

Ellen O'Hara & Deepa Naik

Mapping Creative Hubs in England

March 2021

Foreword

Since 2014, the British Council has been working with over one thousand creative hubs globally. We see creative hubs as communities of support for creative professionals, as well as catalyst platforms that contribute to an inclusive and sustainable creative economy.

Our definition of a creative hub is ‘*a physical or virtual place that brings enterprising people together who work in the creative and cultural industries*’. However, we acknowledge that in practice there are many definitions of creative hubs, and numerous organisations around the world might not resonate with the “creative hub” designation.

Over the last six years, the British Council has developed a plethora of programmes, research and tools that have creative hubs at heart. From the *Creative HubKit* (developed by Creative Edinburgh and Creative Dundee) which has a variety of best practice examples and has been translated into numerous languages globally; and the *Creative Hub Leaders Toolkit* (developed by British Council, Hivos and Nesta) which we published in 2020 and which provides a variety of practical tools to develop a hub business model; to programmes like *Hubs as Hosts*, which brings creative hubs from across the globe to the UK to connect, collaborate and exchange learnings with a variety of UK hubs; and our two-year *European Creative Hubs Network* project (EU funded), which brought 80 UK and 200 EU hubs together, stimulating connections, collaborations and learning with our European counterparts, at a time when this was needed more than ever. You can read more about our work in this area here:

creativeeconomy.britishcouncil.org.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, we planned to carry out mappings of creative hubs across all four UK nations, in an effort to refresh the body of knowledge on creative hubs and their ecosystem. These mapping exercises are for us a substantial source of information, helping us understand how the sector has evolved, what kind of impact creative hubs generate, and what are the current trends. They also offer a valuable resource for our international work, highlighting the richness and diversity of the creative hubs landscape in the UK.

This report aims to showcase creative hubs across England, recapping their successes, needs and challenges, their social and economic impacts and their ability to respond to global challenges, alongside quantitative data. It complements the [Mapping of Creative Hubs in Scotland](#) we have published in 2020.

Through our creative hubs programmes around the world, we have learned that these organisations can play a vital role both on a local and an international scale. Their potential to act as cross-sector, multi-disciplinary, pluri-skilled think tanks, as agents of change in public and social space, and general drivers of good is unrivalled, yet not fully acknowledged. We are committed to providing creative hubs with even more spotlights in 2021, International Year of Creative Economy for Sustainable Development.

We need to recognise the data in this report mirrors a tough state of affairs generated by the COVID-19 crisis, which has pushed many hubs worldwide to close their space, to move their programmes online, to deal with unforeseen financial and wellbeing situations, and much more. We hope this work will be of help to the creative communities in England and globally, by enabling creative hubs and other organisations to find, share, learn and inspire each other while demonstrating the resilience and innovation potential this sector embodies.

We wish to extend our thanks and appreciation to the creative community across England, who showed eagerness and generosity with their time and input for this research exercise.

Finally, we are grateful for the hard work and dedication of the brilliant team who carried out this research with enthusiasm and sensitivity, navigating the difficult pandemic context seamlessly.

March 2021

Roxana Apostol

Creative Economy Programme Manager

British Council

Contents

Executive Summary	5
1.0 Introduction	7
1.1 Approach	
1.2 Acknowledgements	
1.3 What do we mean by creative hubs?	
2.0 The creative hub landscape in England	11
2.1 Location	
2.2 Profile overview	
2.3 Mission, model and activities	
3.0 Impact	23
3.1 Roles & relationships	
3.2 Headline outputs and outcomes	
3.3 Alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals	
4.0 Outlook	31
4.1 Opportunities	
4.2 Challenges	
4.3 Success factors	
5.0 Case studies	49
1. a space arts, Southampton	
2. Duke Studios, Leeds	
3. Hackney Bridge, London	
4. HQ CAN, Leicester	
5. Real Ideas Organisation, Devon & Cornwall	
6. The Making Rooms, Blackburn	
6.0 Reflections	63
References	64
Appendix	
A1 Hub models from the British Council Hubkit	
All Creative Hubs England Map – Identified Hubs	

Executive summary

The creative hub landscape

We identified 316 creative hubs, through the mapping exercise, concentrated in major urban centres and emerging in small cities and towns across the country. The analysis of profile survey data revealed a high degree of complexity and nuance in operating models, mission and output, reaffirming that 'creative hubs' are by no means homogenous. The hub landscape in England is dynamic, diverse and evolving ranging from start-up social networks through to established, multi-site building based hubs.

While previous studies have often focussed on creative enterprise, we found that 'creative social enterprise', 'creativity for social change' and 'everyday creativity' were reoccurring drivers expressed by many hubs in the sample. As such, this leaning towards social impact can be considered a defining characteristic of creative hubs in England.

40% of hubs in the sample primarily serve their hyper-local community, while 60% engage members and users regionally, nationally and internationally depending on their location and remit. Many have a focus on a specific community of interest.

Impact

What binds creative hubs together is the focus on convening and building creative communities, often nurturing and maintaining a complex set of relationships and partnerships. We have suggested six overlapping roles that creative hubs tend to play as a means of understanding their significance and potential within a community. These are:

- Community Convenor and Builder
- Co-creator, Co-producer and Co-curator
- Enabler and Facilitator
- Animator and Change Agent
- Broker and Anchor
- Leader and Advocate

Hubs make a difference in their communities in a multitude of ways, delivering social, cultural and economic value well aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals of Good Health

and Wellbeing (Goal 3), Quality Education (Goal 4), and Decent Work and Economic Growth (Goal 8). Measuring impact remains a challenge, however, and hubs reported a lack of skills, capacity, resources and suitable measurement frameworks as key barriers in this regard.

Outlook

Financial stability, supporting the business survival of hub members, lack of capacity and mental health are key challenges alongside ensuring a steady recovery from the effects of the pandemic. Notwithstanding the impact of COVID19 and Brexit, hubs are optimistic about the future and have ambitious plans for growing space, programmes, reach and networks.

Hubs are adopting new business models and redeploying assets to respond to community needs, while capitalising on opportunities such as new forms of digital engagement emerging from lockdown.

We concluded that success factors include being user led, fostering an entrepreneurial culture, having the ability to tell a compelling story of the role and impact of the hub, and diversifying income streams to build better resilience against financial shocks.

1 Introduction

In 2020, Ellen O'Hara was commissioned by the British Council to map creative hubs across England. The purpose of the study was to provide a better understanding of the profile of creative hubs, who their members and beneficiaries are, as well as their role and impact in their community. In addition, The British Council sought to better understand the challenges and opportunities currently facing creative hubs, to learn what their needs are, and to see how they might better engage and support their work. This mapping exercise set out to describe the current creative hub landscape in England, providing a snapshot in time, through the stories of individual hubs.

1.1 Approach

The two intended outputs of the study were a database of creative hubs and a report summarising the findings of the mapping exercise. A succinct and focused literature review was undertaken to provide contextual knowledge, identify gaps, patterns and key insights on which to build. Fieldwork included a targeted survey issued digitally and circulated via direct emails, a social media campaign and sector specific mailing lists. Survey questions were tested and iterated with the British Council's Creative Hubs Advisory Board. A series of case studies were produced drawing on both survey results and interviews with selected hub leaders. Rather than random sampling, case studies were selected to illustrate the depth and breadth of hub models, scales and impacts.

A database of creative hubs was developed starting with the British Council's Creative Economy team's contacts. This was then expanded through desk research and 'snowball method', with survey respondents suggesting additional hubs to contact. 311 hubs were identified initially; 139 returned a survey of which 130 completed all compulsory questions. An additional five hubs were added after the survey closed, bringing the total map to 316.

The emerging findings of the mapping were shared with 28 survey respondents via an Insight Event on March 19th 2021 and feedback on some key points were fed into this report. This resulting report provides contextualisation of the creative hub landscape, a summary of the survey findings, six case studies, along with observations and reflections by the research team Ellen O'Hara and Deepa Naik.

1.1.1 Data sample & limitations

We acknowledge that map of creative hubs presented in this report is incomplete and suspect that many emerging and smaller hubs, who may not have such a strong online presence, will not have been picked through the desk research process.

139 creative hubs submitted surveys – providing detailed comments and statistics, which took an average of 41 minutes to complete. Although this is notable, the sample is not large enough to produce statistically significant results and so analysis to show correlations between different data points was not undertaken.

At least 12 respondents sit somewhat outside the British Council's interpretation of a creative hub yet identify as one. They included:

- Cultural Education Partnerships
- Creative Sector Development Agencies
- Forums, consortiums and compacts
- Theatres, galleries, museums and festivals
- Makers markets and retail hubs

The biggest challenge of a study of this nature is how to best to tell the story of a diverse set of organisations when each one is incredibly unique. One size does not fit all by any means. As such, we have highlighted several themes and emerging stories, drawing primarily on sample data and interviews to illuminate the role, spirit and potential of creative hubs across England.

1.2 Acknowledgements

The study was originally commissioned in February 2020 and the decision was taken to delay the project by six months due to the impact of COVID19, in consideration of the fact that that many hubs were emergency planning, had temporarily closed their doors and/or furloughed staff. The work was resumed in October 2020 and we were conscious that many hubs were still firefighting, which may have hindered their ability to take time out to participate. We would like to thank the hubs that took part in this study, many of whom provided rich and detailed insights and data, dedicating more than 100 hours to complete surveys, take part in interviews and join the Insight Event.

[51zero](#)
['a space' arts](#)
[a-n The Artists Information Company](#)
[Acme Studios](#)
[Art Asia Trust Ltd](#)
[Artillery CIC](#)
[ArtReach](#)
[Arts and Heritage Alliance Milton Keynes](#)
[Atlantic Youth Creative Hubs](#)
[B&D Studios CIC](#)
[Baltic Creative CIC](#)
[Banks Mill Studios](#)
[Bow Arts](#)
[Bristol Creative Industries](#)
[Bristol Festivals Network](#)
[Cheddar Artists](#)
[Coastal Currents](#)
[Cockpit Arts](#)
[Colonnade House](#)
[Crafty Fox Market](#)
[Crate Studio and Project Space](#)
[Create Studios Digital Media CIC](#)
[Creative Folkestone](#)
[Creative Hub WLV](#)
[Creative Innovation Centre CIC](#)
[Creative Kernow](#)
[Creative Lancashire](#)
[Creative Medway](#)
[Creative Network South](#)
[Creative Wakefield](#)
[CultureWorks](#)
[CVAN](#)
[CVAN East Midlands](#)
[CVAN South East](#)
[CVAN South West](#)
[Daphne Oram Building for the Creative Arts](#)
[David Glass Ensemble](#)
[Design-Nation Cluster Hubs](#)
[Digbeth](#)
[Digital Lancashire](#)
[Double Elephant Print Workshop](#)
[Duke Studios and Sheaf St Eggtooth](#)
[Farleys House & Gallery Ltd](#)
[Fish Factory Art Space](#)
[GoCreate Taunton](#)
[GRAIN Projects](#)
[Haarlem Artspace](#)

[Hackney Bridge](#)
[High House Production Park](#)
[HiveHub Barking Roding Riverside](#)
[Hold Creative Spaces CIC HQ](#)
[Hulkes Lane Darkroom & Studio](#)
[Ideas Hub Chelmsford](#)
[Impact Hub Islington](#)
[Intra Arts](#)
[Islington Mill Arts Club](#)
[Islington Mill](#)
[Jubilee Wharf](#)
[Knowle West Media Centre / The Factory](#)
[Krowji](#)
[LCB Depot](#)
[Lit Theatre Company](#)
[MadLab](#)
[Makerversity](#)
[Marine Studios CIC](#)
[Medway Arts Forum](#)
[MESS ROOM](#)
[Mortar Studios](#)
[National Youth Theatre of Great Britain](#)
[Natural Theatre/Bath Arts](#)
[New Brewery Arts](#)
[Nucleus Arts](#)
[Orbis](#)
[Oxford City Cultural Education Partnership](#)
[Peckham Levels](#)
[Peddle](#)
[Pervasive Media Studio](#)
[Watershed](#)
[Pioneering Places East Kent](#)
[Plexal](#)
[Plymouth Culture](#)
[Pop Brixton](#)
[Poplar Union](#)
[Porthmeor Studios](#)
[Primary](#)
[Production Park](#)
[QUAD](#)
[Real Ideas Ocean Studios](#)
[Redeye, the Photography Network](#)
[Rosetta Arts](#)
[Royal Engineers Museum](#)
[Rural Arts](#)
[Second Floor Studios& Arts](#)
[Seed](#)
[SET](#)

[Sheaf Studios](#)
[Sheffield Creative Guild Society1](#)
[Somerset Art Works](#)
[Somerset Arts Business Cultural Alliance](#)
[Sound Sense Limited](#)
[SPACER](#)
[Spike Island](#)
[SPUDWORKS](#)
[Stour Space](#)
[Studio Voltaire](#)
[Sun Pier House CIC](#)
[The Arches](#)
[The Art House \(Wakefield\)](#)
[The Art House \(Southampton\)](#)
[The Auxiliary Project Space](#)
[The Birley](#)
[The Brixton Project](#)
[The Carousel Nottingham CIC](#)
[The Circus of Illustration](#)
[The Dryden Enterprise Centre](#)
[The Edge](#)
[The Engine Room](#)
[The Generator Hub](#)
[The Making Rooms](#)
[The Net Community Hub](#)
[The NewBridge Project](#)
[The Old Library](#)
[The Old Print Works](#)
[The Royal Standard](#)
[The Transition Chelmsford](#)
[The Vale - Global Grooves](#)
[Triangle Network](#)
[Turf Projects](#)
[Two Queens](#)
[Village Underground](#)
[Voluntary Arts](#)
[Warwick District Creative Compact](#)
[We Built This City](#)
[Westbury Arts Centre](#)
[Wood Street Studios](#)
[York Creatives](#)

1.3 What do we mean by creative hub?

For this mapping, we began with the definition used by the British Council: *“A physical or virtual place that brings enterprising people together who work in the creative and cultural industries.”*

We considered the four key characteristics that creative hubs share, suggested by Virani and Malem in 2015¹:

1. they provide tailored services to creative SMEs, including micro-businesses
2. they are aimed specifically at early-stage creative SMEs and micro-businesses
3. they are facilitated by trusted individuals who retain a number of important positions and conduct a number of important activities
4. they have become important to the health of the local creative economy

As such, we sought to identify individual organisations rather than creative clusters, creative quarters or creative enterprise zones that lead with this purpose. The term remains somewhat knotty however, meaning many things to many people. And while some hubs are indeed *'nests for freelancers and micro-SMEs to gather'* (Prof. Andy Pratt: City, 2016), we found that many are also driven by social purpose.

What creative hubs share is a focus on people and community building through creativity. This mapping shares stories of hubs as sites of co-creation, collective problem solving, and social innovation fuelled by creative practice. Creative social enterprise, creativity for social change and everyday creativity were reoccurring drivers expressed by many hubs and can be considered as defining characteristics in this context.

