

Takeover Project Evaluation Report

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Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	6
Evaluation methodology.....	9
Volunteering figures.....	10
Pre-programme survey.....	10
Post-programme survey.....	13
Categories of volunteering	18
Findings.....	20
Finding 1: Cohort summaries and project-level learning.....	20
Finding 2: Barriers to youth volunteering in Mansfield and Ashfield	33
Finding 3: Enablers of young people’s volunteering and retaining volunteers	36
Finding 4: How the Takeover programme better supported opportunities for volunteering	38
Finding 5: Reflections on partnership working and organisational learning for Captivate.....	39
Recommendations to better support young people’s volunteering and arts engagement.....	41

Executive Summary

Takeover is a 24-month programme which provided new arts and creative volunteering and skills development (pathways into work) for young people 14-24 from Mansfield and Ashfield. The programme was designed and delivered by a consortium of arts and community organisations led by Captivate (Nottinghamshire's Local Cultural Education Partnership) with Nonsuch Studios, Inspire Learning, First Art & Inspire Youth Arts. The team involved in shaping the programme worked with a consortium of partners, led by Inspire: Culture Learning and Libraries: Inspire Learning and Inspire Youth Arts, through a strong partnership model, that supported freelancers and arts organisations within the practical delivery of work. Takeover was funded by the Volunteering Futures Fund (Department of Culture, Media and Sports (DCMS) and Arts Council England (ACE)), the project offered intensive arts and cultural training for young volunteers leading up to a celebratory Takeover festival (March 2024). NTU were commissioned as evaluation Partner for the Takeover programme. Working across the 8 diverse cohorts of young people, NTU administered pre- and post- project questionnaires, as well as for exit interviews with Artists and Teachers. Regular reflective discussions were also facilitated with the Takeover Co-ordinator – Emily Minnett and Captivate Partnership Manager – Vanessa Oxspring.

An introduction to the project, including cohort descriptions, evaluation methodology and volunteering statistics follows. This report has analysed the results of NTUs engagement with Takeover to share learning with partners and other interested parties. Learning from this report is split into five areas; cohort summaries with project level learning, barriers to youth volunteering in Mansfield and Ashfield, enablers of young people's volunteering and retaining volunteers, how the Takeover programme better supported opportunities for volunteering and reflections on partnership working and organisational learning for Captivate.

Findings are explored in these areas and can be summarised as follows:

1. Each of the **8 cohorts of young people were diverse**, with differing needs and cultural 'starting points', which meant that the Takeover programme had to be designed in a bespoke fashion by the Artists' leading the projects. This generated in-depth project level learning, captured in Finding 1, which can be built upon for future partnership working between Captivate, the educational settings and the Artists.
2. Young people in these cohorts faced **significant barriers to volunteering**. These included financial pressures on young people, which limited their availability for volunteering, due to expectations to support their families through caring and part time working. This was circumvented by the Takeover programme by hosting Artist-led

activities partially or fully within school/college time/timetable. Additional barriers included delays to accessing groups of young people which reduced project timescales, lack of scaffolding for young people with disabilities to engage in volunteering and limited cultural frame of reference for arts festivals and previous arts education.

3. The Takeover programme demonstrated some **'best practice' in enabling young people's volunteering**. This included working with Artists, high levels of support from school/college staff, 'festival pedagogy' with pre- and post- festival learning opportunities, curriculum links and the opportunity for young people to develop commercial products and generate income.
4. The Takeover programme **better supported young people's volunteering by offering opportunities to work creatively and entrepreneurially** with new arts skills, being involved in events management and commercial activities and hosting public-facing events which built upon young people's confidence and experience setting up displays and managing performances.
5. **Captivate and partners was able to develop its organisational capacity and partnership working through the project**, with 6 out of 8 partnerships being new. Building these new partnerships took time, and gatekeepers were key to the success of these new partnerships. Teacher relationships and partnerships with Captivate were further strengthened, as the most effective school/college staff supported young people to research and develop ideas outside of the scheduled session times.

In order to support Captivate with its future partnership working and better ways of supporting young people's volunteering beyond the project, this report closes with some recommendations based on the themes of **maximising 'Festival Pedagogy'** (pre- and post- festival learning), **allowing extra time for new partnership working** and **better scaffolding for the volunteering experience**.

Introduction

Takeover aimed to provide new arts and creative volunteering and skills development for young people 14-24 from Mansfield and Ashfield. Through funded by the Volunteering Futures Fund, the project offered intensive arts and cultural training for young volunteers leading up to a celebratory Takeover Festival (March 2024). The underpinning ethos of Takeover was that young people could lead their own artistic projects supported by professional artists and give their time as volunteers to ‘take over’ disused space in Mansfield to share their artistic and entrepreneurial work.

The original intention was to recruit diverse cohorts of young people, staggered throughout the two-year programme. However, due to the challenges with recruiting new groups of young volunteers, the approach was adapted to work with existing groups of young people, through schools and colleges. This new approach proved beneficial in terms of creating new partnership opportunities for the Local Cultural Education Partnership. Working with schools, colleges and alternative education, offered new challenges in terms of young people volunteering outside of school hours. These barriers will be reflected upon later in this report.

In the first year, three cohorts worked with Artists to plan, co-ordinate a deliver their own public takeover events. These included a pop-up shop in the Four Seasons shopping centre, a beach-themed family day at the MyPlace centre and two pirate-themed events at Portland College. In the second year, five new cohort worked towards developing the Takeover Festival. Each cohort coordinating a different zone of the dis-used Debenhams Department store, which was the setting for the Takeover Festival. The festival was produced with support from Nonsuch Studios. In total, the Takeover project worked with 139 young volunteers, with the Takeover Festival attracting 1582 visitors.

The Takeover cohorts and projects were as follows:

Setting and Volunteer context	Timeline	Partners and Outputs
<p>1. <i>Brunts Academy – a school with a performing arts specialism in Mansfield. Volunteers did not need to be involved in arts subjects to take part and some volunteers had worked with Inspire previously.</i></p>	<p>Jan-Mar 2023</p>	<p>Artist: First Art Young people organised and hosted a Pop-Up Shop over 2 days in the Four Seasons shopping centre. Volunteers set up stalls and sold baked goods that they had made, clothing ranges that they had designed and offered practical workshops for visitors.</p>

Setting and Volunteer context	Timeline	Partners and Outputs
<p>2. <i>Inspire Learning based at MyPlace in Mansfield. Young people 16-24 enrolled on courses which support their employability skills, work placements, qualifications in Maths and English. Volunteers were not involved in arts education beyond the project.</i></p>	<p>Apr-July 2023</p>	<p>Artist: Emily Minnett and Vanessa Oxspring Young people coordinated and ran a family event day themed around the beach and seaside. Young people planned and organized the entertainment, including live music and other aspects such as stall holders and food vendors.</p>
<p>3. <i>Portland College – a post-16 specialist college for young people with disabilities. Volunteers were recruited from performing arts and movement groups.</i></p>	<p>Apr-Sept 2023</p>	<p>Artist: Nonsuch Studios & First Art Young people were involved in organising two events: a Pirate themed fun day for families and a similar event for Portland students.</p>
<p>4. <i>Brunts Academy – a second cohort from this setting, who had not taken part in Takeover the previous year. These volunteers were already arts-engaged and wanting to go onto creative courses at college or aspired to go to university.</i></p>	<p>Jan-March 2024</p>	<p>Artist: Dizzy Ink Working towards the Takeover Festival, the cohort worked with a circus theme and created artistic products for sale, as well as t-shirt printing, circus skills, face painting and coconut shy activities.</p>
<p>5. <i>Inspire Learning – a second cohort from this post-16 education setting. Volunteers had not been involved with the previous project and were not involved in arts courses at Inspire.</i></p>	<p>Oct 23 to March 2024</p>	<p>Artist: Sian Watson Young people worked in small groups under the directive of 'Departments of Joy', whereby they organised micro projects that originated from young people's interests: fashion, Harry Potter, Manga. These formed 'zones' as part of the Takeover Festival including different participatory arts activities and shop-based stalls.</p>
<p>6. <i>Outwood Academy is a secondary school in Kirby-in-Ashfield. They cohort</i></p>	<p>Jan to March 2024</p>	<p>Artist: Cath Connolly Young people developed skills in large-scale puppet-</p>

Setting and Volunteer context	Timeline	Partners and Outputs
<i>were recruited as part of an after-school art group.</i>		making and shadow puppetry. Their creations, a large wearable spider puppet, and a Big Bug Boutique were part of the Takeover Festival.
7. <i>Wings Academy is a residential educational setting for young people in care. These young people face significant inequalities relating to mental health and learning difficulties and trauma.</i>	Sept to March 2024	Artist: Adrian (Noise Academy) & Naji (Wavey Beats) The young people worked with Producers and Song Writers to write lyrics, DJ and perform live. They also recorded their own songs, which they placed at the festival, as well as DJing live.
8. <i>West Notts College is a post 16 education provider. The majority of the volunteers were enrolled on arts courses at FE level.</i>	Jan to March 24	Artist: Nonsuch Studios Young people undertook volunteering as part of their placement requirements within their creative arts courses. They worked on creating individual pieces of art, which they curated as part of an exhibition for the Takeover Festival.

More in-depth cohort descriptions, including project level learning are included in this report.

Evaluation methodology

NTU were commissioned as evaluation Partner for the Takeover programme. The evaluation tools included a pre- and post- project questionnaire for young people alongside exit interview with Artists and Teachers following each cohort. There were also regular reflective interviews with Takeover Co-ordinator – Emily Minnett and Captivate Partnership Manager – Vanessa Oxspring.

Data	Numbers
Pre-programme questionnaires	43
Post-programme questionnaires	32
Interviews with Artists	8
Interviews with Teachers	5
Interviews with project leaders	3

The focus of the evaluation was to glean more understanding of young people's arts engagement across the eight cohorts and to gain insight into barriers to volunteering for young people from the Mansfield and Ashfield area. The report makes recommendations referring to recruiting and maintaining young people as volunteers on an arts-based project, project level learning and organisational learning for Captivate. The limitation with this methodology is that stakeholder and adult voices have been fore-fronted for operational insights. As an evaluation team, we would have liked to include more 'youth voice' beyond the young people's surveys, however, as part of a nationally funded project- the Volunteering Futures Fund (DCMS and ACE) – NATsen were commissioned to undertake in-depth interviews with young people, resulting in case studies ask part of the wider funder evaluation.

