



# Kick the Dust Evaluation

Final Report

National Lottery Heritage Fund

June 2023

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## Introduction

The Heritage Fund's Kick the Dust (KtD) programme sought to address the underrepresentation of young people in the heritage sector and had 4 specific aims:

- Increase the ambition, scale, and quality of youth engagement with heritage.
- Make heritage relevant to more and a greater diversity of young people, building on their needs and interests.
- Develop sustainable, ongoing work with young people within heritage organisations.
- Show the value of youth engagement with heritage.

Twelve large-scale projects across the UK received grants of up to £1million to embed high-quality youth engagement in heritage organisations. Over its 5-year lifespan, the programme engaged thousands of young people across all twelve projects, with over 5,000 young people participating in the KtD programme at any one time.<sup>1</sup>

Renaisi was appointed as the programme evaluator in 2018 to understand the impact of Kick the Dust. The evaluation took a mixed methods approach which included: collection of different project output and outcome data; a range of project surveys; and in-depth qualitative interviews with four KtD projects selected as case studies.

## Evaluation findings

- KtD funding provided heritage organisations with the time and financial resources to trial and develop new approaches to embedding youth engagement within their work. As a result, the twelve KtD projects successfully produced a body of high-quality, innovative heritage content devised and led by young people.
- KtD catalysed engagement with a diverse group of participants in heritage. However, there was a wide range of levels of diversity across the different projects and this could be attributable to the local demographic profiles or the type of project. Further work would be needed to capture, monitor, and analyse the range of people involved in heritage projects.
- KtD projects engaged young people in a multitude of ways and increasingly gave them the reins to lead. This has led to positive outcomes for both the young people and the heritage organisations:
  - The key benefits young people experienced to engaging with heritage specifically (as opposed to other forms of youth engagement) included connecting with people with similar backgrounds and interests, connecting with people from different backgrounds and experiences, exploring identity, connection to the local area.
  - By empowering young people to curate and interpret heritage, KtD has increased young people's awareness, understanding, and engagement with heritage.

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<sup>1</sup> As mentioned previously, determining the precise number of KtD participants proved challenging, and the total number of individual KtD participants is expected to be significantly higher than 5,000.

- KtD helped delivery organisations to develop their own expertise in working with young people, welcoming a more diverse group of people to their services, and giving young people decision-making powers. Whilst some organisations have made structural changes to embed these learnings within their institutions, the extent to which these changes will be sustained in the long-term is uncertain, especially when organisations face financial uncertainty.
- Key drivers of success included:
  - The Heritage Fund's commitment to large-scale and long-term funding.
  - The approach that the Heritage Fund took to light-touch project management.
  - The skills, expertise, and stability of project managers.
  - Innovative approaches to youth engagement within projects that particularly resonated with young people.

## Recommendations

### Recommendations for the Heritage Fund:

- Address the ongoing barriers young people face to engaging in heritage as part of their broader funding strategy.
- Commit to long-term funding of projects which seek to trial new approaches and create sustainable change.
- Provide space and flexibility for grantees to reflect, learn and continuously improve, including opportunities for peer learning.
- Set youth engagement requirements for organisations applying to different funding streams based on learning from previous funds.
- Build on decision-making methods piloted through KtD and embed youth voice in funding decisions and across the Heritage Fund more broadly.
- Clearly define 'diversity' and establish a framework for capturing the diversity of participants in future programmes.
- Support projects with sustainability planning and identifying opportunities to embed sustainability in youth engagement programme design to allow for long-term impact.
- Consider how best to utilise opportunities to share learning from multi-year programme.

### Recommendations for organisations delivering work engaging young people in heritage:

- Embed the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances within project plans while prioritising stable project management.
- Be ambitious in giving young people decision-making authority in project delivery.
- Establish a framework for community representation amongst staff/volunteers.
- Embed activities focusing on identity and place throughout youth engagement (especially for organisations without a large heritage component in their delivery).
- Consider how youth voice can be embedded throughout their wider work.
- Embed sustainability of youth engagement in heritage within project planning.

Renaisi was appointed in 2018 to evaluate the impact of Kick the Dust – the Heritage Fund flagship programme to address the underrepresentation of young people in the heritage sector. Since then, Renaisi has carried out surveys, questionnaires, 1-2-1 interviews and workshops to understand the impact of the programme and the reasons for that impact. Drawing on this evidence, we have analysed the programme and made recommendations for future interventions to engage young people in heritage. In this report, we describe our methodology for undertaking the evaluation, share our detailed findings, analyse the impact of the programme, and make recommendations for future work in this area.

## Notes on the programme and projects

Throughout the report when we refer to 'Kick the Dust (KtD)' we are referring to the programme. When we reference findings or analysis relating to specific projects or initiatives within projects, we will reference the detailed projects. Not all our findings are attributable to the programme design or delivery, and we have specified where we believe that projects have had particular impacts and the factors which have contributed to those. However, it is important to note that Renaisi was commissioned to conduct a programme-level evaluation of KtD funding as a whole rather than an in-depth evaluation of each individual project. Grantees themselves undertook their own evaluations to explore the process and impact of their specific work. Throughout the report, we also acknowledge that there are wider contextual factors which have contributed to the outcomes and impact of KtD.

## Overview of Kick the Dust

KtD was launched in 2016 as a £10million strategic investment to address the underrepresentation of young people in the heritage sector. Twelve large-scale projects across the UK, each led by a consortium of heritage and youth partners, received grants of up to £1million to embed high-quality youth engagement in heritage organisations.

In 2020, an additional £1.27million was distributed to KtD projects operating in England, through the Youth Accelerator Fund. The Youth Accelerator Fund was set up in January 2020 to address urgent needs in the youth sector, and to expand existing projects at The Heritage Fund, Sport England, Arts Council England and the British Film Institute.<sup>12</sup> This funding has been utilised by KtD projects operating in England to undertake additional activity and engage more young people, in line with their original project priorities.<sup>13</sup> Activity funded through this additional funding has been evaluated in line with all other KtD activity.

The programme aimed to put young people at the heart of heritage projects and support heritage staff to develop the skills and confidence to sustain youth engagement beyond KtD's lifespan. The programme also sought to address the lack of robust evaluation and evidence of both the impact of youth engagement in heritage, as well as how to do this engagement effectively.

The KtD programme had 4 specific aims:

- Increase the ambition, scale, and quality of youth engagement with heritage.
- Make heritage relevant to more and a greater diversity of young people, building on their needs and interests.
- Develop sustainable, ongoing work with young people within heritage organisations.
- Show the value of youth engagement with heritage.

In line with the research that informed the design of the KtD, the programme design has three underlying principles:

1. The programme will be youth focused. Young people will be at the heart of projects, with young people and adults working collaboratively on projects.
2. The programme will embed youth engagement in heritage in the long-term. Staff will develop the skills and confidence to sustain youth engagement in heritage and organisations will be committed to involving young people in the running of the organisations.
3. The programme will be committed to evaluation and evidence. There will be high quality evaluation on individual projects, but also look at the impact of the programme as a whole.

## The twelve projects

The consortia funded through KtD were geographically diverse, spanning the whole of the UK, as well as covering different sub-sectors of heritage, including natural heritage, industrial heritage, intangible cultural heritage, museums and archives, and the built environment. The locations of each project are mapped below.



The twelve **KtD projects (and the organisations delivering them)** were the following:

**Don't Settle** (We Don't Settle, formerly Beatfreaks Arts)

Based in Birmingham and the Black Country, Don't Settle was created to address the lack of representation of young People of Colour in the heritage sector. During the 4.5 years of delivery, the Don't Settle Curators/Activators co-curated and co-designed 8 major heritage

outputs creating new narratives, such as exhibitions, audio tours and re-imagining heritage spaces.

We Don't Settle is a legacy of the project, establishing itself as an independent organisation from Beatfreaks in April 2022. We Don't Settle continues to work with young people who are minoritised by systems and structures to create a more equitable society, through arts, culture and heritage, including co-creating its future programmes with Don't Settle alumni.

#### **Future Proof Parks (Groundwork UK)**

Groundwork partnered with Fields in Trust and National Youth Agency to deliver 'Future Proof Parks' – inspiring young people to get involved in preserving their local parks and greenspace heritage in five 'hub' locations across England; East, North East, North West, West and West Midlands. Between 2018 and 2021, the programme worked with 43 'Friends of' park groups to involve young people, through training and building capacity for other activities such as crowdfunding.

As well as practical improvements to green spaces, young people reported increased confidence, sense of ownership, and transferrable skills gained, whilst 'Friends of' parks groups reported improved wellbeing due to interactions with young people, transfer of knowledge and ideas, and more positive perceptions of young people. At each of the hubs, Youth and Community practitioners led delivery, designing activities tailored to diverse groups of young people and persuading 'Friends of' park groups around the long-term benefits of youth participation.

#### **Hands on Heritage (Amgueddfa Cymru - Museum Wales)**

Between October 2017 and March 2023, Amgueddfa Cymru's Hands on Heritage initiative placed young people at the heart of decision-making processes within the museum. The main focus of the initiative was the creation of the Amgueddfa Cymru Producers (ACPs), a network of diverse young creatives between the ages of 18-24, who acted as agents of change and were involved in a wide range of projects.

Following the end of KtD funding, the youth engagement initiative was rebranded as Bloedd – Llais Pobl Ifanc / Young People's Voice. A new group targeting people aged 25-30 was created to ensure continuation for long term ACPs. The posts of Youth Engagement Coordinator, Facilitators (x2), and Admin Officer were made permanent, and core funding ensured the continuation of ACP involvement.

#### **Hope Streets (Curious Minds)**

Hope Streets was a five-year organisational change project designed and led by Curious Minds, which transformed the way that five museums across the North West work with teenagers. Hope Streets enabled participants to delve into the hidden history of their local 'Hope Street', connecting young people with organisations, artists and experts to explore and 're-present' their local heritage.

Over the course of the project, an independent evaluation of Hope Streets reported increased youth engagement, more opportunities for youth voice and decision making, an increased and ambitious commitment to working with young people, permanent roles in youth engagement becoming embedded in staff structures, and museums developing and sharing their expertise in youth engagement.

#### **Ignite Yorkshire (IVE)**

Focussing on the industrial heritage of Yorkshire, Ignite Yorkshire tested new ways of connecting a 21<sup>st</sup> century generation of young people with the stories embedded in the rural

and urban fabric of the region from the last 250 years. Over four years, Ignite Yorkshire delivered over 50 projects with young people increasingly leading the direction of project work and IVE's strategy.

