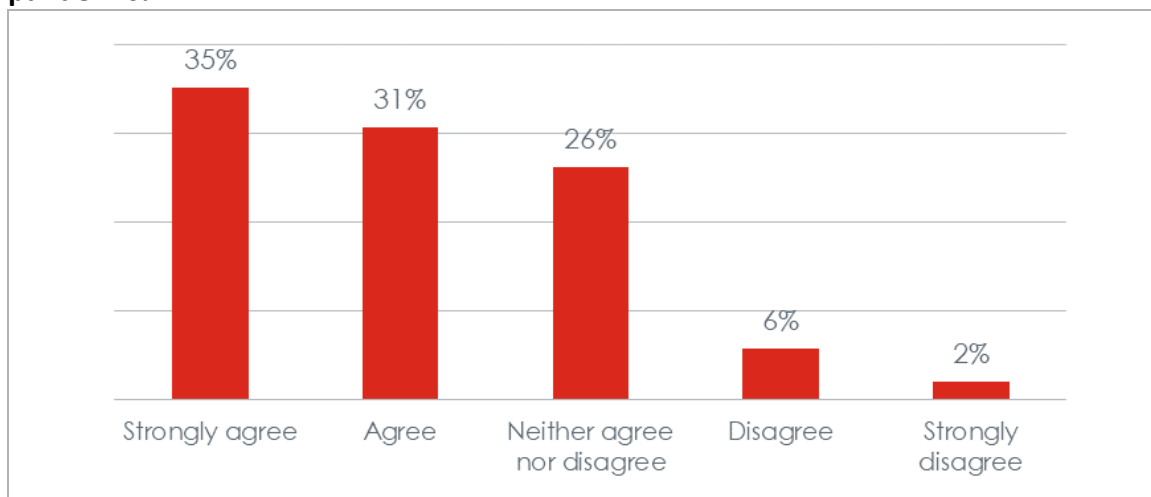
Figure 4-2: Has the COVID-19 pandemic limited/ended the impacts or benefits you experienced?



Source: Successful applicant survey (n= 729)

4.33 In light of this, grantees were asked if their **DYCP project had enabled them to better adapt to the pandemic. Two thirds agreed**, and just 8% disagreed, with the remaining 26% neither agreeing nor disagreeing. As expected, the interviews did find numerous examples of grantees whose practice had been difficult to maintain due to the pandemic, however many had been able to adapt or reorientate their practice using skills and knowledge gained through DYCP. Many of those funded after the start of the pandemic were specifically aiming to develop their practice in a way that would help them to adapt, or at the least wanted to use the additional spare time afforded by the pandemic for their development.

Figure 4-3: To what extent do you agree you were better able to adapt to the pandemic?



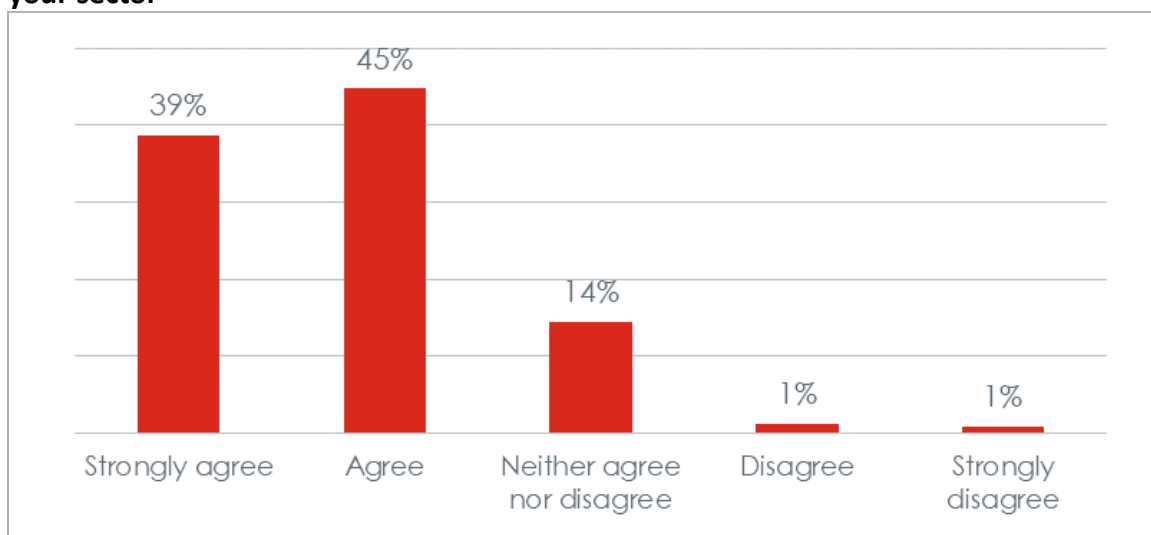
Source: Successful survey (n=728)

“It gives you a safety net. I don’t know what I would’ve done [during the pandemic] ... maybe I would’ve become a delivery driver temporarily – but I didn’t have to do that because I had this to fall back on.” Grantee interview, Museums/ Libraries

Implications for future career

4.34 Finally, grantees were asked whether they felt they were **better able to sustain a career in their sector as a result of DYCP** and the impacts they had experienced. The vast majority agreed, and only very small numbers disagreed. Given the range, magnitude and sometimes transformative impacts set out in this chapter, this is unsurprising. The survey also asked successful and unsuccessful applicants were still in the type of role they were in when they applied to DCYP; 99% of successful and 98% of unsuccessful still were. The **greater opportunities and resulting financial security reported by many grantees, as well as the increased passion and confidence, were important factors in the likelihood that careers would be sustained**. Also in some cases investments had been into equipment or practices that would make their practice more cost effective and financially sustainably going forwards.

Figure 4-4: To what extent do you agree that you are better able to sustain a career in your sector



Source: Successful applicant survey (n=728)

Additionality

4.35 The evaluation found **good levels of additionality**. The majority of interviewed grantees said they did not expect their activities, and ultimately outcomes, would have occurred without the funding. This was especially true for ‘riskier’ investments, which included exploring new areas of work, the more innovative activities, expensive equipment and trips, and paying for collaborator/mentor time, where there was not a guaranteed return. Grantees said that not only would they need to have had funding, but they would have needed to take time off from working, which for many would otherwise not be possible. Therefore **many simply would not have experienced any of the impacts that they did, some of which have been substantial and transformative**.

“It wouldn’t have happened – I don’t have £10k and couldn’t take the time off work.”

Grantee survey, Combined Arts

*“I honestly don’t see how it could have happened without the funding. I wouldn’t have had the dedicated time to work in that way... I wouldn’t have spent the time in the same way without the money, headspace and attitude [from] the funding.” **Grantee survey, Visual Arts***

*“I wouldn’t have had the time due to day-to-day work commitments.” **Grantee survey, Dance***

*“Things are improving, but with my job the way it was I didn’t have disposable income and I wasn’t sure where my next work was, so I felt like I couldn’t invest.” **Grantee survey, Theatre***

4.36 A smaller number of grantees thought that perhaps, possibly, they could have undertaken some of the cheaper elements and tried to fit them around existing commitments. However, the view was that **the project would have been at a smaller scale and taken longer, so would not have been as impactful.**

4.37 Being able to commit a substantial amount of time and not worry about other commitments was key to the value added from of DYCP funding. The projects were also greater than the sum of their parts – with activities working in synergy, and impacts snowballing to yield further impacts – so not being able to work with collaborators or attend conferences, and not having the credibility afforded by the funding, would all have reduced the level of impact. Having to purchase cheaper equipment and materials was anticipated to have limited the quality and innovative nature of outputs too.

*“I would have tried to get onto a week course here or there but wouldn’t have been able to spend that amount of time focussing on a specific area that I wanted to develop.” **Grantee survey, Dance***

*“This is what enabled me to do that, and I think if I hadn’t had that, I would have just stayed in the same artistic work dynamic, which had always been a reactive one, rather than a proactive one.” **Grantee survey, Theatre***

*“I would’ve done it, but the collaboration was really important and I wouldn’t have been able to pay the people to collaborate with me and make the music without the DYCP – it would’ve happened in a smaller way, the quality would have been compromised and the scale would’ve been reduced.” **Grantee survey, Not Discipline Specific***

*“I think I might have done some of it but it would have been evenings and weekends on top of my other employment. And I think I was able to have more impact saying ‘I’m doing an Arts Council England supported project on this’ than just turning up to a conference saying ‘I’m interested in this’ – the Arts Council funding gives it the credibility.” **Grantee survey, Museums/Libraries***

“I know it sounds a bit cheesy but when I got the funding I was hoping things would change, but they’ve changed beyond what I could have imagined. ... You need that time

and momentum to get that step change. It's hard to take time out of work to build the momentum." Grantee survey, Visual Arts

- 4.38** The unsuccessful applicant interviews and survey responses support these findings too. In the survey, unsuccessful applicants were asked whether they were able to undertake any of their planned activities without the DYCP funding, to which just 3% said 'yes, in full' and 32% said 'yes, in part'. The interviewees who had managed to progress their plans were doing so over a longer period, around their existing work commitments and therefore less intensely, at with a lower level of financial investment.
- 4.39** Lastly, the point about value for money from the introduction chapter is worth reiterating. The evaluation has avoided seeking to monetise any economic impact, nor perform a value for money assessment, due to the difficulty in getting survey/interview participants to quantify any economic value and in attributing such impacts to DYCP. No questions to this effect were included throughout the research. However, the insights captured do indicate that there are economic and financial returns for at least some successful applicants, which will have broader knock on effects more widely across the economy.

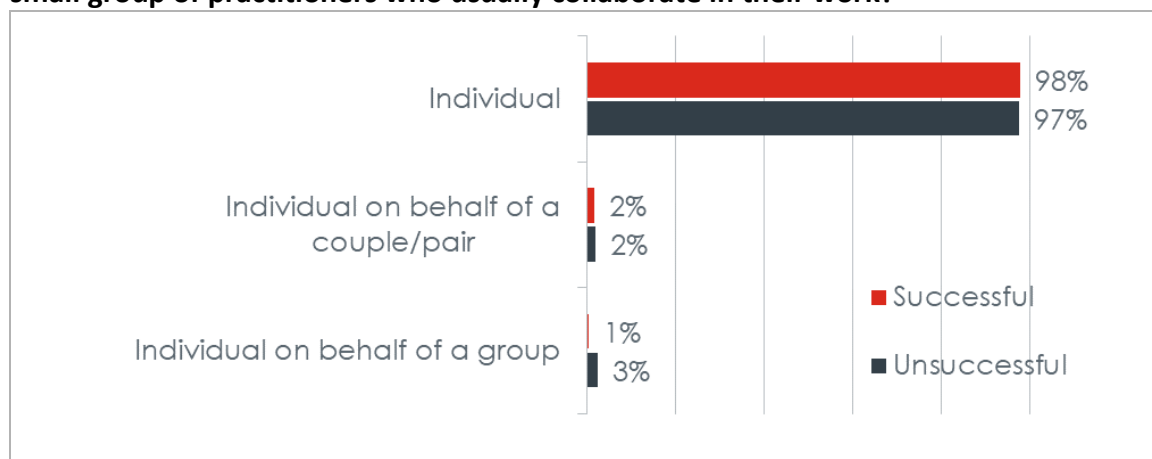
5. Who is applying to DYCP, and who has received funding

- 5.1** This chapter explores who DYCP has funded, considering whether individuals applied alone or as a group, the types of roles applicants are in and their length of experience, and the representativeness of DYCP applicants.

Individuals or groups

- 5.2** While DYCP is generally targeted at individuals, it is permissible to apply on behalf a group of individuals. No data is collected on this, so the surveys asked questions to gauge the extent to which this is happening. The data reveals that only very small numbers had applied on behalf of a couple/pair or group.

Figure 5-1: Did you apply to DYCP as an individual, or as an individual on behalf of a small group of practitioners who usually collaborate in their work?



Source: Successful survey (782) and unsuccessful survey (n=542). Note multiple choices were possible if multiple applications had been made

Types of role

- 5.3** Those involved in the development and delivery of DYCP were keen to emphasise that DYCP is not just aimed at creators and performers. Practitioners in ‘backstage’ and more research-focused roles are also able to apply to DYCP. Changes to the guidance were made for Round 8 onwards to better reflect this and try to encourage more applications from those in these types of roles. There was, however, no data to offer any insight into the prevalence of the different types of roles. As a result, the surveys asked applicants to specify the type of role they were in at the time of their application(s), based on a list designed to reflect the different roles in scope.

