



young people first

Since the Garage opened its doors in spring 2004 as a young people's creative training and development centre, it has swiftly developed strong partnerships, a broad range of performing arts activities and a community of young people whose lives are enhanced, sometimes transformed, by their involvement with us. This review of our first four years sets out these achievements in more detail, but the first step in truly understanding them is to grasp our mission:

To create a home from home for people, especially young people with the fewest opportunities, who will benefit from creative and learning interventions.

This ambitious goal motivates everything we do. By giving young people the means to explore creativity and develop new skills, we can help them gain fulfilment, confidence and new direction in their lives.

The project was launched through a partnership between the NELM Development Trust (the delivery organisation for the New Deal for Communities regeneration programme in west Norwich), which provided capital funds, and Norwich Theatre Royal, which provided the premises. Today the Garage is managed by the Garage Trust, an

independent charitable trust, and our work takes place in our state-of-the-art venue and in community settings.

We also:

- support organisations across the East of England in providing accredited, youth-led projects underpinned by volunteering opportunities for young people – this work has been made possible by contracts with Arts Council England, Trinity College London and 'vinvolved', the new young people's volunteering charity
- maintain important partnerships with – among others – the Norfolk Youth Offending Team, Blueprint (13 regional partners) and a number of organisations resident at the Garage
- rent our facilities to external organisations for courses, productions, showcases and conferences

This review explores the range of activities on offer at one of the busiest youth arts venues in the country, and looks ahead as we seek to maximise the potential of the building and the young people we work with. For all of us, that's an exciting prospect. I hope – and I believe – you'll agree.

Darren Grace
Executive Director

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Putting young people first

As the Garage has developed its work, so it has acquired a national reputation for its participation and training programme. Young people are at the centre of the management and delivery of the programme, and thus have practical opportunities to take on responsibility and develop transferable skills such as communication and leadership. The Garage is *their* Garage. And the programme is their programme, so it's no surprise that they engage with and respect it.

It's also no surprise that this unique approach has had significant results. Since 2004 the Garage has:

- secured more than £1.5 million in additional project funds to develop direct delivery projects with young people
- delivered more than 3,000 hours of creative projects
- directly enabled 85 young people to gain a recognised level 1 or 2 qualification
- provided creative careers information and guidance to more than 1,500 young people through careers fairs and one-to-one support
- developed a unique partnership with the Norfolk Youth Offending Team, creating a funded post to work with young offenders as part of their court order – the creative youth worker has so far worked with 46 young offenders, of whom 23 gained a level 1 qualification
- devised projects that have enabled it to invest £72,000 in support for other arts organisations in the

- region; £182,000 has been secured for the next three years and 13 organisations will benefit from funds and specialist professional support
- been appointed to manage region-wide contracts that support arts organisations in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and the unitary authorities of Luton, Peterborough, Southend and Thurrock
- invested more than £90,000 in the creative economy through freelance artists and practitioners

Amid all this activity, we never lose sight of our mission to help young people who would otherwise have few opportunities. Of the young people accessing the programme, for example, 43 per cent are NEET (not in education, employment or training) or at risk. And in the last year, more than 47 per cent of opportunities at the Garage were free of charge and either available to or targeted at residents from the NELM (North Earham, Larkman and Marlpit) area.

Our programme

Our core programme performs two overarching tasks: it acts as an umbrella for the various learning techniques and qualifications we offer, and it enables young people to chart their progress as they learn new skills and grow in confidence. The programme has three primary elements: Access, Creative Drive and Pathways.

In the Access element, the focus is on introductory activities that allow Garage staff to gain the trust and confidence of young people in order to support them at whatever level of participation they feel ready for. This includes those groups of young people who need more intensive or specialised interventions, such as those leaving care, young offenders and those at risk of offending, young parents, young refugees and asylum seekers and young people not in education, employment or training. The goal is to bring them to a position where they can be integrated into Creative Drive, the central element of our programme.

