



Young people and the heritage sector

Research report

November 2015

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2 Introduction

2.1 Background

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) was set up in 1994 under the National Lottery Act and distributes money raised by the National Lottery to support projects involving the national, regional and local heritage of the United Kingdom. HLF operates under the auspices of the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) and since April 2013 it has been delivering its fourth Strategic Framework: 'A lasting difference for heritage and people' (see HLF website for more details).

Young people aged 11-25 are beneficiaries across HLF's funding programmes, including targeted and open programmes. They have been engaged as trainees, volunteers, members of working groups, audiences, and participants in activities aimed at schools, families and youth groups. HLF also has a specific funding programme, Young Roots, which provides grants of between £10,000 and £50,000 for projects that engage young people with their heritage. Projects are youth-led and delivered through partnerships between youth organisations and heritage organisations.

Early in 2015 HLF commissioned positioning research on the Young Roots programme, to better understand the changing policy and economic environment for youth engagement, and to consider how the programme could be situated in relation to Local Authorities, commissioning frameworks, and the wider landscape for youth work across the UK. This research raised a number of questions, including the need to gain a much stronger understanding of the support required by the heritage sector in engaging young people.

HLF is currently in a period of review and is gathering the information needed to inform the development of the next strategic framework that will be operational from 2018. Icarus was commissioned in July 2015 to contribute to this process by undertaking research to inform HLF's planning about future funding for young people.

2.2 Purpose and scope of the research

This research has been commissioned to provide a better understanding about how HLF can support the heritage sector to engage more young people between the ages of 11 and 25 with heritage. In particular, it has explored the following questions, focusing primarily on the engagement of young people outside of school settings:

- What kind of work with young people is currently happening within the heritage sector, and how is it funded?
- What do heritage organisations currently delivering high quality work with young people need in order to build on this and sustain it?
- To increase the number and range of heritage organisations working with young people, what are the needs of those with little or no track record in this area?
- To ensure opportunities for a wide range of young people, across the whole of the UK and all heritage sectors, are there specific issues in relation to different groups of young people, age ranges, geographic areas and/or types of heritage?
- What relationship do heritage organisations have with the youth sector, what do they see as the youth sector's role and how do they feel this relationship and recognition from the youth sector could be improved?
- What other partnerships/organisations do heritage organisations value in their work with young people?
- What kind of funding levels, project duration, and other parameters do heritage organisations feel would work best in the current environment?

2.3 Research methods

The research aim, topics and questions were confirmed at the start of the project and incorporated into a Research Framework (see Appendix A). For insights to be captured about the full extent of work with young people in the heritage sector, the framework included questions relevant to all heritage organisations regardless of whether they currently engage young people and other questions applicable only to those currently working with young people.

The research was conducted in two phases.

- Phase one - structured telephone interviews with 18 heritage organisations (see Appendix 1). Given the small size and the diversity of the organisations in this sample it was not feasible to form firm conclusions from these interviews; rather, the experiences of this set of organisations was used to inform the shaping of the sector-wide survey in phase two, and to add depth to the survey findings in this report.
- Phase two - online survey distributed by HLF to heritage organisations, with a focus on finding out about their work with young people outside of schools. The survey was delivered direct to 163 organisations and also promoted through various forums,

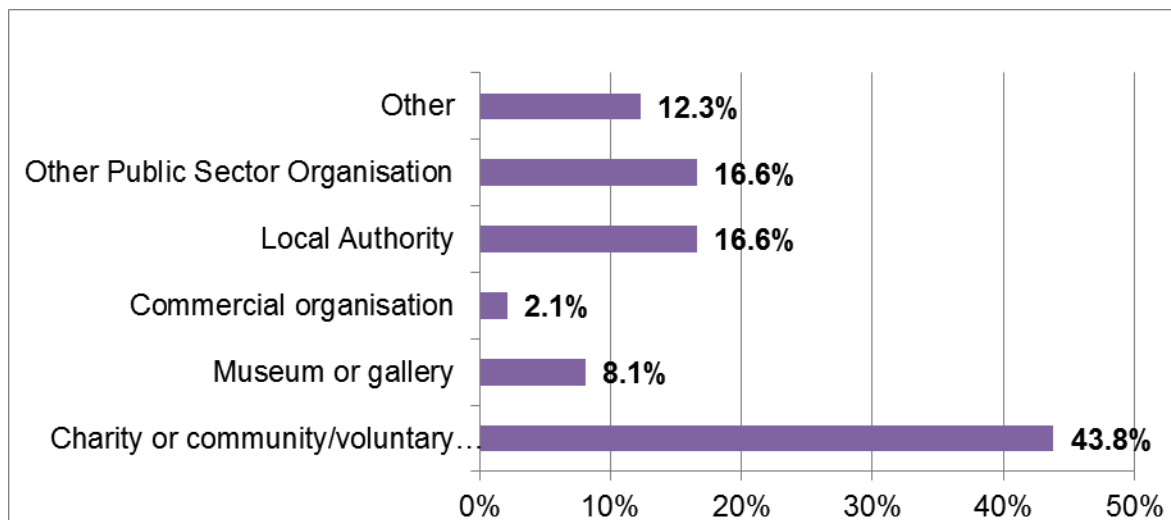
networks and newsletters. A total of 235 heritage organisations responded to the survey, 149 of the respondents completed the survey fully; the remainder chose not to respond to some of the questions. Of the 235 respondents, 17 were not working with young people and 12 were only working with schools.

2.4 The online research sample

The following charts illustrate the diversity of the survey respondents. They show that there were no major gaps in the sample; it included heritage organisations of differing sizes and type, working across the full range of heritage activities, and across all parts of the UK. However there were significantly more responses from heritage organisations that do currently work with young people (92.8%) compared to those who do not (7.2%). This is perhaps not surprising as this was a self-selected sample of organisations responding to an invitation to complete a survey about working with young people.

2.4.1 Type of organization

2.4.1.1 Chart 1: What type of organisation are you? (n=235)

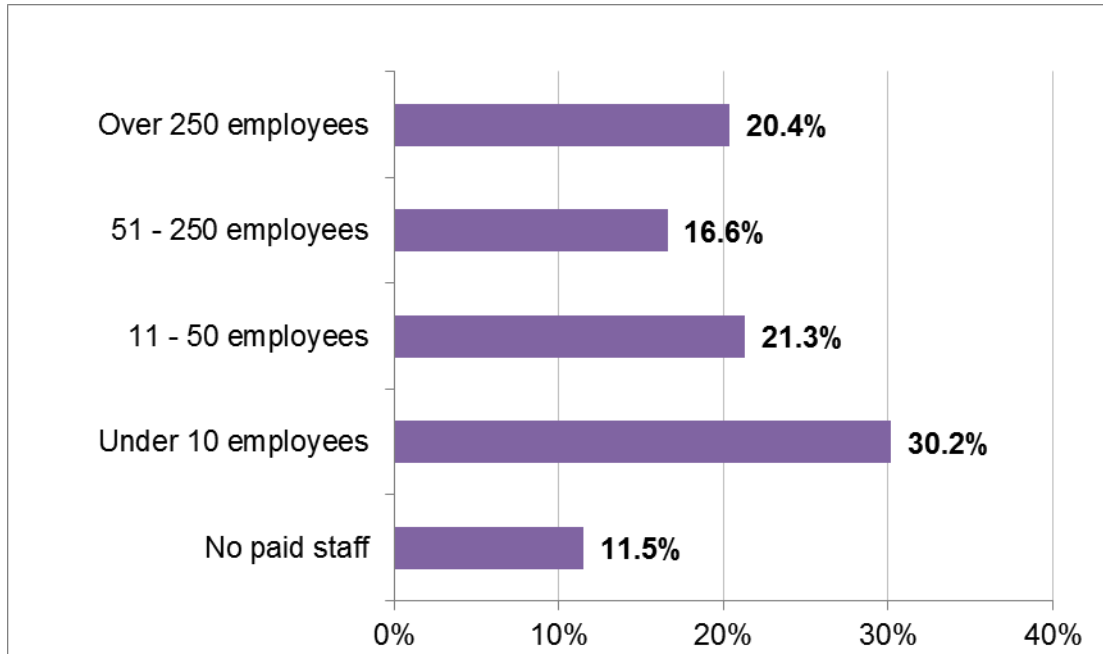


Other' responses given included: trust, consultant, not for profit organisation, University/Higher Education provider, Government Department, National Development Body, Online repository, Community Interest Company, Community Benefit Organisation, Interpretation specialist, Arts Council England Bridge organisation, social enterprise and local conservation group or network.

The online survey respondents reflect the diversity of organisations active in the heritage sector. The highest proportion of responses came from charitable or community/voluntary organisations and there was also good representation from the public sector and museums and galleries.

2.4.2 Size of organization

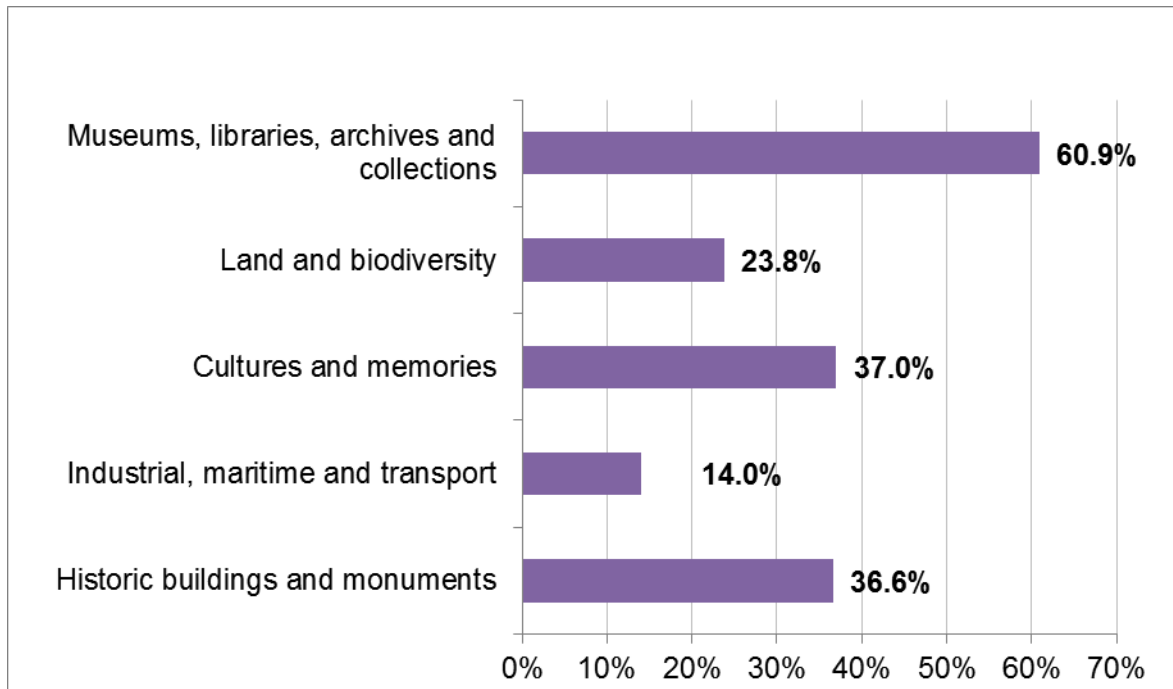
2.4.2.1 Chart 2: What is the size of your organisation? (n=235)



The number of employees within an organisation was used as an indicator of its size; respondents were from heritage organisations of all sizes, with the highest proportion of responses from organisations with less than ten staff.

2.4.3 Heritage sector

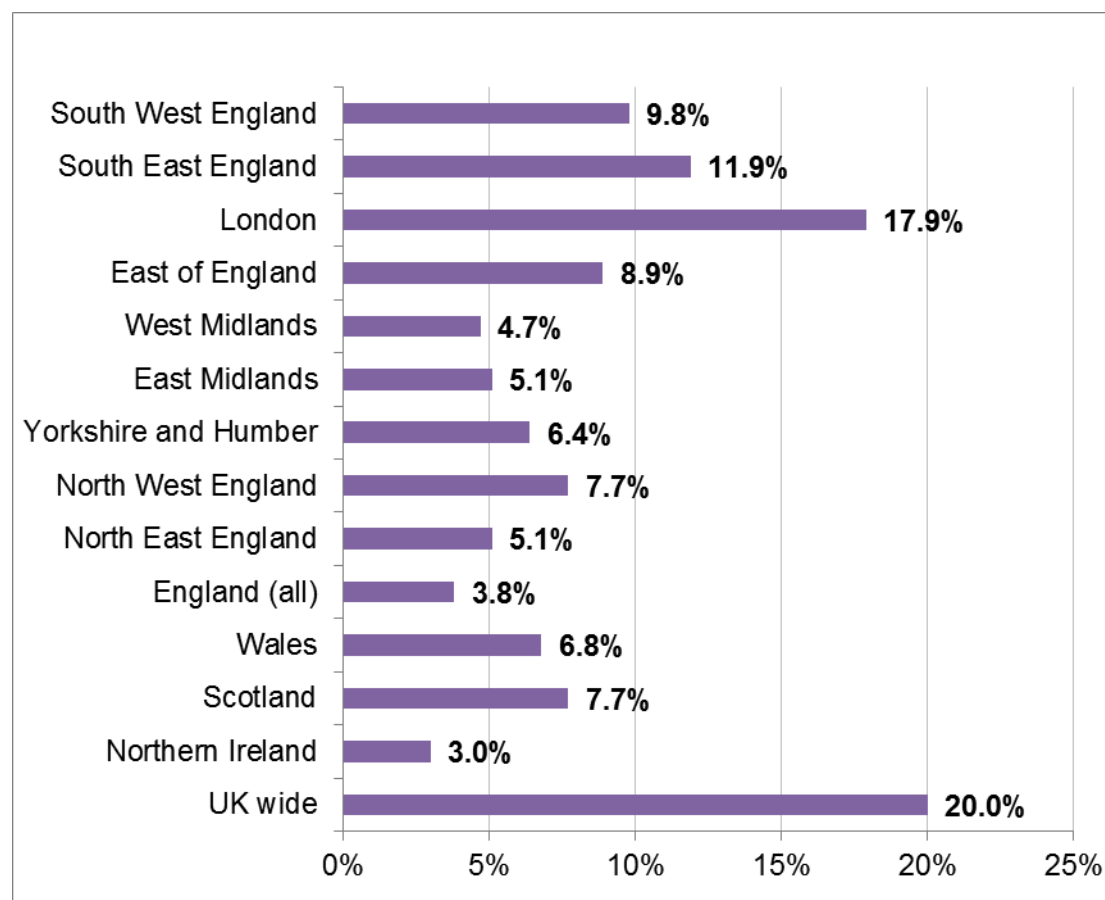
2.4.3.1 Chart 3: Which heritage sector does your organisation work in? (n=235)



Though not all organisations would regard themselves as heritage organisations, they were all involved in heritage activities. A substantial proportion of the respondents (nearly two thirds) worked in ‘museums, libraries, archives and collections’, however there was also good representation across the other areas of heritage.

2.4.4 Geographical coverage

2.4.4.1 Chart 4: In which parts of the UK does your organisation operate? (n=235)



Responses were received from heritage organisations working in all of the English regions, across all four home nations, and those working UK wide.

2.5 The interview sample

The interview sample was selected by HLF. The aim was to ensure that there was good representation within the sample from organisations of different size, different areas of heritage and different areas of the UK. Appendix 2 lists the types of organisations that were interviewed in phase one of the research.

2.6 Report structure

Each chapter in this report presents the quantitative data from the online survey first. The results are presented in charts and then patterns in the data are described; insights drawn from the survey responses to open questions and the interview data are then summarised. This qualitative data offers a more nuanced account of the experiences and perceptions of

heritage organisations and is included to add depth and understanding to the quantitative survey data. A summary of the key findings is included at the end of each chapter.

The full structure of the report is as follows.

Chapter two provides an overarching view of engagement work with young people aged 11-25 across the heritage organisations surveyed. This section reports on differing levels of experience within the sector and the types of opportunities offered to young people. The mediating influence of organisational size is also discussed.

Chapter three presents the findings about how heritage organisations resource their work with young people. Here the focus is on financial and human resources.

Chapter four presents the findings about the barriers and constraints encountered by heritage organisations.

Chapter five discusses three areas that are relevant to good practice: partnership working, leadership of young people and evaluation.

Chapter six shares findings about the sustainability of this work with young people.

Chapter seven presents the financial and non-financial support needs identified by heritage organisations, and the suggestions that have been made about how HLF can best support their work.

