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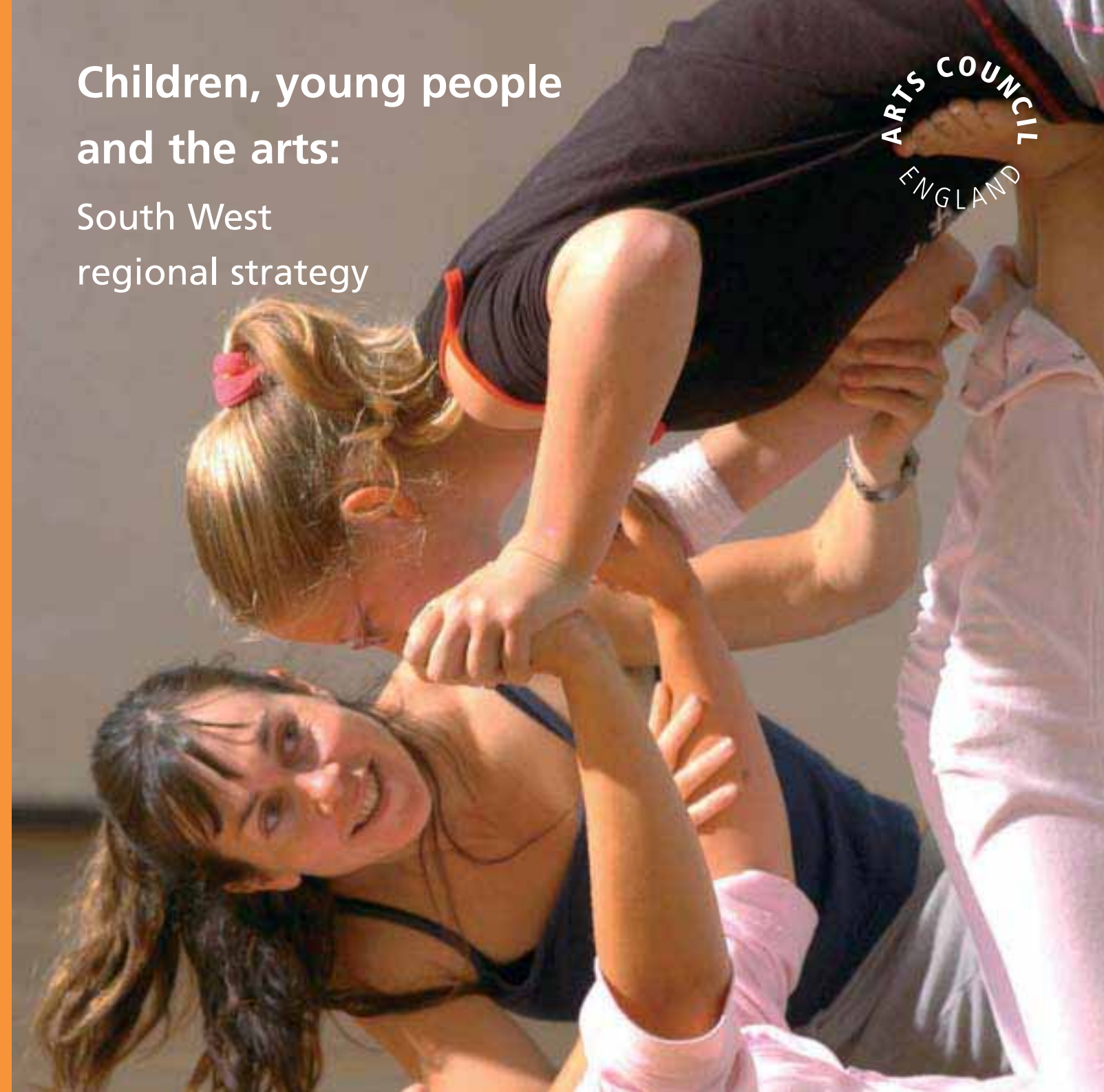
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Children, young people and the arts:

South West regional strategy

ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND



Arts Council England is the national development agency for the arts in England. Between 2005 and 2008 we are investing £1.7 billion of public funds from Government and the National Lottery. This is the bedrock of support for the arts in England.

Our vision is to promote the arts at the heart of national life, reflecting England's rich and diverse cultural identity.

We believe that the arts have the power to transform lives and communities, and to create opportunities for people throughout the country.