Volunteering figures

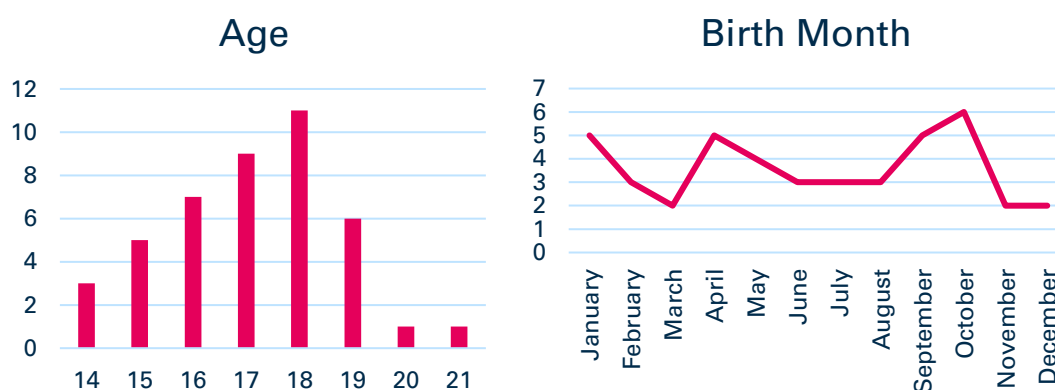
Alongside interviews conducted with artists, teachers and project leaders we sort start and end reflections from Takeover participants through two voluntary online surveys. Engagement with these was supported by the project and we gathered responses from 31% of participants at the beginning of their experience and 19% at the end. We did gather a further six responses in a pilot paper-based survey that was used to test our questions with participants at the end point but this data has not been displayed here.

Each survey asked for responses on participants volunteering experiences and at the end on the impact of the programme on the people taking part. We will display a series of descriptive statistical results of each survey.

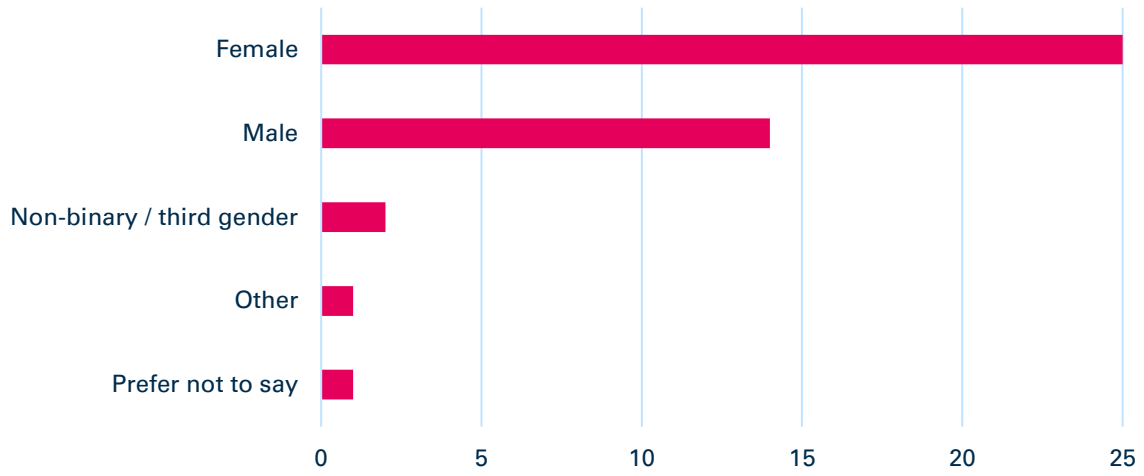
Pre-programme survey

This survey aimed to gather a light touch snapshot of participants and their volunteering history. The data shared below highlights who they were and where they are coming from in relationship to volunteering. Whilst this doesn't represent a full set of participants the response rate of 31% across the period of the project represents a clear picture across the different cohorts. Across the 75 surveys we have successfully matched 18 participants to explore how their volunteering activity may have changed. It should be noted that we can't be sure if participants classified themselves as volunteering due to their engagement solely on takeover or through other activities so any link between each time point and volunteering activity should not be seen as concrete evidence of changes to their activity.

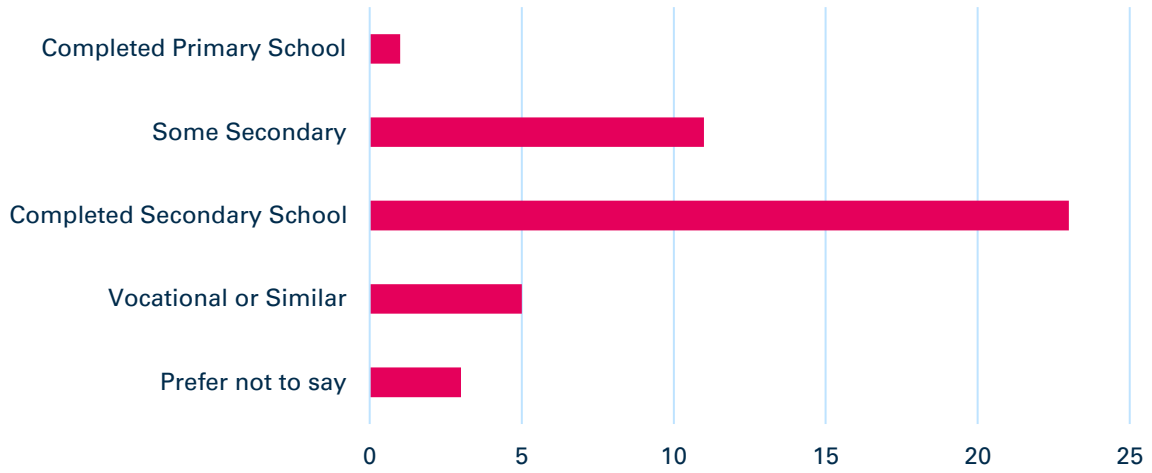
Demographics



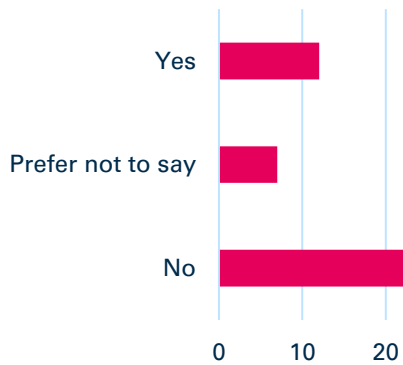
Given Gender



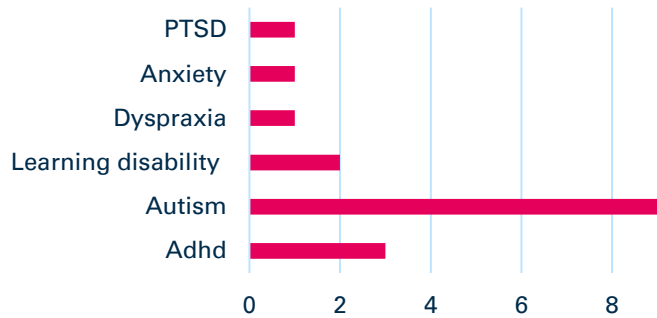
Highest Education Level Achieved



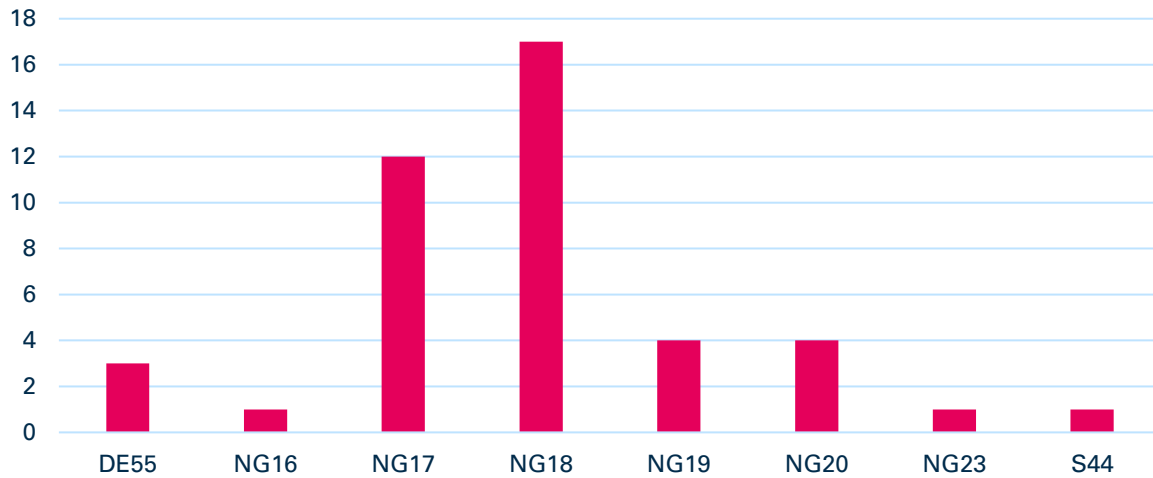
Disability



Disabilities named by participants

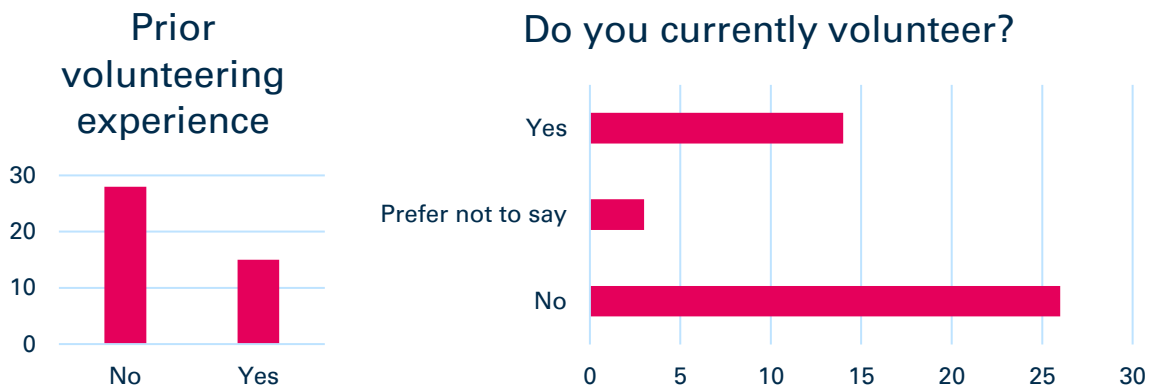


Where did the participants come from?