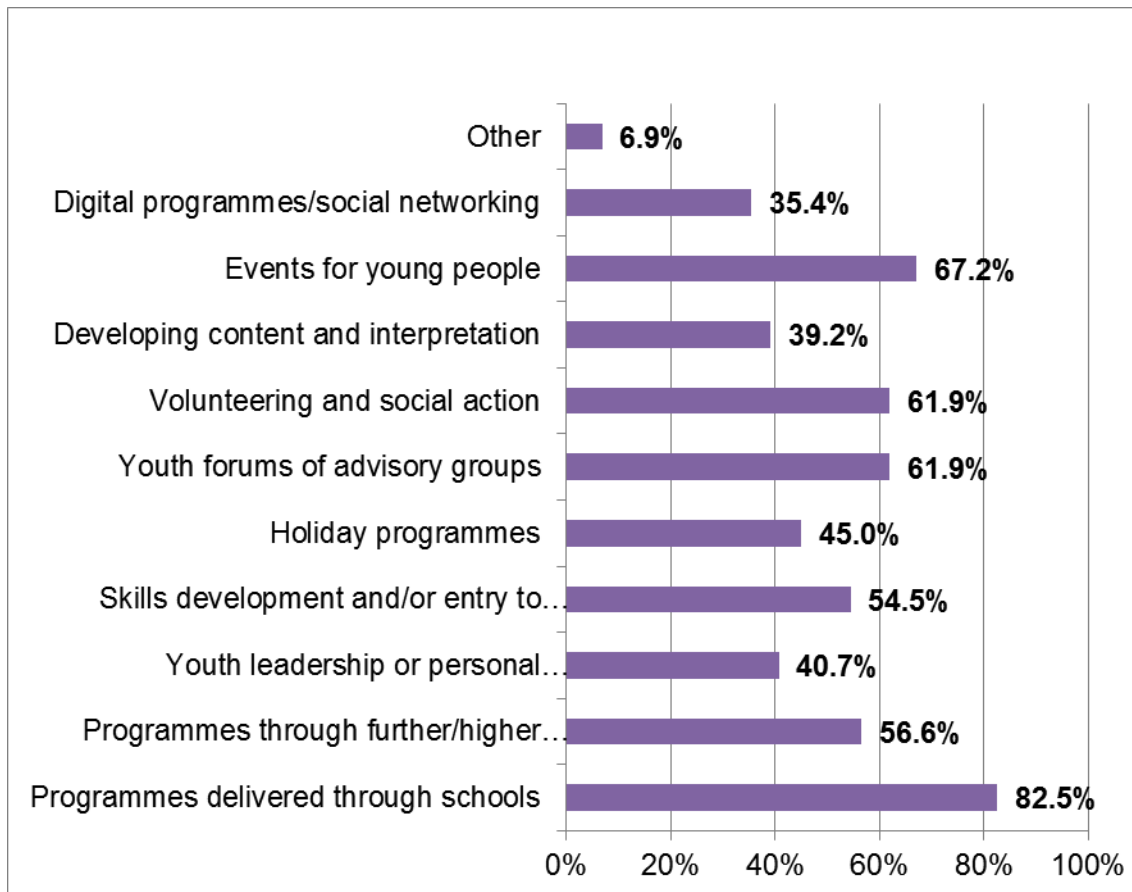
Chapter eight presents the key messages arising from this research.

3 Current provision

This section provides an overview of the work and experience of heritage organisations in working with young people.

3.1 Types of activities that involve young people in heritage

3.1.1 Chart 5: What kind of activities run by your organisation are young people engaged in? (n=189)



Other' responses given: youth theatre, arts projects, film/cinema, family projects, peer education, dance, music, archaeological fieldwork.

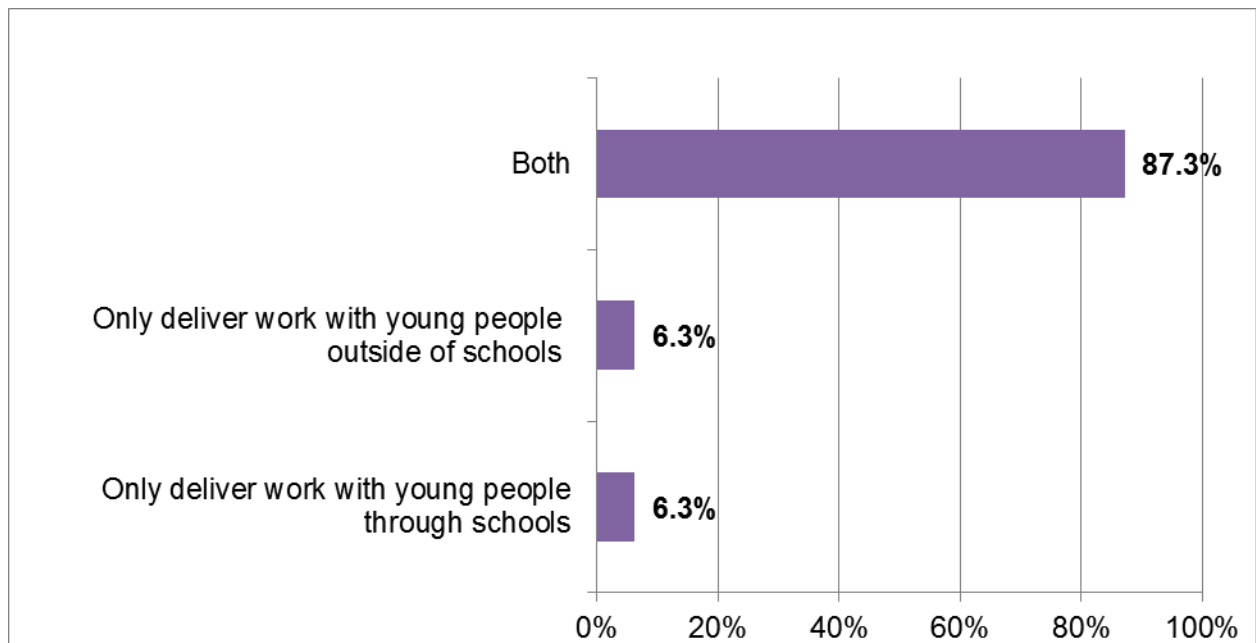
This chart shows that heritage organisations are engaging young people in a wide range of activities, both through schools-based programmes and outside of school settings. Formal education settings are a key part of the provision: four fifths of organisations indicated that they deliver programmes through schools, and just over half deliver through further and higher education institutions.

In their work outside formal education, the most popular approaches are one-off events,

volunteering and social action, and youth forums. Other common approaches offer development opportunities for young people. Examples include: skills development and entry into employment; and youth leadership and personal development programmes.

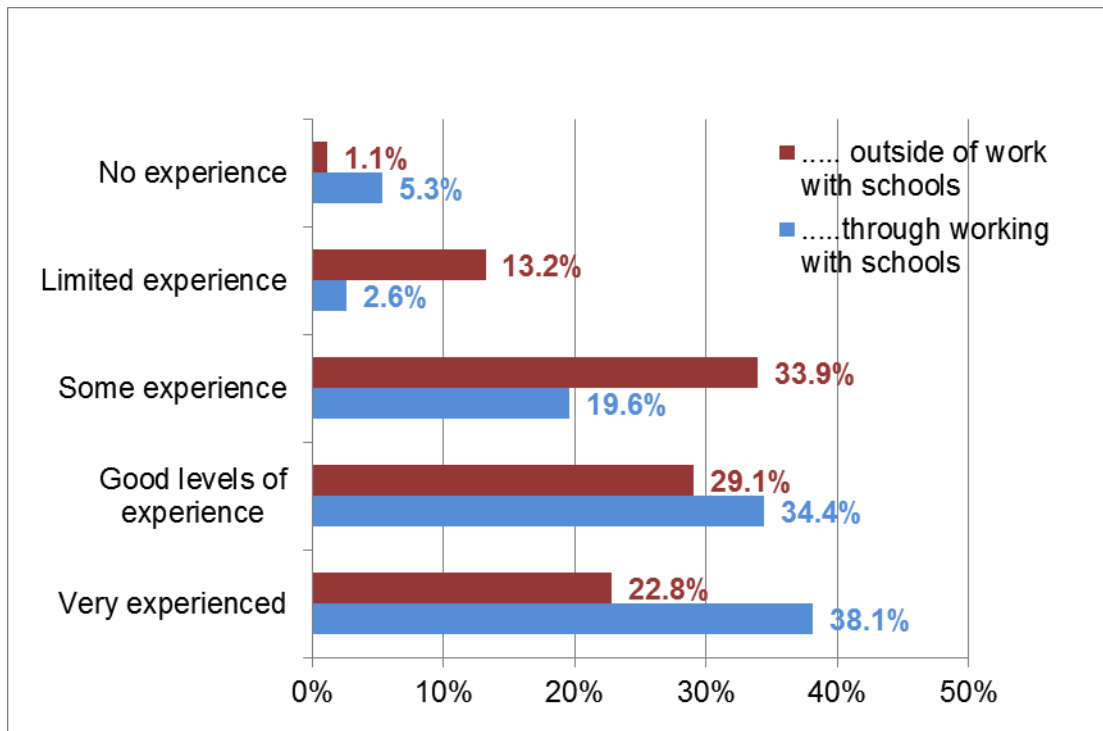
3.2 Experience levels of school and non-school activities

3.2.1 Chart 6: Does your organisation....? (n=189)



The vast majority of survey respondents indicated that they were delivering work both through schools and outside of schools. It is interesting to note however that the organisations' levels of experience in working in these two ways were markedly different.

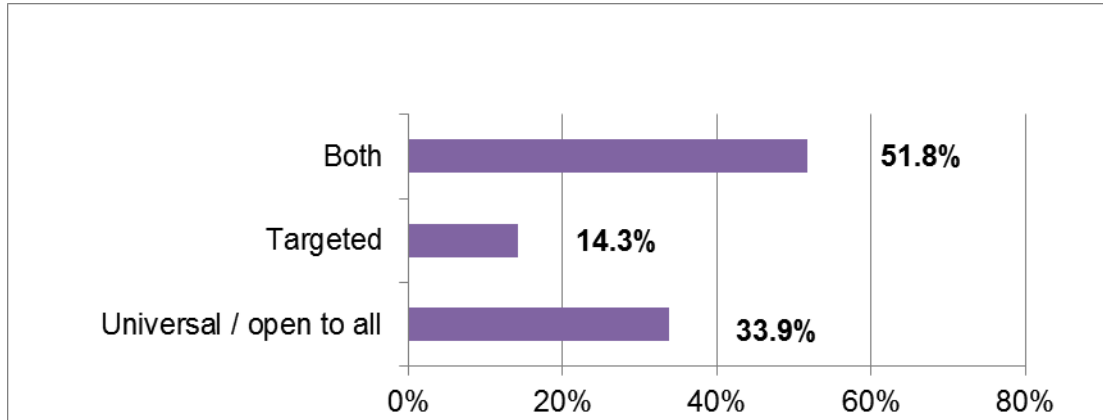
3.2.1.1 Chart 7: How experienced is your organisation in engaging young people with heritage? (n=189)



Heritage organisations have higher levels of experience in schools-based work than working outside of schools. Three quarters of organisations considered themselves to have a good or high level of experience of work within schools, whereas a half said this was the case for their work outside schools. Nearly half of survey respondents reported that they have some, limited or no experience of working outside schools. The reasons for this are not clear and they may suggest one of several factors which are discussed in more depth elsewhere in this report: a skills and confidence gap around working out of schools; lack of funding to develop and deliver this kind of work; few and declining opportunities to develop partnerships with youth sector organisations; and a perceived lack of priority for this kind of work.

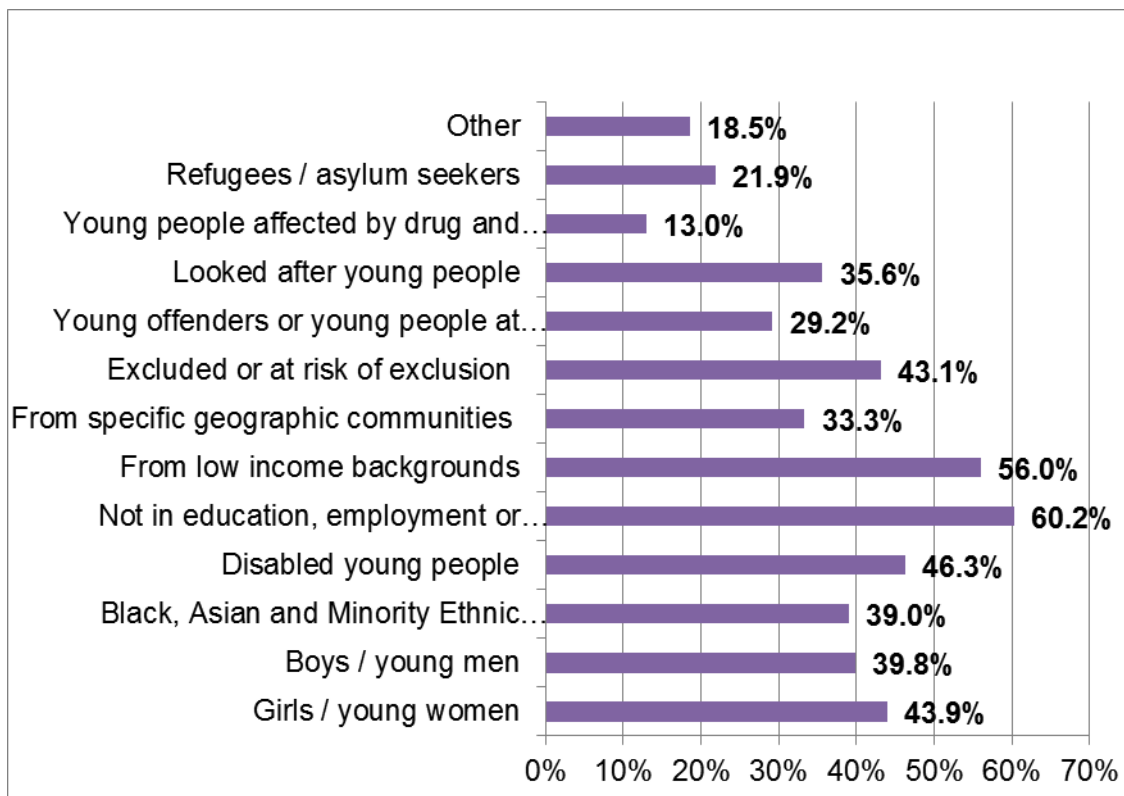
3.3 Universal and targeted approaches

3.3.1 Chart 8: Is your work with young people open to all or is it targeted at particular groups? (n=168)



About half the sample of heritage organisations indicated that their work with young people includes both targeted activities and activities that are open to all. One third only offer universal provision and a much smaller proportion only offer targeted activities.

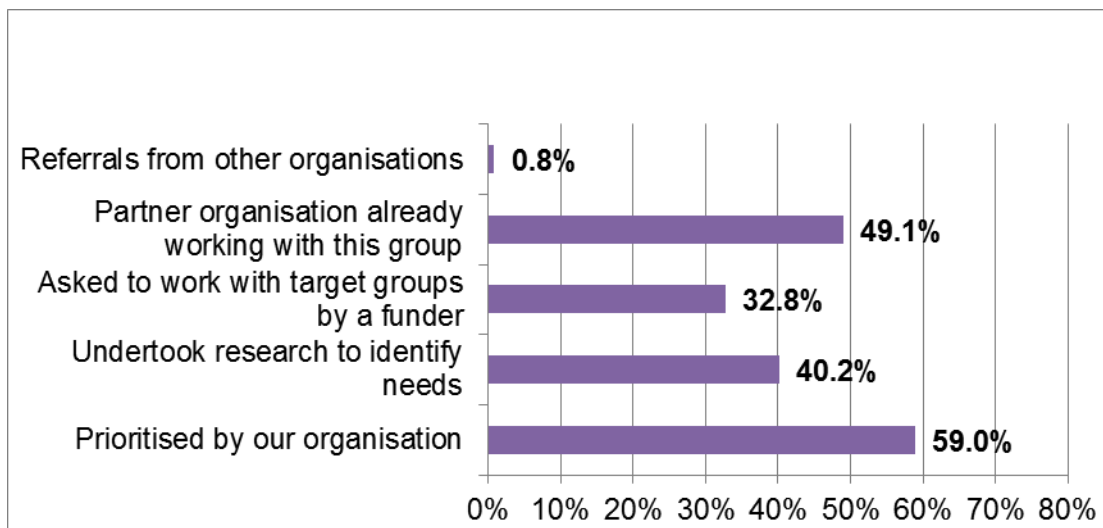
3.3.1.1 Chart 9: Which particular groups of young people are you aiming to engage? (n=123)



Other' responses given: varies/ depends on project, young people not engaged in heritage, gypsy, Roma and traveller young people, young people with health needs, young carers, lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender young people(LGBT), rural young people, undergraduates/postgraduates, Welsh speaking young people, young people with English as a second language, migrant young people, teenage parents.

Heritage organisations reported that their targeting of groups of young people is wide ranging. The groups most commonly targeted are: young people not in employment, education or training (NEET); and those from low income backgrounds. It is notable that there was generally a high level of targeted activity for all of the groups identified within the survey.

3.3.1.2 Chart 10: How do you decide which groups of young people to focus on? (n=122)



Both internal and external factors influence how organisations decide which groups of young people to target. Significant internal factors were: because the group had been prioritised by their organisation; and organisations were responding to research about needs. External factors were also important, in particular the influence of partner organisations and funders.