As well as finding new ways to interpret industrial heritage, young people trained the wider community of museum and heritage practitioners in the north and gained skills and experience that helped them into further education, employment, and training. Participants also reported that their wellbeing was supported by being able to stay connected during lockdowns, having safe settings to share their perspectives on heritage, and being introduced to new experiences and networks and by being paid for their creative input.

### **Keeping it Wild** (London Wildlife Trust)

Keeping it Wild inspired over 1000 young people aged 11-25 to become actively involved in the protection and promotion of London's natural heritage. The programme focused on young people who are typically under-represented in the environmental sector, with 93% of participants coming from at least one of the target groups (Black, Asian or minoritised ethnic heritage, disabled young people, or young people from lower socioeconomic communities).

Young people took part in **Environmental Social Action Projects** in their local communities, completed **Paid Traineeships** and were involved with our **Youth Forum** with the overall aim of making nature more inclusive, accessible and relevant to young people living in London. London Wildlife Trust now has a dedicated, permanent Youth Programmes team that which are continues to deliver the paid traineeship scheme and build strong partnerships with youth groups/organisations, as well as a new Youth Board to ensure youth voice is at the heart of the Trust's governance structure.

### **Kick the Dust Norfolk Journeys** (Norfolk Museums Service)

Kick the Dust Norfolk Journeys provided opportunities for young people to get involved in heritage-themed work experience, volunteering opportunities and creative projects, with a key focus on embedding youth voice in 10 museums across Norfolk.

Young people were able to progress from Player to Shaper to Leader, co-curating exhibitions alongside museum professionals, taking on traineeships and Governance roles, planning and hosting major events, commissioning videographers to create films capturing their learning as part of the legacy project. Further, over 400 staff took part in training ensuring that had the knowledge and confidence to engage young people with challenging and complex needs.

### **Our Shared Cultural Heritage** (British Council)

Our Shared Cultural Heritage explored the shared cultures and histories of the UK and South Asia. The British Council managed the project, working in partnership with Glasgow Life Museums and Manchester Museum, with support from UK Youth.

Throughout the programme, young people were involved in the design, decision-making, and delivery of a number of projects within museums in Manchester and Glasgow, as well as wider cultural programming in the cities and nationally. This included: long-term paid opportunities such as cultural apprenticeships and traineeships; one-off paid roles such as digital producers; social action projects where young people planned and lead their own projects and developed social media campaigns; opportunities to explore ways to communicate shared histories and create safe spaces for dialogue. Other central projects developed by young people include Museum Tests, where young people workshopped new ways of exploring museum objects and questioning colonial narratives, which has directly

influenced how objects are credited. Other projects include the Manifesto for Change young people are developing to share their insights with the heritage sector.

### **Reimagine, Remake, Replay** (The Nerve Centre)

Reimagine, Remake, Replay utilised creative media and digital technologies to connect young people with heritage in Northern Ireland. This resulted in young people curating exhibitions on the themes of Climate Justice, Arts & Wellbeing and LGBTQ+ Rights.

### **Scotland 365** (National Museums Scotland)

Scotland 365 provided opportunities for young people to explore contemporary Scottish heritage in an intensive programme of co-design and co-delivery across six projects over 15 months. Participants co-led projects, working alongside museum staff and external professionals to design projects, voice opinions and produce prototypes.

Heritage staff have gained confidence in engaging young people and adopting co-designed approaches to youth engagement. Prototypes developed by young people across each of the areas of the project have been developed into public programmes, such as the development of a Hidden Histories LGBTQIA+ trail available via Smartify and an Escape Room at National Museum of Flight. Consideration of workplace representation and routes to employment, as highlighted by young people, is ongoing through exploring schemes such as Developing the Young Workforce.

### **Shout Out Loud** (English Heritage)

Since 2018, English Heritage's national youth engagement project, Shout Out Loud, has provided a platform for young people to explore heritage sites and collections across England, helping them to uncover untold stories from our past. By amplifying their voices, the now permanent youth engagement programme continues to put young people's ideas and stories at the heart of English Heritage with increased representation and creative opportunities for involvement.

A new pathway of engagement is enabling English Heritage to build a larger, more diverse group of young people through their re-launched Young Producer programme, Young Associates scheme, Young Producer Alumni, and paid placement opportunities focused on developing digital skills. English Heritage are also looking to embed youth engagement further into business-as-usual activities including the HR team, the Acquisitions, Disposals and Loans Committee, and the Blue Plaques Panel.

### **Y Heritage** (Leicester YMCA)

Y Heritage empowered young people by creating a panel to decide where funding was allocated to celebrate local heritage. Leicestershire-based organisations applied for funding up to £30,000 from this young people's panel, with opportunities for work or training a prerequisite for receiving funding.

Following a successful end to the original 3-year project, Y Heritage Legacy (YHL) was created to take the learning from Y Heritage and grow the project, opening up heritage opportunities for young people from many other YMCAs across Central England. YHL concentrated on creating paid jobs for YMCA residents for 12 months, developing a Heritage Youth Forum (a group of 8 YMCA residents), as well as partnering with Norfolk Museum Service to deliver educational trips for young people. The Heritage Fund have committed to continuing to support this partnership with Norfolk Museums Service, with a new project ('Your Heritage Your Future') seeking to enable many more young people to find meaningful opportunities with Museums and heritage sites.

## The impact of COVID-19

While the impact of Covid-19 was not a key focus in this evaluation, due to the long-term nature of the programme, the impact of the pandemic could not be ignored, with many projects having to switch to remote delivery during the national lockdowns. Projects reported significant challenges in the years 2020-22, including staff furloughs, budget challenges, participants struggling with their mental health, and changes in organisational priorities.

“I think we've struggled to really kind of engage with different youth sector organisations... I think after COVID, it became a lot more difficult to get in touch with those kinds of sector [organisations] and everybody was so stretched and trying to figure out the new normal, as it was called that, I think it became just very difficult to reach out to those organisations.”

Delivery staff

Given this context, projects were positive about the resilience KtD staff and participants showed when adapting to these challenges. One stand-out example of this was with the 2020 Festival of Hope, where Hope Streets participants played a key role in pivoting at short notice from an in-person festival to fully remote delivery.

“They'd spent months working on plans for a festival. That then had to shift quite dramatically because of the situation we all found ourselves in, and we took real kind of inspiration from them as young people and how they dealt with that situation. It made us as staff feel, more confident I think after that Festival of Hope, because it hadn't been possible to do it within our museum sites as kind of maybe originally intended.”

Delivery staff

Further, several participants stated that taking part in the project during the lockdowns had supported their mental health and wellbeing. Given the widely reported impacts of the pandemic on social isolation, anxiety, and other factors related to mental health, several projects sought to create activities that would support participants during this difficult time. One example from Reimagine, Remake, Replay were the weekly check-ins that provided an opportunity for participants to share how they had been feeling in a relaxed and welcoming space.

“We had a weekly wellbeing group, and that was a really nice space to just kind of get together and you would check in at the start of the session... you could say as much or as little as you wanted, it wasn't something that's very structured.”

Young person

## The Evaluation Findings

Through its KtD programme-level evaluation, The Heritage Fund aimed to understand the overall impact of the programme and whether its aims were achieved.<sup>2</sup> The Heritage Fund requested more emphasis on understanding ‘what makes heritage special’ in the final years of the evaluation; namely, how young people benefit from engaging in heritage compared to other engagement in other sectors.<sup>3</sup>

To address The Heritage Fund’s aims, the evaluation incorporated a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods:



Quantitative analysis of project output tools submitted by all KtD projects at the end of delivery years.<sup>4</sup> These included the number of participants engaged, details on staff and volunteer training, and examples of outputs produced.



Quantitative analysis of three surveys: the project team survey, the consortium partner survey, and the youth engagement in heritage survey (aimed at staff members or volunteers who worked at organisations involved in KtD but were not directly involved in the project).



Quantitative analysis of outcomes data gathered by surveying KtD participants. These survey questions focused on the impact of participating on young people.



In-depth qualitative case study interviews with four KtD projects (Hands on Heritage, Hope Streets, Keeping it Wild and Shout Out Loud), to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of KtD and reflections on learning.



Analysis of additional qualitative documentation and quantitative data provided by KtD projects on an ad-hoc basis, including project-level evaluations, case studies and outputs produced by young people.

Survey answer	Weighted score
Strongly agree	5
Agree	4
Neither agree nor disagree	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1

To simplify comparisons between levels of agreement with different statements in surveys, a weighted score has been calculated for each question asked to participants. Higher numbers

<sup>2</sup> Each of the projects also had local evaluations that were used to inform delivery. As such, this programme-level evaluation provides a snapshot of the projects, with more detail covered in each of the project-level evaluations.

<sup>3</sup> This is a question that emerged strongly following the interim KtD report, and one of growing interest within the wider heritage sector.

<sup>4</sup> There were some difficulties in tracking the numbers of individual participants projects engaged, with many engaging for multiple years being double-counted due to filling in forms more than once. There were also some concerns early in the programme about the high number of categories used in the demographic information questionnaire, with several participants highlighting that they did not feel represented, leading Renaisi to use a more stripped-back form with broader categories and ‘prefer to self-describe’ options.

(tending towards 5) indicate more positive responses. Lower numbers (tending towards 1) indicate more negative responses.

This section explores the findings of our evaluation on what KtD achieved, the enablers of KtD's success, the legacy of the programme, and what makes heritage special – namely, the precise benefits of engaging in heritage specifically.

## What did Kick the Dust achieve?

### **KtD engaged a large number of young people across the UK.**

Over its 5-year lifespan, the programme engaged thousands of young people across all twelve projects, with over 5,000 young people participating in the KtD programme at any one time.<sup>5</sup> Young people's participation was categorised into four levels; 'Involved' participants, who engaged with KtD in a more light-touch way (e.g. one-off events), and participants at the 'Consultation', 'Collaboration', and 'Co-leadership' levels, who were involved in the programme long-term and with more decision-making responsibility.

