



# **CREATIVE TRANSITIONS**

**Supporting the wellbeing of young people through  
co-designed cultural activity**

**External evaluation report**

**Mary Schwarz, December 2020**

**TORBAY CULTURE**

BECAUSE IT MATTERS | EST. 2015

## CONTENTS

1	Introduction	5
2	A partnership based approach	6
3	Shared goals and purposes	8
4	Operational effectiveness	10
5	Continuous quality improvement	12
6	Evaluation Approach	15
	Young carers case study	
	Young parents case study	
	Phab club case study	
7	Concluding comments	27

***“With the right artist, with the right skills, and the right decision-making processes, this can work.”***

Commissioning partner





**1 INTRODUCTION**

**Creative Transitions** was a Torbay Culture programme, part of the Changing Lives strand of Torbay’s Great Place Scheme, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England, commissioned in partnership with Imagine This...and Public Health Torbay. Its aims were to support vulnerable young people with particular challenges in their transition to adulthood, through creative activity. Three different groups of young people participated – a group of young carers, of young parents and of young people with learning disabilities – through three host organisations which worked with the commissioned artists.

This short evaluation report, which includes case studies of the three constituent projects, explores how the commissioning process for the programme worked and identifies learning to take forward. Supported by the creative outputs, the aim is to inform public health and arts and cultural commissioning in the future, in line with one of the programme goals:

*To better understand opportunities and barriers for embedding more collaborative arts and culture into prevention programmes.*

The structure of the report draws on the context – and accompanying considerations for action – noted in the *Connections between Culture, Health and Wellbeing in Torbay (2020)* report, namely that it is:

*a partnership based approach to shared goals and purposes; operational effectiveness; continuous quality improvement; and evaluation that will maximise the best outcomes for participants.*

Evaluation data used in preparation of the report comprises:

- Reports written by commissioned artists
- Attendance registers
- Surveys and outcomes stars completed by participants

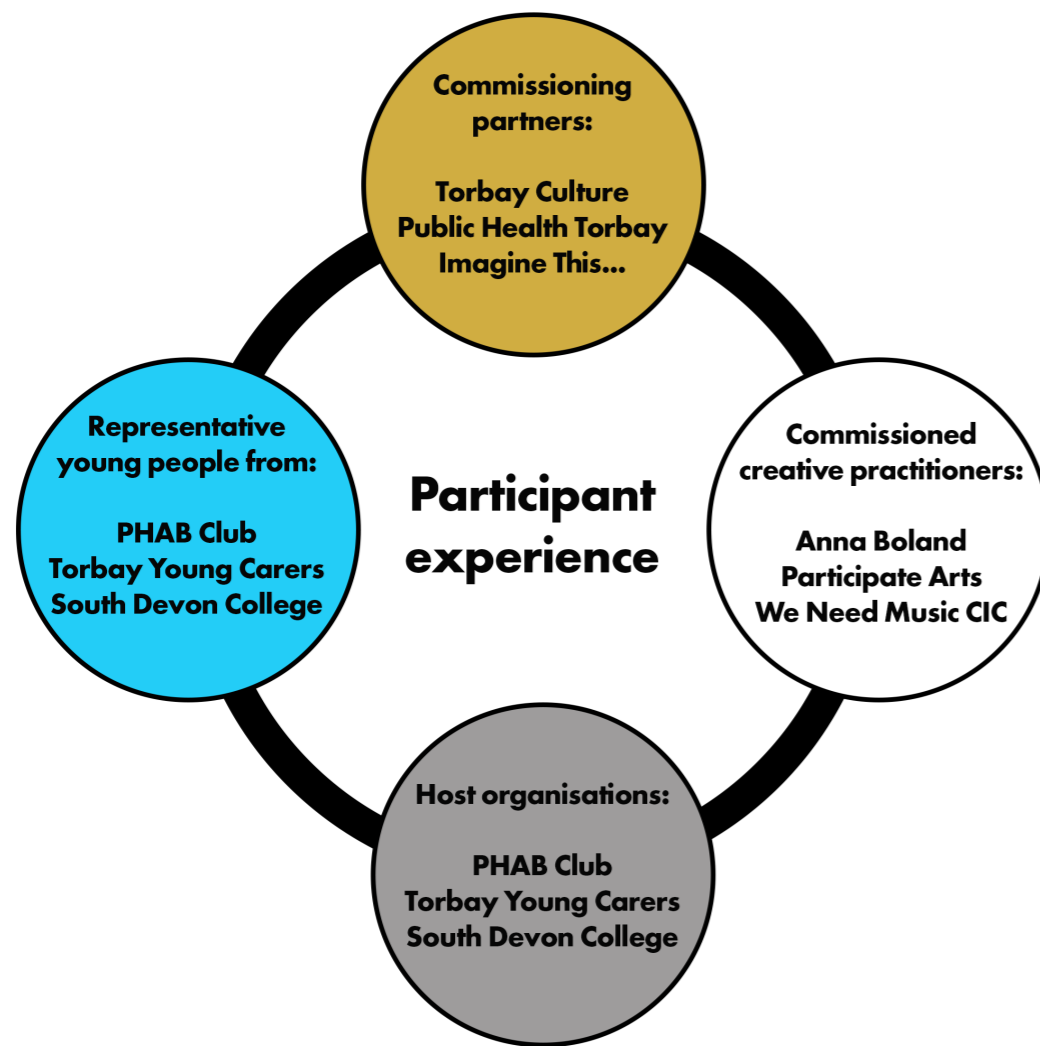
- Semi-structured Zoom conversations with
  - some participants from the Phab Group and from the young carers group facilitated and recorded by a young artist external to the project
  - each project host/artist(s) pairing facilitated and recorded by the Torbay Culture Creative Commissioning Lead
- Semi-structured Zoom/telephone conversations with commissioning partners and with artists undertaken by the External Evaluator.