3.4 Qualitative insights

3.4.1 Broad approach

- **The significance of school based work.** Schools based work was common among interviewees. However a few explained how they target certain schools because of their geographical location. For a small number of organisations, school based work was the main route for engaging young people. This was the case, for example, for a very large national museum, which engaged large groups of young people through school visits.
- **Dual approach.** Many organisations described a dual approach of schools based work and out of school activities. Often the out of school activities that were described by interviewees offered short, time-limited opportunities for young people to engage with heritage (for example, holiday clubs or workshops). There was acknowledgment from some that these attract the more motivated young people who are switched on to heritage or whose parents are keen for them to participate.

3.4.2 Types of activities

- **Youth-led activities.** These were often described as youth forums or special interest groups or clubs, such as a Young Poets Group or an Archaeology Club. Activities like this tended to involve those young people who are already interested in heritage.
- **Activities targeted at particular groups of young people.** These tended to be described as time-limited, project based and reliant on external funds - one example was a photography project for NEET young people.
- **Promoting employability.** A few organisations described how they are engaging older young people (over 18) in activities that promote employability. One regional museum, for example, offers an extensive programme of opportunities to build the skills, confidence and employability of young people (through apprenticeships, developing young people as freelancers, a young volunteer project, and a route into work programme).

3.4.3 Experience

- **Highly experienced organisations.** A small number of organisations have significant experience of engaging young people outside of schools. They were able to describe in very clear terms their offer to young people and they gave a compelling rationale for their

approach. These organisations tended to have dedicated, skilled staff resources for engaging young people and a long track record of this work. A regional museum, for example, described why it promotes universal access rather than relying on other organisations to bring specific groups of young people into the museum.

“We have taken this decision for a number of reasons: 1) engaging a wide range of young people from different backgrounds (rather than using a targeted approach) promotes the exchange of skills, knowledge and experiences which ultimately enriches the learning for everyone involved. 2) engaging young people as individuals means that they are more likely to build a sense of ownership and connection to the museum.” (Interviewee from a regional museum)

Similarly, a national museum spoke about their understanding of meaningful engagement methods.

“Static approaches are not as successful. We’ve discovered that young people want to create real experiences, so our projects tend to be fast moving, vibrant and have a festival feel to them. Young people will often work on content creation for social media to engage others and film has become very important to us.” (Interviewee from a national museum)

3.4.4 Summary of key points about current practice

- **Heritage organisations employ a wide range of approaches to working with young people, with a substantial proportion involved in schools work.**
- **The work undertaken by heritage organisations outside of schools is varied and incorporates a number of approaches including: one-off events; volunteering and social action; youth forums.**
- **Heritage organisations have a higher level of experience in schools based work compared to their experience working outside of schools.**
- **The majority of heritage organisations provide both targeted work with particular groups of young people as well as approaches that are open to all young people.**

When targeting young people their work is wide ranging to many different groups, with NEETs and those from low income backgrounds most prominent.

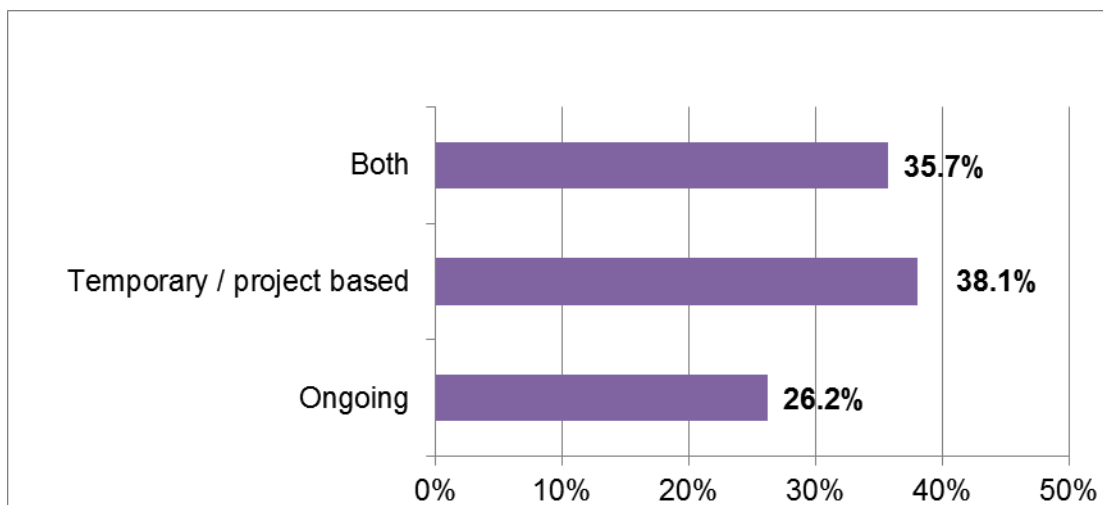
- **Both internal and external factors influence decisions about the kinds of groups of young people that heritage organisations will target.**

4 Resources

Heritage organisations were invited to provide information about how their work with young people is funded and staffed and their feedback on how they are resourced is presented in this section of the report.

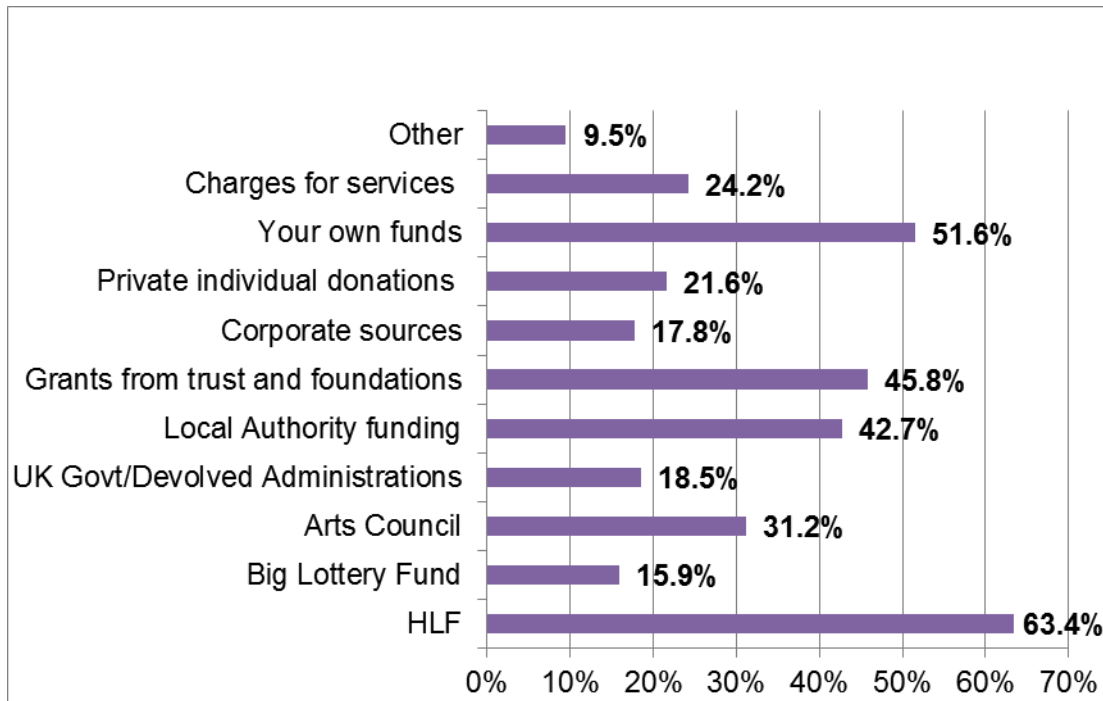
4.1 Longevity of funding

4.1.1 Chart 11: Is your work (not involving schools) ongoing or temporary / project based? (n=168)



4.2 Sources of funding

4.2.1 Chart 12: What sources of funding has your organisation used to fund youth engagement work? (n=157)



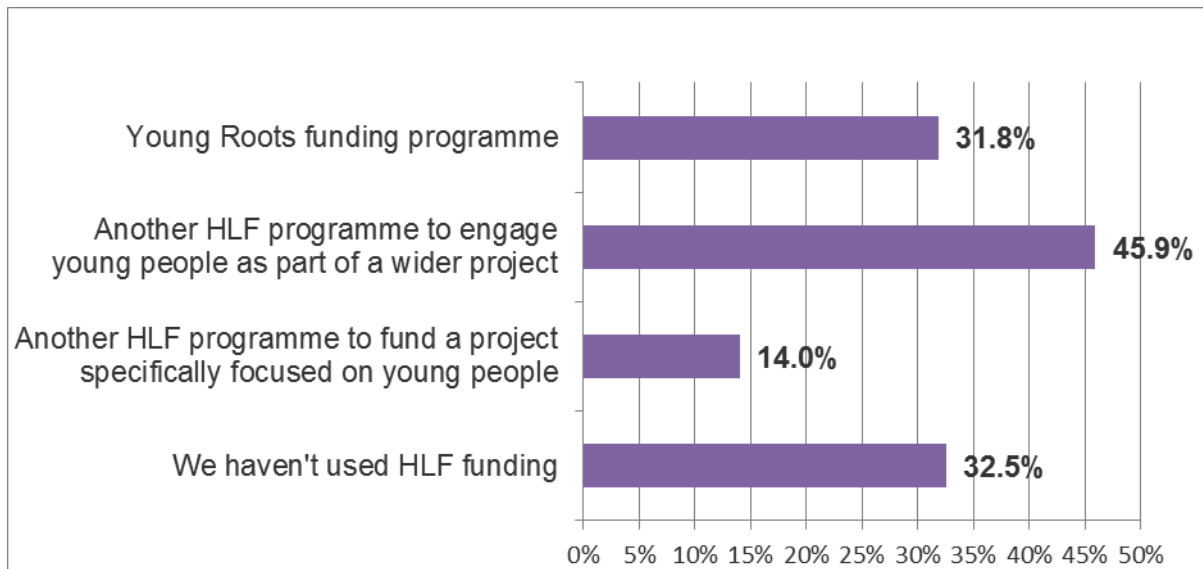
'Other' responses given: membership fees, commissions by venues, partner contributions, EU funding, public health funding, universities, 'Friends' organisations, Wales Council for Voluntary Action, the National Association for Decorative and Fine Arts Societies (NADFAS), the BBC.

The most important source of funding reported by survey respondents was HLF (for nearly two thirds of organisations), and the next most popular funding source was an organisation's own funds. Grants from trusts and foundations and local authority funding were also identified by nearly one half of respondents. The Arts Council, highlighted by nearly a third of organisations, was also an important funder of youth engagement in the heritage sector.

Closer analysis of the data reveals that experienced organisations are using HLF funds more commonly than those with less experience. Using an organisation's own funds for engagement work is also more common among more experienced organisations. Inexperienced organisations are more likely to be using grants from trusts and foundations to fund their engagement work.

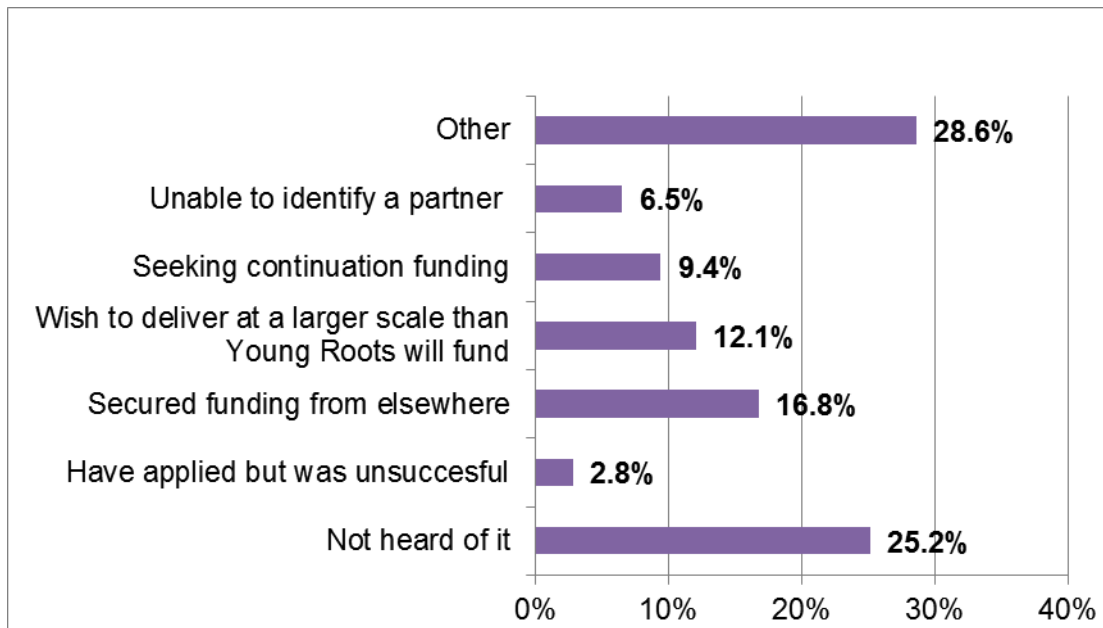
4.3 Use of HLF funding

4.3.1 Chart 13: How has your organisation used HLF funding for its youth engagement work? (n=157)



Just over one third of respondents have not used HLF funding for their youth engagement work, while a similar proportion have made use of Young Roots funding. However, the most common approach to utilising HLF funds to support work with young people, was to engage young people as part of a wider HLF funded project (nearly one half of respondents) although there is no indication from the findings about the scale or depth of the work with young people in such projects. The least common approach was to secure funding through another HLF programme for a specific project for young people.

4.3.1.1 Chart 14: If you have not used Young Roots, what was the reason? (n=109)

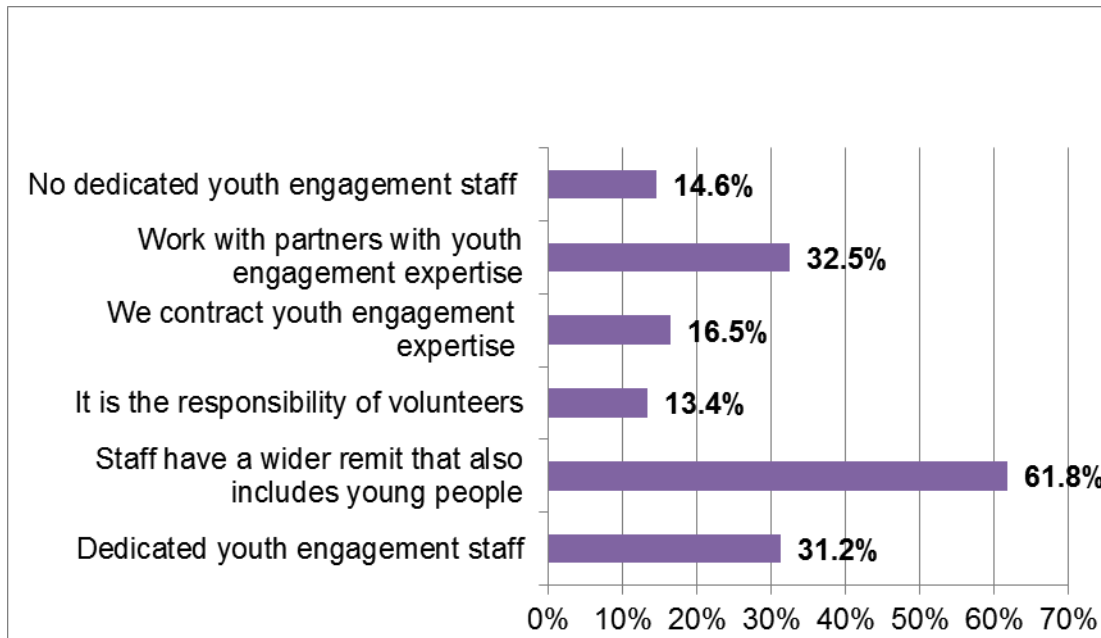


'Other' responses given: considering applying (6.5 percent), lack of capacity to develop bid (6.5 percent), have an existing HLF grant (4.6 percent), not clear about the criteria, not had a suitable project, advised by HLF, don't have sufficient contact with young people, age restriction of Young Roots, heritage not a priority.

The most common reason (a quarter of respondents) for not accessing Young Roots was a lack of awareness about the programme and this was true for organisations of all sizes and experience levels.

4.4 Staffing youth engagement

4.4.1 Chart 15: Which best describes how your organisation staffs its work with young people? (n=157)



The most common approach to staffing youth engagement work within heritage organisations is to utilise employees that have wider responsibilities in addition to young people's work (this approach applies to around two thirds of organisations). A third of organisations indicated that they have dedicated youth engagement staff and a similar proportion are benefitting from the input of partners with youth engagement expertise. Volunteers and external suppliers are also working with young people in a small proportion of organisations.

Analysis indicates a relationship between organisations with experience in youth engagement outside schools and the employment of dedicated youth engagement staff. Of those organisations with dedicated staff, three quarters described themselves as experienced or very experienced.

4.5 Qualitative insights

4.5.1 Sources of funding

- **Schools work more likely to be ongoing.** Schools work was often described by interviewees as ongoing or part of the organisation's core activity, whereas work outside of schools was often framed as project-based.

