

# Overview of Cultural Education Partnerships in the South East

## Section 1:

### What are Cultural Education Partnerships?

Local Cultural Education Partnerships (LCEPs) were launched nationally in 2015 in response to Arts Council England's Cultural Education Challenge. There are currently 118 locality-specific partnerships established across England, with 15 in the South East region. All focus on supporting children and young people's arts and cultural opportunities.

LCEPs are supported by a national network of Bridge organisations, funded by Arts Council England (ACE) to connect the cultural and education sectors so that children and young people can have access to great arts and cultural opportunities. Artswork is the Bridge organisation for the South East.

Each LCEP, or CEP as they are more

commonly known, is unique, but all of them bring together partners from a range of sectors, including:

- Arts and culture
- Education
- Local Authorities

The CEP model is one of strategic co-working, making the most of available resources, ensuring they are focused where need exists and can be met.

#### CEP Aims:

To provide more, better, arts and cultural opportunities for children and young people, particularly those most in need, and for this to be achieved through locality-based partnerships.

There are a range of partnership working practices across the South East. CEPs were defined as a combination of the following by a range of South East CEP members:

**An on-going dialogue:** a process of collaboration and co-working; a place where people and organisations working, or interested in, arts and culture for children and young people, can meet, exchange, connect, plan, invent and inform, on an on-going basis;

**A funded partnership-based project platform:** a platform enabling organisations (principally local authorities, arts and cultural organisations) to come together to run projects (principally with schools), whose funding requires them to be run by partnerships;

**A partner/member-supporting agency:** a central set of people and services which support a group of stakeholders, interested in arts and cultural opportunities for children and young people, to develop that interest and build capacity towards it;

**A common identity for arts and cultural learning:** a shared umbrella identity for a collection of otherwise diverse organisations and individuals; a convenient one-stop-shop where schools and others can discover opportunities and support.

**“ We believe that all children and young people should be able to experience great art and culture. Cultural education fosters creativity and innovation, unlocking vital skills that drive the creative industries. ”**

Arts Council England's  
Cultural Education Challenge

---

## Local partnership contexts

All Cultural Education Partnerships are focused on their specific locality. This local focus, coupled with the different roles and experiences of CEP members, means that each CEP operates within a unique context. Common points of difference include:

### Timeframe

Some CEPs have been running since before the Cultural Education Challenge, others are currently being established.

### Geography

Some CEPs operate within single cities, others across large, mainly rural, counties. Each CEP has its own socio-economic demography, although the majority, especially where initiated by the local Bridge, are in areas of socio-economic need and/or deprivation.

### Arts and cultural context

A few CEPs are in areas with a significant

arts and cultural offer, large numbers of National Portfolio Organisations and other Arts Council England-funded organisations, whereas others have very little of this existing infrastructure.

### Arts and cultural collaboration

In some CEP areas there is a strong tradition of arts and cultural organisations collaborating. In others, there is more of a sense of independence and sometimes competition. In some areas, there is roughly one organisation per artform/specialism, minimising competitive overlap. In others, individual organisations are more focused on their particular agendas.

### Relevant existing networks

Where these exist, CEPs invariably have a particular job to do in identifying how the CEP fits within, or alongside, existing networks to avoid duplication. In areas that don't have networks already in place, the CEP has a much more extensive job to initially pull people together.

### Broader infrastructure

The existence of other relevant infrastructure, such as universities and creative sector economy, has a big impact on both how CEPs evolve and the resources they can draw on.

### Local authority

Local authorities' support for CEPs, arts and culture, and arts and cultural learning, varies significantly. Several are hosted and maintained by local authorities; others have little involvement or support from their local authorities.

### Sources of funding

Some CEPs are based in areas where ACE has particular strategic focus, or there are other government-supported focuses. Some are in areas where there is significant private/philanthropic support for arts and culture, whereas others are in areas where there is little. CEPs also vary in the extent to which they've been able to leverage funds from outside the arts and cultural sector.

---

## Section 2:

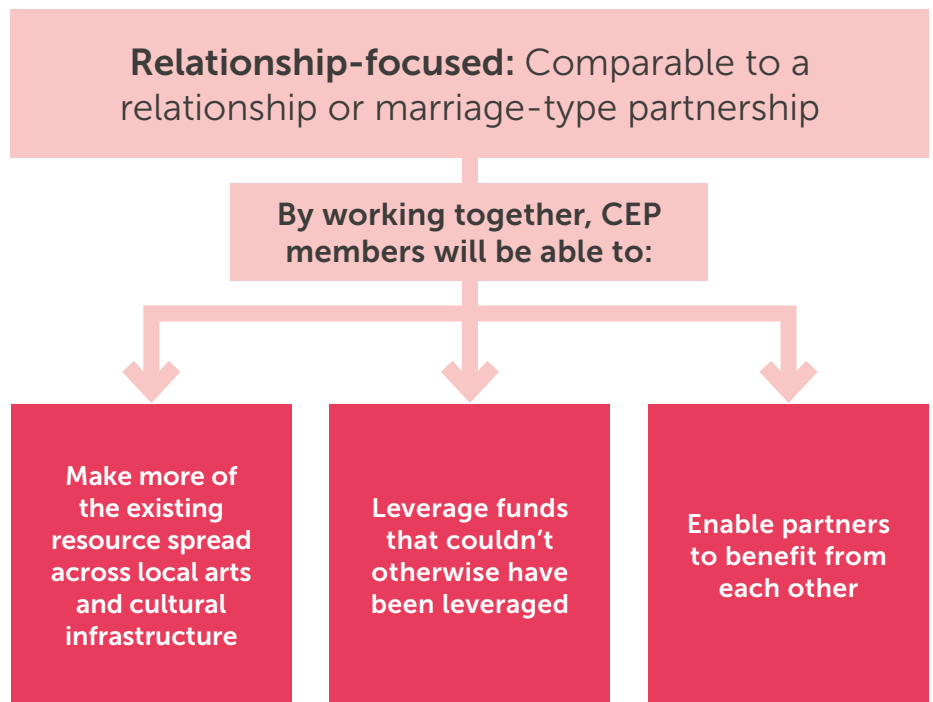
## Development of Cultural Education Partnerships