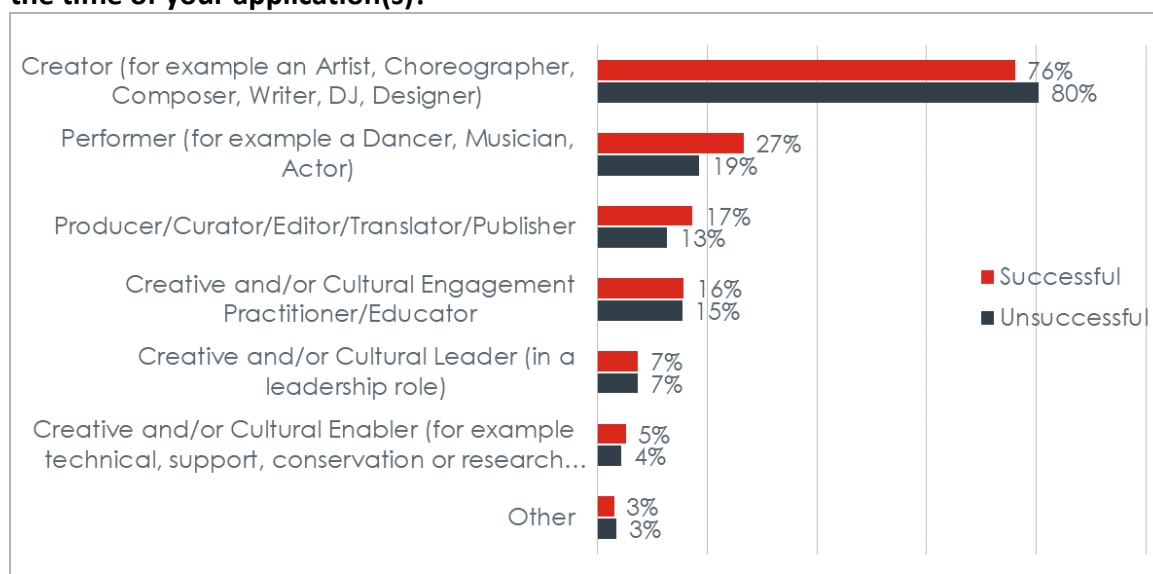
Figure 5-2 shows that the majority were ‘creators’ (76% of successful applicants); there was a reasonable spread across other types of roles, although leaders and enablers accounted for small proportions (7% and 4% respectively). The roles of applicants haven’t significantly changed over different rounds. There would be value in continuing to track

this, by including these categories or slightly amended versions within the application form.

Point for consideration: Consider capturing information on role types within the application form, perhaps using the categories defined for this evaluation.

- 5.4** It is worth noting that interviewees' work situations were widely varied. Some were working in their practice full-time, others part-time; some were working on many projects at once, some were working in side-jobs, and some were in the process of trying to start working as a freelancer.

Figure 5-2: Which of the following best describes your creative and/or cultural role at the time of your application(s)?

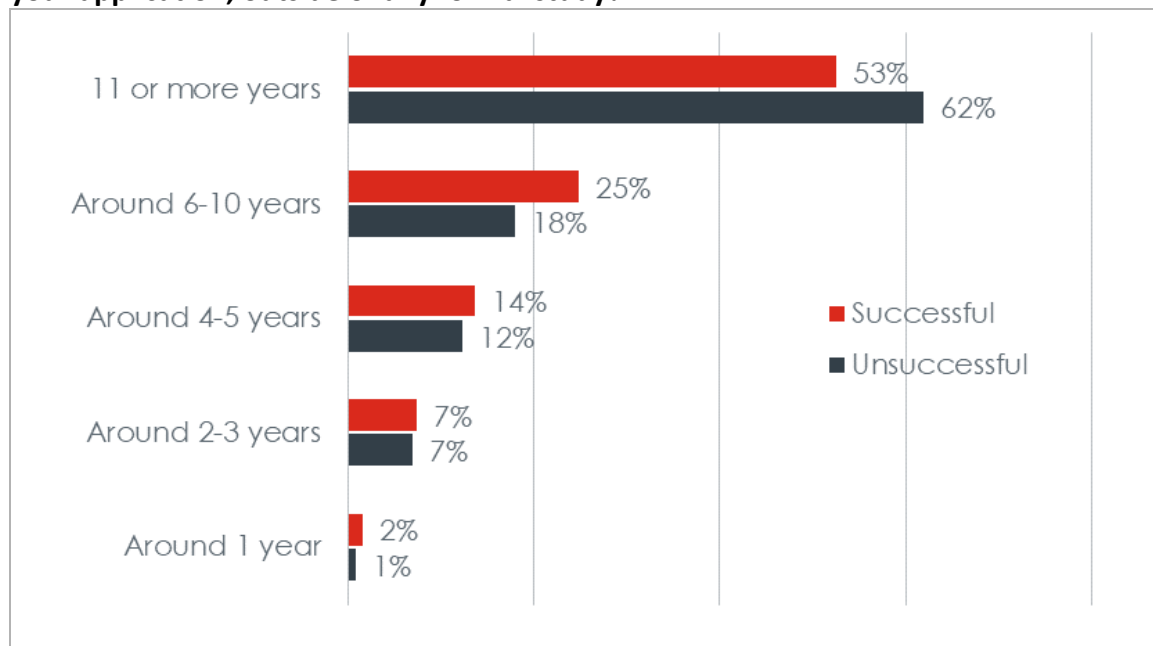


Source: Successful (n=782) and unsuccessful (n=542) applicant surveys. Note that respondents could select multiple options so categories are not mutually exclusive.

Length of experience

- 5.5** Length of experience forms part of the eligibility criteria, with practitioners needing one year's experience outside of formal study, down from three years as of Round 8. However, this is not captured in a systematic way, so the surveys included a question about length of experience. Figure 5-3 shows that over half of applicants have been in their practice for 11 or more years. However, the data does appear to show those who have a slightly shorter length of experience are more likely to have been successful. Comparing Rounds 1-7 against Rounds 8-9 there was no change in the proportion of applicants in each category.
- 5.6** It is worth noting that this question is open to interpretation, however it probably is worth capturing this information in a standardised way via application forms going forwards.

Figure 5-3: How many years of creative or cultural practice did you have at the time of your application, outside of any formal study?



Source: Surveys of applicants (successful=697 and unsuccessful=488)

Point for consideration: Consider capturing details on practitioner length of experience in the DYCP application form, with clear guidance as to how to define ‘length of experience’.

Representativeness

- 5.7** *Let’s Create* establishes the need for Arts Council England to support diversity within the creative and cultural workforce. The importance of this is recognised by those involved in the development and delivery of DYCP, and the guidance includes a commitment to funding a broad range of ‘individuals and geographical areas’³⁵; Decision Panels take these factors into account when making their funding decisions.
- 5.8** This section considers the backgrounds of individuals applying to and funded by DYCP. To do so, it draws on the tables in Annex B that compare DYCP against other Arts Council England programmes, NPOs and, to an extent, to the UK creative and cultural workforce as a whole (based on publicly available data). It also considers success rates and how applicant numbers have varied over time.

Geography

- 5.9** Table 5-1 considers the spread of applicants by geography. It shows the number of applications from London is considerably higher than from other regions, which is reflected in a lower success rate; the Midlands has the lowest number of applications and

³⁵ Arts Council England. 2021. [Developing your Creative Practice: Guidance for applicants](#), p.38.

highest relative success rate. The geographical split in awards reflects a pre-allocated budget for the regional Decision Panels.

Table 5-1: Grantees, applications and success rates by region

Round	Population		% of population		Success rate
	Grantees	Applications	Grantees	Applications	
London	1,021	7,192	27%	39%	14%
North	882	3,562	24%	19%	25%
South East	770	3,179	21%	17%	24%
South West	486	2,416	13%	13%	20%
Midlands	554	1,946	15%	11%	28%

Source: SQW analysis of monitoring data

- 5.10** The proportion of applications from London has been higher in more recent rounds, and London is the location of 27% of all funded applicants (and 39% of applicants overall).
- 5.11** Table B-5 in Annex B shows the weighting between regions is similar to NLPG (for individuals), which also uses pre-allocated regional budgets. However, DYCP has weighted its awards away from London to a greater extent than the awards to individuals provided by the Emergency Response Fund, which has a split that is more reflective of the split in applications to DYCP. Considering regional data on self-employment in the creative and cultural workforce, DYCP is supporting a disproportionate number of grantees in the Midlands and North compared to the workforce.
- 5.12** Looking at local authority level data, DYCP receives 10% of applications from Arts Council England’s ‘Priority Places’ and the success rate is equal with the non-Priority Places success rate at 20%.³⁶ The proportion of applications from these areas has varied between rounds, with a low of 7% in Round 6 and a high of 11% in Rounds 2 and 10.
- 5.13** Through this geographical spread, the programme is also supporting the government’s Levelling Up agenda, which is within the *Let’s Create* Delivery Plan as an objective.

Personal characteristics

- 5.14** A full overview of the split of applicants, grantees and success rates by personal characteristics is set out in Table B-7 in Annex B. The analysis of the data in isolation showed no obvious change over time, with only fluctuations between rounds being apparent. There are some differences in success rates and applications to different disciplines, but often this is based on small numbers due to granular categories and some of the data only being collected in more recent rounds.
- 5.15** Table B-6 in Annex B sets out details of DYCP applicants and grantees compared to the characteristics of individuals applying to or funded by NLPG and ERF. It shows that the

³⁶ The Priority Places are 54 local authorities identified in *Let’s Create* Delivery Plan 2021-2024 as “places in which our investment and engagement is too low” – see [here](#) for further details.

DYCP programme is similarly diverse in terms of ethnicity, but receives a higher proportion of applications from female applicants, D/deaf or disabled applicants and LGBT applicants. Looking at the split of grantees, DYCP funds a considerably higher proportion of D/deaf or disabled grantees and to a lesser extent a higher proportion of female grantees.

5.16 Table B-6 also compares grantees to the broader cultural sector workforce, which shows that across DYCP and other Arts Council England programmes, Black and minority ethnic grantees account for a relatively high proportion of grantees (at 21-22% of those funded) compared to 8% in the broader workforce.

5.17 Data on socioeconomic background is not publicly available for other Arts Council England programmes, however there is research on socioeconomic background in the ‘creative industries’ and broader workforce in the UK by the Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre.³⁷ The research identifies three groups, based on the occupation of an individual’s main earning parent when they were aged 14, the same data as collected as part of DYCP. Table 5-2 below uses the same groupings; it appears that DYCP has an overrepresentation of what the paper termed ‘privileged’ socioeconomic backgrounds, although working-class backgrounds are as represented as they are in the creative occupations (though not as represented as in the wider workforce as a whole) and have the highest success rate. Those from intermediate backgrounds are very underrepresented. However, caution should be taken in interpreting this: DYCP data is based on just Rounds 8-10; 16% of applicants said ‘prefer not to say’ (these have been excluded from the analysis below); the creative industries definition is broader than the sectors covered by DYCP; and there are limits to the robustness and true representativeness of this type of analysis.³⁸ A fuller breakdown of socioeconomic backgrounds is presented in Table B-7 in Annex B.

Table 5-2: Socioeconomic backgrounds for DYCP versus wider workforce

Categories based on parental NS-SEC aged 14	% of applicants	% of grantees	Success rate	Creative occupations	All occupations
Privileged	64%	64%	23%	52%	37%
Intermediate	19%	18%	21%	32%	35%
Working-class	17%	18%	25%	16%	29%

Source: DYCP monitoring data and Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre

5.18 The survey also captured data on personal characteristics to test whether and how experiences of the programme differ based on these. There were interesting insights into

³⁷ Creative Industries Policy and Evidence Centre. (2020). Getting in and getting on Class, participation and job quality in the UK Creative Industries.

³⁸ See for example: Social Mobility Commission. (2021). How employers measure socio-economic background: An accompanying report to new guidance. The question used for this analysis relies on just one question amongst a set suggested by the Social Mobility Commission, and the paper sets out the shortcomings of that question.

how applicants found out about the programme which may have implications for how DYCP, and the Arts Council more widely, can seek to attract diverse applicants:

- Ethnicity – successful applicants from Asian/Asian British, Black/Black British and Mixed backgrounds are considerably more likely to have found out about DYCP via an organisation other than Arts Council England; applicants from Black/Black British backgrounds are more likely to have heard about Arts Council England via friend/family/colleague/peer than those of other ethnicities
- Socioeconomic background – applicants whose parents were in semi-routine manual and routine manual and service occupations, which constitute most of the ‘working-class’ group in the analysis above, are considerably less likely to have heard about DYCP via word of mouth rather than directly through Arts Council England
- Length of experience – the shorter an applicant’s length of experience, the more likely they are to have heard about DYCP via word of mouth rather than directly through Arts Council England.

5.19 These findings demonstrate the importance of outreach, word of mouth and sector organisations for attracting diverse applicants. A new advice framework is being developed by the Arts Council which will include a focus on reaching target groups and making advice more accessible, and may offer a means for promoting DYCP.

Point for consideration: Monitor whether the new advice framework is leading to increased uptake of DYCP amongst underrepresented groups, and consider how it can be used in order to better promote DYCP to these groups in particular.