### **KtD engaged a diverse group of young people, particularly with regards to age and ethnicity – but many at the higher levels of engagement had a prior interest in heritage.**

The programme was broadly able to engage young people from different backgrounds.<sup>6</sup> Regarding ethnicity, 62% of surveyed KtD participants identified as White, compared with 81.7% of the broader UK population.<sup>7</sup> KtD also engaged people in more deprived areas, with approximately half of surveyed KtD participants (47%) living in the most deprived areas.<sup>8</sup>

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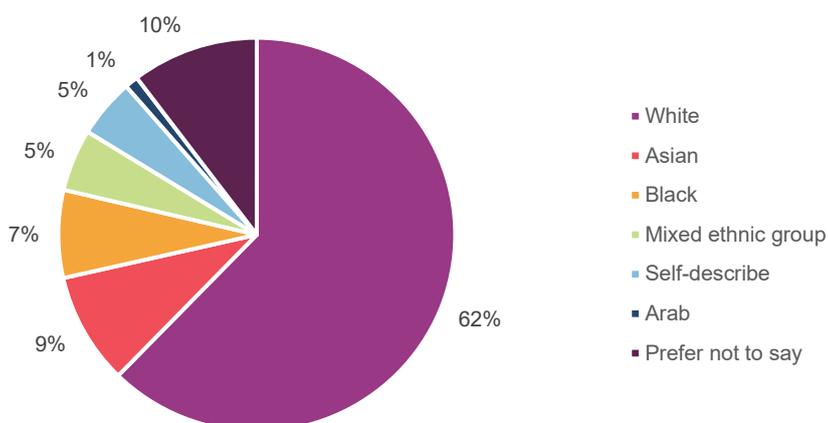
<sup>5</sup> As mentioned previously, determining the precise number of KtD participants proved challenging, and the total number of individual KtD participants is expected to be significantly higher than 5,000.

<sup>6</sup> Demographic information was collected by projects on an annual basis. Information was not provided by all participants, while some provided data on more than one occasion. It is not possible to distinguish individual participants due to having no individual identifiers. We therefore use the phrase 'surveyed KtD participants' to refer to data provided by participants at the point of being surveyed.

<sup>7</sup> United Kingdom Census 2021

<sup>8</sup> We analysed this data using Indices of Multiple Deprivation, which rank areas in terms of deprivation based on several indices. Whilst this is not a perfect comparison, as areas are ranked for each nation rather than the whole of the UK, we can use these figures to indicate roughly how deprived the areas participants were living in are.

### Ethnicity of participants (N = 8101)



### Indices of Multiple Deprivation (N = 6207)



There were wide disparities in diversity with respect to ethnicity between projects due to the local context of where projects were based and what the projects were focused on. For example, in Year 4 of KtD (2020 – 21), 81% of KtD Norfolk Journeys participants identified as White<sup>9</sup>, compared to 8% of participants on Don't Settle (a project primarily celebrating the heritage of young people of colour).<sup>10</sup>

Some projects reported a lack of diversity in terms of ethnicity for participants at the more senior levels of engagement, an issue that was raised by both staff and participants. There was also some concern amongst projects that, despite the figures calculated using Indices of Multiple Deprivation, there was little diversity in terms of social class amongst participants at the more senior levels of engagement.<sup>11</sup> This may have been due to many university students and graduates applying for those more senior roles to build on their pre-existing interest in heritage.

<sup>9</sup> The latest census figures for Norfolk report that 95% of the population identified as White.

<sup>10</sup> The latest census figures for the West Midlands report that 77% of the population identified as White.

<sup>11</sup> Social class in the UK context is difficult to quantify, with multiple understandings and definitions. In this context, this is referring to the high proportion of university students and graduates at the more senior levels of KtD participant engagement.

“There was definitely something around the Young Producers programme... a lot of them are young people who were already very interested in history and heritage, and I don't think it was particularly ethnically diverse or diverse in terms of backgrounds in other ways.”

#### Evaluator

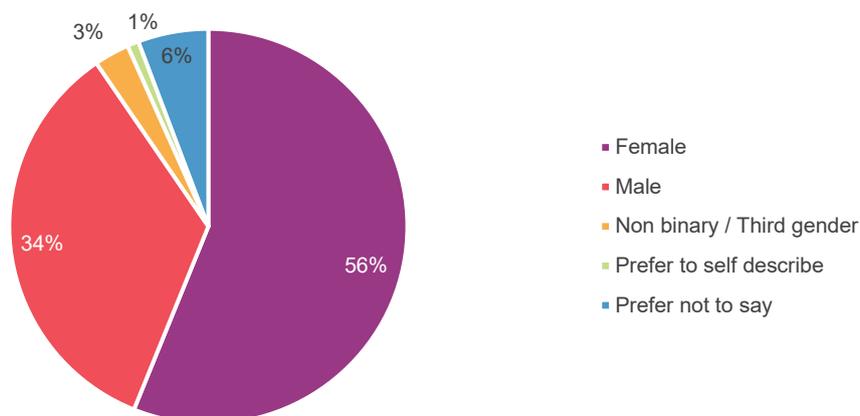
One important means of engaging young people from under-served backgrounds was highlighting stories or heritage that have traditionally been unheard or overlooked. Many projects increasingly focused on this after the broader societal focus on injustice and inequity following the murder of George Floyd in May 2020. Activities on this theme included participants reinterpreting and changing the display of existing heritage collections, or inviting participants to spaces they otherwise would not have been in. One example of this comes from Shout Out Loud, where classical musicians from underrepresented backgrounds were invited to an English Heritage site to highlight stories that appealed to them through their music.

“I worked with an orchestra who described themselves as black and ethnically diverse young musicians. And they all [played] classical music. So already, they are underrepresented in a sort of classical music world. And then they are also underrepresented in heritage and history... they chose which site they'd like to learn about and focus on, they chose which stories they were interested in, and they did their own research that was sort of supported with meeting historians and things to make sure it was accurate, and then they wrote their pieces of music, and they thought about the arrangements and what they wanted it to be.”

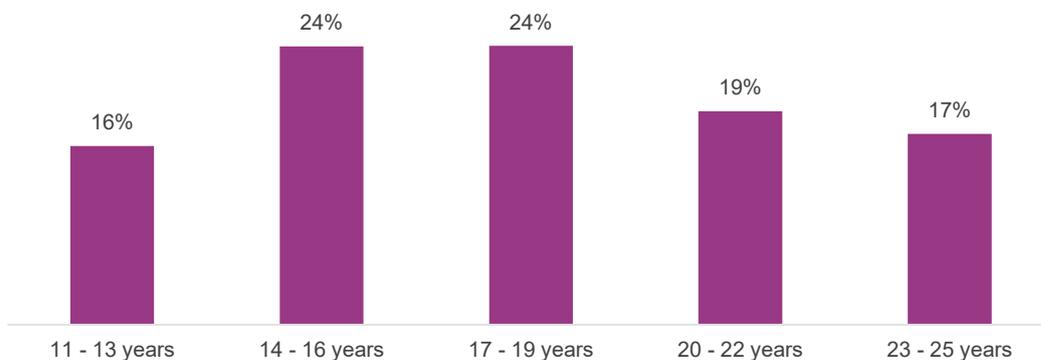
#### Delivery Staff

The programme participants were reasonably diverse in terms of age. Approximately half of surveyed participants (48%) were aged 14 – 19, the middle of the age range for young people eligible to be KtD participants. Predictably, those participating at the more senior levels of engagement (‘Consultation’, ‘Collaboration’, and ‘Co-leadership’) tended to be older than those participating in a more light-touch way. In terms of gender, there were consistently more female than male participants over the course of the programme. Slightly over half (56%) of surveyed participants identified as female, with 34% male and 3% identifying as non-binary/third gender.

**Gender of participants (N = 7729)**



**Age of participants (N = 8928)**

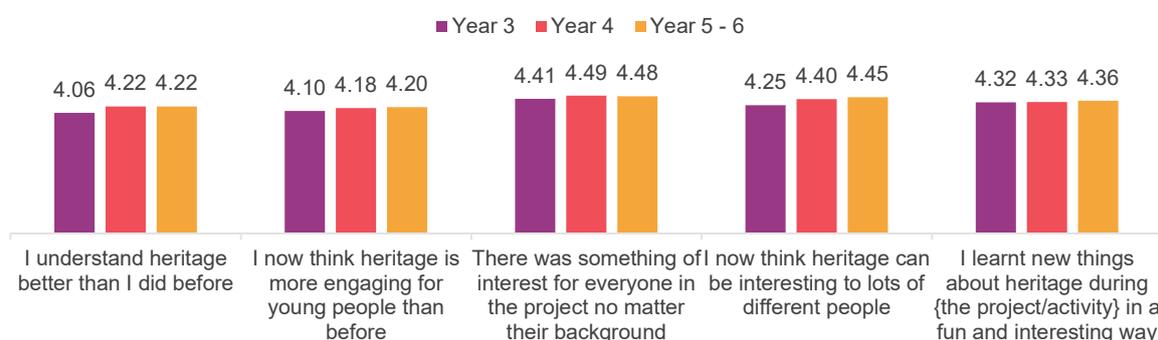


**Participating in KtD helped change young people’s perceptions of heritage.**

One aim of Kick the Dust was to make heritage more interesting and relevant to young people. The findings from the surveys suggest that KtD was broadly successful in changing young people’s perceptions of heritage. Statements about understanding heritage better, thinking heritage is engaging, there being something of interest for all participants, heritage being interesting to different people, and learning about heritage in an interesting way, all

received weighted scores above 4, suggesting strong agreement with these statements.

### Young people's outcomes data: Weighted scores on relevance of heritage for young people



These findings were reflected in the qualitative data. While many of the young people interviewed had a previous interest in heritage, several young people spoke about how they had gained an appreciation for heritage through taking part and were looking to explore this interest going forward. One example from Keeping it Wild was of a young person sharing how they had grown to appreciate the importance of natural heritage through participating, having previously had little interest in the subject.

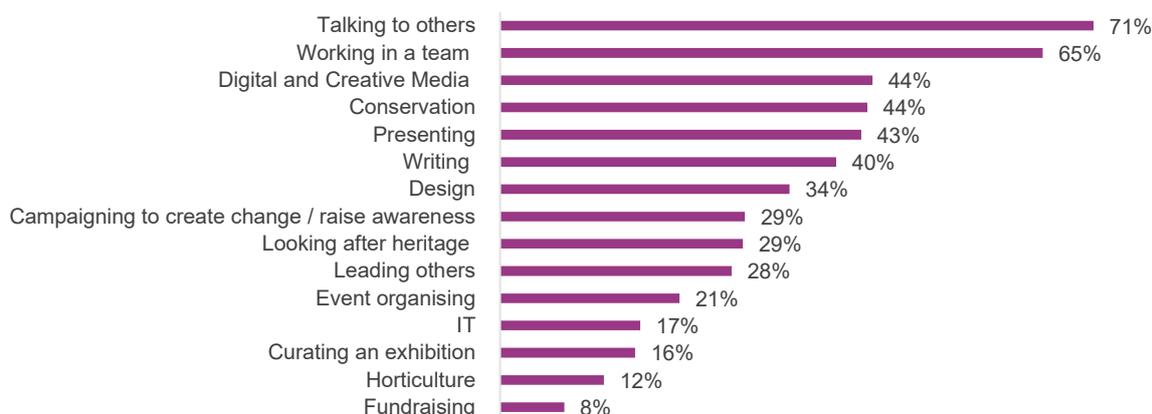
“It helped me get a lot better connection with nature. It made me realise how important nature is and how important animals are for wildlife. I won’t lie, I was very much on that ego mindset, but I then I feel that shifted to the eco-side, I realise that you do need the wildlife and those animals as well to help us humans.”