### Why form a Cultural Education Partnership?

All Cultural Education Partnerships (CEPs) represent a partnership between a number of organisations and individuals, all with differing needs. The CEP focus on creative opportunities for children and young people is critical in persuading individuals and organisations to take part, and is often key to making them successful. Partnerships take a lot of time, effort and money to form, but are ultimately more effective than organisations working individually.

CEPs facilitate greater connectivity and sharing of existing resource. Synergies emerge where the partnership can become more than the sum of its parts and achieve a greater net impact.

The reasons for forming a CEP fall into two categories:



“ Here’s a challenge, opportunity or need and to respond to that challenge, we’re going to need an architect, a builder, a plumber, an electrician, and a manager, bricks, pipes etc. – multiple skills and resources.

As partners are grouping around a generic aim, the first task is to work out where they should focus within this remit. In many cases, partnerships in arts and cultural learning are brought together around a specific task/project.



### Developing a CEP partnership

All CEPs have been encouraged to form a partnership that responds to the local context, and its needs, resources and knowledge.

In order to be effective, CEPs need to start with an extensive strategic development period, carefully considering their aims:

- **Local need:** What are the particular needs when it comes to arts and cultural provision for children and young people? What resources and knowledge are in place, or can be put in place, to meet this need?
- **Working together:** It’s important for all CEP partners to formalise

how they will work together, and indeed the majority of funding available for CEPs requires them to already have Terms of Reference or a Memorandum of Understanding in place. In many cases, it takes significant effort to get these agreements in place.

- **Organisations involved:** CEP membership varies extensively, and the make-up of an individual CEP will have an impact on the work that can be carried out. Some are primarily made up of arts and cultural organisations, some have strong school membership, and some have broad cross-sectoral participation from health, police and social

care. Around half are led by local authorities, whereas others have little or no local authority participation.

- **Partnership structure:** The way partnerships function varies from CEP to CEP. They could be relatively informal networks or formalised consortia. Others have formed, or are poised to form, entirely new organisations. Some are combinations of all three.

Coming to an initial agreement between CEP members on where to focus and how to proceed, requires considerable time and work. It takes CEPs in the South East an average of two years to reach an ‘Established’ stage (see Fig.1 below).

Figure 1: Average time (months) a CEP spends on each development stage as defined for Arts Council England’s monitoring



---

## Section 3: Cultural Education Partnerships in practice

The ultimate aim for all CEPs is to ensure access to more, better arts and cultural opportunities for the children and young people in their specific locality. Interviews carried out with a number of South East CEP members in 2019 largely echo this:

### Q. What is the purpose of a Cultural Education Partnership?

“ A means and a structure of bringing arts and cultural organisations together under one roof, where it was lacking before, to consider ways of working together

“ Bringing together arts and cultural organisations, schools, and others to bring about a change for arts education for children and young people

“ Increasing the provision of arts and cultural opportunities for children and young people

“ To support children and young people to access and engage with arts and culture and to develop their creative potential

---

In order to meet these aims, the work carried out by CEPs in the South East tends to fall into three broad groups. (These are not mutually exclusive):

#### 1. Develop

Developing arts and cultural opportunities for children and young people in greatest need including opportunities to develop careers in the creative industries.

#### 2. Harness

Harnessing arts and culture's potential to address other challenges, such as mental health and well-being, or crime and antisocial behaviour.

#### 3. Build

Building capacity of schools, arts and cultural organisations, and others, principally by bringing their resources and expertise together more effectively so as to work towards (1.) and/or (2.).

From conversations carried out with CEPs in the South East, there seem to be three principal ways that CEPs work to meet this aim:

#### 1. Synergising

Making the existing resource and expertise present across the CEP go further by bringing it together more effectively and strategically.

#### 2. Mobilising

Enabling, empowering and influencing people and organisations, within or outside the CEP, to change what they do by, for example, training teachers or persuading health commissioners to support arts and culture.

#### 3. Delivering

Running projects across the CEP partnership that provide arts and cultural opportunities for children and young people.

Delivering is a very significant part of many CEPs' programmes. Many funds, including those that originate from Arts Council England, imply or require some element of delivery.

Some interviewees report that delivery is often what is required to enable synergising and mobilisation:

- If, for example, partners do not have a history of working together, a shared delivery project can be the glue that brings them together;
- It is often experiencing or observing delivery projects that mobilises schools to want to develop arts and cultural provision, or non-arts agencies to want to harness arts and culture.

Beyond delivery, CEPs can also have significant impact through creating synergies and mobilising others. CEPs need to consider the balance between Synergising, Mobilising and Delivering when creating their strategies.

## About this work

The content for this resource has been drawn from a longer developmental evaluation that was commissioned by Artsworld and undertaken by Ben Sandbrook/World Pencil in 2019 to identify what happens, and what works, in setting up and running a Cultural Education Partnership (CEP) in the South East. The research has been undertaken through data and written materials analysis, 26 semi-structured interviews with Artsworld and CEP representatives, and an online survey completed by 30 CEP representatives.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**

# WorldPencil