

## Borough Partnerships –

### Harrow Arts Centre & Tiger Monkey

*Silver & Gold* was a nine-month action research programme that supported six cultural organisations in London to explore new models for delivering Arts Award. The programme was designed, facilitated and funded by A New Direction. This document is one of five that share the learning from the programme. The full set can be found on the AND website <http://www.anewdirection.org.uk/>

#### Introduction to the organisations

##### Harrow Arts Centre

Harrow Arts Centre (HAC) is part of the Community and Culture Directorate of the local authority. It is a multi-artform venue that hosts music, theatre, comedy, dance, film and a range of classes and workshops. The venue includes a 400-seat auditorium, 120-seat Studio theatre, visual arts spaces, a dance studio and a range of meeting and workshop spaces.

*Project Coordinator:* Cate Gordon, Participation Programmer

*Prior Experience:* HAC has offered Arts Award since 2011

*Awards:* 10 Silver

*Participants:* 15 young people including three newcomers to HAC with the remainder drawn from a range of existing projects and activities at the Centre.

*Partners:* Harrow Music Education Hub (HMEH)

*Aim:* To improve progression routes for young people working towards their Arts Award by finding a realistic and sustainable way to deliver Silver Arts Award at HAC



Model for Silver & Gold:

Harrow Arts Centre has a strong offer for Bronze and for Gold<sup>1</sup> but as Cate Gordon explained, *'Silver has always occupied a funny middle ground, being tagged on to other projects or trying to help one or two young people complete Silver while everyone else in the group was completing Bronze.'*

For *Silver & Gold*, HAC designed a project to enable young people to achieve Arts Award by bringing together all the different projects and activities they were taking part in. The young people met with an adviser on a monthly basis to collate evidence and build portfolios; the adviser also had a bank of 'flexi' hours to support individual needs. There were also group opportunities to visit events, meet professionals and complete the leadership unit (young people designed and led workshops during the Easter break).



<sup>1</sup> HAC has recently been recognised as an Arts Award Good Practice Centre for 2014-15.

## Tiger Monkey

Tiger Monkey, based in Enfield, aims to develop the social inclusion of children, young people and adults of all ages, backgrounds and abilities through creativity. The organisation has particular expertise in work with young people who are excluded from school or at risk of exclusion. Tiger Monkey offers training, workshops, projects and long-term partnerships.

<i>Project Coordinator:</i>	Emma Ghafur, Director
<i>Prior Experience:</i>	Extensive experience of Bronze and Gold, limited experience of Silver. Worked in partnership with educational institutions to deliver Arts Award but not other cultural organisations.
<i>Awards:</i>	9 Bronze, 22 Silver (+ 1 Gold to be moderated later in the year)
<i>Participants:</i>	Over 50 young people across four different cultural organisations including young people with learning disabilities and young people for whom English is an additional language.
<i>Partners:</i>	Enfield Youth Service, Face Front Inclusive Theatre, Platinum Arts, Tottenham Hotspurs FC, The Red Room, Right Choices and the Dugdale Centre.
<i>Aim:</i>	To embed Arts Award across the borough of Enfield

### Model for Silver & Gold:

Tiger Monkey acted as the lead partner, engaging and supporting a range of organisations across the borough of Enfield to develop Silver Arts Award. Part of Tiger Monkey's offer was to train Arts Award advisers, with a particular focus on youth workers. Organisations ran activities with their own cohort of young people and Tiger Monkey facilitated a series of six Catalyst Days across the autumn and spring, to which partner staff and young people were invited. These days focused on the development of portfolios but also gave the young people opportunities to broaden their experiences by working with staff and artists from the partner organisations.

Tiger Monkey also staged an Expo in May 2014 at which young people led and participated in a range of workshops to fulfil the leadership aspect of the Award.

### What was new?

At HAC, participation projects are usually designed around an artform or artistic idea with Arts Award being incorporated into this project. For *Silver & Gold*, this model was reversed as Cate Gordon explained,

*'This has been a really different way of working for us: this project has been set up around the Silver outline, in such a flexible way that young people working in any art form can participate. We're now able to offer the opportunity to young people with a much broader range of interests.'*

HAC also hoped to recruit young people through HMEH and Sue McCall from Harrow Music Service attended the first *Silver & Gold* Project Day.

