

ANNUAL REVIEW 2023/24



LEWISHAM YOUTH THEATRE

EMPOWERING YOUNG VOICES SINCE 1987

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

While navigating the structural changes of a new premises and new leadership structure, LYT have spent the last year building new programmes to place young people at the centre of our artistic practice.

We've continued to support early career artists to develop their own work through the *Hatch* programme, while providing training and paid work experience for young directors, facilitators, producers and technicians. Over the year, *Hatch* artists produced a festival of their new work, directed performances of younger groups and supported our events as technicians. See a trailer of their work here: <https://youtu.be/HBOXmYQlpxs>

Our Members' Committee have been busy making a difference locally by consulting on local strategies, helping to design our new Creative Hub, interviewing new staff and hosting social action events, including at London City Hall. See the video they made here: <https://youtu.be/blefd2BLOnE>

Members have helped to define the pillars of our new strategy, articulating the benefit that a youth-led creative hub brings to participants, creatives and the local community.

Find out more about what we've delivered and how we've achieved against these pillars.



Victoria Shaskan
CEO



"We've seen a huge change in ability to communicate clearly with confidence and better able to self-regulate when challenges happen."

-Referral Partner

"I've built a community of friends and been able to creatively express myself."

-15-18s Performer

"Because of LYT, I have had the best few months of my life. Last night, I was up until 3am crying because I was scared that I would never get to see you guys again."

- 8-11s performer

Hatch Festival



Live it Down



Cosimo Remix

YEAR IN NUMBERS

- **1,438** young people, families & community have taken part in activities & performances
- **263** young people aged 8-25 in sustained projects
- **136** went on 14 theatre trips
- **124** hours of 1 to 1 support
- **56** youth volunteers
- **10** productions, including a tour of Lewisham Schools

“It was a proud moment for me as a parent to see him up there performing. He’s naturally shy and quiet but being part of LYT is helping in his confidence and making friends”

– Parent, Junior 12-14s performers



Festival of Short Scenes

Next Steps for:

- **Eli** won second place at the Roundhouse Poetry Slam 2024.
- **Amiga** received paid voiceover work with LandSec.
- **Bushra Baig** worked with Helen Stanley and former LYT staff member Simone Watson to develop a new play, performed at the Vault Festival in February.



Forever and Always

NEW ARTISTIC JOURNEY

We’ve embarked on a 3-year journey to develop 3 new plays, based on the same group of characters at different ages. Young writers aged 10-19 came together over the year to develop themes, characters and one of the new scripts – *Forever and Always*.

“Seeing everything you’ve said in the past couple of weeks [written down] right in front of us, it made it seem possible to achieve anything else...It has also inspired me to continue some of my own writing projects.”

–15-18s Theatre Maker

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

JUNIORS 8-12s

88 aged 8-12, 4 peer mentors aged 13-15 and 4 Graduate Creatives aged 18-25 engaged in 62 sessions across 4 session groups.

In June, the Junior performance companies devised *Cosimo Re-mixed* and *Secondary Skoolz*, both exploring themes around transition from primary to secondary school.

JUNIORS 12-14s

67 aged 12-14, 1 peer mentor aged 16 and 7 Graduate Creatives aged 18-25 engaged in 40 sessions across 4 session groups.

In August, the performance company presented 3 adapted scenes at the *Festival of Short Scenes* supported by 3 young directors in training. The Junior devising company shared a scratch performance with friends and families, exploring themes around grief & identity.

Participation Indicators

- **108** young people performed, worked backstage in productions or delivered their own workshops.
- **588** audience members attended 8 youth theatre performances.
- **79%** of this years’ participants disclosed significant disadvantage, across a range of needs.

SENIORS 14-21s

38 aged 14-18 engaged in 41 sessions across 3 session groups.

Alongside the Juniors, the Senior performance company presented 3 adapted scenes at the *Festival of Short Scenes* in August, supported by 3 more young directors.

Senior Theatre Makers

Wrote and performed a staged reading of *Forever and Always*, part of a series of plays following the same characters at different stages of their youth.

“I have more confidence. It has allowed me to become a role model.”

- 8-11s performer

“It has showed me that I’m not as alone as I thought I was at the start of the project.”

- 14-21 theatre maker

- **94%** of participants in sustained projects have taken part in 3 or more sessions.
- **83%** of participants in sustained projects have completed their project.
- **49%** of ‘workshop’ project participants went on to join a next step performance project within the year.

TECHNICAL THEATRE

30 aged 11-17 engaged in 35 sessions across 4 session groups.