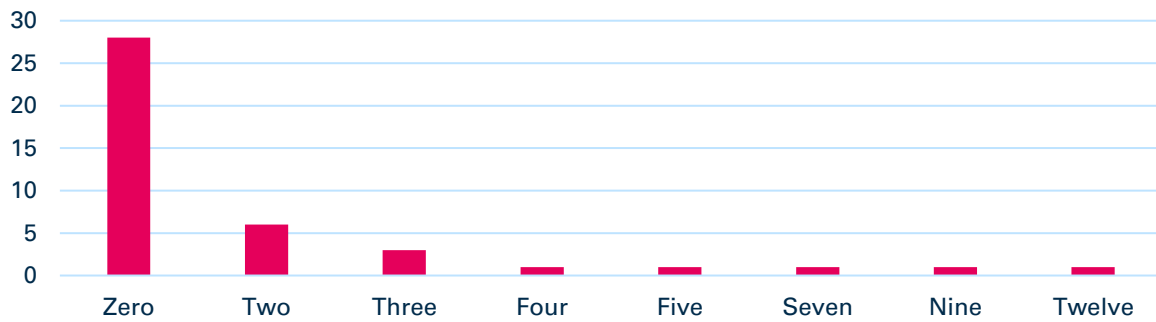
Volunteering

Our focus of the first survey alongside gaining an insight into the types of people who engaged was to understand what experience of volunteering they had prior to their time on Takeover.



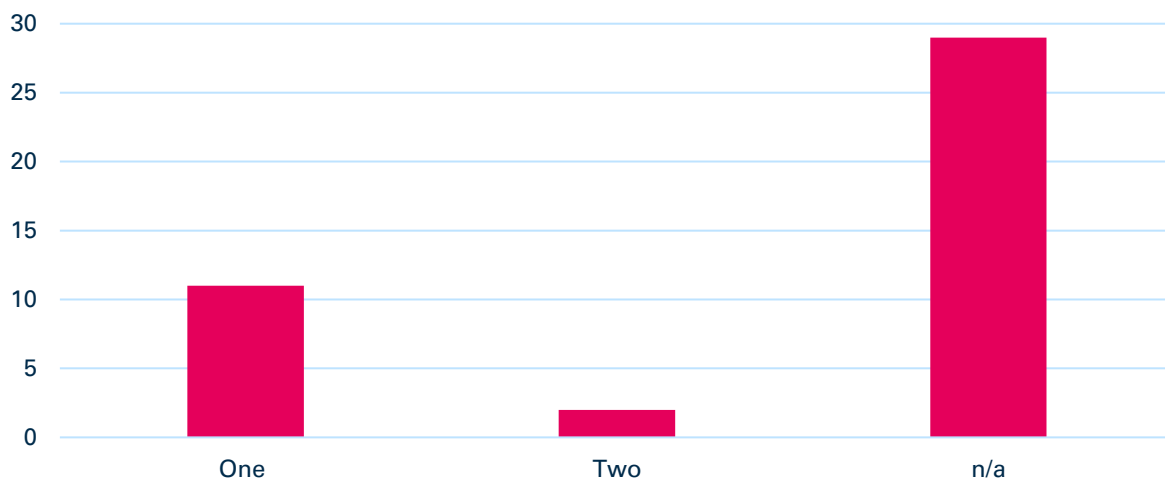
Across the initial sample of participants we see that 70% had not done any volunteering before Takeover. It would appear that all but one of participants who have previously volunteered were active volunteers at the time of the survey.

Hours volunteered per week



As we can see from the chart above collectively the ample gave 58 hours of volunteering time per week with one participant giving almost two days' worth of their time to volunteering.

Do you volunteer for more than one organisation?



Most volunteers (eleven of the thirteen) shared their time with one organisation.

Post-programme survey

We have chosen not to replay the demographic data here as it is broadly representative of the original results of survey one with 18 matched surveys. This section will focus on the results on participants perceptions of the experience and on their volunteering behaviour.

Perceptions of the programme

The survey asked a series of questions to understand the perceived value of the programme for those who took part. The visuals below highlight a series of comments and views about their time with Takeover which included views on what they had developed as strengths, if they felt the programme had been of 'high quality', whether it provided them with new opportunities, expand their interests and if it had increased the likelihood they would engage further in the

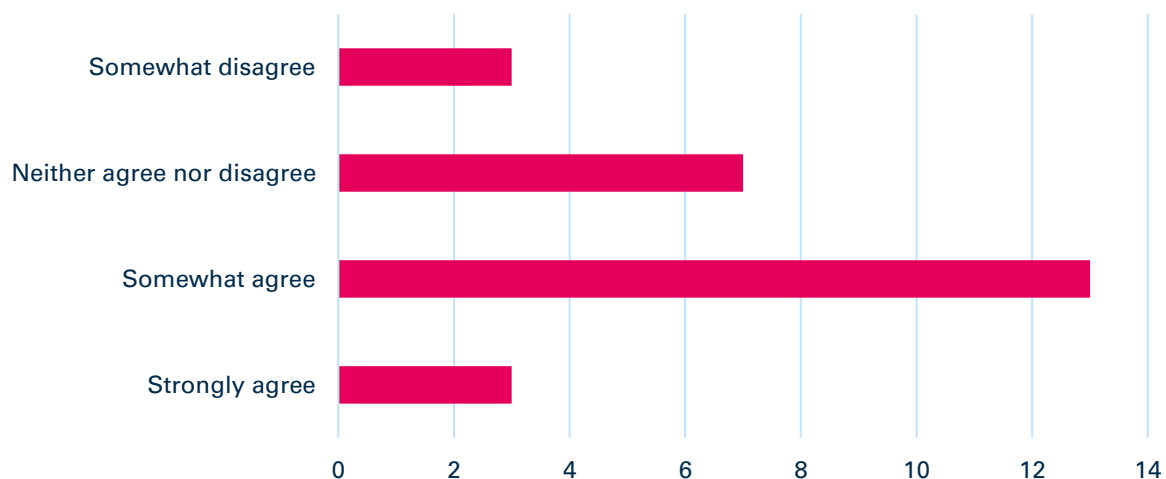
arts sector. We also provided space for more general feedback which is shared at the end of this section.

Strengths developed on the programme

Teamwork	Communication	Meeting and talking to new people	Everything	Knowing how to make a shadow...	Making something to present	
			not many to be honest	Creativity	Perseverance	
	Confidence	A lot	Ability to create work for a project...	Practice my English skills	Working with the public	Inclusivity
			Puppet creating and organising	Endeavouring	Time management	

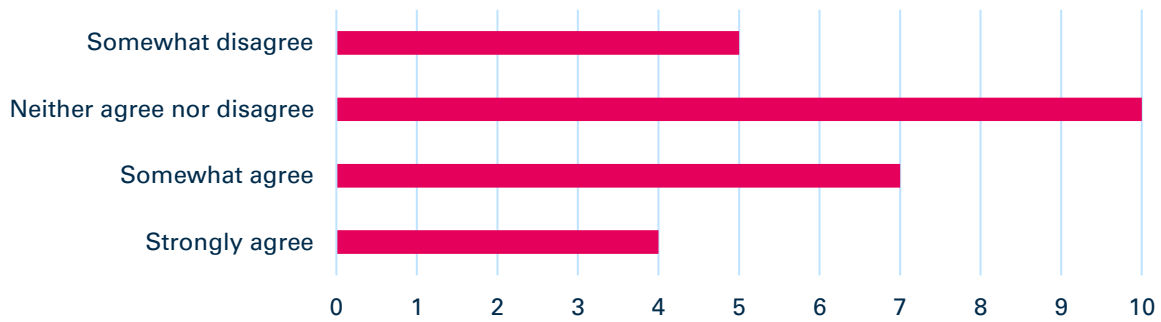
Participants highlighted a range of areas they had developed with six sharing that they had developed their teamwork. Three participants highlighted that either their communication and confidence had been developed and two said it had helped them to meet and talk to new people. Participants were able to highlight as many strengths as they wanted with four participants selecting multiple strengths.

Was Takeover a high quality project?



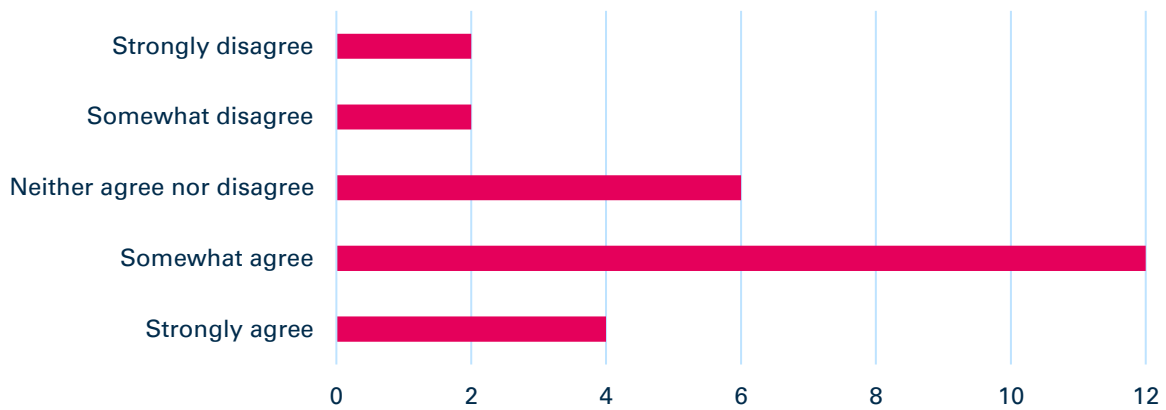
Despite a small number of participants feeling Takeover was not high quality (3) the majority were positive about the quality of the programme.

Has Takeover expanded your interests?



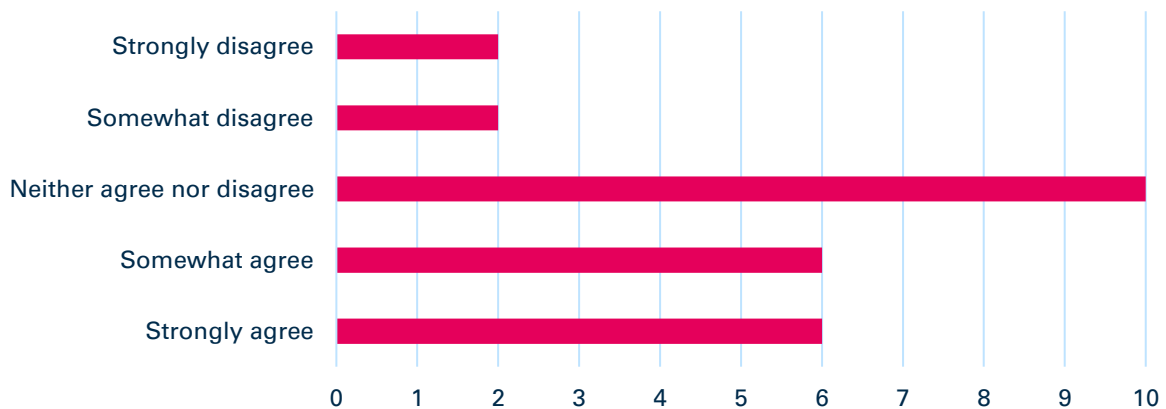
Whilst the majority of participants weren't clear if Takeover had increased their interests just over 40% agreed that it had expanded their interests.

