



# Year in Review 2025-26

Artswork empowers young people through creativity to build a better future for themselves and their communities.

Our programmes help young people to use their voices to shape the world. Through developing skills, building confidence, and gaining experience, young people are supported to take the lead and take their next steps - wherever their future path may lead.

We also support organisations and individuals through our professional development programme using our Think, Learn, Do approach, offering training in areas such as safeguarding, project management, creative wellbeing and youth leadership.

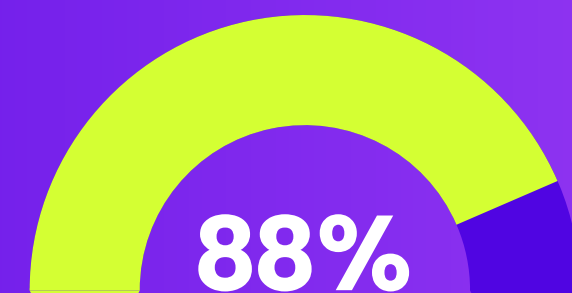
Income from our training is reinvested into our charitable work, amplifying youth voice, growing leadership and creating lasting community impact.



We have worked with

**9,407**

children and young people



of young people we have worked with across all our programmes felt their confidence has improved



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



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**UK Government**

## Our New Patron: HRH Princess Eugenie

This year we were delighted to welcome Her Royal Highness Princess Eugenie as our first Patron. With her support, we aim to expand our reach and deepen our impact across the UK.

Princess Eugenie brings a deep and personal commitment to the arts and youth empowerment, aligning perfectly with the Artswork mission – to unlock the potential of young people through creative opportunities. As a passionate advocate for artistic expression, sustainability, and social impact, Princess Eugenie’s patronage marks a significant milestone in our journey to support young people to be the next generation of creative and cultural leaders.



Speaking on her new role, Princess Eugenie said:

“I think empowerment is such a beautiful word, and so working alongside Artswork to empower young people is something I feel really aligned on. I hope more people will learn about Artswork, and I hope it will create something amazing for the future.”



## Our Youth Board

What have our youth board been up to this year? The Youth Board’s main focus this year was on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), how they can understand their community, and use their voice to generate positive change in their local areas. They created an E-Zine about EDI in response to discussions they had at their last in-person away day.

They have also continued to provide their unique, diverse insights into our work, and advocate for youth-led change.



## Young Consultants

In early 2026 we launched our Young Consultants programme, offering businesses unique, authentic perspectives from bright young minds. Our young consultants are all alumni of our other programmes who have had further targeted training in client-focused consulting and change-agent skills, supported by a chartered management consultant. This is a paid opportunity for the young consultants, whilst also generating income to support our work.



## Artswork Rising

This year, we have started an alumni network on LinkedIn for young people who have taken part in our programmes. We use the group to share opportunities at Artswork, and from our peers & partners.

**9,448**

young people engaged with  
Choices from 2023-2026



## Choices Violence Reduction Programme

An innovative programme commissioned by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Violence Reduction Unit and delivered in partnership with BearFace Theatre, Choices used creativity to help young people navigate the challenges they were facing in their lives, and to help adults in supporting this.

Using a range of materials, developed using the voices of young people with lived experience of violence, Choices took a trauma-informed approach to examine the risks and impact of knife crime and the dangers of exploitation and other violence. It focused on developed critical decision-making skills and understanding healthy relationships.

Choices ran from September 2023 to March 2026, engaging with 104 schools and nearly 9,448 pupils aged 10-12, as well as school staff.

Playland Creative Hub, opened in November 2025, is a new joint venture between Artswork and Portsmouth Creates. In the heart of Portsmouth, the hub is designed to empower young people, grow the city's creative economy and make the arts accessible for everyone. Downstairs at the hub is Playland:

## Playland

A new youth-led creative venue designed and run by under 30's for under 30's, with support from us at Artswork. It's a space to experiment, collaborate and imagine new ideas – a safe space to influence what happens, try out creative projects, and build the confidence and skills to shape their own futures. Through hands-on experience and creative exploration, Playland helps 16–30-year-olds to develop the tools and networks they need to thrive in the creative industries and beyond.