12 young people aged 13-17 going on to assist productions as tech crew.

"I am so happy he has been able to join LYT and stick with it. LYT provides a breath of fresh air so he can get out of the hotel (temporary accommodation)"

- Parents, Backstage Theatre



FEELING CREATIVE & KEEPING IN TOUCH

5 young people on the CAMHS waiting list aged 11-15 engaged in 5 sessions. 23 vulnerable participants aged 8-18 engaged in 3 sessions, to support them re-engage at LYT.

They worked to improve their confidence, social and relationship skills linked to improved mental health and wellbeing through fun and engaging drama and creative games.

"I was able to express my emotions without having to talk about them... I learned how to respect people's boundaries more"

-Creative Wellbeing session participants



OUTREACH

32 one-off drama & technical theatre sessions in schools & community settings reaching 567 participants aged 7-19.

"Thank you so much to LYT for their workshop, they made the activities fun, energetic and enjoyable. The pupils relaxed and participated unreservedly. Thank you for the high-energy activities. We will be sending [more] young people to you"

-Action for Refugees In Lewisham (AFRIL)

Social/Emotional Skills

97% of all evaluation respondents reported a significant increase in at least one social/emotional skill (confidence, teamwork, communication and emotional literacy).

Creative Skills & Resilience

80% reported an increase in their creative skills.

88% 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

Peer Mentor training: A new project that trains young people aged 12-17 to become peer mentors for LYT’s core performance projects. Training sessions were held during the October half term. 9 Peer Mentors supported younger group on projects from January-August.

“It has changed me as a person to lead a big group... It exploded my knowledge and confidence... It changes me massively in terms of confidence, bravery, friendship.”

- Peer Mentors

Members Committee and My London Youth Social Action: 40 participants helped to design LYT’s new premises, interviewed freelance & permanent staff, and produced events, including a leaving party for our outgoing Artistic Director, the launch of the new Creative Hub and the My London Super Summit at London City Hall.

Rainbow Criteria: in collaboration with METRO Charity, Members’ Committee created the Rainbow Criteria, an accreditation to recognise public spaces that have made a commitment to being a safe environment for LGBTQIA+ young people.



Youth Summit

Case for S.P.A.C.E. consultations: Advocated for more youth-led spaces in Lewisham, Members’ Committee ran a campaign for Switching Perceptions and Creating Environments. They fed into consultations on local built environment, Lewisham Library re-development, Lewisham Links green & blue spaces consultation, and youth service review. Alongside the Young Mayor’s Team, they fed their insight into the Lewisham Cultural and Educational Partnership.

“We were so pleased to be able to work with LYT’s Members’ Committee... Their contributions were deep, thoughtful and critical. They helped us to think about how engaging young people in meaningful and creative ways has an important role in the shaping of cities at a design and strategic level.”

- Periscope, Lewisham Town Centre Consultation Partner

Strategy Development: Member’s Committee helped to develop our new strategic plan, including by attending an away-weekend in September to Macaroni Woods in Gloucester.

Leadership

- 86% of all participants completing projects across the year indicated increased leadership capabilities.



Youth Summit

PILLAR 3 – CREATIVE CAREERS

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

– Members’ Committee

HATCH GRADUATE CREATIVE PROGRAMMES

We delivered dedicated training, mentoring, paid placements and commissions for early career artists in youth arts facilitation, theatre directing and theatre making. We delivered:

- The **Hatch Festival** at the Broadway Theatre, Catford with 4 commissioned artists.
- 8 creative wellbeing workshops delivered in schools.
- **A Festival of Short Scenes** directed by trainee directors.
- A tour of **Live it Down** written by Helen Stanley, with young performers paid to deliver this interactive forum theatre play across Lewisham schools.

“Students were actively engaged... Students were also able to self-reflect throughout the workshop and envision positive changes to their approach in learning. Thanks for your intervention.”

– Teacher, Live It Down Tour



QUALIFICATIONS & ACCREDITATIONS

15 aged 12-14 took part in 9 sessions to work towards a Bronze-level Arts Award Qualification. 11 young people completed the Bronze Arts Award qualification.

We also offered 20 AQA accreditations as part of the Hatch Facilitator and My London programmes.

28 participants aged 16-27 received dedicated training and paid work experience, gaining employability skills.

“Really happy to see young directors being supported alongside the kids. A really important and practical early career opportunity for them.”