Tiger Monkey set an ambitious target of achieving up to 50 Awards by working across the borough with a range of partners. The concept of organisations working independently but coming together for Catalyst Days was a new approach for Tiger Monkey and the borough. The range of partners included established relationships (such as Platinum and Face Front) but also new groups such as the Red Room music project.

It was also a new experience for Tiger Monkey to run an integrated project that included young people with learning disabilities (SEN) and unaccompanied minors from Albania, many of whom were in the early stages of learning English (EAL).

### What worked well

At HAC, the decision to give the adviser a bank of 'flexi' hours in addition to the regular sessional hours, proved beneficial. This gave her the capacity to meet young people individually or in small groups; to respond to specific needs or offer catch-up sessions. The adviser was supported by the Centre's two Young Associate Artists, who were undertaking Gold Arts Award through a separate HAC project. This broadened the range of art form expertise available to support young people. This enabled the team to support a wide range of Arts Challenges including painting from memory, technical theatre, singing falsetto and creating henna designs.

In Enfield, the Catalyst Days encouraged a process of ongoing documentation. This was a successful model, and those young people who attended all six days produced rich and successful portfolios that met all the Arts Award criteria. Tiger Monkey found that mind mapping proved an invaluable resource for the Face Front

SEN group whose portfolios 'Were noted for their creativity and congratulated by the moderator'.

As Tiger Monkey's aim was to have borough-wide impact, it is interesting to view the project from the local authority perspective. Jayne Longstaff has worked for a number of years in Enfield, commissioning work for young people. She had no prior knowledge of Arts Award.

*'I was really surprised how many young people [Tiger Monkey] had managed to engage and get accredited qualifications. For some of those young people (without other qualifications), this accreditation will be particularly significant.'*

Jayne Longstaff suggested how Tiger Monkey could use Arts Award to support young people in Enfield:

- Educational attainment, particularly for NEET<sup>2</sup> young people. The model of Arts Award as an alternative educational option and qualification; supporting applications to further and higher education.
- Community cohesion. *'Ways of bringing together communities of young people who may not usually socialise such as the young people from a special school who may not have many opportunities to mix with the general school population.'*
- Volunteering and work experience for young people. Arts Award encourages young people to reflect on their skills and the contribution they can make to society; it also asks young people to research career paths. These factors could improve employment prospects but also, hopefully, encourage active citizenship.

## Meeting challenges

The common challenges experienced by *Silver & Gold* partners are outlined in the summary document<sup>3</sup>. Harrow Arts Centre and Tiger Monkey, however, encountered other challenges linked to partnership working. These are summarised below.

### ***Coping with staff changes and restructuring***

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<sup>2</sup> Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

<sup>3</sup> [www.anewdirection.org.uk](http://www.anewdirection.org.uk)

Both HAC and Tiger Monkey were working in partnership with local authority services that were subject to a period of restructuring. As a local authority venue, Harrow Arts Centre was itself under review.

The impact of this uncertainty was felt most keenly by Cate Gordon at HAC as forward planning was necessarily peppered with caveats. Arts Award is central to the work of HAC, however, and Cate has continued to plan ahead, developing capacity with partners where possible to ensure ongoing opportunities for young people.

Emma Ghafur's experience in Enfield highlighted the significance of individual relationships in partnership work. A change of staff at Tottenham Hotspur FC for example, resulted in the loss of the club as an active partner for *Silver & Gold*. Undaunted, Emma recruited two new cultural organisations to the project and also pursued additional contacts within Tottenham Hotspur. As a result, a schools outreach worker with the club has been trained as an Arts Award adviser.

### ***Developing awareness and understanding amongst partners***

HAC did not recruit any young people through the Music Hub; however, Sue McCall did attend an Arts Award session, meet the group and develop a greater understanding of how Arts Award works in practice. Both partners recognised that Sue needed a fuller understanding of the benefits of the Award before she could advocate for it with music tutors.

Tiger Monkey negotiated a new partnership with a youth centre music project. The youth worker was already trained as an Arts Award adviser but had not previously delivered the Award. The youth worker was enthusiastic but had not had time to run the Award as he had been running the Silver Duke of Edinburgh Award instead. It was necessary to scale back the centre's initial ambitions for the number of candidates for Arts Award. As Emma explained, *'The young people have done the (arts) work but haven't documented as they go along, so they're playing catch-up.'* A positive outcome however was that two young men (graduates of the music project and now employed as staff) attended the adviser training and are keen to carry the work forward.