While each case study provides the detail in terms of outcomes for participants, these are summarised here to give the context of the programme’s positive impact. Participants:

- Grew in confidence and sense of self worth
- Built mutually supportive relationships with their peers and in respect of the young parents, increased bonding with and enjoyment of their babies
- Developed trusting relationships with the artist(s) working on their project
- Learnt how to give and receive constructive feedback
- Felt listened to and valued
- Engaged well with the programme, often despite other demands on their time, and were focused on activity, both within and between sessions
- Developed specific arts skills and explored new creative ways of expressing themselves
- Developed confidence in trying new things
- Took pride in what they achieved
- Developed a wide range of social skills, including active listening, being more comfortable and articulate sharing their experiences and ideas, alongside interacting and working respectfully with others
- In many cases, harnessed creative and personal development from the programme to use in other aspects of their lives.

In addition to the commissioners working together as partners, the productive and mutually respectful relationship between the project hosts (Phab Club, Torbay Young Carers and South Devon College) and artists was based on a partnership approach. Some young participants also ‘partnered’ significantly in terms of their involvement in the selection of artists, as well as all participants being encouraged and supported to say what they wanted to do within, and achieve from, the project in which they took part. The diagram below places the centrality of the participant experience within this partnership approach.

Public Health Torbay and Imagine this... partner representatives both appreciated the initial approaches from Torbay Culture. The Executive Director and Creative Commissioning Lead gave a presentation to the Public Health team showing how creative approaches could be integrated in work with groups to develop social skills and resilience, with examples of previous work seen as inspiring. With funding being available an important factor, there was some keen interest in piloting work to build an evidence base through thorough evaluation, that focused clearly on outcomes.



From the Imagine this... perspective, the programme ‘drew together threads that don’t usually sit together’ and offered a new and creative approach to working with young people.

and reporting positively on their relationship with artists and the significant impact of projects on participants. As one host commented in relation to possible future work together, given such success to date, ‘you’re pushing on an open door’.

While the length of time it took to get the programme established was experienced with some frustration, the series of meetings between the three commissioners to think through the programme and the groups of young people for whom it would be appropriate enabled ‘deep thinking’ about transition. This could be described as a ‘slow art’ process and it takes time to build mutual trust. As one partner put it, ‘being asked’ was a good indicator of genuine partnership working and another reflected that ‘the power felt equitable’. These firm foundations placed the programme in a good position when it had to ‘pivot’ given Covid-19, in terms of what was achievable within a restricted context.

They also recognised the project had supported their own bond with the young people, with the project demonstrating the value the organisation placed on them. Another noted that the project was ‘such a unique opportunity – not something we as a service could deliver...we don’t have the ideas and resources and time’. And the third host organisation representative commented, ‘The art has allowed participants to take part in Zoom sessions – we didn’t see them in other Zoom sessions beforehand and we’ve got them back now, when they were struggling.’ Such comments evidence the ‘added value’ that partnership working brings.

Across the commissioners, there was an awareness that for partnerships to work, partners needed to be willing ‘to play’. It was key to find someone in another organisation who was interested and willing to do this, beyond focusing on a siloed approach to their work. In initiating potential working together, it was not about ‘steamrolling’ people, but enthusiastically, with evidence, telling the story of what was possible and how the other organisations’ objectives could be met. There was also a realisation that while being ‘out of the room’ (where delivery happens), commissioners are nevertheless vital to the success and impact of a project because of the decisions they make and the oversight they have.

It was significant that young people themselves were involved ‘with equal power’ in the selection process for artists, as this was crucial to their buy in and shared ownership. Throughout the projects, artists consulted with participants to get their suggestions and feedback, with the young people consistently reporting there were opportunities to have their voice heard (for example, with six out of seven young carers saying they ‘strongly agreed’ this was the case and five out of seven young parents also giving this top rating, with the other two as ‘agreed’).

All the project hosts were enthusiastically involved in their projects, making a significant (sometimes personal) time commitment in supporting the work

The experience of partnership working on this particular programme led one of the commissioners to comment they realised that there are people in the health and arts and cultural sectors who have a ‘shared passion for creating good experiences for people’ and also recognised that ‘public health is a very important part of the art world’.



