



Kickstart Gateway 21/22

Evaluation
Report



Introducing Create Gloucestershire

Create Gloucestershire (CG) supports the cultural and creative industries in Gloucestershire and introduces new people to arts, culture and creativity.

Our vision is to make arts every day for everyone.

We work in places and with communities that have not benefited as much as others from public investment in arts and culture.

Our practice supports others to collaborate because we know we can do more together than alone. We can't keep working in the same way if we are serious about making our vision a reality. This approach brings fresh and transformative thinking to the most intractable and complex issues facing Gloucestershire.

Our creative community stretches across Gloucestershire. It includes anyone who shares our vision and practice, a dynamic mix of residents, artists, scientists, makers, educators, activists, producers and storytellers as well as organisations and collectives.

A small team host this community supported by a dynamic Board.



Our work

Currently our community is leading new creative thinking in the fields of:

climate action

health

education

investment & funding

talent development

leadership

This thinking is rooted in practical action with people in our priority places.



**Kickstart
Gateway**
Evaluation
Report





The Kickstart Programme

Our ambition for kickstart

The Kickstart project sits firmly in the **Create Talent** strand of our work which supports young people into careers in the arts, cultural and creative sectors.

In an often undervalued and funded sector, we believe it is crucial for young people to gain skills and opportunities to start their career, as well as raise awareness for a wider range of young people to learn about the variety of occupations across the creative industries. It is our hope that by encouraging a more diverse intake of talent and a broader range of routes into the arts and cultural sector, that it better reflects the range of people living, studying, volunteering, and working in Gloucestershire.

In 2020 we saw the affect that the pandemic had had on young people; severely impacting their education, mental health, social development and career plans. Our ambition was to use this newly launched government employment scheme, called Kickstart, to improve the life chances of this generation of talent in Gloucestershire.

Kickstart was set up to create high quality 6-month paid work opportunities aimed at those aged 16-24 who were on Universal Credit and deemed to be at risk of long-term unemployment. The aim of Kickstart was to help young people become more employable, by developing their skills and confidence in a workplace setting, and to gain experience that will improve their chances of going on to find long-term, sustainable work. We applied to be a Gateway organisation and in late 2020 we were successfully appointed.

Our role was to act as an intermediary and apply for funding on behalf of employers in the arts, cultural and education sector who wanted to recruit young people.



Our role as a Kickstart Gateway

We provided support and guidance on job recruitment, navigating the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and paid the funding to individual employers, including the young person's salary. Each employer received an initial amount towards set up and support costs per job placement. This could be used to support individual training, cost of equipment, etc

The remaining funding for set up costs and the Gateway role was retained by Create Gloucestershire. This supported the recruitment of a Kickstart Project Manager (PM) to ensure the smooth coordination and financial management of the programme, recruitment guidance, point of contact with the DWP and light touch support for each employer and young person until December 2022.

Over the period of Kickstart, CG co-designed a number of collective training and networking opportunities to suit the needs and ambitions of the co-hort with employers and young people. Some of these were on-line (during covid restrictions) or more localised e.g. set up in certain areas due to problems with accessing public transport. Sadly the numbers were quite low in attendance, mainly due to transport issues but also, lack of confidence from many of the young people to want to meet up.

Instead, the PM was in regular communication with the co-hort, signposting to appropriate training, networking and job opportunities and met up with each Kickstarter individually (all 60 young people) on their own turf to hear how they had been getting on, what they had found difficult/most proud of and helped them with any signposting, individual connections with other Kickstarters or introductions, interests etc they may have.

All the Kickstarters who completed their placement were also issued with a Digital Badge, as a way of acknowledging and rewarding their achievements accomplished outside of formal accredited qualifications. More info: <https://realideas.org/about-us/our-work/badge-nation/>



Recruitment

The relationship between CG as the Gateway and the DWP at regional and local level was extremely positive, with ongoing support and care to deal with urgent issues.

