New Writing in Theatre 2003–2008

An assessment of new writing within smaller scale theatre in England.

Commissioned by Arts Council England from Emma Dunton, Roger Nelson & Hetty Shand

July 2009
# Contents

1  Introduction & Objectives  
   1.1  Introduction  
   1.2  Objectives  
   1.3  Context  

2  Methodology  

3  The Report  
   3.1  Definition of New Writing and Does It Matter?  
   3.2  Who are the writers and is this changing?  
   3.3  Organisations & Writers  
   3.4  Venues & Audiences  
   3.5  Writing for Younger Audiences  
   3.6  Arts Council Funding and Other Strategic Support  

4  Conclusions and Recommendations  

5  Case Studies  
   5.1  Graeae  
   5.2  Contact  
   5.3  Pentabus Theatre  
   5.4  HighTide Festival  

6  Sources & Constituency  

Appendix 1: E-survey
1 Introduction & Objectives

1.1 Introduction

New writing in theatre at a grassroots level appears to have undergone a period of renaissance over the past six years. Additional funding has enabled a wider variety of new writing/new work to take place in an extraordinary mix of venues across the country. A new more diverse generation of voices is emerging into a culture of experimentation and change.

Throughout the period of discussion leading to this report, debate was all about the work and how it could improve and develop. Although there were concerns about the future, the period since 2003 was mostly viewed as one of growth, inspiration and diversification - in all senses of the word.

This report focuses on the state of play of new writing within smaller Arts Council – funded companies¹ in order to assess what impact the funding increase has had on the theatre industry at grassroots level since 2003. Through a series of interviews and discussions, with a representative sample of organisations and practitioners, this study has aimed to gauge opinion across a range of key issues. Where there are perceived threats or structural weaknesses, or opportunities identified that are still unexplored, it makes recommendations for future action to help ensure the continued health of this vital part of the theatre ecology.

There are undoubtedly many exciting developments not included in this report – it does not claim to be a comprehensive survey. However, by engaging closely with a cross-section of emerging practice, it is hoped that the report will give insight into new developments and patterns in new writing, productions and audiences.

1.2 Objectives

The core objectives of this report are to assess the industry perceptions of the following areas:

- Where have the new writers been emerging from and are they coming from other artforms, different directions, more diverse backgrounds?
- How is this affecting what is written, what is being produced, for which audiences, and where it is performed?
- What is the perceived state of new writing at this level in England today?

¹ The companies and other organisations included are either regularly funded by Arts Council England or recipients of Grants for the arts awards in relation to new writing,
What conclusions can be drawn, and what recommendations can be made for the direction of future policy?

1.2.1 Background

This assessment was commissioned by the Theatre section of Arts Council England’s Arts Strategy department, as part of the wider Theatre Assessment being undertaken in 2008-09.

The Theatre Assessment aimed “to identify the impact of the increased £25m additional funding secured [under the Theatre Review, 2003], and to provide... an assessment of the effectiveness of that additional investment into the theatre sector.”

1.2.2 The Consultants

In response to the tenders received in late 2008, The Arts Council elected to split the New Writing Assessment between two teams of consultants:

a) The British Theatre Consortium (BTC), led by Dan Rebellato and David Edgar were allocated a constituency of Regularly Funded Organisations (RFOs), most of whom were building-based theatre companies, as well as the commercial sector.

b) Emma Dunton, Roger Nelson and Hetty Shand, who are the authors of this report. Their constituency is described below.

1.2.3 The Constituency

- Both teams of consultants engaged directly with playwrights and other writers working in theatre, regardless of whether or not they had been in receipt of direct Arts Council funding.

- 89 organisations in receipt of regular funding from Arts Council England. This group primarily consisted of smaller theatre companies working outside theatre buildings.

- Recipients of Grants for the arts awards relating to new writing. Selecting only those identifying as arts organisations (ie excluding those applying as individuals), and receiving three or more awards over the period of study for projects scoring at least 50% new writing, this resulted in a group of 48 organisations.

- A number of second tier organisations were also invited to participate, eg some of the regional writing networks, the Independent Theatre Council.

- Key individuals, such as freelance directors, producers, literary managers and agents.

Invitations to participate sent to all organisations defined above were addressed to a broad range of individual practitioners, including artistic directors, producers, writer-directors and literary managers.
1.2.4 The Brief

The consultants were required to build on an initial Arts Council brief, and early on in the process, agreement was reached with the Arts Council that this study would take a mainly qualitative approach. This decision was in large part due to the diverse constituency covered and the resultant scale of the task required to conduct a useful quantitative survey. It was agreed that a qualitative approach could usefully explore developments in attitudes and practice at a grass roots and experimental level, where baseline statistical data remain scarce, particularly in relation to Grants for the arts activity.

It was requested that the study should include reference to funding mechanisms, work for children and young people and diversity issues with regard to artists, organisations and audiences, identifying shifts over the period of study and helping to inform the development of future Arts Council policy. Case studies would demonstrate new ways of working and commissioning.

1.3 Context

1.3.1 Timeline of preceding reports, reviews and strategies

Many of the issues and arguments aired during the course of this research have been around in some form for a very long time. Others are newer concerns relating to contemporary developments. In order to help place them all in context, the consultants looked at the conclusions and recommendations from relevant reports, reviews and strategies published over the past decade:

- **1999:** Theatre Writing Strategy published.
- **2000:** Theatre Policy prioritised new writing and allocated specific funds
- **2002:** Eclipse Report focused attention on the urgency of tackling racism in theatre and the wider diversity agenda, including engagement with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) artists and audiences
- **2003:** Theatre Review led to injection of £25m additional funding for theatre in England. Coincided with the introduction of Grants for the arts, streamlining over 150 funding schemes in one programme, and establishing new opportunities for grants to individuals.
- **2003:** Theatre Writing Strategy. The most recent Arts Council strategy for the support of new writing. Recommendations in seven areas: training and development, writing for larger stages, literary departments, diversity, new writing theatres, playwrights, organisations and audience development.
- **2005:** Parliamentary Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport. Report references new writing in relation to the need to increase diversity of talent and output.
- **2007:** Theatre Policy. A refreshed version of the 2000 policy, in which new work was referenced, as opposed to new writing
• **2008: McMaster Review: Supporting excellence in the arts - from measurement to judgement.** Recommendations include references to excellence, and encouragement of innovation and risk-taking. Insists on diversity at the core.

• **2008: Report on the Rural Touring & Cultural Diversity Initiative** recommended using Writers’ Lab project to establish a sustainable approach to developing relationships with BAME writers interested in rural touring by organising a regular networking event to bring together BAME writers, directors and companies.

• **2008/09: Arts Council England Theatre Assessment** commissioned to review the impact of the Theatre Review, five years on, and the effectiveness of the additional funding. Due for publication summer 2009.

## 2 Methodology

It is important to state that this research has taken a qualitative as opposed to quantitative approach, and should be read with this firmly in mind. The decision to take this approach was reached in discussion with Audiences London and the Arts Council, and based on the following factors:

- The consultants were primarily interested in trends, perceptions and opinions
- the resources available combined with the mixed nature of the constituency made a quantitative survey inappropriate
- a lack of available baseline data relating to Grants for the arts would have further complicated a quantitative approach

The following methodology was used:

- Telephone interviews with an Arts Council theatre officer from each region, as well as key writers, directors and literary managers set the scene and provided advice on who we should particularly try to meet and/or have a conversation with
- From the lists of RFOs, Grants for the arts clients and writers, a shortlist of invitees was selected, as far as possible taking into account a wide range of theatre practice, as well as geographical and cultural diversity in an attempt to achieve a representative sample group.
- A series of five small group discussions or focus groups were held to gather opinion on a range of issues related to new writing and new work
- A follow-up e-survey was devised with the help of Audiences London, to test whether opinion expressed in the focus groups was more widely held
- The e-survey was sent out to about 150 contacts, drawn from the constituency as outlined above, and a total of 66 responses were returned
Additional phone and face-to-face interviews were held to provide background and contextual information.

**Writers’ Questionnaire**

A questionnaire for writers was devised in collaboration with the British Theatre Consortium (the consultants working with the other constituency in this assessment), and with the support of Ben Payne (writer and former Associate Director, Birmingham Rep). The questionnaire was sent to a range of writers associated with all groups of funded organisations: venues, non-venue RFOs and Grants for the arts clients, achieving 94 responses.

The results of the writers’ survey are covered primarily in the report of the British Theatre Consortium, but this report does include information drawn from the section ‘attitudes to playwriting’: writers were here asked to indicate their response to a series of statements on a scale of 1 - 7, where 1 is ‘entirely disagree’ and 7 is ‘entirely agree’.

---

### 3  The Report

#### 3.1 Definition of New Writing and Does It Matter?

The response to the question of definitions of new writing particularly in the context of new work was unsurprisingly very mixed and complex. In the same way that there were many differing opinions about the meaning and purpose of ‘dramaturgy’, which is explored later in this report, it was generally concluded that there was not one definition of new writing that would satisfy everyone.

When we asked in our survey to what extent would the participant agree or disagree with the following statement ‘There is a wider variety of work seen on stage under the banner of new writing/new work now than there was 6 years ago’ the results showed that 55% either strongly agreed or agreed whilst 18% neither agreed nor disagreed. Much of the discussions in the focus groups centred around how much new text does there need to be within a production to classify what is being presented as ‘a piece of new writing’. Some would say that there has to be a complete ‘play’ within a piece of work in order for it to properly qualify, others would argue that this does not matter in the least.

Another opinion was that whether a text has been achieved by one person writing a new play, or by a writer collaborating with a group of people, remains irrelevant – labels and divisions are not useful, what matters is authorship and who owns it.