6. Reflections on the DYCP model

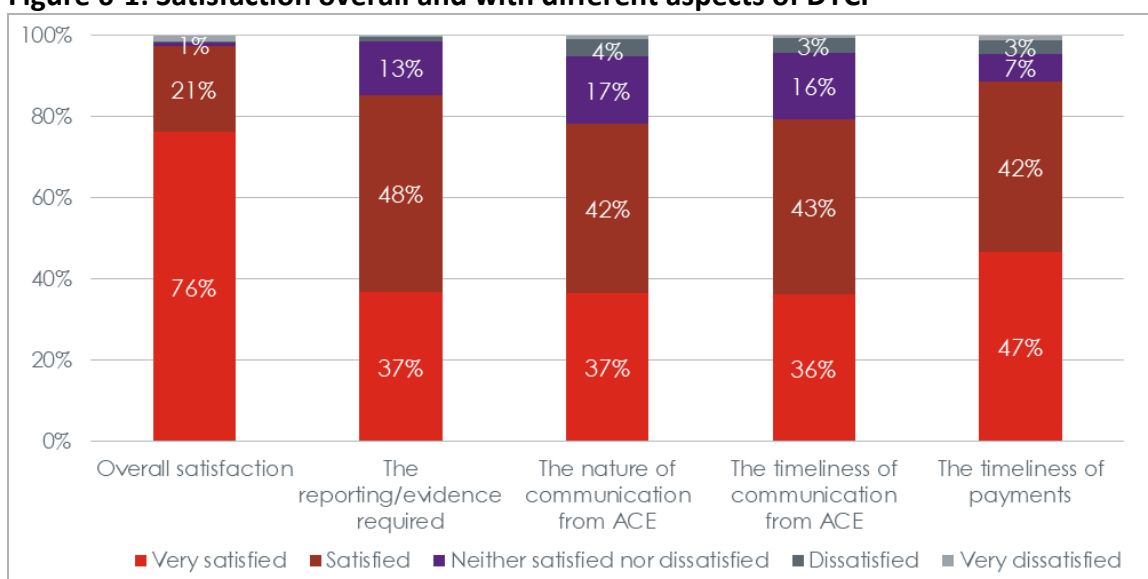
- 6.1** The research with applicants and grantees included questions to gauge satisfaction and whether the DYCP model is the right model. The findings are considered in this chapter.

Satisfaction

- 6.2** The survey of grantees asked about their satisfaction with different aspects of DYCP, and their overall level of satisfaction beyond the application process (considered earlier). Figure 6-1 shows that **76% of grantees were 'very satisfied' with DYCP and the remainder mostly 'satisfied'**; just 12 of 694 respondents to this question were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Reviewing their other answers, it is possible that (at least some of) the 'very dissatisfied' answers were given by mistake, as their other responses suggest high levels of satisfaction and open text comments reflect on how helpful and impactful DYCP had been, with descriptions such as 'amazing' and 'lifesaver'.
- 6.3** The survey revealed high levels of satisfaction across different aspects of DYCP, covering the nature and timeliness of communication, timeliness of payments, and reporting requirements. The **aspect with the highest satisfaction was the timeliness of payments**. Across these different aspects there was again very little dissatisfaction, although there was a substantial minority who said they were 'neither satisfied nor dissatisfied', most commonly for communication from the Arts Council. The interviews aligned with this finding of good levels of satisfaction, but did identify scope for possible improvements that might reflect instances of lower satisfaction.

"Everything was fine – super simple and straightforward. It was very good." Grantee interview, Visual Arts

Figure 6-1: Satisfaction overall and with different aspects of DYCP



Source: Successful applicant survey (n=691-699)

- 6.4** Appreciative comments were made on how **quick the turnaround** was for the decision process. This included comments about the importance of receiving decisions promptly, as waiting on decisions can have implications for other opportunities. That said, there were some survey responses that highlighted the uncertainty they faced over whether they should accept work opportunities while awaiting a decision.

*“I was recently funded for another project from the Art Fund. Their process was that the application was submitted at the end of July – then I was shortlisted, then I had an interview in October – for me that long period of not knowing when I’d been shortlisted makes it tricky to plan other work – having set deadlines and a quick turnaround in DYCP was good for planning.” **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

- 6.5** The **‘hands-off’ or ‘light touch’ approach** to communication and reporting was well liked by most interviewees. Interviewees appreciated the autonomy, flexibility and feeling of trust they had as a result.

*“For me it was really helpful to be left to it. If I’d had to do a mid-term report it would’ve felt bureaucratic and not helpful for me or for them. It’s all about experimentation and taking risks, so actually it’s important to be left to it, but knowing you could contact them at any point, I think that I knew that, and that was always good.” **Grantee interview, Not Discipline Specific***

*“They’ve left me to it – this can be good and bad. [It is] Good because they’re giving us the freedom and have been very understanding of the circumstances and given the extensions. The only thing I received were reminders about submitting the final report.” **Grantee interview, Literature***

- 6.6** However, there was a substantial minority who felt that **more communication or support from the Arts Council could have been useful during the project**, particularly for those who had struggled with progress or direction during their project. There were also comments about being unsure when the Arts Council needed to be contacted to sign off deviations for the activity plan and budget, as mentioned earlier.

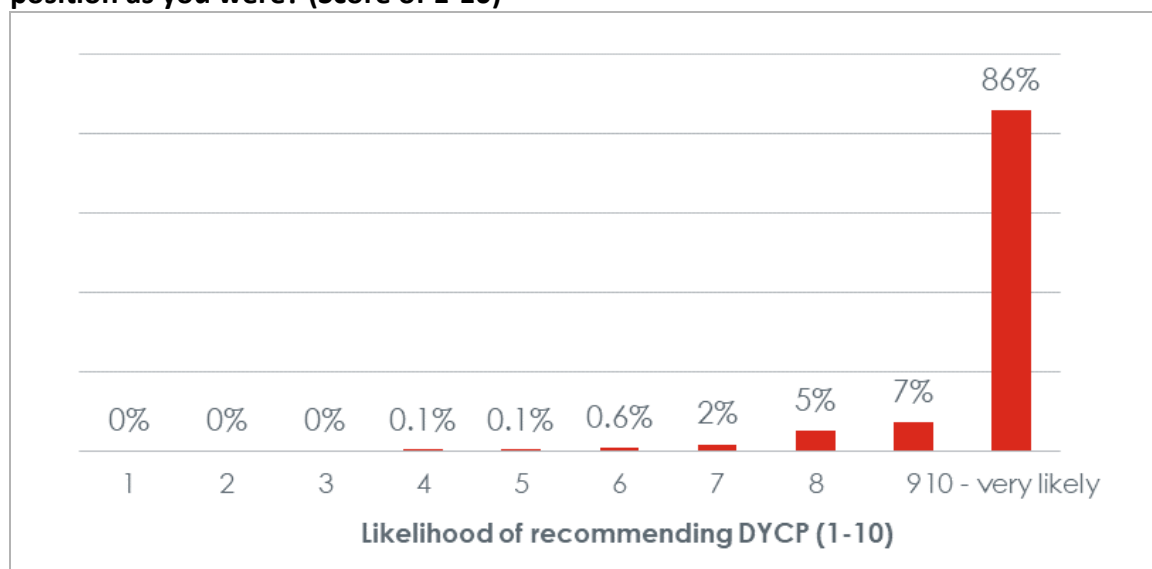
*“One of the things that’s good is that you can just get on with it, but equally I do find it slightly strange there’s never any human contact about the project. I do like being left alone because that’s how I do my best work. There’s a really good feeling of trust and someone isn’t constantly checking in. The trust is really nice, but occasionally it doesn’t feel like they are fully supporting the project.” **Grantee interview, Music***

- 6.7** Considering the payment process, the **upfront payment of 90% was very well liked**, and considered critical for those who needed to pay for things such as equipment and travel costs. There were a couple of interviewees who felt the 10% payment only being paid upon completion might cause difficulties for those less financially secure, but it was well understood why this was necessary.

“The 90% up front was amazing. I needed it all up front and sometimes they make you wait or give you half for example. It can be hard when costs are up front.” **Grantee interview, Visual Arts**

- 6.8** Lastly, there were frequent **complaints about having to use Grantium**, though it is noted that those involved in the development and delivery of DYCP are unlikely to be able to influence this.
- 6.9** The survey also asked grantees to score how likely they would be to **recommend DYCP to someone in the same position**. Very positively, the vast majority gave a score of 10 out of 10, indicating they would be very likely to do so. In the interviews, many grantees said they actively suggested the programme to friends and peers, and some had helped others with their applications. Although of these, there was a recognition the programme needed to be ‘right’ for them and there **were reservations due to low success rates and lack of feedback**.

Figure 6-2: How likely would you be to recommend DYCP to someone in the same position as you were? (Score of 1-10)

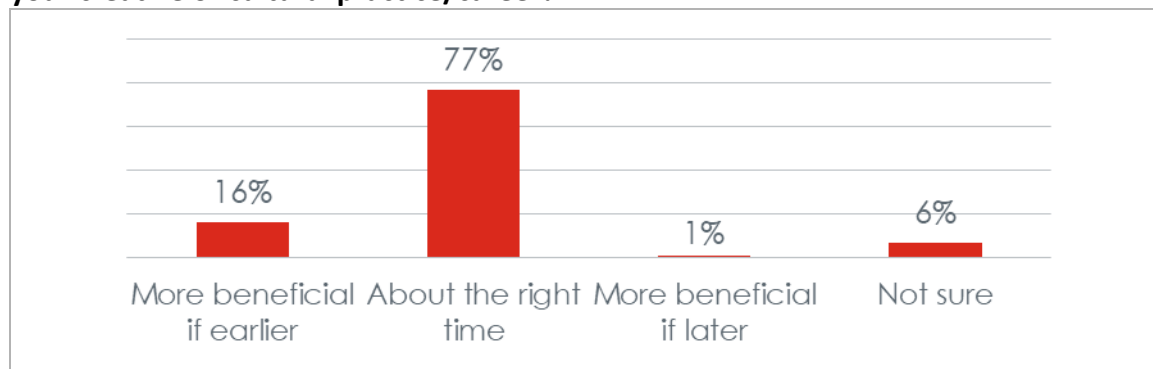


Source: Successful applicant survey (n=698)

Was it at the right time?

- 6.10** The grantee survey asked whether DYCP would have had more of an impact if it came earlier in their career. It found **the majority (77%) thought DYCP funding came at the right time in their career**, with the remainder mostly thinking would be more beneficial earlier.

Figure 6-3: Would the funding have had more of an impact if it came earlier or later in your creative or cultural practice/career?



Source: Successful applicant survey (n=725)

6.11 In the interviews grantees were also asked whether DYCP had come at the right time for them. Their views broadly reflected the survey findings, with DYCP coming at the ‘right time’ for most. Where grantees said it would have been more beneficial sooner, this was expanded to clarify that they would have been ready for it sooner, and therefore could have experienced the impacts sooner, rather than impacts being limited because it had not happened soon enough. There was also a pandemic dimension, with some saying that if their project had been sooner it could have better prepared them for the pandemic, or would have taken place at a quieter point (earlier) in the pandemic which would have suited their project. **Interviewees who had planned and undertaken their project during the early pandemic were especially grateful for being able to use this time productively.**

6.12 Asked what constitutes the ‘right time’ interviewees gave a range of answers, which generally reflected the different ways in which grantees had used DYCP in relation to their own career. Across the interviews, the following factors were seen as important to it being the ‘right time’:

- Having a **clear picture of what they want to achieve** and the **requisite knowledge and skills** to be able to undertake the activities in their activity plan
- Looking for a **shift, pivot or transition in their practice or career**, including those looking to shift from part to full-time employment, those wanting to commercialise their practice, those looking to start freelancing or setting up a new business, those who had taken a career break, or those needing to adapt to changes in their life such as being a new parent or health issues
- Needing to **address ‘stagnation’** including difficulties advancing or where struggling to stay relevant and maintain skills
- Being able to **fit the project around their other work and life** – some had found doing this difficult, due the need to work alongside or other pressures.