However, the relationship between the DWP and employers varied with some seeing it as simply functional whereas others found it to be very supportive and responsive. During the timescale of the scheme, the roles at a local Job Centre Plus (JCP) level up to regional support as a Gateway changed several times, which made it difficult to know whom to contact to sustain an ongoing relationship. As the JCP offices were closed during the pandemic and contact with young people was mainly by phone, this didn't help the situation.

The recruitment process was felt to be confusing from an employer perspective e.g. inflexibility of including more than one postcode for the job location (particularly if working remotely). Some employers felt frustrated by the limited information about individual candidates, or how little the young people knew about the roles on offer or deemed to not be "job ready" which caused some frustration and wasted interview time.

Several employers felt by defining a role and then trying to fill the vacancy was the wrong way of recruiting young people at entry level. Instead by "opening the floodgates" to young people who would welcome a career in the creative arts would have been a better approach e.g. hosting an open recruitment process to help both parties discover what was appropriate (based on skills, interests, passion of the young person and needs of the host organisation).

CG tested different ways to promote roles alongside the DWP such as virtual Open Doors sessions on zoom, which allowed young people to meet the employers and hear more about the jobs on offer. Attendance numbers were low, but in many cases, led to young people applying for the roles. Open Doors also provided an opportunity for young people interested in working in the arts and cultural sector to attend, and DWP colleagues to understand more about individual organisations. Some employers interviewed candidates in their local JCP, or attended jobs fairs. Meeting young people face to face and understanding what they were interested in, definitely helped.

Aside from the initial rush at the beginning of the scheme, when there was access to a wider field of young people, numbers applying were generally low. Some roles were deemed more attractive and had more uptake, such as theatres whilst more rural organisations, with limited public transport were harder to promote. It was noted that organisations offering remote roles, however interesting received little interest.



Open Doors

MEET THE TEAMS EVENT:
Thursday 17th June - 2pm-3pm
Studio 18, SVA,
The Glass Foundry,
Madia and Matilda

**KICKSTART
SCHEME**

The poster features a yellow background with several colorful geometric shapes (triangles and circles) in shades of green, pink, orange, and purple. The Kickstart Scheme logo is in the bottom right corner.

Type of roles on offer

Marketing, publicity and social media assistant

Events and Operations Intern

Receptionist/Administrator

Junior Music Leader/Sound Engineer

Programme or Project Management Assistant

Digital Content Producer

Arts Education Intern

Technical, Gallery and Exhibitions Intern

Theatre or Studio Assistant

Database and Data Collection

Graphic Designer

Front of House and Box Office Assistant

Glass Production Assistant

Engagement Assistant

Radio Producer



Employers



Artshape



Bright Marketing for the Arts



Can't Sit Still



Chosen Hill School



Cheltenham Festivals



Deepbed Radio



Gloucestershire Academy of Music



Gloucester Museum (Gloucester City Council)



Gloucester Guildhall (Gloucester City Council)