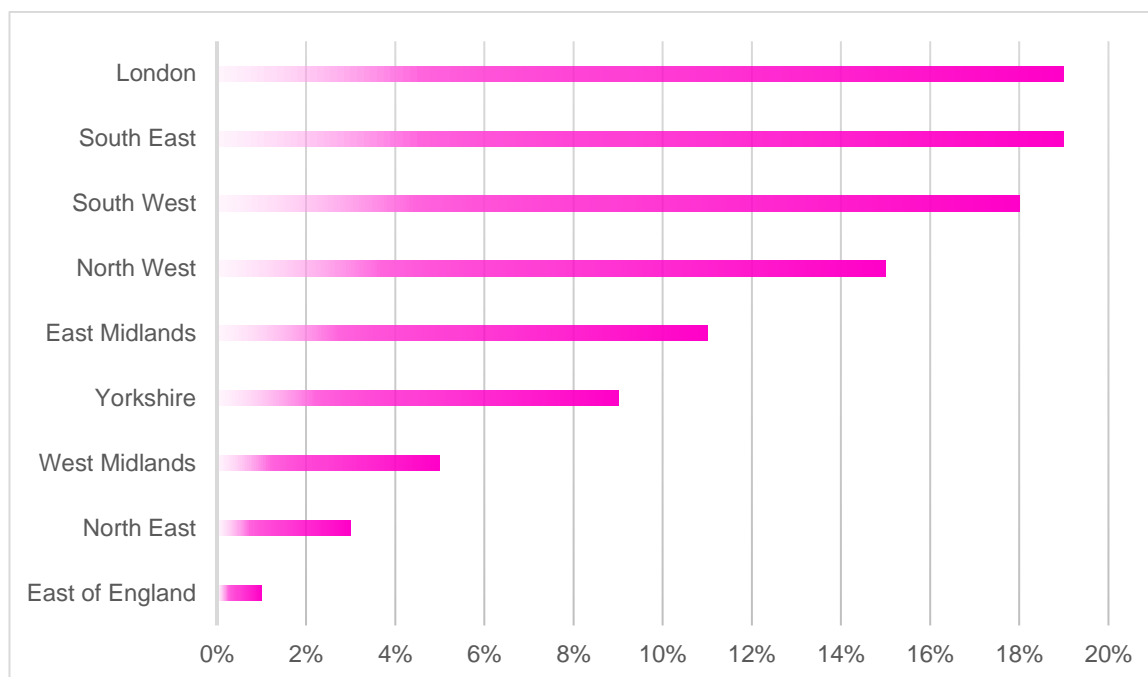
¹ Virani, T and Malem, W (2015), *Re-articulating the Creative Hub Concept as a Model for Business Support in the Local Creative Economy: The Case of Mare Street in Hackney*, London, Creative Works London.

2 The hub landscape

2.1 Location

Geographic mapping of all 316 hubs that were identified shows hubs are concentrated in the South of England with the fewest hubs being identified in the East of England:

Figure 1: Regional spread of hubs



We compared this spread with the recently published Creative Industries Radar: Mapping the UK's creative clusters (Siepel 2019), to see if there were any common patterns. Siepel's study identified 709 distinct *microclusters* of creative businesses, spread widely across the UK², and shows that one-third are outside of the 47 major creative clusters that have widely been identified in the past. Figure 2: Map of Creative Hubs in England also shows a spread of activity across the country; the majority of hubs are located in urban centres known for their vibrant creative sectors with half located in major cities (London, Birmingham, Manchester, Salford, Liverpool, Leicester, Bristol, Nottingham, Sheffield, Wakefield and Newcastle).

² Dr Siepel, J (2020), *Creative Industries Radar: Mapping the UK's creative clusters and microclusters*, UK: Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre led by Nesta

30% of hubs identified are located in small urban centres with 12% in towns. 3% of the hubs identified have a regional remit and 3% a national remit. A small number of hubs are located in rural or semi-rural locations such as Haarlem Artspace in Wirksworth³ (population 5,180) and Creative Cromford⁴ (population 1,433), located just 3 miles apart. Both hubs occupy impressive former 18th century mill buildings built by Sir Richard Arkwright, serving distinct segments of the local creative community (contemporary visual artists and office based digital creatives respectively).

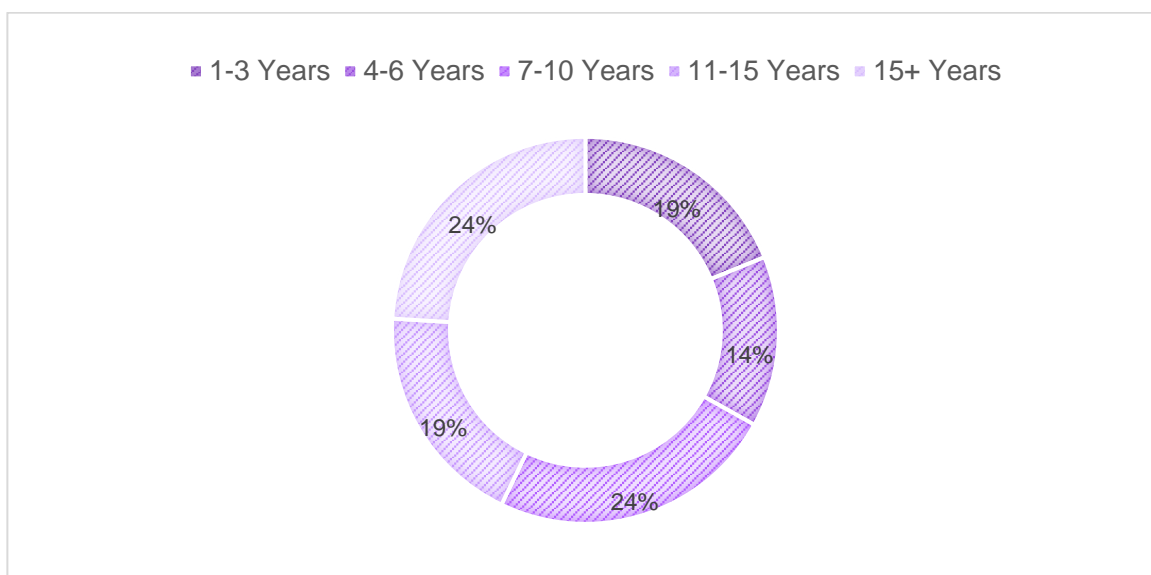
2.2 Profile overview

This section sets out the aggregated survey data. We asked hubs to share a range of profile data with us to illuminate the scope and scale at which creative hubs in England are operating.

2.2.1 Years active

A third of hubs have been active for five years or less while 67% have been active for at least six years. This suggests a dynamic and evolving scene with many mature hubs in action. Some hubs have evolved from funded projects such as Ideas Test (Medway & Swale), one of the first seven Creative People and Places⁵ projects.

Figure 3: Years active



³ Wirksworth is a historic market town in the Derbyshire Dales district of Derbyshire, England.

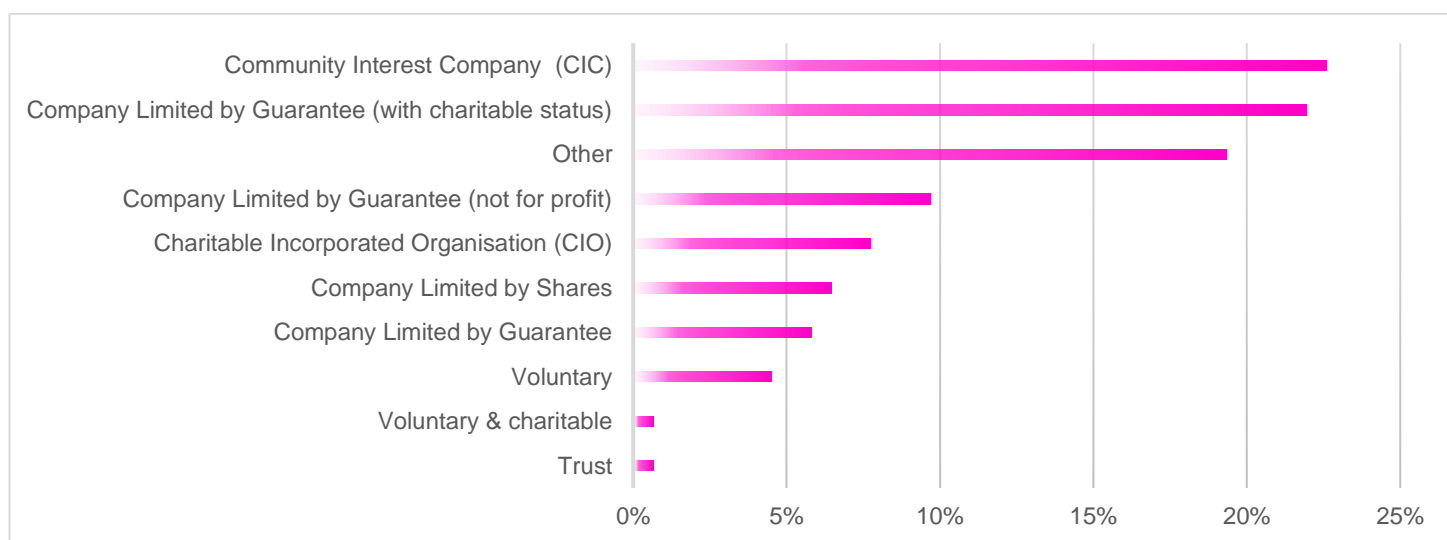
⁴ Creative Cromford is based at Cromford Mills, home of Sir Richard Arkwright's first mill complex, birthplace of the modern factory system and internationally recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site <https://www.cromfordmills.org.uk/>

⁵ Creative People and Place is an Arts Council England initiative that has supported 33 independent projects in areas where there are fewer opportunities to get involved with the arts <https://www.creativepeopleplaces.org.uk/>

2.2.2 Legal Structure

A wide range of company and governance structures were reported with the most frequent being Community Interest Company (CIC) and Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status. 20% reported 'Other' structures which included informal partnerships, consortiums and compacts, funded projects, Community Benefit Societies, Charity by Royal Charter, Wholly Owned Subsidiary and sole traders.

Figure 4: Legal structure



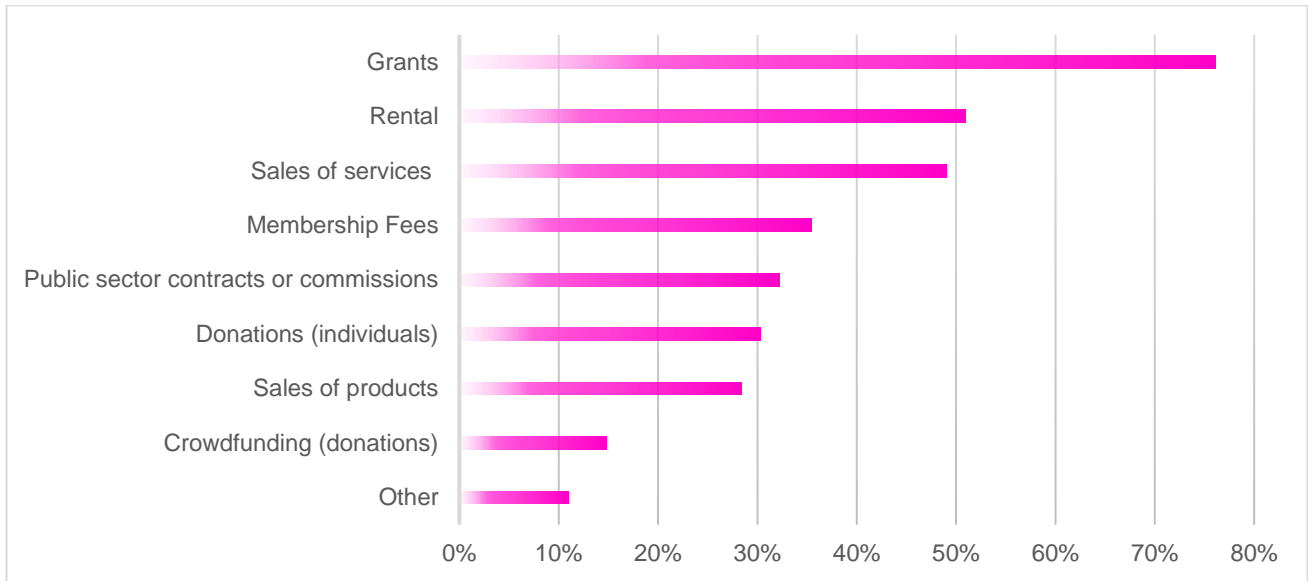
2.2.3 Sources of income

None of the hubs reported having a single income stream suggesting that they all operate a mixed economy business model. The most frequently cited source among this sample is grant income. This is not to say that grant income represents the largest, on average, proportion of income for creative hubs. Rather that this sample included hubs that are regularly funded (e.g. Arts Council England as a 'National Portfolio Organisations) and / or have benefited from grants for specific project activity. 'Other' sources included license fees leveraged from intellectual property rights and sponsorship.

The case studies reveal stories of bootstrapping⁶, innovative approaches to crowdfunding and personal investment to launch hubs and sustain growth. 5% of this sample has made use of loans and 10% cite private investment as means of raising finance.

⁶ Bootstrapping describes the process of building a company from the ground up with nothing, using personal savings and cash from initial sales to start and grow the business.

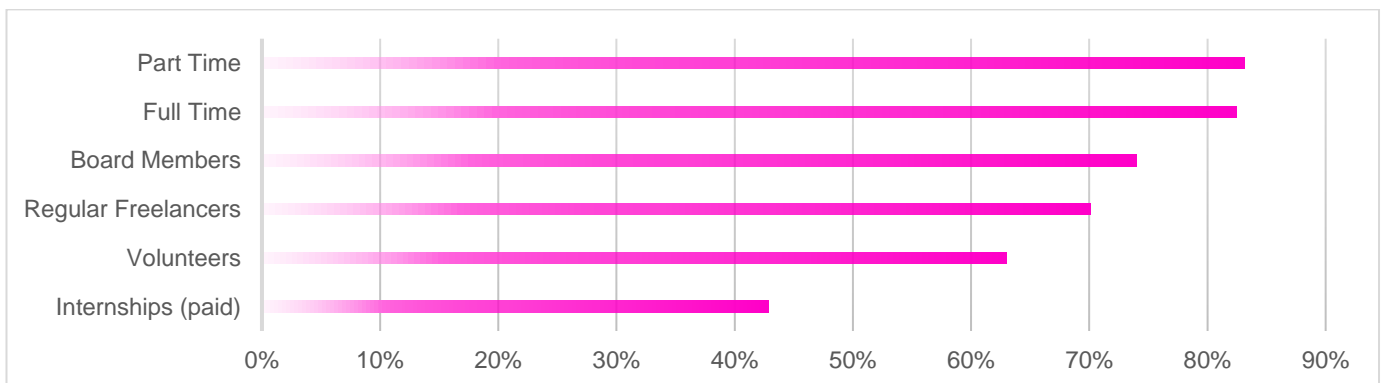
Figure 5: Sources of income



2.2.4 Staffing

The staffing data shows that 60% of hubs employ full time staff with a mean average of seven, yet a range of between one and 300. Similarly, 66% employ part time staff with a mean average of five ranging from one to 100. Almost half engage volunteers which reflects two points – that some hubs are volunteer led while others engage volunteers through their programmes. Hubs are also providing internship and apprenticeship opportunities as well as regularly engaging freelances.