Creative Drive itself has three tiers – levels 1, 2 and 3 – reflecting the levels of commitment, skill and responsibility required. These tiers dovetail with the bronze, silver and gold Arts Awards and with levels 1–3 of the new creative diplomas for 14 to 19-year-olds. Specialist training, such as our technical theatre skills course, accredited by the Open College Network, is also available. The shape of the Creative Drive element is tailored in direct response to young people's ideas and, where possible, participants are supported to contribute to planning, delivery and management.

Level 1 activities are designed to engage, enthuse and excite by giving young people a taste for engaging in creative activity. It's also an opportunity for them to get used to working in groups and to gain confidence. Level 2 focuses on skills, technique and performance,

and includes off-stage work such as technical theatre. The goal of level 3 activities is to develop transferable skills through leadership and entrepreneurship – an example is the management and production of arts activities, workshops, events or performances.

The third strand of the programme, Pathways, supports young people as they prepare to take their next steps. Through a mixed programme of individual careers guidance, advocacy activities, and information and taster events, the Garage team helps them access information, advice and guidance on creative activities, training, education and careers.

A final point to make about our three-strand programme is that it's extremely flexible and responsive to young people's needs. They can enter the programme at the point that's right for them and move on when they are ready. While one young person might be ready for level 3 Creative Drive work after the Access stage, another might not need the Access

element and prefer to move straight from level 1 Creative Drive work to Pathways.

Below and on pages 6 and 7 are examples of activities and events that form, or have formed, part of the Garage's programme.

Access

Families provision Intensive creative interventions with children from problem families in Norwich to develop social and moral awareness.

BBC Blast Workshops and performances that help link new young people into our programme.

Larkman project Drama sessions across the curriculum to aid learning in literacy and vocabulary development.

Creative arts worker: youth justice Work with young offenders as part of court orders to help reduce offending behaviour.

Bus Stop 39 Work in Norfolk high schools to write a soap opera, linking into and highlighting council support services, particularly for young people.

Picture the Past A reminiscence and textile project with young and older people, whose stories were used to create a publication and a quilt.

Adult dance Dance activities for adults, providing healthy exercise for the over-40s.

“I'm not able to live with my mum at the moment, so my nan is fostering me. I never told any of my friends at school this – but I trust you guys”

Workshop participant, aged 14



Engaging young people

Outreach activities are central to the Garage's Creative Drive programme – simply being available to young people is not enough. So to ensure that our message reaches everyone who could benefit, we've recently agreed a three-year, £76,000 funding package with BBC Children in Need that will enable the Garage to launch a roadshow and a youth-led advocacy DVD aimed at engaging young people across Norwich.

The NELM area will be targeted, as will other deprived wards in and around Norwich. One-to-one support workers will encourage young people to make the transition into activity and help them continue to attend. The funds will also support tutor time, equipment costs, the creation of a clothing bank and small bursaries for suitable footwear, so that money isn't a barrier to participation.



Creative Drive level 1

Overdrive holiday activities

Activities every school holiday for young people from across Norwich. Free bursary places are available to young people from the NELM, Mile Cross and Catton areas of the city. Overdrive includes a huge summer programme which culminates in a live public performance.

Vision Street A project involving graffiti artists, filmmaking and breakdance at the Fourways community centre in NELM.

Walk the Line A dance and film project for young people in NELM.

State of Emergency A three-day residency in which African dance artists worked intensively with our level 1 holiday provision groups.



Creative Drive level 2

Sponsored award places

Opportunities for young people from the NELM area to join specialist courses in dance and drama run by Norfolk Dance and Norwich Theatre Royal.

Fusion Our level 2 dance group, recruited from young people who have taken part in Overdrive holiday provision.

New Connections A National Theatre project in which the Garage and Norwich Playhouse have, since 2004, hosted performances by the region's youth companies, schools and colleges.

It Snows A drama and physical theatre performance piece performed by a group of young people from our programme as part of the New Connections Festival in April 2008.

Passion Productions

An independent dance group from the NELM area which has worked collaboratively with the Garage since its launch.