Gloucester Culture Trust



Hawkwood Centre for Future Thinking



Kingshill House

Employers



Loco Glass



Madia & Matilda



New Brewery Arts



Prema arts centre



Stroud Valleys Artspace



Studio 18



The Glass Foundry



The Music Works

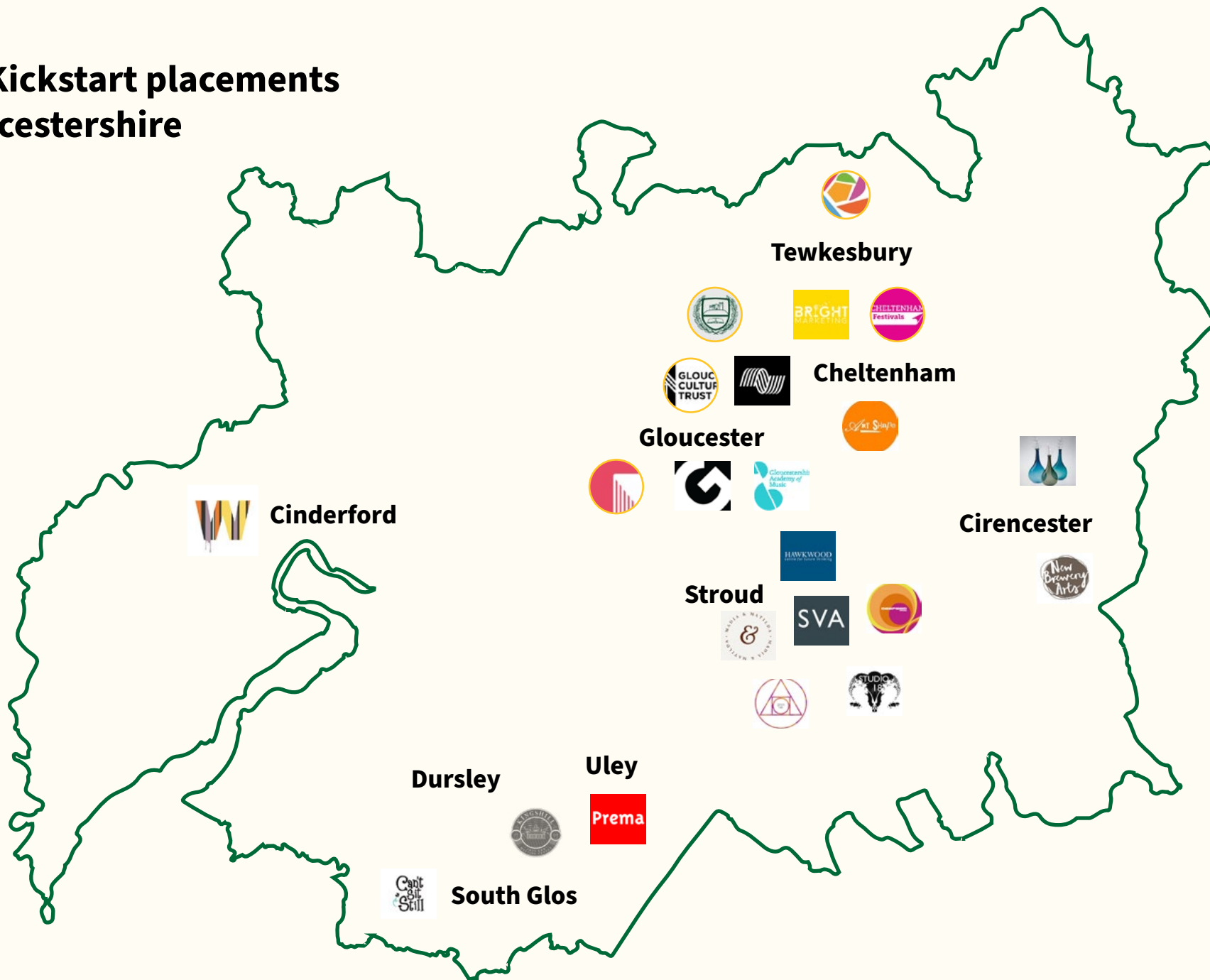


The Roses Theatre



Wyldwood Arts

Location of Kickstart placements around Gloucestershire





**Stories
& Impact**

Who the scheme supported

Since April 2021 we have supported 60 young people across the creative industries and cultural sector in Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire:

3 in glass blowing

5 in theatre

10 in music

2 in radio production

2 in arts marketing

4 in sustainable fashion

1 in festivals

26 in arts venues and artist studios

1 community arts

1 circus

3 museums/heritage

1 disability arts

1 media (in school setting)

CG is committed to improving diversity in the arts and cultural sector and in opening up opportunities for more young people in the sector across Gloucestershire, particularly in areas where the arts are under-represented and in rural areas.