“It felt like the next step and the right pot of money to approach it. I had got to the point in my career to where I needed time to push it in a new direction ... My career had been

*very busy prior to having a baby, so I didn't have the headspace to approach it." **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*"It was just bang on for me. I was sort of in a transition from one kind of practice to a new kind of practice that I'd been exploring for 5 years, but very-part time. Then I was feeling committed to doing that kind of work and looking to grow it." **Grantee interview, Dance***

*"It is necessary if you are at a point where you need breathing space without the pressures of life that really stifle creativity. When you're focused on making money, it doesn't offer the freedom to get deeper on what it is you're about, what it is you want to provide and produce into the world. It can really provide fear and block that creativity." **Grantee interview, Dance***

*"I was feeling like I was stagnating and going back to this safe job. I wasn't pushing myself out of my comfort zone. At that point it was about doing something that would encourage me to try new areas and mix up my work. And I was seeing more and more people talking about the software ... [so] I'd have been getting left behind." **Grantee interview, Theatre***

*"It was the only opportunity I've had in the last 15 years just to focus on me. That was really nourishing and actually a lifeline." **Grantee interview, Dance***

*"I am a photographer with a degenerative sight condition. The eye specialists have told me to prepare for going blind. My Arts Council [England] DYCP is making a huge difference to the direction of my work." **Grantee survey, Visual Artists***

*"This period was a vital learning opportunity for me to understand how I can continue to work in the sector as an ill artist." **Grantee survey, Literature***

*"I wanted the headspace because I didn't want to continue doing the same. I should've thought about the business model a bit earlier, to start thinking about commercialising the work before I was 40." **Grantee interview, Visual Arts***

*"As soon as I saw the fund existed I knew I was going to apply for it at some point, and then when I knew I wanted to go freelance it gave me the impetus and freedom to make that change." **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

6.13 It was commonly suggested **mid-career practitioners were most likely to be in positions associated with the 'right time'** set out above, although this may be because interviewees were likely mid-career themselves (as the survey data on length of experience in the previous chapter showed). It was suggested that mid-career was a point at which practitioners are most likely to have lots of work on, so little time for reflection and development, and a lower likelihood they were learning on the job compared to those earlier in their careers. Mid-career practitioners were also thought not to have access to as many opportunities for development as those who are younger and earlier in their

career, whereas those later in their career were perceived to be more likely to have the financial security, profile and access to the types of funding that facilitate development. Mid-career practitioners were also considered more likely to understand their strengths, to have a clearer idea of where they wanted to go next, and to have enough experience and capital to make the most of the opportunities DYCP offers. That said, there was a recognition that early or later stage careers could benefit provided they met the conditions above – it was just more likely that mid-career practitioners would be in this type of position.

“It’s an age where you fully know yourself a little bit better or know what your strengths are, your limitations, or what your potential is or might be ... it’s very encouraging to have that happening at that [mid-career] stage.” Grantee interview, Theatre

6.14 Probably most important was how the programme allows grantees to **design their project around their own development needs**.

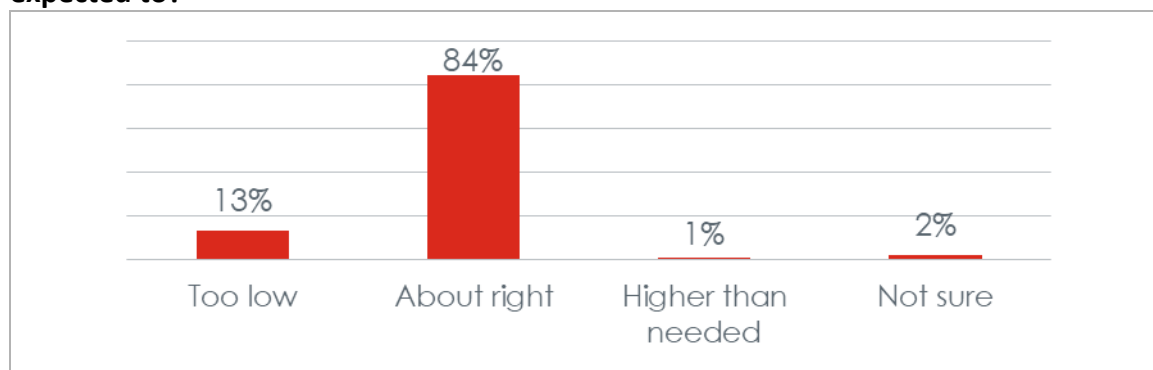
“I think the real strength of this programme is that you can design it for yourself, and you can fill gaps that are there for you.” Grantee interview, Music

Is the grant enough?

6.15 In the survey, 84% of grantee respondents thought the level of funding was sufficient to deliver their plans, with only 13% saying it was too low. Those who said it was too low were disproportionately those who had received £5-7.4k, with 21% of this group saying it was too low, meaning there was room for greater funding within the £10k limit. Of those who received £7.5-£10k there were 12% that said it was too low.

6.16 Again, this aligns with interview findings. The **vast majority said the amount had been sufficient**, although it was noted that **project plans had been designed based on the level of funding**, so more funding would have enabled more to happen and could have achieved greater impacts.

Figure 6-4: Was the amount of funding from DYCP right for you to achieve what you expected to?



Source: Successful applicant survey (n=725)

6.17 The disciplines most likely to say the funding was too low were Dance (18%) and Combined arts (18%), with few in Literature saying it was too low (8%).

6.18 A key question is whether the £10k limit should rise. The survey asked what changes would maximise the impact of DYCP – a list of four options, from which two could be selected, included increasing the limit on the funding amount.³⁹ This was the joint most popular option, with 49% of respondents selecting it along with increasing the time limit, demonstrating some (but not universal) demand. Views were also mixed amongst interviewees on this, but there were a few reasons given to support considering an increase:

- Grantees did say that they **could have achieved more with a greater budget**, with some suggesting that just £1-2k more could have had a significant impact by adding an additional dimension to their project (with varied responses as to what they could have done with the extra funding) though in the survey there was also appetite for much higher levels.
- The **rising cost of living and levels of inflation**. The £10k limit has existed since the programme started in 2018, and as of 2021 the equivalent level would be £10,832 accounting for inflation.⁴⁰ With higher inflation in 2022, the value of the £10k limit will be eroded further still.
- There is evidence from the interviews that **grantees were not paying themselves enough to cover lost earnings**; in some cases they reported not paying themselves at all for project activities/elements. This led to **pressure to work alongside** the project, either where they had not planned to at all or to a greater extent than planned, which was reported to have negative implications for their project and its impacts. Factors driving this included grantees seeking to be competitive in their application, and grantees wanting to use more of their budget for investing in other things. An increased limit might help address this, although grantees who flagged this had not applied for the full amount of available funding. Therefore **further guidance or expectations around wages might address this specific issue** more effectively than additional funds.
- There is **greater financial insecurity for many in the sector since the pandemic**. This may increase the importance of grantees being able to use the funding as a wage or to supplement their wages during projects. Alongside the increased cost of living, without an increase to the limit DYCP grantees applying for the maximum grant will be having to divert a greater proportion of their project costs towards wages.

³⁹ The full list of options was: (1) allow applicants to apply for more than £10k; (2) allow the activity to take place for longer or over a longer time; (3) opportunities to connect with peers and/or leaders in your discipline; and (4) opportunities for meeting/sharing with other DYCP grantees. It received responses from 700 respondents.

⁴⁰ <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetary-policy/inflation/inflation-calculator>

- Many of the projects include **collaborators, who are often paid for their time**. Similar to the grantees, wages are likely to need to rise due to the increased cost of living and pressure on the sector.
- Where projects are about a group, such as a band or dance group, there is an increasing risk that **£10k split between multiple individuals will be too small to realise the ambitions of the fund**.
- Lastly, **an increase to the limit will not automatically lead to everyone bidding up to the limit**; just 25% have bid for the maximum £10k to date, although 60% have bid for £9k+. There will likely still be some downward pressure from grantees trying to be competitive in setting their budget.

*“I think I had to make some choices. One of those was to pay myself less – I wouldn’t work for anyone else for that amount and haven’t done since I was a graduate, but I think what that does is gets you the project and the application. But then you do feel the pressure to earn money on top of that. Ideally I’d have paid myself £250 a day and it would have given me extra space. But that’s what artists will do – they’ll cut their fees before anything else. The Arts Council need to take the lead on this – they need to say ‘we won’t fund it if you aren’t paying yourself properly’.” **Grantee interview, Dance***

6.19 However, there are reasons against increasing the funding limit to consider:

- Most important is that **a higher limit would mean fewer grantees overall**, and a considerable number of grantees did not think an extra £1-2k on their project would be worth others missing out on the opportunity.
- A few of the **less experienced grantees said that the £10k limit was high, but not so high that it was ‘off-putting’ or ‘scary’** like other funding opportunities could be. They expressed doubts about applying had the level been higher, especially if it came with **greater expectations around administration, reporting and oversight**.
- Conversely, **a higher limit might lead to greater number of applications** if prospective applicants had opted not to bid due because they did not think it was sufficiently high to deliver their vision or to warrant the time and foregone earnings to write the application. So there is a risk of greater application numbers for a lower number of available grants, with **implications for resourcing and success rates**.
- **Riskier projects might be less likely to receive funding at the higher level** (depending on the Arts Council’s approach to this and decision making criteria), which risks disadvantaging more innovative proposals and less experienced applicants.

*“The size of the grant felt more manageable than others I was looking at. They were bigger and for really big projects. It felt it could be tailored to smaller or larger projects, so it’s a middle ground [£10k] – it’s a huge amount of money, but any other kinds of grants were scary.” **Grantee interview, Literature***

*“You can apply for up to £10k so apply for what you need; I liked that. Some pots of funding offer more than you need, and the more you apply for the more they’re going to scrutinise your application. I asked for what I needed and nothing more, and so I was able to justify it.” **Grantee interview, Theatre***

*“If it was more, you could do a bigger and longer project, but I was able to spend enough time... You shape it to the time and money there is. I think that’s really good for that sort of project.” **Grantee interview, Music***

*“For me it’s very generous. I’m not used to being able to apply for funds between £2-10k so for me that was sufficient ... I’m used to scrabbling round for little pots of money.” **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries***

6.20 On balance, the evidence indicates there probably is a strong enough case for a small increase of £1-2k based on the factors above, noting that for most £10k would still be sufficient, and that this would impact on the number of grantees and success rates. The more difficult question is whether DYCP would be more effective with an even higher limit, and what an appropriate level would be. In theory there will be an optimum grant level, where the ratio of benefits to costs is greatest. Too low and the funding is spread too thinly, with projects not benefitting from the synergies that make the sum of its parts greater. Too high and there are diminishing returns, so the increase in impacts is not proportionate to the increased funding. **At current the current £10k limit, the scale of impacts being achieved suggests the funding is not being spread too thinly.** But it is unclear whether the scale of impacts from an extra £2k, £5k or £10k would lead to greater synergies or diminishing returns, and therefore whether any associated reduction in the number of grantees would be warranted.

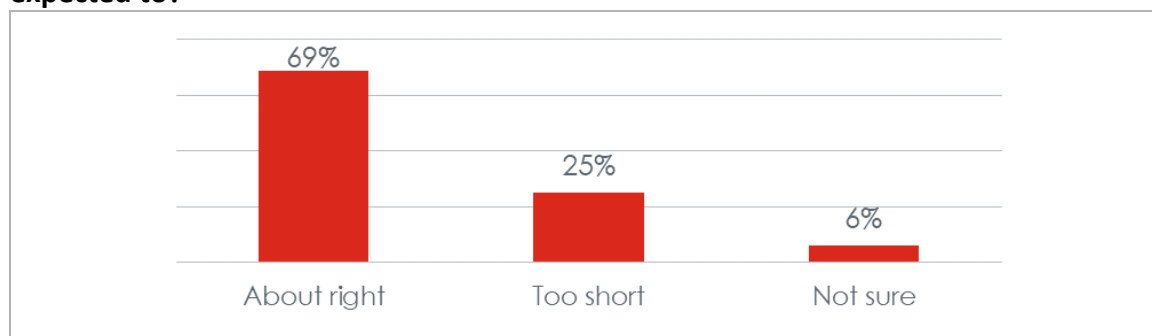
Point for consideration: Consider increasing the limit to £12k alongside the merits/demerits of a further increase. Keep the funding amount under review, and consider it alongside the overall funding allocation for DYCP.

It is long enough?

6.21 Most (69%) grantees who responded to the survey thought the length of time was ‘about right’ although a quarter did think it was too short. The survey also asked what changes would maximise the impact of DYCP – a list of four options, from which two could be selected, included increasing the time limit.⁴¹ This was the joint most popular option along with increasing the value, with 49% of respondents selecting it.

⁴¹ The full list of options was: (1) allow applicants to apply for more than £10k; (2) allow the activity to take place for longer or over a longer time; (3) opportunities to connect with peers and/or leaders in your discipline; and (4) opportunities for meeting/sharing with other DYCP grantees. It received responses from 700 respondents.

Figure 6-5: Was the length of your DYCP activity right for you to achieve what you expected to?



Source: Successful applicant survey (n=725)

6.22 This broadly reflects the findings from the interviews. **Most were happy with the length of their project**, including those who used a short period of time for a more compressed and intensive project that they could commit to entirely. Others said that on reflection they should have given themselves more time because their activity was too compressed. This was mostly not about the 12-month limit, however. Interviewees who said their project would have benefitted from more time had mostly not used the full 12 months available, and those who found the 12 month limit an issue had been able to extend it with permission from the Arts Council. A more common reason for projects needing longer was the impact of the pandemic or health issues, which meant projects needed more time.

