

YOUNG CAMDEN FOUNDATION

Digital Youth Work Fund (DYWF) Report 2020



Chief Executive statement

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic we were determined not to react impulsively, but instead to focus our attention on finding out what our members needed and be fast and highly adaptive in our response.

From the conversations we were having with our members, it was clear that there were varying degrees of knowledge and experience on the topic of transforming a predominantly face-to-face youth service to one that is partly/wholly digital. There was interest in the notion, but little clarity about what a good digital youth work offer should look like, how to maintain safeguarding measures, and how to rapidly train-up staff.

Young Camden Foundation was pleased to launch the Digital Youth Work Fund sponsored by Google, to support the local children and young people sector with building or enhancing a digital youth work offer.

At the time of launching the fund, digital youth work did not exist at scale in Camden, but there was a strong desire to build a portal that could have several functions including, facilitating youth work sessions online, providing a hub of accessible resources, and a centre for learning for both youth practitioners and young people.

We believe that the current social distancing rules represent an opportunity for organisations to provide good quality online activities and support to local children and young people. New online support channels will offer young people and children a way to keep engaged with positive and safe online activities.

I'm pleased that almost 900 children and young people have benefited from this unique fund, but know that the digital divide is still holding back some children. We will continue to pursue opportunities to invest in the children and young people sector, with a particular focus on supporting more young people to develop the skills required for the future job market.

I hope that you find this report interesting and are inspired by the projects that are featured.



KEITH MORGAN

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE
YOUNG CAMDEN FOUNDATION**

"Now more than ever, having access to digital tools and resources can have a transformative impact on people's lives. We're excited to be working with the Young Camden Foundation to help young people navigate the accelerated digital transformation." Zoe Stern, Community Engagement Lead, Google UK

Background and purpose

With the outbreak of COVID-19 (coronavirus) and the impact the virus is having on civil society there is an acute danger for the children and young people (CYP) sector to feel overwhelmed and powerless. However, this is the time when positive thinking, cross-partnership working, and rapid mobilisation is required. At the beginning of the pandemic many local community organisations closed their service because they either no longer had the human resources or lacked the expertise to restructure their service or repurpose their assets. Their biggest concern was what will happen when young people have nowhere to go, very little to do, and few people to talk to about the anxiety they are feeling in relation to the outbreak.

There is a general belief that most if not all young people are ‘digital natives.’ Research shows that 90% of young adults (16-24yrs old) in the UK has access to a smartphone and only 3% are not using the internet. Despite this, there are an estimated 300,000 young people who do not have basic digital skills.

Demand for digital skills already outstrips the supply of available talent, despite high levels of youth unemployment and the ability for young people in Europe to move easily across the EU in search of work. The EU Digital Skills and Job Coalition reports that 37% of EU workers have insufficient digital skills and there are clear signs that the digital skills gap is widening. By 2021, there could be almost 500,000 unfilled digital technology jobs in Europe.

In May 2020, Young Camden Foundation (YCF) launched a Digital Youth Work Fund (DYWF) with the following objectives:

- Co-produce a digital youth work resource centre that is accessible, inclusive, and sustainable
- Equip youth practitioners with the online tools required to continue the delivery of key elements of their youth work provision
- Partner the local CYP sector with major tech company to cohere the wide spectrum of youth sector provision into one easy portal of engagement and communication for young people.

Partnership with Google UK

In May, Google UK sponsored the development of a YCF Digital Resource Centre that will support the local children and young people sector with building or enhancing a digital youth work offer. YCF published details of the fund in its newsletter which has 250 subscribers. The fund was also promoted through other local newsletters including the Voluntary Action Camden weekly newsletter, London Borough of Camden community team newsletter and Funding Central, and the NCVO’s funding news.