Young person

### Young people were engaged in heritage projects in a multitude of ways and increasingly given the reins to lead.

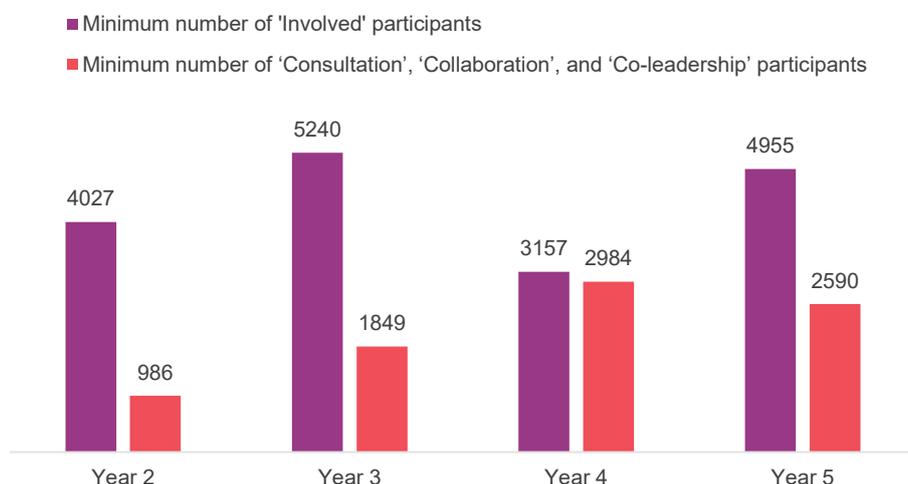
All twelve KtD projects provided young people with different options for getting involved in their heritage projects. At the height of KtD delivery in Year 4 (2020 – 21), at least one-third of KtD participants were engaged in design, writing, presenting, conservation, and digital and creative media, with over half of participants talking to others and working in a team to support these activities to happen.

### Activities surveyed young people have been involved in (Year 4 only, non-exhaustive list, N = 275)



Over the 5 years of delivery, young people progressed to become increasingly more embedded in KtD, with organisations handing over the reins and engaging young people at the higher levels. By the fourth year of the Kick the Dust programme (2019 – 2021), approximately 3,000 young people were participating at the more senior ‘Consultation’, ‘Collaboration’, and ‘Co-leadership’ levels of the programme, with a similar number (3,157) participating at the more junior ‘Involved’ level. In comparison, there were a minimum of 986 ‘Consultation’, ‘Collaboration’, and ‘Co-leadership’ participants in Year 2, compared to a minimum of 4027 ‘Involved’ participants.

### Kick the Dust participants by level of participation



By way of example, the Keeping It Wild project reported successfully retaining a youth-led focus in its delivery, with young people being supported to shape the project at all levels. This included designing and delivering their own social projects, as well as determining which nature-related topics to focus on in delivery (e.g., climate change). These initiatives demonstrated a commitment on Keeping It Wild to enable young people to make key delivery decisions, a commitment that was shared across KtD projects.

“Young people were able to decide and shape the programmes themselves. Young people involved in social action were given responsibility to plan and design a social action project.... Trainees

have the power to co-curate traineeships, have been able to shape traineeships. At the top level, young people [displayed] governance in the youth forum.”

Evaluator

While young people tended to assume increasingly more influential roles as delivery progressed, Y Heritage saw participants assume positions of influence early into the project, with key decisions on funding being made in ‘Dragon’s Den-style’ pitches. This may have been influenced by two key factors; (1) the comparatively small numbers of Y Heritage participants compared to other projects, and (2) pre-existing relationships between project staff and participants.

The KtD programme was seen as an important opportunity for many of these organisations to implement their existing commitments to engage with a greater number of young people and do so in a meaningful way. Staff and young people alike reflected that the KtD programme successfully supported heritage organisations to move beyond more tokenistic youth engagement that traditionally relies on consultation and delivering work to young people. Instead, young people were given the opportunity to be involved at the inception stage of different initiatives and supported to drive real change, rather than being handed a brief to simply execute.

“We inherited the youth forum format from the museum. Before the project, [it] was a bit dry. Young people came in, heard how the museum worked, and made mainly decorative decisions, not meaty ones. [The youth forum] was led by someone who was very busy, a bit older, and had no capacity to focus on youth work. With me coming in, it opened up ways to work differently with the youth forum. [We] Learnt a lot by doing in the first year.”

Project manager

“For me, at least at the museum staff that have been working with the [young trainees], were so incredibly kind and inclusive and caring, and you really feel like you’re being listened to. They’re not just going: ‘Yeah, okay.’ It doesn’t feel like box ticking, which I think often with big institutions, it can feel like ‘we just need to say we’re including young people, just so we look good.’ It really has felt like we’ve been valued throughout the whole time.”

Young person

A key success of the KtD programme was ensuring young people had ownership over distinct pieces of work and giving them the power to make these their own. As such, young people successfully both reinterpreted existing and created new heritage content. Examples from across the projects include:

- **Hand on Heritage’s** Amgueddfa Cymru producers, who were given the power to decide what to do with a portrait of Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Picton, a man with connections to the slave trade in Trinidad. It was decided to highlight these previously overlooked elements of Picton’s legacy by reframing the portrait alongside the work of a Trinidadian artist exploring his impact in Trinidad.

- **Hope Street's** young people were instrumental in delivering the 2020 Festival of Hope, an online festival showcasing both new and pre-existing heritage content across six sites in the North West. Young people were involved in creating documentary short films to be displayed on the festival website alongside work they had commissioned from professional artists.
- **Ignite Yorkshire** in partnership with Chol Theatre produced 'Run of the Mill 2', a drama piece co-produced, written, and performed by young people that was inspired by textiles heritage in Kirklees and Huddersfield.

Their engagement with KtD also provided young people the opportunity to work on issues they felt passionate about and contribute towards societal change:

- Participants on the **Keeping it Wild** project felt excited to be engaged in initiatives related to environmental degradation and pollution, including raising awareness and calling for powerful stakeholders to protect the environment.

“The most important one of all was that we were working in teams and record our voices about how we can change the environment and how not to harm the environment anywhere. How to ask the people like the prime minister and the big people who can help us like the government.”

Young person

- **Hands on Heritage's** (Un)seen (Un)heard intervention, led by the young producers, explored hidden stories from the perspective of BAME communities. This included centring a bust of Bokani, a Congolose man brought to Europe in the early 1900s, by the Welsh artist Guscombe John.
- **KtD Norfolk's** young people decided to display museum artefacts that showcased previously underrepresented LGBTQ+ history.

Some of these findings and themes are explored further in the later section on 'what makes heritage special'.

### **Some young people had the opportunity to influence heritage organisations more widely.**

Young people were not only given the power to use their own views and creativity to shape individual projects, but some KtD participants were able to influence broader decision-making within heritage institutions. This sphere of influence was mostly reserved for the young people at the highest levels of engagement, many of whom undertook paid placements or traineeships or other leadership roles within their heritage organisations, with the following examples demonstrating how they were able to influence broader decision-making:

- The young people completing work placements as part of the **Hope Streets** project were placed within a local heritage organisation, gaining experience in the day-to-day workings of museums.

“Young people were also invited to be part of more high-level decision-making. E.g., the work placements we ran where young people were paid to lead on a piece of work like fundraising,

curatorial work... it had an impact on the inner workings of those museums.”

Project manager

- The young producers on **Shout Out Loud** were embedded in the wider team and able to contribute and make decisions at all levels of English Heritage:

“Generally, they have been a solid core group of young people that have contributed at every level of engagement across the project and within English Heritage. [...] We really let them develop their own things, we listened to their voices, they felt like part of the team during their placements. They offered us a huge amount with their skills and enthusiasm and different ways of looking at things, things we wouldn’t have thought of, and they ran with them and created great, primarily digital, content.”

Senior leadership team

- **Keeping it Wild** provided multiple different paid traineeships, including one where participants created and disseminated social media advertisements highlighting ways to preserve natural heritage that influenced how London Wildlife Trust communicated its message more broadly.

### **Young people themselves benefitted from taking the lead in different ways.**

Participants reported a range of benefits from taking on roles of influence in projects:

- Young people felt appreciated by the heritage staff they worked with and were pleased to know that their contribution to the organisation’s work was valued. This helped young people improve their **confidence** and feel a **sense of achievement** after participating in KtD activities.

“When she left, she gave me responsibility to co-lead the session with another member of staff. [It] Felt like my input into stuff made a difference.”

Young person

- KtD also provided participants with **experiences** within heritage they otherwise would not have had. This was especially helpful in giving the participants engaged at a more senior level a taste of what working in the heritage sector is like. Many of these young people benefited from the freedom to switch between roles and thus got a feel for what working in the heritage sector could look like for them.

“After 6 weeks, you can specialise a bit more and make your own direction in the trust. It is good because you get independence and idea of what it would be like working for the trust.”

Young person

- KtD has allowed young people to develop a range of different **skills**. Roles were often tailored to the specific activities participants were interested in, such as marketing, public speaking, creative writing, project management, and communications.

“Skills from a placement with Marketing and Communications - a very different side to museum work than I had previously known - that will be applicable in other jobs.”

Young person

- Supporting young people to create original content and focus on stories that resonated with them meant that they could **experience heritage differently** and explore what it means to them and their own identity. We have developed this finding in the ‘what makes heritage special’ section later in the report.

### **Conferring power to young people also positively impacted the heritage sector organisations.**

By having ownership over the design and delivery of projects, young people **created work that was often seen as innovative** by heritage staff. Bringing their unique perspectives and lived experience to a project meant that they were able to tell new stories and push existing boundaries.

“It just took us aback a bit that they saw things in that light. But it’s been very refreshing. I think we’re probably too close to it.”

Senior leadership team

“[We had] A lot of good discussions about the work and what worked in the exhibition and what didn’t. I felt heard as a queer person when saying certain objects didn’t feel representative and they were ultimately removed.” Young person

Young people’s input and creative leadership also meant that **their content was often more diverse and thus relatable to different people and communities**. For example, by focusing on lesser-known stories for Shout Out Loud’s Orchestra project, young people were able to create content that was seen as refreshingly different from the work usually produced by English Heritage:

“They [young people] chose which site they’d like to learn about and focus on; they chose which stories they were interested in. [...] they all picked a story of a person who was of a different ethnicity, not white. And they talked about how, even though these people were around 200 years ago, they could relate to some of those struggles that they were having, and they were interested in being able to tell their stories in a different way and share them further because most people wouldn’t know those stories. And it just it felt kind of important for them. And then also it felt important for [the heritage organisation] because we had these like young people on the site, and they were being able to use spaces in a way was exciting and different.”

