



LEWISHAM YOUTH THEATRE

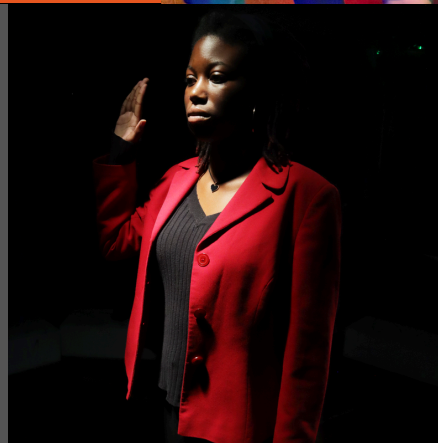
Annual Report



2024/
2025



Empowering
young lives
since 1987



Prepared by
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Introduction

The year started with a residential trip to Macaroni Woods with the LYT Members' Committee. The weekend gave space to young people to co-design and interrogate LYT's strategic pillars, tracing their own journeys and future ambitions across the pillar and mapping out the programme year for the membership.

Their ambitions have given the organisation direction throughout the year and continually re-focused the organisation's efforts, during a year of continued change.

This year has seen LYT articulate our practice within the framework of Creative Health, delivering an impactful pilot project supported by Maudsley Charity, that explored satellite work in the borough to support those with additional mental health barriers.



New Year's Day Parade

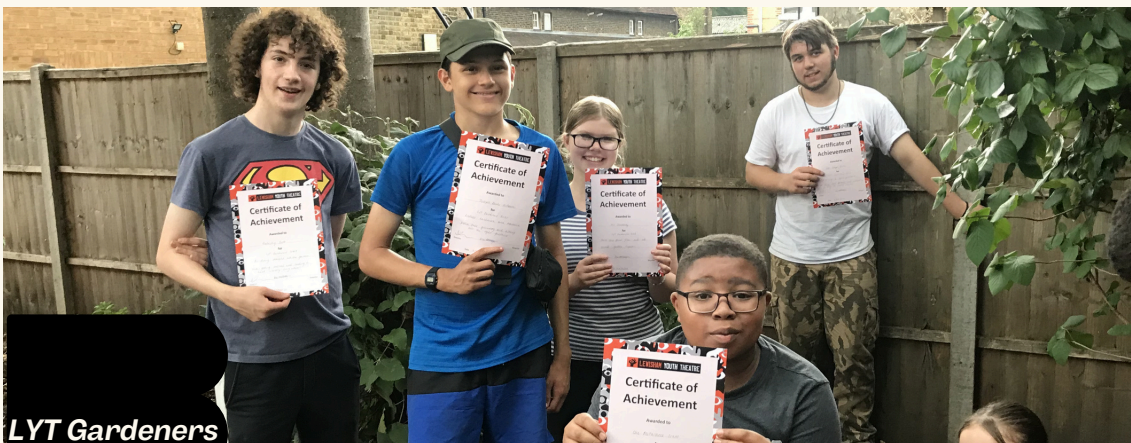


Our 2nd year in the Creative Hub (436 Lewisham High Street), gave us the opportunity to share the space and our practice with the local community and transform the space into a home of performance, rehearsal/workshops rooms and a community event venue.

We have continued to make improvements to the space, with inclusivity, diversity and creativity at the forefront of all decisions.

This year has been one of change, collaboration and reflection. It reminded us that LYT's rich history is something to be proud of, and it doesn't limit us, but instead sets the foundation for what comes next.

As we make space for fresh ideas and the creativity of future generations, we're embracing the one constant we can rely on: change itself.



LYT Gardeners

Delivering Against Our Strategic Pillars

Pillar 1 – Personal & Creative Growth

“We’re a place where young people can evolve. It’s like a flower blooming in a thunderstorm. It’s all about finding yourself”

- Members’ Committee



Fairground Mystery

67 members (8-11), 7 peer mentors (13-15) and 6 Trainee Facilitators (18-25) engaged in 66 sessions across 4 session groups.

The Junior companies devised *How Curious?!* and *The Fairground Mystery*, exploring themes around change, belonging and how to celebrate individuality.