It was generally agreed that at the heart of this issue lies the question of who it is being defined for and why. It was acknowledged that the Arts Council might require some kind of definition in order to be clear about what it is funding.
Most agreed that going to see ‘new writing’ no longer necessarily means going to a theatre at 8 pm in the evening and watching a play on the stage. That there has been a diversification in not just where (eg site specific) and when (late night shows, festivals) you see some new writing but also in what format (short piece presentations, readings, more experimental work, etc). This not only captures different kinds, and sometimes younger, audiences but also has the added benefit of giving emerging writers and artists a wider range of opportunities to hone their craft in whichever direction it might be going.

A concerted effort was made to invite focus group participants who would not necessarily be classified as traditionally coming from within the new theatre writing genre such as spoken word, performance poetry, those engaged in devised work and so on – it was interesting to hear the diversity of opinions and at times radical definitions. Below are examples showing some of the range of opinion expressed by the focus group participants:

“...there is a new generation of work coming up; it is not physical theatre, but new work with writing at the heart of it”

“I think the writer’s role should be protected, I think increasingly a lot of work is devised and you get asked to work with people, and that can be fine and can work really well but you have to protect the writer.”

“To me a play script is nothing more than an instruction manual for creating a piece of art rather than the piece of art itself. Whether it’s come out of three months in a rehearsal room with three people pulling a script together, or whether it’s three months in your house working to deliver a finished play is immaterial.”

In our survey we asked which of the following options could be included in descriptions of new writing/new work (participants could tick all the boxes that he/she felt applied):

- a) An individual writing a play 84%
- b) A writer collaborating with other artists 87%
- c) Other 33%

We asked for suggestions for descriptions in the ‘Other’ section, and here is just a sample of the responses:

- A company devising work
- A devising process which results in a text-based piece of theatre
- A group devised piece which has been crafted by a director/writer
- A theatre text that emerges from an artistic exploration of ideas, either individually or collectively
- Any set of instructions for a stage-able performance

---

2 Three comments from focus group participants
• Writers/performers/directors collaborating with other artists

In one discussion it was suggested that the Arts Council favours ‘devised, circus or acrobatic stuff’ and that new work is ‘siphoning money away’ from ‘new writing’. There was definitely concern from some participants that traditional play-writing could be threatened by the increase in the seed-bedding of ‘new work’ and it could be undermining the value of developing a straightforward play, ie some of those surveyed felt that there are sections of the industry who are now less favourable to the writer-centred approach and this could be damaging the emergence of good new writers who write a ‘traditional’ play. The writers’ questionnaire distributed by the BTC seemed to confirm this: the second most strongly agreed with statement was ‘the playwright’s individual voice is less valued than it was five years ago’.

Respondents to the same questionnaire also concurred with the idea that ‘the theatre industry is more open to non-traditional, collaborative ways of theatre-making’. A real energy and debate seemed to exist around what we might define as ‘new work’ in whatever shape it takes; however text-based it is, that is capturing and engaging new audiences who may not even be aware, or interested in the fact that they are seeing something that contains ‘new writing’.

Finally we might conclude that the landscape of new writing has been changing significantly enough for us to be having this discussion and may indicate that one net result of the increased funding since 2003 has been a broadening of the definitions of new writing and this has acted as a catalyst to the artform in a positive way.

Do these definitions matter? – sometimes they may be needed for a specific purpose, such as for formulating policies, but more importantly it seems that there must be scope to embrace the fact that the definitions of new writing are constantly changing: the difficulty of pinning them down could be seen as an indicator of a healthy organic debate and development in the sector.

3.2 Who are the writers and is this changing?

3.2.1 Targeting Diversity

Repeatedly over the past decade and more, reports, reviews and strategies from the Arts Council and other public bodies have called for a re-doubled effort to increase the diversity of artists, practitioners and audiences in the arts, to challenge stale attitudes and better to reflect contemporary society.

“It is vital that we move into an understanding of diversity... to cover the span of ages, religions, cultures, sexualities, disabilities and socio-economic backgrounds... They should be given the chance not only to find their feet, but to find their voice and to contribute to the culture, diversity and creativity of this country.”

3 McMaster report, 2008, on Diversity
“The need for more effort and initiatives to tackle the lack of diversity in the theatre workforce—as well as in new writing and in audiences—was also raised. There was a need to encourage the provision of appropriate opportunities and role models, as well as candidates for those opportunities, from amongst ethnic minorities.”

“…the Arts Council should do more to help writers from BAME backgrounds as they develop… [via] a network of writers’ access to dramaturgical support, residencies and commissions.”

This assessment aimed to find evidence of whether these stated priorities, coupled with the increase in funding had led to a more diverse range of theatre writers, emerging from a more varied socio-economic, educational & cultural background. Several focus group participants summed up why they felt this should matter:

“I’m eager to broaden the backgrounds of our playwrights in particular because as storytellers, we hold a unique position… We decide which stories are worth putting a frame around… If the people who hold this responsibility are from a narrow and broadly similar background then so is their raw material for drama - the life experience on which they draw.”

“…it’s about cultural capital. It’s a very self-conscious middle-class ability to navigate systems and ask questions and fill in forms. And that excludes whole sectors of people from being professionals.”

The general perception of those consulted in the course of this research is of an improving situation, at least as far BAME writers are concerned. A number of initiatives, emerging both from within the Arts Council and from artists and other organisations, have been supporting change in this area over the period of study. It is not the purpose of this report to re-assess the effectiveness of those individual strategies, but to look at the general situation as understood by those working in new writing who participated in the research. Our survey asked if the respondents thought there had been a change in the number of BAME writers emerging over the past six years. Over 58% of respondents thought there were more, against 5% who thought there were fewer.

The survey respondents were also positive about the amount of work from these writers actually getting produced: 56% also thought there had been an increase in the amount of work from BAME writers being produced, against just 6% who thought there was less.

Although this is clearly positive in terms of Arts Council strategy and the other recommendations cited, it is significant that, in both cases, around 45% of respondents only detected a slight increase, suggesting this is – in perception at least – still an incremental process rather than a sea change, with little room for complacency. Also, it should be noted that the survey did not attempt to separate

---

4 Parliamentary Select Committee on Culture, Media and Sport, 2005
5 Arts Council England Theatre Writing Strategy, 2003
6 Focus Group participants
white respondents from BAME or disabled respondents, so it is acknowledged that perceptions of the extent of change may well vary depending on the respondent’s personal perspective.

The situation facing writers, and the companies wanting to engage with them, is clearly very patchy across BAME communities. A focus group participant describes his company’s experience:

“All about six years ago we started a play reading festival called Typhoon… an opportunity to present East Asian writing in Britain… also looking for home-grown writing, there wasn’t any. The one or two writers who were around were very much at the beginning… so we started a new scheme called Yellow Ink, which has been mentoring writers for five years. Now we’ve a pool of about eight writers of various abilities, at different levels of their development… we’re encouraging them to go beyond the confines of our company [but] when they go and approach venues they often say ‘Yellow Earth do East Asian work, you should go and talk to them.’ It’s a bit of a Catch 22.”

Comments such as this suggest that, while the opportunities for grassroots entry into writing have improved, there remain problems with progression routes through to establishing independent careers working across the sector as established writers.

Even where there is career progression, it can sometimes prove hard to shake off the labels that come with involvement in a targeted professional development programme:

“I think the issue is that a lot of the writers we’ve been working with - they don’t want to be categorised as black writers. It’s not that they don’t want people to acknowledge their backgrounds, but they want to be treated the same as white writers.”

3.2.2 Deaf and disabled writers

When the same questions asked in the e-survey about ethnic diversity were asked specifically in relation to deaf and disabled writers and their work, the respondents were much less certain: 17% did detect more deaf and disabled writers emerging, and 20% saw an increase in their work reaching the stage, against 5% and 7% respectively noting a downturn. However, 78% and 73% respectively thought things had either stayed the same, or didn’t know.

Even within Deaf and disability arts, it was acknowledged that the effort to break out and achieve wider visibility was not without its problems:

“You want to give the audiences an opportunity to see a Deaf play in a mainstream theatre. You want to achieve all those things. You don’t want it to stay in the community. But then you might get panned by the critics.

7 Focus group participants
because your play can’t compete with your hearing peers because you don’t have the skills or training. It is a development thing, I think.”  

The interview with Graeae for the case study in Section 5, below, included discussion of strategies for supporting professional development of deaf and disabled writers, as well as acknowledging the low number of Deaf or disabled writers breaking through to the theatre mainstream.

### 3.2.3 Writers from other artforms

Another area of change seems to be the emergence of theatre writers from other areas of the performing arts, such as spoken word, music, comedy, cabaret and dance. Over two thirds of respondents thought there was either a slight or large increase, with less than 2% detecting a decrease.

Reasons for this shift were not explored in depth, but it seems likely that it is part of a wider trend towards breaking down of traditional barriers between art-forms and sub-genres, and the dislike of ‘labels and divisions’, as one writer put it.

Writers coming into theatre from other artforms weren’t always finding it a smooth transition: one artist who was clearly experiencing some success writing for theatre, had found himself in demand but rather bemused by theatre practice and the unspoken rules governing the process of creating new work: from understanding meeting etiquette to working out the hierarchy in a workshop, this had all been an unexplained journey. Without the one person he eventually chanced across who invited him to talk about his ideas, he admitted he’d be “on a building site again”.

### 3.2.4 Socio-economic factors – keys or barriers?

Just as social mobility in wider society is still a current and unresolved political issue, there seems an increasing recognition that socio-economic factors – such as class background and educational opportunities – can either open doors or represent significant barriers to success for those looking to establish a career in writing for theatre.

One new initiative, the annual ‘Adopt a Playwright’ scheme, launched in 2008, aims to tackle exclusion specifically on economic grounds:

> ‘The aim [of Adopt a Playwright] is quite simply to encourage new voices from every corner of our multifaceted society by buying them the time to write. We want to make sure that talented new writers from backgrounds that offer them little encouragement or financial support do not give up but are given a fair chance to prove themselves and take their place among our culture’s storytellers.’