6.23 The disciplines most likely to say the project was too short were Theatre (33%) and Combined Arts (31%) but these levels are not considerably above average.

Maximising impact

6.24 The findings so far all suggest the DYCP model is fundamentally working. There have been recommendations made around elements such as the application process and feedback, but the evidence does not indicate that the model itself needs radical change in order to achieve its aims.

6.25 There is, however, a question of whether additional elements could maximise the impact DYCP delivers. This section considers this question based on the research with grantees. Firstly though, it is worth noting upfront that the suggestions would require trade-offs, and in particular there would be resource implications. Therefore there is a judgement to be made about whether the benefits to sufficient to warrant any suggestions being implemented.

Table 6-1: Ways to maximise the impact of DYCP (select up to two)

Proposed changes	% of respondents
Allow applicants to apply for more than £10,000	49%
Allow the activity to take place for longer or over a longer time	49%
Opportunities to connect with peers and/or leaders in your discipline	47%

Proposed changes	% of respondents
Opportunities for meeting/sharing with other DYCP grantees	28%

Source: Successful applicant survey (m=700)

6.26 The different suggestions fall into six groups:

- **Budget limit and time limit:** The first two – increasing the £10k limit and the length of time – have already been considered. One additional suggestion in this space was the personal access costs should include childcare costs, as this was a key barrier to some grantees, and some were keen to develop their practice following a career break for caring responsibilities.
- **Connecting with peers:** This was also covered in the survey. Nearly half of respondents expressed a desire to connect with peers and/or leaders in their discipline, while just over a quarter were interested in meeting other DYCP grantees, with the lower popularity likely reflecting the non-discipline specific component. Interviewees thought this opportunity for networking and ‘community building’ would allow them to share experiences, ideas and resources, and identify collaboration opportunities, which could influence ongoing projects and augment project impacts. Common suggestions in survey responses were for either events during or following their project, or for an online portal to connect with other grantees. If such opportunities were implemented, this would need to be a voluntary offer, so as not to override the DYCP of principles proportionality, light-touch requirements and autonomy. Timing would also need considering. At the mid-point or at the end of a project were most commonly suggested, although the different timelines for projects may make this challenging.
- **Contact and support from the Arts Council during the project:** While many grantees liked the hands-off approach of DYCP, a frequent suggestion was that additional contact with the Arts Council would be beneficial, specifically to perform a ‘critical friend’ role. Projects which included a mentor were less likely to require this, likely because this function was already provided by others. It was also more commonly suggested by less experienced grantees. The suggestion was that having a critical friend could help in identifying further opportunities, stimulate ideas, and offer a specific point in time to regroup – thereby supporting grantees to get the most value out of their project.
 - This could perhaps be fulfilled by Relationship Managers, who may be best placed to advise around project plans, disciplines and practice.
 - Some grantees suggested contact at the outset, some at the mid-point, some upon completion, and some as a follow-up 6, 12 or even 24 months later.
 - The level of resourcing for this could be significant, so any touch points would need to be limited. Also, there was not universal demand, so a voluntary offer would likely be preferable.

- **Supporting with showcasing:** This was a common request in survey responses, with suggestions including a showcase event at the end of projects, a space to share with other grantees on a portal, and the Arts Council's dissemination via web articles or emails.
- **Follow-up support/engagement for grantees:** This is partially covered in the suggestions for follow-up support from a critical friend post-project, but there were other suggestions around this. Firstly, the opportunity to connect with peers could take place upon completing the project to encourage reflection on next steps, and provide timely networking opportunities. Other suggestions included better signposting of progression routes, for example to funding opportunities, training and resources that would continue the grantee's journey.
- **Follow-on funding:** This included an appetite for 'DYCP 2' type funding to build on their first project. This is permissible through DYCP itself, given reapplications are allowed to an extent, although grantees were often unaware or unsure if they could reapply. However, the views on reapplying to DYCP were mixed amongst interviewees and survey respondents, as there was a recognition that this would reduce the number of people funded overall. There were also suggestions that there should be signposting to or support with other funding, including for NLPG.

"They've made the investment, so it feels like they're missing out by not following up to make something more tangible happen" **Grantee interview, Museums/Libraries**

6.27 As already noted, there are **trade-offs and resource implications associated with these possible changes**. Also, the exact format of some of these suggestions would need working through, and the benefits of these changes are uncertain currently. If any of these changes were deemed of interest then their operability and value added could perhaps be tested through piloting with a small cohort or a single round.

Point for consideration: Consider the desirability and feasibility of the suggestions for improvements made by grantees above, and consider testing the value (and resource requirements) of any changes planned by conducting small-scale pilots.

6.28 Lastly, it is worth noting that DYCP is oversubscribed and – in the view of those involved in the development and delivery of DYCP, and based on the (limited) available data – there are more high quality applications that would be fundable. A **larger overall programme budget is another way DYCP would be able to widen and increase its impact**. That said, overall resource pressures and competing demands mean this might not be possible, and if the DYCP budget was increased it risks being at the expense of the Arts Council's spending on other activities or programmes.

7. Alignment and contribution to *Let's Create*

- 7.1** This section considers the extent to which DYCP is aligned and contributing to *Let's Create*, and any scope for improving this. Beforehand, it is worth noting that there is a greater emphasis on individuals within the Delivery Plan than in *Let's Create*. In the former it is one of five key themes, whereas in *Let's Create* more of its focus and language is on organisations. Therefore in interpreting the relevance of DYCP to *Let's Create* there is often an additional step to take in making that connection, and a focus on the broad themes and objectives is a more sensible approach. In comparison, the read-across to the Delivery Plan is more straightforward. The relevance of this will become clear in this chapter.
- 7.2** The alignment with the *Let's Create* Delivery Plan is particularly clear given DYCP's central role in the document. Through supporting individuals, supporting access to international travel, networks, collaborators and culture, and through supporting grantees to develop their practice and careers in response to the pandemic, **there is a clear contribution towards the themes that the Delivery Plan sets out.**
- 7.3** For *Let's Create* itself, considering the challenges and ambitions set out in the strategy, **it is clear that DYCP is making a strong contribution.** The impacts set out in this report demonstrate how **DYCP is delivering against certain points in particular: greater innovation, development of talent, increased collaboration, access to international opportunities, more sustainable and resilient careers, supporting diversity in the workforce, and supporting progression into (or competencies for) leadership roles.** These impacts are most applicable to the 'A Creative and Cultural Country' Outcome because this is the Outcome that concerns the workforce. DYCP focuses on individuals and freelancers, and on supporting them to innovate, network, collaborate, improve their practice and ultimately to improve the quality of their work and to sustain and flourish in their careers. The research with grantees highlighted the importance of this: no other major programmes were identified that fill this niche across Arts Council England's disciplines, and the other key Arts Council England programme for individuals – NLPG – is more focused on the production of outputs, and so does not provide the space for as much innovation and development.
- 7.4** DYCP is also contributing to the other two *Let's Create* Outcomes. Its contribution to 'Creative People' stems from its support of grantees whose careers involve activism or the dissemination of their knowledge and skills, including those who teach them to others. Its contribution to 'Cultural Communities' stems from the focus on achieving a geographical spread of funding, and through the work that grantees produce (during or after their projects) reaching their own and other local communities.
- 7.5** Lastly, there are the **Investment Principles:**
- **Ambition and Quality – DYCP is contributing to this** through its focus on potential, and by supporting grantees to develop and innovate in their practice, to recognise the

value of investing in development, and ultimately by leading to higher quality work to the benefit of the public. Also, an important point made by the Arts Council England consultees is that the involvement of Relationship Managers in the reviewing of applications exposes them to new and innovative practice.

- **Dynamism – Many DYCP projects include a focus on using new technology and exploring new areas of practice**, and grantees have reported having more sustainable and resilient careers, greater financial resilience, adopting new business models, and developing project, business and financial management skills and knowledge.
- **Environmental** – The limited evidence found around this related to **individual projects including sustainability as a focus** in their practice or subject matters.
- **Inclusivity and Relevance** – The focus on a **simple and accessible application process and factoring diversity into the decision process** is ensuring DYCP supports a diverse range of grantees, and the impacts on career prospects can support diverse grantees sustain and flourish in their careers. There is also **evidence of diverse grantees moving into leadership roles**. A substantial number of the grantees spoken to had projects that were overtly focused on this issue too, so **individual projects are reflecting this Investment Principle**.

Improving the future evidence of alignment and contribution

- 7.6** There is a clear alignment and contribution to *Let's Create* based on the evidence presented in this report. However, one question pondered during the evaluation was how to better link DYCP to *Let's Create* on an ongoing basis. For NLPG, a recent change was to ask grantees to read *Let's Create*, while the questions in the application form explicitly ask about contributions towards the *Let's Create* Outcomes and Investment Principles. One option could be to adopt a similar approach for DYCP. Yet **there are issues associated with linking *Let's Create* to DYCP so explicitly, largely related to accessibility and proportionality**, which need to be considered. This section considers these issues and what a solution might look like. The observations around issues are partly based on the interview and survey responses – all of which will have been unprompted, as *Let's Create* was not an explicit line of questioning – and partly based on our own observations.
- 7.7** Firstly, *Let's Create* is a 67-page ten year strategy, and not necessarily written with DYCP applicants in mind. So there is a risk that grantees might struggle to interpret it or relate it directly to their personal development, especially those with accessibility issues; some might struggle to find sufficient time to review and sufficiently interpret the strategy – especially those who are less financially secure; and some might consider reviewing it disproportionate for the size of the grant and likelihood of success. This indicates there are clear accessibility, proportionality and incentive considerations.
- 7.8** Secondly, **the focus and language of *Let's Create* is (on the whole) more focused on organisations**. The summary of each Investment Principle includes reference to individuals for Inclusivity and Relevance, whilst others refer to organisations. Asking individuals how they would contribute towards the Investment Principles is to ask them

to read and interpret a strategy that may not necessarily appear to speak directly to them. Again this may risk accessibility issues, including because some may struggle to ‘read between the lines’ in written documents.

7.9 Given these issues, an accessible, proportionate and advantageous approach may be to collect information via the **inclusion of tick boxes linked to *Let’s Create***. Since Round 8 there have been boxes regarding the three *Let’s Create* Outcomes in the application form for applicants to tick, to say which they expect to contribute towards. But there are three issues with this approach: (1) these demonstrate intent rather than actual delivery and impacts; (2) they risk misinterpretation; and (3) they do not demonstrate the specific impacts that are being delivered against the Outcomes and Investment Principles.

7.10 Therefore, **a preferable approach may be the inclusion of a fuller list of activities (such those in as Table 4-6) and outcomes (such as those in Table 5-1) with tick boxes in application and project activity forms**, similar to the approach used in the evaluation survey. Importantly this would:

- Systematically capture richer and more granular data on planned activities, delivered activities and impacts, so their prevalence and scale would be known
- Benefit internal decision making, as it would be better understood what DYCP is (and is not) funding and achieving
- Allow those involved in the development and delivery of DYCP to demonstrate how the programme is contributing towards *Let’s Create* without placing the onus on applicants to read the strategy and identify links themselves.

"Other organisations don't offer programmes like this. It felt quite hands off, which was really attractive to me. They're really asking you: 'what do you need?' I understand that it's aligned with their strategic priorities but it didn't feel like those were being imposed on my practice." **Grantee interview, Dance**

Implementing data capture on activities

7.11 The inclusion of a fuller list of activities in the application and activity form would provide better insight into activities planned and, more importantly, activities delivered. Asking applicants to tick from thirteen or so boxes does not feel disproportionate to the value it would add, both to internal decision making and by functioning as useful guides to the types of activities that could be funded.

7.12 The categories used in the survey in Table 4-6 were an attempt to achieve comprehensive coverage of the types of activities funded. However, they were designed early in the interview process, and therefore were unable to fully reflect the interview findings. If they were to be included, they warrant some reflection, and it appears the following points could be better included, more explicit or clarified:

- There is no reference to seeing shows/exhibitions/tours within the UK, which we understand was an activity/focus of some funded projects

- There is no reference to purchasing materials, as opposed to equipment
- Explicitly including payment of wages to themselves may be clearer and more useful than the 'free up time from work' option in the survey
- Less intensive and/or short-term courses/training/workshops could be distinguished from intensive or long-term courses/bootcamps/residencies
- Creation of new work (including prototypes/pilots), while more an outcome, was part of the creative process for some interviewees and so could warrant inclusion – whilst not wishing to place undue emphasis on this given the DYCP ethos
- It may be worthwhile including a distinction between work with audiences and communities.

Point for consideration: Consider the inclusion of activity categories in application and activity forms to capture more detailed insights on the types of activities planned and undertaken, which will help to demonstrate how DYCP is contributing towards *Let's Create*. If the survey categories are used, then beforehand it will be important to reflect on their comprehensiveness and clarity. See Table 4-6 for the activity categories used in the survey.