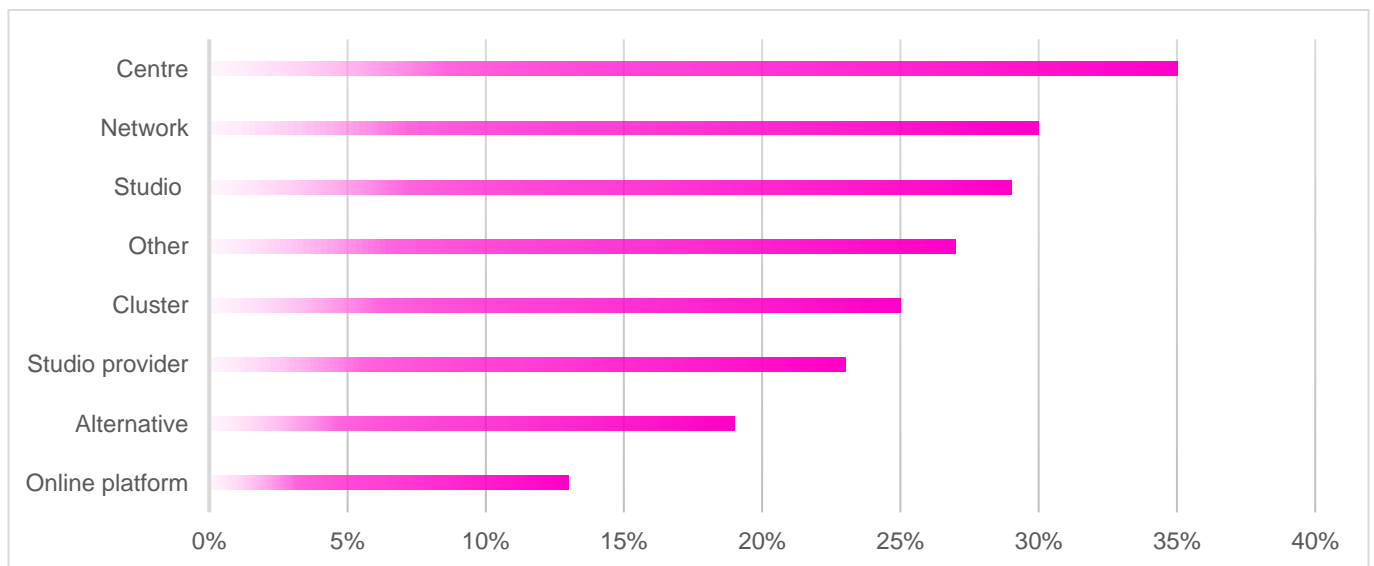
Figure 6: Staffing



2.2.5 Operating models

We know that hubs take many forms from networks, retail platforms, open access print studios, libraries, makerspaces and fab labs⁷, co-working spaces, incubators, community hubs, arts venues, indie artist studios, studio providers, and more. Respondents were asked to select which operating models most accurately described them, based on the British Council's typology (see Appendix A1). As the infographic shows, almost half selected more than one option (44%) and 6% selecting 5 or 6 options. This illustrates the level of complexity, nuance and hybrid operating models that hubs take.

Figure 8: Operating models



65% of the sample are building based hubs, two thirds of which are public facing via a gallery, events space, open access community space, café or bar. Of these a small number of hubs reported to own their building(s) such as Second Floor Studios & Arts (London) who secured a combination of crowdfunding and social investment from the Arts Impact Fund to purchase their Deptford Foundry site.

27% of the sample selected 'Other' model, of which 6% describe themselves as 'Other' only.

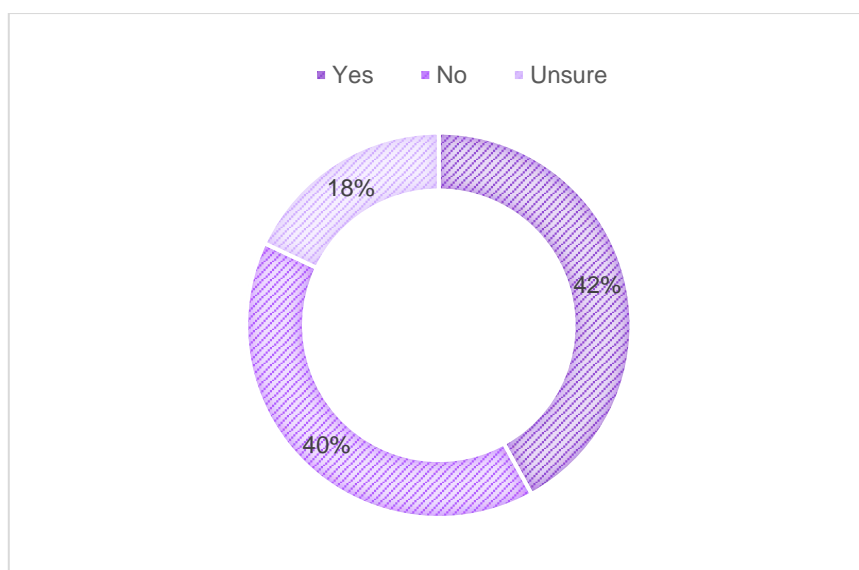
'Other' models included:

⁷ Fab Labs began in 2002 as an educational outreach programme at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Centre for Bits & Atoms. Founded by CBA's Professor Neil Gershenfeld their aims are to provide a technical prototyping platform for innovation and invention, providing stimulus for local entrepreneurship and a platform for learning and innovation: a place to play, to create, to learn, to mentor, to invent.

- Time limited projects – such as the Atlantic Youth Creative Hubs which is an Interreg Atlantic Area project with Plymouth College of Art being one of the hubs involved
- Complexes – such as High House Production Park in Purfleet, a 14-acre site dedicated to creative production and Production Park in Wakefield, a campus for the live events industry.
- Large arts charities – such as Creative Folkestone that function as clusters dedicated to making their locality better places to live and work.
- Community spaces – providing a range of services for local creatives and the wider community such as Ideas Hub Chelmsford, The Edge in Birmingham and The Net Community Hub in Chatham.
- Makerspaces – offering free public access, commercial prototyping and machining hire such as The Making Rooms in Blackburn and Knowle West Media Centre in Bristol.
- National networks and advocacy bodies such as CVAN, Voluntary Arts and Design Nation.

42% of the sample describe themselves as social enterprises, which includes CICs, not for profit CLGs and charities.

Figure 7: Social enterprises



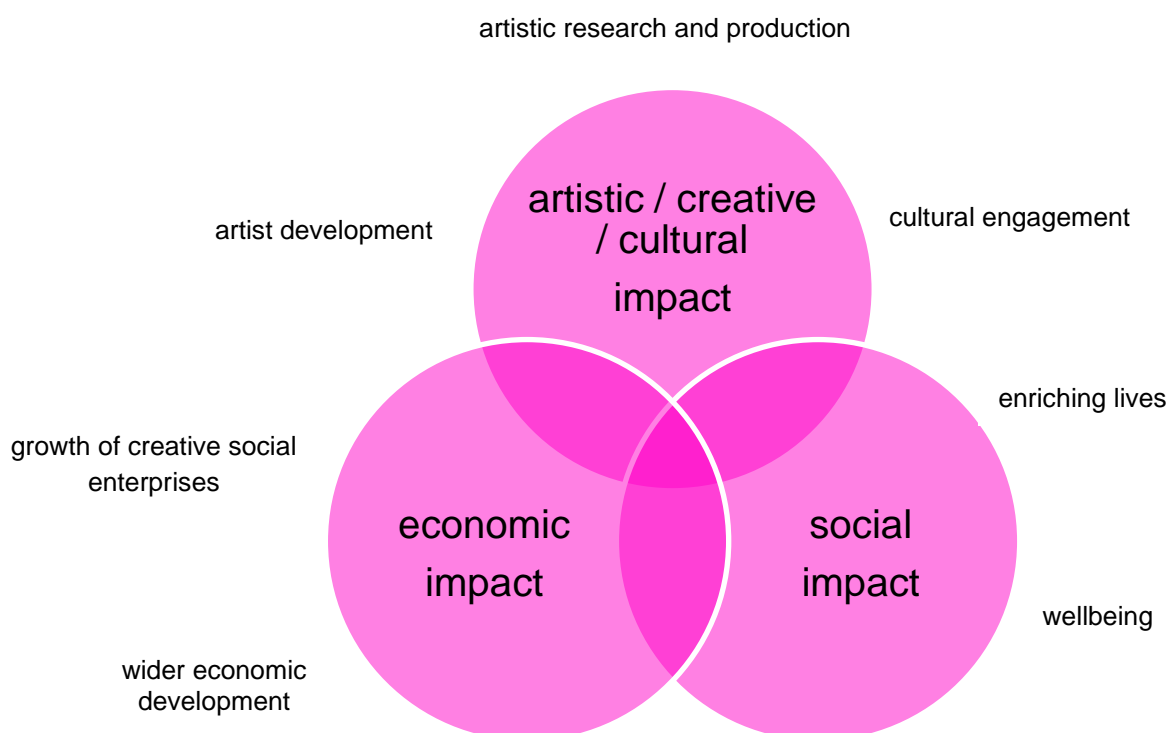
2.3 Mission, model and activities

We have not suggested an alternative to British Council's typology because we feel a one or even two-dimensional system would still not be nuanced enough to capture the essence and reality of many creative hubs. We did however seek to use other data, such as stated mission and aims, as an alternative way to think about creative hubs and what defines them.

As one might expect, each organisation's mission is specific to them, reflecting both their unique drivers, strengths and the needs of their target community. As with operating models, hubs describe multi-layered missions. The three key drivers can be broadly categorised as artistic/creative/cultural impact, social impact and economic impact. Other common themes included education and skills development, research and innovation and making a location a better place to live and work.

An analysis of key words revealed that **building community** and **enabling creativity** is central to the core purpose of most hubs in the sample. Co-creation, co-production and collaboration also featured frequently in how hubs describe the way in which they work.

Figure 9: Mission focus - key themes



job creation

social change

Figure 10: Mission statement key words



2.3.2 Who do hubs serve?

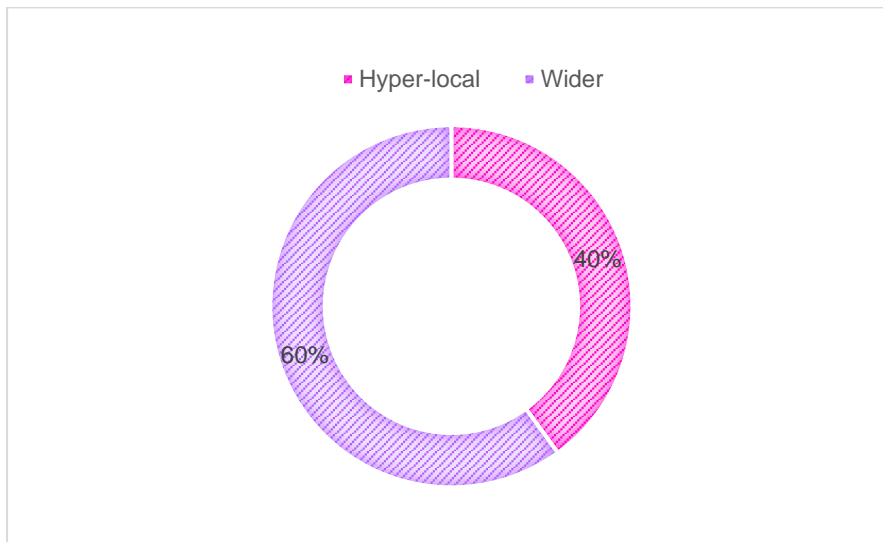
40% of hubs primarily serve their hyper-local community, with the remaining 60% engaging members and users regionally, nationally and internationally dependent on their location and remit. The Making Rooms, for instance, attract users from all over Lancashire, but also from as far as Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds. Having users travel larger distances to access a hub, speaks to the need for more spaces like this in the UK.

Previous studies on hubs have highlighted the focus on serving start up creative entrepreneurs and SMEs. However, this mapping revealed a more nuanced picture, with many hubs serving a range of professional and amateur practitioners, businesses and community members, emerging artists and more established creatives.

Knowle West Media Centre (Bristol), Spacer (Ramsgate) and Wood Street Studios (London) specifically cited that they serve communities high on the multiple deprivation index. The Art

House (Southampton), Studio Voltaire (London) and Lit Theatre cited LGBTQ+ as specific communities of interest, while the MESS Room brings expertise in working with deaf and disabled communities. Others, such as HQ in Leicester focus solely on a specific target audience of young adults with an interest in developing music skills and career opportunities.

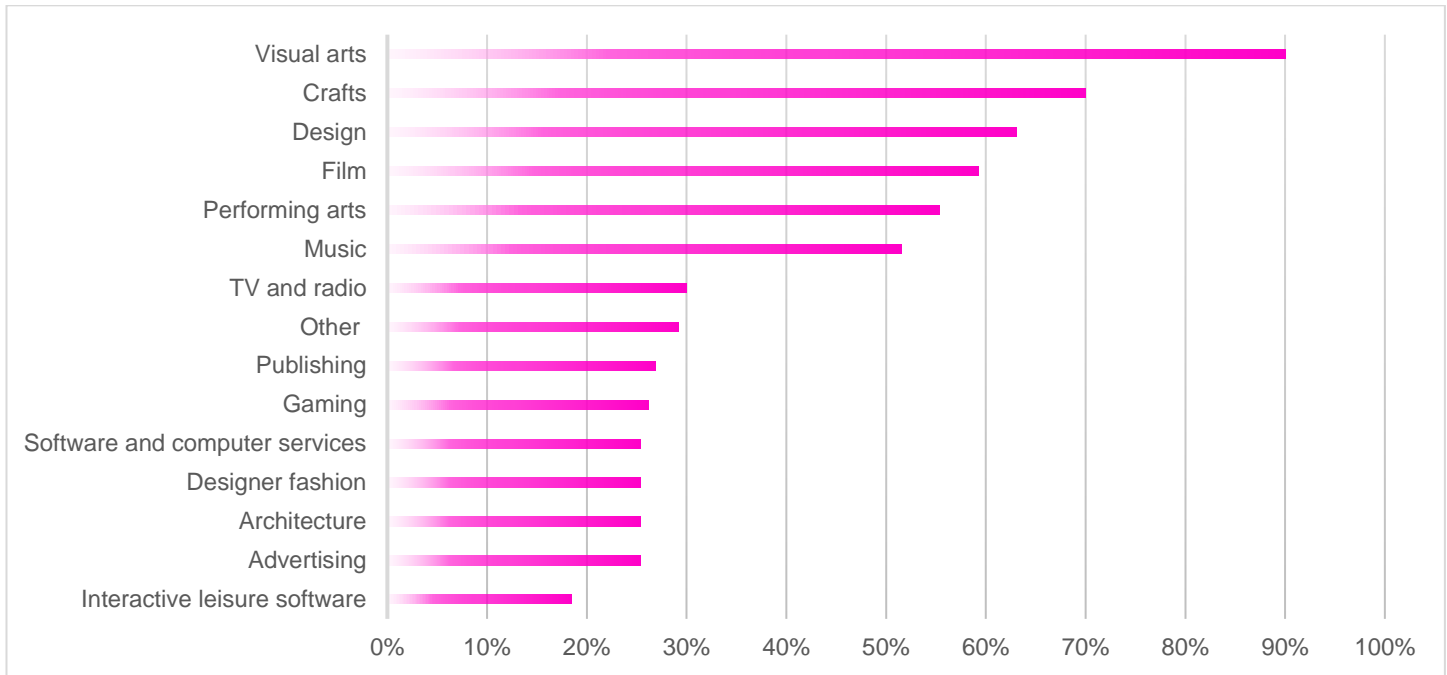
Figure 11: Reach



In terms of sectors, the full spectrum of art forms and creative industries were represented, with the visual arts being most frequent in this sample. Alongside the typical list of creative industry sectors, were a whole host of other communities of interest, again confirming that the term ‘creative hub’ expands well beyond creative enterprise. Creative and immersive technology and socially engaged arts were highlighted as specific creative subsets. Others were:

- Third sector and social enterprises
- Manufacturing and engineering
- Food and beverage
- Academics and education professionals
- Wellbeing businesses including counselling services

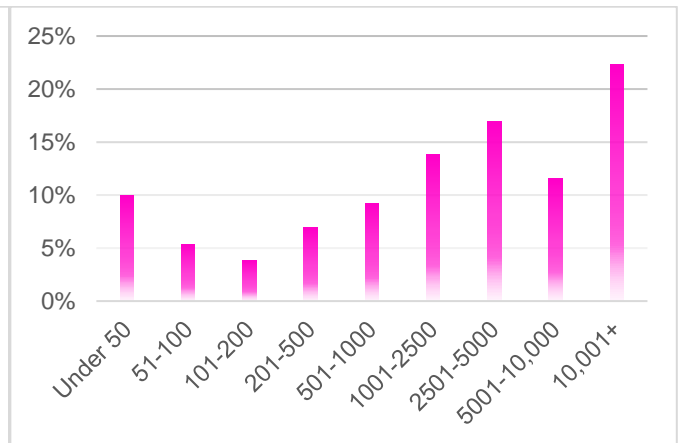
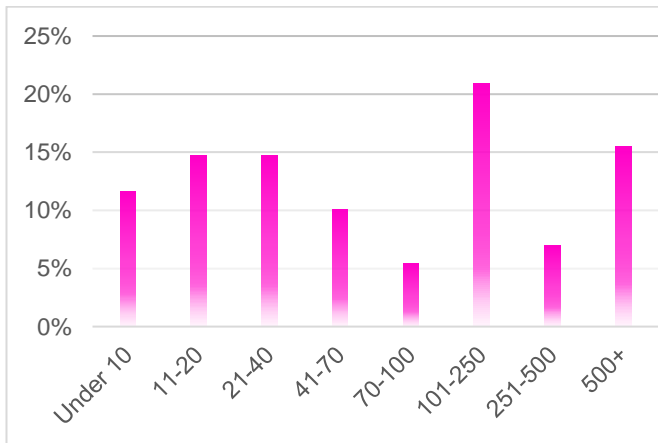
Figure 12: Creative sectors served



The number of hub ‘members’ – described as fee paying members, regular or registered users, studio holders, tenants – ranges from less than ten for small collectives to well over 500 for larger centres. Similarly, the number of hub ‘users’ – described as audiences or participants taking part in activities including online platforms – was also distributed across the range.