Did Takeover provide you with new opportunities?



Four participants did not feel that Takeover had supported them to new opportunities but 16 were in agreement that it had.

Did this experience increase your likelyhood to engage with the arts sector?



A small majority felt that Takeover had increased the chances of them engaging with the art sector. Whilst four felt they would not engage after their

engagement. A large group also were unsure at the stage if it would increase or decrease the chance that they engaged. This survey did not break down what level of engagement participants were considering but it provides a broadly positive view from participants about the sector and their engagement with it.

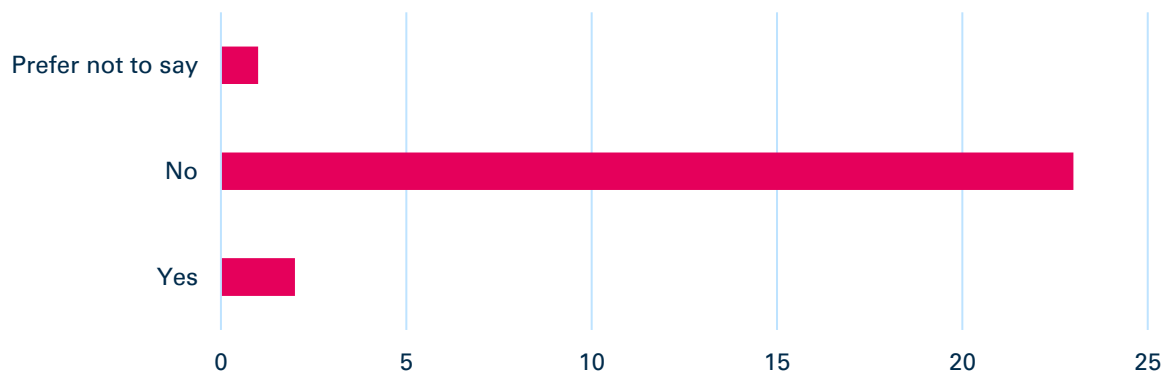
Do you have any general feedback?



We also provided survey participants the opportunity to share wider feedback which we have reproduced above. These four comments provide a generally positive view of the scheme with one request for support around food prices.

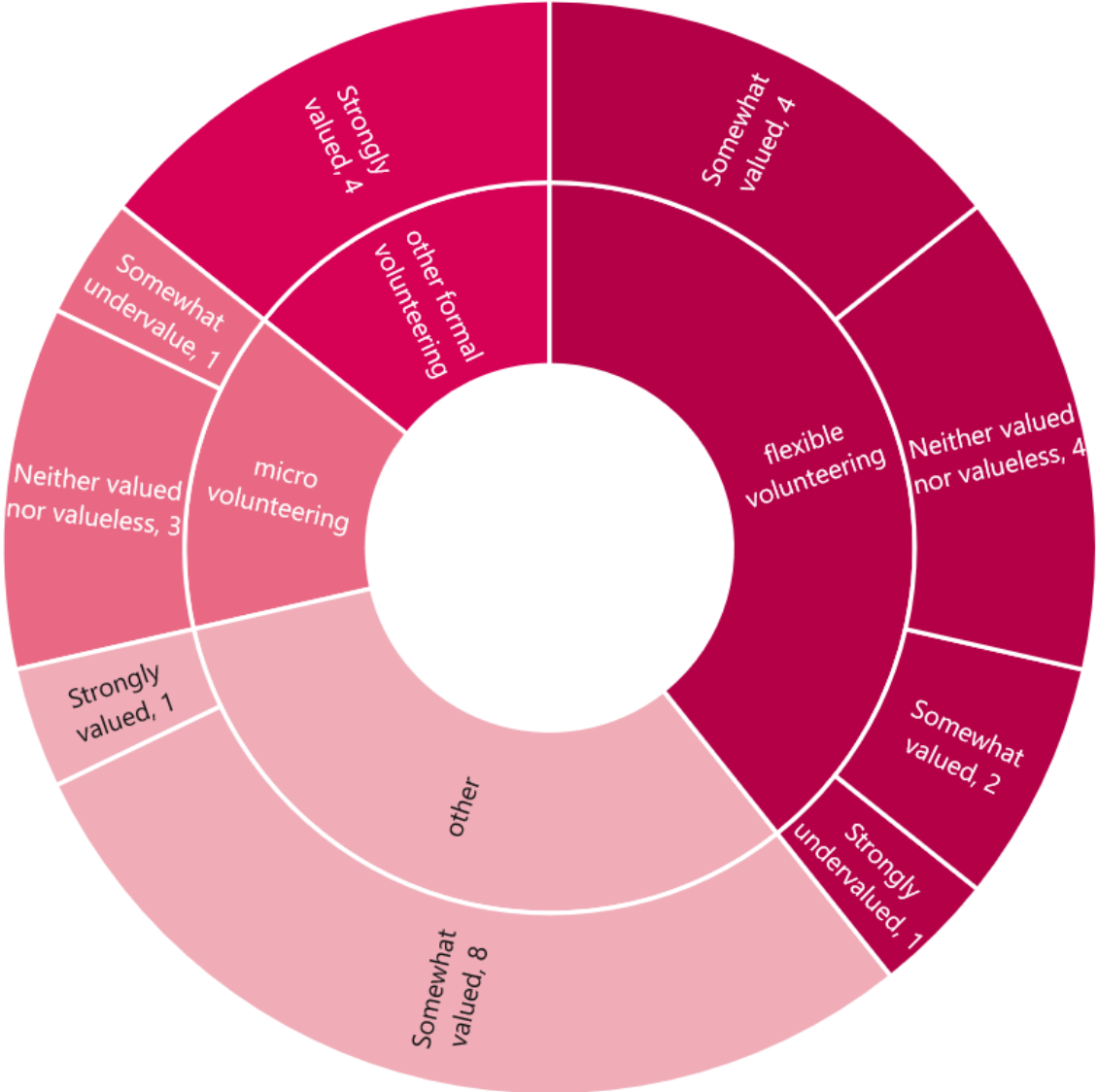
Volunteering post-programme

Are you currently volunteering?

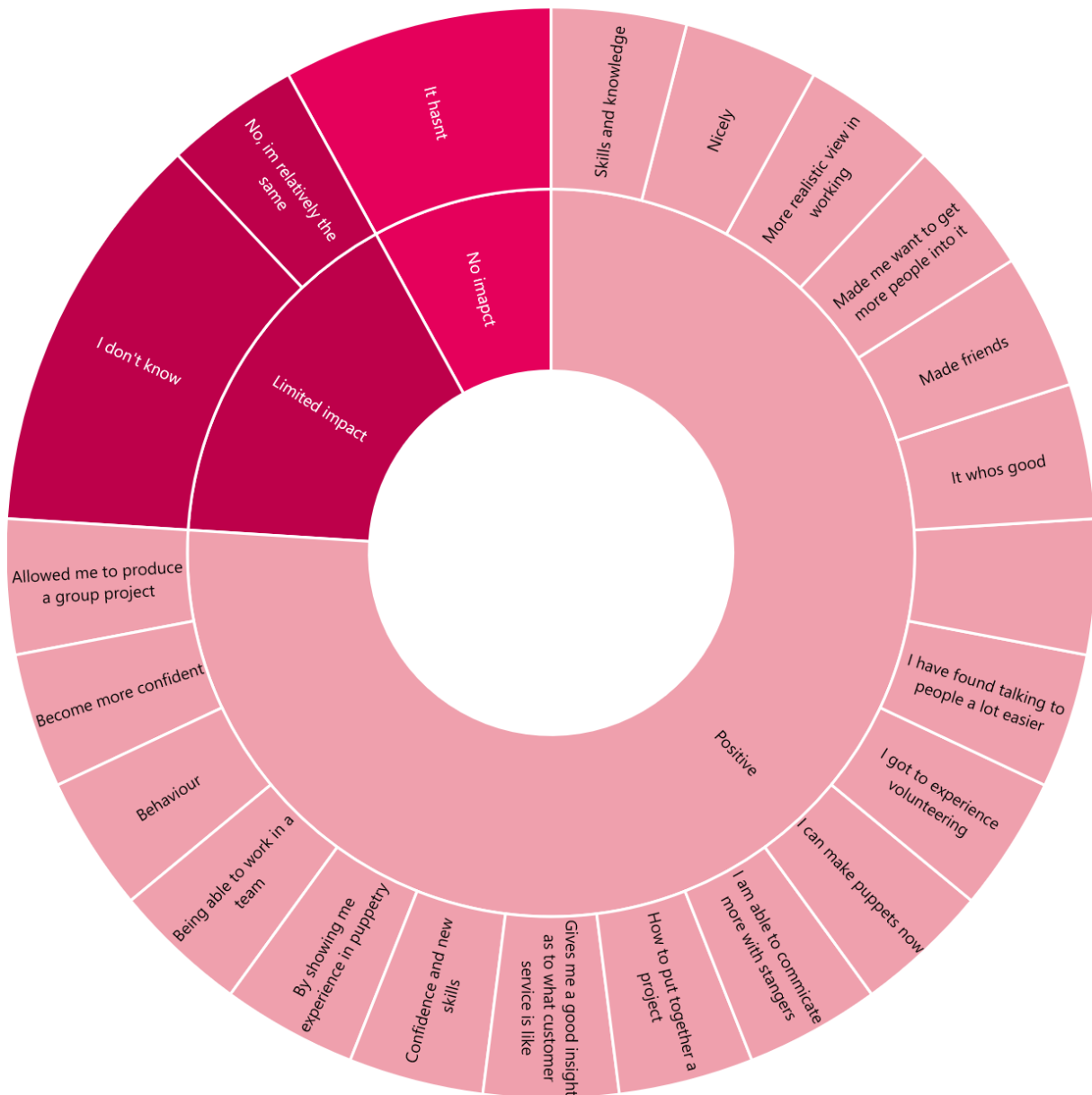


Of the two who are currently volunteering they are offering 3 and 4 hours per week to one organisation each. One of these participants has maintained their volunteering from the beginning of the project and another has started having not been undertaking any volunteering before. Of the remaining matched participants five have stopped volunteering but four of these indicated they were doing 2 hours of volunteering per week which may well be their time with Takeover.

Volunteering opportunities and their perceptions



Volunteering Impacts



As we can see from the visualisation above participants feedback about volunteering was positive. We classified comments and have shared them for reflection. It is clear that Takeover provided opportunities to develop hard and soft skills through the programme for the majority of people who took part but some felt it had limited or no impact on them.