Breakdance group An informal session of young breakdancers who rehearse at the Garage.

Shakespeare Youth Festival

A regional festival of youth groups supported and hosted by the Garage and Norwich Playhouse.

Performances We were invited to perform at the European Social Fund celebration 2007, the 1,000th Arts Award (in London) and a number of other conferences, events and showcases.

Creative Drive level 3

Playing A Part A creative project, facilitated by staff, that developed participants' performance, event management, planning and production skills.

Blueprint: project 1 A one-year, youth-led, regional volunteering project that combined the arts with volunteering for community benefit.

Blueprint: project 2 Building on the first Blueprint project, this three-year project involves the Garage working with a new set of regional partners.

Open College Network: technical theatre course A course written by the Garage and Norwich Theatre Royal – levels 1 and 2 can be taken in 'sound for theatre' and 'lighting for theatre'.

Artsmark event 2008 Supported by the Garage team, an Arts Award youth production group managed the Artsmark Awards ceremony at the Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds on behalf of Arts Council England.

“The young people were incredibly positive about the experience and their process, and had clearly got a lot out of the project”

James Grievs

National Theatre 'new connections' assessor

“I believe in myself and what I can achieve a lot more than before I did the Arts Award – now I grab every opportunity for getting involved in the arts. I now feel I can speak to people and encourage people who are the same as how I used to be”

Sophie, silver Arts Award holder

Pathways

Support on progression routes, signposting and careers advice. Offers support activities for all levels of the Arts Award

Creative careers fairs Information stands, practical activities and talks by industry professionals to help young people choose creative and cultural career paths.

Open Doors A one-day opportunity (in partnership with Norwich Playhouse) for young people from schools, pupil referral units and special needs schools, and those not in education, employment or training (NEET) to get hands-on experience of careers in theatre.

Pathways One-to-one advice and guidance surgeries for young people interested in careers in the creative industries.

IAG Conference A one-day event bringing young people together with professionals for information, advice and guidance on creative careers. Guest speakers, workshops and delegate information packs were brought together by the Garage team, backed by inspirational performances from our own young people.

“Now I grab every opportunity for getting involved in the arts”

A silhouette of a person in a dynamic pose, holding a ball in their right hand, set against a vibrant green background. A large, white, curved quote is superimposed over the scene, reading: "Now I grab every opportunity for getting involved in the arts".

"I love the Garage and without it I wouldn't be who I am today"





“At The Lowry we’re constantly looking to improve our service to our community and have developed a range of activities to meet an ever-growing demand. One of the ways we benchmark our work is by seeing what our colleagues are doing across the country. In only four years the Garage has become one of the venues we keep an eye on, not just because of its great programme, but because of the way it creates participatory pathways for young people ... the Garage shines like a beacon of activity and inspiration”

Andy Farrell Readman, Head of Community and Education, The Lowry

Arts Award: a qualification for life

Young people who participate in our Creative Drive programme grow in confidence and fulfilment, in their creative and interpersonal skills, and in their ability to take responsibility for their own work and for collaborative projects. These benefits are well documented and can transform a young person's life prospects. But the Garage delivers something more as an integral part of its programme: recognised qualifications.

Arts Award is a qualification offered at levels 1, 2 and 3 (bronze, silver and gold) on the National Qualifications Framework. Students can achieve an award in any arts or creative activity. Just like GCSEs and A levels, Arts Awards are recognised qualifications that can open doors for young people to get into further education, training or employment. Students work with an adviser – an artist, teacher or youth worker – to decide which level to do and to set personal challenges. Finally, individual students' work and participation are formally assessed

and the assessments are moderated by an external moderator. Certificates are awarded by Trinity College London.

At the Garage, we incorporate Arts Awards into our own Creative Drive programme and we have been appointed the regional development agency for the East of England. We train advisers, provide networking opportunities for advisers and for young people taking the award, and act as an advocate for the programme throughout the region. Since the programme was launched, thousands of young people have achieved Arts Awards across the country. By the end of March 2007, more than 16.8 per cent of national awards had been achieved in the East of England – substantially more than the average regional figure of 11.1 per cent.