> “Whether they’re a single mum from Peckham or a minicab driver from Tower Hamlets, there is one common reason why the system works against
them: it places the onus of responsibility on the beginner writer to invest in their own play.”

But there was also concern expressed that some of the previously available opportunities for aspiring writers, such as ‘informal apprenticeships’ were no longer an option:

“I worked as an actor [in TIE] for 10 years before I wrote a play, which served as an apprenticeship... Because I grew up on a council estate it was a constant ongoing conversation that turned me into a playwright... [Now] I don’t know how the hell you get to the point of being able to occupy a space. It takes a lot of intellectual energy and nerve. I think a lot of the rungs of the ladder - particularly the one I came up – have disappeared…”

It was suggested that a focus on young writers has meant that it has become increasingly difficult for older writers at the beginning of their career or even in mid-career to get funding or commissions. The results of our e-survey seemed to bear this out (56%, against 7% who disagreed), backed up by comments from our discussions:

“What you can’t raise money for is mid-career writers, or older people who’ve suddenly decided they want to change direction.”

“...for me there are still not many women writers... I think to be 22 or 23 and say you want to be a playwright requires an enormous amount of self-confidence. What you find is there are a lot of women and people from ethnic minorities who might not say it at 23, but might at 35… There’s no infrastructure for those late starters.”

3.3 Organisations & Writers

3.3.1 Professional Development opportunities for writers

“In order to truly develop new voices and new audiences for it, the development has to take place in the community itself through venue/company participatory programmes that are authentic and long-lasting”

From conversations with individuals and through the focus group discussions it was almost unanimously agreed that there has been an increase in the availability of development opportunities for emerging writers, particularly those who are younger. This has been across the board both regionally and in London and includes development programmes through venues, companies and individuals as well as writers attachment programmes in all their forms. 65% of those surveyed felt that this increase in attachments/residencies had had a clear impact on the development of the writer’s craft.

10 Writer Fin Kennedy launching Adopt a Playwright
11 Focus group participants
Most respondents were positive about the various forms of intervention that might be engaged in to develop ‘new voices’, particularly attachments and participatory programmes. In discussion with writers, attachments were also popular:

“…you got a room and a computer and eight weeks and you were paid. There was no stipulation... You could discover if your idea worked... That was brilliant.” 12

The funding increase was definitely seen to have encouraged growth in the amount of new writing in all its forms, including the traditional play, but perhaps more prevalently new work in less conventional formats. Most we spoke to were very positive about the impact of this and there was a sense that the investment in development programmes has had a positive effect on the sector.

Amongst other visible benefits highlighted was a resurgence of the fringe where emerging producers and practitioners are experimenting with new writing and new work. This was felt to offer writers increased opportunities to see their work in front of an audience at an early stage in their careers.

Development programmes themselves have also offered invaluable sources of employment for some emerging writers teaching on courses, in schools, and in venue participatory programmes for example.

“For me that’s become the most exciting thing, my own work and this day-to-day existence which is about teaching people to do what I already do. They feed each other.” 13

It was generally perceived that the impact of development programmes and opportunities for writers regionally has been strong:

“My observation nationally is that it’s been extraordinary really what’s been able to occur at a regional level. I don’t think there was anything like that before it coincided with the arrival of literary managers working in regional theatres...I think the key thing is that the investment has been sustained.” 13

If there was one key concern that emerged regarding the investment in development for writers, it was that this shouldn’t be at the expense of getting productions on stage. It was perceived to be easy to get money for developing new writing and programmes, but not for creating new productions. Some were concerned that the Arts Council see investing in a new writing development programme as a less risky venture than taking a chance and investing in a full production which contains new writing. During an interview one literary manager recommended that the future funding in this area of professional development could be eased off if it meant more funding could be allocated to actual productions.

The frustration of constantly being ‘in development’ and not reaching the production stage was summed up by one writer as follows:

---

12 Focus group participants
13 Playwright in focus group
“You have these endless coffee meetings, and you go ‘my life can’t be all coffee!’ Why am I sitting down every morning at the computer? The only thing that makes a difference is having a play performed… until it’s on that stage in front of an audience then it’s not a play.”¹⁴

Another point made on several occasions was that the development opportunities to take the next step to write the second or third play were more limited and that there is a tendency to be dazzled by the idea of it being the first play.

“My problem is [with] a writer being cut loose after their first commission: if theatres are funded to break new writers, then there’s nowhere to pass them onto after your first play.”¹⁴

"It’s about where you can find the additional pots of money to support that writer to move on to the next level. And that’s where we’re finding it quite difficult; to find a way we can continue supporting that writer so they can get two, three or four pieces out. So you are working with new writers all the time, but then it’s really difficult showing them the next path of where they can go to, who they can go with. Who’s interested in the second phase?”¹⁴

Finally, discussion around the development of new voices raised concerns that the importance of ensuring parity in the development of diverse new directors was equally important if work was to be understood in its cultural context.

“Suddenly there was a period a few years ago when there were a lot of very good black writers emerging, but very few black directors. You need to start finding those directors who can best direct that new work. The directors have slightly lagged behind and I don’t know if directors are diversifying as a result of writers diversifying.”¹⁴

The case studies shown later in Section 5 of this study show the work of four companies and their practical implementation of developing new writing and new work.

### 3.3.2 Networks

Most writers expressed that being tapped into a network of some kind was crucial to their careers and professional growth. The emergence of online social networking sites, such as Facebook, has had an impact on the many ways writers are able to network, but the profession is still perceived to be very ‘clubby’ – either you are in or you are out. Networking opportunities once you are on the ‘ladder’ in some way eg on an attachment or connected to a venue are fairly straightforward to get involved in. However if you come from a non-traditional writing background, such as spoken word or cabaret, and perhaps don’t have that connection with theatre as venues, there is no one obvious place to go to get connected into the theatre writing sector.

Writernet (see also Development Agencies below) was mentioned several times as a valuable organisation that was missed by those who brought it up. There was a

---

¹⁴ Focus group participants
desire for some kind of organisation independent from venues or producers which could be a centre-point for writers to get advice and socialise/network. When asked which services provided by existing writers’ development agencies or programmes had been most useful, 64% of respondents said a new writing network in their region and 48% facilitating connections between writers and organisations (respondents could select more than one option).

Most expressed that regional networking was often easier to get hooked into whilst in London it can be perceived as being somewhat excluding.

Writers and non-writer practitioners who took part in the survey did feel that overall there was a need for the Arts Council to be more strategic in instigating or funding crossover networking opportunities between all sections of the industry: venues, producers, writers, programmers and directors.

### 3.3.3 Writers’ Development Agencies

“The Arts Council should look at the role playwrights’ organisations play and their value, and take a consistent approach.”

Most of the organisations & writers we have spoken to, have expressed support for the vital role these regional writers organisations play in providing a network between writers, the companies & individual artists in the region as well as fulfilling an advisory role, script library and development opportunities. However, funding for these organisations has been complex and sometimes problematic, with wide variation in remit between organisations across the country. With the recent demise of Writernet in London and the South West Playwriting Network, we suggest that perhaps the above recommendation continues to apply.

One experienced commentator warned that these closures may represent part of a repeating pattern:

“The point about these agencies is that they came into their own during the last recession when there was little development money in theatres, but have been seen to serve their purpose now there’s development work going on in theatres themselves. If the theatre development budgets get restricted, there will be a desire for them again… just as they are disappearing.”

### 3.3.4 Dramaturgy and other forms of Critical Intervention

“For writers dramaturgy is like sex – if it’s good get as much as you can; if it’s bad you’re better off sorting yourself out.”

“Too often advice is given to writers by people who are neither sensitive to writing or have never written a word and who are therefore tempted to get

---

15 Theatre Writing Strategy 2003
16 Interviewee
17 Focus group participant
writers (particularly younger less experienced writers) to do all sorts of things that aren’t particularly helpful.”

“It can help inexperienced companies and writers take risks with each other, and increase the chances of successful end product, but more experienced writers may find this unnecessary and obstructive.”

One literary director interviewed, who works for a small-scale producing company, said that she felt that new writing in England was at a very strange stage in its development. Despite the fact that new writing was more prevalent now than it was six years ago (ie new writing had now been adopted as a matter of course by both established as well as emerging producers and programmers), she felt this is oddly in juxtaposition to a real erosion of the writer-centred approach. She felt that this could be a worrying trend. She mentioned that theatre companies increasingly ask for pitches for shows from writers, there has been an emergence of the ‘short play’, and although she could see the merits of this kind of activity, had concerns about how this affected developing the craft and furthering the careers of writers.

It did seem important to explore briefly the notion of ‘dramaturgy’ in this report, as it is a concept that has emerged over the last six years in a way never seen before and this will have affected our constituency in some way. In our survey we asked the following question:

‘Over the last six years there has been a perceived increase in the role of the dramaturg. Without taking instances of good or bad dramaturgical practice into account, on the whole do you think this development is beneficial to the sector?’

60% of those surveyed answered yes to this question, 15% no and 25% didn’t know indicating that within our constituency there was relatively strong feeling that this role or concept had been beneficial to the sector. However, in exploring this a little further in the group discussions it became clear that there are very diverse views on what we mean by dramaturgy in England. For some a dramaturg as an individual is completely unnecessary as they consider the best dramaturg to already exist in the role of the director and the best dramaturgical experience being the rehearsal room or live organic dramaturgy through work-shopping.

“The best dramaturgs are in fact the directors of a piece of new writing and anything else is just molly-coddling”.

The role of the dramaturg was seen by some to be lacking a consistency of quality and purpose. The view that dramaturgy is of course only as good as the skill and experience of the dramaturg was a consistent one, to quote from another e-survey participant:

“Dramaturgy comes with a serious caveat, which is the background, training and quality of the individual dramaturg. Dramaturgy will only ever be as sophisticated or useful as the individual offering it. It comes down to training,

---

18 e-survey respondents
19 Focus group participant
and at the moment there isn’t really any formal training for dramaturges, so there is no quality control and no professional bar to judge them by.”  