### 3

#### SHARED GOALS AND PURPOSES

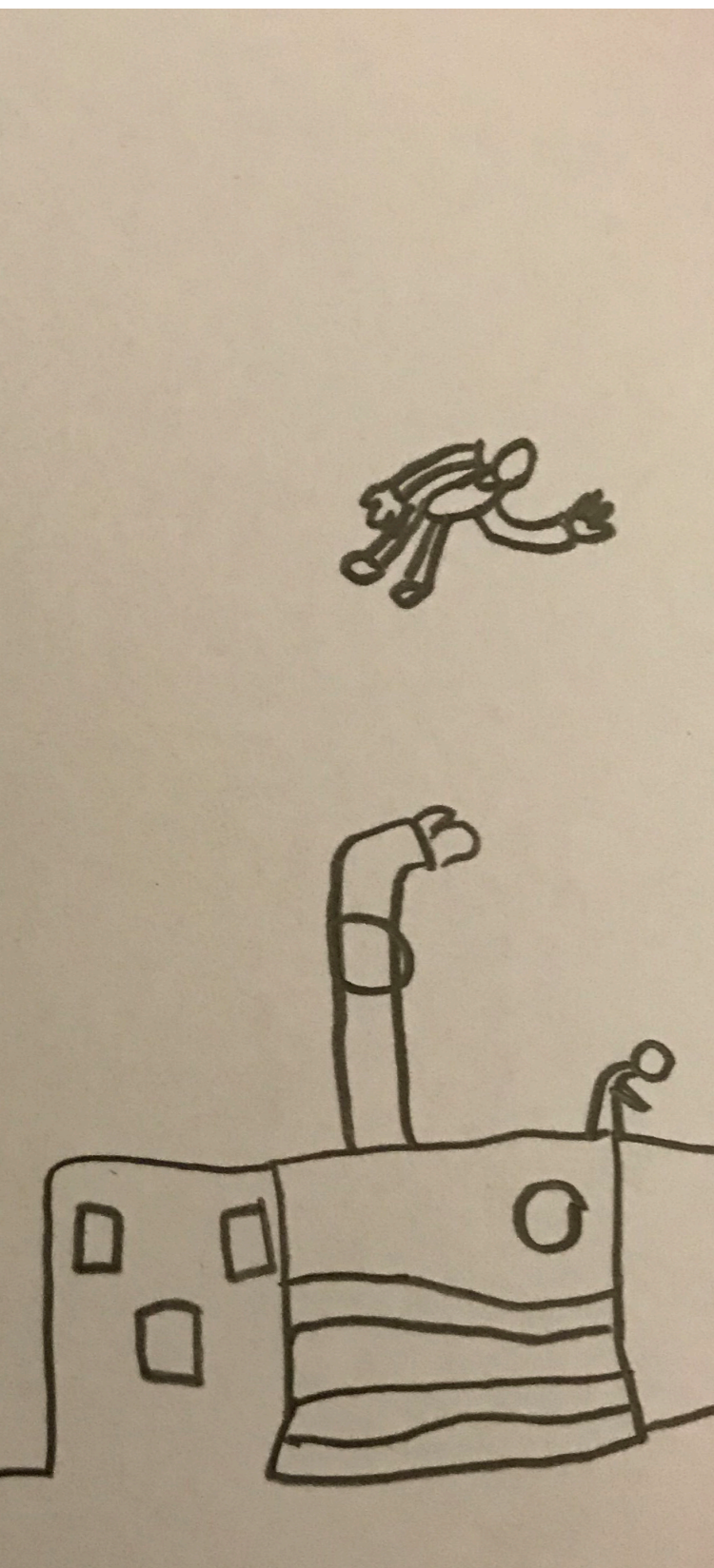
The commissioning partners arrived at mutually agreed goals and purposes for the programme with the scope, strategic priorities and alignments along with responsibilities fully reflected in documentation, such as the commission brief.

For two of the projects, the same clarity of understanding that this was a targeted 'intervention' programme, specifically about transition for a specific group of young people, rather than a general access arts project was shared by hosts, artists and participants. As one host commented, 'It's not just about doing some nice art and being creative.' In the case of the other project, participants certainly had a valuable experience, but the transition focus was not so evident.

#### Learning to take forward

- Continue to articulate and communicate the 'intervention' nature of targeted projects





## 4 OPERATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

A bespoke commissioning process, one of the considerations for action in the *Connections between Culture, Health and Wellbeing in Torbay* report, was put in place for the programme, informed by some specific learning from previous health and arts projects.

Fellow commissioners appreciated the 'pretty tight' process that Torbay Culture followed and respected the care taken 'to enable everyone to be held in the process' from generating creative discussion about possibilities to the agreed articulation of the programme and its resultant documentation and implementation. As noted in the **A partnership based approach** section above, for one partner 'the pace felt too slow at the start' but on reflection appreciated the depth of initial preparation and that 'A strong formal infrastructure enables the partnership process to work.'

The original intention for the programme Steering Group (comprising representatives from the three artists, commissioners and hosts along with representative young people) was for it to meet monthly and provide support and challenge to the contracted creative practitioners to help create the best conditions for success. However, the approach changed so that the Group was involved in the creative practitioner selection process and interview and then an evaluation review in month two. Inception meetings between the commissioned practitioner, host and representative young person were held individually on a project specific basis, rather than across the programme, to enable greater focus.

The Torbay Culture Commissioning Lead acted as the common link between the groups and also initiated the 'reflective practice' sessions for practitioners to meet together (see Section 4 below). Project specific meetings were also held between Torbay Culture, the contracted artist and host organisation at the start of the programme and then two months in to manage 'a good ending' (described below).

There were times when specific direct advice and support from individual commissioning partners were not always available, resulting in Torbay Culture by default taking more of a project management role. There were also some instances demonstrating further support may be needed for artists to enable them to act fully independently as confident contractors, working to a set commission fee.