Junior Theatre Makers collaborated on an original script, *When I Speak of Lewisham*, a work-in-progress play exploring how young people navigate Lewisham.

51 members aged 12-14, 3 peer mentors aged 14-16 and 4 Trainee Facilitators aged 18-25 engaged in 44 sessions across 3 session groups.

The Junior and Senior company performed an immersive double bill titled *FLOOD!* In collaboration with SMASHFest, groups explored the impact of rising water levels on the future generations.

Waves of Time explored the relationship between science and media in relation to flooding during 3 periods of history. This was performed in Ladywell Park, where Lewisham’s infamous flood of 1968 happened.



Waves of Time



Into the Ark


32 members aged 15-18, 2 peer mentors aged 16-19 and 1 Trainee Facilitator aged 21 engaged in 26 sessions across 2 session groups.


Alongside the Juniors, the Senior performance company performed *Into the Ark*, a court case drama, following a jury of young people confronted with the stories of regular people charged with being responsible for climate change, their fate lies in their hands.


Delivering Against Our Strategic Pillars


Pillar I – Personal & Creative Growth


<p>Backstage & Technical Theatre:</p>	<p>37 members aged 11-17, 2 peer mentors aged 16-18 and 2 Trainee Facilitators engaged in 52 sessions across 5 session groups, with 22 young people aged 13-18 going on to assist productions as tech crew.</p>
<p>Outreach Projects:</p> <p>Over 3 days during February half term, 12 participants aged 12-18 took part in 6 well-being workshops exploring the cultural offer in Lewisham and how it can support mental health and wellbeing outcomes, culminating in an inspiring walk from Goldsmith's Community Centre to Lewisham Music with local stakeholders.</p>	<p>Across 4 sessions, 12 young people aged 10-18 helped us design a series of workshops exploring addiction and substance misuse and the local services available in the borough. This workshop will tour to schools and community groups next year.</p> 
<p>Outreach:</p>	<p>18 one-off drama & technical theatre sessions in schools & community settings reaching 357 participants aged 7-19.</p>


 **627**
Lewisham young people have taken part in **374** sessions, with **228** taking part in regular activities.

 **83%**
Of this years' participants disclosed significant disadvantage, across a range of needs.

 **240**
Audience members attended 4 youth theatre performances.

 **96%**
Of participants in sustained projects have taken part in 3 or more sessions, with 77% taking part in 10 or more sessions.

 **66%**
Of 'workshop' project participants went on to join a next step performance project within the year.

 **96%**
Of participants in sustained projects have completed their project.



Backstage Crew

94%

Reported an increase in social/emotional skills.

74%

Reported an increase in their creative skills.

85%

Indicated an increase in resilience.



Pillar 2 – Community Change-Makers

“We both give to and receive from our community. We allow young people to have a voice and through this process are lifted up to a higher social level.”

– Members’ Committee



Members Committee:

Participants worked together to transform our outside space, interviewed freelance & permanent staff, produced events, including the AGM and the Member’s Festive Party, as well as organised youth-led social action campaigns.

Rainbow Criteria: In celebration of LGBT+ History Month, Members’ Committee, across 11 sessions, actioned their youth-led campaign to make Lewisham more LGBTQIA+ youth friendly. Awarding the Rainbow Criteria to 10 successful organisations across Lewisham borough.

Gardening: In collaboration with Civic Futures – a cross London project funded by the GLA – members aged 9-18 took part in 10 sessions focused on learning gardening skills, to promoting wellbeing through access to green spaces.

Culminating in a full day session with growing groups from across London, including Black Roots, Culthorpe Community Gardens & Grow Lewisham, where they shared plants, wisdom and skills to improve LYT’s garden.

We delivered:

Peer Mentor training: A project that trains young people aged 12-17 to become peer mentors for LYT’s performance projects.

12 young people joined LYT projects as Peer Mentors.



42 aged 11-18 took part in 54 Members’ Committee sessions.



12 Peer Mentors supported younger groups on projects from October 24-August 25.



76% of all participants completing projects across the year indicated an increase in leadership capabilities.