YCF received **13 applications** from different local organisations, and a total of **£60,993** was requested. YCF’s grants panel made up young people, and community organisations, and grants committee made up of YCF trustees awarded a total of **£32,833** to **11 organisations**. As the request for funding was greater than what YCF had to distribute, the panel made the difficult decision to cap awarded grants at £2,500 in order to fund as many of the projects as possible. YCF also contributed £2,833 of core funding to help make up the difference and transferred two applications to YCF Summer Opportunities Fund.

895 children and young people directly benefited from this fund.

In addition to the Digital Youth Work Fund, YCF received support from Google UK to:

- Develop a central portal of resources for organisations to build or enhance their digital youth work offer – please see here for more details
<https://youngcamdenfoundation.org.uk/projects/all>
- Cohere the wide spectrum of youth sector provision in the borough into one easy portal of engagement and communication for young people – please see here for more details
<https://youngcamdenfoundation.org.uk/blog/>

Applications and beneficiaries at a glance

YCF received 13 applications from different local organisations
A total of £ 60,993 was requested.

Numbers at a glance	
Total applied for:	60,993
Total approved:	32,833
Number of applications	15
Successful applications:	11
Success rate:	73.3%

Project proposals received can be placed into three categories – support to develop online youth provision, access to digital equipment, and training and peer-to-peer projects

Number and Type of projects	
Online activities (Football, video skills, dance etc)	4
Training and peer to peer projects (radio and film making)	2
Access to digital equipment	5

Maximising reach was a priority of the fund – beneficiaries included BAME young people, children with Special Education Needs, and young people from low income households

Successful Organisations	Age group targeted	Number of young people, children or staff benefiting from this project	Notes
1 Bloomsbury Football Foundation	3 to 14	100	BME
2 Pro Touch	7 to 25	100	BME & SEN
3 Small Green Shoots	12 to 13	65	
4 Dragon Hall	8 to 17	50	
5 Yes Outdoors	9 to 17	110	Includes SEN
6 Sidings Community Centre	11 to 19	40	Includes SEN & BAME
7 The Thanet Youth and Community Centre	9 to 17	110	Includes BAME & SEN
8 WacArts	10 to 26	250	Deprived YP
9 Summer and Winter through NW5	10 to 18	20	Girls
10 Somali Youth Development Resource Centre	11 to 15	30	BAME
11 SHAK Youth Club	9 to 19	20	
Total number of children and young people:		895	

Funded projects

WAC Arts Online

On 17th March 2020 we closed our building, suspending our face-to-face performing arts engagement, for young people aged 5-30, with a commitment to those facing the greatest barriers to participation (whether physical, social, or economic). Recognising that our most vulnerable beneficiaries (for example, those with disabilities) were disproportionately affected by Covid-19, we redeployed our Programme Team to develop Wac Arts Online, a new creative programme providing:

- Weekly online creative sessions for young people with SEND

- 1:1 video/telephone advocacy and buddying support for young people with SEND
- Online Youth Forum meetings

The DYWF supported the scaling up of Wac Arts Online, and the launch of participatory creative workshops (led by artists from diverse backgrounds) covering wide-ranging art forms including:

- Weekend family dance sessions
- Spoken word writing and performance workshop
- Podcast production for 'Pirate WA web radio'

Pro Touch online football coaching

Since the mid-March lock-down, Pro Touch has delivered over 100 hours reaching over 200 plus members (we have over 900), with videos viewed over 20,000 times across various media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn. The DYWF helped to extend our programme to 150 more young people, contributing to the following components of the programme:

- Live and recorded football skills masterclass sessions
- Sports pack – registered participants can request sports pack to use to participate in the masterclasses. Packs included a football, football cones and water bottles
- Group sessions – we will host a series of topical conversations about different issues impacting young people e.g. Covid-19, BLM etc. These topics are chosen and led by our young apprentices
- Phone 1-2-1 check-in – we will offer registered participants weekly 1-2-1 check-in sessions to discuss concerns they may be facing during this difficult period.