As noted above, involving the young people in procurement demonstrated the programme goals and purposes in a very practical and successful way. Providing training for artists in trauma-informed practice (see next section) was important given the young people with whom they were working, as was addressing the duty of care to participants, especially given the pilot nature of the interventions. Planning for 'a good ending' to the project took place in liaison with hosts and artists, to ensure the celebration and validation of participants' efforts and achievements, any individual support required and signposting to other opportunities.

It is important to note one of the originally intended hosts decided not to go ahead with the project. While there may be different perspectives about

what the issues were, this does seem to prompt attention for the need for better cross sector understanding and reiterate the importance of 'fit' between artist and context.

### Learning to take forward

- Continue to invest time in the early stages of the commissioning process i.e. generating ideas and ways of working, identifying relevant contacts, devising clear briefs and documenting processes and protocols
- Continue to involve project participants in artist selection processes
- Provide developmental support for artists to devise and write project proposals that take into consideration how potential host organisations and participants will receive them



**5 CONTINUOUS QUALITY IMPROVEMENT**

Across partners, hosts and artists, there was an evident commitment both to deliver the best experiences for participants and learn within and from project delivery, particularly given these were pilot activities. There was also personal learning gained through the programme that could positively impact on other areas of people’s professional lives.

The artists met regularly with the Torbay Culture Creative Commissioning Lead and these sessions were valued highly. As one artist commented:

*‘The Artists reflect meetings were really useful in sharing practice and ideas, to enable learning and having the space to reflect on sometimes quite intense emotional, challenging work.’*

Artists also took part in some trauma informed practice training, which they all appreciated, with a couple making the following comments:

*‘I found the training very useful as a lot of our work tends to involve contact with people that have suffered or are suffering some kind of “trauma” in their lives and sometimes I wonder about my capacity as an artist who is not trained as a “therapist” to hold well some of the issues and sensitivities that can arise. It was therefore useful to gain another perspective and understanding of how to view and understand someone who has not had an easy time.’*

*‘I found it informative and relevant to the work with [...]. We were aware that some of the activities might provoke emotional*

*responses - always a responsibility as an Artist to handle sensitively. There were practical suggestions like adopting user-friendly and open language to enable participants to reflect without becoming more traumatised. It has taught me as an artist practitioner to have more confidence in dealing with emotional content in projects like this.’*

One artist recommended this training should take place before project start in the future and could include partner host organisations

*‘to allow them to input responses around trauma and specific group/individual support’. Another artist ‘would have liked a deeper lens on this – it’s vital for Arts and Health work that practitioners are using informed practice so there is a shared professional understanding between health and arts partners.’*

Also, given the diversity of participants, Disability Equality Training may have also been useful for artists.

The artists’ reports evidence a reflective approach to practice, both reflection in action (that is, during delivery in order to make any necessary adaptations) and reflection after action (reviewing what has happened). In practice this meant being flexible in terms of what they did with participants, altering activities or approaches if they were not working well. They learnt much about the challenges and barriers facing the young people they worked with as well much about working with Zoom and in one particular project, using social media platforms.

Partners and hosts were very willing to take part in evaluation conversations, appreciating the opportunity to share their experiences and views about their role as well observations on participants’ journeys.

In terms of personal learning, one commissioner reflected that their experience would influence how they talked with colleagues and how much, as a result of the programme, they wanted to include creative activity in future work. Being introduced to artists they didn’t know, building relationships with the arts community that can be seen as ‘flakey’ to find overlaps and a shared language, and appreciating the participation agenda needs a certain pace and resource (different from a ‘consult and carry on’ approach) would all have an impact beyond the programme.

**Learning to take forward**

- Plan in relevant training before or near project start to maximise its effectiveness and impact
- Explore opportunities for shared training e.g. between hosts and artists
- Maintain the inclusion of artists’ meetings
- Maintain the inclusion of opportunities for commissioners and host organisations to reflect on their roles and learning, as well share their observations about participants’ engagement and development



## 6

## EVALUATION APPROACH

There was a detailed Logic Framework for the programme and an expectation that commissioning partners would share appropriate evaluation methodologies and offer relevant evaluation tools as part of programme planning. In practice, some of these tools were provided after delivery commenced and not as much consistency in relation to evaluation data capture was achieved across the programme as intended (notwithstanding the need for alternative but comparable approaches with the group of young people with learning disabilities). Some artists were more confident than others in devising bespoke creative tools, which was also an expectation, and there were different degrees of critical reflection within their reports.

Evaluation tools used in the programme included:

- Outcomes star
- Personal goal setting and review
- Ratings questionnaires (mid and end project)
- Informal and semi-structured evaluation conversations
- Sticky note and thumbs up/down responses

Choosing to use a young artist to hold the independent evaluation conversations with some of the group participants was an appropriate approach. Many of the young people have adults frequently coming in and out of their lives and this peer-based context worked well in providing a comfortable and trusting environment in which participants felt confident in openly expressing their views. With more time for preparation of this element, some useful evaluation protocols could have been established.

The Public Health representative recognised the need for robust evaluation that not only evidenced change but also communicated the impact of that change: for instance, through visual means and the direct voice of the young participants. To that end, with case studies, this report, podcasts and online galleries, the evaluation of the 'journey travelled' through the *Creative Transitions* will have been presented in a variety of ways to different audiences.