– Partner, Arts Council England

MASTERCLASSES

135 aged 8-25 engaged in 12 masterclasses

Including a Creative Forum with Dani Mosely and Adjani Salmon - actors and writers of BBC series *Dreaming Whilst Black*; a music and dance performance by Patrice Naiambana; and a masterclass with actress and BAFTA award winning Gbemisola Ikumelo.

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

91% participants indicated an increase in ambition. 53% said they had significantly improved in ‘knowing what I want and working to achieve it’.

SEE THEATRE

136 aged 12-25 attended 14 performances or tours across London’s theatres.

Including a backstage tour of *Les Miserables*, and a performance of *Hamilton*.

110 young people engaged in 24 interactions with professional theatre companies. including trips to see theatre, backstage tours, masterclasses and panel discussions with industry professionals.

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, 656 community members & young people attended 12 performances & events at the Creative Hub. As well as our own performances, we hosted:

- Lewisham Safer Communities ‘Are You Hearing Us’ creative event, showcasing creative contributions from Second Wave, Sounds Like Chaos and the James Ross Hunter Foundation alongside our own performance of *Live It Down*.
- Apples & Snakes and Looked After Children Team for a creative respite programme exploring painting and poetry.
- We provided creative support and a venue for Lewisham’s Children in Care Council’s Elevate team of care leavers to teach cultural competency to newly qualified social workers.
- Rehearsals and auditions of local companies, preparing to bring their plays to national festivals including the Vaults Festival, Peckham Fringe and Edinburgh Fringe.
- Broadway Theatre Choir rehearsal as part of Lewisham’s *SEEN Festival*.
- Performances by Albion Theatre and Sounds Like Chaos.
- Teatro Vivo, who transferred their costume storage to the Creative Hub.

Volunteering: This year, 22 volunteers and placement students gave up their time to support on our projects. In addition, we’d like to give a special thank you to M&G, and the 9 members of their team who came to support us to improve our new building.

My London Partnership: LYT culminated leading this project to seed social action across Lewisham and Greenwich alongside partners Charlton Athletic Community Trust, Metro Charity, Tramshed and Trinity Laban. The Youth Steering Group, made up of participants from 7 partner organisations, held a campaign fair and Q&A at City Hall.



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:

- Embedding Youth-Led Social Action

Workshops: LYT participants led workshops for the GLA’s Civil Society & Sport: Securing A Fairer Future conference at London City Hall and as part of Lewisham’s *SEEN Festival*.

- Youth-led practice in Arts Management:

Workshop for Goldsmith’s Arts Management students.

- Creative Wellbeing for Primary: Trainee facilitators led a workshop with year 6 students from Launcelot primary school as part of Lewisham’s *SEEN Festival*. Children got a tour of the theatre and a chance to project their voices from the mainstage of The Broadway.

- Hatching a Creative Journey: As part of the *SEEN Festival*, our commissioned artists led a workshop on producing your own creative work.

“LYT’s focus on centring the experiences of young people is innovative and embedded in their organisation’s way of working, and they work creatively to go far beyond simply consulting young people.”

- Greater London Authority Officer

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

STAFF

In the last year, we welcomed new staff and embraced new changes...

We welcomed staff member Filiz Ozcan as Creative Director, a new role working with Victoria Shaskan in the role of CEO, to drive forward the vision for a Creative Hub, centring youth voices at all levels.

We also welcomed Molly Cox as Senior Producer, following her success as My London Manager; Jess Drader as Participation Manager; Dean Coffey as Participation Assistant and Raphael Ameyinoge as Hatch Assistant Producer.

PREMISES CHANGES

In December 2023, we moved into a new building at 436 Lewisham High Street.

Drawing on our experience in the previous unit, we worked with our Members' Committee to design the new space. In 2024, we worked with local partners including Youth Build and Public Works architects to return this disused space to vibrant community use.

London
Youth

QUALITY MARK
BRONZE ACCREDITED
AUGUST 2024 -
AUGUST 2027

Re-accredited with a London Youth Bronze Quality Mark, a quality assurance scheme accredited by City & Guilds.

We'd like to thank Pauline Nakirya Papayova who served as Interim Participation Manager, whilst we recruited permanently for this post.

This year, we said goodbye to long-time Artistic Director Helen Stanley, Monique Uwiragiye and Subira Damali as they pursue freelance careers. We also said goodbye to Angus Scott-Miller, who has moved on to Catch 22 as the Young Men's Project Coordinator.

Board Changes: Our Council of Management (Board of Trustees) welcomed new members Louise Gordon, Creative Consultant at NSPCC and Ian Paish, Head Teacher at Deptford Green.