The core transferable skills learned through Arts Awards include communication, leadership, team working, planning and review, alongside the development of arts

skills and the 'softer' outcomes of citizenship and greater aspiration.

An excellent example of Arts Award work at the Garage is a silver course in which, given a set budget and the use of the venue, a group of young people had to decide on, plan and manage an event. The end result was a spectacular, multidisciplinary success. The students programmed a theatre showcase, commissioned dance groups and a jazz band, choreographed and directed performances, created music tracks in DJ workshops and MC'd on the day, curated an art exhibition in the lounge and provided storytelling workshops for a local nursery. Every aspect was devised, planned, marketed and managed on the day by the young people. In our implementation of Arts Awards, taking responsibility for projects like this is every bit as important as acquiring the arts-oriented skills.

www.artsaward.org.uk



“As well as leading the strategic development of Arts Award across the East region, The Garage has also supported many young people to achieve awards in a wide range of community projects. The team’s enthusiasm and energy has generated a real buzz for the Arts Award in the East and beyond”

Diana Walton, Head of Arts Award Development, Arts Council England



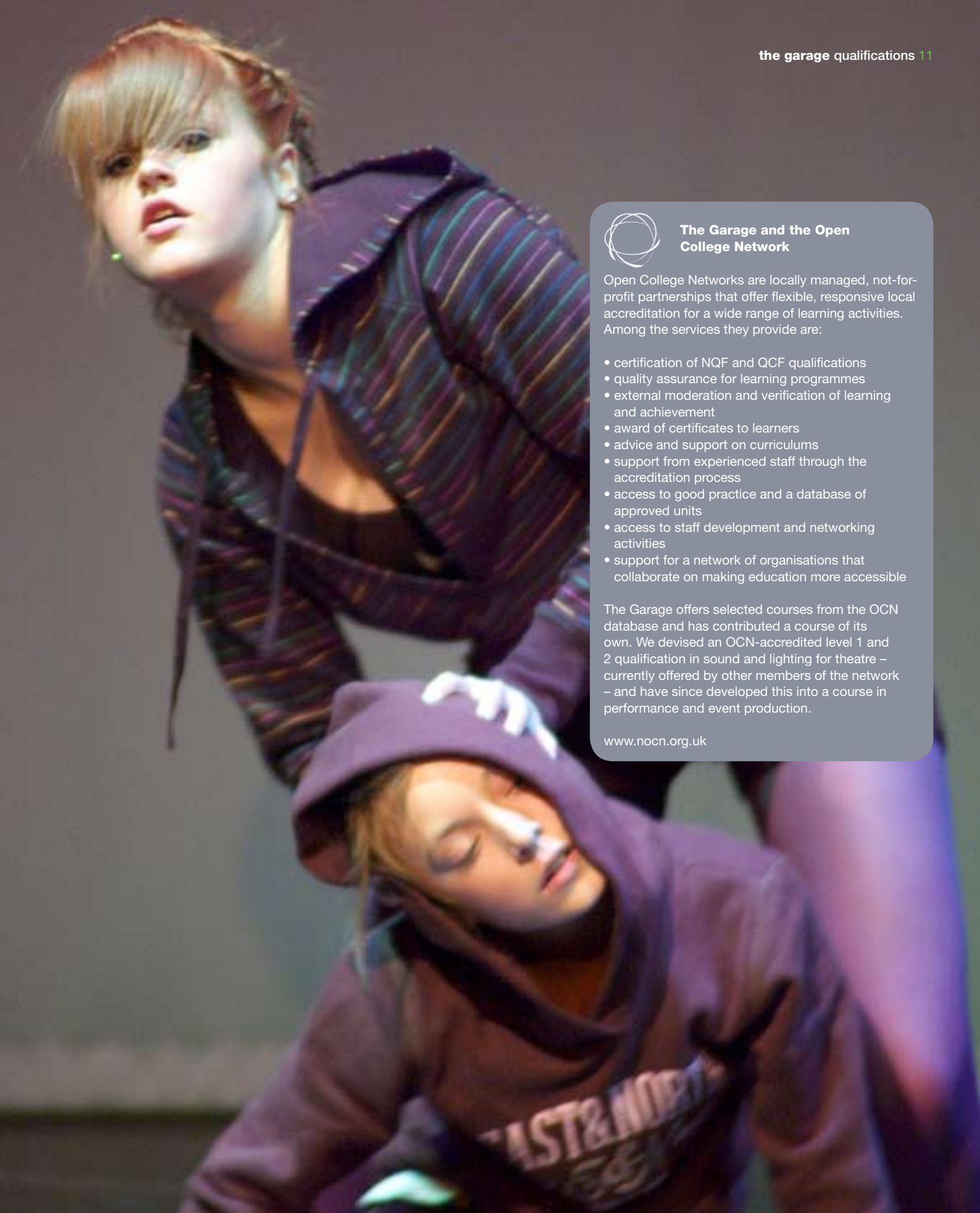
The Garage and the Open College Network

Open College Networks are locally managed, not-for-profit partnerships that offer flexible, responsive local accreditation for a wide range of learning activities. Among the services they provide are:

- certification of NQF and QCF qualifications
- quality assurance for learning programmes
- external moderation and verification of learning and achievement
- award of certificates to learners
- advice and support on curriculums
- support from experienced staff through the accreditation process
- access to good practice and a database of approved units
- access to staff development and networking activities
- support for a network of organisations that collaborate on making education more accessible

The Garage offers selected courses from the OCN database and has contributed a course of its own. We devised an OCN-accredited level 1 and 2 qualification in sound and lighting for theatre – currently offered by other members of the network – and have since developed this into a course in performance and event production.

www.nocn.org.uk