### Learning to take forward

- Continue to draw up a logic framework for projects, using the proforma developed
- Agree common programme-wide evaluation methodologies and tools between commissioning partners before delivery starts
- Encourage artists and hosts to develop additional and embedded project-bespoke and creative evaluation methodologies as appropriate
- Provide training and support in evaluation as required (e.g. for artists re tools new to them, for interviewers re open questioning techniques)
- Ensure artists' reports follow the logic framework and include critical reflection

Reflective quotes from young participants, host organisations and case studies for each of the three projects follow.



**"I have had more one to one sing and play with my little boy (Bonding) We have both learnt new songs!"**

Participating young parent

**"The fact [baby] has really taken to signing and music and enjoyed himself has made me happy. Bonding is more easier with [baby], while singing"**

Participating young parent

**"It's making me more confident the project included everything I wanted to do with my baby"**

Participating young parent

**"Given me and [baby] way more bonding ideas. [Baby] is giggling and smiling more. Thank you for the experience you've helped mine and [Baby's] bonding so much."**

Participating young parent

**"I never expected to get so much out of this and such lovely memories"**

Participating young parent

**"The young people are going to be sad [that the project] is ending as they have really enjoyed it. They really appreciate the hard work that has gone into it. They can really see it. That's a great value, especially a positive female role model that they can see the hard work and how much you care and everything that has gone into it. It has really benefitted them, massively."**

Host organisation: Young parent project

**"The confidence they've grown to sing to their own babies and do the music. This is something that they've never done before. A lot of them have said they wouldn't go to groups because they feel insecure and judged, so this has been an amazing experience for them."**

Host organisation: Young parent project

**"They are really proud of what they've done. Not many people are proud of them, in the community, they always feel judged and looked down upon, so this has been really positive for them."**

Host organisation: Young parent project

**"Actually getting the little bags of art materials has been so exciting for the young people, it's been like Christmas for them every few weeks. That has worked really well in engaging them - they are unwrapping their envelopes that [the artist] has spent hours putting into bags and envelopes. It's been really cool doing that. It has allowed some to engage in Zoom - we hadn't [previously] had an offer exciting enough to bring them in. It has been a really lovely project and it came at the right time."**

Host organisation: Phab Club project

**"[The artist] has adjusted the program to meet the individual needs of our young people and is always positive and encouraging. The young people clearly feel comfortable with her and communicate with her throughout the sessions from beginning to end."**

Host organisation: Phab Club project

**"One young person we didn't see at all through lockdown and she has engaged in this process and doing really well with it, so that has been a really nice thing. The benefit of that is that she has been attending other sessions as well."**

Host organisation: Phab Club project

**"My favourite bit was doing it as an achievement and an experience. I was proud of myself [...] I have proved to myself that I could be an art person."**

Phab club participant

**"This is the first time I've ever done it. I'll carry on doing it, I won't give up. I'm quite passionate about art now."**

Phab club participant

**"It has made me more confident."**

Phab Club participant

**"People were communicating and putting their hand up. They were communicating at the art project more than in public."**

Phab Club participant

**"It is clear to all of us that the young people are finding the project rewarding and we have had emails from parents telling us how much the young people are enjoying the sessions."**

Host organisation: Phab Club project

**"Its really hard for me to get excited about anything in my life, but I get really excited about this project. It's kind of pure – everything in my life always seems to come with worries and anxieties, but this project comes with no worries at all AND its something that is just for me and makes me have times for myself. So much of what I do is about other people."**

Participating young carer

**"I feel that our voices were heard and that we were able to share our emotions quite openly."**

Participating young carer

**"Receiving all the compliments on the art, it made me think I'm not terrible at everything. They made you think that they were impressed with what you'd done and their opinions do matter. There was never any negativity. In the world there can be so much negativity, that going here to only have compliments... this was a great environment to be in."**

Participating young carer

**"So good to have something to focus on that's not stressful like school work"**

Participating young carer

**"I LOVE the art supplies I have built up. I really love it! I am literally SO excited waiting for the art boxes to arrive in the post and always ask my mum as soon as I get in if its here yet... Its made me rethink how I use my time. I need more time for me."**

Participating young carer

**"It makes me feel better doing art. It makes me feel at peace in a way. I just feel like the time flies when I'm doing art, which is not necessarily the best thing with all the stuff I have to do, but I it's a very calming experience."**

Participating young carer

**"Being a young carer you are so tired from everything and you don't feel like doing it, but having the encouragement there and the motivation to do it was really nice."**

Participating young carer

**"It really did help me find different ways to express myself."**

Participating young carer

**"I gained new skills and confidence in myself"**

Participating young carer

**"[My child] has health issues and has had a difficult year. She gets very anxious. She is a carer for her autistic brother who makes her body issues worse. This project has been one of the real positives of this year, and she looks forward to packs every week. It has been really good for her self-esteem. It's amazing she is showing herself on the (zoom) screen at all- she has previously had counselling online and didn't want to show her face. Thanks for everything you are doing."**

Parent of participating young carer

**"[My child] is loving this project – although she may not always look like she is, she loves it. She absolutely hates zoom. This is the only zoom session she has agreed to participate in and there's LOTS she's invited to do or suppose to do."**

Parent of participating young carer

**"[The artists] have been amazing, they would contact each young person and their family, they rang them to check in and organise a face to face meeting, they check on them every so often. [...] They tried to communicate in the best way they can, being positive and open, they weren't like scary adults, they made everyone feel really calm. It has been amazing to work with them. "**