Pillar 3 – Creative Careers

“We’re inspiring young people to acquire skills, to learn about and choose their pathway in life”

– Members’ Committee

We Delivered:

Following last year’s HATCH commissions and festival, LYT expanded the HATCH programming to encompass all work with members 18 – 25. HATCH standing for Home of Artistic Talent and Creative Horizons.

We delivered dedicated training, mentoring, paid placements and residencies for early career artists in youth arts facilitation, stage design and theatre making. These programmes culminated in:

- 6 creative wellbeing workshops delivered in schools
- 1 Design Residency, working with LYT as a designer on our performance companies mentored by Production Manager. This resident has since received a full scholarship to study design at Yale University.

Work Experience:

10 young people aged 14-20 took part 198 hours of work experience, receiving an insight into arts administration, facilitation, programme management and participation. 7 placements were in Lewisham schools, 3 were in alternative schools or out of borough schools.

Creative Hub workshops:

132 aged 8-25 engaged in 13 masterclasses, workshops and open days including a creative workshop with Lewisham-based theatre director Arne Pohlmeier; a LGBTQ+ History month celebration with Proud 2 Be Me CIC; a masterclass with Wimbledon Arts College and two wellbeing workshops with Children in Care Council.



Qualifications & Accreditations:

15 aged 12-14 took part in 25 hours of mentoring to work towards a Bronze-level Arts Award Qualification.

We also offered 20 AQA accreditations as part of the Peer Mentor and Facilitator Training programmes.

See Theatre:

137 aged 8-25 attended 10 performances or tours across London’s theatres and organisations, including backstage tours of The Phantom of the Opera and Moulin Rouge! and a performance of Hamilton.

“I loved going to see the play, I hardly ever get to go to the theatre”
– 12-14s participant

Pillar 3 – Creative Careers

“The activities are inclusive and allow them to think on their feet and improvise. They also allow for the young people to work not only with their friends, but everybody”
– AFRIL worker



The Hungry Bowl

Participant Indicators:



139 young people engaged in 23 interactions with professional theatre companies, including trips to see theatre, backstage tours, masterclasses and panel discussions with industry professionals.



13 participants aged 18-25 received dedicated training and paid work experience, gaining employability skills.



17 young people received support to access next steps at LYT and beyond.



15 young people completed the Bronze Arts Award qualification and 20 young people received AQA Unit Award Accreditations.



83% of participants indicated an increase in ambition. 75% said they had significantly improved in 'knowing what I want and working to achieve it'.

Next Steps:

Our direct support to connect participants to next steps and opportunities around London has meant that:

6 of our Backstage Theatre participants received placements at National Youth Theatre Backstage programme.



SYT member performed in *Hungry Bowl* by Edward Bond directed by Niko Kreigar at the Rose Bruford MA/MFA Contemporary Directing Practice showcase.



8 members performed with Urban Synergy as part of Lewisham's winning entry to the London's New Year Day parade.



2 members went on to secure places at prestigious west end summer school opportunities.



1 member was selected to present the European Young Audience Award at European Film Club Awards in Berlin.

Pillar 4 – Creative Ecosystem

“We’re breathing life into local creative ability, giving creatives a place to go, collaborating with our neighbours and reviving creativity in our services.”

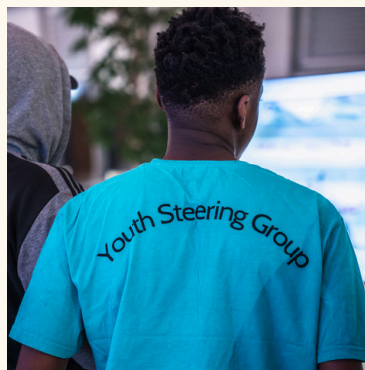
– Members’ Committee

Sharing our Creative Hub: Over the year, 325 community members & young people attended 7 performances & events at the Creative Hub. As well as our own performances, we hosted:



LEAN

held their Annual General Meeting at the Creative Hub



YSG

used our space to hold their weekly meetings



SE London Pride

hosted a Tea Party for LGBTQIA+ over 30s



- Theatre company Teatro Vivo continue to use our storage space to house costumes and props.
- Rehearsal space for local artists, including Izzy Ponsford, Bushra Baig, Niko Kreiger and Wake the Beast Theatre.
- Audition space for Komola Collective.
- Urban Synergy rehearsed along with LYT participants for the New Year's Day parade.
- Youth Justice Team used our Creative Hub for their all-department team meeting.
- Change Grow Live hired in kind some set pieces and instruments for their annual Pride event.
- Subira Damali hosted a film screening of her documentary *Sacred Strands*.