Categories of volunteering

All Short to medium term opportunities

(Up to 6 months long and more regular than one-off opportunities across this period)

Volunteering was categorised by the Volunteering Futures Fund as:

- Micro volunteering – *volunteering to do specific time-bound tasks that can be undertaken as a one-off (e.g., collecting or delivering groceries, doing an errand, making telephone calls, giving someone a lift).*
- Digital volunteering – *includes digital volunteering activities that take place remotely or in person.*
- Flexible volunteering – *the ability to help out by offering your services as a volunteer as and when it suits you with no regular pattern of commitment or a minimum stipulated number of hours each week.*
- Other volunteering – *any other formal volunteering opportunities not covered by the above modalities (defined as those who have given unpaid help to groups or clubs, for example, leading a group, administrative support or befriending or mentoring people).*

Within the Takeover project, the following tasks contributed to the following categories:

Micro volunteering	This included festival and public event planning and set up time. These tasks as required by the different cohorts, and included time spent with sales and public engagement.
Digital volunteering	This included any tasks that were given to young people in terms of marketing and digital promotions of events through social media.
Flexible volunteering	These hours took place mainly on the Takeover Festival Day as young people who had not been involved in the creative arts production and preparation side, gave their time to support the day.
Other volunteering	Being part of a regular out-of-school or in-school committed group counted under this category, where young people gave their time to develop art skills, working with Artists.

Findings

This report has analysed the results of NTUs engagement with Takeover to share learning with partners and other interested parties. Learning from this report is split into five areas and is followed by recommendations for better supporting young people's volunteering through arts projects in future. These are:

- Finding 1: Cohort and project descriptions with project level learning
- Finding 2: Barriers to youth volunteering in Mansfield and Ashfield
- Finding 3: Enablers of young people's volunteering and retaining volunteers
- Finding 4: How the Takeover programme better supported opportunities for volunteering
- Finding 5: Reflections on partnership working and organisational learning for Captivate

Finding 1: Cohort summaries and project-level learning

Cohort 1 consisted of ten young people from **Brunts Academy** in Mansfield. As a school with a performing arts specialism, Captivate have a long-term relationship with staff at this school and had worked with some young people previously. This first cohort can be described as 'arts-engaged' upon entry to this programme, with many already having creative industry-related ideas. As a result, the project was able to encourage the young people to take a high level of autonomy with their work. The young people were already skilled in terms of baking, textile design and model-making and the project supported them to become more 'public-facing' with their artwork. Working with **Arts Practitioners - Art First** gave the project an extra quality in terms of learning about what can become a creative business or a successful public arts event. This was a completely different opportunity that is not offered in school.

The project started with 8 visioning and planning meetings with the Project Co-ordinator, where they **developed entrepreneurial and creative business skills**. They worked towards setting up a **Pop-Up Shop**, supported by First Art, who are one of the Captivate partners. Hosted over 2 days, volunteers set up stalls and sold baked goods that they had made, clothing ranges that they had designed and offered practical workshops for visitors. Young people had been involved in sourcing materials, delivering activities and learning how to sustain their arts practice as a business. There were also two public events organised by the volunteers – a spoken word performance and an exhibition. As young people were involved in all aspects of planning, they also took leadership over the marketing elements, managing social media and press coverage of the event.

Taking the form of an after-school arts group, most of the volunteering time spent on this project can be counted as **micro volunteering**. This included planning and setting up tasks as required by the project, as well a time spent with sales and public engagement. There were some aspects of **digital volunteering**, in particular for the young person who led on the marketing and social media. He came from a technology-background and was not undertaking arts subjects at school.



Pop Up Shop event at FirstArt in February 2023

Cohort 1 outcomes and project-level learning:

- Young people benefitted from **ideas generation meetings** and practical advice on how to make their artistic ideas into reality.
- **Working with an Artist** helped develop an entrepreneurial approach to 'making art'. This included developing branding, clothing design, setting up and running a shop.
- **Covering the cost of materials** enabled young people to develop products and workshops which could be 'saleable' to the public. This was an important element of commercialisation for the volunteers.
- Having the opportunity to set up and exhibition, organise a performance and 'curate' a creative space within a disused shop was a valuable experience for young people in terms of **transferrable project management skills**. Young people also learnt about event marketing, managing social media and communicating with the press.

In **Cohort 2**, 25 young people were based at **Inspire Learning**, a post-16 education provision hosted at MyPlace. in Mansfield. Young people were enrolled on courses which supported their employability skills, work placements and qualifications in Maths and English. Volunteers were not involved in arts education beyond the project.

Taking the same approach as cohort 1, young people participated in ideas generation sessions with Project Manager, Emily Minnett, as a way to get inspiration for jointly-designing and leading an arts event. The young people in this cohort strongly expressed the importance of 'giving something back' to their communities and spending the project budget on something that would benefit families local to the area. As a result, young people worked towards a **beach and seaside themed family event**, to be hosted at the MyPlace centre. The group was split into smaller project-tasks groups where young people planned and organised entertainment, such as stall holders, live music and food vendors.

In terms of volunteering opportunities, young people's time within this cohort was more limited with many of them having part time jobs or caring responsibilities outside of education provision hours. As a result, young people were 'timetabled' to attend, and Inspire Learning staff supported the project within these hours. The main volunteering roles were counted as **micro volunteering**, with young people giving their time to run the event and undertaking specific roles such as front of house, stage manager and workshop facilitators. In addition, **digital volunteering**, was undertaken by some of the cohort who had skills in photography and graphic design to be able to market the event through the college and social media.



Summer Takeover! event at Myplace in July 2023

Cohort 2 outcomes and project-level learning:

- The cohort were overwhelmingly positive about running the beach themed event. Great attention and detail went into the overall look of the space, including creating a small sand area for children to play. Young people reported positively on the opportunity to **invite their families** into a space, which was previously viewed as solely for education purposes.
- This project is the first time that MyPlace has hosted an event for the public. Despite initial anxiety about this, the family day was a resounding success, which has encouraged confidence in facilitating future events at the venue. This project has enacted a **change in culture** in terms of opening the doors of the building to the local community.
- Having little time to work on their event, outside of scheduled weekly project sessions was challenging, as simple tasks, such as supporting young people to write and send emails organising the event, were not supported by staff. There was **no scaffolding for young people** to develop and disseminate their learning from the project across other areas of study within the college.
- The opportunities for developing volunteering were limited due to the need to timetable the project within curriculum hours. The **non-voluntary nature** of participation on this project was problematic as some young people did not feel like they had opted to sign up.

Portland College – a post-16 specialist college for young people with disabilities – provided the **third cohort** of 15 young people. These volunteers were recruited from performing arts and movement groups, as young people who were interested in the arts. The college supported the programme as the volunteering aspect fit well with their work experience programme. This cohort worked with **First Art** – with whom they had a previous working relationship – and **Nonsuch Studios**.

Young volunteers were involved in creating, designing and participating in two events: A **Family Pirate themed** day, followed by a Pirate Party for young people from Portland college. students. These two events built upon young people's interest in theatre, designing food for the event through a Pirates of the Caribbean theme and interest in costume and props. Some adaptations were made in terms of volunteer's involvement and ideas for an immersive cinema experience were scaled-down and the events did not host interactive stalls or young people's acting, as planned. Instead costumes and food were brought in, as well as professional actors, to support the young people's experience. Therefore, most volunteering tasks were classed as **flexible volunteering**: one-off in nature and helping out with the project. There was positive feedback from those young people who attended the Pirate experience and the families who came on the day, contributing to the Portland college's community engagement.

Initially designed to be a ten-week programme, mirroring cohorts 1 & 2, this cohort experienced **delays to their project planning and public event**. This was due to an extra allocation of bank holidays running during the planned dates but also a lack of structure for the programme that was suitable for this specific cohort. Both the Artists and Teachers reflected upon necessary changes and adaptations to the programme to better suit the volunteers need. Due to the project running out of time in the summer term, the public events were put on hold until the autumn term. This delay meant that some of the volunteers had lost interest or moved on from the college.



Pirates of Portland event at Portland College in November 2023

Cohort 3 outcomes and project-level learning:

- The **timescale** for the project ended up being too long between planning and event delivery. This contributed to the attrition of volunteers.
- Young volunteers expressed an interest in becoming more involved with the public event. For example, being the actors, creating the costumes or making the food, instead of just bringing this in for the project. **Allowing young people more involvement** in a wider range of activities, asking the adults to step back if possible and let young people lead, would have better supported their learning.
- **Giving young people defined roles** within the final events would have helped to structure the project better to volunteering roles and work experience. For example, **creating sub-groups** depending on people's interests instead of all young people trying to decide everything.

- For this cohort, in particular, **shorter and more frequent sessions** – such as 1 or 2 hours twice per week – would have enabled a better momentum and coherence to their volunteering experience.

Cohort 4, a second group of 8 young people from **Brunts Academy**, were one of five cohorts that worked towards the Takeover Festival. Although the project had worked with Brunts Academy in the first year, the young people in the second group were new to the Takeover programme. Within this cohort, the majority were involved in arts education in and out of school, taking up an arts specialism as a hobby, as well as expressing an interest in progressing on to creative courses at college or university.

Working with **Artist Dizzy Ink**, this cohort met weekly in the ten weeks running up to the festival. The first sessions built upon getting to know the group, their artistic strengths and what they wanted to work on as part of the festival. Young volunteers were then given roles within the group: being responsible for different activities or producing certain products or organizing certain things. As well as planning tasks, the Artist also prepared skills development sessions in advance: laser cutting, spray painting work and t-shirt printing activities. As with the previous Brunts cohort, the focus of **artmaking was entrepreneurial**, with young people motivated to give their time to the project by creating products to sell or experiences to sell to the public.

The Brunts' cohort festival 'zone' had a strong and distinctive **circus theme**, with costumes, circus skills, and a stall for selling products and things like key rings and jewelry that was also available as a workshop. They also offered face painting and a coconut shy, a clown, circus skills workshops, selling candy floss, selling prints and live screen printing. As this cohort regularly dedicated their time as part of an after-school art club, the majority of their volunteering hours were classed as **'other formal volunteering'**, and also included **micro volunteering** due to the time young people gave to setting up and running the festival day.



DepARTment Festival, March 2024. Image credit Lamar Francois

Cohort 4 outcomes and project-level learning:

- Young volunteers gave attention to detail in terms of the circus theme and created a **strong aesthetic and festival 'offer'** for the public.
- Young people were motivated to give their time to the project by the **opportunity to sell** art they had made. This offered a **financial reward for their time**. Because young people in this cohort already had high level arts skills, they were able to focus more on creative industries type outputs.
- The Artist reflected that **giving individual roles and areas of responsibility** worked well with this cohort.
- Again, the **support of the Art Teacher** was recognized as a valuable and vital enabler to support young people to attend the project and to help promote the festival to potential audiences.