Figure 14: No. hub members

Figure 15: No. hub users



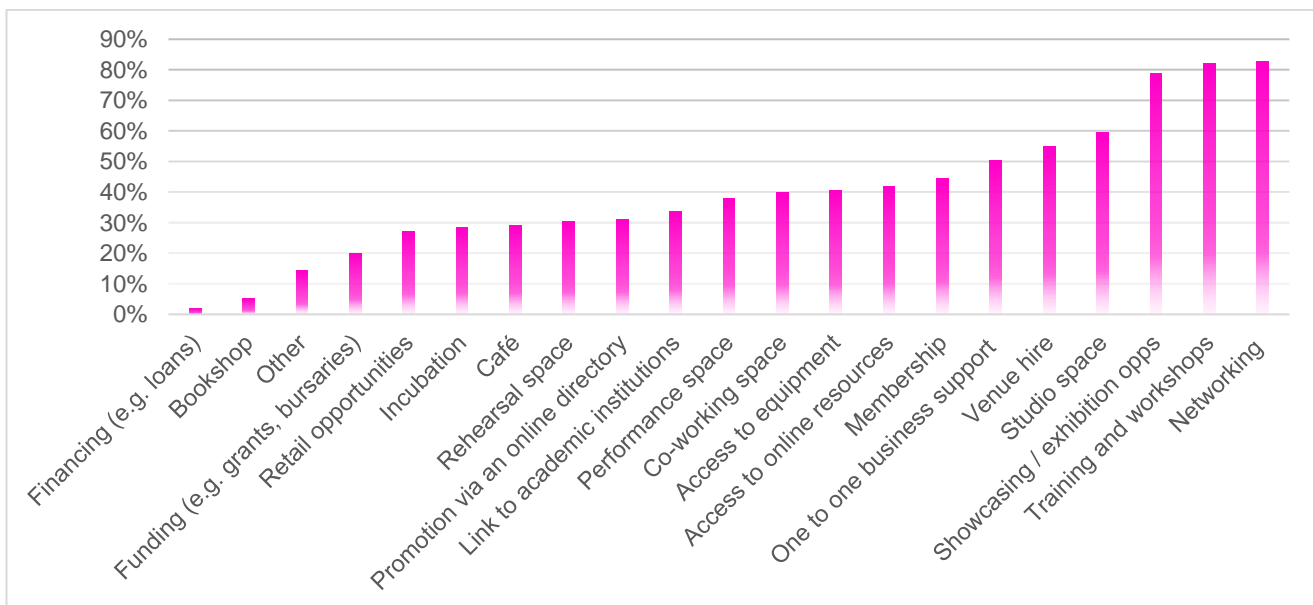
2.3.3 Service provision

As with operating models, the services on offer by creative hubs are wide ranging. The spectrum of services ranges from those that could be described as ‘hard’ services such as space, access to machinery and equipment, to ‘soft’ services such as access to networks and skills development. We found that the most frequently offered services are Networking and Training followed by Showcasing, Studio Space and Venue Hire. This speaks to the fact that hubs are primarily community builders and reinforces the message that this can happen with or without a dedicated space, on or offline.

The Insight Event raised an important discussion about the apparent low level of retail or sales opportunities provided by hubs. A priority for many new entrants into the creative industries is access to customers and their first paid gig. Hubs such as Create Studios Digital Media CIC (Swindon) focus on supporting the next generation of diverse digital creatives into the sector and do provide pathways into paid opportunities. Through their [Create Futures](#) programme, they offer young people mentored roles on commercial commissions, leading to first paid employment as freelance associates or permanent staff roles.

Flexible event space, fabrication and prototyping, publications and event listings, access to green space, sector advocacy, libraries, residencies, and acting as a polling station were also cited. This again illustrates the wide-ranging ways in which hubs deliver their goals.

Figure 16: Service provision



3 Impact

Previous research has already shown that creative hubs can produce a wide range outputs and outcomes including, jobs, new products and services, talent development, regional talent retention, informal education, urban regeneration, research and development, new networks, quality of life enhancements and resilience.⁸ Yet hubs continue to remain misunderstood and often under-valued by those outside their immediate reach.

3.2 Roles and relationships

Hubs play a dynamic set of roles, holding and nurturing an often-complex set of relationships. Understanding these are important in both defining hubs and grasping the potential impact of hubs and hub leaders. ‘Hub managers are critical to the success of these types of organisations. They are the primary curators, intermediaries, brokers and knowledge agents.’⁹ By drawing out themes from both the open answer survey questions and case study interviews, we have suggested six overlapping key roles that creative hubs might play:



Community Convenors and Builders

Creative hubs are community builders first and foremost. Every hub plays a role in convening a like-minded people, galvanised by a common vision or purpose.

The Hub Manager, or in some cases a dedicated Community Manager, will often play a crucial role in curating the membership and helping people to make connections.

Design Nation¹⁰ for instance are embarking on growing their Cluster Hubs Network, which fosters and nurtures 14 groups of makers in different regions across the UK. The groups are self-directed and provide peer to peer support and development. In addition, Design Nation provides beneficiaries with small grants and capacity building support.

⁸ Prof Dovey, J and Prof Pratt, A (2016), *Creative Hubs: Understanding the New Economy*. London, City University of London (in association with University of West of England, REACT, Creativeworks London, and The Watershed).

⁹ Virani, T and Malem, W (2015), *Re-articulating the Creative Hub Concept as a Model for Business Support in the Local Creative Economy: The Case of Mare Street in Hackney*, London, Creative Works, page 15

¹⁰ Design Nation are the leading portfolio organisations for craft, design and product in the UK.



Co-creators, Co-producers and Co-curators

The process of co-creation is a common feature of many hubs and includes working with the local community to co-produce hub programming and crowdsourcing content from members for creative enterprise programmes.

This sample also shared stories of cross sector collaboration to solve complex social problems. Co-creation appears to be a distinguishing feature between creative hubs and, for example, workspaces whose relationship is solely tenant and landlord.



Enablers and Facilitators

Central to most creative hub's mission is the concept of nurturing people, facilitating change and creating the environment for people to take risks, develop confidence and flourish. Several hubs described themselves as 'safe spaces' for people to gather and be.

Other hubs, like HQ CAN focus on providing pathways into the creative industries for those without formal education, training or networks through mentoring and by providing positive role models.



Brokers and Anchors

Hub leaders not only broker connections within their immediate creative community but reach outwards forging connections with partners that might otherwise be challenging for individuals and communities to do alone. Mature hubs in particular are trusted and active partners.

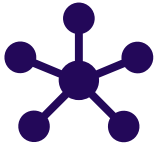
Real Ideas explained that their track record, scale and stability enables them to step into this role and risk-share with both institutional partners and the community.



Activators and Change Agents

Hubs reimagine disused industrial space, empty high streets and forgotten heritage buildings, breathing new life into them. In this way, hubs can play an active and positive role in local regeneration and urban development helping to enhance quality of place.

For example, The Arches (Worcester) is a [new development](#) linking the graduate community, public sector partners and the creative sector, all behind a recognisable story of place and brand. Creative Folkestone's 'Folkestone Creative Quarter' has restored 90 buildings and look after around 80 flats, 115 studios and offices and over 50 shops, creating an urban village of artists, designers and makers.



Leaders and Advocates

Hubs are sites of new ways of working and are nurturing the next generation of creative, cultural and social leaders. They are driving cultural strategy and policy, taking a strategic role in urban planning and regeneration, advocating for policy change and championing the voice of creative social business on Local Economic Partnerships.

Hub leaders regularly cite the strategic role they play either in their locality or in relation to regional and national agendas. For example, Culture Works, a consortium hub of grassroots arts organisations, have successfully [worked to push culture up the agenda in North East Lincolnshire](#), ultimately resulting in a £3.2m successful bid for culture in Grimsby.

The intricate network of partners that hubs broker and leverage include private landlords, community leaders, local authorities in multiple departments, other public services such as the NHS, freelance creatives, higher education institutions, funders, farmers, artists and many more. Understanding these roles, the nature of the relationships and mission focus, all help us to better appreciate how creative hubs make a positive difference both in the local community and wider creative ecology.

3.3 Headline outputs and outcomes

While this study did not aim to measure the impact of hubs (individually or in aggregate), we did seek to further illuminate the type of difference hubs make, and how this might map against some of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹¹.

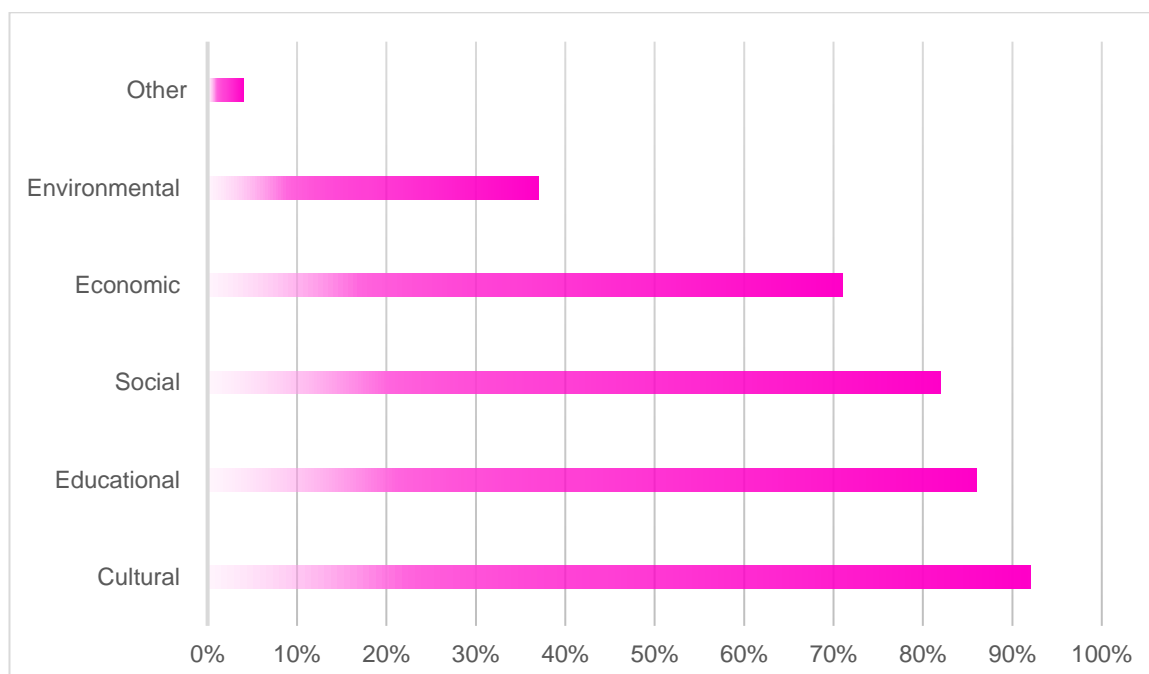
¹¹ [The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart are the 17 [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)

Using indicators often requested by funders, we asked how many outputs hubs had generated in 2019. Interestingly this was the least answered question, 32% responded 'Not sure' and several hubs noted that their figures were estimates. Nonetheless, the results show that hubs are sites of productivity and value creation:

- 87% New collaborations
- 76% New services
- 73% New members
- 69% New products
- 64% New research
- 61% New subcontracting opportunities

In terms of outcomes, Cultural Impact was most frequently cited which aligns with the mission focus trends. Other impacts include sector development and ecosystem building, again speaking to the leadership role that hubs play.

Figure 17: Headline impact



3.4 Alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals

The three SDGs that hubs most commonly aligned with were:

GOAL 3: Good Health & Wellbeing	70%
GOAL 4: Quality Education	65%
GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	56%

Creative Medway¹² cited that the five themes of their strategy are intentionally aligned with the SDGs and include Connectivity, Shared Ambition, Spaces and Places, Creative People and Community Engagement, Eco-system building/Cluster Development. Other specific examples are set out below against 9 of the goals.



GOAL 1: No Poverty

Hubs commonly reported Living Wage principles and serving communities from low socio-economic backgrounds as ways in which they contribute to this goal.

32% of hubs provided examples which included Acme Studios (London) whose stated charitable object is 'the alleviation of poverty of artists' which they achieve through the provision of highly subsidised affordable and long-term secure artist studios, and the annual provision of 35 artist residencies, bursaries and awards.

During the pandemic, some hubs have pivoted to provide frontline and emergency services, redeploying their assets and resources to become foodbanks and community response units. For example, Primary (Nottingham) have been working with NighbourhoodFood to coordinate the ['Pay-it-Forward fresh food scheme'](#) supplying those in need with public food donations.

¹² Consortium of organisations in Medway created to support a cross cutting culture led ambition for Medway via the new cultural strategy around a central compact.



GOAL3: Good Health & Wellbeing

There is a growing body of research that demonstrates how integral culture and creativity are for our health and wellbeing and over two thirds of hubs cited their cultural focus as the way in which they deliver against this goal. A sense of belonging, reducing isolation and providing a safe space for marginalised communities were also commonly cited outcomes. For example, Studio Voltaire's (London) ['Desperate Living C-19'](#), is a six-month engagement programme which aims to support LGBTQ+ people during and after COVID-19.

A number of hubs deliver creative wellbeing programmes such as The Vale Global Grooves's (Mossley) ['Creative Wellbeing'](#) for individual participants and ['Create Together'](#) working with three separate community groups. Others are delivering activities and impact with a specific focus on improving mental health such as Eggtooth (Hastings) who offer free or subsidised therapy and creative activists for 12 weeks.