Delivery staff

Staff recognised the **value of diversifying their internal team** and acknowledged the power of lived experience.

“Having a bigger team, and younger people [...] joining the team who developed it in ways I couldn’t has driven the project forward. Getting these younger facilitators join the team made it a lot more

democratic. For example, one facilitator is part of the LGBT community and thus drove our LGBT work forward. With her taking the lead, it has become so much more community-led and a safer space. I am not the right person for everything.”

Project manager

Overall, the KtD programme was able to **shift heritage staff’s attitudes towards young people** and their perception of young people’s abilities. Across all four case study projects, staff spoke of the value young people added to their heritage projects, recognising that young people can create high-quality work and be valuable contributors and leaders in this sector.

“It’s very easy for the interests of young people to be marginalised, and for them to feel that this kind of world of heritage is not for them. And I think bringing this kind of project has really shown me and [...] the museum that given opportunities, young people are very much interested in heritage and have a lot of valuable and interesting things to say about how we use it for their individual benefit, but also for the benefit of wider society.”

Delivery staff

Crucially, heritage staff reported having **a much better understanding of youth engagement** and what it means to involve young people meaningfully with heritage. Delivering their KtD projects has engendered **a shift in staff attitudes and behaviours**, and it has allowed them to become more knowledgeable and confident to work with young people. As a result, heritage organisations feel empowered to improve the quality of youth engagement and build on this in the future.

“I have seen in the last year how staff members’ confidence has grown in terms of them working with young people, particularly our trainees... it is nice to see now how the staff on site are communicating directly with the young people rather than go through the project team. They feel confident enough to arrange things with them directly and communicate with them about different opportunities. That has been very important for the legacy of the project.”

Project manager

“As a museum, I think we’ve learned to be more open, to be less defensive. To be better at hearing and respecting points of view that can be actually quite challenging for us. I still think we’ve got a distance to go in that respect, but it’s certainly put us on the right footing.”

Delivery staff

“[We were] trying to figure out how you can run a project and make it youth-led, but at the same time, not overwhelming the young people... Figuring out ways to know the group and help them to feel comfortable and giving them something to do at the start so that they can just get involved easily. And then at what point you can kind of start handing the decisions over to them and helping them to feel

confident and being able to lead what we're doing? That's something that I definitely feel like I've got better at and worked out and thought about very carefully and things over the last couple of years.”

Delivery staff

Trying to engage and work with young people has also allowed staff to learn about the barriers young people face with getting involved with heritage and brought specific issues to the forefront.

“[Young people] have amplified the issues that come up. Young people don't have access to knowledge on nature, spaces around them. Access is very targeted to early ages or older ages... One of the young people [created a video on] ageism in the environmental sector.”

Delivery staff

The themes set out above are discussed again in the section on 'what makes heritage special'.

### **Partners, especially youth sector organisations, likewise took away some key learnings from the consortium approach.**

Throughout KtD, youth organisations have become more familiar with the heritage sector and what it can offer young people. This was especially valuable for those partners that had not worked closely with heritage organisations before and therefore used Kick the Dust to expand their delivery to incorporate heritage sites and activities. At North Yorkshire Youth, one of the partners on Ignite Yorkshire, a new role of Learning and Heritage Facilitator was created to continue the delivery of heritage craft skills in combination with outdoor activities. Another example saw Keeping it Wild partner London Youth using London Wildlife Trust's green spaces for their future delivery with young people. Similarly, one consortium partner reflected on their learnings about the accessibility issues within the heritage sector and how it can be made relevant to YP.

“[I learnt] a lot about green heritage... Reframing heritage to be relevant for young people in unexpected ways. I learnt from young people what it means to them.”

Consortium partner

## **What makes heritage special?**

During the course of the programme, the Heritage Fund asked Renaisi to consider 'what makes heritage special' as part of demonstrating the value of youth engagement with heritage. In order to address this question, we have analysed the findings and interview responses throughout the programme. At the heart of this question is the consideration of the ways in which the engagement with heritage itself has had a different outcome for the young people, compared to for example, engagement with a sporting activity or a creative activity. In considering this question, we have been conscious to consider the underlying benefits to young people of connecting with their peers and exploring different activities socially and analysed the distinctive impact of engaging through heritage activities. Throughout the research, we have seen evidence of the benefits to young people of

socialising with their peers and engaging in a new activity. In identifying ‘what makes heritage special’ we have specifically focussed on examples of where the activity or socialising is centred on heritage.

Heritage engagement has had a particular or unique impact for engaging with young people in four ways. It is important to note that these responses are provided by an informed and passionate cohort of young people. The 4 areas where we identified ‘what makes heritage special’ are: the opportunity to connect with young people with similar backgrounds and interests; the opportunity to connect with young people with different backgrounds and experiences; the opportunity to explore identity; and the connection to a local area and place.

### **Connecting with people with similar backgrounds and interests**

Some participants reported connecting with other young people with similar backgrounds and interests through the heritage activity. In this theme, their shared experiences through heritage could support their connection in a way that aligned with their background. For example, the following participant on the Reimagine, Remake, Replay project identified connecting through arts-related activities:

“I loved getting to know other people and talking about our shared passions for drawing, mindfulness, and the importance of expression and digital technology in heritage.”

Young person

Meeting others with similar interests also helped participants form new friendships and take part in new social activities, as demonstrated by the following participant on Future Proof Parks.

“Having the confidence to sign up to the Friends group at my local green space recently has also felt really positive.”

Young person

### **Connecting with people from different backgrounds and experiences**

Some participants reported connecting through heritage with young people from different backgrounds and that this helped them to understand and connect with other young people. For example, linked to the finding about identity set out below, the following participant sets out the impact that engaging with the project has had on their understanding not just of their own heritage but that of other people:

“I've also talked about becoming more self-aware because you learn not just about your own heritage, but you can engage with heritage of other cultures or other people who you might not necessarily directly come in contact with on a daily basis. It really just encourages people to think more about other people and not just be so focused on themselves, which is also just such a big skill you need to have that to go through life. And it's really important to be aware I think you do get that a lot from engaging with heritage.”

Young person

In some instances, KtD projects explored contested heritage, which provided an opportunity for participants to connect with people with different perspectives. One example of this comes from the Reimagine, Remake, Replay project, with the following young person stating that exploring the Partition of Ireland exposed them to differences of opinion while being confident to share their perspective.

“Over the course of the last few weeks and being able to soak up different opinions while checking and challenging my own, I have been able to fully allow myself to no longer sit on the fence when it comes to divisive subject matters. With that said, I do not think that that has given way to me feeling more dismissive of others' opinions and differences – I am just as happy to chat about what I disagree with as much as I am willing to stand up for what my own beliefs are.”

Young person

This example demonstrate how KtD allowed young people to engage with complex issues of national identity and connection to place.

### **Exploring identity**

Following the above findings about the way that heritage has supported young people to connect with each other, some young people reported that heritage activity supported them to understand their identity. For example, several projects sought to celebrate LGBTQ+ heritage, with the following young person on Hands on Heritage summarising their experiences:

“It’s been sweet to work on projects about queer Welsh people, it’s helped me feel better represented.”

Young person

As with the findings above on connecting to people with different backgrounds, several participants shared that the projects had helped people understand the identity of others. When asked to share one of the highlights of participating in Shout Out Loud, one young person mentioned the tour of Ranger’s House on Shout Out Loud that celebrated queer history, as it helped a parent to better understand their own child.

“One of my highlights was the thing that made me tear up and the last meeting when [the staff member] read out that feedback with there was someone who'd gone to Ranger’s House after we'd set up the queer tour stuff and had had one of the leaflets. And she said that she'd taken it home and it had helped her better understand like her own child, and they then saw themselves in, in what we'd made, which I just thought was really lovely.”

Young person

### **Connection to the local area**

Project participants referred to heritage as providing a special connection to a local area or place. This is linked to their understanding of identity.

“To me, heritage refers to things of social and historical interest which connect communities and individuals; connection can be through engagement or sharing stories of interaction. Heritage is relevant to the past and present and encourages reflections on how to preserve important cultural features in the future. [The KtD project] has helped me to engage with local sites rich in ecological heritage and with the community groups which maintain these. I had previously been seeking involvement in groups such as this by looking online, but [the KtD project] has helped me to access spaces directly, get involved easily without a long sign-up process, and introduce myself more effectively and confidently to volunteer groups.”

Young person

This connection to place was highlighted by several participants as one of the benefits of taking part in their project. Learning about local history helped some participants to become more connected to a new area or place that they had not grown up in (for example, a university student feeling more connected to the area they had moved to for their studies). Learning about complex history could contribute to disrupting their relationship with the local area.

“As an English person living in Wales for uni I was able to understand a lot more about Welsh history that I didn't hear about growing up... I wasn't born in Wales but living and working here I've grown a strong connection to the place and consider it home.”

Young person

## What will Kick the Dust's legacy be?

### **For some young people, KtD could be a stepping stone into the heritage sector.**

As mentioned above, the KtD programme has been able to provide some of the more involved young people with important skills and a deeper insight into the heritage sector. This has led some young people to start full-time roles in their heritage organisations; others have gone on to pursue further study or volunteering opportunities related to heritage.

“We learnt to work with those young people which has been so successful. Feedback shows that they got a lot of value out of their placements. They have gone on to do great stuff, and the skills and confidence they got from [their KtD project] helped them to go on and do those things.”

Senior leadership team

### **Strong foundations have been laid for high-quality youth engagement to be sustained in participating organisations.**

There are indications that the heritage organisations engaged in Kick the Dust are ready and preparing to sustain high-quality youth engagement.<sup>12</sup> Project teams have seen changes in how heritage staff engage with young people and witnessed an increased commitment to involve young people at different leadership levels.

“There's more drive to get young people into different levels of leadership or structures within an organisation. So [...] from young people moving on from taking part in a project to be a member of staff, for example.”

Consortium partner

Organisations reported feeling more confident working with young people and highlight the skills and knowledge imparted by their consortium partners, which they can now employ themselves.

“As the project brand has evolved over the last three years, we have been able to recruit for our opportunities more openly. The project has got more of a name for itself. Before, when we were building those recruitment/referral pathways, we did that through our project partners. That is a fantastic benefit of having cross-sector partnership, working off each other's strengths.”