We thank Edison Huyhn, Ed King and Tom Toomse-Smith who are stepping down from the Board due to external commitments.



Our new Creative Hub



Our new Creative Hub

PLANS FOR FUTURE PERIODS

NEW LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE

In September 2024, Filiz Ozcan left LYT to continue her work at her own theatre company Komala Collective.

We welcomed a new Creative Director, **Sara Myers**. Sara has a long background in Social Care, where she managed youth, domestic violence and drug/alcohol programmes. More recently, she has worked as a freelance writer, dramaturg, director, applied theatre practitioner, and is a mentored writer with Paines Plough.

Sara will help us to solidify our learning from the last several years, bringing our creative career development programmes under the banner of H.A.T.C.H – Home of Artistic Talent and Creative Horizons.

In her new role as Senior Producer, **Molly Cox** will particularly grow our impact in the local community through our Creative Ecosystem strategic pillar.

Together with our CEO **Victoria Shaskan**, they will lead our team to ensure our organisational values of collaboration and care are embedded at every level of the organisation.



"I am so excited to spearhead an organisation bursting with youth creativity and voice. I can't wait to get started on this year's groundbreaking creative programme."

- Sara Myers, Creative Director

NEW SCRIPTS-IN-DEVELOPMENT

We will continue the development of the *Forever & Always* triptych – 3 plays written by participants about the same group of friends at ages 11, 14 and 18.

"Very brave and honest work...It's important to have fresh new ideas displayed on stage, so everyone can experience at least one story they relate to."

- Hatch Festival Audience members

WHAT IS A YOUTH-LED CREATIVE HUB?

A PLACE FOR...

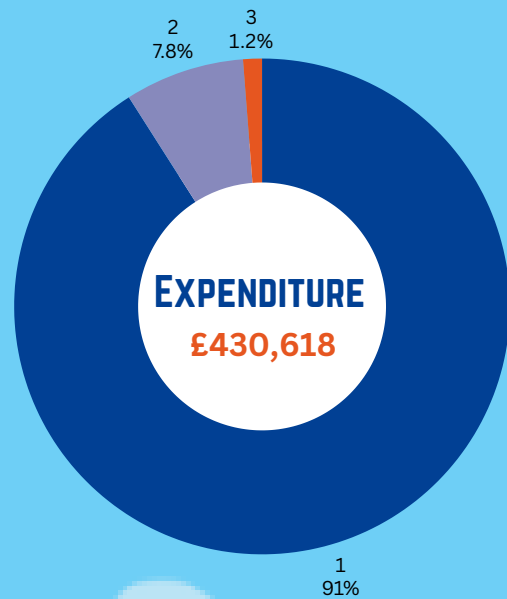
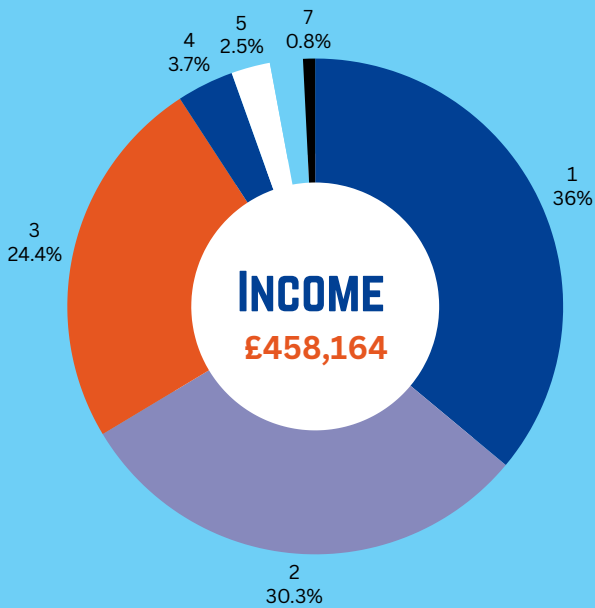


NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

We will continue to work with our participants, team and Board to develop our understanding of our new strategic pillars.

Led by our participants, we will articulate our plans for developing this work in an innovative and creative format.