Another concern echoed fairly frequently is that dramaturgy could be used as an excuse to not commit to production and there was fear that the balance could tip too far in the direction of what is perceived to be happening in the United States, where a script becomes over-developed and starts to lose the unique voice of the writer. As one focus group participant mentioned no play is flawless and sometimes it is precisely the perceived flaws in a piece of new writing that gives it its humanity.

On the whole our research in this area has brought to light that dramaturgy can mean quite different things to different people, and that an increased understanding of the process and the role it can play would be helpful.

“While literary departments and dramaturgs can help broaden the base of individuals who consider writing a play… ultimately only the writer can develop their own unique voice.”

Some of those surveyed felt that there is a role for the dramaturg both within the cross-form contexts as well as new writing and that it could play a significant role in helping inexperienced writers work with experienced companies and vice-versa, thereby playing an important part in bringing new voices from more diverse backgrounds into production.

Another perspective was that dramaturgy should be seen in a wider framework of critical intervention, addressing a need to tackle head on issues of quality. This could include peer review, structured criticism from the wider creative team, or more previewing of work with opportunities for formal feedback. Organisations should be supported in developing their ‘practical critical capacity’ in ways that both support the writer and strengthen what an audience eventually sees:

“Text is often de-valued because it’s not worked on enough.”

There was strong participation and feedback in the discussion around dramaturgy both in the survey and in focus groups and interviews which indicates that this is a development which provokes a healthy and interested debate in an area which the majority did say is still in its infancy. We might conclude that the development of the role of the dramaturg in whatever form it takes is happening and it might be useful to look at some further investment in the training and definition of the role,

“The role didn’t exist when I first started working. You had literary managers and you had directors. You did not have dramaturges. It’s a borrowed European term that’s much more creative than being a literary manager but isn’t a director. Suddenly you’ve got another creative force in the room.”

---

20 Focus group participants
21 Interviewee
22 Focus group participant
3.4 Venues & Audiences

3.4.1 Venues

Many participants suggested that more theatre venues, across the country, have new writing policies now and are either producing their own or presenting new writing to a greater extent than they were six years ago.

“Everyone wants to put on new writing – everyone’s doing it – even the RSC.”

As there were only three venues in the given constituency, this report focuses on the point of view of the smaller companies touring into those venues. Some participants expressed that venues had become more difficult to access, perhaps due to the increase and variety of product available:

“There seem to be less ‘straight’ new plays on the touring circuit, but much more new work”

And for others these relationships had become more vital, leading to commissions and co-productions (see section below for more detail).

“There are also relationships with the venues and the big theatres commissioning us. We have a really formal supportive creative relationship with John at Contact, or Steve at Tramway. So those individuals are really part of the creative process as well”

At the same time there has clearly been a diversification of venues sought for this new work. In conversation with Orla O'Loughlin, Artistic Director of Pentabus Theatre (see Case Study, Section 5), she suggested that their work is so diverse that it is not always suited to a regular touring pattern and so over the last few years projects have taken place in caves, shopping centres, at national and international festivals as well as theatres, schools & village halls. Touring for the company has changed with the work.

“When they say they can’t take a risk on new writing, what they’re really saying is that they can’t risk their audience. The risk isn’t on new writing or new work. There is a huge audience out there for new and exciting and different work.”

3.4.2 Audiences

Although we did not carry out research directly into changes in audiences for new writing during this period, several participants made it clear that certain venues had become key players in enabling the success of their new work. These venues, both producing and presenting, have also diversified and work hard with the smaller

23 Writer in focus group
24 Arts Council Officer
25 Focus group participant
26 Orla O’Loughlin, Interviewee
companies, sometimes over several years to develop new audiences &
participants.

"At Contact we can sort of say that something like 99% of new work is seen
by 95% of people under 35. Well, that's ten years of work." 27

With the rise in Festival culture and site specific work, this has also led to a change
in the demographic make up of the audience. In our e survey 80% felt that use of
alternative spaces attracts a new type of audience and in describing that audience
many felt it was younger, as discussed later in this report.

During one focus group there was a discussion about changing audience
expectation and a view that there is a hunger for a more rounded experience with
higher production values even at the small-scale level.

“Audiences and what they expect to see on stage has really changed. They
won't be short-changed by a grubby old sofa and a bit of black tat...so there
are whole changes of attitude towards the role of design, music and lights.”
28

3.4.3 Collaborations & Co-productions

Several smaller organisations reported how important venues have become not
just as presenters but as co-producers of new writing projects. In addition to
providing financial and technical support, they are often providing artistic support &
experience.

“I think it's really important for us that we’re working in that co-producing
arrangement with someone else, not just for the practicalities like a proper
theatre and technical support stuff, but more because of the creative
relationship that happens.”28

The significance of co-productions and collaborations between producing
companies was also noted. This allowed for cross-fertilisation of creative ideas and
was also seen as way to introduce writers to other audiences.

And it is acknowledged that working internationally with co-producers and other
collaborators plays an increasing role in the work of many companies and artists in
the constituency. Some writers commented on how vital overseas sales of their
writing were and what a key role their agents played in the marketing of their work
abroad. However, it was felt that further exploration of this international dimension
was a separate area of study beyond the scope of this research.

3.4.3 Second Exposure

Writers agreed strongly when asked if they thought it less likely that a new play of
theirs would receive a second or subsequent production than five years ago, and

27 Kully Thiarai
28 Focus group participants
also agreed that ‘sustaining a play-writing career has become more difficult than it was five years ago.’  

With the rise in programming of new work, there seems to be even less interest in producing a second production of a new play. In the area of new or devised work, where the writing may not be dominant, there is no expectation of a second production unless revived by the same company of artists involved in the initial production.

However, increasing the further life of an existing piece either through a revival or transfer is still of huge importance to the small companies and the writer. It is often through this further life that the work has increased visibility and potential national profile.

“The trouble is that for the next job it’s about having something written up in a national paper. That’s really critical. It’s that lack of critical discourse about the work regionally. Most of the work isn’t being talked about.”

Consequently touring to London or the Edinburgh Festival are still the main ways in which, small companies and individual writers can achieve this. For HighTide, one of our Case Study companies, supporting the further life of their work is one of the four main aims of the company.

“It is integral to HighTide’s artistic model that we simultaneously provide a protected environment in which writers can develop new work and, when ready, commit to profiling their work on a national scale through collaborations with theatres around the country.”

Samuel Hodges, Artistic Director HighTide

3.4.4 Festivals

“I think it’s really important that this new fringe has started to emerge. I agree that there’s a lot of work, and it doesn’t mean that all of it’s very good. But I don’t see how you learn to get better unless you see your play in front of an audience. I think you’re in a young festival, people go with different expectations. If that play was put on in the Royal Court Upstairs it would be slammed. But in a field in Suffolk it gets a five star review. I think that’s correct. How else are you going to learn?”

There has been an increase in the number of New Writing Festivals taking place across the country led by smaller organisations. One format enables small companies to mount several new plays, using one company of performers. For example the policy in the Eastern Region has led to the emergence of 2 new writing Festivals – HighTide in Halesworth and Hotbed in Cambridge and one Festival of new work - Pulse in Ipswich (all funded via Grants for the arts). The Escalator Programme, detailed below in ‘Funding’, has been crucial to this development in the Eastern region, through its policy of innovation and particularly East to Edinburgh, specifically funding companies to take their work to the

---

29 writers’ survey distributed by the BTC
30 Focus group participants
Edinburgh Festival. HighTide is described in more detail in our case study in Section 5 of this report.

“Escalator’s East to Edinburgh – as well as the financial side there is also a support network when you’re up there. There are networking events and all the Eastern artists get together. You can meet writers and I know from people that it’s fruitful for making those connections with other artists and organisations in the region.”

Using a very different, umbrella format, 247 Theatre Festival burst onto the Manchester scene in 2006 with an audience of 1600 in one week. Now in their fourth year and funded by the Arts Council, amongst others, 247 are presenting 21 new plays across the city in a variety of venues to an expected audience of over 3,000.

This seems to mirror the rise in popularity of festivals in general. Latitude, now in its fourth year and predominantly a music festival, also takes in cabaret, literature, poetry, comedy, dance – and new writing theatre, from companies such as Paines Plough, Nabokov and DryWrite.

There is no doubt that taking part in a festival small or large, increases visibility, offers networking opportunities and raises profile on a national scale for individual writers or small companies.

3.4.5 New work in alternative spaces

In our survey 80% agreed that new work which uses alternative spaces attracts a new type of audience. When asked if they could describe this new audience there was a strong response and here is an example of some of the responses:

- ‘An audience who may not connect with traditional venues. They might feel socially disconnected from these spaces and find a more neutral place easier to access.’
- ‘An experimental, fresh, open-minded often young audience (18-35) who want a more interesting and engaging experience than simply sitting end-on in a formal theatre setting’
- ‘I think it depends on the context, but I think that presenting work in alternative spaces offers the opportunity to re-imagine the rules of theatre space for audience and performers, and an opportunity to explore a more open, public theatre.’
- ‘People who don’t consider theatre to be part of their culture and don’t consider it as a leisure option.’

The phrases ‘non-traditional theatre goers’ and ‘people who do not normally attend theatre’ and ‘young’ to describe audiences attending performances in alternative spaces were prevalent. There is no doubt that there is an excitement around and increase in the use of alternative spaces to present ‘new work’ which may or may not contain a piece of new writing. Although primarily led by smaller companies,

---

31 Focus group participant
32 E-survey respondents
the fact that venues themselves are also engaging with this process implies that it is perceived as tapping into different and/or younger audiences.

