

# Listening Projects

## Consultation Brief

### About A New Direction

A New Direction is a London-based non-profit, generating opportunities for children and young people to unlock their creativity. We work with schools, cultural venues, local authorities and a range of other partners to support children and young people to be creative and experience culture, while identifying areas of inequality and campaigning for policy change.

### Background

We are living in an unprecedented time, with wide-ranging impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic for how we live, work and learn; the structural inequalities highlighted by the Black Lives Matter movement and the climate emergency necessitating rapid action and change.

Our work at A New Direction connects to each stage of a young person's experience living and growing up in London – through their experience of their local and city-wide areas, through education and seeking creative employment if they choose to follow that path, and how these experiences can support creativity and be enriched by culture.

A New Direction is thinking about the longer-term horizon and developing plans to equip and support children and young people and partners concerned with cultural education to navigate, adapt to and thrive in a new post-COVID future. In shaping our plans, we want to listen to the voices of those we work with and those who are involved in our work, to understand evolving dynamics in the city and ensure our work is rooted, part of collective ambitions and relevant.

In January and February 2021, we will undertake five Listening Projects, each focussed on a different theme (expanded below). We want to hear from families and young Londoners as well as organisations and partners who work across the rich ecology that supports young people, culture and creativity in different areas of the city and regionally.

The Listening Projects will be a rapid sense-making process; a mix of virtual conversations – including group conversations and individual interviews – which build on learning and evidence emerging from published materials exploring the current context for our sector and young Londoners.

### Information about this commission

We're looking for organisations interested in leading on one or more of five Listening Projects, each focussed on a particular theme (more below), to include:

- Planning a central question in consultation with A New Direction to guide the Listening Project

- Planning and convening at least one group/roundtable conversation focussing on the theme, including seeking representation prioritising diverse perspectives and opinions on the topic
- Designing and undertaking a small interview process to complement the roundtable discussion
- Analysing findings and presenting a written overview of outcomes to A New Direction by Friday 19 February 2021

Organisations or individuals can apply to lead one or more than one Listening Project.

A maximum of £4,500 inclusive of VAT is available for Listening Project themes 1, 3, 4 and 5 below and £6,000 inclusive of VAT is available for Listening Project 2 (a total of £24,000 across the five Listening Projects).

## **Insights capture from published materials**

In November 2020, A New Direction is undertaking an insights capture exercise looking at learnings emerging from published materials documenting the effects of COVID-19 for London, young Londoners and cultural and creative education. We hope to publish outcomes from this and will make summaries available for those leading the Listening Projects in December 2020.

## **Ensuring inclusion, diversity and representation is central**

A New Direction is committed to representation, inclusion and diversity and want to approach each Listening Project through this lens. We welcome details from applicants about how they will employ principles of equity in the framework for their Project, ensure equity in representation of participants, and involve discussion about questions of inclusion relevant to their theme.

As mentioned below, we're looking for approaches that align with our core themes of **equity, creativity and trust**.

## **Themes**

### **Theme 1: The experience of young Londoners**

The events of 2020 have had a significant impact on many factors affecting young people's lives in London. In this conversation we want to more fully understand the experience now for children and young people in relation to culture and creativity.

What would be young Londoners' priorities for culture, creativity and learning in the short to medium term? How can organisations work together to ensure young people's voices are central to our work now and in the future? How do young people see their role in shaping their communities?

### **Theme 2: Supporting organisations leading practice**

In this conversation we want to listen to the challenges, considerations and priorities for organisations delivering and supporting cultural and creative learning from early

years into adulthood. This might include cultural and creative sector organisations, early years providers, youth club settings and teachers/colleagues in education.

How are cultural and creative sector organisations, communities and schools connecting through on site and remote work, digital work and in new spaces? What are the implications of this? What can we learn? What do successful 'blended' digital/non-digital practice and partnerships look like?

How are early years providers collaborating with families? Can these practices support learning at other phases of education?

What can we put in place to support teachers to continue to engage with culture in their classrooms and teach for creativity? How might we best support critical thinking, creativity and a breadth of opportunity across the curriculum and the wellbeing of all school-staff and pupils? What factors will affect culture and creativity in education in the coming two years?

As outlined above, a higher fee is available for this theme given the potential for more than one group conversation or a higher number of interviews as part of this Project.

### **Theme 3: The Climate Emergency**

The climate crisis is an urgent challenge. How can critical thinking and creativity explore new ideas and solutions? Can cultural and creative practice explore and amplify perspectives and act as a vehicle for change? How does cultural and educational policy and practice connect with environmental policy and emerging fields of democratic participation involving young people? Beyond working to reduce the impact of our own organisations, what role can A New Direction and culture and creative learning play in leading positive change?

### **Theme 4: Enabling cultural communities**

During 2020, Londoners' lives have been simultaneously hyper-local and more geographically removed. How we use our space at home, the activities we undertake in our local areas and how we move around the city, has all changed quickly. The experience has also uncovered structural inequalities in who has access to services (regional, local, digital). It has also illustrated the compassion of communities to respond quickly to develop solutions.

What practice is emerging that celebrates community-led and hyper-local approaches? What does it mean to build a creative place now? What will be important in successful local join-up and collective action to support key priorities? What does the process and outcome of galvanising community assets and local social infrastructure do to improve communities and strengthen local leadership? Who else needs to be around the table?

Here we're keen to hear from a breadth of perspectives and organisations involved in culture, local government and planning.

## Theme 5: Employment and work

The past six months have seen big economic challenges and a significant impact on jobs and work in the city. Evidence has shown that young people are more likely to work in sectors which have suffered the highest job losses and projections anticipate a significant loss of creative jobs.

How are further and higher education and training programmes preparing young people for the world of work? With such seismic shifts, how do we ensure young people are not left behind?

### How to express interest

To express interest in leading one or more of the Listening Projects above, please send an expression of interest document no more than three A4 sides in length to [corinne.bass@anewdirection.org.uk](mailto:corinne.bass@anewdirection.org.uk) by **5pm on Tuesday 15 December**.

Your expression of interest should outline which theme(s) you're applying to lead, how you expect to approach the topic, organisations or individuals you'd hope to involve and your relevant experience.

Decisions will be based on clarity of approach, alignment with A New Direction's values of equity, creativity and trust, relevant experience, and the breadth of voices you hope to involve in the Listening Project.

We'll get back in touch with all applicants by Monday 21 December 2020 and hope to hold set-up meetings with Listening Project leads on Monday 11 January.

### Contact us

For more information or if you have any questions, please contact Corinne Bass, [corinne.bass@anewdirection.org.uk](mailto:corinne.bass@anewdirection.org.uk).