OUR FINANCES



1	Trust & Foundation Grants	£165,163
2	Lottery Funding	£139,007
3	Statutory Grants	£111,900
4	In Kind Rent & Legal Costs	£17,032
5	Partnership & Commissions	£11,622
6	Individual & Corporate Donors	£9825
7	Bank Interest	£3615
Total		£458,164

1	Direct Charitable Activities	£391,750
2	Support Costs	£33,578
3	Governance	£5290
Total		£430,618

Balance of Funds at 31 Aug 2024

Restricted Funds	-
Unrestricted Reserves	£130,000
Unrestricted (For Projects)	£74,307
Total	£204,307

Our work this year was made possible by grants and donations from: Arts Council England, Audience Club, City Bridge Foundation, Children in Need, Garfield Weston, Greater London Authority, Haberdashers Benevolent Fund, Henry Smith Charity, Hillcote Trust, Jack Petchy Foundation, Lee Charity of William Hatcliffe, London Borough of Lewisham, Lewisham Safer Communities, Lewisham Local, London Youth, National Lottery Community Fund, People's Society Trust, Percy Bilton Charity, Royal Free London NHS Foundation, Skinners' Charity Foundation, The Grocers Charity, UKSPF and Mishcon De Reya.

We would also like to thank our individual donors for investing in the wellbeing of Lewisham young people: Lucy Faulks, Jonathon Cox, Jamiel Thomas, Tom Toomse-Smith, Ian Jamieson, Dani Moseley, Nick Heard, Jeffrey Stella, Liz Downie, Nitya Bolam and 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



Festival of Short Scenes

THANKS

We'd like to thank all those who have supported on LYT projects during 2023/24

Special thanks to: Mayor Brenda Dacres, Cllrs Edison Huyhn and Hau-Yu Tam, James Lee, Sakthi Suriyaprakasam, Nancy Stridgen and Susan Ellis (Lewisham Council), Barnaby Smith (GLA), Phil Brady, Tom Dobson (Public Works), Sita McIntosh (Inclusive Audiences), Mana Gondora (Children in Care Council), Youth Build, Teatro Vivo, The Audience Club, SMASHFest UK, METRO Charity, Charlton Athletic Community Trust, Tramshed, Young Mayor's Team, Trinity Laban, The Broadway, Langley Search & Interim, Lewisham BRAG, Pilot Theatre, Wimbledon Arts College and Mishcon De Reya.

Referral Partners: Action for Refugees in Lewisham, Baseline, Bromley Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Service, CAMHS, Children in Care, DreamArts, Free to be Kids, Grand Mentors, Lewisham Early Intervention Team, Redthread Youth Ltd., Refugee Council, SLAM, Special Guardianship Support Team, Youth First, Volunteering Matters.

Local Primary Schools: Athelney, Holbeach, Holy Cross, John Stainer, Lancelot, New Woodlands, St Mary's CE and St. Saviours R.C, Rushey Green.

Local Secondary Schools: Bonus Pastor, Deptford Green, Forest Hill Boys, Hatcham College, Knights Academy, New Woodlands, Prendergast Vale, Sedgemoor Academy and Sydenham Girls.

Advisory Board: Jane Wilson (Clinical Psychologist).

LYT Core Team: Victoria Shaskan (CEO), Helen Stanley (Former Artistic Director), Filiz Ozcan (Creative Director), Molly Cox (Senior Producer), Angus Scott-Miller (Former Participation Manager), Pauline Nakiryia Papayova (Interim Participation Manager), Jess Drader (Participation Manager), Anna Smith (Production Manager), Maizy Wright (Outreach Producer), Monique Uwiragiye (Programmes Producer), Subira Damali (Progression Coordinator), Natalie Parsons (Volunteer Coordinator), Isla McGregor (Finance & Administration Coordinator) and Dean Coffey (Participation Assistant).

Freelancers: Angela Ekaette Michaels, Bushra Baig, Delyth Evans, Emanuel Mendes da Silva, Hazel East, Julia Couto, Kat Gill, Louise Dickinson, Princess Bestman, Raphael Ameyinoge, Roisin Martindale, Sebastian Constantine, Tonderai Munvebvuvu and Tunde Euba.

Graduate Creatives: Amiga Harewood, Batanga Bokola, Danielle Colleman, Eli Gore, Izzy Ponsford, Jan Vaughan, Justice Ezi, Kayla Brown, Lulu Chaps, Matthew Moore, Nae Chetty, Pierce Duncan, Rowan Fornah, Sasha Bond and Shivonne Dominguez Blascikova.

Council of Management: Genine Whitehorne (Chair), Tom Toomse-Smith (Treasurer), Mairi Hayes (Safeguarding Lead), Edison Huyhn, Ed King, Jamiel Thomas, Tyreke Leslie, Frenka Mumford, Louise Gordon and Ian Paish.

Patrons: Lucian Msamati and Phaldut Sharma.

LYT Principle Supporters:



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