“Just wanted to say a big thanks for the equipment loan last week. The performance went down really well. The team also appreciated you all cheering them on as they completed the last stretch of the Pride walk!”

– Change Grow Live Service Manager



Pillar 4 – Creative Ecosystem

We delivered:

Training & Exchanges: We have exchanged with partners to highlight our own work, while supporting a wider adoption of quality youth-led practice. Activity included delivering:



“Thank you for an excellent day. It has really helped each team to coalesce their general 'Discovery' thinking into promising creative directions.” - SMASHFest

LYT continues to actively participate in both the Lewisham Education and Cultural Partnership and Lewisham's Cultural Partnership Board, to share our collective experience and members voices with the wider sector.



Sharing our Youth-led practice:

2 members of Members' Committee delivered a workshop on how to embed youth-led practice in organisations during the LEAN AGM and at a “Lunch and Learn” virtual session for GLA staff.

“It was the perfect way to share how LYT does things and that was easily the most engaged lunchtime session I've seen in my two and a bit years at the GLA! Super fun and positive, and I really appreciate you taking the time out to run the session.” - GLA staff

Sharing Creative practice:

In collaboration with SMASHFest, LYT shared applied theatre practice with Middlesex University students at the Creative Hub. Providing dramatic techniques and creative pedagogy that would inform their creation of prototype immersive experiences that explore flooding in relation to climate change.

Created bespoke workshops for Youth First, sharing how drama and creativity can improve your wellbeing and mental health. Delivered these across youth clubs during Mental Health Awareness Week.

Pillar 4 – Creative Ecosystem

LYT continues to receive referrals through local partnerships. This year, our partners have included:



Local Primary Schools: Holy Cross, John Stainer, Lancelot, Dalmain, Rushey Green, and Haberdasher's Knights.



Local Secondary Schools: Bonus Pastor, Forest Hill Boys, Prendergast Vale, Prendergast Ladywell School, Sedgemoor Academy, Sydenham Girls, Haberdashers Knights Academy, Lewisham College and Riverston school.



Community Referral Partners: Action for Refugees in Lewisham, CAMHS, Children in Care, Free to be Kids, Looked After Children, SLAM, Special Guardianship Support Team, Youth First, Parent & Carer Forum, TNG Youth & Community Centre, Honor Oak Youth Club, Bellingham Gateway Youth & Community Centre, Woodpecker Youth Club, Adult Learning Lewisham, Marsha Phoenix Memorial Trust, Lewisham CSC and Lewisham Parent & Carer Forum.



Secondary School Teacher

"Students got to work creatively and imaginatively with their peers. Some students in the workshop really came out of their shell as they are usually quite shy and resistant to get involved."



Primary School Teacher

"Some of our children started this session quite reticent and not really joining in, but by the end most were participating! I think this was a great experience to show them that they can be creative in front of others without having to feel embarrassed."

Volunteering: This year, 19 volunteers and placement students gave up their time to support on our projects. Following placements at LYT our volunteers have been supported to rejoin employment, access future creative opportunities or join next steps training and education.

"Thank you again for our check in – I really appreciated it. Your suggestions were genuinely helpful and gave me a lot to think about. I especially felt encouraged to express myself more, and that has given me a bit more confidence. I'm really glad to be part of the LYT sessions. It means a lot to feel so supported." - Student placement

10.