The Playland project has emerged from previous conversations with local young people, who expressed that there was a lack of spaces where they felt real safety and belonging.

In it's first year, the space, formerly an abandoned arcade, has been transformed by the young people involved. Some of the things we've done and held this year are: exhibitions/gigs, workshops for wellbeing and skills development, plus paid opportunities for young creatives. We've also built relationships with local organisations and generated income through space hire.



**We are delighted that Playland has secured £300,000 funding from the National Lottery to expand and continue to support young creatives in the city to thrive.**

"Playland has become this incredible space where inspiring, creative people come together to make something magical. To me, Playland is the people - everyone is equal, supported and encouraged to grow. I'm so grateful for the friendships and opportunities it's given me. I wouldn't be who I am today without Playland."

– Libby, Playland Contributor



## Your Stories

Your Stories was a fully youth-led project delivered in partnership with In Focus. The group responded to and took inspiration from the work of Jane Austen to celebrate her 250<sup>th</sup> birthday year, delivering a series of free workshops where participants use a range of creative methods to tell their stories, which resulted in an exhibition of the artwork and a 'birthday party' for Jane.

## Young Cultural Changemakers

**47,752**

people in communities across the south-east of England have engaged with our youth-led changemaking work this year



**5,428**

young people made active change in their communities through consultations and creative commissions

Now in our third year of the programme, we have been working in Dover, the Arun District, The Isle of Wight, Gosport, Slough, and the Rushmoor area with over 5,428 young people to support them to make change in their communities through creativity.

Starting with conversations with young people that are facilitated through creative activity, we then work with groups to develop and deliver projects with youth voice at their core.

Our projects engage young people underserved by cultural provision, focusing on themes such as mental wellbeing, improving communities & the environment.

"This project shows what can be achieved when we truly listen to children and act on what they tell us."  
– Councillor Karen Lucioni, Chair of the Environment and Community Protection Committee, Isle of Wight Council



The young changemakers have chosen many creative ways to get their voices heard far and wide, including:

- Photography
- Digital & analogue filmmaking
- Mapmaking & wayfinding
- 3D installations
- Murals
- Performance art
- Podcasting
- Lantern making
- Putting on events & immersive experiences

Young people have communicated their thoughts and feelings to us on topics such as anti- social behaviour and climate change, as well as insights from their lived experiences of being in foster care, in military families, and more.

85

young people improved their career prospects through our in-depth work or practice-based support via:

## RISE

RISE provided £500 grants to 15 young creatives aged 11 to 30 to develop their creative practice, as well as providing mentoring and networking opportunities.

**100% reported positive impacts on their creative practice and 93% said it had improved their confidence and motivation.**

Creative practices ranged from poetry to dance, and the work created reached out to a wide audience - being shown at festivals and community events!

15

RISE bursaries awarded

“Artwork didn’t just give me money and walk away - they checked in, offered advice, and connected me with people in my industry. That’s made all the difference.”

– Caitlin, filmmaker and writer

## Pre-employment creative skills programmes

46 young people took part in our Portsmouth & Havant creative skills programmes - pre-employment training schemes that help young people develop essential life skills, build confidence, and discover new possibilities for their future through creativity. The programmes are for young people aged 16-24 who are care experienced or living in challenging circumstances.

This year, **100% of participants demonstrated increased confidence, improved relationship building, and increased skill levels, as well as 100% of participants reporting that they felt more positive towards education, employment, and training.** Additionally, 31 Arts Awards were achieved, and 20 Digital Badges were awarded.



“I was really nervous and scared before starting the programme, but it’s really helped me. I’ve developed a much better routine, it’s been really nice to have things to get out of bed for and people to show up for. I would say my confidence and mental health have improved.”

100%

reported feeling more positive about education, training, and employment

## Breakthrough

Breakthrough is an intensive 6-month work placement programme that offers young people entry level work in the creative industries as well as wrap-around training, support & mentoring. Within the 20 young trainees on the programme it’s also created a community of peers.