SHAK – The Lockdown tapes

Young people have been particularly affected by the crisis. A recent survey found that out of 2,000 young people nationally 83% said that the pandemic had made their mental health worse. The DYWF funded the Lockdown tapes project, an opportunity for young people to record and share their experience of the pandemic and lockdown. These stories provided an outlet for young people struggling to cope and encouraged other young people to talk about how they are feeling to friends and family. Through the fund youth workers attended training on digital recording practices with young people and were able to purchase the required equipment.

Summer and Wynter – tackling digital divide

Working with NW5 Project, we initiated a campaign to address digital poverty amongst our fellow students at La Saint Union School in Camden. With schools closing and classes moving to online, we know that there are 36 students that do not have access to any type of technology to keep up with schoolwork. We know a further 76 students that have to share technology with their family members, which can be up to 5 people sharing one device. The DYWF contributed to the purchase of devices, dongles and software required for these students to stay on track with schoolwork.

Covent Garden Dragon Hall Trust – Media Production Project

Since Covid-19 we have moved our activities online, using zoom and video production to share our experience and to support each other. We know that there are groups of young people that will want to continue to engage in youth activities remotely, and there is an opportunity to engage with young people new to our service. We therefore used the DYWF to expand our Audio-Visual programme and transition the delivery from face-to-face to online. Through the programme we delivered weekly and monthly tech and coding Clubs, and CoderDojo sessions supported by volunteers. The young people learnt about Python programming, Micro Bits and Raspberry Pi.

YES Outdoors technology appeal and digital homework club

There is ongoing demand for access to technology such as computers and laptops as young people struggle to use small phone screens when doing work. We are lucky to have had a number of iPads and laptops donated. Our collection scheme makes it easier for people to donate, and we use volunteers to collect the devices, technical staff do the wiping and cleaning, and volunteers to coordinate the distribution. We used the DYWF to increase the number of devices purchased and distributed to families that need them most.

We run a popular homework club and mentoring programme out of the Thanet Youth Club, which we've had to close as a result of the pandemic. We used the DYWF to transition this face-to-face support to digital.

Small Green Shoots – Leveling Up projects

At Small Green Shoots, we champion BME young people from low-income households providing them with real-life training, education and access to employment opportunities in the creative industry. Our Young Shoots live in overcrowded housing, have limited opportunities, are NEET (not in education, employment or training) and often have little digital access at home. We work to build

their confidence, connect them with local businesses, community organisations, creative professionals and other public bodies.

We used the DYWF to develop a new project called Levelling Up. This project gave young people from deprived backgrounds an opportunity to learn vital skills within the music industry with the support of local creative business professionals and producers. The new skills young people developed included, managing online presence, staging events, developing digital content, outreach and networking safely online.

Lighthouse – Camden Spear Digital programme

We currently provide the award-winning six-week employment readiness Spear programme. This equips disadvantaged young people with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to secure long term employment and to rebuild their lives. The course includes writing a strong CV, dealing with conflict and communication and presentation skills. Coaches negotiate work placements and apprenticeships and a company visit and provide one-to-one mentoring support. Business managers test the interview skills and work readiness of participants.

Over 75% of those who complete the Programme get into work or further education and are still there a year later. The trainees receive a year of support to help them find and succeed in work. The DYWF enhanced the offer to young people by enabling us to deliver, and for young people to participate in the programme online.

Bloomsbury Football Foundation

We use the power of football to improve young people's lives. To provide additional support to the 1,400 children we work with, we used the DYWF to launch Bloomsbury Academy Online. The programme of online football activity which can be undertaken by children in their own homes, included:

- Daily Challenge Skill Videos
- Online Video Training Sessions accessed through our YouTube channel
- Live Strength and Conditioning Classes - A series of live-streamed classes for players once a week
- Live 'Off Pitch' Webinars/Lessons - Fortnightly sessions that focus on educating our players about all the other aspects of the football – including behaviour, motivation, tactics and physical and mental well-being
- Virtual Coaching and Analysis - Specific one to one analysis and coaching for the children with our Academy.