As a Gateway, we were awarded £423,539 by the DWP to enable 60 young people to take up a Kickstart opportunity with 21 employers across Gloucestershire/South Gloucestershire, equating to an average distribution of £3,038 per employer and £5,185 per employee.



“

Feedback from the Department for Work & Pensions

"We are really pleased to have been working with Create Gloucestershire as a Gateway for the Kickstart scheme. We have had limited engagement with employers in the arts and cultural sector up until now. It has given us new contacts, relationships and energy to support young people, hoping to work in this sector.

It's been absolutely fantastic for Kickstart and for me, leading the Kickstart team of Employer advisors to get the chance to fill the gap with creative type roles. The Gloucestershire youth teams have been encouraged by so many new employers offering our caseloads work opportunities in the sector with some great outcomes already for long-term employment in the pipeline too.

We really want to continue this partnership, and find new ways to engage through work experience, volunteering and apprenticeships. Overall it has been met with great positivity".

Jo Smith, Gloucestershire Kickstart Employer Team Manager, DWP

Feedback from employers

“Create Gloucestershire were very helpful and supported us all along the way through each process.”

“Consistent and clear communication...I didn't feel as I was on my own.”

“Amazing, It wouldn't have happened without the support of CG”.

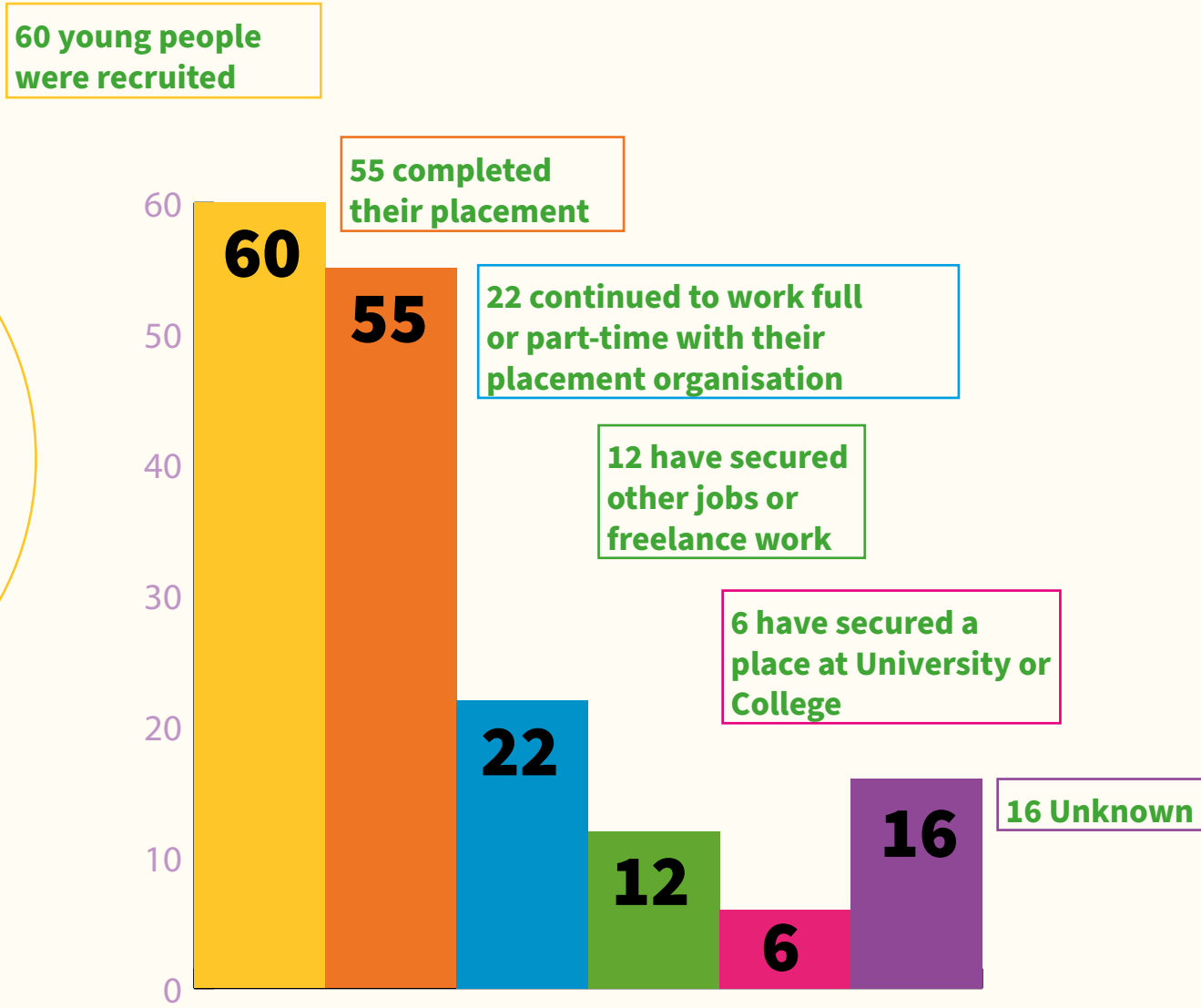
“This is a much needed initiative, especially in Gloucestershire. There are so many makers and creatives desperate for young people to hand their craft on to, and there are many young people who have vague ideas about creative futures, are willing to commit but have no idea what's out there in the 'real' world.