In our manifesto *Ambitions for the arts 2003–2006* we set out to:

- prioritise individual artists
- work with funded organisations to help them thrive rather than just survive
- place cultural diversity at the heart of our work
- prioritise young people and Creative Partnerships
- maximise growth in the arts

Contents

Arts Council England, South West	3
Our national aims for children and young people	6
Our regional priorities for children and young people	8
Regularly funded organisations and initiatives in the region	12
Collaboration	15
How to work with us	16

Cover image: Students from Dawlish Community College, Devon worked with dancer Niki McCretton during their activity week. Niki is part of Dance South West's Associate Artists scheme that aims to take dance into schools and communities. The school used this event to give students the opportunity to take part in dance, which is not offered as part of the normal timetable. Dance South West is one of our regularly funded organisations.

Photo: Chris Saville/Apex



Arts Council England, South West

'The South West is home to an incredible diversity of assets and talents: from artists, cultural organisations and creative individuals and groups. Together these present young people and children with a wealth of opportunities for participation and learning, to develop their confidence and to shape their futures. Arts Council England, South West is working in partnership with colleagues from across the cultural sector, including young people, to maximise these opportunities and to encourage emerging talent for the future.'

Professor Alan Livingston
Chair, Arts Council England, South West

Children from Hillesley Church of England Primary School in Wotton-under-Edge worked with artists Sarah Young and Advanced Skills Teacher Maggie Rebbeck on the design and painting of their *Window of the World*. One of their other designs was used for Gloucestershire Local Education Authority's Christmas cards. The school received an Artsmark Silver in 2005 in recognition of its commitment to the arts.

Photo: Kevin Clifford/First Stop Photography

The South West is England's largest and most rural region, with the lowest population density in the country. It is a region of contrasts: from the challenges of infrastructure, transportation and communication to the opportunities presented by vibrant creative industries, dynamic artistic practice and innovative cultural services.

Arts Council England, South West has developed a range of programmes to support arts and creativity inside and outside of schools, to consult with young people and to test new ways of working.

In 2005, 142 schools in the South West achieved Artsmark status, stimulating interest and achievement across the spectrum of arts practice. In Bristol, Cornwall, Forest of Dean and Plymouth, Creative Partnerships has offered new ways of learning through creative activity. It will also act as the regional agency for networking, training and advocacy in support of the Arts Council's young people's Arts Award.

The South West is one of three regions that are home to a Cultural Hub. This three-year investment (2005–08) in Bournemouth and Poole brings together schools, regularly funded organisations, archives, museums, libraries and local education authorities (LEAs). It will lead to more sustained working relationships that will enable young people, teachers, artists, cultural services and local authorities to plan learning and participation programmes together. A genuine dialogue is underway, where activity shaped by and created for young people, in a range of locations, is building trust and confidence.

We have established a network of arts education partnerships covering all local authority areas in the region. These respond to local needs, help to form links between artists and LEAs and, increasingly, provide strategic links to other services. Core funding from Arts Council England has proved invaluable in ensuring stability and sustained activity.

Our national aims for children and young people

The aims of Arts Council England for children and young people up to 2008 are:

- to foster a world-leading arts infrastructure alongside other cultural organisations that supports and values the cultural expression of children and young people and increases their opportunities to engage in activities relevant to their needs and interests
- to ensure the arts and creativity have a place within wider Government and other policy agendas that have an impact on children and young people
- to see wide social recognition of the value and transformational power of the arts and creativity, particularly in relation to children and young people

Arts Council England will achieve a high quality of creative arts and cultural engagement for all children and young people by:

- ensuring that we hear the views of children and young people, engage them in decisions that affect them and broaden the range and appeal of our 'offer' so that it is relevant
- identifying areas of need and targeting our resources strategically
- developing the skills, capacity and knowledge within our sector
- using our programmes and initiatives strategically
- working with our partner institutions to maximise the contribution of the arts to children and young people
- advocating for the arts through monitoring, evaluating and sharing high-quality work

Our regional priorities for children and young people

The Children Act 2004 sets out a national requirement for local providers to build their programmes around the needs of children and young people. This, and the introduction of Local Area Agreements, provide a framework for our work.

We will be working with the Government's new framework for services set out in *Every Child Matters* and *Youth Matters*. We believe that the arts can contribute to achieving the five outcomes outlined in *Every Child Matters*: being healthy, staying safe, making a positive contribution, achieving economic well-being and enjoying and achieving.