- **Young Roots as a source of funding.** There was a consistent message from many interviewees that Young Roots funding was considered appropriate for short-term, smaller scale projects, and less suited to delivering and embedding youth engagement at scale. For example, a large national charity commented that the short-term nature of Young Roots was off-putting because it prefers to seek larger amounts of longer-term funds that are more conducive to embedding and sustaining practice across the organisation. The following comment from a regional museum was quite typical.

“We will be drawn towards the larger pots of funding as we need to be able to create projects at scale wherever possible.” (Interviewee from regional museum)

4.5.2 Staffing

- **Dedicated youth engagement staff.** An important insight from the interviews is that in some cases, where organisations had dedicated youth engagement staff, the focus of their work was mainly schools and education. These members of staff were variously described as Education Officers, Outreach Officers and Learning Officers. It is possible that this may be the case for a proportion of the survey respondents that commented on how they staff their work with young people (even though they were advised to focus their responses on work with young people outside of schools).
- Where dedicated staff were in place this was described very positively. It was noted that having staff from a different tradition to the majority of colleagues helped to build capability more widely within the organisation.

“The Rangers and Wardens employed at our sites generally have little experience of working with young people and need to be given the opportunity to see the value of doing so and develop skills in relating to young people. Having a youth worker to make this happen and offer training was essential. The alternative is for heritage organisations to buy those skills from outside or to partner with specialist youth providers.” (Interviewee from a national charity)

- **Generalist staff.** Organisations gave examples of how staff with general responsibilities for promoting heritage or attracting new audiences, have acquired, through practice, knowledge and skills associated with working young people.

- **Organisations with a national portfolio.** A national charity pointed out that although they are delivering pockets of work with young people around the country, there is no formal way of connecting these within the organisations, nor do they have a central youth engagement function or strategy.

4.5.3 Summary of key points about resourcing

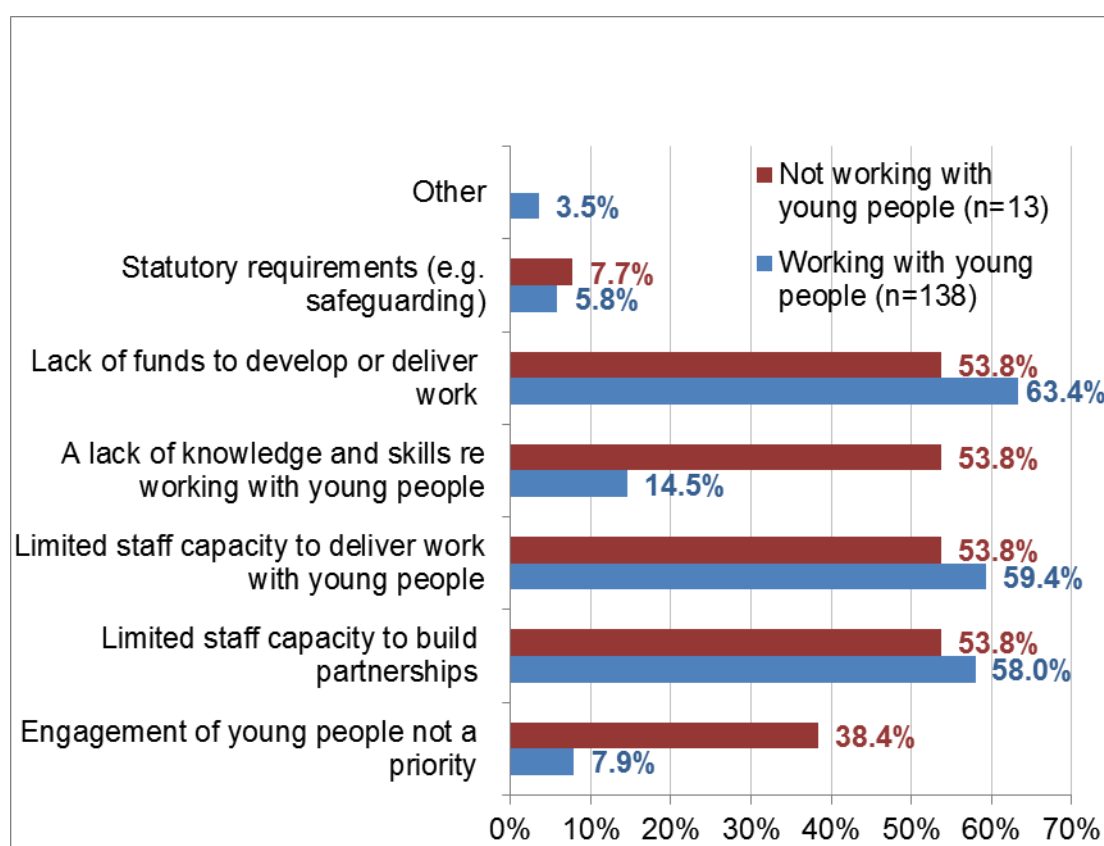
- **One quarter of heritage organisations report that their work with young people outside of schools is ongoing. Just over a third report their work is temporary or project based and the remainder state they have a mixed portfolio of temporary and ongoing youth engagement work.**
- **HLF is the most common source of funding for the work that heritage organisations undertake with young people, and this is particularly true for more experienced organisations.**
- **The second most popular source of funding for youth engagement work is the use of organisations' own funds, and this is particularly true for experienced organisations.**
- **About one third of organisations have not accessed HLF funding at all.**
- **About a third of organisations have accessed Young Roots funding.**
- **The most common reason for organisations not accessing Young Roots is that they did not know about it, and this response was common to organisations of all sizes and levels of experience.**
- **The majority of heritage organisations deliver their work with young people via staff members who also have wider responsibilities. About a third of organisations do have dedicated staff for youth engagement work, and this is particularly true where organisations have high levels of experience.**

5 Barriers and constraints

The heritage organisations surveyed were invited to comment on the factors that made it difficult to develop or deliver work with young people outside of schools. This section presents the range of perspectives on these factors from the organisations working with young people outside of school, the organisations working only with schools, and those not working with young people at all.

5.1 Factors impacting on the development and delivery of work with young people

5.1.1 Chart 16: What makes it difficult for you to develop / deliver work with young people aged 11-25?



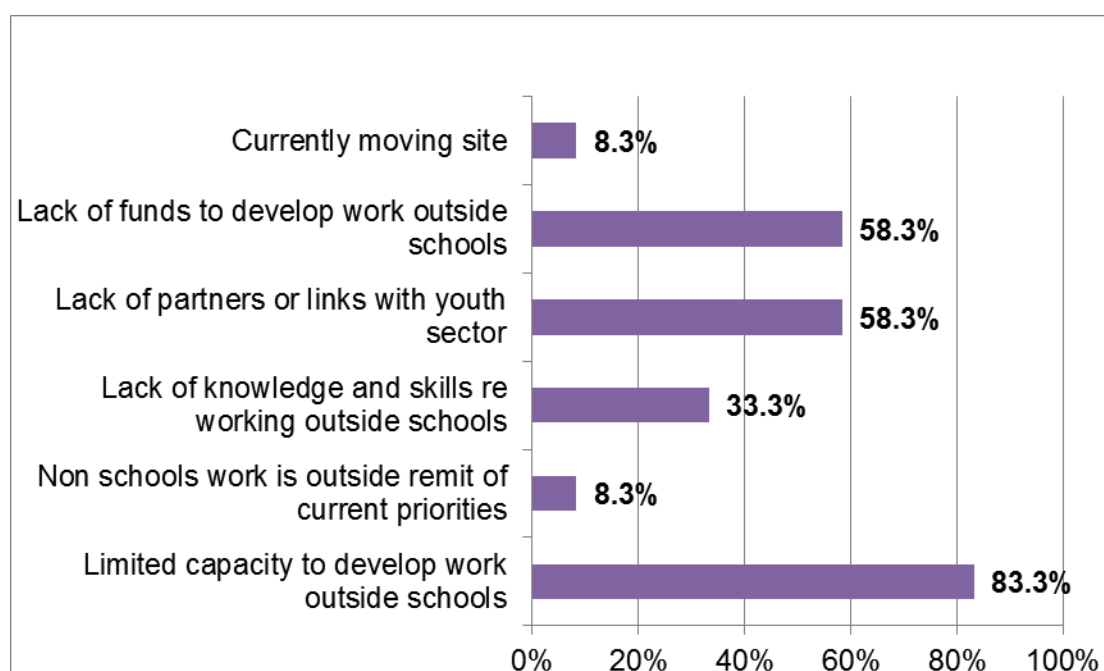
'Other' responses given: young people not having the time to engage, funders priorities dictating the style of work, partners difficult to engage, pressure to achieve high numbers.

The responses reveal that a large proportion of heritage organisations already working with young people outside school are encountering constraints on the development of their work. Three factors were identified as significant by nearly two thirds of organisations: a lack of funds to develop or deliver the work; limited staff capacity to build partnerships; and limited staff capacity to deliver the work. A lack of knowledge and skills was also highlighted by

organisations although to a much lesser degree.

Heritage organisations not working with young people also identified a lack of funding and capacity constraints as barriers to developing their work with young people. Perhaps not surprisingly, respondents from this group were more likely than those already working with young people outside schools to identify a lack of knowledge and skills as a barrier.

5.1.1.1 Chart 17: Why have you not delivered engagement work with young people outside schools? (n=12)



As with those heritage organisations already working with young people outside of schools, the barriers identified by organisations only working in schools were: limited capacity; lack of partners or links with the youth sector; and lack of funds.

5.2 Qualitative insights

Survey respondents and interviewees were invited to give examples of the barriers they most commonly experience to working with young people. Their responses are summarised below under the broad categories of internal and external constraints.

5.2.1 Internal constraints

- **Lack of resources.** Heritage organisations articulated frustration that, although they aspire to do more with young people, they are hampered by a lack of resources, or a lack of time to secure resources. Implicit within many comments was the notion that meaningful work with young people requires dedicated time and effort to develop

activities and to build relationships with partners, which organisations are unable to resource.

“Young people require more contact, support and supervision. It is getting harder and harder due to constraints on resources to be able to provide for young people's needs...The difficulty is confounded as with less and less resources and staff, plus demand to do more with less resource, it is hard to justify time trying to source more funding and working towards real long term change. It's very frustrating.” (Survey respondent from a medium sized community and voluntary organisation – historic buildings and monuments)

It was clear from the interviews that organisations of varying size and structure share frustrations associated with having insufficient time to work with young people.

- **Perceptions, skills and expertise.** Some organisations acknowledged the need to change the perceptions of their staff and volunteers towards young people; others referred to lacking the specialist skills that this work requires.

“Generally teens are seen as a ‘problem’ to avoid rather than a group to engage with.” (Survey respondent from a local authority museum)

“We are in an area of socio-economic disadvantage and need the support of experienced youth workers to facilitate engagement.” (Survey respondent from a very small community and voluntary organisation – historic buildings and monuments)

One local branch representative from a national charity spoke about how the volunteer workforce is not comfortable with working with young people and suggested this is a systemic challenge.

“This is an ongoing challenge for us, for the Trust and for the sector generally, as our traditional volunteer base has not, as a rule, signed up expecting to work with younger people.” (Interviewee from a large national charity – historic buildings and monuments / land and diversity)

Three different approaches to acquiring the skills were suggested: training and developing staff; ‘buying in’ skills and expertise from elsewhere; and partnering with organisations, such as youth groups, to address skills gaps. It was, however, noted that

'buying in' skills from elsewhere is not always desirable because it doesn't build ownership internally

- **Not a priority for the organisation.** One organisation illustrated this point by noting that the internal drive to achieve high visitor numbers for minimal cost was downgrading the perceived importance of young people as an audience.

5.2.2 External constraints

- **Young people's perceptions.** Organisations highlighted the challenge of making heritage attractive to young people, observing that heritage is often seen as 'boring' or 'irrelevant' to a young audience.

"The main barrier is that young people don't view botanic collections as places that can offer much to them." (Survey respondent from a medium sized national arboretum)

- **Shrinkage of the youth sector.** Heritage organisations referred to the shrinkage of the public and youth sectors as a significant challenge. It was observed that many of the staff who would typically provide access to young people or offer complementary skills, such as youth workers or community workers, were no longer in post.

"Lack of capacity/cuts to the youth sector in general has resulted in fewer groups for us to work with – as we tend to work in partnership this has limited our activities." (Survey respondent from a medium sized community and voluntary organisation – land and biodiversity)

One interviewee from a large national museum described the impacts of this on their work with particular groups of young people.

"The contraction of the public sector, or agencies we used to work with, has severely restricted the opportunities to connect with certain groups – examples are Asian women, Looked After Children and intergenerational work, all of which we did much more of before the financial crisis and austerity government." (Interviewee from a large national museum)

- **Statutory requirements.** Statutory requirements were also highlighted as a barrier by some interviewees. For example, one interviewee described how "red tape" had meant

they were not able to deliver out of school experiences to young people with special needs.

- **Age-related barriers.** Survey respondents and interviewees were invited to comment on particular age groups that they found it difficult to engage. The pattern of responses indicates that heritage organisations experience difficulties working with young people across the age spectrum. It was noted on a number of occasions that school aged children are busy with homework and extra curricula activities; whereas difficulties 'marketing' to young people over 18 were noted because there are no obvious mechanisms to reach them.

5.2.3 Summary of key findings about barriers and constraints

- **All respondents identified factors that have made it difficult to develop or deliver work with young people.**
- **Common over arching constraints are: a lack of funds to develop or deliver the work; limited staff/volunteer capacity to deliver the work; and limited staff capacity to build partnerships.**
- **Heritage organisations have also noted a range of other challenges that impact on their capacity to engage with young people. These are wide ranging and reflect factors both internal and external to their organisation.**
- **Internal factors included: staff perceptions about working with young people; gaps in the skills and expertise of staff and volunteers in working with young people; work with young people not identified as a priority.**
- **Externals factors included: young people's perceptions about engaging with the heritage sector; young people's lack of time to engage with the heritage sector; lack of funding available for work with young people; shrinkage of the public sector; unwieldy statutory requirements.**

There is evidence that these challenges are impacting upon the *scale* of work with young people within the heritage sector (organisations are doing less than they would like to) and they have *implications* for who is being engaged. It is likely that the engagement of groups that are 'harder to reach' is less likely to happen because

organisations lack the time, skills and connections that this work requires. The shrinkage of youth services is particularly relevant in this respect as they can offer a route in to many groups of young people outside of school.

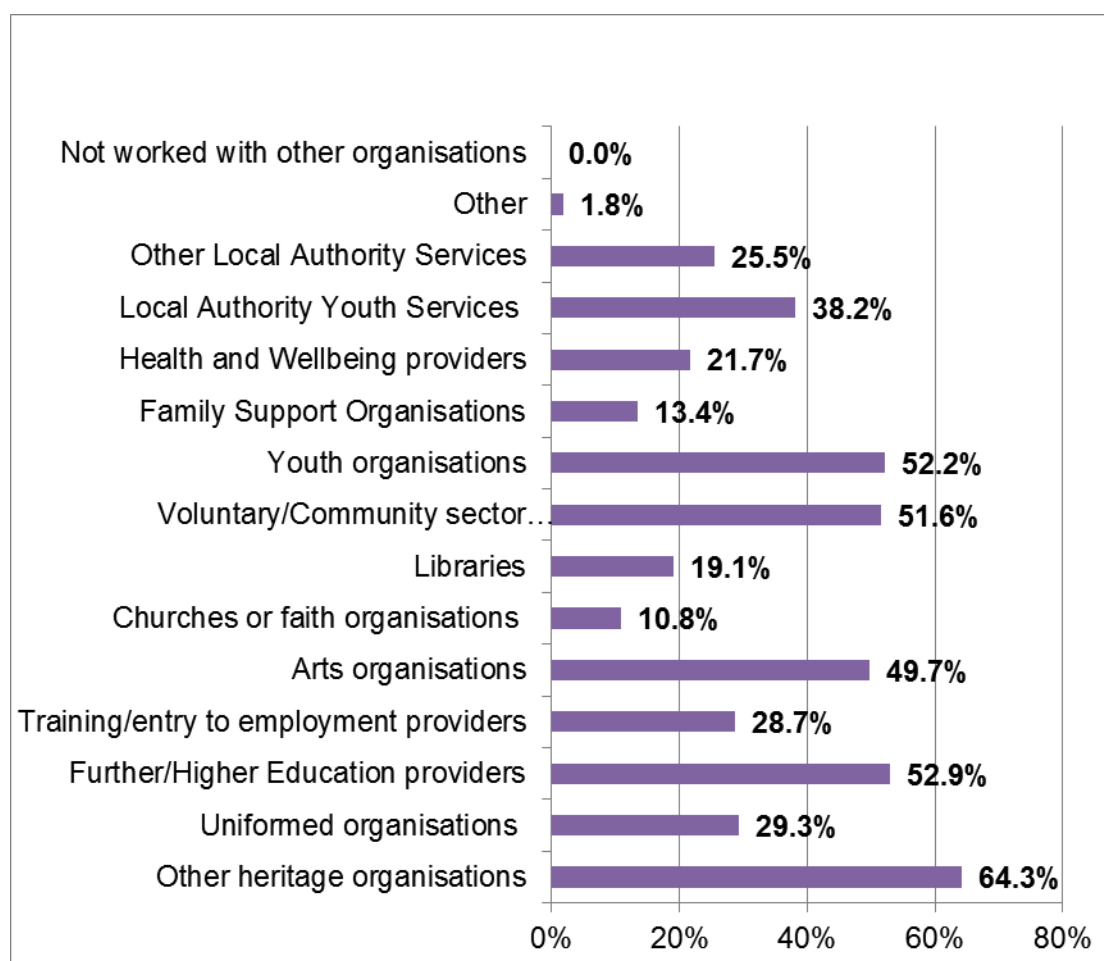
6 Good practice insights

The research enquired about three broad aspects of good practice: **partnership working**, **youth involvement and leadership** and **evaluation**. This section of the report presents the patterns of current activity reported by survey respondents for each of these three areas and draws on examples from the interview data to illustrate different experiences.