Project manager

There are several examples of some of the concrete steps organisations are taking to embed new ways of working in their institutions and build on KtD's legacy. This includes:

1. **Planning future training sessions** for staff to share and collectively reflect on the project's achievements and identify remaining gaps.

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<sup>12</sup> Specific details on the legacy of individual projects can be found in the introduction to the twelve projects beginning on page 4.

“We want to do some follow-up training before the end of the project. We as a project team know what the challenges and successes have been, but it would be interesting to hold a forum with staff to see what they think the achievements of the project have been. And what kind of resources and contacts they might want to take forward from the project, who they might want to be introduced to in their networks to have that continuity.”

Project manager

2. **Developing internal capacity and committing organisational funding** to sustain high quality youth engagement.

“The fact that [the heritage organisation] has funded this team of seven people to work on this ongoing from core funding, I think it's really it's going to be instrumental in terms of what the organisation does going forward.”

Evaluator

3. **Continuing existing or building further partnerships** with other organisations who can increase and diversify their reach.

“We are now talking to other organisations who work directly with or represent people of colour in nature conservation sector... We have diversified the faces that engage with the project and therefore have attracted other people, it has achieved exactly what we set out to achieve.”

Senior leadership team

4. **Rolling out some of their KtD projects** across their heritage sites and supporting them with their community engagement work.

“We did some stargazing at Stonehenge, and we've started working on a kind of pack for other sites to be able to also do stargazing with young people from their sites... We want to roll it out to across all as many sites as possible and get all different [heritage] site teams trained up and ready to be able to engage with their own communities and their own groups, so that you don't so much need a youth engagement team, you've got it as everybody's doing it as part of their job.”

Delivery staff

5. **Embedding young people permanently** in the decision-making structures within their organisation. One key example is **English Heritage's** Blue Plaques Board as well as their Acquisitions, Loans, and Disposals Committee, on which young people now have permanent seats. The organisation is also committed to continuing its young producers programme and building an alumni network.

“Young producers will become alumni... [Shout Out Loud] will have an alumni network for them, they may come back to do peer mentoring for new producers. Want to have a more structured

programme with a more regular turnover and try to reach more young people and make sure they are involved in training opportunities.”

Senior leadership team

Consortium partners have likewise seen changes in how they work with young people and have built partnerships that will continue beyond KtD.

“The CBA [Council for British Archaeology] and PhotoWorks now work together. I had introduced a practice sharing element to the consortium. Every six months, we come together and talk about challenges. That was well received, and it helped to build those relationships. Sound Connection support the CBA with other stuff as well. The pay-off of building relationships with partners has been huge. We learnt a lot about working with other partners.”

Project manager

**It is however unclear how long-lasting these efforts to embed youth engagement will be.**

Whilst heritage organisations are optimistic about their ability to continue high-quality youth engagement when KtD comes to an end, they are also conscious of the challenges they might face to successfully deliver on their commitments. There is recognition that some of the attitudinal and behavioural changes required to let young people lead will take time to embed in their institutions, and that there are more things to be learnt.

‘As a museum, I think we've learned to be more open, to be less defensive. To be better at hearing and respecting points of view that can be actually quite challenging for us. I still think we've got a distance to go in that respect, but it's certainly put us on the right footing.’

Delivery staff

“We learnt that we have got a lot to do in terms of integrating within the organisation now. Sometimes we have been working a bit more in parallel because of the nature of the activity plan. But we have now laid foundations and opened the doors that we need to take that forward in an integrated way. But our colleagues have been very open to this.”

Senior leadership team

A key concern raised by many revolved around the availability of funding. Recruiting and engaging young people, especially at the more involved levels, requires substantial and continued investment. In particular, being able to offer paid placements was seen as contingent on further funds being made available, and organisations were unsure whether they'd be able to continue some of these KtD initiatives.

**Best practice is being shared more widely – but more action is required to embed young people in the wider heritage sector.**

There is evidence that KtD's impact goes beyond the twelve projects involved as some heritage organisations have started sharing best practice more widely and influencing local institutions.

“Our [heritage] partners have made a commitment to involve young people as collaborators and leaders. Through that, they recognize what genuine youth voice activity looks like vs. what tokenistic involvement would look like. They are now always thinking about how to bring young people into decision-making, but also telling others how to do this.”

Project manager

However, the evaluation did not specifically focus on capturing organisations' ambitions to impact the wider heritage sector, as this was out of the scope of the research and evaluation. Therefore, it is unclear to what extent this might have happened as the team has not asked specific questions on this outcome.

It appears reasonable to assume that further action will be required to shift the sector as a whole and overcome the remaining challenges to embedding young people across the UK's wide-ranging heritage institutions. Both staff and young people interviewed spoke of some of the entrenched barriers persistent in the sector. This included: the lack of paid, full-time heritage roles for young people (the focus being predominantly on short-term placements); some evidence of heritage organisations preferring older young people with specific experience to assume leadership roles such as sitting on the board of trustees.

## What enabled Kick the Dust to be successful?

### The Heritage Funding model as well as the mindset, commitment and skills brought by the staff were key enablers of success.

The KtD programme owes its success to several factors, some of which are related to the design of The Heritage Fund, others to the mindset, commitment, and skillset of the grantees and the wider consortia.

1. **Length and amount of funding:** Staff and partners from all four case study projects reflected that significant investment of both funding and time is necessary to build the connections, skillsets, and confidence required to ensure projects are truly youth-led.

By being given the time to **trial and test** different approaches, and the space to **reflect** more deeply, KtD projects were able to **adapt** and overcome different challenges.

“We’re obviously doing a lot of work [...] right in the beginning about online safeguarding, but that then also spurred on conversations about further safeguarding when we were returning back to it [...] what we’ve learned over the last three years is immeasurable.”

Delivery staff

Having sufficient time and space for reflection encouraged **creativity**, and, most importantly, enabled staff to **focus on the voice of their young people**. Young people’s feedback was gathered and acted on, and some young people were supported to use their lived experience to enact change.

“The majority of the museum staff are white. So, it was very much led by the youth who had the lived experience of being a person of colour in Wales. And that allowed us to navigate the topics in a way that we felt comfortable with. [...] The most important thing is making sure that when you do have those difficult topics, that you allow the people who are affected by these topics the most, to lead those conversations. [...] And then we did have time [...] to have genuine conversations.”

Young person

“The key is having tailored sessions that put young people at the heart of what we do and being flexible and [...] asking young people how they found the opportunity and how they’d change it. We have built in lots of regular opportunities to feedback and adapt and amend. [...] Using the feedback process to improve the project, has been essential for the success of the delivery. “

Project manager

More broadly, the KtD projects used the time and funding available to **give young people a range of options for engaging** with their work. This included practical activities different from what they would usually do at school as well as paid opportunities. Providing **financial compensation** was seen as a key contributor to successful youth engagement, and it allowed some young people to be more deeply embedded as active team members through long-term placements.

“The museum being able to pay us for our time, is really invaluable, especially in a creative sector where a lot of the time younger emerging people can be taken advantage of.”

Young person

Young people also benefitted from the **freedom to create their own project** and choose topics or stories that resonated with them, and we have considered this in the exploring identity section. As such, having sufficient resources allowed KtD projects to deliver high-quality work, react to changing contexts more thoughtfully and creatively, and, most crucially, embed young people’s voices in these creative processes. This flexibility was especially important for responding to the changing social contexts around issues such as Black Lives Matter and Climate Justice.

“[At the time of] Black Lives Matter [...] one of the portraits in the collection here came into focus [...] and we realised we needed to work on interpreting it more fully and more properly. [...] So having The Heritage Funding in place meant that we could actually take our time to work through the issues properly, work with young people to do the research and to do some of the key thinking about what we should do with this.”

Delivery staff

Lastly, the length of The Heritage Funding also allowed staff to **build the trust** necessary for high quality youth engagement and providing young people support, especially with issues around mental health and wellbeing.

“A lot of young people are facing mental health challenges, or their wellbeing is suffering, because of everything that's going on. And particularly through COVID, we noticed that it was really important to check in with our young people. So, something that I learned from our festival coordinator... at the start of each session, so just getting the young people to be honest about how they're feeling. [...] it only really works once you've built up a bit of trust with those young people, that's when they start being quite open.”

Delivery staff

- 2. Flexibility.** A trusting approach from the Heritage Fund in allowing projects to adapt plans to changing contexts awarded the projects the freedom to adapt their work and use their creativity to problem-solve. This flexibility was especially important during the Covid-19 pandemic, as plans had to be altered due to the national lockdowns.

“I think with funded projects, there is a temptation I think to do the action plan too rigidly. So, I think you'll have to keep open-ended, that enables you to change direction slightly. And we had to do that because of COVID... in running this initiative during COVID, has taught us that, I think the importance of long longer-term investment.”

Senior leadership team

- 3. Ambitious, and daring project teams.** Coupled with the freedom awarded by The Heritage Fund, having committed project teams, who were willing to be flexible and

experiment with new approaches was equally important. It enabled projects to be innovative and go the extra mile.

“It’s about being willing to go back to the drawing board completely and being humble about giving over that kind of power and decision-making and trusting in young people, giving them the opportunity.

Sometimes that can be quite difficult, especially for a project manager, you’re spinning lots of plates and to give over some of that responsibility can be quite nerve-wracking. It has been a humbling process to give across some of that power.”

Project manager

- 4. Skilled and long-term project managers.** The managers of the 12 projects brought particular skills and experience to the delivery, especially for managing the consortium partnership and many moving parts of project delivery.

“Hats off to [the project manager]. She came in actually slightly after the program started... she had to hit the ground running at incredible speed and managing projects can be complicated, but it’s a fairly complex, multifaceted, different elements, different partners, three years, et cetera. And I think she has really done that with really expertly. She listens very well. She really values the expertise within the partners. She gets everything done that she commits to doing.

And she really cares, you know, she’s really got the aims of the project at heart.”

Consortium partner

It is also worth noting that the project managers for all four case study projects remained in their roles throughout most, if not all, of KtD’s delivery. This consistency arguably supported projects to learn and adapt ongoingly and solidify both processes and relationships.

- 5. Internal commitment to youth leadership.** Whilst the commitment and skillset of project staff were crucial, it was equally important that these individuals could tap into an existing enthusiasm for the KtD programme within the heritage sector organisations. The grantees funded through KtD had previously committed to increase their engagement with young people from different backgrounds and let them lead on some of their heritage work, meaning that KtD itself was for many a strategic priority.

“The scheme fits [...] within the broader direction of travel for the organisation of looking at how we widen engagement, how we ensure [...] that we are here for everybody really.”

Senior leadership team

“It hasn’t actually been hard to deal with, because we committed from the start that we were going to let them take control and decide what they wanted to do.”