Breakthrough aims to be a true entry level opportunity for young people to take their first steps in their careers, with placements in creative & cultural organisations offering a range of different roles. Despite a challenging job market, by the end of the programme 60% have already secured further education or employment, with **93% of respondents feeling better equipped to search for, find, and gain employment in the creative & cultural industries. 100% of respondents reported an increase in confidence and skills upon finishing the programme.**

19 organisations across the south-east took part, with 90% of employers reporting measurable benefits from having a Breakthrough placement, and 90% reporting increased confidence in employing a diverse young workforce.

The insight, commitment, and professionalism of the young people involved has impressed all of us here at Artwork, and some have undertaken additional work as paid social media Ambassadors, and training through our Young Consultants programme.



## Apprenticeships

This year 4 young people completed Level 3 Apprenticeships with us. They undertook 18-months of intensive work-based learning and are now qualified events assistants.

This was our last year delivering Apprenticeships - we have loved offering this over the many years they have been running, but are now focusing our efforts on exploring new ways to support young people to get into creative careers they love.



“I genuinely feel like it's changed the path of my life going forward, I have no idea where I'd be without it, it's been the perfect start to a creative career and I really couldn't have asked for anything more. I want this opportunity for more young people in my position, so that everyone has a chance to discover more about themselves and gain confidence like I've been able to. It's an invaluable opportunity in the working world right now!”

– Breakthrough Programme Participant

“The apprenticeship with Artwork has helped me massively both in my professional and personal life - giving me opportunities I never thought I would get.”

Artswork Professional Development supports people across the creative, cultural, and heritage sector to build safer, more inclusive, and more effective practice. We deliver facilitator-led online training, self-paced online courses, and bespoke in-house training with organisations. This year we have delivered training to 1,334 learners, with brilliant results and feedback.

**1,334**

people undertook learning with us this year

“The best safeguarding training I have had so far! The excellent trainer was really engaging and also adapted the content to suit all of the participants needs and work scenarios. A really detailed and clear course that has given me so much more than foundational knowledge.”

– Course Participant, facilitator led Essential Safeguarding

Through the range of learning experiences we offer, people have built confidence to:

- recognise and respond to safeguarding concerns
- manage risk more effectively
- lead projects and teams
- create more inclusive environments
- measure and evaluate impact
- support wellbeing and trauma-aware practice
- communicate more effectively
- develop safer creative spaces

## In-house training

This year, we delivered 28 bespoke learning sessions for organisations across the creative, cultural and heritage sectors, including V&A, Somerset House, and English National Opera.

“Informative and educational. A really useful refresher exercise to clarify where we do well and where we would benefit from more formalised project planning processes. This learning will have a positive influence on my team moving forwards.”

– Course Participant, Project Management for the Arts



**91%**  
of respondents reported increased confidence after completing an Artswork Professional Development course

## Live online training

We delivered 56 facilitator-led online training sessions to 669 learners, and developed and delivered brand new courses including:

- Mentoring Young People
- Managing People & Behaviour Dynamics
- Theory of Change Models
- Risk Assessments in Creative & Cultural Settings

## Self-paced learning

We have continued to develop and refresh our eLearning offer, using new course-building software to create more interactive, engaging and accessible self-paced learning experiences. We also refreshed our Safeguarding courses, and introduced several new self-paced courses options including:

### Creating Wellbeing Aware Environments

Self-Paced

Learning how to build environments that actively support physical, emotional, mental, and social wellbeing.

### Recognising and Responding to Sexual Harassment

Self-Paced

Exploring how to recognise sexual harassment, understand its impact, and respond appropriately using clear, legally informed guidance.

### Exploring Youth Voice: An Introduction

Self-Paced

Discovering how to build more meaningful relationships with young people, and embed their voices in your planning and practice in a way that’s thoughtful, collaborative, and impactful.



“A very interesting course, lots of direction to build a robust evaluation framework from. This course has helped me be more confident in my practice and I look forward to championing the ideas to our department and implementing as much as I can get buy-in for!”

– Course Participant, Measuring Impact & Evaluation in the Creative, Cultural & Heritage Sectors