Over the next few years our work will include:

- developing relationships with local authority Children's Trusts. We have initiated and are leading on a pilot programme with Devon, a pathfinder Children's Trust area, in partnership with Devon's Children's Services, the county's Spatial Planning Unit and South West Museums Libraries & Archives Council (SWMLAC)
- providing information, advice and guidance – through work with the formal and informal learning sectors – to help young people engage in arts and cultural activities and to make informed choices about learning and careers
- reviewing arts education partnerships to consider the possibilities for developing and strengthening community learning opportunities. This will develop arts and cultural services that are well positioned to offer activities for children and young people
- developing the Regional Youth Arts Network (RYAN), which has the potential to provide a strategic context for local arts activity. It can draw together arts specialists and expertise from the youth sector and local government. Linking with existing consultation frameworks, RYAN can provide a route for young people to shape service provision and develop the Arts Council's strategy for young people at risk of offending or anti-social behaviour

We will also seek to:

- work with local authorities to inform the Government's proposals set out in *Youth Matters* for opportunity cards and an opportunity fund to be spent on local projects that young people want
- contribute to the development of Government proposals for £40 million capital funding over two years from April 2006 to enable local authorities to develop new approaches to youth facilities
- build on the work of the Russell Commission to extend opportunities for all young people to make a contribution to their communities

Queens Park Infant School in Bournemouth was awarded Artsmark Gold in 2005, recognising its commitment to making the arts central to the learning culture of the school. Here, pupils are creating clay models for use in storytelling workshops, aiming to develop speaking and listening skills. Photo: Kevin Clifford/First Stop Photography



Regularly funded organisations and initiatives in the region

Arts Council England's regularly funded organisations provide a diverse range of opportunities for young people and children to engage and develop, using art as a platform. We want to strengthen this infrastructure by promoting new ways of working with young people, audience development and increased involvement in local communities.

Organisational change may be necessary to ensure that services remain responsive, relevant, innovative and challenging. We will work with colleagues in our regularly funded organisations to ensure that artistic quality is matched with user need.

We will encourage the use of strategic funding and Grants for the arts, where possible, to ensure that sustainable communities, young people and widening participation are developed.

We will undertake an audit of arts activity with, and for, young people at risk of offending or anti-social behaviour. This will inform the development of a regional action plan to promote and strengthen work and identity sustainable partnerships for the future.

With Creative Partnerships, we are developing a model of activity and support to ensure a legacy beyond the current Creative Partnership funding in the region. This model includes a long-term strategy as well as short-term activity in non-Creative Partnership areas with Department for Education and Skills funding and South West Screen partner funding.

We have engaged and supported the Government Office consultation on *Youth Matters* with colleagues in Connexions and local authority youth services. In partnership with the Reading Agency, SWMLAC and TR2, we have also organised sessions with young people as advisers to shape our future direction.



Collaboration

Close working relationships with Government Office South West, the Regional Development Agency and Culture South West mean that we are able to join activity together when developing strategies on the ground. The links we are developing with local authorities will encourage partnership working across the cultural sector.

Emerging areas of work include strengthening relationships developing from the Bournemouth and Poole Cultural Hub, with a blend of direct activity and strategic change.

Our work with partners to ensure a legacy from Creative Partnerships involves consolidating activity in areas of need, being responsive to the challenges of formal and informal learning and keeping young people at the heart of our thinking.

Creative Factory brings together over 50 teenagers with a range of backgrounds and musical experience, whose passions range from violin, drumming and guitar to dj-ing, singing and sax. The young people form a ground-breaking band where any style of music goes, creating their own pieces ready for gigs and CD recordings. Creative Factory has been developed by the Bath Festivals Trust, one of our regularly funded organisations, in partnership with the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and the Wiltshire Music Centre.

Photo: Theo Moye/Apex

How to work with us

This document gives a summary of where we are and what we intend to do.

We have witnessed the impact that arts and culture have on the lives of young people and children. We want to ensure that the arts play as full a part as possible in the changing landscape and that young people's voices are heard in the shaping of future services.

Aspirations can only become a reality through partnership. If you would like to contact us about our future plans or want to work with us on this agenda, get in touch using the contact details below.

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You can also visit the Arts Council website for more information about development programmes:

www.artscouncil.org.uk