We need an organisation that can match-make for small companies too busy staying afloat to think about the longer term”.

”

Where are they now?

21 Employers joined the CG kickstart scheme across Gloucestershire/South Gloucestershire and between them they recruited 60 young people.



Kickstarter stories



“It’s the best decision I’ve made in my life so far”.

Create Gloucestershire
Published by Louise Bardgett · 29 June ·

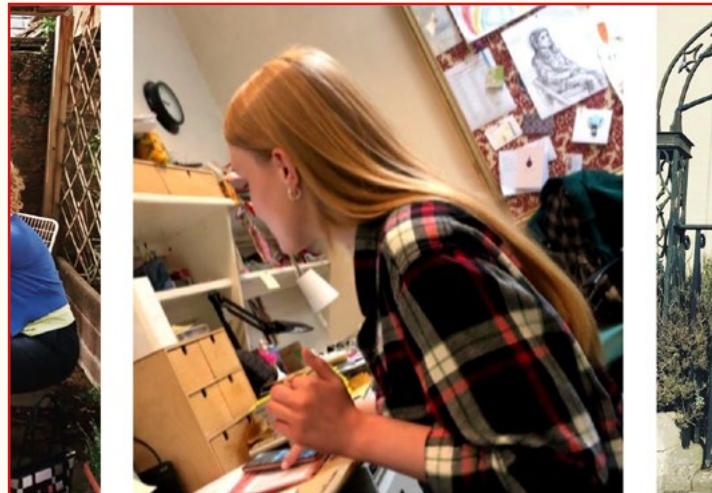
Great to meet up with Jimmy and Sam, who are working as Kickstarters with [Deepbed](#) Radio, profiling DJ’s and audio projects in Gloucester and Stroud.

Both talked about enjoying the freedom to explore ideas and are most proud of a radio weekend event they helped produce.

Sam is keen to develop as a musician and Jimmy, who helps run [Mould](#) youth arts collective in Stroud, wants to set up pop up exhibitions around town centres.



“I have always dreamt of a job in the Arts & Culture sector, but no opportunities had ever come along and I feared that my mental health might restrict me. Kickstart has given me such an amazing opportunity and I am so grateful for it.”



and **Growing as an Arts Education Intern with Prema**

KICKSTART BLOG

Ania Bond is working as the Arts Education Intern at Prema Arts Centre and joined through the Kickstart Scheme. Find out how she discovered the work opportunity and how she has got on in the role and what she has learned along the way (as well as how great the coffee is in the Vestry cafe :-).