Host organisation: Young carers project

**"Being part of the project has helped me to understand how to incorporate art whilst supporting young carers/young people. Helped me to recognise my strengths and weaknesses, artistically and also personally."**

Host organisation: Young carers project

**"It's not something they get through the post everyday, these fun packs, they get to keep it and they feel really special. They love the snacks, they just love it. I feel they enjoy it, they look forward to it each week. Some of them are really stressed at school but they still find time to do the art, which I think is a real testament to the commitment that [the arts organisation] has to do this and be current and consistent with it. If there was an opportunity to do it again, it would be amazing. "**

Host organisation: Young carers project

**"I feel it's nice to have people from outside of the service do it, because else they would be so insular, they would just be knowing us. I feel like it's been such a valuable thing that if it were to run again it would be so helpful – you could tailor it to whoever you wanted. There are so many young carers around maybe sibling young carers or parent young carers... there are so many options you could do it for, and then really see the benefit as they've enjoyed it so much"**

Host organisation: Young carers project

## CREATIVE TRANSITIONS: YOUNG CARERS

## CASE STUDY

### Summary

This was one of three Creative Transitions projects supporting vulnerable young people with particular challenges in their transition to adulthood, through creative activity. Participate Arts worked via Zoom (last session in person) over a 12-week period with eight young carers, two of whom did not attend sessions but continued to receive the art packs linked to the Five Ways to Wellbeing. Two young people's attendance was 100%; others mostly provided a reason for any absence. Participants enjoyed the activities; grew in confidence; bonded as a group; learnt new skills; felt listened to; took time for themselves; and reported a greater sense of wellbeing.



### Case study detail

Participants received a Journal at the start and weekly art packs with materials, ideas and activities linked to the Five Ways to Wellbeing (Connect, Be Active, Keep Learning, Give and Take Notice) and snacks.

Evaluation comprised participant setting and review of personal goals; reflection time; artist telephone calls; mid and end of project questionnaire; artists' report; attendance data; commissioner facilitated conversation with host and artists; conversation with some participants facilitated by an young artist external to the project; conversations held by the external evaluator with partner commissioners and artists, along with a project documentation review.

Two people did not attend any sessions, despite contact attempts by the host, school and artists. Two had 100% attendance; mostly others gave absence reasons related to caring demands and mental health, with some experiencing technical difficulties. For one participant, 'hate'

of Zoom was a reason. However, one parent reported 'M is loving this project...she absolutely hates Zoom. This is the only Zoom session she has agreed to participate in...' and another participant moved from invisibility to visibility on screen. Participants were excited to receive the packs ('It felt like Christmas') and appreciated being able to build up supplies for future use.

They enjoyed the activities; increased their confidence and social interaction with each other; found new creative ways to express feelings; gave and received valued peer feedback and support; and one participant in particular self-regulated his emotions by 'having a creative focus that mitigated the anxieties in their life, as they approach adulthood' (artist). All reported a greater sense of wellbeing from participation, with making time for themselves key.

Key aspects contributing to intervention success were:

- Good communications between artists and host, with active participation and support of the young people in sessions
- Varied, high quality art resources 'It showed they care about us' to keep as well as use
- Artists being encouraging, motivating and enabling, so all voices were heard

**"It's really hard for me to get excited about anything in my life, but I get really excited about this project. It's kind of pure - everything in my life always seems to come with worries and anxieties, but this project comes with no worries at all AND its something that is just for me and makes me have times for myself. So much of what I do is about other people."**

Participant

## FACT FILE

Purpose	To support vulnerable young people with challenges in their transition to adulthood, through creative activity
Aims	To provide a 'safe space' for young people To improve confidence and enjoyment of life amongst participants To increase skills, knowledge and confidence amongst participants to better manage their lives and transition to adulthood To increase social interaction and reduced loneliness in young people To ensure participants will feel as though they have had their say and been listened to To build strong, equal, trusting relationships between group participants to build resilience and provide support to one another To maintain or increase participants' attendance in training, education or other support open to them from partners and other agencies, statutory or otherwise To better understand among all partners the opportunities and barriers for embedding more collaborative arts and culture into prevention programmes
Artforms used	Visual arts: including mono-printing and block printing, collage 3D, charcoal drawing, acrylics, cartoons, stencils, digital manipulation
Project Partners	Torbay Culture Public Health Torbay Imagine This...
Funders	Torbay Culture through the Great Place Scheme: Changing Lives supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England
Artists	<a href="#">Participate Arts</a>
Participants	Eight young carers from the Torbay Young Carers Service
Location	Zoom plus one in person session at Artizan Gallery, Torquay
Dates	12 weekly sessions from 12 August to 25 October 2020
Outcomes	Enjoyment; increased confidence and social interaction; finding new creative ways to express feelings; greater sense of wellbeing; and making time for themselves.
Evaluation	In session participant setting and review of personal goals; end of session reflection time; artist telephone calls (five participants); mid and end of project questionnaire; artists' report; attendance data; commissioner facilitated conversation with College staff member and artists; evaluation conversations held by the external evaluator with each of the partner commissioners and the artist, along with a review of all project documentation.
Cost	£5000
Outputs	11 Zoom sessions plus 2 extra Zoom sessions with a digital art specialist 1 in person session Online gallery of work Podcast of participants talking about their experience of the project
Quality Indicators	High level of engagement between host and artist; high quality art resources; artist's adaptability to participants' interests and needs; continuity of provision over the project period
Keywords	Young carers Transition