GOAL 4: Quality Education

Talent development, skills development, capacity building, increasing access to formal education, qualifications, apprenticeships and other employment pathways are a common focus of hubs work. 65% of hubs gave examples for this goal, including Creative Network South who offer an [apprenticeships and pathways to employment](#) programme, Makerversity (London) who deliver [training in 21st century skills](#) to 16-25-year-olds not in education.



GOAL 5: Gender Equality

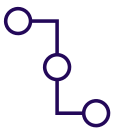
A commitment to gender inequality was specifically cited by 48% of hubs and examples included Poplar Union's (London) [Women in Focus Festival](#), Create Studios Digital Media CIC (Swindon) who are female BAME led and are committed to equality of opportunity, and Lit Theatre (Nottingham) who lead the ['Womxn in Theatre - East Midlands'](#) network which is inclusive of trans, non-binary and other marginalised genders.



GOAL 8: Decent work and economic development

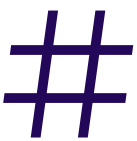
56% of hubs gave examples for this goal which is being met through the provision of affordable studio and workspace, business and professional development support and incubation. Examples include Cockpit Art's (London) incubation offer, that provides demonstrable impact on job creation and a range of economic indicators as noted in their annual '[Cockpit Effect](#)' reports.

Hubs also play a key role in the development of wider creative economy. For instance, Baltic Creative (Liverpool) has shared its ambitions as part of the [Baltic Triangle Area Ambitions](#) which sets out a 10-year Vision Manifesto for growing green space, infrastructure, jobs, education and training in the area.



GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

Aligned with Goal 8, hubs are developing the infrastructure to enable creative communities to flourish. 48% of hubs gave examples against Goal 9 which include Krowji's (Cornwall) aims to create a nationally significant cluster of Cornwall's creative enterprises. Maker spaces such as The Making Rooms (Blackburn) and Knowle West Media Centre (Bristol) are contributing to the industry and innovation agenda through their core programme provision.



GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality

41% of hubs shared examples of reducing inequality which included having active and applied Equality and Diversity Action Plans and Policies in place, as well creating accessible pathways for those currently underrepresented in the sector. Examples include the MESS Rooms (Chatham) who connect and support Deaf and hard of hearing people, blind and visually impaired people and people with learning difficulties, making opportunities accessible to all ages and abilities. Knowle West Media Centre (Bristol) deliver '[Creative Workforce for the Future](#)' offering paid work experience in the creative industries for Young People from lower socio-economic backgrounds.



GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities

46% of hubs cited examples under this goal which included Creative Kernow's (Cornwall) [CLASH](#), a climate and sustainability hive helping creatives to respond to climate emergency and engage with the circular economy. Pervasive Media Studio (Bristol) plans to bring in an Environmental Emergencies Action Researcher to develop a Framework for Climate so that both Watershed, and the wider creative community they work with can respond to issues of climate crisis.



GOAL 12: Responsible Production and Consumption

34% of hubs are actively working towards responsible consumption and examples included Knowle West Media Centre's (Bristol) '[Rethink Remake Recycle](#)' programme, investigating the scale and impact, both locally and globally, of common household waste materials such as paper and plastics.

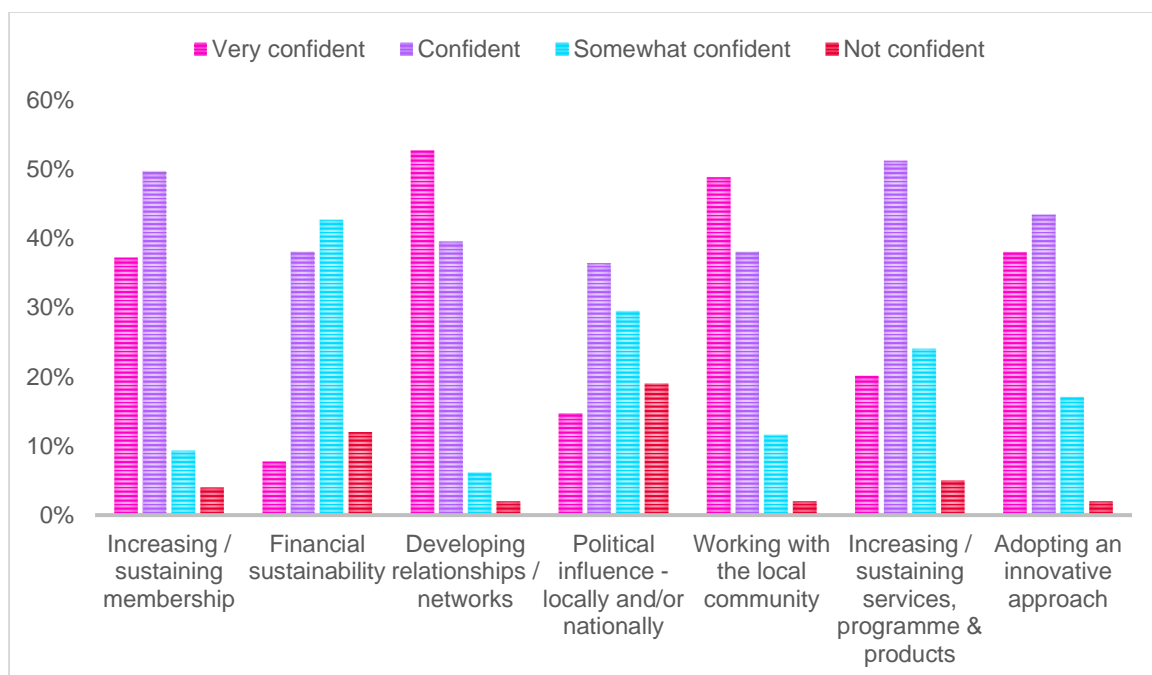
4 Outlook

Hubs are optimistic about the future, notwithstanding the uncertainty of the coming months due to the on-going pandemic and impact of Brexit.

80% of respondents expect core members¹³ to either increase or stay the same in 2020 compared with 2019. Almost half expect users¹⁴ to decrease, reflecting the fact that many public facing hubs have been closed or part closed since March 2020.

Confidence is highest in terms of working with the community and developing relationships and networks. Hubs are least confident about financial sustainability and political influence, which echoes challenges facing hubs.

Figure 18: Confidence



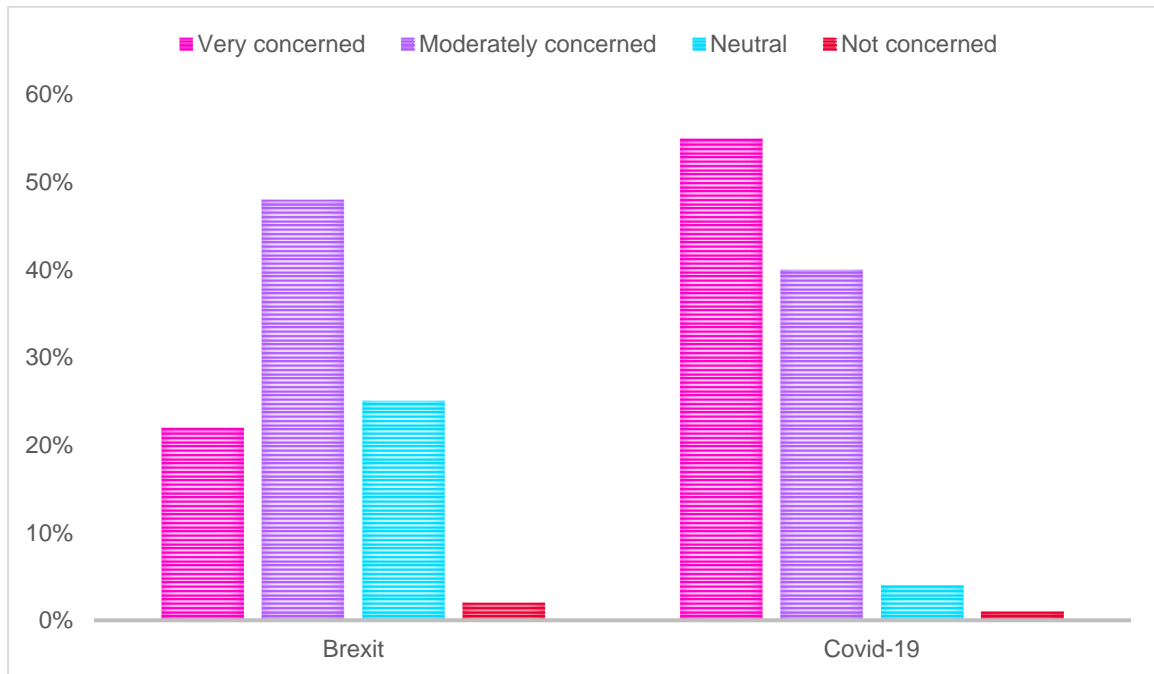
Though not the focus of our research, we did ask respondents about how concerned they are about the impact of Covid-19 on their hub. We found that 55% of respondents are ‘very concerned’, whilst a further 40% are ‘moderately concerned’. Only 5% are ‘neutral’ or ‘not

¹³ Described as fee paying members, regular or registered users, studio holders, tenants.

¹⁴ Described as audiences or participants taking part in activities including online platforms.

concerned'. Concern about the impact of Brexit is also high with 25% reporting to be 'very concerned' and 48% 'moderately concerned'.

Figure 19: Concern over impact of Brexit and COVID19



Despite the challenges of the last 12 months, hubs report a high degree of ambition, with many sharing their visions for growth and expansion. The scope of ambition ranges enormously from hub to hub with the most frequently mentioned as follows:

- To survive and recover from the pandemic
- To secure a venue and / or acquire a building
- To expand or improve existing space
- To increase impact across the board
- To improve financial viability
- To increase visibility and reputation
- To increase public engagement and reach
- To invest in new equipment and facilities
- To grow to core hub membership
- To be better networked internationally

4.1 Opportunities

Hubs are demonstrating an incredible degree of resilience and imagination, having pivoted business models and discovered new ways to engage with their communities. The nimble and entrepreneurial nature of many hubs means they are spotting and moving on a range of opportunities emerging in their specific context and in response to the pandemic. While the opportunities cited are often unique to each hub, we observed some patterns across the sample that are summarised below:

4.11 Digitalisation

Digitalisation as a result of lockdown has presented hubs, and their members, opportunities to develop to hybrid forms of community support, artistic production and engagement. Increasing digitalisation is enabling some hubs to grow global audiences and forge new international partnerships. Though there are also concerns about reaching vulnerable audiences or those who lack digital access including network bandwidth in rural areas, for example.

4.12 Galvanised partnerships and collaborations

Despite the fact that many hubs have closed their doors to the public over the last 12 months, it has also been an opportunity to galvanise local partnerships. One hub stated that: *‘The pandemic has revealed a strong grass roots support for our work which can be built on. We’ve seen an improving environment of better cross working between arts and wider communities.’*

4.13 Place-based initiatives

Strategic place-based projects are creating opportunities for some hubs. For example, the Cultural Development Fund¹⁵ investments in Grimsby, the Kent Thames Estuary, Plymouth, Wakefield and Worcester were all cited key opportunities for hubs in those locations. The Commonwealth Games and City of Culture bids are seen key opportunities for hubs in Birmingham and Southampton respectively.

4.14 Policy alignment

A number of cities, counties and regions have launched strategies and frameworks for developing the creative and cultural sector, which present opportunities for partnership and

¹⁵ The [Cultural Development Fund](#) (CDF), launched in the summer of 2018, with a budget of £20 million available for towns and cities (excluding London) to invest in creative, cultural and heritage initiatives. Delivered as part of the Government’s Industrial Strategy this marked a new approach to cultural and creative investment, focusing on geographical location and the effect that strategic investment can have on economic growth and productivity.

investment for many hubs. *‘The potential to engage with the green skills and digital innovation agenda.’ and ‘Working with new partners to explore possibilities particularly in social prescribing and supporting those into employment.’*

4.15 The recovery from Covid19

While the longer-term impact of Covid-19 is still to be understood, creative hubs recognise that they have a role to play in the recovery by continuing to listen to and work with the local community, revitalising highstreets, responding to changing working patterns (e.g. rise in home and remote working) and contributing to urban development. One hub leader cited that: *‘We are aware that cities are shifting in use, we want to demonstrate the cultural, social and economic value of hubs like ours, so that we can build a long-term and sustainable future for our work, and for similar spaces in the city.’*

4.2 Challenges

While opportunities are quite specific to each hub, challenges appear to be more universal.

4.21 Financial stability

75% of hubs cited finance as the key challenge. The need to rebuild lost income as a result of Covid-19, reports of not qualifying for government support packages and high competition for funding from grant giving bodies are key concerns. Organisations without secure longer-term funding and/or with a reliance on commercial income (e.g., from venue hire, bar, café etc.) face continued uncertainty. Organisations dependent on local authority funding and donations also fear reductions to their income.

4.22 Supporting member survival

Hubs that provide creative workspace have been offering rent holidays to help ease the financial burden facing their member and tenants but recognise this cannot be a long-term strategy. Maintaining occupancy is frequently cited by building based hubs as a key challenge, with one hub leader stating *“We rely on freelancers and Covid has proved how fragile our business model is.”*

4.23 Political recognition & impact measurement

Challenges in gaining political recognition, in articulating what hubs are and ‘how they can be useful’ is also a common theme. The survey responses suggest that while hubs know which activities are likely to be delivering impact, robust impact measurement is rare. More established hubs tend to have more formal systems for measuring and communicating impact, but it remains a key challenge for many. One hub leader stated that *“We’ve been self-financed from the start and because we’ve not had to report to funders, we haven’t implemented formal impact measurement in this way”*.

The newly formed [Creative Workspace Network](#), led by Phoenix Arts, aim to carry out research on the economic value as well as the social impact of creative workspaces in our communities, which is a welcome step in addressing this need.

4.24 Security of tenure

Security of tenure alongside a lack of fit for purpose space, were cited by a fifth of the sample as a key challenge. The vulnerability of creative hubs and workspaces, who are often exposed to the broader dynamics of the property development process, have been well documented in previous studies.¹⁶ The threat of rising rents, displacement, and short-term contracts for those in meanwhile space are not uncommon.

Despite new hub developments emerging, it is still a challenge to create a financially sustainable solution for empty commercial and community space, that enable local businesses and community organisations to easily and affordably occupy new space. This [Affordable Workspace Challenge](#)¹⁷ supported by Nesta, will look for solutions to that challenge.

4.25 Capacity and Wellbeing

Increasing pressure on resources to support the membership, as well as finding time to emergency plan, whilst managing day to day operations, is squeezing capacity among hub teams. Together with the personal impact of Covid-19, this strain is negatively affecting the mental health of hub leaders and their teams.

¹⁶ Allen, S, O’Hara, E, Henry, N and Eisen, N (2016), *Making Space: Developing and Sustaining Affordable Artists’ Studios and Creative Workspaces*. UK, Creative United.

¹⁷ <https://challenges.org/affordable-workspace-challenge/>

4.3 Success Factors

While each hub exists within a unique environment, we concluded that there are some common traits, behaviours and modes of operations that influence the success and growth of creative hubs.

- Being user led, listening and responding to the community to ensure relevance and responsiveness
- Fostering an entrepreneurial culture that enables a more emergent approach to leading and running the hub
- Having the ability to tell a compelling story about its distinctiveness, role and value
- Maintaining strong partnerships with the local community and wider networks that help the hub achieve its goals
- Securing and developing the right space to host and house the hub community – for those that are building based
- Diversifying income streams to build better resilience against financial shocks

Policymakers wishing to invest in hubs might consider how their interventions align with these drivers.