A significant majority of those taking part in our survey felt that seeing a production in alternative space would give audience members an incentive to try out a show in a theatre. Some felt that the nature of alternative spaces naturally had a tendency to attract the less traditional type of work, but on balance, alternative spaces were seen as giving more opportunities for all types of theatre, including new writing.

“In terms of voting with their feet I think people are going to see new work. They’re going to see new everything. You could go and see Punchdrunk, go and see something at the ICA. Theatre becoming mainstream isn’t the right word, but theatre feels less elitist and more universal. I think people are going more easily to see things, and less fearfully.”

3.4.6 Other new work engaging with writers

It seems likely that one effect of the increased funding available has been greater opportunities for artists identifying as writers to emerge from, and cross into other areas of performing arts such as Performance, Dance Theatre, Live Art, Experimental Theatre, Spoken Word, Cabaret and Comedy. There has been a diversification of what we are able to see on stage across the country, which has helped to broaden the definition of new writing in particular (see section on definitions above) and theatre in general.

In London, the Spill Festival of Performance has twice attracted a large and very youthful audience to its international programme of experimental theatre, including a number of works that we could choose to identify as new writing: for example, Tim Etchells (of Forced Entertainment) working with Belgian company Victoria and Spill’s commission from Mem Morrison.

In physical theatre, companies such as Frantic Assembly (RFO) and Stan Won’t Dance (Grants for the arts recipient) have been commissioning writers for significant new productions in recent years.

For the younger audiences often attracted to this kind of work, there is a sense that whether or not a piece is identified as ‘new writing’, along with whether or not it happens to be in a conventional performance space or at a conventional time, are all increasingly irrelevant, being replaced by an emphasis on the importance of creating a sense of occasion, or a stimulating shared experience.

3.5 Writing for Younger Audiences

---

33 E-survey respondent
3.5.1 Writing for Children

New writing for children within the smaller, non venue-based companies seems to have increased and diversified. In our survey, 42% thought new writing/work programmed specifically for children had increased over the last 6 years as opposed to just 7% who thought it had decreased. In discussion with companies in this sector, this was a direct result of increased funding:

“The impact of increased funding in 2003 meant we started to have a research and development pot. This enabled us to experiment, particularly with form...to diversify and collaborate even more than we already did. This has directly impacted on our relationship with our audience. It’s very important to understand what inspires a child and how we can play with that. This money has enabled us to do this.”  

However, there remain issues of marketability of the more experimental or new work, and some venues were seen to be overly cautious about how hard it would be to sell to both parents and schools. In our survey 73% felt it was easier for venues to sell adaptations of known work rather than original new writing specifically for children.

“I know that even venues that might take big risks on their adult work, for their children’s work they want something really safe and recognisable.”

One writer was particularly concerned that this caution was resulting in increasing numbers of adaptations in theatre for children, at the expense of commissioning original work. It was suggested that adaptations should be regarded as a lower funding priority in order to help redress this balance.

In addition there was a perceived lack of writers of quality and experience working in this sector. Companies were selecting from a small pool of UK writers and some were increasingly looking overseas for children’s writers. So despite a large number of writers emerging into the adult market, there seems to be little integration between the two sectors and a perceived lack of cross-fertilisation between adult and children’s new writing companies.

3.5.2 Writing for and with Young People

It would probably be fair to say that the 16-25 age group constitutes a large part of the emerging talent as well as often being part of the target audience for much of the work of the constituent companies. As a result, many of the comments elsewhere in this document relate to young people, even if not explicitly stated.

The additional funding going into theatre post 2003 was seen by some of those consulted to have strengthened the hand of regional theatre companies to develop their approach to new writing, citing the creation of new writing posts charged with finding ways to nurture local talent. Through this, many companies had forged new connections with young artists:

---

34 Artistic Director, children’s theatre company
35 Focus group participant
“…the project I’m most proud of in my whole career is called Momentum. It’s about young writers in the East Midlands… we were working with 16-18 year olds. It really changed some of their lives: some of them are working as professional writers now.”36

The project had also enabled some of its participants to go on to make links with producing companies, both in theatre and TV.

Many companies reported involvement in participatory work with young people, leading to productions which emerge from a collaborative devising process.

One discussion centred on who claims the label of ‘writer’ in collaborative work with young people:

“…when you’re working with young people they do want to take ownership of their writing… We would say [the writer leading the process] was the facilitator, because the ‘writer’ is the young people. They’re the ones devising the pieces, going back and re-writing them."36

Manchester’s Contact was cited by several of those we consulted as representing best practice in this area, particularly in terms of the success of its engagement with young people as both artists and audience members.

Expanding boundaries of what new theatre work had come to mean, seemed to be leading to a wider range of ways in which young people could engage with theatre; through work in new forms:

“…in terms of young writers, it’s a completely different ballgame. They’re using different formats, not coming from the traditional routes: they’re using hip hop, they’re using animation… Their stories are much shorter… some are using mobile phones…”36

…and in unconventional spaces:

“They’re saying I don’t want to do my piece in a traditional theatre setting. It could be in a club or in the street or in a barber’s shop…They’re really stretching us!”36

Contact clearly saw it had a responsibility to facilitate these changing demands, including the more surprising:

“…in a funny sort of way we’re coming back round to wanting very specifically scripted work that isn’t so fluid… some of the young artists are saying ‘actually, we’d like to work on a play’… for them, that’s novel.”37

Further information on Contact’s Rhythm and Words programme can be found in the case study in Section 5, below.

36 Focus group participants
37 Kully Thiarai, Contact
Another company singled out for making particularly interesting progress in this area was Action Transport. Their 2006 festival of new plays written for, by and with young people, *The Lockpickers' Ball*, led to the publication of *The Skeleton Key*, a guide to creating new work with and for young people, with contributions from several other young people’s theatre companies.

3.6 Arts Council Funding and Other Strategic Support

3.6.1 Perceived impact of additional funding post 2003

Comments made in discussions with organisations about the funding picture since 2003 were overwhelmingly positive. It seems almost as important to note the complete absence of serious complaint about the funding regime over the period of study; both RFOs and unfunded companies readily acknowledged the impact the additional funding had made on their ability to look beyond survival and develop strategies for future development, including new writing. For example, the arrival of Grants for the arts was remembered by one artist as follows:

“There was a time when it was really liberating: you really could just dream something up and whack in your application for it. That was brilliant actually, that’s what it should be.”

Writers were enthusiastic about the recent period too:

“I think in this period there was a real emergence of possibilities: if you want to write, you can find somewhere.”

And seemed to point to the creation of new posts specialising in literary management/new writing, particularly in regional venues, as key to this change.

The effect funding had had on writers’ ability to think big was also referenced:

“People always said they wouldn’t write anything with more than three people because it would never get produced – that was the convention, and it’s simply not true now.”

There was, however, also a sense from some that the boom time had been and gone fairly quickly: some appeared almost nostalgic for what they saw as a short-lived golden age for Arts Council-funded theatre organisations, and feared a return to the strictures of the past. One participant who had worked in new writing over a long period, noted that when cash was tight, “the first thing that always goes is the development budget”, but also thought that they had just been through a period where development and ideas had flourished thanks to the additional funding.

---

38 Focus group participants
3.6.2 Regularly Funded Organisations

Regularly funded organisations were well represented in the research and in the focus groups, but there was relatively little discussion of their funding situation. Complaint about over-all levels of funding was significant only by its absence.

One issue that did emerge repeatedly was that of the increasing difficulty RFOs were finding with making the case for additional project funding through Grants for the arts. A change to the rules means that RFOs can currently only apply for additional project funding through Grants for the arts with the written permission of their lead officer. This was felt to have had a negative impact on the commissioning ability of RFO companies:

“Grants for the arts was brilliant for us. We supported three writers simply to write plays. They applied, but we supported them… Now because the barrier is your Arts Council officer, you’re stuffed and you can’t do that…we wouldn’t apply, it’s not worth our while.”

Other participants agreed and there was a sense of an increasing reluctance on the part of the Arts Council to support RFOs seeking additional project funding. While it was acknowledged that this was a result of there being ‘less money in the pot’, there was concern about the impact this was having on organisations’ ability to support the development of ideas and new work through the various stages. The difficulty of getting beyond the first stage of funding a writer to develop a new idea was mentioned in one discussion:

“…then when they go back to the Arts Council or funder they can’t get any additional money. And then for us as venues, you can’t apply for additional funding because they’re funded already.”

The route to becoming an RFO is clearly still a long and difficult one to navigate for many companies, leading to a sense of resignation perhaps best summed up as follows:

“… We’re not regularly funded and will never be unless somebody dies”

3.6.3 Grants for the arts

“…for me one thing that’s been incredibly valuable, and I almost wouldn’t consider making a piece any other way now, is what I perceive to be the Arts Council’s increasing happiness to fund development processes.”

Organisations and individuals without RFO status had a rather different experience of the funding system. The Grants for the arts programme established in 2003 was often seen as fundamental in seed-bedding new and experimental projects, thanks to its structure and uninhibited remit allowing direct applications from individuals and smaller off the radar groups of people, giving birth to both great success stories as well as allowing for failure.

39 Focus group participants
72% of respondents to the e-survey agreed with the suggestion that the Grants for the arts programme has enabled new and extraordinary projects to emerge from individuals and small companies.