Cohort 5, a second group of young people from **Inspire Learning**, was made up of 30 young people. Volunteers had not been involved with the previous project and were not involved in arts courses at Inspire. Working with this large group required a different approach and **Artist Sian Watson**, started to the programme by facilitating a trip to Papplewick Pumping Station. This visit inspired the young volunteers to start to think about 'inventions' and 'things that bring us joy'. The Artists' approach, instead of asking young people to develop a shared theme, was to call upon young people's interests to develop a series of smaller 'zones' within the Department Festival. These '**dioramas**' were

designed to facilitate young people working in smaller groups, which they felt more comfortable with, and to **celebrate individual interests**. Each group had a different diorama young people were able to share and celebrate something they were passionate about.

Following several sessions of planning and discussion, thinking about what would be visually engaging for the public, this cohort took part in practical workshops which produced a logo and name for their spaces, signage and mapped each of the zones out for the Takeover Festival Day. The pattern of volunteering consisted of both **flexible volunteering**: undertaking one-off tasks, such as shopping for materials, setting up the dioramas; and **formal volunteering**: with regular weekly commitment to attending the Artist-led sessions. There was also a Guest Artist who encouraged young people to illustrate a big collaborative drawing board, which was then transferred to the festival for the public to continue illustrating.

On the day of the festival, because this was a large cohort, young people arrived in shifts so it didn't feel overwhelming in the space. Young people were able to set-up and take **ownership of their 'zone'**, but also to enjoy spending time in other zones of others from the same cohort. One young person commented that he could clearly see everyone's ideas had become real and he understood why the group had taken on the project. The Artist reported that she felt quite redundant on the festival day, as the **young people took the lead with their different areas**, working in small groups. Some parents also came along to visit the festival.



DepARTment Festival, March 2024. Image credit Lamar Francois

Cohort 5 outcomes and project-level learning:

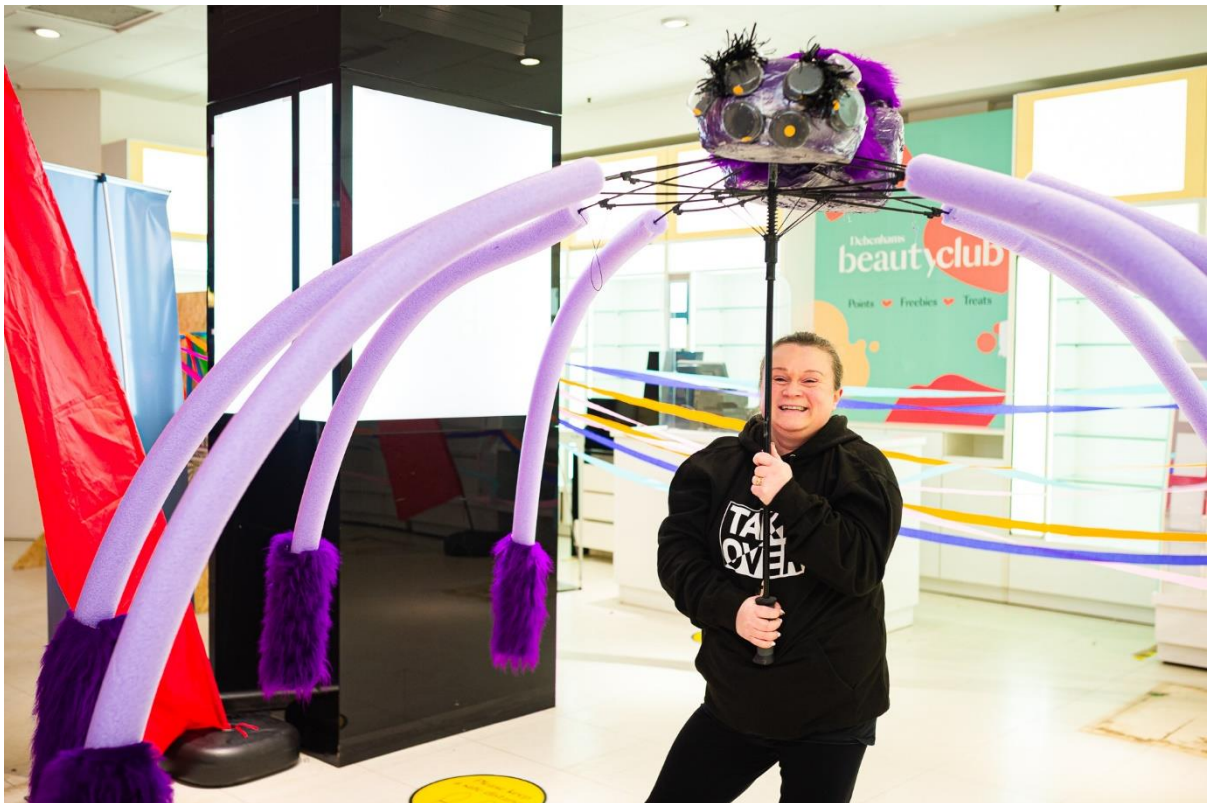
- Working with a large cohort, the Artist recognised the need for young volunteers to 'find their place' depending on their own creative interests. **Working in smaller groups** accommodated young people coming from different learning areas (not necessarily arts-focused) and different personalities.
- There was a social aspect of the project, with the cohort needing to feel 'all in it together', but also the sense that **working on a 'big' festival could be quite daunting** for young volunteers. By focusing on one small area, this felt more manageable, and took the pressure off something that might have felt 'too big' for their vision.
- For the Artist, breaking the project down into smaller parts, ensured the young people felt **ownership** of their idea. But it wasn't until the festival day, when all the zones were installed next to each other, that young people could see how the dioramas across the group came together.
- The most challenging element was working with a group of young people to design sets and installations, without having seen the festival space. The cohort were only able to **access the Department store space** a few days before the festival, which delayed the 'making' of the zones.

Cohort 6 were 8 young people from **Outwood Academy** – a secondary school in Worksop. This was the first time that this educational setting had been involved with Captivate. They worked with Artist and puppet-maker, **Cath Connolly**. The Artist was able to show previous examples of their work as inspiration for the group, which included photography and art students. The creative content of the sessions worked well as the students were able to use this towards their GCSEs. Working towards an 'arts festival' was a challenging concept for this cohort, as none of the young volunteers had ever experienced a festival before. This manifested in some reluctance to join the programme at first, with only one young person attending the after-school sessions. To encourage more young people to attend, the timing of the sessions was changed to be half in school, half after school, which retained more volunteers. A delay to the project start date, due to communication and safeguarding issues, reduced the timescale and leadership opportunities for the young people.

The **Artist took in resources**, such as a large golfing umbrella, to inspire the group. This later became a large spider puppet and a centre-piece of the Takeover Festival. The Artist reflected that she had to adapt her ideas and expectations for the group, moving from the idea of creating 4 or 5 large puppets, to one. Instead, the young people made smaller puppet insects and created a shadow puppet show called the **Big Bug Boutique**. With the creative content, having scope for all young people to create their own things, within a bigger theme worked well. This meant young people could feel comfortable in

their own smaller contributions to a bigger piece of work, under the skilled guidance of an Artist. The support of the **Art Teacher** was also vital, although they were not given any extra time within their school day to support the programme.

Beyond the **formal volunteering** hours of the project sessions, young volunteers worked to decorate the space and set up the stage for the shadow puppet show on the festival day, as **micro-volunteering** hours. Photography students also took photos of the festival space and there were more volunteers for the festival day, than actually took part in the workshops (10 young people increased to 12).



DepARTment Festival, March 2024. Image credit Lamar Francois

Cohort 6 outcomes and project-level learning:

- **More time** is needed **at the beginning** of a project, working with a new partner to ensure DBS and school staff to support the programme are in place.
- Moving the project **sessions** to **partly within school time**, helped to support young volunteers to attend the project.
- Support from senior school's staff needs to be underpinned by the allocation of **work loaded hours for school staff** – such as the Art Teacher – to support the programme within school.
- For young people who have not attended a cultural festival before, **more scaffolded learning** is needed to envisage what this volunteering commitment would entail. For example, this might include cultural visits,

sharing footage or artefacts from previous festivals or more support in future to access festivals. This would encourage and retain volunteers.

10 young people from **Wings School Notts** - a residential school for young people who face significant inequalities relating to mental health and learning difficulties and trauma – were **cohort 7** of the Takeover programme. This was another new partnership for Captivate and the artform chosen for this project was music production. The school had a pre-existing partnership with **Adrian from Noise Academy**, and the Takeover programme introduced a new Artist, **Naji from WaveyBeats**. Working with these two Producers and Song Writers, enabled the young volunteers to write lyrics, learn how to DJ and develop skills in performing live music. Young people worked on the project for seven weeks writing and recording their own songs. They also prepared to DJ live at the festival, as well as performing their own songs.

Being part of the project was offered to young people as part of a **'rewards-based system'** and being a residential school, the young people were not able to give their time on a volunteering basis. However, the school was keen to include the music sessions and the festival project as part of a **cross-curriculum offer** such as making posters in art and learning about the music business side through setting stage times and set lists. As well as curriculum links, the teachers tied the project into **learning about post-16 options** and the different pathways into music and young people were able to glean different perspectives on music as a career such as workshops and charity work.

Volunteering on this project was classed as **formal volunteering**, through regular music production workshops and **micro volunteering**, for those that supported the Takeover Festival set up. **Two teachers supported the project**, both with different roles. One supported the music delivery, recruiting young people and supporting them with the project. The second staff member supported in a logistical role: cross referencing EHCP targets and plans, checking cultural profiles and supporting in a pastoral approach.

On the day of the festival, the music area lit up the whole Department store space, as music filtered into every zone. There was reluctance and disbelief at the start from the young people that they could perform live, but many surpassed their expectations and surprised themselves. **Self-esteem** within the group was low and to be able DJ in public was a big achievement for the cohort. Young people also **gained confidence** in showing friends how to DJ at the Festival.



DepARTment Festival, March 2024. Image credit Lamar Francois

Cohort 7 outcomes and project-level learning:

- Having '**studio time**' was also a big buy-in for the young people, some of whom might not have had the confidence to take part in a project like this.
- The teachers were keen to give **young people** as much **ownership of the project** as possible. This included things like shopping trip to buy equipment and decorations for their festival stage.
- Because of the ownership young people had taken, on the day of the festival, staff felt more relaxed as **young people had planned** the set up and performances and knew what to get on with.
- The **teachers' support** with this project way key: supporting young people's self-esteem, checking-in on low levels of confidence, knowing young people's backgrounds and removing potential triggers to past trauma.