5 Case studies

Six case studies were produced to help illustrate the breadth and diversity of creative hubs. In the interviews, we focussed on the foundation story to understand the key drivers and motivations for developing the hub, and explored areas such as mission, model, role and impact in more detail.

5.1 a space arts

Website: <http://aspacearts.org.uk>

Location: Southampton

Structure: Charity

Employees: 1 full time, 6 part time

Turnover: £870k

Reanimating cultural heritage.



Image credit: a space arts

'a space' arts supports artists and inspires audiences by providing exhibitions, studios, professional development opportunities and by culturally reanimating disused spaces with arts and heritage. It was founded in 2000 by artist Daniel Crow who graduated from Southampton University the previous year. In response to the lack of opportunities in the city for emerging artists to make and exhibit their work, his aim was simple – to create 'a space' to meet, make and show art.

a space's journey began in an empty Victorian shop unit in the downtown area of Southampton with a £1,000 grant from Hampshire County Council. This inaugural exhibition venue enabled a space to test early ideas, refine a collective vision and gather audiences. Next, Southampton City Council invited a space to activate the medieval vaults of the old town and in 2004 [Art Vaults](#) was born, cementing their reputation for successfully reanimating cultural heritage with contemporary art.

"We didn't want white, shiny, perfect cubed gallery. We just needed 'a space'. From Victorian Shop, Medieval Vault, to Victorian railway arches, that ethos and the dynamic combination of arts and heritage really began to build some momentum."

A space became a charity in 2009 and is now regularly funded by Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation.



Image credit: a space arts



Image credit: a space arts

Mission

a space supports visual artists and cultural audiences in and around Southampton to create a city where artistic communities flourish. At the heart of their work are 3 aims:

- To support and champion the work of visual artists by creating opportunities for artistic careers to thrive and become financially sustainable.
- To positively change levels of representation within Southampton's visual arts community.
- To create opportunities for the public to engage with, learn from and be inspired by the work of visual artists.

Values

- For artists by artists, really listening to artists and removing barriers.
- Open, being experimental and trying new things.
- Taking an entrepreneurial approach throughout.

Hub model

A space arts now manages the [Arches Studios](#), a hub of visual arts talent that celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2015. [The Arches Studios](#) is a visual arts studio complex of 21 studios, for visual artists at all stages of their careers and working across all media. The studios offer a vibrant environment where artists can develop their visual arts practice, contribute towards the creative community, engage with a programme of development activities and participate in an annual Open Studios event where the public are welcomed into the studios.

[Tower House](#) offers studio spaces within a 600-year-old, grade II listed building set in Southampton's Old Town with entrances on Town Quay Road and Winkle Street. Their current residents contribute to a vibrant community of creative individuals and small cultural organisations that play a pivotal role in the city's cultural and creative identity.

In 2012 a space embarked on their most ambitious project to date, [God's House Tower](#) a new, dynamic and distinctive arts and heritage venue that opened its doors to the public in 2019. [God's House Tower](#) is a cutting-edge arts and heritage venue in Southampton's Old Town.

The [Sorting Office](#) offers studios for designer-makers alongside a large versatile hireable space, the Production House. a space worked in partnership with Eastleigh Borough Council (EBC) for 5 years to develop projects before handing over the management to EBC in September 2017.

Roles

a space nurtures a complex balance of key partners that includes the local authority, funders such as Arts Council England and Lottery Heritage Fund, the University of Southampton and Solent University, private landlords, artists and the wider community. Some of the key roles they play include:



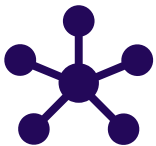
Activator and Change Agent: Developing the ecology of affordable studios

A space's focus on developing artist studio spaces has played a key role in growing the region's affordable studio sector. They instigated and continue to work with the [Studio Providers Network South](#) to give managers from fourteen studio projects across Southern Hampshire a networking platform. They have successfully brought numerous buildings back into use through their vision and innovative programming approaches.



Enabler and Facilitator: Investing in the next generation

Having nurtured and developed a community of artists over the last 20 years, a space is now actively investing in the next generation, seed funding artists to become independent through [RIPE](#). Led by 'a space' arts, in partnership with the University of Southampton and Solent University, RIPE is a space's ambitious programme of events, exhibitions and residencies designed to support fine art graduates and culturally reanimate one of Southampton's most interesting but forgotten neighbourhoods.



Leader & Advocate: Strategic lead for visual arts in the city

a space plays a significant leadership role in the city, ensuring the voice of artists are heard and acted upon. For instance, Hub leader Daniel Crow chairs the Visual Arts Committee in Southampton's bid for the City of Culture in 2025.

Impact

a space measures their impact in terms of artists supported, audiences engaged, and investment secured for the city. They make a significant difference to place-making, drawing on

their passion and skill for reanimating forgotten, historic sites with contemporary works of art by emerging artists.

“We've been able to bring to vacant and forgotten parts of the city back into use and back into the public consciousness”.

As a direct result of RIPE, a space also positively impact graduate retention in the city. RIPE has supported 50 graduates to exhibit and develop their artistic practice, forming professional networks and friendships that will help them sustain a fruitful visual arts practice in Southampton.



Image credit: a space arts

5.2 Duke Studios and Sheaf Street

Website: <https://duke-studios.com/>

Location: Leeds

Structure: CLG

Employees: 8 Full time, 2 Part time

Turnover: £650k

Shining a light on the create scene in Leeds.



Image credit: Duke Studios

Duke Studios is an open collaborative space in the City Centre of Leeds founded by Laura Wellington and James Abbott Donnelly. As two creatives, Laura and James observed the growth of hubs around the world and were inspired to launch Duke Studios with the motto of ‘people first, business second’ in 2011. Their foundation story is a tale of a bold vision, bootstrapping and resilience that began in a disused office building, which they transformed over three years, building a vibrant creative community. Duke Studios made use of innovative approaches to crowdfunding to raise the initial investment they needed including the ‘Duke Investment Saver’ which raised £35k from family and friends. The success of the first three years mean that the community was soon outgrowing their space and in 2015 they moved the Sheaf Street, where they are currently located.

“We’ve been so well prepared for the pandemic because we’ve had resilience training for the last 10 years. We’ve had to raise and make every penny to realise our vision. Our ethos and approach are now what others to are looking to.”

Ethos

- Create inspirational spaces for work and play
- Look out for each other, collaborate, be stronger together
- Champion the creative and independent sectors of Leeds
- Nurture and provide opportunities for creative talent
- Always welcome new people

- Create great partnerships
- Do really great stuff
- Work hard and be nice to people

Hub model

Based around a coworking model, **Duke Studios** provides a range of workspaces, creative services and facilities. The current hub has space for 75 resident businesses, 110 members across studio desks, co-working, a 450-capacity event space.

[Sheaf Street](#) offers a café bar and vital social space for the Duke Studios community and is run as a separate legal entity.

[Duke Makes](#) is a publicly accessible digital fabrications and rapid prototyping lab, which services all of the kinds of makers and doers.



Image credit: Duke Studios

Test Bed, the newest edition to their portfolio, is a multi-purpose event space with a 1,200-capacity seated and 3,000 capacity standing. Through this new space, Laura and James are interrogating the future of events. They intend to research and innovate with a number of different artists, creators and community members, referencing models such as Fun Palaces and experimenting with co-creation.

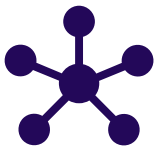
“We're on a mission to make great waves and do good things and empower and enable other people to do those things too.”

Roles



Activator and Change Agent: Grass roots redevelopment

A critical success factor for Duke is being locally attuned and responsive. This means that their contribution to redevelopment and regeneration has been grassroots, responding to the real needs of the community.



Leader & Advocate: Vision for creative economy in Leeds

Laura and James have a 2030 vision that explores how you might create an independent creative district adjacent from what will be the highest land values in the city. Duke has shone a light on the existing creative scene in Leeds, building community and momentum, and have been described as ‘putting a front of house on the creative sector’.



Enabler & Facilitator: Supporting creative entrepreneurs to develop and grow

The set up at Duke allows members to begin in the shared workspace and graduate from space to space as they grow. The Community Manager, Fran Bunday, places a crucial role in curating and brokering connections between the studio community, leading to unlikely collaborations and new friendships.

Impact

While Duke Studios do not formally measure impact, the evidence is in their community who have evolved with them.

As well as being a hub for creatives, Laura and James also play a role in place-making and building civic pride through extraordinary creative programming. In 2016, as part of the Yorkshire Festival project, they produced Big Disco which brought the world's biggest disco ball to undeveloped area of Leeds' South Bank. Part regeneration project, part cultural happening, part art, and part music, Big Disco hosted a party for 5,000 and convened 22,000 people across the world to dance to one song at the same time.

They are helping to build a thriving creative ecology by creating a campus-like structure of businesses that can work as an ecosystem together. Last year, Laura and James created the Wunderkind Group to act as an umbrella for Duke Studios, Sheaf Street, Duke Makes, In Good Company, and Test Bed, bringing their work together under one brand.



Image credit: Duke Studios

5.3 Hackney Bridge by Make Shift

Website: <https://hackneybridge.org/>

Location: London

Structure: Private Limited Company

Employees: 7

Turnover: £0

Driving progress through local enterprise.

Hackney Bridge is a creative hub by Make Shift who specialise in transforming disused land, spaces and empty buildings into new multi-use cultural and creative destinations. Sitting on the edge of the boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, Hackney Bridge is an enterprise platform. It aims to bridge opportunities across the neighbouring boroughs by create thriving enterprises that benefit their neighbourhood. It also pays homage to bridging the industrial past, to the present and the future, hence the name Hackney Bridge. As a new development, the build was completed in 2020 and the hub opened in October 2020.

Make Shift's journey in creating Hackney Bridge began in 2016 when they were asked to propose ideas for a meanwhile site by London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) and East Wick & Sweetwater (EW+S). Spending well over a year on the ground, understanding the needs of the local community was instrumental in defining the project, designing the spaces and curating the Membership.



Image credit: @isatheexplorer courtesy Hackney Bridge

Mission

'To drive progress through local enterprise' through 'Champion Individuality.'

Beliefs

- Champion collaboration
- Drive Progress
- Take ownership

Hub model

Hackney Bridge offers workspace and studios for artists, makers and small businesses, as well as space for food businesses such as bars and restaurants, retailers, markets, events, community gardens and more.



Image credit: Hassan Gazali courtesy Hackney Bridge

Roles

Hackney Bridge borders four London Boroughs, enabling it to bridge the gap between Hackney, Newham, Waltham Forest and Tower Hamlets. The spaces are designed directly from insights drawn from their local talent, residents and businesses and the final scheme includes direct ideas from this process. With rapid regeneration in the area, it is important for Hackney Bridge to ensure the area's identity is not lost and that local people benefit from the opportunities created.



Enabler & Facilitator: Supporting local enterprise

Hackney Bridge aims to create real, lasting and positive impact by creating a legacy of independent enterprises that can shape the future development of the area and ensure local people are at the heart of the neighbourhood's evolution.

Impact

While this impact is yet to be realised, specific plans include:

The Good Growth Hub (GGH):

GGH are a founding Member at Hackney Bridge. They are funded by LLDC and will focus on being an exemplar in the design and delivery of demand-led skills and employment training in the local area. The intention is to develop a truly inclusive Innovation District with local, diverse talent at its heart.

Community Investment Scheme:

The Hackney Bridge team are in the process developing a Community Investment Scheme, that will develop a programme of interventions and services that are member to member, member to community, and community to member.

5.4 HQ CAN

Website: <https://hqcan.org/>

Location: Leicester

Structure: CIC

Staff: 7

Turnover: £135k

Changing lives through music.



Image credit: HQ CAN

HQ CAN is an award-winning social enterprise recording studio based in Leicester city centre. They provide mentoring, creative workshops, and access to professional recording environments for young adults experiencing unemployment and ill mental health.

The hub was founded in 2016 as a creative arts network and community hub by Yasin El Ashrafi, Harri Georgiou, Sam Kettley and Sallyanne Kirk. Yasin – the driving force behind HQ CAN – battled with addiction challenges as a young man but never lost his love of music. This experience together with a desire to address the lack of music opportunities, resources and facilities in the city was the inspiration for HQ CAN.

Mission

“We provide high quality projects aimed at improving employability, skill levels and mental well-being for young adults in the creative industries.”

Values

HQ CAN strives to facilitate the talent and creativity in all, aims to level up Leicester’s music scene and produce the best new music from the region.

Hub model

HQ CAN is part of the wider HQ family which includes HQ Recordings, a commercial record label and HQ Familia, a collective of producers, artists and videographers. One of HQ CAN’s core strengths is the vast range of knowledge and skills possessed by the team and its wider network. They bring a powerful mix of lived experience and industry knowhow which means they can cater for a range of adults, from talented emerging artists to vulnerable people who need positive creative activities. Crucially, the HQ network of mentors and facilitators bring industry experience, insights and networks, helping to build both the knowhow and social capital of the young adults that they support.

Operating as a social enterprise, HQ generates income through fundraising, partnerships, crowdfunding, and sales. In 2019, they achieved a large-scale refurbishment with £50k of social investment from Key Fund (£42k loans and £8k grant) enabling the build of a second studio, fully equipped to industry standards.

With support from the National Lottery Community Fund for the project 'You CAN', they have expanded further and created a multi-use space, encompassing workstations, a small recording studio and a photography rig with lighting plus.



Image credit: HQ CAN

Roles

Yasin has been recognised for his inspirational leadership and mentorship, acting as a positive role model and advisor for the young adults he works with. The hub plays multiple roles including:



Enabler and Facilitator: Bespoke interventions

Many of HQ's participants are experiencing specific challenges in life. Some may be ex-offenders, others may have mental health conditions. HQ also works with individuals who are recovering from substance abuse or are unemployed long term. Each individual is given a program tailored to their needs and goals - some may require one-to-one

mentoring while others may need support using skills they already have to kickstart their career in the industry.



Co-producer: Grassroots and needs focussed

HQ take grassroots, need focussed approach, which enables them to build on existing strengths, and remain responsive and relevant to the young adults they work with. The range of intervention available means that HQ can develop long-term relationships and acts as a one stop shop for emerging musicians and artists.

“We take a lot of feedback and responses from our participants to ensure they are getting the most they can from the opportunity and that any needs they have are addressed.”



Broker and Anchor: Trusted partner

HQ CAN is growing its track record as a trusted partner with funders, national charities and universities such as Arts Council England, The National Lottery Community Fund, Youth Music, Key Fund, The Prince’s Trust and De Montfort University. HQ also collaborates with local providers ensuring their provision is complimentary and coordinated. These include Pedestrian Ltd, Soft Touch Arts, 2Funky Arts, Off Shoots, TiME.

Impact

HQ CAN’s beneficiaries describe them as life-changing, providing a lifeline and a safe space that is welcoming and free of judgement. Their programmes help to promote a positive outlook on life, build confidence, find direction and purpose, as well as offer tangible outcomes like employability skills and creative development.

Through work experience and industrial placements, HQ CAN offers students and graduates their first steps into the music industry. Many young creatives have received support to start businesses, become self- employed, record EPs and singles, and find work experience in the field.



Image credit: HQ CAN

By expanding their programme commercially, establishing an industry standard recording studio and a record label, artist development and management contracts, HQ have had a positive impact on the local music scene. Since 2016 they have supported:

- Over 150 beneficiaries across 7 projects
- Numerous new businesses and self-employed young adults
- Numerous hard-to-reach and disadvantaged young people into work or further education
- Boosted music industry infrastructure in Leicester city centre

Yasin has big plans to grow HQ's community and impact. Expanding the hub space, creating a café, performance space, filming space and building routes into adjacent industries all form part of the longer-term vision. HQ are also planning to launch a creative practice diploma to fill the gap in formal education, to better help people get industry ready.