Implementing data capture on outcomes

- 7.13** The current final activity form provides no systematic data on outcomes. Again, asking applicants to tick a list of boxes does not feel disproportionate to the value it would add, and may even help stimulate greater reflection.
- 7.14** The categories used in the survey in Table 5-1 were an attempt to achieve comprehensive coverage of the types of outcomes that might be achieved. However, they were also designed early in the interview process, and therefore were unable to fully reflect the interview findings. If they were to be included, they warrant some reflection and it appears the following points could be better included, more explicit or clarified:
- Commercialising work
 - Won or long/shortlisted for an award or competition
 - Teaching knowledge/skills/practices to others (to better understand dissemination and knock-on effects)
 - Success with applications to other funding sources in the list (possibly distinguishing between Arts Council England and other organisations).
- 7.15** As well as the categories, there is a question of what is measured. There two key considerations for this, capturing magnitude of impact and longer-term impact:
- A binary yes/no provides no insight into the magnitude of impact. As a result, the question used in the survey asked respondents to give scores of 0-5 to capture this. This approach could be used again

- Capturing outcomes at the end of a project would only capture outcomes within the project lifetime, and it is known that many only emerge over a longer timeframe. A solution could be to have two columns that cover realised and anticipated outcomes, with the latter providing a forward-looking element. Another option may be to introduce light-touch follow up data collection 12-months or so after the project ends.

7.16 A combination of both of these options may be deemed overly complex and disproportionate. If so, it will need to be decided which it is more important to capture.

Point for consideration: Consider the inclusion of the outcome categories used in the survey within the activity form to capture more detailed insights on the types of outcomes DYCP is enabling, which will help to demonstrate how DYCP is contributing towards *Let's Create*. If the survey categories are used, then beforehand it will be important to reflect on their comprehensiveness and clarity, and the preferred format. See Table 5-1 for the outcome categories used in the survey.

8. Conclusions and key points for consideration

- 8.1** The findings presented throughout this report indicate that **the DYCP model is proving effective in supporting creative and cultural practitioners to develop their practice**, through enabling them to build skills, confidence, knowledge and networks, and to invest in equipment and materials. Those in receipt of DYCP are grateful for the opportunities provided to them, and have been able to build on the impacts and seen them snowball – sometimes in directions not previously anticipated.
- 8.2** The programme is seen to offer a unique opportunity for freelance practitioners. As a result of the impacts achieved, most grantees agreed that the funding had secured a step change or at least accelerated their career. Through these impacts and its design features, **the programme is delivering against its intended outcomes as outlined in its logic model, and is playing a distinctive and important role in supporting individuals and delivering against *Let's Create***. The evaluation has also found **good levels of additionality**. Evidence indicates that the programme receives more high quality applications than it can fund. This suggests that, subject to the Arts Council's prioritisation and available resourcing, **there would be scope for a moderate increase in levels of investment in the DYCP programme without detrimental effects on additionality**.

Elements working particularly well

- 8.3** The **reach of the DYCP across the sector is to be praised**; successful applicants come from across England, span the range of eligible disciplines, and DYCP grantees are diverse compared to recipients of other Arts Council England grant funding and the wider creative workforce.
- 8.4** The **principles of potential, achieving a step change, proportionality, accessibility, diversity, flexibility and autonomy are apparent throughout the programme design are key strengths**. The limited level of staffing has been carefully thought through, so that the timeliness and the quality of the programme and grantee experience does not suffer whilst maintaining efficiency. The knowledge and dedication of the Arts Council staff involved in the development and delivery of DYCP are to be credited. Importantly, these staff draw on resources and expertise of colleagues throughout Arts Council England, including Relationship Managers and discipline-specific teams, in order to deliver the programme and seek to ensure it works for all disciplines.
- 8.5** Grantees liked and were **satisfied with the current model**. In particular, the value of grants and length of projects has been sufficient for activities to be delivered and impacts achieved. The vast majority thought the project had come at the 'right time' for them, which is a positive reflection on judgements made during the decision process and clarity of the guidance provided to potential applicants. Most felt the amount of funding and timescales for delivery were sufficient for them to realise their ambitions as outlined in their application form.

- 8.6** There is another point worth reflecting on; the funding provided by DYCP enabled practitioners to develop new skills, knowledge, contacts and practice. But the **funding was not the only critical enabler identified**; simply being selected for funding by the Arts Council proved to be a powerful motivator and confidence boost for some, and the recognition they received helped to drive forward their activities for personal development and experimentation. This should not be lost in future thinking about DYCP evolution and sustainability. In addition, the process of completing the application form proved formative for some, including those who were ultimately unsuccessful in their application. Overall DYCP can be seen as providing a ‘catalyst’ through more than just the funding it provides.
- 8.7** The programme was **particularly welcomed by practitioners funded during the COVID-19** pandemic, when financial instability and insecurity increased for many in the creative and cultural sector. Others reported being in a stronger position to sustain their practice (and income) during the pandemic as a result of DYCP funding. Given the ongoing instability in the sector, DYCP continues to play an important role in supporting a particularly vulnerable part of the workforce.
- 8.8** That the programme appears relatively unique in its offer is also important to recognise. If DYCP was not offering the funding to freelancers, it is unlikely most of the development activities would have happened, with many reporting that they could only do so at a lesser level or slower pace, if at all. While an economic impact assessment has not been possible within the scope of this evaluation, it does pose a question: if DYCP didn’t exist, what would the knock on impacts across the sector be? The evaluation evidence indicates that there would be a gap in development opportunities for freelance practitioners, with a risk that the commercial, reputational and community development impacts reported as a result of DYCP funded activities would not occur to the same extent, or as quickly, if at all.

Elements with scope for improvement or refinement

- 8.9** While the model is fundamentally working and proving effective in meeting its aims, there are some elements which could be considered for refinement or improvement.
- 8.10** Reach across the sector is broad and to be praised overall; however, there is scope to encourage further applications from within the heritage and cultural part of the sector in particular, especially from Libraries and Museums practitioners. Interviewees and survey respondents working in these disciplines reported that the DYCP is not necessarily well targeted or tailored towards those working in this part of the sector (or at least, it is not perceived to be), and overall application numbers remain low; the latter may in part reflect lower numbers of freelance practitioners working in these disciplines, but indicates some scope for targeted promotion and tailoring.
- 8.11** Although the application process was mostly viewed positively, there are **possible refinements to be made to further improve accessibility and understanding**. For example, recommendations to consider included additional case studies, video guidance,

a standalone common mistakes factsheet, alternative application formats and a clearer support offer for neurodivergent applicants.

- 8.12** The absence of feedback is entirely understandable given the scale of applications versus available resource. Yet it is a notable frustration for unsuccessful applicants, and means the process of applying to DYCP is not as formative as it could be for less experienced applicants. Nor does it send signals to unsuccessful applicants on whether they should reapply or not, possibly having detrimental effects on the number and quality of reapplications. It also limits information for internal decision making. Consideration may want to be given as to what is achievable and proportionate around feedback. This might mean offering cohort-wide feedback on common mistakes, or it might mean feedback statements to applicants based on a list of pre-defined reasons. That said, we recognise the need to keep resource demands to a minimum, and that DYCP does not need to encourage an increase in applications overall.
- 8.13** The collected monitoring data is good quality, and covers information such as project costs, length, foci and participant characteristics. The evaluation offered insight into how the data is used to inform decision making and to monitor programme reach and coverage, indicating that what is routinely collected is generally well used. However, DYCP **does not capture information on the types of activities delivered and outcomes achieved**. Capturing this data via the activity form would allow the Arts Council to better understand what is being funded and its short-term impact, which could then be monitored on an ongoing basis. Indeed, many grantees themselves may welcome this, with some calling for more engagement with the Arts Council post-funding; this may offer one route in which to do so, whilst minimising the staffing resource required.
- 8.14** Other points for consideration include the maximum grant value (particularly given inflationary pressures), opportunities for connecting with DYCP peers within disciplines, whether there is scope for Relationship Managers to play a critical friend role at limited touchpoints, and follow-up engagement. All would have resource implications and trade-offs, so potential benefits would need to be weighed up carefully, particularly given that the model is fundamentally working well in its current state.

Final reflections

- 8.15** The DYCP model is working well, funding a wide variety of creative and cultural practitioners to develop their own practice, enabling individuals to build confidence, knowledge, networks, skills and offers, in many cases leading to new practice, commercialisation, recognition and the development of others. It aligns well with *Let's Create*, the Delivery Plan and the government's Levelling Up agenda. Arts Council England's investment in the freelance community has been hugely welcomed by those in receipt of funds, and the programme has achieved impacts which would otherwise simply not have been possible.

Key points for consideration

8.16 A summary of all the points for consideration noted throughout the report is presented on the following page. These have been developed to improve and refine DYCP, rather than indicating that wholesale change is needed, and in recognition that resources overall are constrained for additional investment.

Summary of key points for consideration
Awareness raising and targeted promotion
1: Consider case study focus and coverage, and ensure the examples demonstrate the variety of activities that can be funded through DYCP.
2: If it is a priority to increase successful applications from less well represented disciplines (particularly Libraries, Museums and to a lesser extent Combined Arts) the following should be considered: the appropriateness and language of the application form and guidance; producing more case studies for these disciplines; more active engagement of these sectors. This could draw on relevant Arts Council England teams and sector organisations.
Guidance and application processes
3: Consider more guidance around writing an application, which might include sharing examples of successful applications, and include a more intensive offer targeted at those who are (or may be) disadvantaged.
4: Consider running short satisfaction surveys for any external facing events with practitioners/potential applicants. To manage resourcing demands, this might best be focused on events aimed at those from underrepresented disciplines.
5: Consider how to increase the accessibility of the DYCP application process. This might include introducing bite-sized video guidance, allowing video or audio applications, and reviewing how sufficient and prominent the support offer is for neurodivergent applicants. Co-designing and/or testing any changes or additions with practitioners with a range of identified access needs could help to ensure they are fit for purpose.
6: Consider piloting and introducing limited standardised feedback to applicants, based on tick-box recording by the Arts Council's decision panels. Consider whether it would be feasible to include feedback on different elements of the application as part of this.
7: Consider producing standalone 'common mistakes' and/or 'myth buster' factsheets.
8: Consider explicitly highlighting the success rates for previous DYCP rounds so that applicants are informed and can respond accordingly.
DYCP model
9: Ensure there is clarity around permitted divergence from activity plans and budgets, including by giving more prominence to the requirements to secure approval from the Arts Council for changes to project plans.
10: Consider increasing the individual grant limit to £12k alongside the merits/demerits of a further increase. Keep the funding amount under review, and consider it in light of the overall allocation of funding for DYCP.
11: Consider the desirability and feasibility of the following suggestions for improvements made by grantees, and consider testing the value (and resource requirements) of any changes planned by conducting small-scale pilots: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase to the time limit • Opportunities to connect with peers • Contact and support from the Arts Council during projects

Summary of key points for consideration

- Support with showcasing
- Follow-up support/engagement
- Follow-on funding opportunities/signposts

Monitoring data

12: Monitor applicant data on neurodivergence and whether there are any observable differences in experiences of applying to DYCP.

13: Consider capturing information on role types within the application form, perhaps using the categories defined for this evaluation.

14: Consider capturing details on practitioner length of experience in the DYCP application form, with clear guidance as to how to define 'length of experience'.

15: Monitor whether the new advice framework is leading to increased uptake of DYCP amongst underrepresented groups, and consider how it can be used in order to better promote DYCP to these groups in particular.

16: Consider the inclusion of activity categories in application and activity forms to capture more detailed insights on the types of activities planned and undertaken, which will help demonstrate how DYCP is contributing towards *Let's Create*. If the survey categories are used, then beforehand it will be important to reflect on their comprehensiveness and clarity. See Table 4-6 for the activity categories used in the survey.

17: Consider the inclusion of the outcome categories used in the survey within the activity form to capture more detailed insights on the types of outcomes DYCP is enabling, which will help to demonstrate how DYCP is contributing towards *Let's Create*. If the survey categories are used, then beforehand it will be important to reflect on their comprehensiveness and clarity, and the preferred format. See Table 5-1 for the outcome categories used in the survey.

9. Acknowledgements

9.1 We would like to acknowledge the time and insights provided by the many people who have contributed to the evaluation research and provided insights, introductions to key people and access to relevant data. We know that the cultural and creative workforce is under additional pressure in light of the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, and people have given up their time and effort in order to contribute to the evaluation. Without stakeholder inputs the evaluation would not be possible, and we are grateful for people's time and commitment to the study.

In particular, we would like to thank:

- The Arts Council England staff involved in the development and delivery of DYCP, who have provided access to data, disseminated the online surveys, reviewed and assured outputs produced as the evaluation has progressed, and participated in in-depth interviews to inform our workplan and findings.
- Other senior leads within Arts Council England, who participated in interviews and the interim findings workshop with the evaluation team.
- DYCP applicants, specifically those who have taken part in an interview and/or completed one of the online surveys.