One participant praised the way the programme allowed writers to write outside of the commission. While acknowledging that this didn’t suit all writers, it gave a chance to explore ideas. However, concern was expressed by some of those consulted, including some Arts Council officers, about a perceived decline in funds going direct to artists. Concern was also raised by some artists that the application process can be off-putting for people not regularly engaged in making funding applications:

“My problem with Grants for the arts is you need to have degree standard English in order to get through the first round”\cite{40}

“I think of them as mock exams…”\cite{40}

And from the company perspective, a requirement to demonstrate ‘additionality’ had also proved problematic to some:

“… the one thing for me is at each time of applying is having to demonstrate your additionality. So having an opportunity to do what you do but do it better, rather than do it differently, is a real problem and stretches our creativity. So it’s ‘what’s the theme this year in terms of additionality?’ For me that’s a constant problem.”\cite{40}

3.6.4 Other Arts Council Support

Arts Council England East’s Escalator programme provides bespoke professional development programmes for artists and arts organisations, with an emphasis on innovation and change. As well as mentoring several new writing organisations in the region, one of Escalator’s seven strands is East to Edinburgh, which enables new work from the region to be seen on the Edinburgh Fringe. This is understood to be the only Arts Council region to fund strategically the presentation of work in Edinburgh, but the programme was cited by several interviewees as being key to getting their work seen by a wider audience and increasing opportunities for further touring.

“In 2007/08 we were on East to Edinburgh… and we’re still making new connections and striking up valuable relationships through connections with other Escalator companies. I think that sort of opportunity is wonderful”\cite{40}

\cite{40} Focus group participant
4 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 The additional funding for theatre since 2003 has been acknowledged by many individual artists, companies and programmers as having had a real impact on their abilities to take risks and innovate. It has allowed many more organisations to develop an active policy of supporting new writing and so improved the situation for the creation and presentation of new work. This change was warmly welcomed by many of those consulted.

4.2 However, there is still a perceived imbalance between how different parts of the sector achieve access to funding for new writing; between companies and individuals, the regularly funded and the project funded. In particular, recent curbs on access to Grants for the arts funding for Regularly Funded Organisations is seen to be restricting their ability to support individual writers and artists.

Recommendation: To monitor, and if necessary address perceived barriers to writers and independent artists achieving direct funding, and to look again at the impact of the ways in which regular and project funding co-exist.

4.3 Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic writers are more visible in theatre than previously, and a wider range of backgrounds is being represented on stage. Policies to support the emergence and professional development of writers from minority groups are generally perceived as having had a positive impact on this.

However, the situation is very inconsistent across the spectrum of minority communities, and there remains a perceived problem of ineffectual progression routes into mainstream careers.

Recommendation: To facilitate a process of learning from the success stories of writers from more diverse backgrounds who have broken away from the margins. To develop strategies for career progression routes, in those sectors where this has still to happen.

4.4 Self confidence and youth are still perceived as key to many artists gaining access to a career in writing for theatre. Those for whom confidence only arrives with maturity may find few opportunities to change career, so their voices are less likely to be heard; theatre can still seem to be an exclusive club to which only the young, articulate, white middle classes can automatically claim entry.

Recommendation: To ensure that investment in development programmes favours projects that are rigorous and informed in their attempts to engage with writers from more diverse backgrounds. In particular, to ensure that there is support for the emergence of new writers who are older, acknowledging the
effect this can have on bringing forth more diverse voices, as well as potentially more mature subject matters.

4.5 The continuing evolution of theatre in both form and process brings with it creative challenges for writers, but is broadly welcomed by writers and those in other creative roles working at the grass roots of new writing.

**Recommendation:** To continue to support and encourage the creation and presentation of new work in alternative spaces and forms, recognising the value this has both in drawing new audiences and ‘new’ artists, as well as in the development of practice.

**Recommendation:** To encourage the healthy cross-fertilisation of the theatre sector with other artforms, dismantling perceived barriers to creative practice. In particular, to support quality new theatre writing emerging through other artforms such as cabaret, comedy, spoken word, dance, film and visual arts.

4.6 There is a perceived imbalance between the number of writers participating in development programmes and the number of opportunities for their work to reach the stage. There is also a concern that funding development programmes could be to the detriment of funding for actual productions.

**Recommendation:** To examine further the balance between funding development programmes for writers and funding towards getting their work on stage.

4.7 Diverse new work on stage comes not just from writers, but often also requires an appropriate creative team.

**Recommendation:** To ensure that there is an equivalent investment in developing emerging directors, designers and other theatre-makers from more diverse backgrounds, as they are may be best placed to direct and produce the new voices that are emerging (see also Live and Direct report, Helen Jeffreys, April 2005).

4.8 Many individuals and companies across the sector – not only writers - reported that there were times when they felt they were working in isolation and would benefit from improved networking opportunities to support the cross-fertilisation of ideas and learn about other models of good practice.
**Recommendation**: To facilitate a more strategic approach to networking, supporting the development of practice and creative opportunities between all sections of the industry. In particular, to look at how existing structures (including regional writers’ agencies, training organisations and social networking sites) could offer a range of networking opportunities to reach those writers, programmers and companies who currently report feeling isolated from each other.

4.9 There is still a perception that new work produced outside London less often achieves a national platform than work originating in London.

**Recommendation**: To address the barriers that exist for regional projects and companies in achieving national exposure: ensuring increased opportunities for regional activity to be recognised on a national level.

**Recommendation**: To continue to support and encourage innovative festivals and seasons presenting new writing and new work giving wider exposure to projects and productions that would otherwise remain regional.

4.10 Dramaturgy and other critical interventions in new writing are of growing importance but of an uneven quality.

**Recommendation**: To support improvement in the scope and quality of dramaturgy / critical engagement, while still allowing the concept to continue emerging in an organic way, that remains beneficial to writers. For example, investing further in enabling directors, producers, etc. to engage more effectively in this process, and creating opportunities to preview work or otherwise open it up to peer review.

4.11 Despite many writers emerging during this period, relatively few are working in children’s theatre and there still seems little cross-fertilisation between the adult and children’s sectors of the industry.

**Recommendation**: To look favourably on projects encouraging or facilitating more writers of theatre for adult audiences to cross-over into writing for children, and vice versa.

5 **Case Studies**

Below are examples of professional development programmes, commissioning practices and other strategies for engagement with writers, all in use in the following client organisations over the period of study:

- Graeae – disability, touring
- Pentabus – rural touring, site specific
- Contact – venue, focus on young people
- HighTide - emerging new writing festival
5.1 Graeae

Established in 1980, Graeae is a London-based and disabled-led national touring company. Jenny Sealey, Artistic Director since 1996, was awarded an MBE in the last New Years Honours. Graeae is regularly funded by the Arts Council and benefited from a substantial uplift following the Theatre Review.

Graeae has always commissioned new plays, prioritising commissions from disabled writers. A share of the Arts Council funding uplift has been allocated to an increase in commissioning and other new writing activities:

In 2006, a review of staffing structure, led to the creation of a new role of Literary Manager. Alex Bulmer, a writer and director (who is also blind) was recruited to the post.

Current writing projects in development

Recent commissions include Jack Thorne, Paul Sirett, Sex and Drugs and Rock and Roll (co-commission and co-production with Theatre Royal Stratford East) and a first script from regular Graeae actor Sophie Partridge, whose Forum theatre piece Just Me, Bell is touring schools in autumn 2009.

Past new writing productions 2003-08

Whiter Than Snow by Mike Kenny (co-production with Birmingham Rep)
Static by Dan Rebellato (co-production with Suspect Culture)
The Flower Girls by Richard Cameron (co-production with New Wolsey Theatre, co-commission with the disability charity John Grooms)
Diary of an Action Man by Mike Kenny (co-commission & co-production with Unicorn)
Peeling by Kaite O'Reilly

Collaborative new writing projects

Wild Lunch with Paines Plough

Graeae has twice joined with Paines Plough in their established programme of ‘Wild Lunch’. A group of both disabled and non-disabled writers selected by both companies meets together weekly for a series of seminars and workshops led by established writers, directors and other artists. At the end of this period, the writers are ‘locked in’ over the course of a weekend with the brief to write a short one-act play. The results are presented in a series of lunchtime rehearsed readings, directed and performed by members of both companies.

In the first collaboration, one of these short plays, by Glyn Cannon, was chosen by the companies to develop to a full-length commission, and eventually co-produced in 2004 as ‘On Blindness’, with Paines Plough and Graeae being joined by Frantic Assembly. While reviews and audience reactions were mixed, this was seen as a successful collaboration in terms of skill-sharing between the three companies, and audience crossover.
BBC Radio Drama

A long-standing collaboration with BBC Radio Drama developed from an initial approach from director David Hunter and then-producer Jessica Dromgoole. This led initially to the BBC Radio 3 broadcast of the Graeae-commissioned stage play *Peeling* by Kaite O’Reilly in 2003.

There followed a writers’ residential week funded by the Arvon Foundation in 2005, repeated in 2008, and followed up with a Research and Development day, led by established writers Mike Kenny, Duncan MacMillan and Paul Sirett.

In late 2008, Radio 4 broadcast a new adaptation of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in two episodes, one written by Graeae’s Alex Bulmer and the other by Jack Thorne (Shameless, Skins).

Current new writing programme strands:

- **Write Stuff: Submission Programme.** Scripts read and considered twice-yearly. All scripts receive written feedback, some selected for further development in Write Stuff First Draft programme, PlayLab days or invited on to a commission scheme.

- **Write Stuff GRAD: First Draft Programme.** Successful submissions are given development support to bring the material to a working first draft. Support may be mentoring, dramaturgy or workshopping with actors. Aims to both attract new writers to Graeae who are interested in new narratives and enable artists who work with diverse communication which is not necessarily text based, eg BSL.

- **Play Lab.** An opportunity for play and experimentation around new writing, in a one-day laboratory with artists and writers working as part of a collaborative artistic team to explore original ideas. Aims to inform Graeae’s existing practice or develop material for future productions.

- **Write Direct** directly selects writers the company is interested in commissioning, aiming to have three commissions per year in development, with at least one going through to production.

- **Dis This:** Disabled Writers Development Group offers a “disability literate” creative environment, exploring new accessible formats and ways of working, aiming to allow writers to freely explore ideas and themes. Twice-monthly facilitated sessions. Work that is less traditionally verbal, eg more acoustic or visual, is given equal theatrical and technical support. Writers are paid an honorarium to write for the final stage.