5.5 Real Ideas Organisation

Website: <https://realideas.org>

Location: Devon & Cornwall

Structure: CIC

Employees: 105

Turnover: £3m

Creativity for social change.



Image credit: Real Ideas

Real Ideas Organisation is a social enterprise passionate about finding creative solutions to social problems. It was founded fourteen years ago by Lindsey Hall and Matt Little with a shared vision for supporting real and lasting change for individuals, communities and organisations. Creativity as a tool for change is a common thread that runs through Real Ideas' work, which now falls under three core strands of activity:

- Support for businesses: help for start-ups and enterprises
- Support for under 25s: support for young people across the south west
- Place based innovation and regeneration

Mission

“We solve problems & create opportunity. From supporting young people to find work and develop skills to helping start-ups and enterprises thrive, we work to solve problems and create positive and lasting social change. Our hub's mission is to provide the space, support and content to enable people to succeed.”

Values

- Be curious - We're restless optimists
- Be real - We make lasting change
- Be adaptable - We were born to flex
- Be fearless - We take risks worth taking
- Be together - We welcome all-comers

Hub model

Real Ideas manage four hub spaces - Devonport Guildhall, Ocean Studios, C-Space and Devonport Market Hall.

They took on the restoration and reimagining of [Devonport Guildhall](#) in 2007 in a community asset transfer from Plymouth City Council, securing £1.5 million to refurbish it from the Community Assets Transfer Fund and Devonport Regeneration Company. Opening its doors to the public in 2010, Devonport Guildhall is a space for events, enterprise, co-work and community activity. The concept for this first hub evolved by asking how the elements of business centre, arts centre and community centre work might in a continually evolving, dynamic way. As part of Real Ideas' successful social enterprise model, it operates without the need for a revenue grant. Income streams include public sector contracts, consultancy, project specific grants, sales of services, and membership fees.

“For us being a social enterprise is a very deliberate statement. We're interested in making profit because it enables us to do other things that deliver social value.”

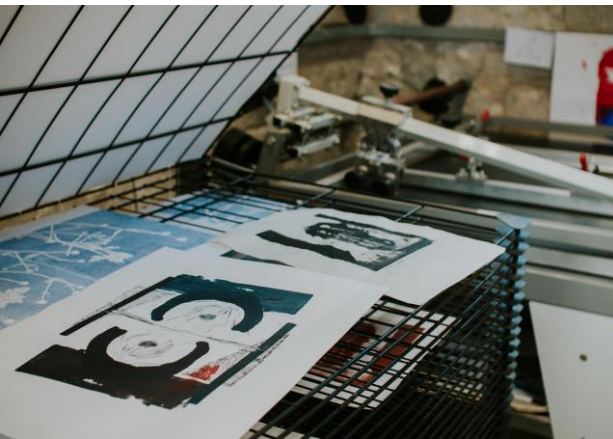


Image credit: FotoPlus courtesy Real Ideas



Image credit: FotoPlus courtesy Real Ideas

Following this success, Real Ideas was invited to take over the running of [Ocean Studios](#). Ocean Studios is a creative space for the city of Plymouth and home to an array of resident and visiting artists who regularly host workshops, exhibitions and events for Plymouth's creative community. Through provision of sector specific managed workshops, Ocean Studios boosts creative enterprise in the city, aiming to engage local people in the arts and culture. It serves

the city and the wider drive to work area attracting a community of makers, creatives, young people and others interested in developing skills in those areas.

[C-Space](#) is Real Ideas third hub - a £2 million multi-use co-working space in Newquay, Cornwall, developed in partnership with Crowdfunder. It offers people the chance to connect, collaborate and create under one roof. The renovated backpackers hostel fuses business and incubation space as well as a state-of-the-art production studio, event space and a local produce café and bar.

[Devonport Market Hall](#), due to open in 2021, will be a world-class space for creative, digital and immersive experiences, situated in the heart of historic Devonport, Plymouth. The Market Hall is home to an awe-inspiring 15m immersive dome as well as providing space for people to innovate, create, work, learn and have fun. The £7.6 million renovation project is led by Real Ideas and is part of a city-wide drive to develop Plymouth as a recognised centre for immersive technologies and digital fabrication. Key partners include Plymouth City Council, Plymouth University, Plymouth College of Art, City College Plymouth, Destination Plymouth, Creative England and Crowdfunder who are working together through the DCMS Cultural Development Fund initiative.

Their successful track record in revitalising spaces also led to an invitation to take on the capital build of Liskeard Library. Once complete, Real Ideas will continue to run the library for the council, creating another vibrant co-working and co-making space with a range of co-located services including creative and social business support. Real Ideas see their suite of hubs as a campus of sorts and are interested in how to connect people so that people can use the spaces and facilities they need across the network.

“How you might enable hubs to work without being reliant on everybody physically coming to a single location is really interesting to us.”

Roles



Activator & Change Agent: Repurposing existing cultural assets

Lindsey Hall emphasises their role as an active partner in enabling the growth of the wider creative ecology across Devon and Cornwall. Over the years, Real Ideas have carefully evolved what they provide, animating and repurposing

several buildings to complement and build on the existing strengths and assets of the local scene.



Co-producer & co-curator: Working with content partners

Real Ideas co-producer with their creative community is via their 'content partner' strand of membership. By playing the role of choreographer and curator, Real Ideas can activate their physical and digital spaces and build community through co-production.



Broker & Anchor: Sharing risk with partners

The degree of stability, scale and trust that Real Ideas have achieved over the years means that they also play the role of anchor and are able to help people share risk:

“We are generous and we're also asking other people to be generous too. And that's how we can be part of and help build community. I think the notion of a good hub is that you can provide that sort of risk sharing anchor with and for others.”

Impact

Real Ideas makes positive change happen for people, organisations and places in a range of ways. As they have grown, the impact they generate has become more diverse and complex. They currently track over 2000 data points each quarter and some of their headline impact statistics include:

- 3,500 vulnerable young people moving forward positively, including into work, education, training and setting up their own enterprises and creative practice
- 378 organisations supported with in-depth social enterprise expertise
- 71 new and emerging social, creative and community businesses helped to start-up and grow
- 313 cultural and creative organisations given expert advice, support and training
- 1590 people engaged in social enterprise and community activity as a result of our support
- A major light festival in Plymouth, attracting audiences of 50,000+ per year
- 7.6m of inward investment raised to support the renovation of the Market Hall

5.6 The Making Rooms

Website: <https://makingrooms.org/>

Location: Blackburn

Structure: CIC

Employees: 3 (5 volunteers)

Turnover: £144K

Improving lives and inspiring minds, through creative technology and entrepreneurship.

The Making Rooms is a place where creativity, technology and advanced manufacturing come together in a community facility for use by artists, inventors, students and children to design and make. They are a full-service Makerspace, with a free public access programme called Fab Lab Blackburn at the weekend and commercial prototyping and machine hire during the week. The team runs various funded workshops and accelerator programmes for the local community and host creative technologists' tenants in their studio spaces.



Image credit: The Making Rooms

The Making Rooms began as a Blackburn with Darwen Council funded project, inspired by The 'Blackburn is Open' project, which sought to fill empty prime town centre buildings with cultural activities and a night-time economy. Over the course of three years, local people were encouraged to start studios, businesses and cultural events in these shells. This project led to the creation of The National Festival of Making, a free creative festival that takes over the whole of the town centre once a year; The Bureau Blackburn, an arts centre; and The Making Rooms.

The Making Rooms was a response to a low level of cultural engagement, a push to promote entrepreneurship in part to utilise a significant amount of empty town centre retail spaces and a desire for locals to rediscover the town's strong heritage of making. Blackburn with Darwen Borough has twice the national average of people working in manufacturing, making it important to ensure people have access to training for the skills local employers need.

Hub director Thomas Mcpherson-Pope started his career in developing educational electronics and over the last 10 years has progressed from a makerspace user, then volunteer, lab manager and is now director. The hub's product developer Jefferson Sanchez interned for the organisation while studying Mechatronics at The University of Leeds and joined as a staff member at the beginning of 2020.

Mission

Help create more jobs in the creative and manufacturing sectors by enabling and supporting new business creation:

- Improve employability by giving people future creative and technical skills
- Increase participation in Science, Engineering, Technology, Mathematics and The Arts
- Improve the well-being of Lancashire residents by providing fun, interesting and self-development activities and enabling people to design and make their own products

Values

- Access for all
- Technology for good
- Enjoy what you're doing

Hub model

The Making Rooms has several discrete strands to their operating model – a creative technology lab, Makerspace, training centre, studio collective and community venue for creativity.



Image credit: The Making Rooms

[Fab Lab Blackburn](#) - providing free access to machines and training. This acts as an engagement tool creating a pipeline for other programmes and gives many people their first taste of digital creative technology.

[The Tech Blackburn Business Accelerator](#) - launched in 2019 as an 8-week programme for eight delegates to develop new products, helping to create future machine and studio users. This programme is funded by Blackburn with Darwen council to promote entrepreneurship in the borough.

[Creative Accelerator Blackburn](#) - launched in 2020 and funded by Arts Council England, is a 6-month programme for five delegates to develop their creative practices.

Blackburn Studios - housing a range of creative businesses across 13 studios.

Young Persons Accelerator – supporting 32 delegates between 15-24 years old to up-skill, improve employment opportunities, and be inspired to become entrepreneurs.

Income sources include commercial design/prototyping services, crowdfunding studio rental and machine hire, and grants from Arts Council England, the local council and DCMS.

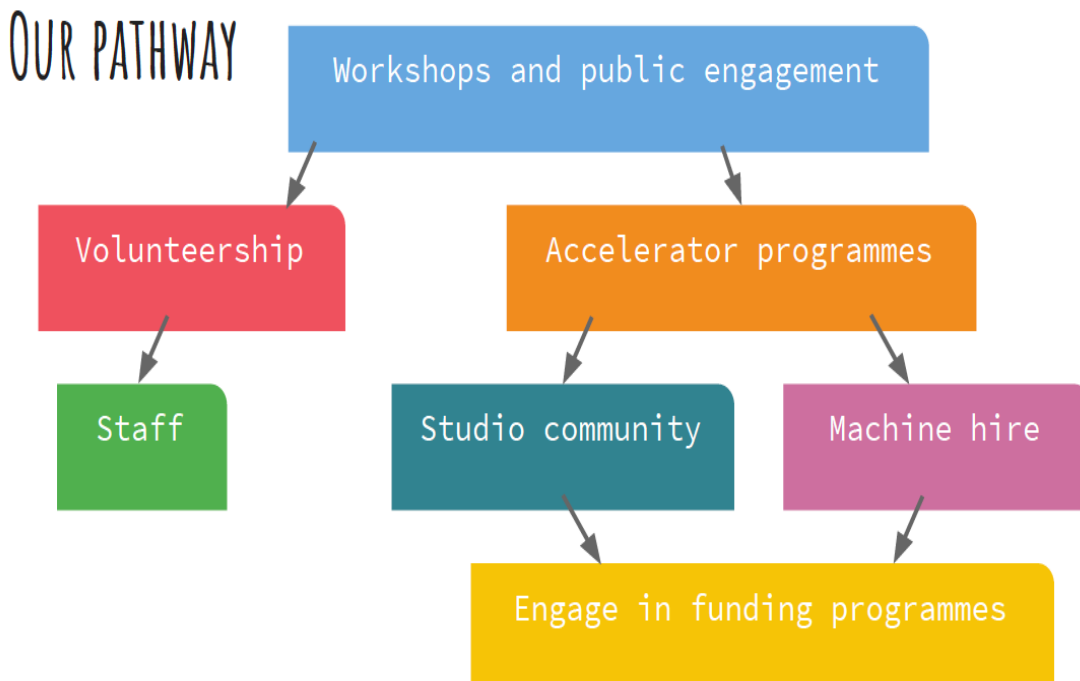
“We believe that each challenge faced by creative hubs have been solved by a hub, and by connecting these organisations together we can all benefit from our collective ingenuity.”

Roles



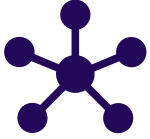
Enabler and Facilitator: Enhancing connections between the community

Over the years, The Making Rooms has developed a community of engaged and skilled volunteers, regular users and studio tenants. They have honed a full development path for creative entrepreneurs, and every activity has a clear rationale.



47

Image credit: The Making Rooms



Leader and advocate: Sharing best practice globally

Having built a thriving business model, The Making Rooms are keen to share their experience with other hubs nationally and internationally:

“Starting a creative space like ours in the UK is hard. Many of the Fab Labs that open typically, close within 3 years. We have learnt the hard way what works and what doesn’t and we want to share this with other established labs and those just starting out.”

Impact

The Making Rooms lets people of all ages discover the fun and fulfilment that comes from creating something. They hear regularly from users about how it has changed their lives for the better. They have seen many people come into the Fab Lab programme having never designed or made anything before, then go on to become regular users, volunteers, join their accelerator programmes and start a business, engaging thousands of people each year in creativity and technology.

6 Reflections

The profile data confirms what previous studies have shown – creative hubs come in all shapes and sizes with the term interpreted in many different ways. They leave a unique footprint in their community and achieve their missions through a complex set of hybrid business and operating models. This compounds the challenge of explaining what hubs are, what they do and crucially what difference they make.

In our view creative hubs are beacons of hope, optimism and imagination. They continue to forge new ways of working by bringing together enterprise, collaborative approaches to social change and creative practice. Hub leaders are a rare breed of visionary thinkers, doers and enablers of extraordinary things, creating a lasting legacy in their creative communities.

So how do we ensure that these vital assets receive the recognition and investment that they deserve and need to do what they do best?

Three specific strengths stand out as potential opportunities for hubs and their partners:

Local yet global: The strength of purpose and focus that comes from addressing the needs of one's local community, combined with the ability to connect with audiences and hubs nationally and internationally. Increased digitalisation has further enabled this and there is a clear appetite for hubs in England to learn and share with hubs around the world.

User-led, emergent and hybrid models: Being genuinely community led and skilled in emergent business practice are great strengths of many hubs. In these complex and continually changing times, we can learn a great deal from hub leaders and their communities about how to best navigate the times ahead.

Improving wellbeing: The decline in people's mental health over the last 12 months has been linked to a combination of social isolation and economic uncertainty, something that hubs address on both levels. This focus on creating both economic and social value is a powerful story that hubs can leverage to gain much needed recognition, support and investment.

The maturing of both community business support and arts impact investing is also creating a specific opportunity for creative hubs with a social purpose. Organisations that have deployed alternative finance to acquire buildings are not only securing their own future and leaving a vital legacy for the creative communities that will follow. We expect to see a growth in community owned hubs in the coming years and more instances of hubs making use of vehicles such as community share offers, such as Stretford Public Hall (Stretford), who successfully raised £255,000 in 2017 from over 800 members and match funding from a range of partners.¹⁸

We were excited to read about the Creative Land Trust's first acquisition of Stone Studios in the heart of Hackney Wick from developer Telford Homes at the time of writing the final draft of this report. This represents a substantial step towards the Trust's goal of securing 1000 affordable workspaces for London's artists and makers.

Across the English regions we've seen inspiring examples of creative hubs leading change in their communities in a way that other organisations cannot rival. Those hubs that are embedded locally are uniquely placed to pivot and respond to the crippling effects of Covid-19. They stand to play a crucial role in the recovery, enabling communities to reimagine and rebuild.