Annex A: DYCP logic model

What we will do.....		What we expect to happen....			
Rationale	Activities	Outputs	Short term change (during the programme)	Medium-long term change (towards the end of the programme)	Impact and strategic goal
<p>Cuts to public funding are falling disproportionately on individual practitioners – lower commission/ presentation fees and more conservative programming</p> <p>Arts Council existing funding requires public outcomes in order to achieve funding – restricting time for R&D or writing</p> <p>Challenges to income for individuals limit range of practitioners from protected characteristics able to sustain a creative career</p> <p>Lack of investment on creative development has a direct impact on risk taking and development of practice</p>	<p>Extension of Artists International Development Fund to allow non-public facing activity by practitioners</p> <p>Clarification of expectation on NPOs to support individual practitioners</p>	<p>Individual practitioners better supported to develop their practice</p> <p>Increase range of practitioners from protected characteristics able to sustain creative careers</p> <p>More sustainable careers as a result of more time to build appropriate and stronger partnerships and networks</p> <p>Higher quality and more innovative work available to public in the longer term</p>	<p>More individual artists able to undertake work that has depth and rigour through time to research</p> <p>Higher quality and more innovative work being produced as a result of more time to experiment</p> <p>Individual practitioners able to direct their own development rather than depending on larger organisations</p> <p>Increased engagement from diverse practitioners with ACE funding programmes</p> <p>Increased collaboration and better networks leading to shared outcomes and risk taking</p>	<p>Higher quality work being produced for presentation to public</p> <p>Creative practitioners able to sustain longer careers</p> <p>Individual practitioners with better networks for future collaboration and presentation of work</p> <p>Increase in leadership potential and practice of diverse practitioners</p>	<p>Artists are delivering artistic work and cultural experiences that represent the height of ambition, talent and skill</p> <p>More artists are exporting their work internationally and visitors cite the arts and culture as the reason they visited England</p> <p>The work produced by artists reflects the diversity of contemporary England</p>

Annex B: Additional analysis

Table B-1: Number of reapplications per round

Round	Applications	Of which, reapplications	Count
Round 1	894	0	0%
Round 2	967	71	7%
Round 3	887	119	13%
Round 4	910	169	19%
Round 5	503	112	22%
Round 6	559	135	24%
Round 7	745	181	24%
Round 8	3,509	396	11%
Round 9	6,135	1,253	20%
Round 10	1,455	465	32%
Round 11	1,731	480	28%

Source: SQW analysis of monitoring data

Table B-2: Planned activities for successful and unsuccessful applicants

Activity	Successful - planned	Unsuccessful - planned	Difference
Undertake training/a course/a residency	38%	74%	36
Experiment with new skills/approaches/practices	67%	87%	20
Develop my existing skills/approaches/practices	67%	82%	14
Work with a community/communities	14%	26%	12
Meet/work with new collaborators/networks	61%	67%	6
Pay for new equipment	28%	29%	2
Pay for a space/studio time	24%	22%	-2
Access mentoring/coaching (longer-term advice)	46%	44%	-2
Free up time by spending less time in employment/working/touring	43%	41%	-2
Travel internationally – to a single destination	15%	11%	-5
Travel internationally – to multiple destinations	10%	5%	-5
Work with existing collaborators/networks	45%	38%	-7
Access advice and guidance (one-off advice)	30%	20%	-10
Undertake research/developing my knowledge	66%	31%	-36

Source: Applicant surveys (successful=742 and unsuccessful=503)

Table B-3: Activities planned versus delivered for successful applicants

Activities	Planned	Of which didn't deliver	Not planned	Of which did deliver	Delivered (planned + unplanned)
Undertake research/developing my knowledge	66%	5%	34%	77%	89%
Develop my existing skills/approaches/practices	67%	7%	33%	79%	89%
Experiment with new skills/approaches/practices	67%	8%	33%	79%	87%
Meet/work with new collaborators/networks	61%	17%	39%	58%	73%
Work with existing collaborators/networks	45%	12%	55%	34%	59%
Access mentoring/coaching (longer-term advice)	46%	15%	54%	33%	57%
Free up time by spending less time in employment/working/touring	43%	11%	57%	30%	55%
Undertake training/a course/a residency	38%	15%	62%	27%	49%
Access advice and guidance (one-off advice)	30%	19%	70%	22%	40%
Pay for new equipment	28%	11%	72%	19%	38%
Pay for a space/studio time	24%	17%	76%	15%	32%
Work with a community/communities	14%	32%	86%	11%	19%
Travel internationally – to a single destination	15%	61%	85%	6%	11%
Travel internationally – to multiple destinations	10%	68%	90%	2%	5%

Source: Successful applicant survey (n=742)

Table B-4: Spread of discipline coverage on DYCP versus other Arts Council England funded programmes

Discipline	DYCP (R1-11)		ERF (Individuals) ⁴²		NLPG ⁴³	NPOs - Orgs ⁴⁴
	Applicants	Funded	Applicants	Funded	Funded	Funded
Combined arts	9%	8%	11%	12%	15%	22%
Dance	6%	4%	6%	7%	9%	8%
Film	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%	1.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Libraries	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.3%	0.8%
Literature	13%	11%	4%	4%	8%	6%
Museums	0.6%	0.4%	0.8%	0.8%	0.9%	8.6%
Music	24%	24%	21%	17%	16%	12%
Not discipline specific	1%	2%	7%	7%	1%	3%
Other/Not Known	0.0%	0.1%	1.7%	1.4%	0.3%	0.0%
Theatre	15%	15%	19%	22%	32%	22%
Visual arts	32%	36%	27%	27%	17%	18%

Source: SQW analysis of monitoring data, plus other sources as per the footnotes

⁴² Arts Council England. 2020. [Data Report: Emergency Response Funds for Individuals and for Organisations outside of the National Portfolio](#).

⁴³ Arts Council England. [Project Grants data](#). Accessed February 2022. Note, this covers 2018/19-2021/22 and only considers funded individuals.

⁴⁴ Arts Council England. 2021. [National Portfolio Organisations data](#). Accessed February 2022. Note, this covers 2018-22 NPOs and is based on the count of organisations rather than the workforce.

Table B-5: Spread of regions on DYCP versus other Arts Council England funded programmes and the wider sector

Region	DYCP (R1-11)		ERF (Individuals) ⁴⁵		NLPG ⁴⁶	NPOs - Orgs ⁴⁷	Cultural Sector jobs ⁴⁸
	Applicants	Funded	Applicants	Funded	Funded	Funded	Self-employed
London	39%	27%	41%	42%	29%	31%	38%
Midlands	11%	15%	10%	11%	13%	16%	8%
North	19%	24%	21%	21%	24%	28%	18%
South East	17%	21%	15%	15%	21%	13%	24%
South West	13%	13%	12%	12%	13%	12%	11%

Source: SQW analysis of monitoring data, plus other sources as per the footnotes

⁴⁵ Arts Council England. 2020. [Data Report: Emergency Response Funds for Individuals and for Organisations outside of the National Portfolio](#).

⁴⁶ Arts Council England. [Project Grants data](#). Accessed February 2022. Note, this covers 2018/19-2021/22 and only does not only cover individuals.

⁴⁷ Arts Council England. 2021. [National Portfolio Organisations data](#). Accessed February 2022. Note, this covers 2018-22 NPOs and is based on the count of organisations rather than the workforce.

⁴⁸ Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Office for National Statistics. [DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates 2019: Employment](#). Note, this counts filled jobs rather than individuals.

Table B-6: Diversity of personal characteristics on DYCP versus other Arts Council England funded programmes and the wider sector

Region	DYCP (R1-11)		ERF (Individuals) ⁴⁹		NLPG ⁵⁰		NPO workforce ⁵¹	Cultural Sector jobs ⁵²
	Applicants	Funded	Applicants	Funded	Applicants	Funded		
Black and minority ethnic	21%	22%	20%	22%	20%	21%	18%	8%
D/deaf or disabled	15%	20%	12%	14%	10%	10%	19%	17%
Female	55%	61%	52%	55%	45%	36%	60%	43%
LGBT	25%	27%	18%	20%	24%	35%	16%	-

Source: SQW analysis of monitoring data, plus other sources as per the footnotes

⁴⁹ Arts Council England. 2020. [Data Report: Emergency Response Funds for Individuals and for Organisations outside of the National Portfolio](#).

⁵⁰ Arts Council England. 2021. [2019-20 Annual Diversity Report](#). Power BI dashboard, accessed February 2022. Note, this covers 2019/20 data.

⁵¹ Arts Council England. 2021. [2019-20 Annual Diversity Report](#). Power BI dashboard, accessed February 2022. Note: this covers 2019/20 data; and data has been reweighted to exclude 'not known' and 'prefer not to say' responses which account for 49% at most for sexual orientation and 16% at least for gender. Also note this figure will underreports on the 'true' NPO workforce, as for example the [Creative Industries Federation paper on Creative Freelancers](#) found the National Theatre used 2,900 freelance staff in a year versus 600 staff.

⁵² Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and Office for National Statistics. [DCMS Sectors Economic Estimates 2019: Employment](#). Note: this counts filled jobs rather than individuals; this is based on the 'Cultural Sector' which does not fully align with DYCP; gender is based on self-employed jobs, but all others are based on 'all jobs' as the self-employed jobs data is unavailable; and definitions/methodologies may differ to Arts Council England collection.

Table B-7: Numbers and percentages for population, interviews and surveys, plus success rate, by variables (un/suc= un/successful)⁵³

Variable	Population			Success rate	Interviews		Surveys		Population %			Interview %		Surveys %	
	Suc	Un	All		Suc	Un	Suc	Un	Suc	Un	All	Suc	Un	Suc	Un
Round															
1 (closed May-18)	103	791	894	12%	4	1	32	32	3%	5%	5%	11%	8%	4%	4%
2 (closed Oct-18)	111	856	967	11%	4	1	29	29	3%	6%	5%	11%	8%	4%	4%
3 (closed Jan-19)	135	752	887	15%	4	0	45	45	4%	5%	5%	11%	0%	6%	6%
4 (closed Apr-19)	100	810	910	11%	4	0	41	41	3%	6%	5%	11%	0%	5%	5%
5 (closed Jul-19)	98	405	503	19%	4	1	36	36	3%	3%	3%	11%	8%	5%	5%
6 (closed Oct-19)	147	412	559	26%	3	1	51	51	4%	3%	3%	8%	8%	7%	7%
7 (closed Jan-20)	107	638	745	14%	4	1	60	60	3%	4%	4%	11%	8%	8%	8%
8 (closed Dec-20)	824	2,685	3,509	23%	5	4	226	226	22%	18%	19%	14%	33%	29%	29%
9 (closed Apr-21)	1,298	4,837	6,135	21%	5	3	252	252	35%	33%	34%	14%	25%	33%	33%
10 (closed May-21)	375	1,080	1,455	26%	-	-	-	-	10%	7%	8%	-	-	-	-
11 (closed Sep-21)	415	1,316	1,731	24%	-	-	-	-	11%	9%	9%	-	-	-	-
Region															
London	1,021	6,171	7,192	14%	8	2	0	168	27%	42%	39%	22%	22%	24%	35%
North	882	2,680	3,562	25%	8	2	0	46	24%	18%	19%	22%	22%	27%	10%
South East	770	2,409	3,179	24%	9	1	0	107	21%	17%	17%	24%	11%	22%	22%
South West	486	1,930	2,416	20%	6	2	0	83	13%	13%	13%	16%	22%	12%	17%
Midlands	554	1,392	1,946	28%	6	2	0	80	15%	10%	11%	16%	22%	15%	17%

⁵³ Note that: monitoring data is not captured on some of these variables; not all survey respondents provided answers to all questions, so totals can differ between variables; personal characteristics data was unavailable for interviewees; some interviewees and survey respondents are double counted where they had applied for multiple disciplines for example.