Unloc – Digital Enterprise programme

Unloc is a non-profit social enterprise working to support the development of young people's skills, potential and boosting their determination to succeed. We deliver programmes on career pathways, enterprise, leadership, and youth voice to young people in school, college, and community settings. The DYWF helped us to transition our face-to-face programme to a digital offer. We incorporated self-guided tools, such as an e-learning website and Google Classroom to enable the continuation of the programme. We also used the DYWF to invest in the development of 'live' digital support for young people including:

- Training for our youth work facilitators on the use of 'live' digital tools such as Google Meet
- Essential hardware for the delivery of live and recorded sessions, including suitable cameras (where laptop cameras aren't sufficient), microphones & earphones
- Creating templates and adapting digital resources to better suit 'live' delivery

Sidings – Embedding digital skills within our youth club

Lockdown brought a sharp emphasis on digital skills and engagement. We wanted to embed digital skills within our youth club programme, responding to a request from our members during lockdown. The DYWF helped to:

- Improve our youth workers ability in delivering safe online engagement by undertaking NSPCC online safety training.
- Inform young people how to use the internet and social media safely
- Offer a suite of online advice and support on how to manage mental health
- Continue the delivery of our "Be Internet Citizen's" course designed by Google with a small number of young people
- Purchase lap-tops to enable young people to have use of computers for study and digital projects

Somali Youth Development Resource Centre

We provide advice, information, and activities for young Somali people with the objective of preventing under-achievement, exclusion, and involvement in drugs and crime. We used the DYWF to teach young people new skills to help them develop and grow and keep busy during the lockdown. This included, film editing, photoshop and graphic design. The programme focused on providing non-traditional activities for young people that challenged and expanded their expectations and horizons through training and accreditations in technology and the arts, continuing their STEAM learning whilst in lockdown