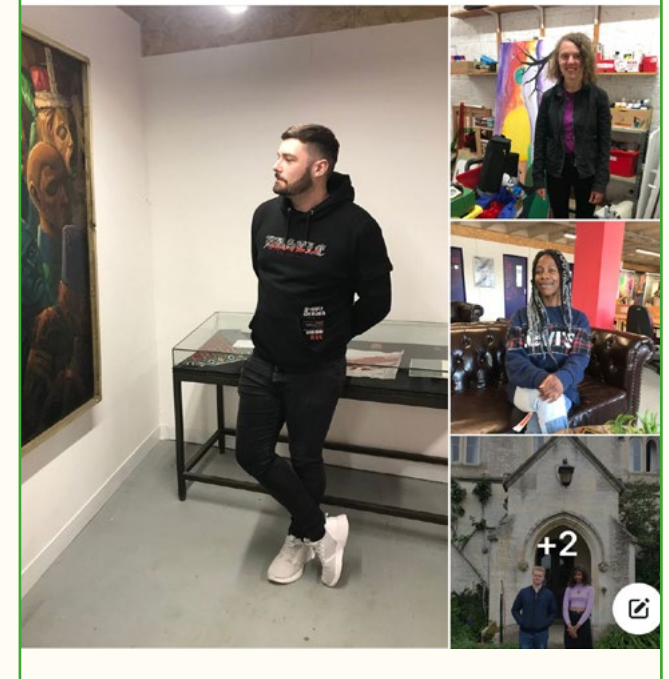
[Read More](#) →

“It is nice to have a job that doesn’t feel like a job... I feel like I have a purpose. I feel like I’ve landed where I need to be”.

Create Gloucestershire
Published by Louise Bardgett · 1 June ·

It’s been a busy couple of weeks meeting up with some of the Kickstarters dotted across Gloucestershire, and hearing how things are going in their current roles.

Welcome to Callum, Sam and Elliot with Gloucester City Council’s cultural services, Ania and Laura at [Prema Arts Centre](#), Kate at [Art Shape](#), Jussara at [JOLT Gloucester Creatives](#), and Kim and Finley at [Hawkwood CFT](#).




Key insights from the Kickstarters

good

Enjoyed the variety of work

Employer support was warmly welcomed. Didn't feel worried about getting things wrong, no hierarchy in SME's

Opened eyes to the arts and cultural scene in Gloucestershire and what is on your doorstep

Increased in confidence and work gave them a structure and a purpose

tricky

Appreciated the flexibility and freedom to explore and find out what they enjoyed (but some struggled with lack of structure)

Weren't aware of the Kickstart scheme – heard via word of mouth, or work coach

Didn't know about the organisation/ company before they worked there

Working remotely doesn't work for everyone

Easier to follow on from another Kickstarter

Many preferred more practical training

difficult

Public transport was an issue and got worse during the scheme

Anxiety and Mental Health was rife – work was sometimes overwhelming (high absence rate in some cases)

Reservations around networking, particularly in person

High percentage who are neuro diverse and struggled with time management and structure, causing issues with employers

Employer stories

New Brewery Arts

“We were down to a skeleton staff as lockdown ended, so it was great to have another pair of hands to step in as needed. We also believe in these kinds of opportunities to bring people into the sector, so this was a funded way for us to do this”.



Wyldwood Arts

“Our employee was a huge benefit to our organisation, which is a small arts charity. Having the additional capacity of a person working 25 hours per week is massive for any small business. Taking on a new employee is also more risky for a small organisation because their pay is a larger proportion of our overall turnover, so this allowed us to take on an employee with very low risk. Our Kickstart employee has continued with us after the initial 6-month period and we are hopeful that she will be with us for a long time to come. Additionally, our organisation has always been run by freelancers, so it also allowed us to get our PAYE systems working.”