6.1 Partnership working

6.1.1 Partner organisations – who they are

6.1.1.1 Chart 18: What types of partner have you worked with to deliver youth engagement activity? (n=157)



'Other' responses given: the NHS, supplementary schools, local businesses.

All the survey respondents reported that they had undertaken some form of partnership to support their work with young people outside of schools. Of these, nearly two thirds reported that they had worked in partnership with other heritage organisations, indicating that there is

much cross-fertilisation of skills, expertise or capacity within the sector. This practice was reported more by experienced organisations than those with less experience.

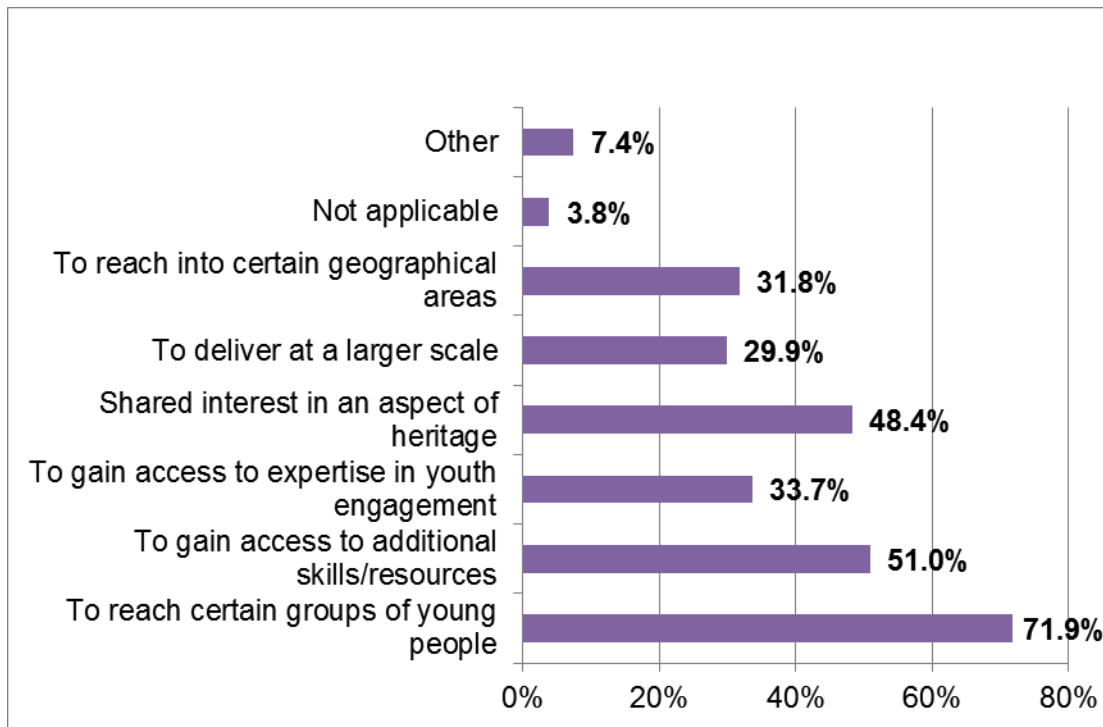
A substantial proportion also referred to partnerships within the youth sector: half stated that they had worked with youth organisations; around one third referred to working with local authority youth services; nearly one third said they had worked with uniformed organisations. More experienced organisations reported partnerships with youth organisations than those with less experience.

The arts sector was also revealed to be a significant contributor to the engagement of young people in heritage, with one half of heritage organisations indicating that they collaborated with arts organisations. Similarly, further and higher education providers, and training and entry to employment providers, were identified as important partners. Less prominent, but still relevant to around one quarter of organisations, were other local authority services, health and wellbeing providers and libraries.

An important finding highlighted by these survey responses, is that as well as engaging with the youth sector, heritage organisations are partnering with many different sectors (arts, health, family support, faith, further education and training) to support their work with young people. It is also important to note that survey respondents were commenting on who they *had* worked with and it may be the case that some of these partnerships are no longer active or are intermittent. Interestingly though, when asked to comment on the nature of their relationship with the youth sector, approximately half of respondents said they have an active and ongoing relationship and half said they have occasional links.

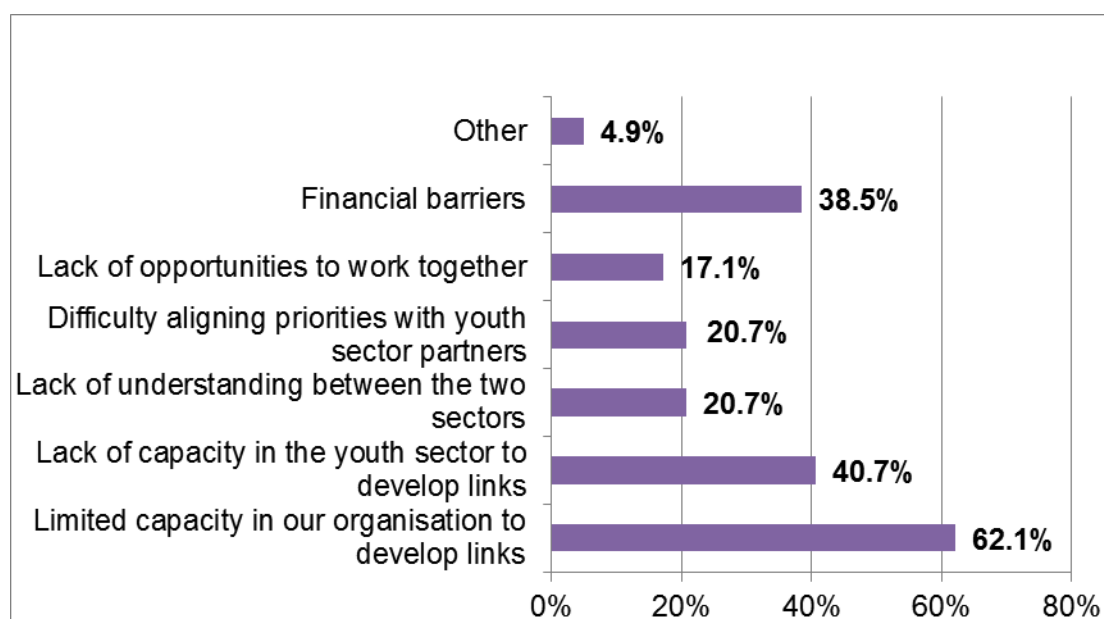
6.1.2 Benefits of partnership working

6.1.2.1 Chart 19: Why have you worked with other organisations to deliver youth engagement work? (n=157)



6.1.3 Difficulties associated with working with the youth sector

6.1.3.1 Chart 20: What difficulties have you encountered in working with the youth sector? (n=140)



'Other' responses given: expectations from parts of the youth sector, poor levels of service from parts of the youth sector, young people moving on, young people not understanding heritage, difficulties accessing young people.

The most commonly identified barrier to developing effective working links with others was capacity limitations. Heritage organisations with less experience of working with young people were more likely to highlight capacity as a barrier: 84 percent of organisations inexperienced in working with young people stated capacity affected their ability to develop partnerships, compared with 42 percent of experienced organisations. This is perhaps not surprising given that the early stages of partnership working can be very demanding on an organisation's time (researching and identifying partners, finding common areas of interest, identifying opportunities to work together etc.). Arguably, organisations with a track record of working with young people are more likely to have undertaken this initial resource-intensive groundwork.

Lack of capacity within the youth sector was mentioned by over a third of organisations and this echoes comments reported elsewhere in this report about the impact of the shrinkage of the public sector. Also highlighted as important by a considerable proportion of organisations were: lack of understanding between the two sectors; difficulty in aligning priorities; and lack of opportunities to work together. Although it may be the case that a large proportion of heritage organisations have worked with the youth sector, they are encountering

considerable challenges building or sustaining these links at present.

6.1.4 Qualitative insights

Many interviewees described their partnerships with other organisations in very positive terms and were able to articulate the benefits of working collaboratively. In their accounts, they also highlighted some of the difficulties they had encountered. Insights arising from their experiences are summarised below.

- **Establishing and retaining partnerships.** Some organisations spoke about *how* they establish and retain partnerships, referring to the importance of networking, being ‘open’ to collaborations and responsive to ideas and opportunities as they arise. This can be very demanding on resources. For example, it was noted on a number of occasions that it is often necessary to educate other organisations about what heritage organisations can offer to young people outside of schools. This account from a large national charity highlights how much work this can entail.

“We initiated the links with the Youth Service by visiting a youth centre in the community we were interested in working in, and spending time talking with the youth worker, before jointly approaching the Head of Service with a project proposal. We needed to change some initial perceptions of our organisation as we were not seen initially as a natural partner for the Youth Service.” (Interviewee from a large national charity)

- In acknowledgement of the resource implications of partnership working, one interviewee from a small local museum expressed a preference for developing ideas on their own because this was more practical and efficient.
- **Strength and stability of links with the youth sector.** Many interviewees recognised the value of working with the youth sector and some offered accounts of powerful and effective relationships with youth services or youth organisations. Uniformed groups, such as scouts and sea cadets, were mentioned on many occasions. A desire for long-term meaningful partnerships that deliver sustained benefits was widely expressed but organisations acknowledged that their links with the youth sector were not as established as they would like them to be due largely to internal capacity constraints. Some referred to difficulties maintaining partnerships because they are often established around time-limited projects or dependent upon the input of staff employed on short contracts. A

consistent theme across many of the interviews was the impact of the shrinkage of the youth services.

“It’s completely essential to develop relationship with the gatekeeper organisations that have good relationships with young people. Unless young people have a peer, parent, teacher or youth worker encouraging them to take part in an activity then they are not likely to engage. You can’t cold call young people. Therefore it’s vital to get youth organisations on board. What is challenging is that a lot of youth services are being cut and so they are under a lot of pressure. Therefore there is a bottle neck now.” (Interviewee from a large regional museum)

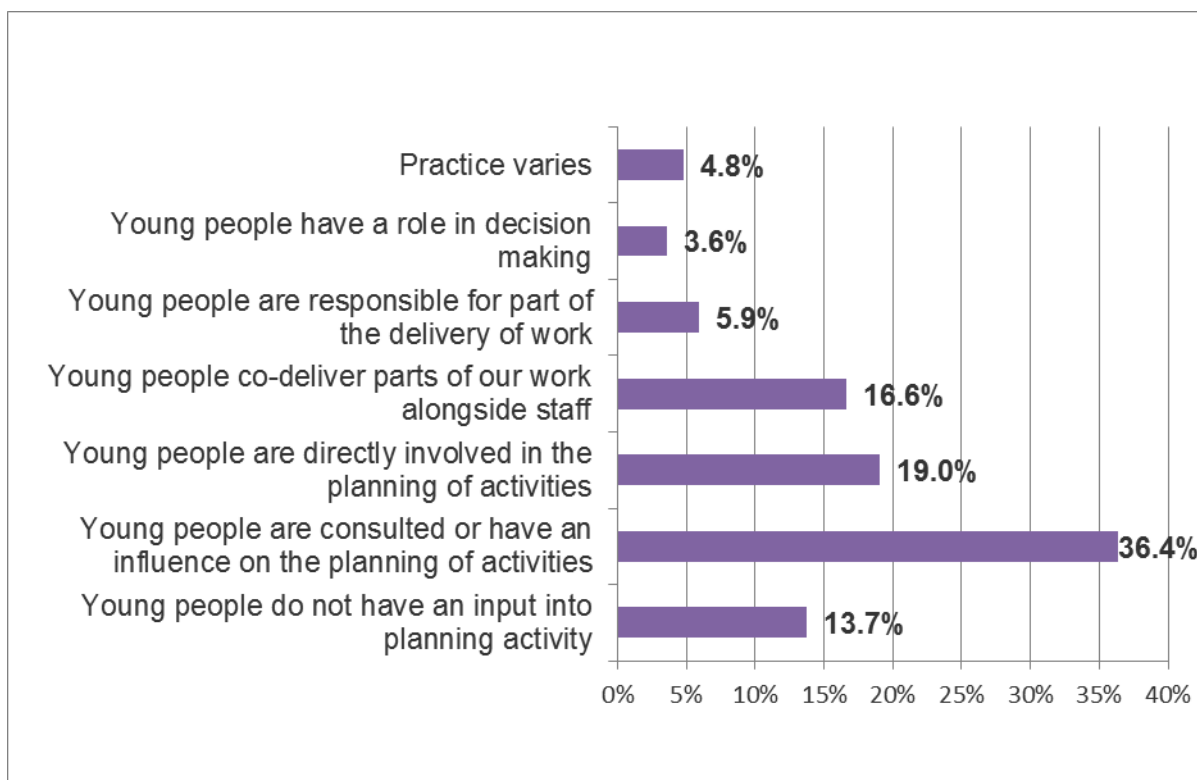
- **Involvement in strategic networks/partnerships.** A few heritage organisations referred to the transformational influence of strategic networks and partnerships. One interviewee spoke about how a partnership between three national heritage sites that had resulted in the sharing of learning materials, physical spaces and expertise. Similarly, a representative from a library service spoke about how involvement in a cultural education partnership had catalysed some very exciting work with young people.

“The partnership is so fruitful because it brings together expertise from different organisations and there are opportunities for the partnership to bid for external work to support area based projects.” (Interviewee from a local authority library service)

- **Strong local links.** As well as speaking about the benefits of strategic networks, the interviews also revealed the gains associated with establishing strong links at a local level with a wide cross section of groups and organisations. A representative from a local charity responsible for a park, pointed out that it was only through working at a neighbourhood level that they could achieve deep penetration into the community and build the relationships that are critical to the engagement of young people.

6.2 Youth involvement and leadership

6.2.1 Chart 21: Which best describes how young people play a role in influencing your work? (n=168)



Just over a third of heritage organisations are consulting young people about their experience of taking part in activities, and they are consulting in order to inform the planning of activities. A slightly larger proportion are offering young people opportunities to be directly involved in the planning or delivery of activities. A small proportion of heritage organisations, about one seventh, reported that they are not providing opportunities for young people to play a role in influencing their work.

6.2.2 Qualitative insights

Interviewees were asked to comment on how young people are involved in the design and delivery of work with young people. The different approaches they described are summarised below.

- **Occasional surveys and focus groups:** For example, a national charity occasionally consults young people to gather their views about support that is offered.
- **Forums and advisory groups.** For example, a large national charity has established a youth forum that is consulted about aspects of the organisation's work with young people.

- **Occasional ‘take over’ days where young people have an opportunity to make decisions.** For example, a national charity invited young people on one day to identify what should be its youth engagement priorities.
- **Youth led network.** For example a youth-run network promotes engagement in heritage on behalf of its members.
- **Young people as volunteers supporting delivery of activities.** For example, a very large national charity recruits young people to work as volunteers on projects with younger children.
- **Young people running their own groups.** For example, a small local museum established a young poets group which is now self-led.
- **Young people recruited and trained to lead projects.** For example, a library service received funding to recruit and train individuals to become peer mentors.

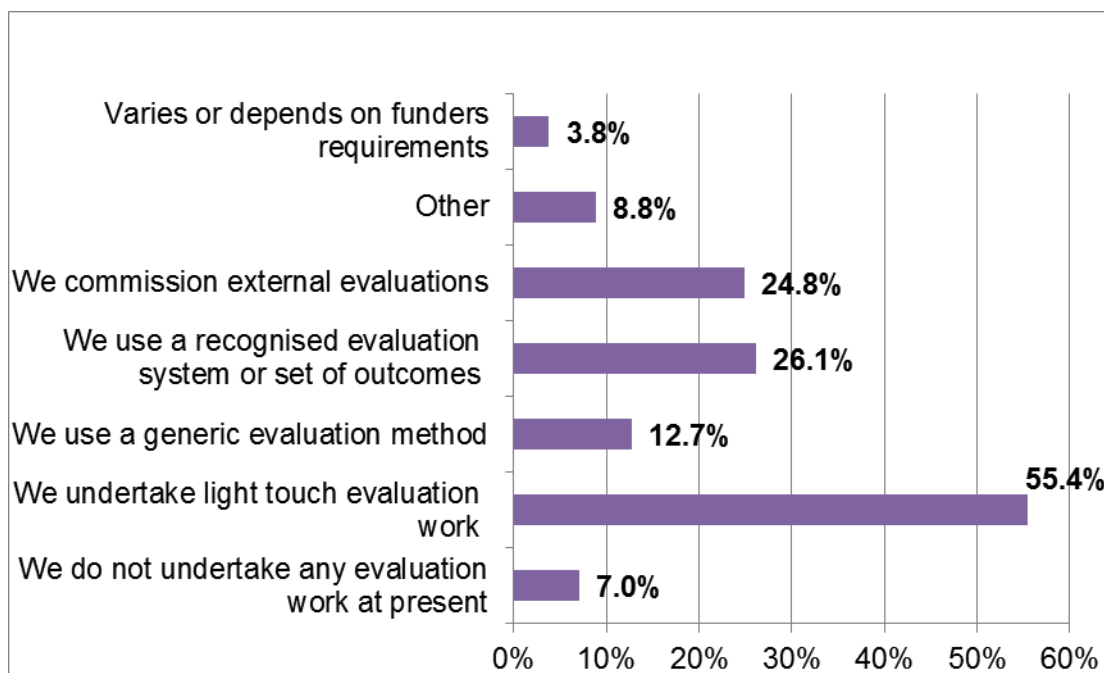
It was apparent from interviewees’ comments on this subject that the practice of offering young people leadership roles or genuine influence over decision-making was embedded in very few organisations. Barriers were noted by a few organisations; for example, skill gaps were occasionally mentioned and questions about the appropriateness of offering young people leadership were raised. An interviewee from a heritage site managed by the County Council, with considerable experience of working with young people, spoke passionately on this subject.