## CREATIVE TRANSITIONS: YOUNG PARENTS

## CASE STUDY

### Summary

This was one of three Creative Transitions projects supporting vulnerable young people with particular challenges in their transition to adulthood, through creative activity. Musician Laura Forster (We Need Music) worked via Zoom, Facebook and in person over a 12-week period with 12 young parents (in different groupings) and their babies and toddlers. Attendance was mixed due to baby and other life demands but communications via social media helped keep everyone in touch. Participants enjoyed the activities; built relationships with each other; became more confident interacting with their babies within the facilitated social and creative space; and were happily surprised they could write songs.



Attendance was mixed given baby and other demands, as well as College Covid-19 attendance rules, but reasons for absence were given. Participants enjoyed the activities; developed social interactions with each other including learning from each other's different parenting approaches; gained confidence in interacting with their babies and bonded more with them, noticing better their particular characteristics to use in personal lullabies; were much more driven in their learning; and were proud of what they achieved.

**'Given me and [baby] way more bonding ideas. [Baby] is giggling and smiling more.'**

Participant

Key aspects contributing to intervention success were:

- Young people being on the interview panel to select the artist, who had excellent inclusive facilitation as well as musical skills
- A strong partnership between the artist and College, with the latter highly supportive and aware of how best to be involved, for instance, with creche workers withdrawing for sessions to enable participants to be more independent in caring for and interacting with their babies
- Providing participants with an experience they had never had before and would not feel confident in accessing elsewhere, for fear of feeling uncomfortable and judged by others

### Case Study Detail

Participants received a pack of high quality, age safe instruments to use at home and keep beyond the project, with the contents informed by their own ideas and requests. Interactive music making sessions were held via Zoom, videos on a closed Facebook group and in person, with participants writing individual and group songs for and about their babies. At the final session, participants received a project photo book and a pamper pack from the artist to acknowledge how their hard work would have a lasting impact on their babies' futures.

Evaluation included participant mid and end of project outcomes stars; artist's report; attendance data; commissioner facilitated conversation with host and artist; conversations held by the external evaluator with commissioners and artist, along with a project documentation review.

## FACT FILE

Purpose	To support vulnerable young people with challenges in their transition to adulthood, through creative activity
Aims	To provide a 'safe space' for young people To improve confidence and enjoyment of life amongst participants To increase skills, knowledge and confidence amongst participants to better manage their lives and transition to adulthood To increase social interaction and reduced loneliness in young people To ensure participants will feel as though they have had their say and been listened to To build strong, equal, trusting relationships between group participants to build resilience and provide support to one another To maintain or increase participants' attendance in training, education or other support open to them from partners and other agencies, statutory or otherwise To better understand among all partners the opportunities and barriers for embedding more collaborative arts and culture into prevention programmes
Artforms used	Music: Singing and songwriting
Project Partners	Torbay Culture Public Health Torbay Imagine This...
Funders	Torbay Culture through the Great Place Scheme: Changing Lives supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England
Artists	<a href="#">Laura Forster: We Need Music CIC</a>
Participants	12 young parents (all female) aged 17 to 20 (four across the whole project, four for first eight sessions, four for last five sessions) attending South Devon College and their babies and toddlers
Location	Zoom/Facebook and South Devon College
Dates	13 weekly sessions 5 August to 20 October 2020
Outcomes	Enjoyment; developed social interactions; increased confidence in interacting with their babies and bonding; more driven in their learning; and pride.
Evaluation	Participant mid and end of project outcomes stars; artist's report; attendance data; commissioner facilitated conversation with host and artist; conversations held by the external evaluator with commissioners and artist, along with a project documentation review.
Cost	£5000
Outputs	6 Zoom sessions and 7 sessions in person Celebration event Photo books including song lyrics MP3 recording
Quality Indicators	High level of engagement between host and artist; high quality music resources and facilitation; strong focus on individual and group development; artist's adaptability to participants' interests and needs; continuity of provision over the project period
Keywords	Young parents Transition

## CREATIVE TRANSITIONS: YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SEND

## CASE STUDY

### Summary

This was one of three Creative Transitions projects supporting vulnerable young people with particular challenges in their transition to adulthood, through creative activity. Visual artist Anna Boland worked with eight young people with learning disabilities from the Phab club (six females and two males, aged between 12 and 29 years old) via Zoom over a 12-week period. Attendance was high, with participants greatly enjoying the sessions. They developed trusting relationships with each other and the artist; confidence; social interaction skills; openness to feedback; and a sense of pride in their work, alongside creative skills and knowledge.



Attendance was high (three people in sessions 100%, two over 90% and no one below 75%). Participants enjoyed the activities and bonded very well as a group. They developed: trusting relationships with each other and the artist; confidence; social interaction skills; and a sense of pride in their work, alongside new creative skills and knowledge. Despite some Zoom challenges (e.g. the artist could not see everything the participants were doing) the Phab Coordinator commented, 'The art has allowed participants to take part in Zoom sessions' and so access other club provision. When one participant covered themselves in paint, this prompted conversation with them and their parents leading to an improvement in behaviour.

Phab is now keen to fundraise for a project with the wider club membership.