Variable	Population			Success rate	Interviews		Surveys		Population %			Interview %		Surveys %	
	Suc	Un	All		Suc	Un	Suc	Un	Suc	Un	All	Suc	Un	Suc	Un
Discipline															
Visual arts	1,183	5,335	6,518	18%	7	2	241	233	32%	37%	36%	19%	20%	31%	36%
Music	883	3,494	4,377	20%	7	2	141	104	24%	24%	24%	19%	20%	18%	16%
Theatre	554	2,161	2,715	20%	6	1	110	76	15%	15%	15%	16%	10%	14%	12%
Literature	482	1,613	2,095	23%	4	1	106	70	13%	11%	11%	11%	10%	14%	11%
Combined arts	322	1,099	1,421	23%	4	2	109	89	9%	8%	8%	11%	20%	14%	14%
Dance	207	550	757	27%	5	0	36	28	6%	4%	4%	14%	0%	5%	4%
Not discipline specific	55	266	321	17%	2	0	11	14	1%	2%	2%	5%	0%	1%	2%
Museums	24	41	65	37%	1	1	9	7	1%	0%	0%	3%	10%	1%	1%
Other/Not Known	1	14	15	7%	0	0	20	17	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	3%
Film	0	7	7	0%	0	0	-	-	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	-	-
Libraries	2	2	4	50%	1	1	0	1	0%	0%	0%	3%	10%	0%	0%
Focus of activity (not mutually exclusive)															
R&D	3,508	13,250	16,758	21%	33	9	-	-	94%	91%	92%	89%	75%	-	-
New work	2,925	12,668	15,593	19%	21	8	-	-	79%	87%	85%	57%	67%	-	-
New networks	3,124	11,962	15,086	21%	30	9	-	-	84%	82%	82%	81%	75%	-	-
Professional development	3,255	11,613	14,868	22%	33	8	-	-	88%	80%	81%	89%	67%	-	-
Experiment w/ new collaborators	2,549	9,839	12,388	21%	26	7	-	-	69%	67%	68%	70%	58%	-	-
International travel	914	3,480	4,394	21%	19	3	-	-	25%	24%	24%	51%	25%	-	-
Length of project (each goes up to upper limit e.g. "up to 3 months" inc. 3 months precisely)															

Variable	Population			Success rate	Interviews		Surveys		Population %			Interview %		Surveys %	
	Suc	Un	All		Suc	Un	Suc	Un	Suc	Un	All	Suc	Un	Suc	Un
Up to 3 months	362	1,741	2,103	17%	4	2	-	-	10%	12%	11%	11%	17%	-	-
3-6 months	1,129	4,430	5,559	20%	10	4	-	-	30%	30%	30%	27%	33%	-	-
6-9 months	976	3,277	4,253	23%	8	2	-	-	26%	22%	23%	22%	17%	-	-
9-12 months	1,143	4,577	5,720	20%	13	4	-	-	31%	31%	31%	35%	33%	-	-
12-18 months	92	453	545	17%	1	0	-	-	2%	3%	3%	3%	0%	-	-
18-24 months	11	104	115	10%	1	0	-	-	0%	1%	1%	3%	0%	-	-
Expenditure (minus personal access costs)															
£2-4.9k	246	1,318	1,564	16%	3	1	65	-	7%	9%	9%	8%	8%	8%	-
£5-7.4k	460	2,337	2,797	16%	7	2	123	-	12%	16%	15%	19%	17%	16%	-
£7.5-10k	3,007	10,927	13,934	22%	27	9	596	-	81%	75%	76%	73%	75%	76%	-
Included personal access costs															
Had personal access costs	394	1,049	1,443	27%	5	1	54	-	11%	7%	8%	14%	11%	7%	-
No personal access costs	3,319	13,533	16,852	20%	32	8	729	-	89%	93%	92%	86%	89%	93%	-
Number of applications (successful cover those successful at least once)															
1	2,816	9,161	11,977	24%	28	7	587	147	77%	81%	80%	78%	78%	78%	31%
2	709	1,847	2,556	28%	7	2	116	222	19%	16%	17%	19%	22%	15%	46%
3	130	195	325	40%	1	0	42	88	4%	2%	2%	0%	0%	6%	18%
4	13	36	49	27%	0	0	10	17	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	4%
5	2	5	7	29%	0	0	<5	<5	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Successful with Project Grant application															
No	2,475	10,934	13,409	18%	29	8	-	-	85%	91%	90%	78%	89%	-	-

Variable	Population			Success rate	Interviews		Surveys		Population %			Interview %		Surveys %	
	Suc	Un	All		Suc	Un	Suc	Un	Suc	Un	All	Suc	Un	Suc	Un
Yes	450	1,055	1,505	30%	8	1	-	-	15%	9%	10%	22%	11%	-	-
Years of creative or cultural practice outside of any formal study															
Around 1 year	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	<5	-	-	-	-	-	-	1%
Around 2-3 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	34	-	-	-	-	-	-	7%
Around 4-5 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	60	-	-	-	-	-	-	12%
Around 6-10 years	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	88	-	-	-	-	-	-	18%
11 or more years	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	302	-	-	-	-	-	-	62%
Age (Round 3 onwards)															
0-19	0	13	13	0%	-	-	0	0	0%	0%	0%	-	-	0%	0%
20-34	1,451	5,291	6,742	22%	-	-	191	85	42%	41%	41%	-	-	27%	17%
35-49	1,467	5,060	6,527	22%	-	-	326	211	42%	39%	40%	-	-	47%	43%
50-64	484	2,084	2,568	19%	-	-	166	173	14%	16%	16%	-	-	24%	35%
65+	19	163	182	10%	-	-	10	12	1%	1%	1%	-	-	1%	2%
Prefer not to say	47	304	351	13%	-	-	6	11	1%	2%	2%	-	-	1%	2%
Sex															
Female	2,003	6,843	8,846	23%	-	-	468	299	59%	51%	53%	-	-	67%	61%
Male	1,157	5,631	6,788	17%	-	-	210	171	34%	42%	41%	-	-	30%	35%
Intersex	107	338	445	24%	-	-	<5	0	3%	3%	3%	-	-	0%	0%
Prefer not to say	103	527	630	16%	-	-	15	22	3%	4%	4%	-	-	2%	4%
Gender identity															
Man	-	-	-	-	-	-	202	165	-	-	-	-	-	29%	33%

Variable	Population			Success rate	Interviews		Surveys		Population %			Interview %		Surveys %	
	Suc	Un	All		Suc	Un	Suc	Un	Suc	Un	All	Suc	Un	Suc	Un
Woman	-	-	-	-	-	-	448	284	-	-	-	-	-	64%	58%
Non-binary	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	10	-	-	-	-	-	3%	2%
I identify in another way	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	<5	-	-	-	-	-	1%	1%
Not applicable	-	-	-	-	-	-	<5	5	-	-	-	-	-	0%	1%
Prefer not to say				-	-	-	12	25	-	-	-	-	-	2%	5%
Is your gender identity different to your sex as registered at birth?															
Yes	502	1,660	2,162	23%	-	-	0	64	16%	14%	14%	-	-	0%	13%
No	2,526	9,459	11,985	21%	-	-	0	391	80%	81%	80%	-	-	0%	80%
Prefer not to say	139	629	768	18%	-	-	23	35	4%	5%	5%	-	-	100%	7%
Ethnicity															
Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi	0	13	27	0%	-	-	0	0	0%	0%	0%	-	-	0%	0%
Asian/Asian British - Chinese	13	80	105	12%	-	-	0	0	0%	1%	1%	-	-	0%	0%
Asian/Asian British - Indian	119	250	378	31%	-	-	0	<5	3%	2%	2%	-	-	0%	1%
Asian/Asian British - Pakistani	30	62	102	29%	-	-	0	<5	1%	0%	1%	-	-	0%	0%
Asian/Asian British - Any other Asian background	55	210	267	21%	-	-	0	8	2%	1%	1%	-	-	0%	2%
Black/Black British - African	128	401	529	24%	-	-	0	6	4%	3%	3%	-	-	0%	1%
Black/Black British - Caribbean	137	485	627	22%	-	-	0	13	4%	3%	3%	-	-	0%	3%
Black/Black British - Any other Black background	12	60	87	14%	-	-	0	<5	0%	0%	0%	-	-	0%	0%
Mixed - White and Asian	53	241	306	17%	-	-	0	9	2%	2%	2%	-	-	0%	2%

Variable	Population			Success rate	Interviews		Surveys		Population %			Interview %		Surveys %	
	Suc	Un	All		Suc	Un	Suc	Un	Suc	Un	All	Suc	Un	Suc	Un
Mixed - White and Black African	21	126	156	13%	-	-	0	<5	1%	1%	1%	-	-	0%	1%
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	56	202	271	21%	-	-	0	<5	2%	1%	1%	-	-	0%	0%
Mixed - Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background	103	517	634	16%	-	-	0	14	3%	4%	4%	-	-	0%	3%
White - British	2,263	8,871	11,129	20%	-	-	0	307	65%	61%	62%	-	-	0%	62%
White - Gypsy, Roma or Irish Traveller	0	20	15	0%	-	-	0	<5	0%	0%	0%	-	-	0%	0%
White - Irish	80	288	370	22%	-	-	0	13	2%	2%	2%	-	-	0%	3%
White - Any other White background	343	2,074	2,413	14%	-	-	0	56	10%	14%	13%	-	-	0%	11%
Other - Arab	10	39	59	17%	-	-	0	<5	0%	0%	0%	-	-	0%	1%
Other - Latin American	0	0	0	-	-	-	0	<5	0%	0%	0%	-	-	0%	1%
Other - Any other ethnic background	31	162	202	15%	-	-	0	11	1%	1%	1%	-	-	0%	2%
Prefer not to say	50	356	418	12%	-	-	91	38	1%	2%	2%	-	-	100%	8%
Ethnicity															
Asian/Asian British	217	615	879	25%	-	-	0	13	6%	4%	5%	-	-	0%	3%
Black/Black British	277	946	1,243	22%	-	-	0	20	8%	7%	7%	-	-	0%	4%
Mixed	233	1,086	1,367	17%	-	-	0	28	7%	8%	8%	-	-	0%	6%
Other	41	201	261	16%	-	-	0	17	1%	1%	1%	-	-	0%	3%
White	2,686	11,253	13,927	19%	-	-	0	377	77%	78%	77%	-	-	0%	76%
Prefer not to say	50	356	418	12%	-	-	91	38	1%	2%	2%	-	-	100%	8%
Sexual orientation (Round 3 onwards)															
Bisexual	416	1,365	1,781	23%	-	-	0	32	12%	11%	11%	-	-	0%	7%
Gay Man	161	672	833	19%	-	-	0	15	5%	5%	5%	-	-	0%	3%

Variable	Population			Success rate	Interviews		Surveys		Population %			Interview %		Surveys %	
	Suc	Un	All		Suc	Un	Suc	Un	Suc	Un	All	Suc	Un	Suc	Un
Gay Woman/Lesbian	152	395	547	28%	-	-	0	12	4%	3%	3%	-	-	0%	2%
Heterosexual/Straight	1,996	7,696	9,692	21%	-	-	0	300	58%	60%	60%	-	-	0%	61%
Queer	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	16	-	-	-	-	-	0%	3%
I identify in another way	-	-	-	-	-	-	0	8	-	-	-	-	-	0%	2%
Prefer not to say	720	2,638	3,358	21%	-	-	54	105	21%	21%	21%	-	-	100%	22%
Do you identify as D/deaf and/or Disabled person, or have a long-term health condition?															
Yes	606	1,759	2,365	26%	-	-	0	85	18%	13%	14%	-	-	0%	17%
No	2,498	10,553	13,051	19%	-	-	0	356	75%	80%	79%	-	-	0%	73%
Prefer not to say	246	915	1,161	21%	-	-	26	47	7%	7%	7%	-	-	100%	10%
What was the occupation of the highest income earner in your household when you were 14? (Round 8 onwards for monitoring data)															
Clerical and intermediate occupations	136	433	569	24%	-	-	40	29	6%	6%	6%	-	-	6%	6%
Middle or junior managers	96	261	357	27%	-	-	38	19	4%	3%	4%	-	-	5%	4%
Modern professional occupations	598	2,046	2,644	23%	-	-	167	112	26%	26%	26%	-	-	24%	23%
Routine manual and service occupations	226	676	902	25%	-	-	76	64	10%	9%	9%	-	-	11%	13%
Semi-routine manual and service occupations	91	296	387	24%	-	-	37	18	4%	4%	4%	-	-	5%	4%
Senior managers and administrators	202	729	931	22%	-	-	56	43	9%	9%	9%	-	-	8%	9%
Technical and craft occupations	238	959	1,197	20%	-	-	56	48	11%	12%	12%	-	-	8%	10%

Variable	Population			Success rate	Interviews		Surveys		Population %			Interview %		Surveys %	
	Suc	Un	All		Suc	Un	Suc	Un	Suc	Un	All	Suc	Un	Suc	Un
Traditional professional occupations	454	1,560	2,014	23%	-	-	109	66	20%	20%	20%	-	-	16%	13%
Short-term unemployed	21	113	134	16%	-	-	11	8	1%	1%	1%	-	-	2%	2%
Long-term unemployed	68	187	255	27%	-	-	22	16	3%	2%	3%	-	-	3%	3%
Retired	17	42	59	29%	-	-	10	<5	1%	1%	1%	-	-	1%	1%

Source: SQW analysis of monitoring data

SQW

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About us

SQW Group

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Oxford Innovation is a leading operator of business and innovation centres that provide office and laboratory space to companies throughout the UK. The company also provides innovation services to entrepreneurs, including business planning advice, coaching and mentoring. Oxford Innovation also manages investment networks that link investors with entrepreneurs seeking funding from £20,000 to £2m.

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