“The ability to be ‘youth-led’ depends on the attributes and motivations of the young people. This simply wouldn’t be appropriate for many of the young people engaged in the project. This highlights an important point which is that not all young people are suited to leading activities and it is only when you get to know them that you come to understand this.” (Interviewee from a local authority managed heritage site)

6.3 Evaluation

6.3.1 Current evaluation practice

6.3.1.1 Chart 22: How is your engagement work with young people evaluated? (n=157)



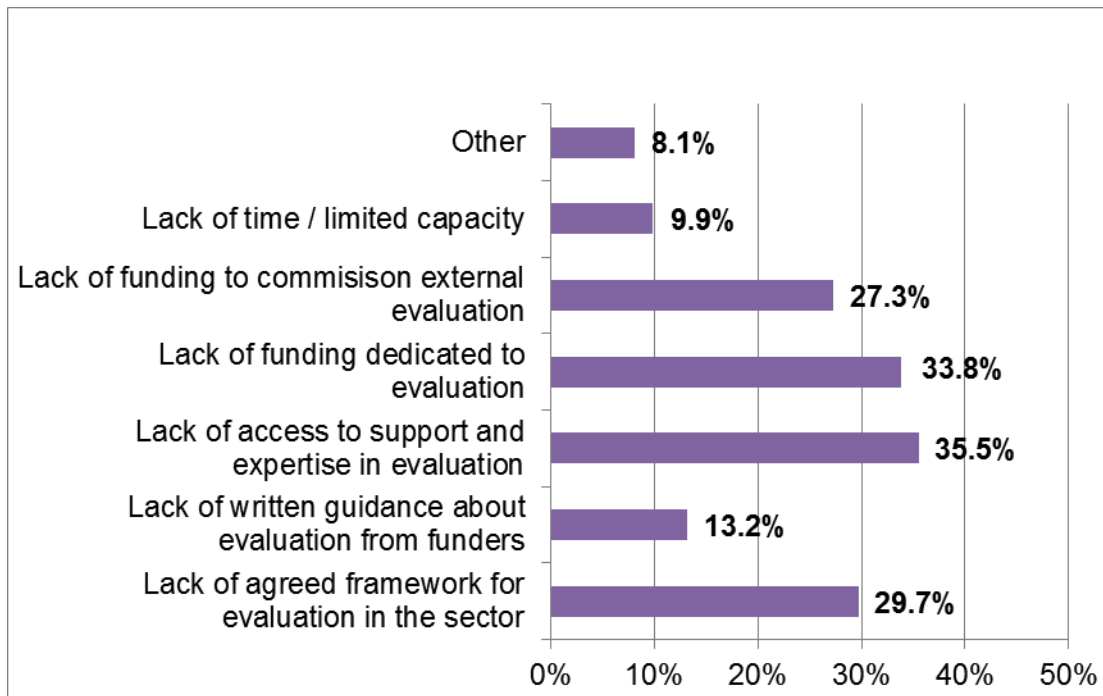
'Other' responses given: varies/depends on funders requirements, evaluation carried out by partners, use digital analytics, use file or photography, use action research, young people evaluate their own work.

The research enquired about how heritage organisations evaluate their work with young people. Light touch evaluation (i.e. an approach that gathers basic information about young people and obtains simple feedback on activities) is the method most commonly applied by heritage organisations (just over half the survey respondents). Such approaches are unlikely to be sufficient to gather good quality evidence about either effectiveness or impact.

The findings also highlight that around a quarter of organisations are applying a recognised evaluation system (although it is not clear whether this has been developed internally or acquired from elsewhere), and a quarter are commissioning external evaluations. None of the very small organisations (those with no employees) reported commissioning external evaluations.

6.3.2 Barriers to evaluation

6.3.2.1 Chart 23: What barriers have you encountered in evaluating your work with young people? (n=121)



‘Other’ responses given: difficult to engage young people in evaluation (4.9 percent), evaluation not designed for young people, difficulty in measuring impact, lack of motivation.

The survey responses indicate that heritage organisations face multiple barriers associated with evaluation. Resource constraints, lack of skills and expertise and a lack of guidance were all highlighted as significant factors.

6.3.3 Qualitative insights

Interviewees described different approaches to evaluation and concerns and difficulties with evaluation were widely articulated. Insights arising from their feedback are summarised below.

- **Light touch evaluation methods.** There is a sense in which light touch methods are the default approach to evaluation for many organisations. The example that was frequently cited was ‘feedback surveys’ or ‘satisfaction surveys’, which young people are invited to complete after taking part in an activity and which, it was suggested, generate fairly superficial data.
- “Without good levels of resource, this is difficult, as many young people are acclimatised to evaluation and approaches used to gather feedback, and this can lead to predictable information that doesn’t offer much insight into the impact or effectiveness of the work. With better resources, it can be possible to use time better to gain more useful

feedback.” (Interviewee from a local authority museums and galleries service)

- **Applying generic tools.** A few interviewees from national organisations spoke about using evaluation tools designed by their organisation. Other organisations referred to using generic evaluation tools such as the Outcomes Star or Social Outcomes and Learning Outcomes. It was noted that generic methods have limitations because they are often not designed specifically for use with young people.
- **Buying in evaluation expertise.** This was considered by some organisations to be preferable to self-led evaluation because external evaluations bring independence and a higher level of expertise. However the view was also expressed that externally commissioned evaluations do not generally build capacity and expertise within an organisation.
- **Scope for improvement.** There was acknowledgement across many interviewees that their approach to evaluation could be improved, and skill gaps in this area were widely acknowledged. Terms such as ‘ad-hoc’, ‘project-specific’ or ‘funder-led’ were used to describe evaluation practice and many organisations expressed a desire to understand and use evaluation more effectively. A limitation noted by an interviewee from a large national charity was that although they undertake discreet project-based evaluations they don’t aggregate this information and utilise the findings to understand the impact of their work with young people.

“Our evaluation has been a little hit and miss. It is not easy to know what good evaluation looks like, and how to do it, or resource it or find the time to do it, or what becomes of the results.” (Interviewee from medium sized national charity - historic buildings and monuments sector)

- **Examples of good practice.** There are some notable exceptions where organisations had developed evaluation practice that they were proud of. For example, an interviewee from a regional museums and gallery service described how they have appointed an Evaluation Officer who is able to guide and advise on good practice. As a result, they are now able to cross-compare evidence between different settings and activities. Another interviewee from a regional museum described how their adoption of a qualitative evaluation method (Most Significant Change) had enabled them to undertake deep exploration of what enables impact in their work.

“It elicits very powerful personal stories of impact and it puts young people at the heart of the process. It is also very effective in building understanding and ownership of the young people’s programmes across the museum because the methodology engages a wide range of stakeholders.” (Interviewee from a regional museum)

- **The role of funders.** It was suggested that funders could assist in a number of ways: by providing clear guidance on how to conduct and use evaluation; by clarifying what is an acceptable standard of evidence; by making realistic demands around evaluation; and by indicating what percentage of a budget should be allocated to evaluation. A representative from a national charity described how their evaluation practice has improved considerably as a result of support they received from one funder.

“When we’ve worked with the Big Lottery Fund, the expectations have been clear, the practice has been flexible and grant managers have listened to what we’ve produced. On one programme we had support from a regional adviser and external evaluator which was excellent. This equipped us with the skills and methods to gather information, interpret it and report it. We still use this approach within our ongoing work.” (Interviewee from a national charity)

6.3.4 Summary of key findings about good practice

6.3.4.1 Partnership working

- **All the heritage organisations that responded to the survey have undertaken some form of partnership working to support their activities engaging young people.**
- **The most significant partner for heritage organisations working with young people was other heritage organisations. Other significant partners included Further / Higher Education providers; youth organisations; the voluntary / community sector; and arts organisations.**
- **A wide range of benefits to partnership working were identified by heritage organisations: to help them extend their reach to certain groups of young people or new areas; to gain access to additional skills and expertise; and to pursue a shared interest in an aspect of heritage with a partner.**

- **Some heritage organisations were able to cite instances of transformational involvement in strategic networks and partnerships that have made an important contribution to their work with young people.**
- **There is a desire for long-term meaningful partnerships with the youth sector and recognition that this can deliver substantial benefits, however links with the youth sector are not as established as many organisations would like them to be.**
- **Heritage organisations have articulated difficulties establishing and retaining partnerships. Internal factors such as having limited time to build relationships were noted. External barriers are also significant and here the shrinkage and instability of youth services is particularly relevant. Changing perceptions of the heritage sector, and educating others about what heritage organisations can offer to young people, is important and necessary.**

6.3.4.2 Youth involvement and leadership

- **Young people were most commonly invited to be involved in influencing the work of heritage organisations via consultation where they were consulted about their experience of taking part in activities and as a contribution to planning new activities.**
- **The practice of offering young people leadership roles or genuine influence over decision-making was rare.**
- **Questions about the appropriateness of offering young people leadership roles were raised by some organisations.**

6.3.4.3 Evaluation

- **The most frequently used evaluation practice across survey respondents was light touch evaluation. While some organisations did commission external evaluators or apply recognised evaluation systems, the practice was not widespread.**

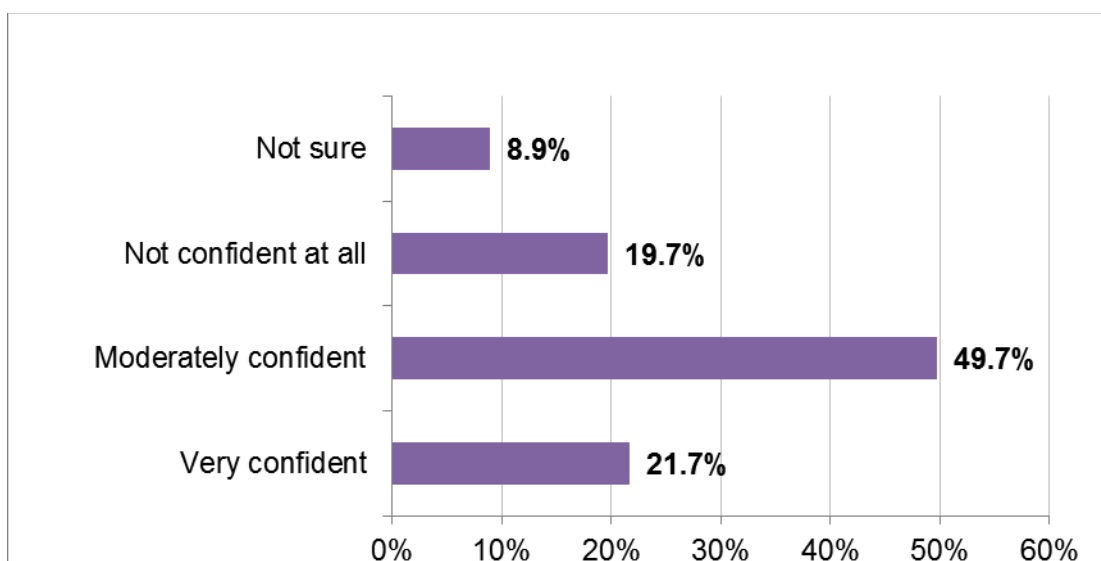
- **Generic evaluation tools are also being applied but a limitation can be that these have not been developed specifically for young people.**
- **A number of factors were identified as barriers to heritage organisations in their evaluation: lack of resources, skills and expertise were all noted, as was the lack of evaluation guidance from funders.**
- **Larger organisations highlighted the challenge of aggregating evaluation data across different projects, possibly due to inconsistencies in their approach to evidence and data collection.**
- **It was suggested that funders could play a role in improving evaluation practice: clarifying expectations; and providing guidance and support to build skills.**
- **The research has revealed only a small number of organisations that are very satisfied with their approach to evaluation.**

7 Sustainability

This section of the report provides a picture of the sustainability of heritage organisations youth engagement work.

7.1 Levels of confidence

7.1.1 Chart 24: How confident are you that your work with young people is sustainable? (n=157)



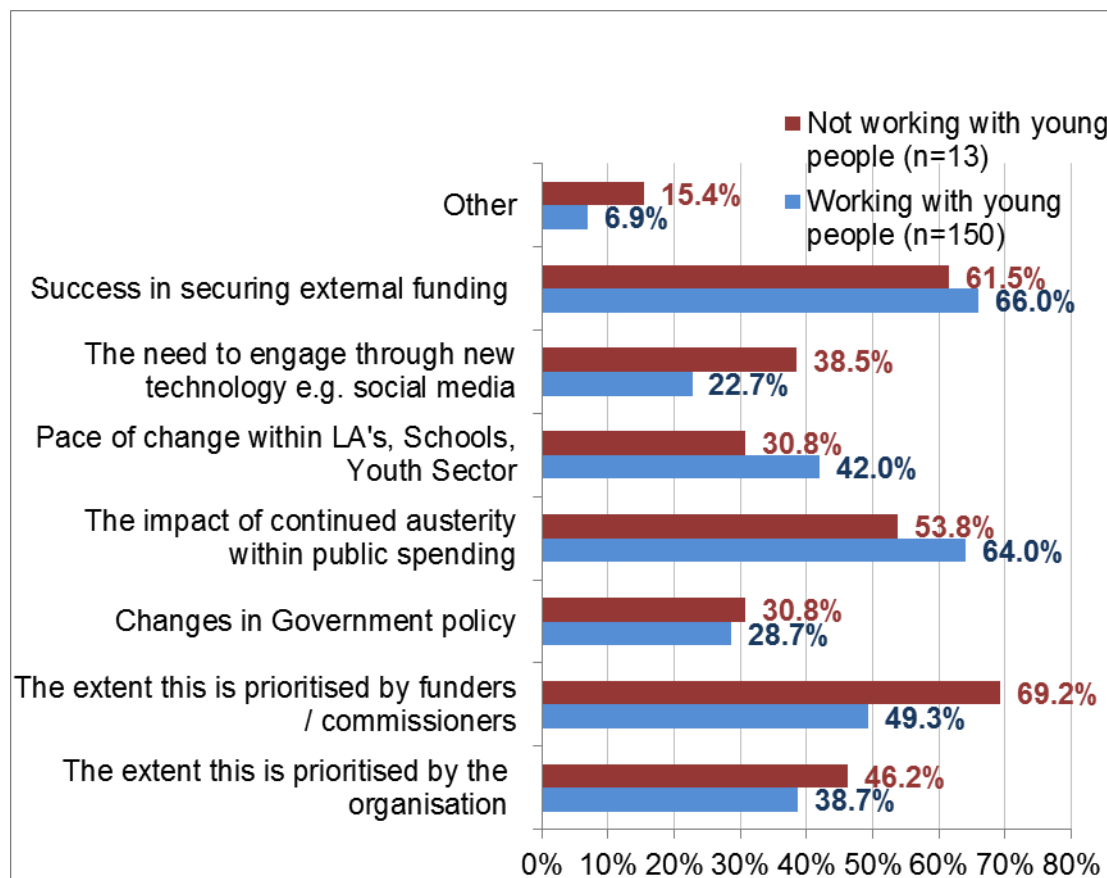
One fifth of organisations currently working with young people outside schools indicated that they were very confident that their work with young people would be sustained. Further analysis of these organisations reveals that size does not appear to be related to high confidence about the future: 35 percent of small organisations and 26 percent of very large organisations reported that they were very confident about the future.

Another one fifth of organisations reported that they were not confident at all. Size does appear to be related to low confidence: 32 percent of small organisations and 13 percent of very large organisations reported that they were not confident at all about the future.

The largest proportion of the sample (half of all organisations) reported that they were moderately confident about the future.

7.2 Factors affecting confidence about future work

7.2.1 Chart 25: What main issues will affect delivery of your work with young people over next 5 years?



'Other' responses given (organisations working with young people): capacity, ability to develop relationships, technology costs, lack of understanding of art form, balancing arts and

heritage, access, lack of specialist knowledge, (organisations not working with young people): statutory controls (7.7 percent), youth organisations not ready to work with heritage organisations (7.7 percent).