”

Can't Sit Still

“We added useful capacity to our small team at an extremely busy period as we toured our first mid-large scale show. It challenged the remote working, part time team to accommodate a colleague at an early stage in their career. We needed to think differently about communication and communication needs, notice and remove the use of jargon, carefully structure the placement to offer appropriate, timely support & training, and manage expectations of the team and the Kickstarter about what was possible.”



Employer stories

Roses Theatre

“We've absolutely loved having Kickstart people in the building - we've employed 3 of them beyond their Kickstart contracts. It supported the business to identify and test capacity needs, without risk to the business model. It's also been brilliant at diversifying the team both in terms of age and cultural backgrounds - their opinions about the business have been hugely helpful.”



”

Hawkwood Centre for Future Thinking

“Kickstart was a huge success, and the skills young people have brought to Hawkwood. They bring a different viewpoint and energy. Giving an opportunity for young people aligned well to our values as an organisation. This was the boost we needed after the pandemic. It also increased diversity within the team - bringing different experiences, backgrounds, and ways of being.”



Key insights from the Employers

Individual support

In some cases, the placements were of “therapeutic value” for young people. However employers felt they needed greater transparency about the individual emotional needs of some applicants, and felt out of their depth and unable to accommodate and support them.

Some individual work coaches were extremely pro-active and kept in touch with the young people during their placement. Whereas, in other cases, a cry for help from employers was received less positively and support was found from other external organisations and Create Gloucestershire.

It was felt that a more open discussion around mental health and young people with the partners was needed in order to create training and care solutions.

Working with young people who were deemed to be less “job ready” required much more support from employers than anticipated. This required additional pastoral support from the kickstarter’s line manager as well as the wider team.

There were also limitations on what you could ask a junior or entry level role to do.

“They can be a helpful extra pair of hands in the team but only with the right in house support and the time needed for this should not be underestimated.”

Training and awareness

Most employers felt that additional training and support opportunities for the Kickstarters outside of their work was needed around employability skills such as time management, work ethic as well as options to upskill in areas of interest or relevant to the work setting. This was particularly important to small businesses, or for organisations where there was only one placement.

However some employers liked the flexibility of organising their own training package and using the set up costs towards laptops and individual and group training. The purchase of new laptops provided a legacy for future staff. It worked better having a number of young people at the same time, as it takes the same amount of training and gives them peer to peer confidence and feeling of not being alone.

In some cases, this was the first time an employer had taken on a young person in an early stage in their career, and needed to think differently about how they communicated, structured the placement and managed expectations. This also included thinking differently about individual learning needs and ways of communication, and removing the use of jargon.

Length of placement

There was a mixed response around the length of the placement. Some smaller organisations felt the required hours was a stretch for a small part time team, all of whom worked less than the Kickstarter but nonetheless the 6 months felt appropriate and achievable when working on a project by project basis.

Other employers would have preferred a longer placement to fit in with programming, or the option to choose the number of hours worked a week. For instance, having both a shorter part time working week and the ability to expand to longer hours would have been useful. One employer wanted to extend a placement but didn’t have the budget but suggested this may have been more viable in part-funding the role with the DWP.

INCREASED CAPACITY

The 21 organisations covered the whole of Gloucestershire and ranged in size from a SME who took on their first PAYE employee to larger organisations such as Cheltenham Festivals. Overwhelmingly, employers expressed the benefit of having extra capacity, particularly after lockdown when many organisations in the arts and cultural sector were just starting to re-open and rebuild their teams.

Many organisations were down to a skeleton staff so the Kickstarters provided a huge benefit and an “extra pair of hands” to many small businesses without the financial risk.