Organisational Developments

Changes to LYT

Staff Changes:

Leavers -

Filiz Ozcan, Creative Director, end date: September 2024

Natalie Parsons, Volunteer Coordinator, end date: January 2025

Jess, Participation Manager, end date: April 2025

Victoria Shaskan, CEO, end date: April 2025

Sara Myers, Creative Director, end date: July 2025

Dean Coffey, Participation Assistant, end date: August 2025

New staff team members -

Maizy Wright, Participation Manager, formally Outreach Producer, start date: April 2025

Bushra Baig, Outreach Producer, start date: April 2025

Monique Uwiragiye, Creative Programmes Manager, start date: August 2025

Following a period of consultation LYT will be changing leadership structures to best reflect our values, mission and vision. You can read more about this in plans for future periods.



Our Creative Hub

Building changes: We've continued to make improvements to our Creative Hub on Lewisham High street, including improving the garden by installing a pond, beds and a bug hotel with the help of Members' Committee; installing double glazing windows in our ground floor space, as well as installing an air conditioning unit to improve the overall temperature of the hall. Changes like these continue to make our building more efficient and a greater asset to share with the wider community.

Board Changes: Our Board of Trustees welcomed new members Alice Chen, Head of Central Bank, Sovereign & Supranational FX & Depo Sales, HSBC Bank Plc – Associate Director as our new treasurer. We thank Mairi Hayes, Ian Paish and Genine Whitehorne who are stepping down from the Board due to external commitments.

Staff Training: During the year, staff undertook training in Domestic Abuse & Disclosure; Designated Safeguarding Lead, AQA unit award, CLORE - Emerging Leaders workshop, Being a champion in diversity and racial identity, Mental Health Training: Awareness of First Aid Level I, Exploring consent with young people, ADHD Awareness, Trauma Informed Practice in Youth Work, Emergency First Aid at Work and Emergency Paediatric First Aid, Individual Fundraising and Templates and Systems.



Plans For Future Periods

New Leadership Structure

From January 2026, LYT will be adopting a co-leadership model - between Executive Creative Director, Monique Uwiragiye and Executive Producer, Molly Cox.

Monique is a theatre practitioner, with nearly a decade of experience leading socially engaged, collaboratively driven creative work across the South of England. Her practice is grounded in research, lived experience and community storytelling, creating bold, politically resonant theatre that explores race, culture, heritage and identity. Monique champions collaborative decision-making, values-led leadership and artistic processes that empower others to take ownership of their stories.



Molly (left) & Monique (right)

Alongside theatre-making, Monique brings extensive leadership experience as a facilitator and producer. Having led youth-led programmes, artist development initiatives and multi-partner collaborations with organisations including Beyond Face, Lyrici Arts, Lewisham Youth Theatre and Theatre Deli.

Molly is an applied theatre practitioner, specialising in youth-voice and community practice. She's been an integral part of LYT's staffing team for over 3 and a half years, starting as the My London Project Manager before transitioning into the leadership team as the Senior Producer. Molly's commitment to authentic co-production is the foundation for all her decisions, keeping the voice of LYT members and the Lewisham community at the heart of the organisation.

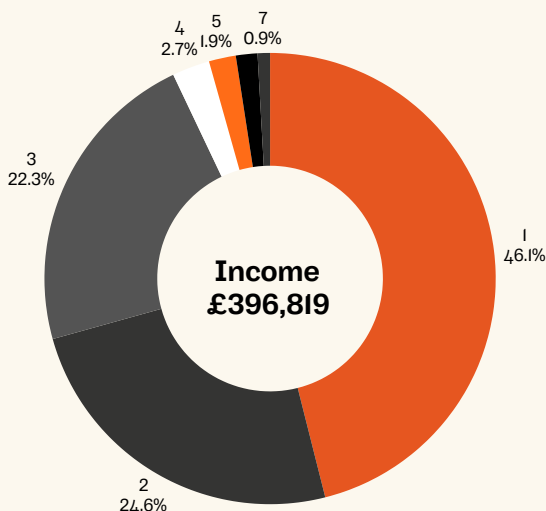
Having started as a volunteer, then a freelancer, and now a core staff member at LYT, Molly has an innate understanding of the organisation's history, nuances, and commitment to its mission.

We believe that a co-leadership structure best meets LYT's evolving needs and allows for our company values of equity and care to be structurally embedded across the leadership of the organisation. The benefit of having dual perspective will strengthen LYT's execution of the organisational strategy and allow for more sustainable capacity across the team. This structure gives space for us to be inclusive, sustainable and brave with LYT's future plans and we are excited to be committing to this new way vision of creative leadership.