Survey respondents working with young people, and those not working with young people, were invited to identify the main influences on the development or delivery of work with young people over the next five years. There was some similarity in the pattern of responses for these two groups. Success in securing funding, the impact of continued austerity, and the priorities of funders and commissioners were the influences that were most frequently identified. This highlights the extent to which organisations are reliant on external resources to deliver work with young people. It is notable that over a third of organisations currently working with young people identified new technology as potentially influential over the next five years.

7.3 Qualitative insights

Interviewees talked about the main influences and issues affecting their work with young people and reflected on their confidence about the future. Insights arising from their comments are summarised below.

- **Availability of external funding.** Many organisations indicated that they are reliant on external funding to continue their work with young people outside of school. A contrast was made, on a number of occasions, with school based work which was considered to be more secure, either because it is self-funding or because it is well established within an organisation's programme of work.
- **Problematic reliance on project based funding.** It was noted that there could be an ongoing problem with the short-termism of project based funding, because resources can come to an end at the point that a model of delivery becomes really effective. These remarks are consistent with the preference noted elsewhere in this report for longer term funding.
- **Uncertainty about the future:** Terms such as 'fragile' and 'uncertain' were used on different occasions by interviewees to express concerns about the future of their work with young people. These sentiments were expressed in instances where interviewees did not feel that the engagement of young people was valued, prioritised or embedded within their organisation.

“There is a need to build commitment, understanding, skills and capacity to ensure future work with young people is not piecemeal and tokenistic.” (Interviewee from a medium sized national charity)

Conversely, one interviewee from a national charity expressed confidence about the future because resources for youth engagement had been mainstreamed within her organisation and a robust evidence base for the value of the work had been established.

Two interviewees, from small charities, both expressed concern about the long- term future of their organisation due to recent or imminent reductions in their funding.

- **A rapidly changing external environment.** The pace of change within the external environment is also impacting upon confidence about the future. There were a number of

comments about how heritage organisations need to build their resilience to cope with this uncertainty. The key messages were that heritage organisations needed to diversify funding sources and avoid getting isolated by strengthening their relationships with others.

“The world in which we operate and interact is changing extremely rapidly. Local Authorities, schools and the youth sector are dramatically different bodies from a few years ago, and the pace of change is likely to continue to be high. The heritage sector often has limited intelligence about what is happening, and who to talk to in order to keep pace with change.” (Interviewee from a local authority museums and galleries service)

“Budgets are going to come under significant pressure, but this is of course more difficult and worse year on year. It is a considerable threat to the sector and to many organisations within it to retain their ability to work with young people in this way. What it demands is that partnerships and collaborative ways of working are central to our business and we are woven further into the fabric of the multiple communities that we work with and serve.” (Interviewee from a national gallery)

The changing needs and priorities of young people were also mentioned and it was suggested that heritage organisations need to be able to adapt and adjust what is offered to young people, including engaging with the digital agenda. This point is consistent with the finding reported earlier about the significance of new technology and social media.

7.3.1 Summary of findings about sustainability

- **Confidence about the future varies considerably across heritage organisations. Half of organisations reported they were moderately confident; around one fifth are not confident at all; another fifth are very confident.**
- **Organisations working with young people and those not working with young people offered a similar assessment of the main influences on the work with young people over the next five years.**

- **Success in securing funding, the impact of continued austerity and the priorities of funders and commissioners were the influences that were most frequently identified. Therefore reliance on external funding to continue or develop work with young people outside schools is high.**
- **A substantial proportion of heritage organisations also identify new technology as a potentially important influence on their work in the next five years.**
- **Work with young people is considered to be particularly vulnerable in instances where youth engagement is not valued, prioritised or embedded within an organisation.**
- **Building resilience is important in a rapidly changing and uncertain context. Work with young people is more secure if organisations diversify their funding streams and make partnerships and collaboration central to their core business.**

8 The support needs of heritage organisations

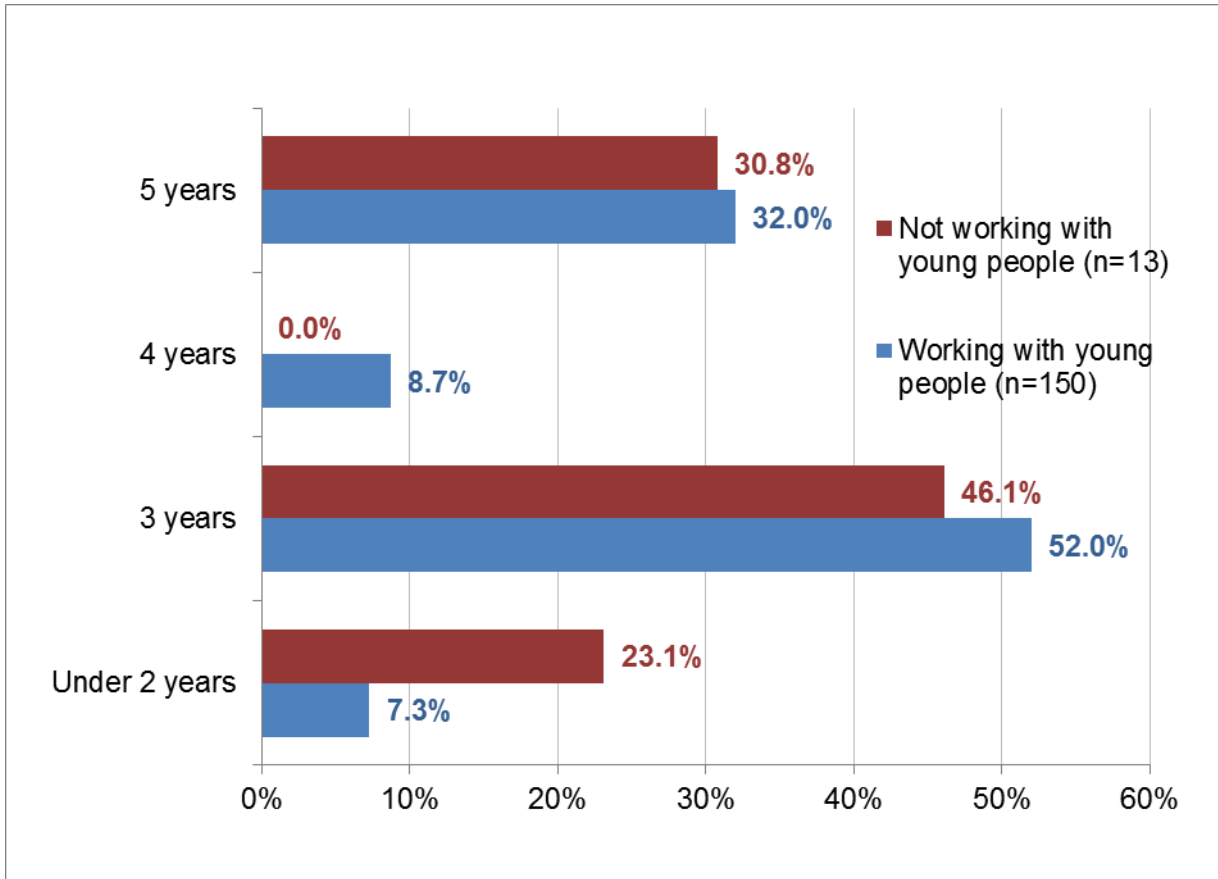
This section provides a summary of the support needs of heritage organisations in their youth engagement work outside of schools.

8.1 Financial support

When asked about how different types of financial support could benefit their work with young people, survey respondents identified characteristics of the funding offer that they would welcome.

8.1.1 Funding period

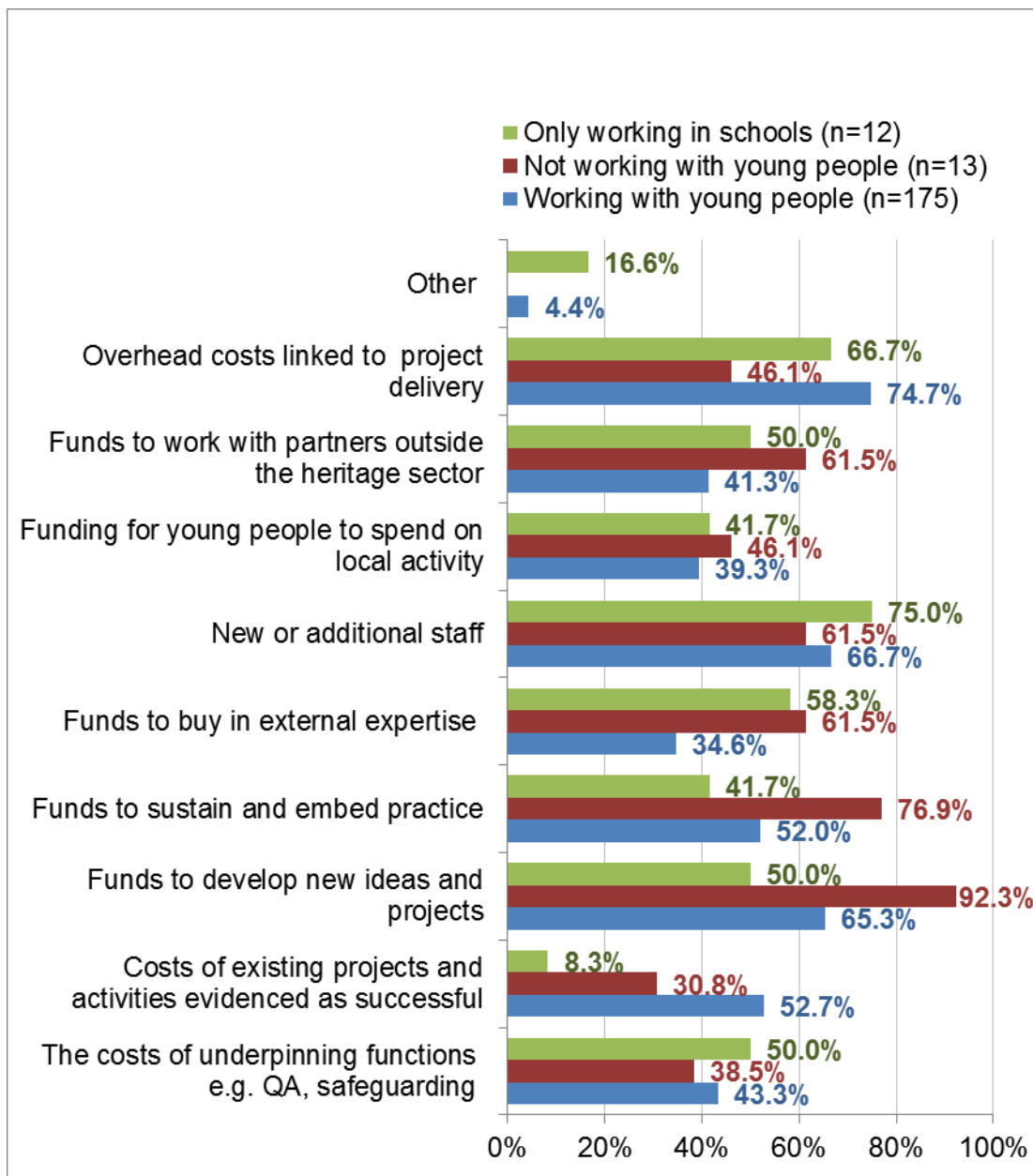
8.1.1.1 Chart 26: What would be the most appropriate duration of funding to support youth engagement work?



There was a clear preference across all organisations for a funding offer of three years or more. A funding period of less than two years was particularly unpopular amongst those organisations currently working with young people outside schools.

8.1.2 Costs

8.1.2.1 Chart 27: If seeking a grant to work with young people, which costs would you include in your bid?



Other' responses given by organisations working with young people: travel and transport costs, funds for training and skills development, capital costs, funds for research, funds to support existing staff/posts. Responses from organisations only working with schools: professional advice and support, not applicable as do not intend to work with young people outside schools.

Three quarters of organisations currently working with young people identified 'overheads' as a cost that they would find it helpful to include within their funding application. There was also a high level of support for including costs associated with new staff and new ideas and projects. Not surprisingly, this was particularly popular amongst organisations not working with young people indicating that they would like funding to develop new ideas and projects

Half of the organisations currently working with young people also indicated that they would like to receive funds to support existing projects and activities evidenced as successful, and a similar proportion indicated that costs associated with embedding practice should be funded.

Other costs that received support from over a third of organisations were costs of underpinning functions, funds to work with partners and funding for young people to spend on local activity.

8.2 Non-financial support

8.2.1 Chart 28: Which following non-financial support could help you deliver work with young people?



'Other' responses given (organisations not working with young people): opportunities to work with schools and colleges.

Heritage organisations identified many different forms of non-financial support that they would find valuable in developing and delivering work with young people. These incorporated support across three key areas: sharing learning and good practice; improving their infrastructure for working with young people; networking with funders and the youth sector. Most popular among organisations already working with young people was support that promoted sharing of ideas and experiences with others such as: events for organisations working with young people; opportunities to network with the youth sector; practical advice from peers; and case studies of effective youth engagement.

The pattern of responses also highlights an aspiration for support that strengthens youth engagement infrastructure within organisations. For example, around a third of organisations said they would like help to develop a youth engagement strategy and nearly a half indicated they would like assistance with marketing and promotion. Access to training was also very popular. That over a half of organisations stated they would like to work with funders demonstrates there is much desire within the heritage sector for more dialogue with those that fund work with young people.

8.3 Qualitative insights

8.3.1 Funding period

There were a vast number of survey comments on the subject of the grant funding period (123 in total), suggesting that this is a subject that many organisations feel strongly about. Survey respondents and interviewees consistently made the case for medium and long-term funding, justifying this on the following grounds:

- **Testing and embedding.** The need to test out different approaches to engagement and then embed those that are evidenced to be effective requires delivery over a number of years.

“Organisations need time to try something out, improve it, measure impact and then embed it.” (Survey respondent from a medium-sized local museum - historic buildings and monuments sector)

- **Relationship building.** Building and sustaining meaningful and trusting relationships with young people takes time.

“In our local area there is a fear that anything good that happens, especially involving children, will disappear as soon as it appears.” (Survey respondent from a very small local voluntary and community organisation - cultures and memories sector)

- **Partnership working.** It takes time to identify appropriate partners and then develop productive relationships with them based on mutual trust and understanding.

“Strong, strategic co-production partnerships take considerable time to be embedded.” (Survey respondent from a large local museum - museums, libraries, archives and collections sector)

- **Staffing.** Longer term resourcing is helpful for recruiting the right calibre of staff, for offering continuity of staffing, and ensuring a consistency of offer to young people.

“It is important for young people to feel at ease, and genuinely welcomed into your organisation, and a familiar and constant face is a way of achieving this.” (Survey respondent from a medium sized national voluntary and community organisation - cultures and memories sector)

- **Development of young people.** Young people need time to grow and develop. Longevity of practice is important if the aim is to build their confidence, promote peer-to-peer delivery and achieve long-term skill development.

“Time is needed to invest in life-changing skills that matter to young people.” (Survey respondent from a medium sized local museum - museums, libraries, archives and collections sector)

- **Tracking impact.** Tracking and evidencing impact requires a sustained period of delivery to produce robust and reliable evidence.

- **Resilience of heritage organisations.** Strong relationships with young people, built over time, foster loyalty as audience members on an ongoing basis.

8.3.2 Funding criteria

Survey and interview respondents used the term 'flexible' when they described how funders could support their work, although they interpreted this in different ways.

Some organisations referred to criteria imposed by funders that they found restrictive or unhelpful. The main points that were made are summarised below.

- **Emphasis on innovation.** It was suggested that the emphasis on newness and innovation prevents organisations from embedding and building on 'what works'.

"Funding should not be about plugging gaps but it should be about sustaining genuinely good engagement practice." (Interviewee from a national gallery)

"The insistence that everything is new makes so little sense when an evaluation highlights that a model is successful and works well. Why reinvent a project if we know it is working well?" (Interviewee from a Non Departmental Government Body)

- **The requirement to involve young people in the early stages of a project idea.** It was noted on a number of occasions that this is very difficult for an organisation with limited experience in youth engagement and it can take a lot of time to get people on board.

- **Funding for relationship building.** Support for the early stages of relationship building between organisations was highlighted as valuable. For example, an interviewee from a library service indicated that the service would like to reach more young people by working with the local Mosque but would need funding to enable this to happen. Heritage organisations highlighted different ways in which funders could support relationships building. One approach could be to pay for staff to attend meetings or events with potential partners.

"We can find it difficult to get to the right organisations locally that know the patch and can help make the connections that give access to young people. Often it can take lots of time to discover these links and who is best to work with. Support with establishing links would be valuable." (Interviewee from a national charity)

Another approach could involve funding pilot projects that would help to build understanding and trust across organisations, for example an interviewee from a national museum requested funding for national pilots that would support the development of

relationships across the country.

- **Allowing organisations to adapt their approach over time.** One organisation captured the sentiment expressed by many others when they spoke about the need for funders to allow organisations to be experimental and evolve and adapt their approach to youth engagement over time.