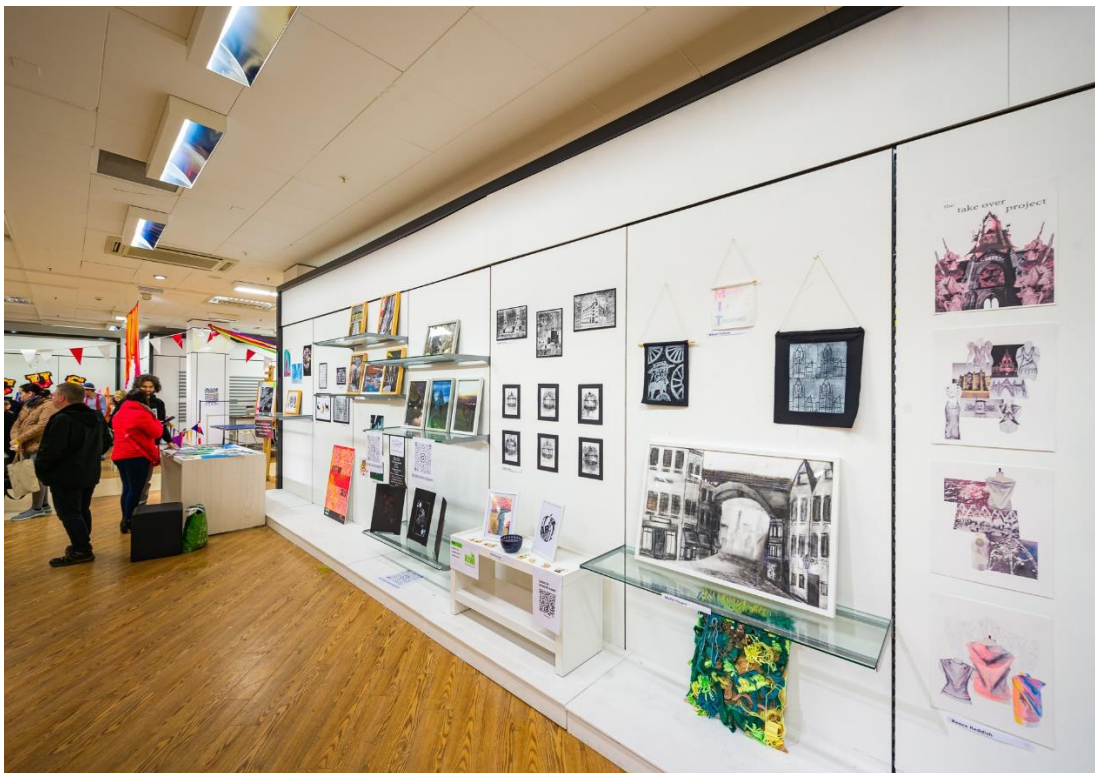
The final cohort, **cohort 8**, were a large group of 31 young people from **West Notts College**. The majority of volunteers were enrolled on arts courses at FE level and the College took positioning the volunteering aspect as numbers of hours students needed to complete towards their placements. Led by an **Artist** from **Nonsuch Studio**, the project started with an introduction to festivals session, looking specifically at what the young people wanted to create and how they wanted to contribute to the Takeover Festival. The approach of the

Artist was to share their skills and also give them support with organisational tasks and timelines. They had support to think about what their exhibition would be about and what kind of work they could make for it. Students often needed reminders, as they were balancing work across other FE courses.

The lead teacher created a brief with and for the students, tasking them with creating a specific piece of artwork for the festival. With the Artist they had a conversation about what goes into an exhibition and how to **curate an exhibition** of different pieces of artwork. The young volunteers created a range of artwork from **textile hangings to photography**. They worked hard to find a theme that linked the work all together and to learn about making a collective exhibition for the festival. Being students on FE arts courses, they already had high level arts skills, which became the focus of their projects rather than events management.

Young people also made **tote bags, keychains and small badges for sale**.

Volunteering tasks included exhibition set up and products sales on the day of the festival (**micro volunteering**), poster creation and graphic design for festival marketing (**digital volunteering**) and regular attendance at college showing a pattern of commitment for their art making (**formal volunteering**). The exhibition was hung by Nonsuch Studios and West Notts College Staff and the majority of volunteers had not been part of a public exhibition before. The majority had not attended a festival before, but all said they would again. The West Notts College staff team were great in supporting the project and ensuring that young people attended and committed.



DepARTment Festival, March 2024. Image credit Lamar Francois

Cohort 8 outcomes and project-level learning:

- Teachers were highly invested in making sure students were involved and the Takeover programme was pitched as an opportunity for arts-engaged or arts-interested young people to build up their placement hours.
- Working with an Artist was vitally important so that young people could develop cultural repertoires around exhibition curation and see beyond their own individual contributions.
- Young volunteers valued opportunities to develop commercial products as part of the programme.
- Opportunities were missed for this cohort to 'take the lead' more with their group contribution to the festival. Had there been more time with this cohort, they could have developed valuable leadership roles and experience.

Finding 2: Barriers to youth volunteering in Mansfield and Ashfield

The original intention of this project was to recruit a core group of young people as volunteers. However, after challenges with recruiting a new group of young people, the approach changed to work with existing youth groups through schools and colleges. This shift is symptomatic of wider changes in the youth sector over the last decade. With cuts to funding and provision of youth clubs and arts projects, the culture of volunteering and extra-curricular activities has fallen away and the current offer for young people is much reduced. No longer do young people 'expect' to take part in activities in their free time, more frequently opting for online connections with friends out of school time. This shift in young people's social patterns is also attributable to the post-covid world. With additional pressures of academic achievement and expectations of behaviour in school, young people can feel demotivated and disempowered by a society that does not offer them anything beyond the school walls. This context is mirrored in Mansfield and Ashfield with a (%) cut in youth services since (year) REF and a rise in young people reporting boredom and feelings of isolation. In addition, cuts to the arts activities means that involvement in the arts outside of school is dependent upon parental involvement and extra finance. **Expectations of and opportunities for youth volunteering are much reduced and the lack of youth sector infrastructure has obliterated young people's 'culture of volunteering'.**

Young people's lives and extra responsibilities are also a barrier to volunteering. With financial pressures on families and young people's awareness of the cost of living crisis, more expectations have been placed **upon young people to support their families through caring and part time working.** This reduces the time available for young people to take up volunteering roles,

without feeling conflicted with other responsibilities. Assuming that all young people can give their time to projects for free is problematic, as very few young people can 'start from ground zero' and enjoy the luxury of free time. A significant minority of young people in this programme, from the older age range, would go straight from college to work until the early evening. In order to adapt to these socio-economic conditions (number) of cohorts hosted the Takeover project within curriculum time.

These conditions also impact which young people can take part in arts programmes, and despite reducing barriers to access through taking the project to established groups, those who were already arts-involved both in-school and out-of-school were advantaged. This manifested in two ways: **parental involvement and support** i.e. giving lifts to young people and supporting at public events; and secondly, **young people's expectations of themselves** as creative (or not). For those young people who could not attend the public events and Takeover Festival at the weekends, this was due to part time work commitments and lack of transport to attend. The Project Manager reported that some young people embarrassed in front of others that they could be part of arts projects outside of school. Many young people wanted to be involved, but within their day-to-day lives, there was no space for it.

In addition, accessing group of young people through **diverse educational settings**, also **presented some barriers**. The educational settings ranged from an FE college, to performing arts specialism secondary schools, to post-16 provision for young people with physical and learning disabilities and a residential care home. These settings held various restrictions in terms of **enabling access to 'external' providers**, allowing young people to go on visits and Festival set up trips outside of the schools and **reduced opportunities for voluntary participation** within the project. Those young people being educated in care or within alternative provision, faced the most barriers to volunteering and participation in the project. For example, having Takeover sessions scheduled as mandatory within curriculum time of alternative provision, caused attrition for those young people who had not wanted to be part of the project. For young people with physical and learning disabilities, staff were inclined to **underestimate their capabilities** in terms of organisation skills and levels of responsibility. Working with schools presented **extra safeguarding issues** and some of those in residential care were not able to attend the Takeover Festival weekend due to pre-arranged 'contact time' with family members.

These extra consideration from across diverse education settings greatly **impacted upon the timescales** of the projects. Connecting with new partners, securing a designed member of staff and waiting for DBS clearance, meant months of delay for some projects to start. This impacted the amount of time young volunteers had to work with the creative aspects of their projects and for those groups working towards the festival output, what could be achieved by the young people was reduced. **Shortened or condensed project timings** that

reduced timescale, meant that **leadership opportunities and taking on roles within the volunteering were not achievable for every cohort**. For the Takeover Festival, in particular, groups would have preferred an earlier 'get-in' date to see the space, and improved logistics of (and funding for) 'getting young people' out to visit other arts events and getting all young people to Mansfield town centre.

The Project Leader and some of the Artists working with the different groups quickly realised that a standardised ten-week programme of event planning sessions was not going to be applicable to all groups of young people. All cohorts approached the project by learning a new art skills initially, such as printing, drama activities, lyrics writing and DJing. This was followed by more events-based and entrepreneurial focused sessions, where young people could take on individual roles and responsibilities towards their Takeover public event. However, Artists reflected that **adaptations had to be made on a weekly basis, depending upon the capacity of the cohort to work independently**, and young volunteers pre-existing arts skills. For example, with cohort 3 – Portland College- the programme on a week to week basis as a way of responding to young people's needs. The Artist reported the need to work and provide a clear framework for the group to work towards an event. This was based upon more collective input rather than allocating individual roles, with young volunteers still learning about different roles. There was some tension around the expected input of young volunteers within this setting on their Pirate themed family day, with supporting staff wanting to see more input and leadership from this group – for example, creating their own food and costumes and doing their own acting – instead of paying for external providers. In this regard, **the lack of scaffolding for young people with disabilities to engage in volunteering** was a barrier, and required a longer programme, with more financial resources to support this cohort to achieve leadership roles and responsibilities.

Another barrier to volunteering and participation in the project was lack of previous arts education experiences and in particular **limited cultural frame of reference for arts festivals**. The Project Manager noted that those cohorts that brought with them previous arts experiences or who were already 'high-skilled' in as arts activity through hobbies and arts groups, were more likely to take up the entrepreneurial skills on offer. Having experienced arts education prior to the project gave young people confidence in their existing abilities and a strong foundation for developing further arts skills and artistic vision. However, this experience was only relevant for 2 out the 8 cohorts, which meant **the majority of young people we surveyed were joining arts projects and volunteering for the first time**. Artists' feedback highlighted that young people lacked confidence at the start of projects, expressing a view that they were not creative or that the 'arts' was not for them. These young people needed more of an extended timeframe to be able to see the value in volunteering. Many young people across all cohorts had not experienced an arts festival first-hand before joining the programme. This was a key barrier to initial recruitment as the

majority of young volunteers had no prior reference point to what a festival was, or how their artistic work could be part of a festival. Therefore, Artists spent considerable time scaffolding opportunities for young people to understand the parameters of what they were working with, including understanding cultural languages and ways of behaving around artists. Young people were reluctant to join the project at first, which was badged as a 'Festival'. But now they have been part of one, and they have experienced it, young people reported that they would take part in one in future.

