

YT Managers Check-In

24th April 2020



Attendees:

Kenny McGlashan (YTAS) - Chair
Catherine Makin (YTAS)
Lisa Williamson (YTAS)
Eleanor Morrison (Firefly Arts / Edinburgh College)
Nicholas Barton-Wines (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland)
Gemma Nicol (Hidden Route)
Debbie Montgomery (Tron Theatre)
Catherine Ward-Stoddart (Tron Theatre)
Amy Watt (Eden Court)
Lisa Matheson (Aberdeen Performing Arts)
Mahri Reilly (Scottish Youth Theatre)
Sharon May (Lyceum Theatre)
Alan King (Youth Theatre Ireland)
Michelle Carew (Youth Theatre Ireland)
Deborah McArthur (Culture NL)
Gillian Gourlay (NTS)
Lisa Keenan (Tron Theatre)

Introductions

Participants shared something they hope to be able to carry forward with you into future work including:

- Creating instructional videos - while they are currently the only way to connect will be useful in the future as a resource for members alongside in person sessions.
- Working from home more.
- Making online content easy to find - some items which have previously been more hidden difficult to find on website, are now becoming much more accessible.
- Checking in and listening to young people. Without the focus of a performance the check in has become even more important.
- Video calls and online meetings over travel – save money and save the planet!
- Regular Check ins with the sector – hope these can continue after lockdown.
- Increased sense of flexibility – many have done things the same way for a long time but have had to adapt quickly to new circumstances.
- A reminder you can't beat the face-to-face contact for young people.

- Barriers to participation – loose the assumption that everyone has digital access. Those who had barriers before may now have even more, so important to keep an eye on this and look at ways to mitigate inequalities.

YTAS Update

- YTAS are continuing to update the [Coronavirus Sector Guidance Toolkit](#)
- [YT Essentials](#) programme has been moved online. Sessions taking place fortnightly and topics will be announced over the coming weeks.
- Ongoing discussions with FST and Culture Counts to highlight the impact of Covid-19 on the sector.
- Spotlight on... - new series of work YTAS are developing to highlight the importance of the sector on the wellbeing of young people, and how organisations are sustaining themselves and adapting to new circumstances.

Adapting Activities

Participants shared the ways that their activities have been adapting including:

- Significant decrease in the numbers of young people remaining involved in activity. Engaging online has been a challenge, with many groups experiencing a drop off of participant numbers.
- Adjusting to regular weekly sessions, rather than intensive periods of rehearsal. For SYT weekly check ins have become more important to ensure young people remain engaged – very different to normal way of working. As projects are adapting in bespoke ways to fit the young people's needs, it's important to ensure that those running the programmes have the capacity for this.
- Adjusting relationships with funders, eg for Eden Court working more closely and in collaboration with local council, who may now have more insight into the work they do. It will be interesting to see how this impact's on future funding decisions.
- Work responsibilities changing as other staff/ departments furloughed. Taking time to acknowledge new ways of working and increased pressure at this time.

Resilience and Adapting the Sector

Participants started a discussion around the adjustments that will be needed to ensure the resilience of the sector. Questions included:

- What are the gaps in skills and resources?
- What are the issues arising for young people?
- How do we evolve practise to reflect new circumstances?

Emerging concerns included:

- How young people will adjust back to group sessions. Period of bedding back in after schools restart before Youth Theatre sessions are likely to begin again. Considering a reconnect term to get people back into the flow before sessions fully resume.
- Limiting class sizes due to social distancing will affect income and staff capacity.
- Mental Health aspects that emerge from the situation will have an impact both for staff and participants. Some work beginning to focus mostly on wellbeing. [Culture Health and Wellbeing have some great work in this area.](#)
- Staff training that will be required to adapt to new circumstances. Importance of staff mental health training, and having the ability to signpost resources.
- Impact on career development, particularly for early career practitioners, as training and work opportunities for freelancers extremely limited.
- Highlighting the impact of our work with young people more widely. With opportunities for young people depleting it feels more important than ever to lobby for the continuance of the sector. How can we make movement here?

[ITAC](#) have been sharing films and discussion that are free to access. Recent event shared a film about the importance of lobbying to support the resilience of the youth arts sector.