Measuring impact – sample of case studies, videos and personal stories

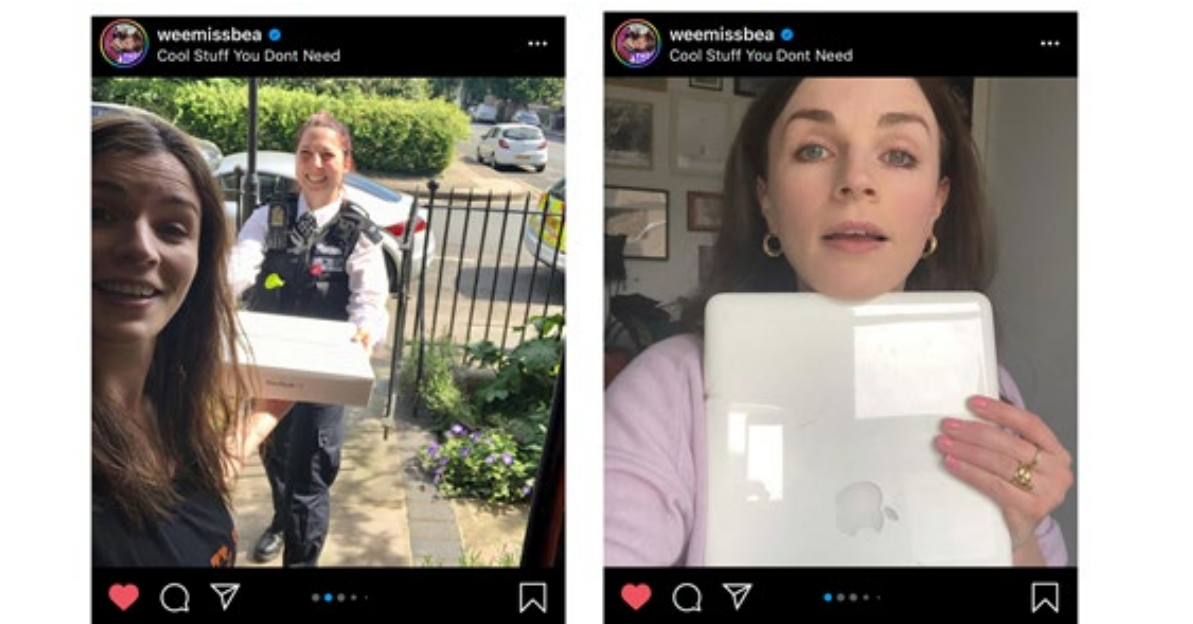
YES Outdoors technology appeal

So far, we have collected and distributed over sixty items to young people across the Camden and Islington. We have worked with Camden Early Help, The Roundhouse and other charities to supply much needed technology to enable more young people to get online.



We have purchased dongles with prepaid sim-cards to enable young people without internet to get online. Our campaign came to the notice of Annie Mac (Radio1 DJ) and Ashing Bea (Channel 4 comedian) who boosted the amount of technology offers due to their big social media following.

[Click here to see how we did it](#)



YES Outdoors mentoring and digital homework club

We have been running twice weekly sessions with up to 10 young people online per session. We have a youth worker and schoolteacher who offer extra support both emotionally and academically.

[Click here to learn more](#)



SHAK – The Lockdown tapes

Twelve young people took part in producing ‘the lockdown tapes’, a podcast that shined a light on young people’s experience of the pandemic and the national lockdown. Young people coordinated the peer interviews using digital recording technology and editing software to produce a podcast for the public to download. The podcast was designed for people to gain a better insight into the experiences of the community on the Alexandra and Ainsworth estate in Camden during lockdown.

[Click here to listen to one of the interviews](#)



Bloomsbury Football Foundation

Whilst we have a vibrant community of highly engaged children and young people the national lockdown meant that all face to face football activity stopped. Pitches were closed and there was limited to no opportunities to engage in sport and football. For some of the children we support, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, they do not have gardens or access to any significant outdoor space. In recognition of this, the majority of our digital coaching and football skills masterclass session were designed to improve participants football skills in any space.

[Click here to see some of our skills sessions](#)





Wac Arts

Empowering young people to change their world through the arts

The launch of Wac Arts Online

On March 17th, in line with UK Government guidance, Wac Arts made the difficult decision to close our building, suspend all face-to-face provision and cancel all upcoming performances and events, until further notice. The full scale of the imposed lockdown, and the impact this would have upon our community, began to be realised. We redeployed our Engagement Team, to adapt our way of working, and within 3-weeks, launched our new provision: **Wac Arts Online** – a new online, integrated, accessible participatory arts programme, co-created with our beneficiaries through consultation and feedback.

Participation

From March – July, Wac Arts Online has provided more than 32 hours of live online creative engagement, enabling more than 100 young people to stay active, inspired and connected, during this time of crisis.

All activities have been free, removing financial barriers and promoting open access. Many sessions have invited young people to participate alongside their family, from the safety of their home, with more than 50 households taking part.



“Thank you so much for giving them back part of their normal routine lives that they miss, in such a great accessible way”
- Parent of a Wac Arts Online participant

Engagement

We have delivered 8 online **Creative Workshops**, covering a range of creative art forms, while exploring themes and issues relevant to our young people, their personal, social and cultural interests. Led by a team of Associate Artists alongside Wac Arts expert staff, highlights have included:



Cocojam - Street style family dance sessions: led by dancer, choreographer and artistic director Jade Hackett. This high energy Zoom dance workout, helped to promote physical fitness, and creative expression for all ages and abilities.

“Such a joyful way to start the weekend with really great, clear and fun teaching”
- Wac Arts Online dance participant

Yoga and mindfulness sessions: led by movement artist and qualified instructor Letty Mitchell. This art form was identified by our young people, in relation to promoting mental wellbeing. The sessions welcomed all levels, providing a safe space to try something new.

