



Age UK London receives funding from:



Consultation Response

TITLE: Mayor's Culture Strategy for London

Date: 19 June 2018

All rights reserved. Third parties may only reproduce this paper or parts of it for academic, educational or research purposes or where the prior consent of Age UK London has been obtained for influencing or developing policy and practice.

Name: Gordon Deuchars
Email: gdeuchars@ageuklondon.org.uk

The following organisations or people have contributed to this response:

1st Framework, <http://1stframework.org/>
Green Candle Dance Company, <http://www.greencandle.com/>
Sheila Dickie, arts practitioner

Age UK London
6th Floor, Tavis House
1-6 Tavistock Square,
London
WC1H 9NA
T 020 7820 6770
E general@ageuklondon.org.uk
www.ageuk.org.uk/london

Age UK London works to improve the quality of life and enhance the status of older people in London. We rely on your support and donations to carry out our vital work so for more information about how to support us visit www.ageuk.org.uk/london

 [Follow us on Twitter](#)

 [Like us on facebook](#)

Registered Charity No: 1092198. Age UK London, the working name for Age Concern London, is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales no.4407861

About Age UK London

Age UK London raises the voice and addresses the needs of older Londoners. We promote and represent the views of older Londoners; we campaign on real issues that make a difference to older people; we work with older people's organisations across London to enhance services; we offer a range of products and services tailor-made for the over 50s (via Age UK London Trading). We are part of the national Age UK network and work in partnership with the national charity Age UK and with London borough Age UKs.

We also link to over 500 local older people's groups in all London boroughs, many of them volunteer led. We are currently funded by City Bridge Trust to build the resilience of these local age sector organisations and help them and older people to make their voice heard, as part of "The Way Ahead" initiative which the GLA is also part of.

Age UK London is glad to have the opportunity to input to the Mayor's Culture Strategy for London. We will structure our response around the consultation questions proposed by the Mayor.

What impact does the capital's culture have on quality of life for Londoners? What could the Mayor do to amplify and support these areas?

Age UK London's remit and concern focusses on older Londoners, while we believe that access to culture (as a participant and as a consumer) is of benefit to all. There is growing research showing the benefits of cultural participation for the physical and mental health of older people. Age UK's recent report on "Creative and Cultural Activities and Wellbeing in Later Life" (www.ageuk.org.uk/creativewellbeing) builds on findings in the charity's Index of Wellbeing in Later Life. This showed that "creative and cultural participation was the single factor that contributed the most out of all 40 of the factors we found to significantly contribute to wellbeing". There is a link to reducing loneliness, which is increasingly recognised to affect many Londoners including older people.

We believe that every older person should be able to take part and therefore barriers to participation need to be addressed. These include location, transport, poor health (mental or physical), poor social networks and low income.

Another basic principle in our view is to recognise that older people are creative contributors to cultural development in London through their talents and their life experience which they bring in. The Mayor could support a number of areas of work some of which are mentioned in the draft Strategy:

- Opening up cultural participation to people living in sheltered housing and in care homes, and to lower income older Londoners
- Promoting partnerships between arts organisations and community groups
- Intergenerational cultural work
- Encouraging positive links between health and social care services and cultural activities (through the London Health Board remit)
- Opening up technology, especially digital technology, to older people

- A London Age Cultural Festival could be developed, possibly linked to the UK and International Older People's Day (1 October) or to the European Day of Solidarity Between Generations (29 April)
- Learning from and linking with positive international examples of age-related and intergenerational culture practice.

Some of these could be supported through the Culture Seeds funding programme which should have explicit age friendly principles written in. We recommend an explicit link and read-across between the Cultural Strategy and work by the Mayor to make London age friendly and dementia friendly: we especially welcome the recent announcement by the Deputy Mayor for Social Integration that London is joining the WHO Global Network of Age Friendly Cities and Communities.

Do you agree that London must embrace a broad definition of culture that includes less formal places and spaces? If yes, what could the Mayor do to best support informal culture?

Yes we do agree with this principle. Many of the activities listed above can best be carried out in informal settings.