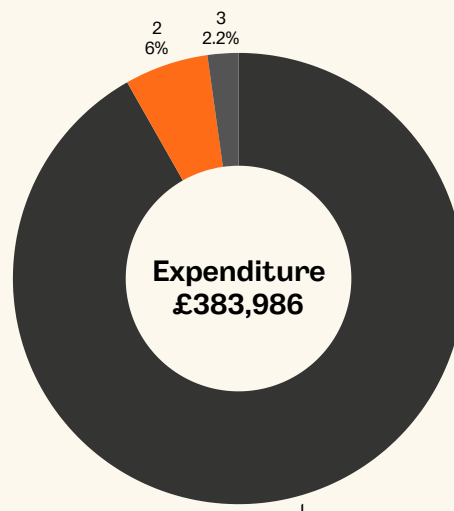
New work with 18 - 25s: We plan to expand our programme offer for 18 - 25 year olds. Starting with creative leadership opportunities, as a next step to our Members' Committee to co-produce this offer. We will be using this work to challenge existing engagement barriers for young early-carer creatives, driving systemic change that will impact access to creativity.

Plans For Future Periods

Financial Review



Income
£396,819



Expenditure
£383,986

1. Trust & Foundation Grants	£182,840
2. Lottery Funding	£97,695
3. Statutory Grants	£88,351
4. Rent in Kind	£10,700
5. Partnerships & Commissions	£7,666
6. Individual & Cooperate Donors	£6,315
7. Bank Interest	£3,252
Total	£396,819

1. Direct Charitable Activities	£352,436
2. Support Costs	£23,068
3. Governance	£8,482
Total	£383,986

Balance of Funds at 31 Aug 2025	
Restricted Funds	£18,964
Unrestricted Reserves	£130,000
Unrestricted (For Projects)	£68,176
Total	£217,140

Our work this year was made possible by grants and donations from: Arts Council England, ASDA Foundation, A2 Dominion, City Bridge Foundation, Clarion Futures, Children in Need, Greater London Authority, Groundwork Tesco, Haberdashers Benevolent Fun, Henry Smith Charity, Hillcote Trust, Jack Petchey Foundation, London Borough of Lewisham, Inspiring Lewisham Fund, Bridging the Gap, Lee Charity of William Hatcliffe, Maudsley Charity, National Lottery Community Fund, Skinners' Charity Foundation, SMASH-UK CIC, The Clothworkers, The Merchant Tailors Foundation and Youth First.

We would also like to thank our individual donors for investing in the wellbeing of Lewisham young people: Lucy Faulks, Jamiel Thomas, Dani Moseley, Stella Jeffrey, Elizabeth Downie, all the other donor who would like to remain anonymous, the families and supporters who donated across the year.

If you would like to find out more about how you can help make a difference for Lewisham young people, contact us at info@lewishamyouththeatre.com



LEWISHAM YOUTH THEATRE



Thank You

We'd like to thank all those who have supported on LYT projects during 2024/2025

Special thanks to:

Mayor Brenda Dacres, Cllrs James Lee, Edison Huynh, and Hau-Yu Tam, James J Walsh, Nancy Stridgen and Kplom Lotsu (Lewisham Council), Barnaby Smith (GLA), Sita McIntish (Inclusive Audiences), Shana Stainbank, Jesse Wyld and Josh Falconer-Roberts (Civic Futures), Mana Gondora (Children in Care Council), Mark Stevenson and Kas Darley (Teatro Vivo), Wyn Griffiths (SMASHFest UK), The Broadway and Jasmine Kershaw (Lewisham Library).

Council of Management:

Genine Whitehorne (previous Chair), Louise Gordon (Chair), Tom Toomse-Smith (previous Treasurer), Alice Chen (Treasurer), Edison Huyn, Freneka Mumford, Ian Paish, Jamiel Thomas, Mairi Hayes and Tyreke Leslie.

Patrons:


Lucian Msamati and Phaldut Sharma.


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