“Participation in creative activity provides young people at risk with not only an opportunity for improving their literacy and numeracy skills, but a unique experience for them to make a positive contribution to society and challenge their view of themselves”

Ruth Searle, Senior Strategy Adviser, National Youth Justice Board for England and Wales



Our profile: local, regional, national

“Young people should be valued members of society, whose achievements and contributions are welcomed and celebrated. This means society viewing young people positively, not seeing them as a problem to be solved.” This statement, taken from *Aiming High for Young People: a 10-year strategy for positive activities*, exactly matches the ethos of the Garage. The strategy was produced in 2007 by HM Treasury and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, and is one of several framework documents and strategic partnerships that provide context and direction to our work.

Local focus

Our immediate priority is our local constituency of young people aged 11–25, particularly those living in the NELM area of west Norwich. Our facilities enable us to offer a range of artistic and creative opportunities to people of all backgrounds, abilities and ages, but especially to broaden the experience of young people with few opportunities and to increase their creative, imaginative, social and technical skills.

These goals tie in with three key themes in Norfolk County Council’s local area agreement that relate to children and young people: raising aspirations, better supported parents and families, and a focus on prevention and early intervention. Our main programme is also particularly relevant to a range of objectives set out in the City of Norwich Partnership’s sustainable community strategy, including:

- to raise aspirations, skills and achievement
- to inspire people
- to improve quality of life
- to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- to support families in crisis
- to improve neighbourhood engagement

- to improve levels of educational attainment
- to boost aspirations and opportunities for people of all ages

Norwich City Council is a pilot local authority for the provision of intensive support for families as part of the national strategy to reduce anti-social and offending behaviour in the families that are the hardest to reach and hardest to help. The Garage was recently selected to deliver this work in a pioneering arts and creative-learning context.

Regional partnerships

While the Garage offers Arts Awards (see page 10) locally, we’ve also had a big impact at a regional level, as the regional Arts Award agency for the East of England.