We hope this report goes some way to illuminate the contribution and potential of creative hubs in England and we look forward to continuing the conversations that have been started through this research process.

¹⁸ <https://www.stretfordpublichall.org.uk/communityshareoffer>

References

Virani, T and Malem, W (2015), *Re-articulating the Creative Hub Concept as a Model for Business Support in the Local Creative Economy: The Case of Mare Street in Hackney*. London, Creative Works London.

Prof Dovey, J and Prof Pratt, A (2016), *Creative Hubs: Understanding the New Economy*. London, City University of London (in association with University of West of England, REACT, Creativeworks London, and The Watershed).

Monteiro, Rui (2017), *Creative Hubs Barometer*. UK, British Council in collaboration with European Creative Business Network.

Richards, L, Vascott, D, Blandon C, and Manger, L (2018), *What works: successful community hubs*. UK, Power to Change & Business In Community Hands.

Dunbar, L (2019) *Mapping Creative Hubs In Scotland*. UK, British Council.

Dr Siepel, J (2020), *Creative Industries Radar: Mapping the UK's creative clusters and microclusters*. UK, Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre led by Nesta

Allen,S, O'Hara, E, Henry, N and Eisen, N (2016), *Making Space: Developing and Sustaining Affordable Artists' Studios and Creative Workspaces*. UK, Creative United.

Online Articles:

Rethinking Creative Clusters by Jonathan Hall-Jones:

<http://culturalplacemaking.com/2021/02/09/rethinking-creative-clusters/>

Taking Grass Roots National by Frederick O'Brien in Roman Road London:

<https://romanroadlondon.com/stour-space-fish-island-celebrates-ten-years/>

How to nurture flourishing cultural and creative hubs – lessons from the Netherlands by Rinske Brand for Project for Public Spaces:

<https://www.pps.org/article/how-to-nurture-flourishing-cultural-and-creative-hubs-lessons-from-the-netherlands>

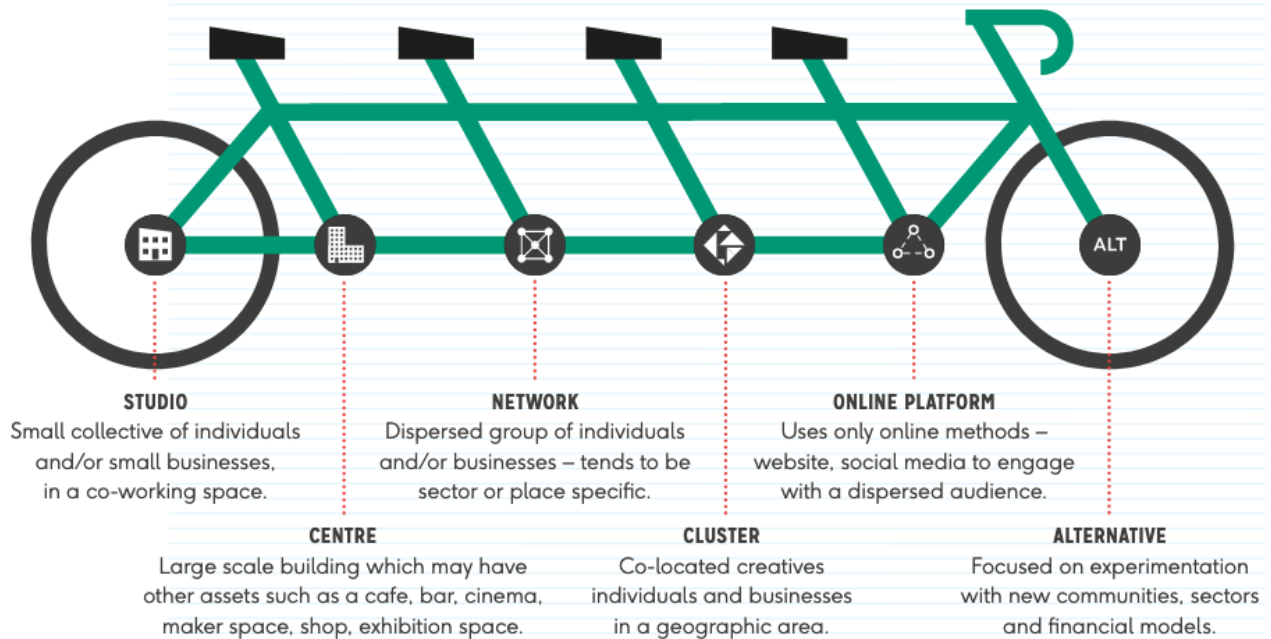
Appendix

AI Hub models from the British Council Hubkit



Creative Hub Models

Creative hubs come in all different shapes and sizes, and can be described in many different ways – collectives, co-operatives, labs, incubators and can be static, mobile or online. Here are a few of their most common features.



05

Creative HubKit

All Creative Hubs England Map – identified hubs

Hub name	Location
2 Queens	Leicester
51 Zero	Medway
a space arts	Southampton
a-n The Artists Information Company	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Abingdon Studios	Blackpool
ACME	London
ACollective	York
Aesop	Oxfordshire

altspace	Altrincham
Ampersand Inventions	Newcastle upon Tyne
Appetite	Stoke-on-Trent & Newcastle-under-Lyme
Arbeit Studios	London
Art Reach	Leicester, Manchester, Portsmouth
Arthouse	Wakefield
Arts Asia	Southampton
Arts Gateway MK	Milton Keynes
Arts Lancashire	Lancashire
Artworks	Halifax
Assembly House	Leeds
Atlantic Youth Creative Hubs	Plymouth
Autograph	London
Axis Web	Wakefield
B&D Studios CIC	Newcastle
Backlit	Nottingham
Baltic Creative CIC	Liverpool
Banks Mills	Derby
Battersea Arts Centre	London
Basecamp Liverpool	Liverpool
Beach Creative	Herne Bay
Bethnal Green Ventures	London
Birley Studios	Preston
Black Swan Arts	Somerset
Blackhorse Workshop	Walthamstow
Block 336	London
BOM Birmingham	Birmingham
Bow Arts	London
Bricks	Bristol
Bristol Creative Industries	Bristol
Bristol Festivals Network	Bristol
Bristol Foundary (UWE)	Bristol
CADS	Sheffield
Canning Circus Creative Hub	Nottingham

Carousel	Nottingham
Central Working Manchester	Manchester
Chaple Artist Studios	North Hampshire
Cheddar Artists	Cheddar
Civic Square	Birmingham
Coastal Currents	Hastings
Cockpit Arts	London
Colonnade House	Worthing
Common Space	Stoke-on-Trent
Container Ville	London
Contemporary Visual Arts Network (CVAN)	National
Crafty Fox Market	Sheffield
Crate	Margate
Create Studios Digital Media CIC	Swindon
Creative Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire
Creative Cromford	Cromford, Derbyshire
Creative Estuary	Chatham
Creative Folkestone	Folkestone
Creative Hub WLV	Wolverhampton
Creative Innovation Centre CIC	Taunton
Creative Kernow	Redruth
Creative Lancashire	Lancashire
Creative Leicestershire	Leicester
Creative Medway	Medway
Creative Network South	South Coast
Creative Wakefield	Wakefield
Cultivator	Cornwall
CultureWorks	Grimsby
Custard Factory	Birmingham
CVAN East Midlands	Leicester
CVAN North West	North West England
CVAN South East	Oxford
Daphne Oram Building for the Creative Arts	Canterbury
David Glass Ensemble	Bath
Derby Makers Group	Derby
Design Nation	Sleaford
Digbeth	Birmingham
Digital Lancashire	Lancashire

Dock Hub	Brighton
DoES Liverpool	Liverpool
Double Elephant Print Workshop	Exeter
Dubrekk Studios	Derby
Duke Studios and Sheaf Street	Leeds
East Meets West	Birmingham /East & West Midlands
East Street Arts	Leeds
Eastside Projects	Birmingham
Eastville Project Space	Yeovil
Ebor Studios	Lancashire
Eggtooth	East Sussex
Engine Shed	Bristol
Enrol Yourself	National
Exeter Culture	Exeter
Exeter Phoenix	Exeter
Exeter Fab Lab	Exeter
Fab Lab Warrington	Warrington
Fab Lab Plymouth	Plymouth
Fab Lab Sunderland	Sunderland
Farleys House & GALLERY Ltd	Muddles Green
Fish Factory Art Space	Penryn
Flameworks	Plymouth
Fusebox	Brighton
Future Foundry Creative Start Up Space	Kent
Gasworks & Triangle Network	London
GoCreate in Taunton	Taunton
Grain photography hub	Birmingham (West Midlands)
Grand Union	Birmingham
Grow hackney	London
Haarlem Artspace	Wirksworth, Derbyshire
Hackney Bridge	London
Hackney Downs Eat Work Art	London
Hackspace	Nottingham
High House Production Park	Purfleet
HiveHub Barking Roding Riverside	Barking
Hold Creative Spaces CIC	Ramsgate
Horsebridge Arts Centre	Whitstable
Hot Bed Press	Salford
Hotwalls Studios	Portsmouth
HQ CAN	Leicester

Hulkes Lane Darkroom & Studio	Rochester
Hyper Island	Manchester
Ideas Hub Chelmsford	Chelmsford
Ideas Test Creative People and Places CIC	Medway & Swale
Impact Hub Islington	London
Impact Hub Kings Cross	London
Impact Hub Westminster	London
Industry	Chester
Intra Arts	Chatham
Islington Mill	Manchester
Jubilee Wharf	Penryn
Kazimier	Liverpool
Knowle West media Centre	Bristol
Krowji	Cornwall
Lab by Capacity	Liverpool
Launch22 Liverpool	Liverpool
Launch22 London	London
LCB Depot	Leicester
Leicester Print Workshop	Leicester
Lighthouse	Brighton
Lit Theatre	Nottingham
Lofthouse Creatives	Stretford
LV21 Light Vessel 21	Gravesend
Made With Many	Corby
MadLab	Manchester
Mainframe, QUAD	Derby
Make in Baltic	Birkenhead
Make Liverpool	Liverpool
Makers Quarter	Manchester
Makerversity	London
Manchester Digital	Manchester
Marine Studios CIC	Margate
Materiom	London
Medway Arts Forum	Chatham
Mersey Made	Mersey
Mess Room	Chatham
Metal Culture	Southend on the Sea, Liverpool, Peterborough
mewe360	London
Mild Bunch	Bristol
Mortar Studios	London

Moseley Community Hub	Birmingham
Moseley Exchange	Birmingham
National Youth Theatre of Great Britain	London
Natural Theatre/Bath Arts Workshop at Widcombe Institute	Bath
Near Now	Nottingham
Netil House Eat Work Arts	London
New Art West Midlands	West Midlands
New Brewery Arts	Cirencester
Newbridge Projects	Newcastle
Nice Neighbourhood	Sheffield
Northern Print Workshop	Newcastle
Northern Soho	Manchester
Nucleus Arts	Chatham
Old Bank	Manchester
Old Courts	Wigan
Old Paradise Yard Eat Work Arts	London
One Thoresby Street	Nottingham
Onion Collective	Somerset
Orbis	Newcastle upon Tyne
Outside In	Chichester
Oxford City Cultural Education Partnership	Oxford
Paradise Works	Manchester
Partisan	Salford
Peckham Levels	London
Peddle	Sheffield
Pedestrian	Leicester
Pempeople' s Livesey Exchange	London
People Dem Collective	Margate
Pervasive Media Studio, Watershed	Bristol
Phoenix Art Space	Brighton
Photo Parlour	Nottingham
Pioneering Places East Kent	Folkstone
Plexal City (Here East)	London
Plymouth Culture	Plymouth
Pop Brixton	London
Poplar Union	London
Porthmeor Studios	St. Ives
Primary	Nottingham

Prism Gallery	Blackburn
Production Park	Wakefield
Project Artworks	Hastings
QUAD	Derby
Rainmaking Loft	London
Real Ideas Organisation	Cornwall
Red Eye	Manchester
Redbrick House	Bristol
Resort Studios	Margate
RichMix	London
Rosetta Arts	London
Roundhouse	London
Royal Engineers Museum	Gillingham
Rural Arts	Yorkshire
Scott Hall Mills	Leeds
Second Floor Studios& Arts Sevenoaks	Sevenoaks
Second Floor Studios& Arts Deptford Foreshore	London
Second Floor Studios& Arts Deptford Foundry	London
Second Floor Studios& Arts Deptford Wembley	London
Second Home	London
Seed	Bridgewater
SET	London
Sheaf Studios	Sheffield
Sheffield Union St	Sheffield
Sheffield Creative Guild	Sheffield
Showroom Work Station	Sheffield
Shutterhub	Alderwasley
Silicon South	Bournemouth
Society 1	Preston
Somerset Arts Business Cultural Alliance	Somerset
Somerset Film / The Engine Room	Somerset
Somerset House Studios	London
Sound Sense	Midlands
Southampton Sorting Office Studios	Southampton
SPACER	Ramsgate
Sparkhouse	Lincoln
Spike Island	Bristol
Spike Print Studios	Bristol
Spotlight Youth Centre	London

SPUDworks	Lymington
St Margaret's House	London
Stack Newcastle	Newcastle
Stage One	London
STEAMHouse	Birmingham
Stretford Public Hall	Stretford
Stour Space	London
Studio Voltaire	London
Sun Pier House	Chatham
Sunlight Centre	Gillingham
Sunny Bank Mills	West Yorkshire
Sway Art House gallery cafe / The Art House	Southampton
TechHub	London
The Albany	London
The Arches	Worcester
The Art House	Wakefield
The Art House, Southampton CIC	Southampton
The Assembly	Manchester
The Auxiliary Project Space	Middlesborough
The Birley	Preston
The Brixton Project	London
The Circus of Illustration	Bedford
The Creative Hub	Lancashire
The Dryden Enterprise Centre (DEC)	Nottingham
The Edge	Birmingham
The Egg Factory	Hebden Bridge
The Generator	Exeter
The Glass Hub	Trowbridge
The Guild Hub	Bath
The Hive / NTU	Nottingham
The Ideas Hub	Chelmsford
The Keepers Artist Collective	Southampton
The Making Rooms	Blackburn
The National Centre for Arts & Design	Sleaford
The Net Community Hub	Chatham
The New Art Exchange / Real Creative Futures	Nottingham
The NewBridge Project	Newcastle
The Old Library	Bodmin
The Old Print Works	Birmingham

The Royal Standard	Liverpool
The Stable Creative Hub	Western Super Mare
The Storey	Lancaster
The Studio	Loughborough
The Trampery Fish Island Village	London
The Trampery Old Street	London
The Trampery Polar Works	London
The Trampery Republic	London
The Trampery the Gantry	London
The Transition	Chelmsford
The Vale Global Groves	Mossley
Tileyard	London
TIN Arts	Durham
Tobacco Factory	Bristol
Toffee Factory	Newcastle
Town Hall Annexe	Salford
Towner Art Gallery	Eastbourne
Transform Crafts	Burnley
Triangle Network	London
Turf Projects	Croydon
Union St	Sheffield
Unit 11 Artist Studios	Southampton
Village Underground	London
Visual Arts South West (VASW)	Cornwall
Voluntary Arts Network	England
Warwick District Creative Compact	Leamington
We Built This City	London
Werks in Brighton	Brighton
West Yorkshire Print Workshop	Murfield
Westbury Arts Centre	Milton Keynes
Whitespace	Norwich
Wired Sussex	Brighton
Wood Street Studios	London
Work Differently	Bristol
Wysing Arts Centre	Cambridge
Yard Art House	Birmingham
York Creatives	York
Yorkshire Visual Arts Network	Yorkshire