Finding 3: Enablers of young people's volunteering and retaining volunteers

Working with Artists was an important ingredient of the Takeover programme that impacted upon young people's experience and artistic quality. Artists were excellent facilitators not only in sharing their skills but also for supporting young volunteers to develop, and negotiate, ideas. Young people reported that they were motivated to complete the programme because of the enjoyment of art making, towards the end of the projects wanting to show others what they had created and their sense of pride in the final public output. Some cohorts worked within creative themes, and others were set briefs to develop creative work, but a key role of the Artists was to check-in on young volunteers on an individual basis to ensure that they could 'find their place' within the programme. For example, with the large cohorts (30 young people plus), Artists were skilled in carving out smaller groups within an overall vision, whereby each young person could feel like they had made a contribution. Working in smaller groups, also supported those who lacked confidence, to be able to become invested in their safe spaces of creativity.

The successes of working with Artists are attributable to the **informal education approaches** that the Takeover programme offered across the cohorts. In particular for groups that had never volunteered before, setting small achievable tasks, which maintained young volunteers' cultural interests and contributed to a larger scheme, such as the festival, was effective. Several Artists feedback that giving young people the space and time to develop their own ideas, raise their level of enthusiasm and build confidence was important. One Artist shared that they didn't like the idea of dictating a theme, as this felt like pressuring the young people into doing something, that they might not really don't want to do at that moment. By having conversations with the young volunteers and inviting them to give ideas, this avoids them feeling pushed into doing something and ensured they developed the ideas in the direction they wanted. Artists offered these **democratic ways of working**, whereby young volunteers could develop their own interests and **sense of ownership** in the projects, which worked well to retain young people on the programme. Teachers reflected that giving the young people ownership of the project, giving them specific roles and jobs, made the supporting adult roles much easier. It also

stopped young people dropping out from the project as they had designed specifically what they wanted to do. Young people also shared their positive experiences of volunteering with peers, by word of mouth', which encouraged others to put themselves forward for future projects.

As well as the pedagogical approach of Artists, **school teachers and environments** were key enablers of young people's volunteering. Within the diverse educational settings, having a **'gatekeeper'** was vital and many Teachers involved in the programme, went 'above and beyond' their regular teaching duties to support young people to volunteer. Ways that Teachers facilitated the projects were through communicating with young people, ensuring volunteers stayed engaged and showing enthusiasm for the creative work that young people produced. Having a **supportive Teacher** to work with the Artist really made a difference to young people's engagement. Arts (and other) Teachers who are overwhelming supportive their students' extra-curricular activities, perform the role of **"arts broker"** (TALE project), whereby they broker relationships with external arts providers to bring new experiences to their students. The strong relationships between young people and teacher, built trust in the process of working with a new project and removed young people's confidence barriers to volunteering. However, not all Teachers involved in supporting cohorts were given extra time to be part of the programme, which became a barrier for some groups.

In addition, the kinds of environments that the schools created to support the projects were also important. **Schools and colleges that really valued nurturing creativity** in their young people, saw the Takeover project as **an opportunity to move beyond what is offered in the curriculum**. Some of the educational settings involved expressed a sense of responsibility for nurturing young people's creativity and enabling them to be part of a wider programme. Schools that took this approach were more inclined to link the project into school curriculum, college placements or other outcomes, whereby Takeover could be more highly valued within the institution. As explored earlier in this report, not all settings were able to offer volunteering time out-of-school hours and **the most effective enabler of young people's volunteering was to move the programme, either partially or wholly, within school time**. The most successful project scaffolded learning within school time and then supported young volunteers to complete tasks outside of this time in the build up to the festival.

For those educational setting that did scaffold young volunteers learning experiences of working towards a public event or the Takeover Festival, we have described this as **'festival pedagogy'**. Through this pedagogical model Artists and Teachers work together to develop **pre- and post- learning opportunities** for groups of young people. These ranges from allocating roles and responsibilities related to the festival to learning about post-16 careers in the arts. As explored above, having the opportunity to develop entrepreneurial ways of working with the arts, that enabled young people to **develop commercial products and**

income were highly valued. Having the Takeover Festival as a central point for other **curriculum links**, such as designing posters, marketing campaigns, stage management and set lists, maximised opportunities for learning. This was an important consideration for those attending alternative provision, who may have missed out on a large proportion of mainstream education. Learning about the arts through 'festival pedagogy' enabled diverse groups of young people to create art in small groups and then come together to celebrate their achievements as a whole, under the umbrella of an arts festival.

Finding 4: How the Takeover programme better supported opportunities for volunteering

The Takeover programme offered the following opportunities for better supporting young people's volunteering in Mansfield and Ashfield:

- Volunteers would not have had the opportunity to work creatively and entrepreneurially with the skills they already had in a real-life context without this project.
- Being involved in events management and entrepreneurial activities enabled young people to understand how they might work in future in the creative industries.
- Having the focus on public-facing events built young people's experience in working with members of the public, setting up displays and managing performances developed their confidence and capabilities in these aspects.
- Being able to purchase materials and create saleable stock, gave the volunteers the opportunity to continue this work after the shop had finished.
- Hosting and being involved in organising arts-based activities and events developed a 'culture of volunteering' in settings that had not hosted public events before.
- Artists were able to signpost future arts volunteering opportunities, such as the Full Shebang.
- The programme offered a 'tip-toe' into volunteering, whereby taking an informal education approach, young people were able to engage in smaller tasks, without the pressure of a larger-scale volunteering commitment.
- Because of the lived experience of being part of a festival, young volunteers would be more willing to take up future opportunities like this.
- For the Wings School Notts and Outward Academy cohorts, the festival was the first they had performed live in public.
- The festival became a catalyst for the young people's learning, as well as a springboard to future activities. For example, one young person from cohort 7 was able to build upon their existing musical abilities and opt to study music at post-16.

Finding 5: Reflections on partnership working and organisational learning for Captivate

The initial learning and development phase of the programme, which struggled to recruit a new group of core volunteers, was superseded by **a change in approach** which saw Captivate work with educational settings as partners. **Building these new partnerships took time**, but the benefits of working with pre-existing groups, was that young people were better supported to volunteers and felt comfortable with existing relationships with Teachers. As the first 'delivery' project for Captivate, Takeover worked with different partners in the LSEP (local schools education partnership) to promote opportunities for young people's volunteering through the arts.

The Takeover programme was taken up by 8 diverse groups of young people, working with 6 educational settings and new Artist partners. The new partners included Inspire Learning, Portland College, Outwood Academy, West Notts college, Wings School Notts, Caroline Rowland, Sian Watson, Noise Academy and Dizzy Ink. The time taken to build these new partnerships and negotiate access to the differing educational settings, reduced time available for young people to volunteer and experience working with the arts. **Gatekeepers were key to the success of these new partnerships**, and relationships have been forged which can now be built upon. Levels of engagement from the cohorts varied and this was accompanied by the differing levels of support for the programme that the schools and colleges offered.

This project has demonstrated that the buy-in and co-operation of School Staff is vital. This could be in terms of promoting volunteering through the project, **supporting young people to research and develop ideas outside of the scheduled session times** and being open minded to new arts events and activities that the setting may not have experienced before. Captivate partners were able to support new groups of young people towards developing new arts skills and experiences in events management. FirstArt, for example, merged an existing project with Portland College and match funded one of the public events. As a result, FirstArt now have a bespoke programme designed for working towards an event: presentations on marketing, on programming, with interactive elements, that they can draw upon in future. Artists were also able to develop new relationships with educational settings, which can be re-visited for future creative work with young people.

Teacher relationships and partnerships with Captivate were further strengthened as schools created a supportive environment for the Takeover programme, which better facilitated the recruitment and engagement of young volunteers. Where schools already had existing relationships with Artists, new practitioners were introduced to add value to existing provision, for example Wings School Notts has got the equipment to deliver a music technology

curriculum, but they have no dedicated teacher. So the project has filled that gap. Teachers and wider school staff were great in supporting the project and ensuring that young people attended and were committed. For example, this was the first time that Nonsuch Studios worked in partnership with West Notts College and the strong connections made with teachers and the positive experience of working in partnership can now be built upon for future projects.

Recommendations to better support young people's volunteering and arts engagement

Maximise 'Festival Pedagogy' (pre- and post- festival learning):

- Young people reported that the idea of 'Takeover' was strong, and that they felt empowered by taking over disused public spaces. To maximise this opportunity in future, offer a longer programme of arts skills development through creative activities and the creation of artistic products.
- Artists reported that the festival model worked well, whereby an Artist was placed with an existing group of young people. This worked well to reduce the time needed to build relationships within a new group. But Artists also expressed that if they had had longer time with their cohorts, they could have supported young people to develop arts leadership roles.
- Young people and Artists would have liked more opportunities to get together post-Festival and reflect upon the successes. A series of debriefing sessions would have been useful to signpost young volunteers to future opportunities.

Allow extra time for new partnership working:

- Many educational providers, who were new to working with Captivate reported on delays in the creative programme due to gatekeeping or safeguarding issues. These impacted the amount of time young people had to volunteer with Takeover.
- Working with mainly new partners, took more time than anticipated to set up new partnerships and gain access to schools. Feedback suggested that having a longer time for each of the cohorts would have enabled a more transformational experience.
- Taking time to understand where Takeover would fit (and be valued) within school/college curriculum was important – such as 'work experience', exhibition curation, public engagement. This also facilitated stronger support from Teachers, as they could make links to young people's learning and often accredited outputs.

Better scaffolding for the volunteering experience:

- To reduce barriers to volunteering or arts participation, offer a bursary for young people to be involved. These cohorts faced financial and family pressures which were barriers to participation out of school time. Financial incentives could be offered in future, which could include funding given to develop cultural assets of brands.
- Informal education approaches of Artists and small group 'task-based' work supported young people to feel a sense of ownership of their projects. This helped to reduced young volunteers' 'dropping-out' and encouraged young people's creative agency.

- Several Artists reported that bigger budgets would have helped to better support the young volunteers to enable access to more specialized equipment such as recording studios and printing presses. This would raise the quality of young people's artwork so work can be sold commercially.

**Frances Howard
Rich Pickford**

June 2024

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