Senior leadership team

Internal **buy-in across heritage organisations**, especially at senior leadership levels, was a key enabler, allowing project teams to embed young people and ensure their engagement could be of high quality.

“[The] Events [team] has got the easiest job, because [...] young people are already quite interested and invested in a music festival or in a silent disco or in multiple strands that we already had for young people. [...] But the curatorial teams have been really eager to work with young people, and [ask] how do we look at collections in a different way? So, I'd say that, [...] across the board, there's been a real enthusiasm for 'how do we start to work in a different way around this project?'”

Delivery staff

More specifically, it required heritage staff at all levels to be open-minded, and willing to take certain risks.

“We had a real commitment to try and open up our heritage in its broader sense. So that the places and stories we care for and curate for, opening them and asking young people: where is the relevance here for you? What is it that you are interested in? And our colleagues being supportive of that and not being scared to hear what young people have to say. That has helped us reach a broader range of young people, those lesser told stories, untold stories, young people have been able to approach our sites, and collection and our stories and find the personal hooks in there that have interested them.”

Senior leadership team

Young people appreciated the staff's enthusiasm and were made to feel comfortable by their friendliness, flexibility, and clear communication.

“I noticed that this was a particularly inclusive project more down to the manner and just the way that the staff interacted with us and also, the fact that it seemed that they really wanted it to work as well [...]. I just think a general environment was created whereby we felt like we could express our opinions and share ideas and even challenge things as well. I can't really put down exactly how they did that, but I think it was their general way was just really nice and made us feel comfortable.”

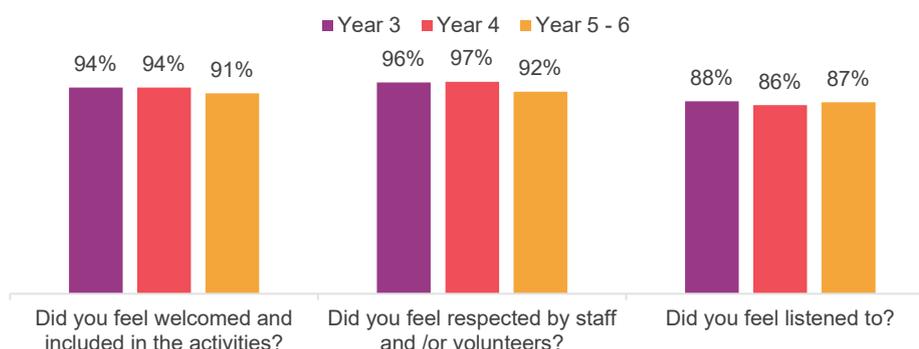
Young person

“If you were struggling with something, they might extend deadline. Whenever I felt like there was something I could not do, I could tell them. I could have said for example that I don't feel comfortable doing the blog and they would have been fine with that and given me something else to do.”

Young person

This sentiment of being made to feel welcome was reflected in the quantitative data, with consistently high levels of agreement from young people that they felt respected by staff and volunteers.

### Young people's outcomes data: % of young people who answered 'Yes' to the following statements



One young person also mentioned the value of having diverse staff they could relate to.

“Good vibes re LGBTQ+ stuff, always feels well considered and thoughtfully approached. Most of the staff members I've worked with have been LGBTQ+ too which is cool.”

Young person

- 6. Partnership working.** Another key to success highlighted by all four case study projects was the collaboration between the partners in their consortium. Each organisation brought its own expertise, knowledge, and networks to the partnership, meaning that all projects could draw on a range of expertise to enhance their delivery and impact.

“[The lead partner], it's all about supporting schools, museums, to engage better with children, young people [...]. The work that they do, it complements our work so well, because we decided early on when we got funding [...] to deliver museum development [and] to not focus on those children and young people, because [the lead partner] have the internal expertise... so that complements each other really well.”

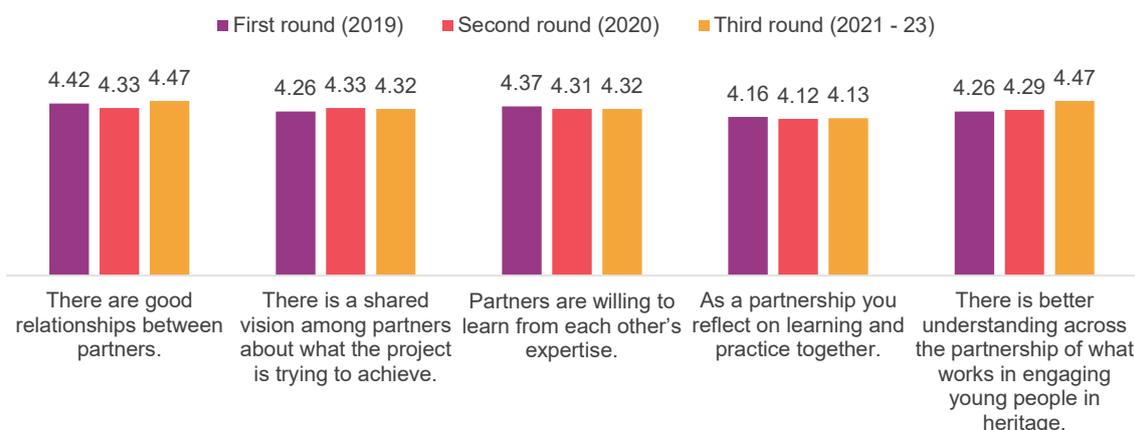
Consortium partner

“Working in partnership can bring you that variety of specialism that when you bring it together and it can just make it so much richer.”

Consortium partner

These findings were substantiated by the quantitative data. Agreement statements in the consortium partner survey related to partnership working all achieved weighted scores above four across the years of delivery, indicating widespread agreement that the partnerships were functioning well.

### Consortium partner survey: weighted scores on relationships between partners



Heritage sector organisations in particular benefitted from the expertise of the youth sector organisations in their consortia. Drawing on their knowledge of local contexts, their networks, and community relationships was crucial to ensure successful recruitment of young people, especially those who would usually not take part in heritage sector activities.

“We worked in partnership with established young people organisations, who have been working with young people, and who targeted diverse backgrounds for many years. [...] We could not do it alone, we recognised early on that we didn’t have the contacts, we accepted that. Partnership working is key, creating a mutual set of objectives with a partner who specialises in engagement with young people and young people from London’s diverse communities. Partnering with them was absolutely mission critical.”

Senior leadership team

“Selecting the right partners who maybe already have networks of more diverse young people, and them being trusted orgs for those young people. And us being able to offer opportunities alongside an organisation they already recognized and trusted.”

Senior leadership team

Through their day-to-day collaboration, as well as partner-led training sessions, heritage staff learnt different approaches and developed new tools to reach a greater diversity of young people and ensure that they could engage them meaningfully.

“It has been a learning curve in terms of the logistics of how to facilitate young people making decisions in a way that is not tokenistic but actually productive as well. With [the consortium partner], we developed training and things like that to unpick the difference between engagement and involvement and learnt tools like coaching to work with young people in a way that is more involvement rather than engagement, so that it is not just us telling young people what to do.”

Project manager

“Now the museums have connections with useful partners, and they know what they are doing, and they know which messaging works, now recruitment was a lot easier.”

Delivery staff

- 7. Evidence of good work.** The length of the KtD programme allowed projects to reflect and build on their successes. Having physical projects on site and displaying the creativity of young people helped to build heritage staff’s enthusiasm and commitment to youth engagement.

“Some of the [smaller] projects that have been [...] most helpful in changing hearts and minds at [the heritage organisation] and seeing the quality and the value of something like [their KtD project], has been around having things physically on site that come off the back of these projects, so exhibitions or performance pieces that are played on video or packs that young people have produced [...]. I think it’s been super, super valuable for people to really understand what it means and also see how it can go on and affect what you might call the traditional [heritage organisation] video visitors experience on site.”

Evaluator

### **The KtD projects nonetheless encountered distinct challenges with engaging young people within heritage specifically.**

- 1. Engendering change in large institutions.** Many of the heritage organisations involved in the programme are large institutions with specific processes, rules, and regulations that can prove difficult to shift. Reaching young people through different media and engaging them remotely during the Covid-19 pandemic often involved developing new policies and processes, particularly around safeguarding, which could take a while to put in place.

“Where young people are wanting to use more current platforms... We are not on TikTok which I think is where everybody is... By the time we got probably approval if that ever came, they would have moved on to a different platform. So, it’s quite difficult for us to keep up.”

Delivery staff

- 2. Safeguarding minority voices.** The responsibility to **safeguard young people** was also raised when reflecting on the power of minority voices to disrupt existing narratives and tell new stories. Interviewees mentioned that having young people’s diverse perspectives on show and having them challenge the status quo can put them in a vulnerable position, and the right support needs to be put in place to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

“[the] idea of inviting untold stories and different perspectives and minority voices on what constitutes [heritage] requires some sensitive approaches to how that then meets where [heritage] might be currently in terms of its audiences.”

Consortium partner

- 3. Natural heritage's inaccessibility.** Whilst staff generally spoke about the time needed to shift mindsets and behaviours in these institutions to get youth voice embedded, London Wildlife Trust specifically mentioned the inaccessibility of the natural heritage sector itself as being a barrier to youth engagement.

“We have got a set of structures and languages that are difficult to access... There is a limit to what new ideas can be in the framework of the scientific understanding of evolution and ecosystems. So, not every idea will necessarily work. It might feel a bit negative when you first engage in conversations.”

Senior leadership team

## Recommendations

In considering these recommendations, we have drawn on the evaluation findings.

### Recommendations for the Heritage Fund:

- Given the ongoing barriers young people can face in engaging with heritage, the Heritage Fund should address these institutional barriers as part of their broader funding strategy.
- Commit to long-term funding of projects which seek to trial new approaches and create sustainable change.
- Provide space and flexibility for grantees to reflect, learn, and continuously improve, including opportunities for peer learning.
- To further support youth engagement across the wider heritage sector, set youth engagement requirements for organisations applying to different funding streams.
- Acknowledging the importance of youth voice in the success of KtD, the Heritage Fund should build on decision-making methods piloted through KtD and embed youth voice in future funding decisions, as well as across the Heritage Fund more broadly.
- Reflecting on the findings regarding diversity of participants, future programmes should clearly define ‘diversity’ and establish a framework for capturing the diversity of participants. This would provide data for analysis of intersectionality within the cohort.
- Support projects with sustainability planning and identifying opportunities to embed sustainability in programme design to allow for long-term impact.
- Given the opportunities for learning presented by KtD, the Heritage Fund should consider how best to utilise opportunities to share learning from multi-year programmes.