Key aspects contributing to intervention success were:

- Good communications between the artist and host, with active participation and support of the young people in sessions
- Group ground rules for interacting well on Zoom
- A range of art materials and methods to try
- Artist responsiveness to participants' interests and needs

### Case Study Detail

Art packs were sent to participants in advance and parents, family members or carers were present during sessions to support facilitated activities. Ground rules were set (e.g. one person talking at a time, active listening and giving positive feedback). Activities covered a range of materials and techniques, with the artist consulting with participants about what they wanted to do.

Evaluation comprised in session feedback from participants (e.g. 'thumbs up or down' and key words on sticky notes responses); written comments from a placement volunteer; attendance data; artist's report; commissioner-facilitated conversation with the host and artist; evaluation conversation with some participants facilitated by a young artist external to the project; and conversations held by the external evaluator with each of the commissioners and with the artist, along with a project documentation review.

**"At the beginning I wasn't that good at art but now I'm a great artist."**

Participant

## FACT FILE

Purpose	To support vulnerable young people with challenges in their transition to adulthood, through creative activity
Aims	To provide a 'safe space' for young people To improve confidence and enjoyment of life amongst participants To increase skills, knowledge and confidence amongst participants to better manage their lives and transition to adulthood To increase social interaction and reduced loneliness in young people To ensure participants will feel as though they have had their say and been listened to To build strong, equal, trusting relationships between group participants to build resilience and provide support to one another To maintain or increase participants' attendance in training, education or other support open to them from partners and other agencies, statutory or otherwise To better understand among all partners the opportunities and barriers for embedding more collaborative arts and culture into prevention programmes
Artforms used	Visual arts: drawing, painting, using inks, clay making, paper cutting
Project Partners	Torbay Culture Public Health Torbay Imagine This...
Funders	Torbay Culture through the Great Place Scheme: Changing Lives supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Arts Council England
Artists	<a href="#">Anna Boland</a>
Participants	Eight young people with learning disabilities from the Phab club in Torquay aged between 12 and 29 years old, six females and two males
Location	Zoom
Dates	13 weekly sessions 10 August to 26 October 2020
Outcomes	Increased confidence and creativity; developed communication skills (including listening and awareness of others); sense of pride; feeling of positivity; reduced loneliness.
Evaluation	In session participant feedback; volunteer report; artist's report; attendance data; commissioner facilitated conversation with Phab Co-ordinator and artist; evaluation conversation with a number of participants facilitated by a young artist external to the project; evaluation conversations held by the external evaluator with each of the partner commissioners and with the artist, along with a review of all project documentation.
Cost	£5000
Outputs	12 Zoom sessions Video of the artwork produced Podcast of participants talking about their experience of the project
Quality Indicators	High level of engagement between host and artist; high quality music resources and facilitation; strong focus on individual and group development; artist's adaptability to participants' interests and needs; continuity of provision over the project period
Keywords	Young people Learning disabilities Transition



## 7

## CONCLUDING COMMENTS

**Creative Transitions** was a clearly targeted intervention that delivered good outcomes and positive impacts for the participating young people. Commissioning partners, hosts and creative practitioners also gained significant learning from the programme that could be applied in future work, along with usefully deepening their experience of partnership working.

Much of the learning to take forward relates to maintaining working practices and approaches that were found to be effective and as such, the programme has had an important role in further consolidating health and arts and culture work in Torbay. This learning from across the different aspects of the commissioning process is presented all together as below:

**Shared goals and purposes**

- Continue to articulate and communicate the 'intervention' nature of targeted projects

**Operational effectiveness**

- Continue to invest time in the early stages of the commissioning process i.e. generating ideas and ways of working, identifying relevant contacts, devising clear briefs and documenting processes and protocols
- Continue to involve project participants in artist selection processes
- Provide developmental support for artists to devise and write project proposals that take into consideration how potential host organisations and participants will receive them

**Continuous quality improvement**

- Plan in relevant training before or near project start to maximise its effectiveness and impact
- Explore opportunities for shared training e.g. between hosts and artists
- Maintain the inclusion of artists' meetings
- Maintain the inclusion of opportunities for commissioners and host organisations to reflect on their roles and learning, as well share their observations about participants' engagement and development

**Evaluation**

- Continue to draw up a logic framework for projects, using the proforma developed
- Agree common programme-wide evaluation methodologies and tools between commissioning partners before delivery starts
- Encourage artists and hosts to develop additional and embedded project-bespoke and creative evaluation methodologies as appropriate
- Provide training and support in evaluation as required (e.g. for artists re tools new to them, for interviewers re open questioning techniques)
- Ensure artists' reports follow the logic framework and include critical reflection

# TORBAY CULTURE

BECAUSE IT MATTERS | EST. 2015

## CREDITS

### ARTISTS

Anna Boland  
Gaby Lovatt and Becci Eriksson, Participate Arts  
Laura Forster, We Need Music CIC

### PARTNERS

Cat Radford, Torbay Culture  
Susannah Ford, Public Health Torbay  
Johanna Morrell, Imagine This...

Independent Evaluation for Torbay Culture:  
Mary Schwarz

Executive Director for Torbay Culture:  
Martin Thomas

Images that illustrate this document were provided by contracted creative practitioners documenting work by participating young people. Some artworks appear as fragments of larger works.



**TORBAY COUNCIL**