For older people in care homes or attending day centres, and often those living in sheltered housing as well, attendance at cultural events outside the home is very challenging or impossible. It is therefore essential that artists receive support to bring high quality art and culture to people who cannot travel to it, whether this is dance, music, theatre or visual art. Other types of venue which have worked well for cultural activities involving older people include cafes, pubs, libraries and cinemas, some of which have developed models for age-friendly or dementia friendly sessions.

How could the Mayor help to remove barriers that prevent all Londoners from securing creative jobs? What examples of good practice are you aware of in this area?

The Mayor could start by having a strategy which aims to encourage and support all Londoners in this respect. The draft Culture Strategy defines its objective in the Creative Londoners chapter as "To support London's young creatives with more opportunities to develop their talent and skills". Actions proposed consistently focus on children, young people and schools.

We agree that children and young people should be supported to develop their creativity and potentially access work in the creative industries. However it is unacceptable that the strategy fails to consider, as far as creative jobs are concerned, any Londoner who is no longer defined as "young". Diversity is promoted in this chapter in terms of gender, ethnicity and class. In the relevant section disability is mentioned briefly while age diversity is not mentioned at all. In our view this chapter is an example of ageist policy-making which is disappointing and surprising in a cultural strategy, all the more so when the Mayor has committed to make London an Age Friendly City.

At one level this emphasis could be taken as implying that "older people are not creative", despite many counter-examples. At another level it is disappointing because social change means that many economically active people in their 40s, 50s and indeed 60s may have decades in the employment market ahead of them and be challenged to adapt to the changing world of work which is described.

We urge the Mayor to partly reconsider the emphasis of this chapter and the proposed actions so that they support creative Londoners of all ages.

How can the Mayor increase participation in the arts and cultural life of the capital, particularly for people who don't currently have access to it? Who should he be partnering with?

See our answer to the first question above (on how the Mayor can support culture's positive impact on Londoners' quality of life).

The Mayor should partner with, among others:

- The [Age of Creativity network](#) bringing together over 1000 professionals who all believe that creativity and culture support older people to experience better health, wellbeing and quality of life
- Arts practitioners in London specialised in supporting older people to access culture and creativity
- Age UK London and the network of London borough Age UKs supporting local older people, including those experiencing low income, health problems and disability, loneliness and social isolation.

What other opportunities are there to support culture in the capital?

As well as support for artistic activity, with, for and by young people and older people, the Mayor should pay special attention to the enormously effective impact of bringing generations together in cultural activity, leading to meaningful social exchanges, greater understanding between generations and, ultimately greater social cohesion. For example, the partnership, as part of GLA's Get Moving project two years ago, between Green Candle Dance Company and Central and Cecil Housing Trust that brought together two care homes and two primary schools in Merton in a dance project (2016).

How can you or your organisation contribute to the Mayor's vision for culture and pledge to support the final strategy?

Age UK London can link between the Mayor's strategy and over 500 London older people's organisations ranging from borough Age UK charities to very small local volunteer-led groups. We could potentially work with the GLA and cultural practitioners to co-produce and roll out an increased cultural offer for and with older Londoners.

Is there anything else that could be considered in relation to the draft Culture Strategy?

Older people are a substantial part of the audience for some cultural activities, and the extent to which older people are enabled to take part may have an impact on those sectors. The Age UK research referred to above found that "... participation generally decreased with age but, while it held up relatively well in the "musical" and "crafts" categories, it fell steeply in the "historical" and "visual" categories. Not only does this risk excluding many older people from activities they enjoy, it is also a risk for organisations in these sectors: they could be losing a large part of their audience".

Do you agree with the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) conclusion that the draft Culture Strategy contributes positively to every IIA objective in some way?

Yes

Further information about Age UK London as requested:

Sector *

Public sector

Community/voluntary sector

Private sector

Type of organisation *

Campaign organisation, social enterprise, Other – charity

Geographical area of operation *

London-wide

Multiple London boroughs

Specific London borough

Size of organisation (if you are an employer)

11-25

Size of organisation (if you are a membership body): N/A