### Recommendations for organisations engaging young people in heritage

- Building on the findings about the contributing factors for successful projects, delivery organisations should embed the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances within project plans while prioritising stable project management.
- Given the positive outcomes projects observed by giving young people decision-making authority, organisations should be ambitious in ‘handing over the reins’ to young people in project delivery.
- Considering the importance of young people feeling that heritage represents them, organisations should establish a framework for community representation amongst staff/volunteers.
- Building on the findings about ‘what makes heritage special’, delivery organisations embed activities focusing on identity and place through their youth engagement (especially for organisations without a large heritage component in their delivery).
- Reflecting on the positive impact of young people in leadership roles, organisations should consider how youth voice can be embedded throughout their wider work.

- Given the importance of embedding the changes observed through KtD within organisations, those delivering this work consider embedding sustainability of youth engagement in heritage within project planning.

## Appendix

### Interim Report - Executive Summary

In 2016 National Lottery Heritage Fund (**The Heritage Fund**) launched KtD, a £10million strategic investment to address the under-representation of young people in heritage, by embedding high quality youth engagement in the heritage sector. KtD is the only funding programme for The Heritage Fund which has focused on funding youth projects at this scale. Twelve large-scale projects across the UK led by a consortium of heritage and youth partners were invested in, with grants of up to £1million awarded. A team of 15 young people called the #DustKickers were part of the decision-making process with The Heritage Fund's trustees. An overview of each KtD project is provided in the introduction to the main report.

KtD was developed in response to research into the engagement of young people in heritage and the support that heritage organisations required to improve this. Research showed that despite investment into young people's engagement in heritage, young people were still under-represented as audiences, users, and volunteers in heritage sites and services. Building on the needs and interests of young people, the programme aims to see a greater number and diversity of young people benefit from high quality engagement with heritage. The programme is also about developing the skills and confidence of heritage sites and services to sustain their work with young people over the long-term. The aims of the KtD programme are to:

1. Increase the ambition, scale and quality of youth engagement with heritage.
2. Make heritage relevant to more and a greater diversity of young people, building on their needs and interests.
3. Develop sustainable, on-going work with young people within heritage organisations.
4. Show the value of youth engagement with heritage.

The KtD programme-level evaluation aims to help The Heritage Fund draw lessons about the impact of The Heritage Funding as a whole and to measure whether KtD has met its programme aims as above. Findings to date indicate that KtD is having a significant impact across all four programme aims and this impact has been amplified by the scale and duration of KtD, as a multi-year programme with significant investment from The Heritage Fund.

#### **Increase the ambition, scale and quality of youth engagement in heritage**

The ambition, scale and quality of youth engagement in heritage is improving as a result of KtD delivery to date.

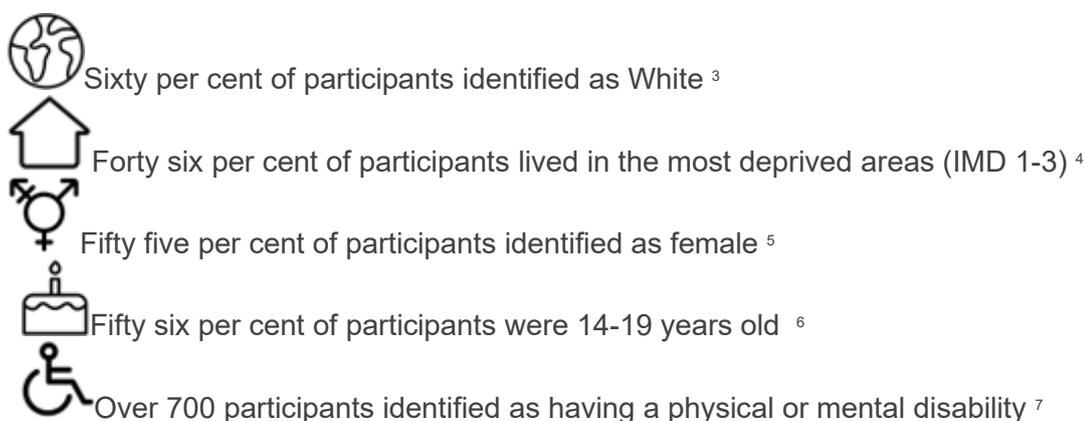
KtD is increasing the scale of youth engagement in heritage, as demonstrated by the number of young people involved in KtD projects; over 5,000 young people have been involved in KtD in 2019-20. Additionally, youth engagement in heritage has generated significant outputs, as over 3,000 items of heritage content have been created by young people involved in KtD projects. 1

The ambition for youth engagement in heritage is changing due to two components of KtD. Firstly, over the course of KtD, projects have increased the extent to which young people are being empowered to make change in heritage, moving beyond the Involved engagement level to the Consultation, Collaboration and Co-leadership engagement levels. For example, Hands on Heritage has two Young Heritage Leaders who are involved in strategy, governance and consultation within the heritage organisation and the Hands on Heritage project. This means that the ambition for youth engagement in heritage is changing bottom-up because young people are being engaged at a higher level through KtD. Secondly, staff attitudes to engaging young people in heritage are changing, as staff gain more experience of engaging with young people through KtD. Consequently, staff have a greater appreciation of what young people can do and are changing their perceptions of how young people should be engaged in heritage. This changes the ambition for youth engagement in heritage top-down, as staff are now seeking greater youth engagement in heritage.

KtD is increasing the quality of youth engagement in heritage through consortium partnerships, which enable heritage organisations and consortium partners to share skills and experience. For heritage organisations, partnerships with youth sector organisations provide valuable skills and experience in engaging young people, which heritage organisations are learning from to improve the quality of their engagement with young people. Additionally, KtD has enabled heritage organisations to increase the quality of youth engagement with heritage as they have sufficient time and resources to undertake project delivery, learn lessons from delivery and adapt delivery in response to these learnings.

### **Make heritage relevant to more and a greater diversity of young people**

KtD projects are making heritage relevant to a greater diversity of young people, in addition to increasing the scale of youth engagement with heritage, as previously mentioned. Projects are making a conscious effort to engage young people who have traditionally not been engaged in heritage and this has resulted in a diverse group of young people being engaged in heritage through KtD. The impact of this is demonstrated by the below statistics, which provide an overview of the extent to which KtD is engaging a diverse group of young people.



It should be noted that there are differences between projects as to the diversity of young people engaged. This is impacted by the target audience of the project; some projects specifically target under-represented groups and others take a broad view of inclusion and

who they wish to engage. Differences may also be affected by the demographics of the local area in which the project is based. There are intersectional challenges in engaging truly diverse and inclusive communities of young people which should be recognised; this is a work in progress for KtD but the emerging evidence is positive.

Projects have delivered a wide variety of activities to engage young people in heritage across the four engagement levels (Involved, Consultation, Collaboration and Co-leadership) and to support young people to learn about heritage. This contributes to the programme aim to make heritage relevant to more and a greater diversity of young people by providing a variety of activities to suit different interests and needs. The activities delivered by projects can be categorised into several themes including arts and crafts, campaigning and social action, digital and creative media, events and exhibitions, nature conservation and social media.

KtD projects have expended considerable effort to adapt project delivery during COVID-19, to ensure that delivery can continue despite the challenging circumstances. The scale of KtD has enabled projects to adapt delivery plans in this period, in order to continue to engage young people in heritage. Additionally, KtD projects recognised the importance of keeping in touch with young people at a time of significant stress and uncertainty for many in order to maintain networks of support. Therefore, projects played a role in supporting young people's wellbeing.

Findings about young people's experiences of their KtD projects highlight that young people have had a fun and engaging experience of heritage, they have found activities to be accessible and they felt that the activities available were relevant to them. These perceptions contribute to the programme aim to make heritage relevant to more and a greater diversity of young people, as young people perceive heritage to be relevant to them and more young people are able to access activities to engage in heritage.

The programme evaluation has highlighted learnings about how to make heritage accessible and relevant for young people. To increase the accessibility of activities, projects should utilise digital and minimise participation costs. To make heritage relevant for young people, projects should involve and empower young people in project design and delivery to amplify their voices, and address young people's preconceptions of heritage head on. To encourage young people to engage it is also valuable to create a welcoming environment, communicate in an open and honest way and offer different ways for young people to engage.

### **Develop sustainable and ongoing work with young people within heritage organisations**

Involvement in KtD has improved the confidence and skills of staff in heritage organisations to engage young people in heritage, as a result of staff training and greater experience of engaging with young people. It is estimated that at least 354 members of staff have been trained as part of KtD projects and this training has covered a variety of topics that improves staff skills to engage young people in heritage, for example, safeguarding, inclusion, digital and how to engage young people. This impact contributes to the programme aim to develop sustainable ongoing work with young people within heritage organisations, as staff are better equipped to engage with young people on an ongoing basis, and this in turn will increase the quality of youth engagement with heritage, as previously described.

Additionally, KtD has enabled heritage organisations to start to embed engagement with young people into their organisational practice. This impact can be observed through

changes to policies and practices; in the 2019-20 Project team survey, 54 per cent of respondents were aware of changes to internal policies or practices made as a result of KtD. Through KtD, heritage organisations have the time to adapt and learn from project delivery, as well as to embed learnings into organisational practice and implement sustainable change. This means that sustainable ongoing work with young people is being developed within heritage organisations as a result of KtD.

### **Show the value of youth engagement with heritage**

KtD delivery to date has demonstrated the value of youth engagement with heritage to young people and to heritage organisations.

Youth engagement in heritage is valuable for young people as it provides them with opportunities to develop their confidence, gain a sense of achievement, develop and practice new skills, and access training opportunities. These impacts are valuable to a young person's personal development and their employability. Through KtD projects, young people have developed and practiced new skills, including IT skills, working in a team and talking to others. KtD projects have also provided training opportunities to young people, both paid and unpaid, with over 1,500 recorded training instances of young people being trained through KtD.

Youth engagement in heritage is also valuable to heritage organisations and the wider sector, for two reasons. Firstly, it ensures that the future generation of visitors and the future workforce are being engaged in heritage. This is because youth engagement with heritage shifts young people's perceptions of heritage as a sector, improves their level of engagement as previously described and increases their awareness of career opportunities within the heritage sector. Secondly, young people's voices bring new perspectives to heritage organisations. This is particularly valuable at a time when heritage is considering how to adapt for the future, as young people can provide constructive challenge about current practices and wider, often more diverse and inclusive, perspectives to shape heritage organisations going forward.

### **Next steps**

This report is an interim report following two years of delivery; the evaluation will continue until Summer 2023, when a final report will be published following the completion of all 12 KtD projects. The changes highlighted in this report will continue to be explored during the remainder of the evaluation, to examine the extent of change across all KtD projects.



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