Confidential Case Study

In collaboration with performance artist ‘**Ida Barr**’ aka Christopher Green, Wac Arts produced a new community Radio Show; **Radio Barr Barr**. Wac Arts young people, friends, artists and community members were encouraged to submit ideas, and three community members were invited to a recording session to discuss interesting topics, perform, and share their stories with host Ida Barr.

S, a young person engaged in Wac Arts Over 18’s Inclusion programme for young people with SEND, enthusiastically took part in Episode 1 performing a rap about his experience of Wac Arts. Prior to talking to Ida Barr, S had a 1:1 session with Wac Arts staff to support him in writing his rap and preparing his performance. On taking part, S said;
“I had really good fun and enjoyed every part.”

The session was recorded and a podcast made available [online](#), via Sound cloud. Wac Arts e-newsletter shared information about accessing the podcast with more than 1800 community members.





Wac Nites Online

Typically 20% of the young people Wac Arts engage identify as disabled - recognising how the pandemic and lockdown measures disproportionately impacted this group we developed a bespoke online offer, adapting our weekly face-to-face creative classes for 14-18 and 18-30 year olds with additional needs, to weekly online sessions.

The ethos of the sessions was to provide a safe space for creative exploration, while maintaining the vital social interaction of those engaged. We provided 10, 2-hour creative Zoom sessions, offering music, dance, art, animation, and drama activities, for 25 young people. For some young people this was the only opportunity for them to interact outside of their families, and allowed them to share their feelings, and express themselves. You can see a snippet of our April sessions in a short video on Wac Arts [Vimeo](#).

"Personally, I've enjoyed the escapist atmosphere for two hours every week where we focussed on seeing smiling faces and having fun outside the ever uncertain stream of news and updates happening around us. The end of term fancy dress Zoom party was really fun and even James Bond turned up!"

- Wac Nites Online Lead Tutor

"I got to interact with people and it gave me a lot of fun things to do"

- Wac Nites Online participant

Collaboration

Our new remote working and online delivery has opened up new conversations about creative collaborations and partnerships. Wac Arts Online has seen us engaged with five new associate artists, working across different art forms, and presentation formats (audio and visual), brining a wealth of experience and welcoming innovation.

We adapted our partnership plans with **Fitzrovia Youth in Action**, and launched our new peer education programme online, with their support. We have delivered 4, 1-hour sessions bringing together young people to discuss and address mental health during COVID-19. The group are now developing a film to advise the wider Wac Arts Community on how to stay connected and access support during this challenging time.

Consultation

Our online provision is a new strand of activity for Wac Arts, and continues to develop in shape and scope through the ongoing consultation with our community, during sessions, via surveys, through conversation and feedback.

One young person, said that participating in Wac Arts Online helped them feel more socially connected, creative and that it positively impacted their health and wellbeing through allowing them to take part in exercise and engage with others. They also said that their financial security had been impacted by COVID-19, so it was great that they were able to take part in the activities for free.

- Anonymous survey respondent, Wac Arts Online participant

Youth Voice is a project committed to ensuring authentic youth Governance at Wac Arts. Our Youth Voice Forum brings together young people from across our programmes to regularly discuss, and challenge, Wac Arts practice and programming. To help us better understand the priorities of young people during lockdown, and in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, we hosted an online meeting. Young people in attendance articulated the need to support young people's mental health and wellbeing, which led to the programming of dance and yoga, progression with our peer education programme, while emphasising the need for School Holiday provision.

Organisational resilience

In addition to our creative engagement we have adapted and developed our internal processes, to ensure we can maintain best practice and reach the greatest number of beneficiaries. Our staff have received internal training, and learnt new digital skills, and we have developed a robust and relevant 'Safeguarding in Extraordinary Times' procedure, responding to the new way of working online. We are holding regular wellbeing sessions for our Engagement Team to come together, share their learning and reflect on current situation, and the increased challenges our young people are facing.

As a member of London Youth, we were invited to deliver an online training session to more than 20 London Youth members on creative inclusive online engagement, recognising our innovation, and adapted expertise within the sector.