“

“My Kickstarters were hugely beneficial for me at a time where we were suddenly back at work and busy, but still feeling like the industry could be shut back down at any minute. I was able to increase the capacity of my team without the financial risk that employing someone at that time would have been (and I wouldn’t have done it). It’s also given team members leadership experience, as they had to step up.”

”

“We got a brilliant young person to support/help us at the Museum and we hope to retain him.”

“It gave us the opportunity to develop young staff within our organisation and build capacity.”

“Young people can bring energy, enthusiasm and relevance to any creative endeavour”.



DIVERSIFYING THE TEAM

In most cases, the employers feel the Kickstarters have contributed greatly to their diversity ambitions and had a positive impact on their teams and workplaces. Some employers cited how recruiting a young person brought fresh perspectives into their workplaces which helped them begin to make changes such as safe spaces or bringing in more flexible working practices.

“It's also been brilliant at diversifying the team both in terms of age and cultural backgrounds - their opinions about the business have been hugely helpful.”

They also said the young people came with another benefit which was to bring ideas to help them to better connect with a younger audience.

Many employers would not have been able to recruit from a diverse background without the support of Kickstart and enable them to broaden their talent pipeline.

“Each of the interns has brought something very different to our organisation. In the first round they were all very different to one another - A was lacking initiative but full of enthusiasm, B brought an entirely new role with him and we've missed this role since he has finished here. In the second round, C has been terrifically thorough and diligent although still so lacking in self-confidence (although a world of difference from when they first started) and D has brought a new role to our organisation.”

“Young people bring a different viewpoint and energy. Giving an opportunity for young people aligned well to our values as an organisation. This was needed after the pandemic and gave us the boost we needed. It also increased diversity within the team - bringing different experiences, backgrounds and ways of being.”





**Recommendations
& Future Plans**

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. Recruitment phase

- More support at application stage for individual candidates to avoid bias towards candidates who are already capable of finding work
- Follow on support for unsuccessful candidates who were unsure how to progress further
- More briefing information on candidates – skill level and individual health needs. Employers felt ill-equipped to offer support
- Clarity about levels of skills/qualifications – what is meant by an entry level job particularly in the arts and creative industries
- Pre-Kickstart intro course – employability skills such as time management/keeping, holidays, work expectations, ethic, presentation, and confidence building
- Clearer recruitment process for employers and applicants
- Open recruitment process – roles based on skills and interests
- Simplified form filling
- More understanding of the processes of the DWP



2. Ongoing support and training

FOR EMPLOYERS

- Ongoing support, resources and guidance on employing young people with additional learning and emotional needs
- One platform for all processes and documents (as a Gateway)
- Peer support around shared learning/ networking / dealing with specific issues
- Shared resources for employability and skills training or a directory of companies providing good practice in this area
- Understanding of the role and responsibilities of DWP and JCP and individual contacts
- Additional pastoral and HR support such as advice on setting up PAYE, rates of pay, contracts and other HR processes around sick and holiday pay
- Regular checking in and ongoing Gateway support for employees and employers
- Clarity of expectations around training – each Gateway had a different offer

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

- More formal training offered centrally to supplement the work placement e.g. time management, professional behaviour, work ethic and clarity if compulsory
- Regular opportunities to come together across the local area to share experiences and network

3. Placements

- Flexibility to choose number of hours worked a week
- Longer placements to fit in with programming or organisational requirements
- Flexibility around training offer

4. Other

- Brokering organisation that can match young artists with SME's

FUTURE PLANS:

As the programme has now closed, Create Gloucestershire is keen to learn from Kickstart, and continue this conversation around how we make the shift from the stop starts of a grant funded talent development and job creation model to a social investment funded model. We would really value your insights into how this might work in Gloucestershire to help young people take their first step in the arts and cultural sector.

For more information about what we have found out, or to be involved in future plans then please email: louise@creategloucestershire.co.uk

For further information

Find out more about the Kickstart Scheme here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/kickstart-scheme>