- **The Aesthetic Narrative.** Master Class for established writers, exploring the Graeae aesthetic of integrated access, in partnership with new writing venues and programmes across the UK.

5.2 Contact
Manchester’s Contact was referenced by many of those consulted for this report as a shining example of good practice around engagement with young people as both audience and artists.

“I think what’s really exciting about Contact’s audiences is that you get this sense of ownership. You go in and there’s a clear Contact audience and they react how they want to what they see on stage”

Contact was seen as leading developments in form that were being successful in reaching beyond the usual barriers to participation.

Contact describes itself as ‘a space where new kinds of theatre are created: where artists can meet, develop, explore and take risks. A young people’s theatre, where you can grow, learn and make decisions as a young artist, audience member, organiser or leader.’

Recently-appointed Artistic Director, Baba Israel, is taking up his post in summer 2009, but has a four-year connection with the venue as a performer, educator and director. He follows on from John E McGrath, who was much-praised in discussions held for this research.

As interim Artistic Director, Kully Thiarai participated in this study. Kully is a former Director of Theatre Writing Partnership, former Artistic Director of Leicester Haymarket and was Artistic Advisor at Contact during its period of re-invention in the late 1990’s.

**New Writing Policy – RAW Theatre**

Contact’s new writing and new work department goes under the name of RAW Theatre; Rhythm and Words. The name is intended to demonstrate a commitment all forms of theatre writing.

Contact states that many of the writers they work with are not from a playwriting background, but often crossing over from poetry, spoken word, writing or directing. Submissions from all writers are actively encouraged.

**Pitch Party** Submitted scripts are read at a Pitch Party, made up of both Contact and BBC representatives. The first ten pages are read and discussed.

**Seed Commissions** A small initial commission following success at a Pitch Party, this may involve work with another artist and support from Contact.

**Flip the Script** A monthly ‘slam’ night where 5-7 minutes each of a number of new scripts is presented by professional actors and directors. The audience vote for their favourite, the winner being awarded with a longer slot the following month.
Development Workshops A creative team is assembled to explore an idea in a workshop lasting up to a week, often ending in a sharing with an invited audience.

Full Commissions These are offered only ‘when an idea is ready’. Any payments made under the Seed Commission scheme are taken into account in the contract. Commissions may go on to full production though this is not an expectation.

Incubate 09 Contact is one of four partner organisations in Incubate, with BAC and Birmingham Rep, and led by Apples & Snakes. The current Incubate provides six spoken word artists with time to play freely and take creative risks over the next two years.

5.3 Pentabus Theatre

Based in Ludlow, Shropshire, Pentabus has been established for 35 years. Under its current Artistic Director, Orla O’Loughlin, the company’s mission statement is ‘to pioneer engaging, provocative and surprising new work that connects people and places.’ The work often engages with peculiarly rural issues. Pentabus is regularly funded by Arts Council England and Shropshire council.

History & Policy

Pentabus originally toured new work regionally, to five counties in the West Midlands, in a variety of venues; village halls, schools, pubs & small theatres. However, output now includes national and international projects.

The company’s new work is categorised by its variety of approach, scale of ambition & determination to connect directly with people & place. It is always a product of collaboration with writers, artists & companies that offer inspiration.

New Writing Policy

Over the past five years, Pentabus has developed, commissioned, collaborated on & produced the work of over 30 writers. Commissioning policy is open to writers of all ages, backgrounds & ethnicities, and there is a policy of reading all unsolicited scripts.

Writers’ Weeks

Pentabus hosts an annual writers’ week to explore a local issue. *White Open Spaces* was the result of the first of these, examining ‘silent apartheid’ in the countryside. The production that followed played Edinburgh, transferred to Soho Theatre, toured to Sweden, and was broadcast on BBC Radio 4.

International Work

The company has spent 18 months working with SCRIPT and the Leonardo Foundation to send writers on International placements, which resulted in writers being placed in Sweden & Ireland.

Current Programme

*Origins* by Steven Canny & John Nicholson. Edinburgh Festival & Shrewsbury
Pigs Six writers spent a week in the country finding out where food on your plate comes from. Rehearsed readings of ten-minute plays for the Edinburgh Fringe 2009.

The Hunting Season, a new play by Sean Buckley in development following a writers' week in 2008

Tales of the Country, based on Brian Viner's weekly column in The Independent and subsequent book. A small scale touring show.

Past Work

Shuffle by Phillip Osment. Event theatre seen over three days at Merry Hill shopping centre in Dudley. (collaboration with the National Youth Theatre)

Underland, large scale site specific performance at Clearwell Caves, Forest of Dean, featuring image, music & text (collaboration with Kindle Theatre).

Kebab by Giana Cabiunariu. Translated from Romanian by Phillip Osment. (collaboration with the Royal Court & Ulster Bank Dublin Festival).

White Open Spaces: a collection of monologues by 7 different writers, short-listed for a Southbank Show Award (collaboration with BBC Radio Drama & Soho Theatre).

Strawberry Fields: political verbatim drama, around issues of migrant labour & industrial scale strawberry farms (collaboration with Alecky Blythe).

Precious Bane: a site-specific spectacle by Bryony Lavery.

5.4 HighTide Festival

The first HighTide new writing festival took place in 2007, and has become an annual event based at The Cut in Halesworth, Suffolk. Headed by Artistic Directors Samuel Hodges & Steven Jon Atkinson, HighTide is funded by a variety of sources including Grants for the arts.

Mission & New Writing Policy

- To source, develop & produce the latest emerging talent in new writing
- to invite a selection of mentor figures to work with the company
- to premiere new work at an annual HighTide Festival
- to support further life of this work.

There is currently an open policy to receive scripts for the next festival in 2010.

First Look – work with schools & young people

A number of school groups form a company in conjunction with the HighTide Artistic Residency Programme, in which school students mix with professional actors, writers and directors in the development of a new play. This collaboration with the Noel Coward and Clore Duffield foundations consists of four sessions both in and out of school and tickets for all shows in the Festival.

HighTide Festival 2007
Premiered eight half-hour plays (four full productions and four staged readings) of which four were published by Oberon. The writers were all paired with emerging directors & mentored over a three month development period by Paul Sirett & Richard Shannon. The festival also included masterclasses from Joe Penhall, Richard Eyre, David Farr & Nick Wright as well as panel discussions, comedy nights, 2 screenings of short films and an evening of music.

One of the plays, Assembly by Tom Basden, went to be developed for the Hay on Wye Festival 2008, and Tom is now adapting it as a six-part TV series.

**HighTide Festival 2008**

Four full productions:

*I caught Crabs in Walberswick* by Joel Horwood (transferred to Edinburgh Festival 08, toured the UK and concluded at the Bush Theatre. Co-produced with Eastern Angles),

*Stovepipe* by Adam Brace (indoor promenade production, transferred to W12 shopping centre in Shepherds Bush in 2009, in collaboration with National Theatre & The Bush),

*Switzerland* by Nick Payne (his first full length play, followed up by *The Pitch* – a mix of text & improvisation, produced by HighTide & premiered at the Latitude festival 2008)

*Certain Dark Things* devised by you need me, (transfers to Edinburgh Festival 2009)

Also a series of Breakfast shorts – previously unperformed short plays by a variety of writers including Chloe Moss & Gary Owen, short films, panel discussions, masterclasses & schools performances.

**HighTide Festival 2009**

Three full productions: *Fixer* by Lydia Adetunji, *Guardians* by Lucy Caldwell and *Muhmah* by Jesse Weaver. *Muhmah* has undergone a period of redevelopment since the festival and HighTide is currently in discussions with various theatres around the country with regards to a transfer.

The programme also included discussions, one off performances, comedy, music and literature with artists and speakers such as Katie Mitchell, David Hare, John Madden and Michael Billington.

**6 Sources & Constituency**

Participants in this research have included:

**Focus group attendees:**

- Oladipo Agboluaje
- Zawe Ashton
- Emma Bonsall, Menagerie
- Alex Bulmer, Graeae
- Lucy Caldwell
- Philippe Cherbonnier, Yellow Earth
- Oluwatoyin Odunsi, The Drum
- Moe Oworobode
- Ben Payne
- George Perrin, Nabokov
- Polarbear (Steve Camden)
Alison Comley, Theatre West
Kate Chapman, Theatre Writing Partnership
Anneliese Davidsen, Paines Plough
Sarah Dickenson, South West Writing Partnership
Sarah Ellis, Apples and Snakes
Sonia Hughes
Fin Kennedy
Mike Kenny
Verity Leigh, Quarantine
Lucy Morrison, Clean Break

Natalie Querol, The Empty Space
Esther Richardson
Keith Saha, 20 Stories High
Julia Samuels, 20 Stories High
Mark Sands, Deafinitely Theatre
Roxanna Silbert, Paines Plough
Chris Taylor, New Writing South
Kully Thiarai, Contact
Chris Thorpe, Unlimited
Bea Udeh, BRIT

Face-to-Face or phone Interviews were held with:

Alex Bulmer Graeae
Fiona Gasper freelance
Paul Harman freelance
Samuel Hodges HighTide
Charlotte Jones ITC
Emma Killick Tutti Frutti
Judith Kilvington Graeae
John E McGrath formerly of Contact
Jude Merrill Travelling Light
Orla O'Loughlin Pentabus
Robert Pacitti Pacitti Company / SPILL Festival of Performance
Ben Payne writer/director
Mark Ravenhill writer
Roxanna Silbert Paines Plough
Tessa Walker Paines Plough

Arts Council Officers
Isobel Hawson National Office
Roger McCann East
Simon Fitch East Midlands
Ian Rimington London
Jenny Killick (and team) London
Mark Mulqueen North East
Uschi Gatward South East
Roddy Gould North West
Phil Hindson South West
Mark Hollander Yorkshire

E-surveys were sent to:

Action Factory Fin Kennedy Oval House
Action Transport Fireraisers Pacitti Company
Lydia Adetunji Forced Entertainment Paines Plough
Oladipo Agboluaje Forkbeard Fantasy Pentabus
Apples and Snakes Frantic Assembly Pilot
Apples and Snakes Geese Polarbear
Zawe Ashton Graeae Quarantine
ATC Paul Harman Rasa
Babbling Vagabonds HighTide Real Circumstance
BAC HiJinx Red Ladder
Bandbazi Hoipolloi Esther Richardson
Blaize Sonia Hughes Rifco Arts
A note on the authors

Emma Dunton, Roger Nelson & Hetty Shand are currently freelance producers & Arts Consultants, each with over twenty years’ experience working in theatre and the performing arts. For the past decade, all three have been producing, touring and presenting new writing or new work throughout England and beyond.