### ***Meeting required standards for documentation***

Silver Arts Award requires detailed documentation and evidence. Tiger Monkey found this created particular challenges for the SEN and EAL groups. A high adult: young person ratio helped as did the use of group discussions recorded through mind mapping and audio. Peer support was encouraged through buddying and within the Albanian group, young people acted as peer translators with additional translation by the attached worker.

## Organisational outcomes

*'The model of monthly support sessions for portfolio development was really successful.'*

*'Engaging over 50 young people in the process and achieving 31 Arts Awards!'*

*'Brokering partnerships with a wide range of youth and cultural organisations with a good geographic spread across the borough [of Enfield].'*

Silver & Gold network partners devised individual evaluation frameworks at the outset of the programme. Alongside delivering successful Arts Award projects (in which young people met their objectives and target numbers of Awards were achieved), objectives and success criteria set out how the organisations hoped to develop with the ultimate aim of embedding and sustaining Arts Award. Key organisational outcomes are listed below.

Both organisations trialled models that offered central and regular support for portfolio development for young people working on a variety of projects. Although both project coordinators described the need for some additional 'catch-up' sessions, these models proved highly effective ways of ensuring and supporting on-going documentation of work. This success was demonstrated in Enfield by the significantly higher numbers of young people being entered for moderation from the organisations that attended all the Catalyst Days.

An objective for HAC was to increase the number of staff who have experience of Arts Award. This objective linked to developing capacity; indicators of success included the Associate Artists gaining experience of Silver and engagement from the Music Hub. The objective was met and the two Associates are now being trained as advisers increasing still further HAC's capacity to support Arts Award.

## Unexpected outcomes

Cate Gordon has been delivering Arts Award since 2008 (introducing it to HAC when she took up her post in 2011) and has always acted as the adviser on projects. For Silver & Gold, she acted in a support role to a freelance adviser and reported, *'I have learnt quite a lot about myself; I realise I have a set way of doing things.* She thought it would be useful to see examples of successful portfolios from other organisations. (Cate's feedback resulted in network partners bringing sample portfolios to share at the final Silver & Gold project day).

Although already an experienced Arts Award adviser and moderator, Emma Ghafur also gained professional development through the *Silver & Gold* project. It was the first time she had worked on an integrated project that embedded Arts Award into the process and she gained knowledge and skills in how best to support SEN and EAL groups with the Award. Key lessons were the additional time required to document and the value of non-written forms of documentation.

Although Platinum Arts did not engage fully with Tiger Monkey's Catalyst Days (the group was also working with Zoo Nation and were pushed for time), participants did attend one session where dancers ran a workshop and held a Q&A about routes into dance. The young people from Face Front were enthused by the event and as a consequence, Platinum have established an accessible dance group for these and other disabled young people.

### **Embedding Arts Award**

Through *Silver & Gold*, A New Direction aimed to embed the sustainable delivery of Silver and Gold Arts Award in the core business of the participating organisations. In the case of Harrow Arts Centre and Tiger Monkey, both organisations were already committed to Arts Award. For these organisations therefore, *Silver & Gold* focused on piloting new delivery models. As described above, both were successful and HAC has already embarked on plans to repeat the project in 2014/15. Emma is taking the learning into a number of other Arts Award partnership projects, ensuring, for example, clarity of expectations with partners.

Emma is also talking to the local authority about funding an ongoing programme of support in Enfield. Emma is keen to extend opportunities in the youth sector through further adviser training and to replicate HAC's model of monthly support sessions. Her vision is for Tiger Monkey to facilitate these sessions and act as a 'Hub' for young people to gain additional support and advice on achieving their Arts Award. Jayne Longstaff mooted the idea that the Hub could also improve the skills of advisers to build sustainable provision across the borough.

Appreciating the need to spread awareness and understanding about Arts Award amongst staff and tutors working at Harrow Music Education Hub, Cate Gordon has agreed to run Bronze Arts Award with a new Music Service group: a Children's Choir due to start in September 2014. Cate and Sue McCall hope this in-house project will galvanise support for Arts Award at the HMEH.



## Conclusion

Both project coordinators had ambitions to embed Arts Award beyond their own organisations. They have each taken important steps towards fulfilling this objective and have specific plans to aid sustainable delivery through outreach, training and pilot activity. Through *Silver & Gold*, HAC and Tiger Monkey recognised the importance of agreeing clear and realistic expectations with partners and building in time to develop awareness and understanding about Arts Award.