“Funding applications should put emphasis on the aspirations, vision and objectives of a project while recognising the need for some flexibility around the actual activities that are delivered to achieve the vision.” (Interviewee from a large regional museum)

Linked with this was a request to allow projects to designate some funding for resources that they have not yet identified.

- **Freedom to make decisions about how small amounts of money are used.** One interviewee made a strong case for grantees having more influence over how they use their grant award so that they can pass on some decision making responsibilities to young people:

“It would be good to have more freedom to make decisions around how small amounts of funding are used to support community capacity, for example to be able to give out money to small groups to deliver heritage related activity. The experience of the service is that when young people are given responsibility for small amounts of money they take this seriously.” (Survey respondent from a local authority – culture & leisure services)

- **Supporting sustainability.** As well as enabling work with young people, it was suggested that funding should support organisations to move towards sustaining what works. This would mean packaging funding in a way that encourages grantees to move away from dependence on grants and build in time to plan and trial approaches to sustaining their work with young people.

8.3.3 Non-financial support

Many ideas were put forward for different forms of non-financial support that would build the capability and capacity of organisations to deliver quality work with young people. An interviewee from a national charity with limited experience in working with young people

outside schools articulated the importance of capacity building in general.

“There is a difficult choice for any organisation starting out in that they will need to learn a lot, and if they are faced with the choice to do what they know how to do or risk doing something they don’t know how to do, they’ll often go with the safe option, or find a partner to do it for them. This is fine for the young people but it doesn’t really build skills in the sector, so capacity building is a key issue.” (Interviewee from a large, national charity)

Consistent themes across the interviews were relationship building and skill development. Specific ideas, suggested by heritage organisations, are summarised below.

- **Facilitate networking events.** It was suggested that funders could facilitate networking events between heritage organisations as these provide valuable opportunities to learn about good practice from other parts of the heritage sector and identify potential project partners.
- **Encourage better use of existing networks.** Another idea put forward was to encourage organisations to make better use of existing networks.

“Funders could use networks better to generate ideas. There is an active Galleries Network and this could be used to initiate dialogue or share ideas or examples of good practice in engaging young people.” (Interviewee from a national gallery)
- **Training for staff and volunteers linked to youth engagement work.** One interviewee highlighted the importance of training to shift the culture within heritage settings to one of acceptance of young people’s work:

“A training resource for heritage organisations would be very useful, for staff and volunteers. A key for us is changing the culture of the organisation to one where working with young people is comfortable and accepted, and this means giving staff, whose primary role is in heritage, the chance to train in working with young people.” (Interviewee from a very large national charity)
- **Creation and dissemination of learning resources.** Case studies or examples of projects that have worked well were also considered valuable, along with tool-kits around

good practice (for example, how to engage young people in project development, and good evaluation practice).

- **Provide access to skilled advisers.** Heritage organisations are keen to access skilled, knowledgeable support from very early in the life of a potential proposal through to its development, delivery, evaluation and next steps. As well as one to one support, respondents suggested mentoring arrangements and development surgeries.

“Have designated key workers who really understand this audience and are tasked with developing strong, sustainable programmes.” (Survey respondent from a very large national charity – historic buildings and monuments sector)

- **Creation of strategic partnerships to raise the profile of work with young people within the heritage sector.** A number of responses described such partnerships as offering leadership, priorities, goals and standards and establishing consistent messages about the value of youth engagement. Partnerships could also commission research to inform practice.

8.3.4 The role of HLF

Heritage organisations were invited to comment specifically on how HLF could better support youth engagement work in the heritage sector. Their remarks were consistent with many of the points summarised above about financial support and non-financial support, and add further texture to illustrate the key points that have emerged.

8.3.4.1 Financial support

The messages about financial support from organisations that were interviewed were wide ranging.

- **About the kinds of work that should be funded.** Responses included both the need to fund established practice where evidence shows it is successful and to provide funding for new and innovative ideas, being more open to experimentation and risk taking.
- **About the duration of funding.** The consistent message from interviewees was about the need for longer term funding.

- **About how young people should be involved in projects.** Concerns were raised about the difficulties of involving young people in project design, delivery and management. There was a request for HLF to be flexible about the need to involve young people in the development of proposals and to have a wider interpretation of what 'youth-led' means. The need to provide pre-project funding to work with young people to develop project ideas was also suggested as a key innovation.
- **About the support for partnership working.** The comments about partnership working reflect a range of challenges that interviewees have encountered in this area of their work and the fact that building partnerships in itself is a resource intensive activity. For example interviewees stated that HLF should: be flexible about the need for partnerships to develop projects; provide funding for the development and maintenance of partnerships; help broker relationships between potential partners.
- **About what is included in the description of heritage.** There were some views expressed about how heritage is defined for funding purposes. For one interviewee a wider definition of heritage is required to include more hands on activities with reference to science, technology and engineering, with heritage as much more progressive and contributive to present day problems. Another suggestion was that HLF should be more open to cross sectoral and cross art form working. Also that there was a need to develop much stronger links with cinema and film heritage

8.3.4.2 Non-financial support

Ideas about the nature of non-financial support that could be offered by HLF were similarly wide ranging.

- **About the funder / grantee relationship.** There was a desire among interviewees for HLF to alter its approach to the funder / grantee relationship by providing a more expert perspective on projects with young people. For example: to become more of a 'hands-on' funder and have more supportive conversations with grantees; to have designated key workers who understand how to work with young people; to broker effective mentoring and advice to ensure the transfer of existing work to help the design of subsequent projects; provide information, guidance and training to build skills relevant to working with young people, project management and evaluation.

- **About evaluation requirements.** Interviewees articulated a key role for HLF in providing guidance about what to evaluate and how to evaluate, as well as supporting heritage organisations in developing their evaluation expertise. This could include providing support around defining outcomes that can be easily and realistically measured, and general advice on evaluation and measuring long- term impact.
- **HLF as champion and advocate on engaging young people in heritage.** This observation was articulated on a number of occasions by interviewees, and was reflected in the survey responses. Acting as a champion or advocate would encompass a number of activities at different levels. At a strategic level, there is a need to convince the government of the vital role of heritage sector in nurturing and developing young people. It was also suggested that there is a need to develop a national framework for engaging young people in heritage. At a sector level, there is a role for HLF in advocating youth engagement and encouraging heritage organisations to value and prioritise this work. HLF could also contribute towards the creation of an evidence base to highlight the impact of this work and the methods and approaches that are effective. For organisations, HLF could become the ‘go to’ place for heritage organisations when considering advice, support or direction in heritage related engagement work with young people.

“Showcase how young people transform as a result of deeper engagement in cultural activities.” (Survey respondent from a very large national charity – multiple heritage sectors)

“It would be good to see HLF standing tall and setting youth engagement as a clear priority for both sectors that aligns with organisation’s own mission and goals and asserts young people’s entitlement to a first class cultural education.” (Interviewee from a national museum)

“It would be good for HLF to articulate more about what excellence in engagement with young people looks like from their perspective. You don’t always think of HLF as the ‘go to’ place when you are considering funding for innovative engagement work with young people, but perhaps you should because their values promote this.” (Interviewee from a national museum)

8.3.5 Summary of findings about the support needs of heritage organisations

- **There is a strong and consistent message from heritage organisations that funding of two years or less is not popular. They have argued that engaging effectively with young people takes time and resources and there is no short-term fix for this kind of work. In addition the point has been made that short interventions do not provide a sufficiently robust and reliable evidence base to 'prove' an approach is effective to funders.**
- **More flexibility in the funding offer is desirable. For example, some criteria prove limiting and can exclude some heritage organisations. For organisations with little experience of engaging young people and therefore few contacts with young people and the youth sector, the requirement for youth involvement in the design of a programme is limiting. Similarly, the requirement to have partnerships in place prior to the project being funded places a resourcing burden onto organisations.**
- **There is a dichotomy between funding innovation and being experimental, and securing funding for 'what works'. Heritage organisations are keen for funding to be available for both kinds of work.**
- **There is a considerable interest from heritage organisations in securing non-financial support from funders and from HLF. Many of the responses indicate that a shift in the funder / grantee relationship would be beneficial. For example, this might mean HLF becoming more proactive in both strategically promoting the benefits of young people engaging with heritage (to both the heritage sector and the youth sector), and providing expertise and good practice advice to heritage organisations about how they can best develop and deliver youth engagement work.**

9 Key messages

This research was commissioned to provide a better understanding about how HLF can support the heritage sector to engage more young people between the ages of 11 and 25 with heritage.

A number of important messages arise from the findings of this research.

9.1 Current practice

- 1. Although heritage organisations use multiple routes to engage young people in heritage, work with young people outside of schools is less prevalent and embedded than work through schools.** Organisations are reliant on external funding for much of their non-school based work and experience levels of this work are generally lower – a substantial proportion of organisations have only some, limited or no experience of working outside of schools.
- 2. Heritage organisations are hampered by a lack of time and funding to develop meaningful engagement activities with young people outside of school.** A substantial proportion of organisations lack the funds and capacity to develop and deliver youth engagement work, and they lack the staff capacity to build the partnerships that this work requires.
- 3. A lack of skills and knowledge is a significant barrier to developing work with young people, particularly for those with limited or no track record in this area.** Organisations are mainly reliant on generalist staff to deliver work with young people. The interview feedback was that when organisations did employ dedicated staff to work with young people, the focus of their work was mainly schools. Organisations articulated a lack confidence in how to make heritage attractive to young people and acknowledged that the skills of their staff or volunteers are not necessarily aligned to engaging non-traditional audiences, and there are some negative pre-conceptions about this kind of work.
- 4. Heritage organisations are encountering significant challenges building and sustaining links with the youth sector.** Whilst there is wide recognition of the benefits of establishing links with the youth sector, heritage organisations report that their internal

capacity constraints, the shrinkage of the youth sector and a lack of understanding between the two sectors are obstructing collaboration.

5. **The practice of offering young people leadership roles or genuine influence over decision-making is embedded in very few organisations.** The most popular level of engagement is consultation, which tends to cast young people in a fairly passive or reactive role; those activities that afford young people power or influence are much less likely to be practiced.
6. **Heritage organisations are most likely to engage in light-touch evaluation activities that tend to elicit quite superficial data.** Resource constraints, lack of skills and expertise, and a lack of guidance from funders were all highlighted as significant barriers to undertaking more rigorous evaluation. Large organisations have noted the challenge of aggregating data across different pockets of activity. A desire to improve evaluation practice has been expressed and there was recognition that funders could contribute by articulating realistic evaluation expectations and providing appropriate levels of support and guidance.
7. **There are exemplars of good practice in youth engagement, evaluation and partnership working within the heritage sector.** A small number of organisations were revealed as having considerable experience of working with young people outside of schools. They were able to clearly articulate and justify their approach to working with young people, they acknowledged the networks and partnerships that underpinned this work and they described how they were using evaluation to evolve a rich understanding of impact.

9.2 Sustainability

8. **The sustainability of much work with young people outside of schools is dependent on the availability of external funding.** The most important influences on the development and continuation of activity are the impact of continued austerity and the priorities of funders and commissioners.
9. **New technology is considered particularly relevant to the engagement of young people in heritage over the coming years.** Organisations noted their need to adapt to

the digital agenda and develop engagement methods that utilise new technologies.

9.3 Financial support

10. HLF is a significant source of funding for work that engages young people in heritage. Organisations are most likely to utilise funds from a wider HLF funded project although it is not clear what the scale and quality of youth engagement is within these projects. Young Roots is also a popular source of funding.

11. Reasons commonly cited for not accessing Young Roots are a lack of awareness about the programme and the short-term, small-scale nature of the offer.

12. There is a clear preference across all organisations for a funding offer of three years or more. Heritage organisations justified this on the grounds that a prolonged delivery period is necessary for: testing and embedding practice; relationship building with young people; partnership working; developing young people; attracting and retaining the right calibre of staff; and tracking impact.

13. Heritage organisations would like funders to avoid restrictive or prohibitive requirements. Whilst there is recognition of the need for funding to test new ideas and approaches, it is suggested that an across-the-board emphasis on newness and innovation is unhelpful. Similarly, it is suggested that the requirement to involve young people and identify partners in the early stages of developing a proposal is not always appropriate or possible.

14. Heritage organisations are seeking a flexible funding offer that allows them to adapt their approach over time. There was a request for giving organisations more influence over how funds are used. It was noted, for example, that the evolutionary nature of engagement processes means it is not possible or desirable to rigidly plan all activities in advance. It was also suggested that young people should be entrusted with small amounts of funding.

9.4 Non-financial support

15. Heritage organisations would like funders to support youth engagement by contributing to the development of relationships and skills that are critical to this work. Many different types of support are valued such as: facilitating networking events; encouraging better use of existing networks; training for volunteers and staff; and the creation and dissemination of guidance materials or toolkits.

16. There is a desire for HLF to act as a champion and advocate for the engagement of young people in heritage. This could encompass a number of activities: highlighting to policy makers the vital role of heritage in nurturing and developing young people; developing a national framework to inform the engagement of young people in heritage; building an evidence base about good practice; becoming the 'go to' place for heritage organisations when considering advice, support or direction in heritage related engagement work with young people.

10 Appendix 1: Research framework

10.1 Research aim

To better understand how HLF can support the heritage sector to engage more young people with heritage, by identifying the needs of the sector.

10.2 Research topics and questions

10.2.1 Current patterns of activity and funding

- a. Are young people a strategic priority for heritage organisations? How are young people defined?
- b. What kinds of activities are young people involved in and what methods are used to engage them? Is this work ongoing, temporary/project based?
- c. Are organisations providing universal or targeted provision or both?
- d. What kinds of organisation are engaging young people? Are there any gaps in terms of the types of organisation that are successfully working with young people?
- e. Do organisations have youth engagement staff, or others, with a specific responsibility for working with young people?
- f. To what extent are the activities that engage young people led by young people?
- g. What groups, and ages, of young people are presently being engaged by heritage organisations?
- h. Are there any gaps or common barriers or difficulties associated with engaging young people
 - From specific groups
 - Of a particular age ranges
 - Living in certain parts of the UK
 - In certain heritage sectors

- j. What sources of funding are commonly being used to fund engagement activity?
- k. Have organisations made use of HLF funding to support youth engagement work – as Young Roots grantees, as partners on projects or through other programmes? Why/why not?

10.2.2 Relationships with other organisations

- a. What kinds of relationship have heritage organisations formed with other organisations to support their work with young people? How have these relationships benefitted their engagement activities?
- b. More specifically, what relationships do heritage organisations have with the youth sector?
- c. What do heritage organisations see as the role of the youth sector in contributing to the engagement of young people in heritage? How could relationships with the youth sector be developed?
- d. Generally, what do heritage organisations need to ensure they develop relationships with other organisations that benefit their work with young people?

10.2.3 Developing and sustaining good practice

- a. Are heritage organisations evaluating their engagement work with young people? How is this evaluation/impact measurement activity funded? Would organisations like to develop or improve their approach to evaluation and impact measurement? If so, what kinds of support would they welcome?
- b. What kinds of non-financial support would help heritage organisations to build on and sustain their work with young people? Do these support needs vary depending on the size or type of organisation?

- c. What kind of financial support would help heritage organisations to build on and sustain their work with young people? Are there any preferences in terms of length of funding, level of funding, types of costs that can be covered or any other practical parameters?
- d. Do those organisations with little or no track record in this area have particular support needs and what are they?
- e. More generally, how could external support assist organisations to overcome barriers or difficulties?
- f. Looking to the future, what do heritage organisations see as the main influences and issues affecting their work with young?
- g. How confident are they that their work is sustainable? What do they perceive to be the main threats to sustainability? Conversely, what do they believe would help to ensure sustainability?

11 Appendix 2: Organisations interviewed in phase one of the research

Size	Coverage	Type	Heritage sector
Very large	National	Non-Departmental Public Body	Historic buildings and monuments
Very large	Regional	Local Authority Museums and Galleries Service	Museums, libraries, archives and collections
Medium	National	Charity	Historic buildings and monuments
Large	National	Museum	Museums, libraries, archives and collections
Medium	National	Charity	Historic buildings and monuments
Very large	Local	Local Authority Museums and Galleries Service	Museums, libraries, archives and collections
Very large	National	Charity	Historic buildings and monuments / Land and biodiversity
Very large	Local	Local Authority Culture and Leisure Service	Museums, libraries, archives and collections
Very large	Regional	County Council	Industrial, Maritime and Transport
Large	Regional	Museum	Industrial, Maritime and Transport
Very Large	National	Museum	Museums, libraries, archives and collections
Small	Local	Charity	Land and biodiversity
Medium	Regional	Charity	Land and biodiversity
Very small	National	Community and Voluntary Organisation	Land and biodiversity
Small	Local	Museum	Museums, libraries, archives and collections
Very large	Local	Museum	Museums, libraries, archives and collections
Small	Regional	Charity	Industrial, Maritime and Transport
Very large	National	Charity	Land and biodiversity

Size:

Very small = no employees

Small = 1-10 employees

Medium = 11-50 employees

Large = 51-250 employees

Very large = 250+ employees