Emma Dunton has worked for a variety of companies including the British Council, Volcano and was Executive Director at ATC. Roger Nelson was Executive Producer at Graeae and has also worked with Pacitti Company, Stan Won’t Dance and Southbank Centre among others. Hetty Shand has experience of a wide range of roles, from Education specialist to Executive Producer, in organisations including the National Theatre, Leicester Haymarket, and Palace Theatre Watford to Gate Theatre, Paines Plough and ATC.

This is the first research project they have worked on collectively.

E-survey managed by Audiences London.

Thanks to all those who have given advice, in particular Ben Payne, Anne Torreggiani and Fiona Gasper.

Emma Dunton, Roger Nelson & Hetty Shand
July 2009
Appendix 1: E-survey

New writing or new work - an investigation into the changes in new writing for the stage over the last 6 years

We are conducting research on behalf of Arts Council England to assess new writing in the English theatre from 2003 to 2008. We are doing this by collecting both quantitative data and the opinions and ideas of those working in new theatre writing. We are surveying theatre companies, agencies, writers, producers and texts, including work for children and young people. Our study will also consider Arts Council policies and funding mechanisms. The research will culminate in a report with recommendations presented to the Arts Council in July 2009.

There are two distinct teams undertaking this research: British Theatre Consortium, led by David Edgar & Dan Rebellato who are conducting a large quantitative survey, looking at levels of commissions and productions in new writing; and ourselves, Roger Nelson, Hetty Shand and Emma Dunton, 3 independent freelance producers who have spent the last 15 years producing new writing for theatre on the small & mid-scale. We have been commissioned to focus on recent developments in more experimental practice and collaborative ways of working. Our emphasis, is on work presented on smaller stages and in non-theatre venues.

So far we have conducted a series of individual and small group discussions with a range of participants, which have raised a series of issues around new writing. Now we would like to see if a wider group of people in our constituency share some of the opinions and feelings voiced in these sessions. Therefore we are asking you for no more than 15 minutes of your time to fill in the following questionnaire. The results/data drawn from this questionnaire will feed directly into our final report for the Arts Council. This e-survey has been compiled in conjunction with Audiences London.
Thank you in advance for your time. Please click "Next" to continue...

Q1  Which of the following describe your involvement in new writing? *(Please tick all that apply)*
- Writer
- Director
- Producer
- Literary Manager
- Presenter (venue)
- Performer
- Other *(please tick and state below)*

Q2  And which is your **main** involvement? *(Please tick only one)*
- Writer
- Director
- Producer
- Literary Manager
- Presenter (venue)
- Performer
- Other *(Q1a)*
Q3  On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being a newcomer to writing for performance and five being an advanced and established writer for performance, at what point in your writing career are you? (Please tick only one)

- 1 - newcomer to writing
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 - established and advanced writer

Q4  Is the majority of your work being developed and seen... (Please tick only one)

- In London
- Outside London
- Mix of both London and outside London

Q5  Is the majority of the work that you are involved in coming from... (Please tick only one)

- Inside London
- Outside London
- Mix of both inside and outside London

Q6  Is the majority of the work that you are presenting coming from... (Please tick only one)

- Inside London
- Outside London
- Mix of both London and outside London

Q6  Please describe the balance in the development/showing of your work between London and outside London
Q6  Please describe the balance in the work that you are involved in between that in London and that outside London.

Q6  Please describe the balance in the work that you are presenting between that from London and that from outside London.

Q7  Which of the following best describes the areas of work you are involved in? (Please tick all that apply)

- New Writing
- Devised work
- Physical Theatre
- Spoken Word
- New work
- Other (please tick and state below)
Q8  For you, which of the following could be included in descriptions of ‘new writing/work’? (Please tick all that apply)

- An individual writing a play
- A writer collaborating with other artists
- Other (please tick and state below)

Q9  How much new writing and/or new work is being presented in England now, compared to 6 years ago? (Please tick only one)

- Much more
- Slightly more
- About the same
- Slightly less
- Much less
- Don’t know

Q10 In general, has there been a change in the amount of new writing/work that English venues are programming now, compared to 6 years ago? (Please tick only one)

- They’re programming a lot more now
- They’re programming a bit more now
- They’re programming about the same amount as 6 years ago
- They’re programming a bit less now
- They’re programming a lot less now
- Don’t know
Q11 We're interested in finding out if there's a difference in the change in the amount of new writing/work that venues are programming now, between London and non-London venues.

Do you think venues in **London** are... *(Please tick only one)*
- Programming a lot more now
- Programming a bit more now
- Programming about the same amount as 6 years ago
- Programming a bit less now
- Programming a lot less now
- Don’t know

Q12 And do you think venues **outside London** are... *(Please tick only one)*
- Programming a lot more now
- Programming a bit more now
- Programming about the same amount as 6 years ago
- Programming a bit less now
- Programming a lot less now
- Don’t know

Q13 Has the amount of original new writing/work being programmed specifically for children changed over the last 6 years... *(Please tick only one)*
- Greatly increased
- Slightly increased
- Remained about the same
- Slightly decreased
Q14  To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statement? *(Please tick only one)*

"In targeting a children’s’ market/audience, it’s easier for venues to sell adaptations of known work, rather than original new writing specifically for children."

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don’t know

Q15  Would you say there has been a change in the number of black and minority ethnic new writers emerging over the past 6 years? *(Please tick only one)*

- A lot more black and minority ethnic writers
- Slightly more black and minority ethnic writers
- About the same amount of black and minority ethnic writers
- Slightly fewer black and minority ethnic writers
- A lot fewer black and minority ethnic writers
- Don’t know

Q16  Has there been a change over the past 6 years in the amount of work from black and minority ethnic writers that is getting on stage? *(Please tick only one)*

- Large increase
- Slight increase
- About the same amount
Q17 Would you say there has been a change in the number of Deaf and disabled new writers emerging over the past 6 years? (Please tick only one)
- A lot more Deaf and disabled writers
- Slightly more Deaf and disabled writers
- About the same amount of Deaf and disabled writers
- Slightly fewer Deaf and disabled ethnic writers
- A lot fewer Deaf and disabled ethnic writers
- Don’t know

Q18 Has there been a change over the past 6 years in the amount of work from Deaf and disabled writers that is getting on stage? (Please tick only one)
- Large increase
- Slight increase
- About the same amount
- Slight decrease
- Large decrease
- Don’t know

Q19 Do you think there has been a change in the number of writers emerging from other areas of performing arts such as spoken word, music, comedy, cabaret, and dance? (Please tick only one)
- Large increase
Q21 How successful do you think the following methods have been at developing new voices? (Please tick one rating for each item)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Very successful</th>
<th>Quite successful</th>
<th>Neither successful nor unsuccessful</th>
<th>Quite unsuccessful</th>
<th>Very unsuccessful</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisational participatory programmes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writers attachments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased literary management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please tick and state below)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q22 To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statement? (Please tick only one)

"There is a wider variety of work seen on stage under the banner of new writing/work now than there was 6 years ago."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agreement Level</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q23 Do you think that new work which uses alternative spaces for performance attracts a new type of audience? (Please tick only one)

- Yes
- No
- Don’t know

Q24 Can you describe this new audience?

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________

Q25 To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statement? (Please tick only one)

"The Grants for the arts programme has enabled new and extraordinary projects to emerge from individuals and small companies over the last 6 years."

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don’t know
Q26  To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following statement? (Please tick only one)

"It has become increasingly difficult for older writers at the beginning of their career or mid-career to get funding or commissions."

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Don't know

Q27  Over the past 6 years there has been an increase in funding for residencies and attachments, with less emphasis on end product. To what extent do you think this has contributed to a development of the writers’ craft? (Please tick only one)

- Has greatly developed the writers’ craft
- Has developed the writers’ craft somewhat
- Has made no contribution to the development of the writers’ craft
- Has been detrimental to the writers’ craft
- Don’t know

Q28  Has there been an increase in the amount of opportunities for professional development of writers (e.g. residencies and attachments) over the past 6 years? (Please tick only one)

- Yes
Q29 In your opinion, has this increase in professional development opportunities led to an increase in the quality of work being seen on stage? *(Please tick only one)*
- Yes
- No
- Don’t know

Q30 Over the past 6 years there has been a perceived increase in the role of the dramaturg. Without taking instances of good or bad dramaturgical practice into account, on the whole, do you think that this development is beneficial to the sector? *(Please tick only one)*
- Yes
- No
- Don’t know

Q31 Please tell us what you think about this development.

_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Q32 Which of the following services provided by writers' development agencies/programmes have been useful to you? (Please tick all that apply)
- Lists and contacts of individual writers
- Script library
- Facilitating connections between writers and organisations
- Providing support with funding applications
- Providing dramaturgical support
- A new writing network in your region
- Other (please tick and state below)

Q33 How important are these services to your work or organisation? (Please tick only one)
- Very important
- Quite important
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Not very important
- Not at all important
- Don't know

Please click "Submit" to complete the e-survey