Partnership working is also important in the Blueprint project, funded by vinvolved. In Blueprint’s first year the Garage provided funds and expertise to King’s Lynn Arts Centre, Focal Point Gallery (Southend-on-Sea), Space4 Gallery (Peterborough), Gordon Craig Theatre (Stevenage), Norfolk Music Works and Stradbroke Youth Club (Suffolk). In the next three years we will fund and support projects with the NR5 Project, Creative Arts East, SeaChange Arts Trust, Suffolk Artlink and Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds.

National context, national goals

Our partnership with Norfolk Youth Offending Team (see panel) is both part of a national pilot and a perfect fit with the themes identified in Norfolk County Council’s local area agreement. Our Creative Drive programme, meanwhile, dovetails with objectives detailed in national strategies such as Every Child Matters, the 2005 Russell Commission report on engaging young people in

volunteering, the Cultural Olympiad, Paul Roberts’ 2006 report on *Nurturing Creativity in Young People*, the 2008 Youth Task Force Action Plan and Sir Brian McMaster’s 2008 report, *Supporting Excellence in the Arts*.

“Evidence shows that how young people spend their leisure time really matters. Participation in constructive leisure-time activities, particularly those that are sustained through the teenage years, can have a significant impact on young people’s resilience and outcomes in later life,” wrote the authors of *Aiming High for Young People*. “Participation can also help increase the resilience of young people who are trying to rebuild their lives – for example young offenders who are trying to change their behaviours and lifestyles.”

Participation and quality are at the heart of everything we do at the Garage. Our experience proves that they make a powerful difference.



Working with young offenders: a national pilot

We’ve worked with Norfolk Youth Offending Team (YOT) to create the post of creative arts worker: youth justice. Based at the Garage, the arts worker’s goal is to re-engage young offenders through the arts and creativity. In one-to-one and group activities, he focuses mainly on young people who are on intensive supervision and surveillance programmes, or in the later stages of detention training orders.

The young people are supported to work towards Arts Award qualifications and, where appropriate, to integrate into our Creative Drive programme. In the summer of 2007, we ran a six-week summer school for seven young offenders on detention training orders, five of whom achieved a bronze Arts Award.

During the next three years we expect to work with Norfolk Youth Offending Team, SeaChange Arts Trust in Great Yarmouth and King’s Lynn Arts Centre to raise funds for a county-wide network of creative arts workers for youth justice.

Looking ahead

This is an exciting time for everyone at the Garage, from staff and stakeholders to – most importantly – the young people who come here to participate, learn and grow. The future promises all of us opportunities to extend our potential and our achievements.

Strategically, we will be responding to the introduction of the creative and media diploma by a consortium of four Norwich high schools. Arts Award is a designated 'enrichment activity' for the diplomas, and our hands-on, production-based approach fits well with the values of the diploma scheme.

We're well positioned to contribute to the government's important initiatives to engage with the most challenging young people and their families through the new Intensive Intervention Programme. And we intend to be fully engaged at local and regional level with the Cultural Olympiad, helping to build on Celebrating Norfolk's Talent, a recent initiative from Norfolk County Council.

We also plan to:

- develop more vocational opportunities for higher-level qualifications such as foundation degrees and those between formal education and employment
- increase capacity for level 2 and 3 activity, developing more performance-based groups at the Garage and at satellite venues
- invest to keep our facilities at the cutting edge – from technical upgrades to refurbishing the student lounge
- develop a range of community-conscious products for the commercial sector, giving young people the chance to train and learn skills in a 'live' environment
- create sponsorship packages that enable businesses to support our work

And there are small but important changes in the pipeline to the way we communicate: improved signage to the front of the building, a website upgrade, and a regular 'what's on' brochure.

There's work to be done and a lot to look forward to.



“The Garage is an admirable example of how a 21st-century arts organisation can function within the society it serves”

*Tim Shuker-Yates, Education and Skills Officer,
Arts Council England, East*

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Mark Harvey, front cover, p4-5,
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p12 inset (middle), p14, p14 inset (middle)
Jonathan Spratley, p2-3, p6 inset (second from
bottom and bottom), p7, p10 inset (chart),
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