Staff will soon be attending Psychological First Aid Training, to further enrich their knowledge for engagement during a pandemic, as well as Digital Strategy Training, as we implement online services in our long-term engagement plan.

Outcomes

Wac Arts Online has provided a safe, and nurturing online learning environment for more than 100 young people and their families, supporting;

Improved relationships:

- Positive, trusting relationships with adults
- Broader understanding of other's needs and abilities
- Healthy peer relationships
- Collaborative working
- Friendship

Improved mental health, resilience and wellbeing:

- Social connectivity addressing isolation
- Structure and routine
- Self-confidence
- Ambition

Increased engagement:

- Invested, committed to creative art forms
- Ownership and leadership

"My Son really enjoyed Wac Arts Online. He felt depressed about lockdown and your online sessions were a lifeline. It made him feel much better. Thank you"

- Parent of Wac Nites Online participant



"Wac Arts Online has proven to be invaluable in terms of our future programme development. Our Online provision has enabled us to engage with young people of a variety of ages, in households, with their families. It has offered opportunities for young people isolated in ordinary circumstances to connect with their peers, and for this reason we are excited to be continuing a blended offer of online and in-person engagement, for the foreseeable future"

- Wac Arts Director of Programmes, Lindsey Pugh

Next Steps

Wac Arts Online was an innovation borne of necessity; however its model has proven to be very popular among our beneficiaries, and as we continue to adapt to the new normal, it will remain a core part of our ongoing engagement provision. From September, we will be welcoming our community back into our building, thoroughly risk assessed and following Government recommendations. With social distancing measures, and teaching bubbles, we will not be able to operate in our former way, and will be offering a blended offer of face-to-face engagement onsite, and online activities. We are working with our community to trial this safe model, and ensure the maximum amount of young people maintain access to arts opportunities.

In addition, we are launching a new 'Virtual Gallery', showcasing the creative work of our beneficiaries and associate artists. This will include a short film showcasing the buildings' activity during the pandemic as a PPE factory, re-purposed by the Royal Free NHS Trust, with support from a host of volunteers making more than 50,000 scrubs for healthcare workers. Wac Arts commissioned a videographer to capture this significant moment in history, and produce a short film for us to share with our beneficiaries, to help them understand what was happening, why they could not visit, and how the building they love was supporting the wider community during the pandemic. The film is due to be released in early September, as part of our Virtual Gallery and phased re-launch of face-to-face engagement.

Thank you so much for
supporting WAC Arts.
Its made me less isolated.
I look forward to it every
week.

- Wac Nites Online participant

From us to you, thank you

A very special thank you to all those individuals, trusts and foundations who have chosen to support us during this challenging period, and been advocates for the youth, arts and cultural sectors, including;

Arts Council England, Bloomberg, D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, Foyle Foundation, Hampstead and Wells Camden Trust, John Lyons Charity, Morris Charitable Trust, National Lottery Community Fund, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Taurus Foundation, The Childhood Trust and the Young Camden Foundation.



www.WacArts.co.uk
@WacArts

SPECIAL THANK YOU TO GOOGLE UK

We want to say a big thank you to Google UK for sponsoring the Digital Resources Centre and Digital Youth Work Fund.

This is a new partnership that I am extremely excited about because of the mutuality of our visions for young people's relationship with and use of technology.

Digital youth work is not a new concept however, it has scarcely been used as a form of expanding and diversifying engagement with young people. This is mostly because of limited resources as a result of depreciating levels of investment in youth work generally. So, it has been a unique and rewarding experience to work with a partner outside of the voluntary and community sector that has brought into our thinking around exploring and testing the capability of digital youth work. It has also been refreshing and inspiring to be valued as an expert in this field.

We look forward to continuing to work with Google UK to create a future where all young people in Camden thrive

YOUNG CAMDEN FOUNDATION

www.youngcamdenfoundation.org.uk