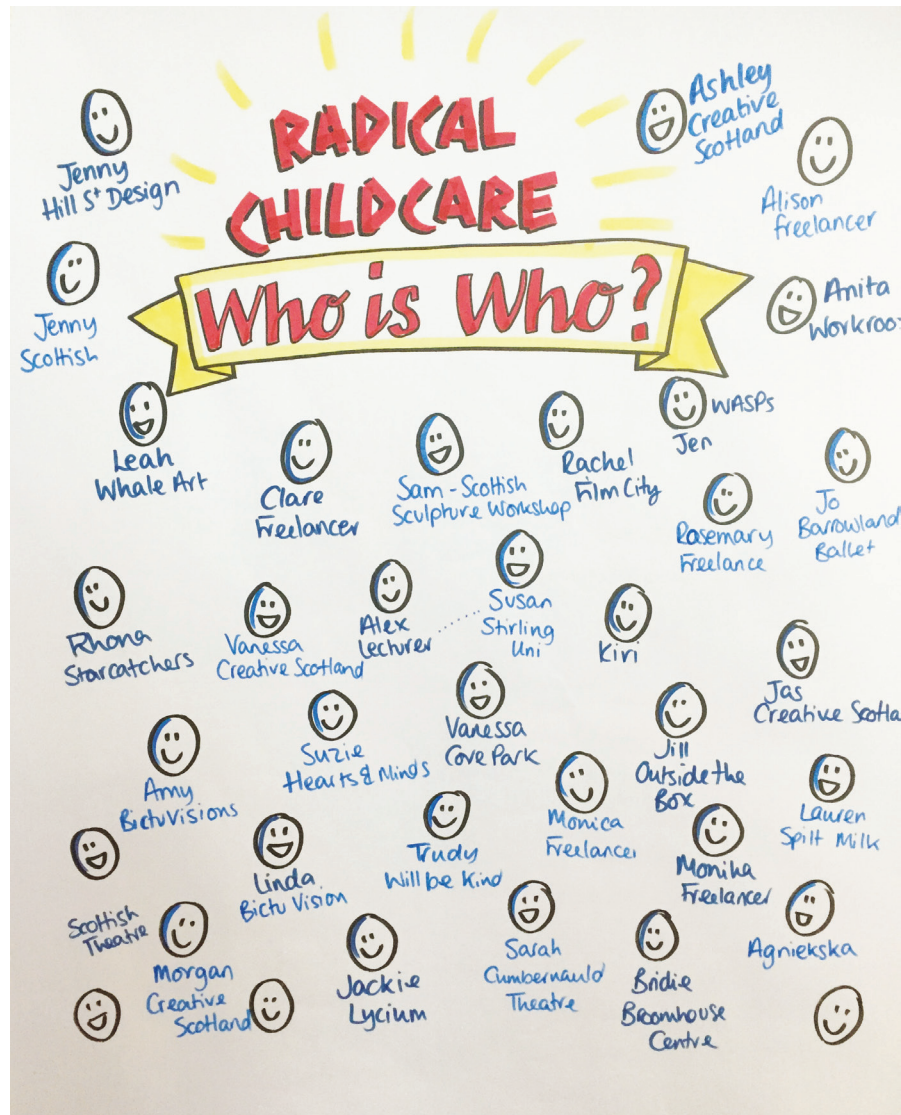# RADICAL CHILDCARE

SHARING AND CO-CREATION EVENT REPORT

Sharing and Co-Creation Event

The Radical Childcare research trip to Birmingham took place **23-25 April 2019**. Nine participants from a range of artforms, locations and organisations travelled from Scotland. All participants committed to a follow-up sharing and co-creation workshop.

The following report summarises the learnings from that event. It took place **20 May 2019** at **The Lighthouse in Glasgow**. Creative Scotland received a great deal of positive interest following the initial open call for participants. Many people reached out to flag their support and wish to be involved in the co-creation phase. Accordingly, everyone who had expressed an interest was invited to the workshop. The event was also advertised on **Creative Scotland's Opportunities** site, **Eventbrite channel** and shared through social media.

The workshop looked to deliver meaningfully against the commitments laid out in the original project description:

- collaboratively explore new childcare models which address the structural challenges that create barriers for women's full participation in the creative industries workforce

- to share good practice, offer inspiration and provoke discussion about the possibilities and opportunities of offering childcare to creative workspaces in Scotland

- help to engender, over the longer term, networks of practice and childcare projects/solutions in Scotland that will be financially self-sustaining.
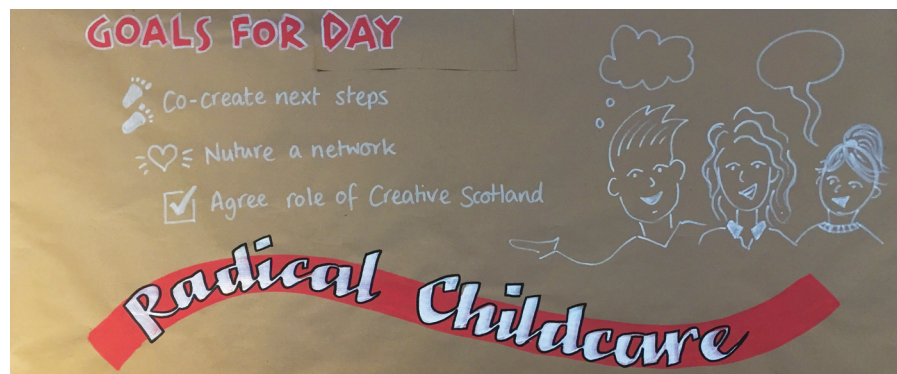
Accordingly, the event goals were defined as:

- **co-create the next steps**, planning additional activity for the next six to nine months that will help catalyse local solutions that are appropriate for communities (of place and of practice)

- **nurture a network** of those interested in exploring pragmatic, sustainable childcare solutions for creative industries workers

- **agree what role Creative Scotland should play** to help bring financially self-sustaining childcare projects/solutions into action.

The Radical Childcare travellers

Individuals who went to the Impact Hub in Birmingham included:

|	
Leah Black	**Whale Arts**
Anita Clark	**The Work Room**
Tinsel Edwards	**WASPs**
Alison Fullerton	**Freelance**
Jenny Hazel	**Hill Street Design House**
Rachel Humphries	**Moniack Mhor**
Jen White	**Stellar Quines**
Rachel Wilson	**Film City Futures**
Jenny Salmean	**Scottish Sculpture Workshop**
Kristina Johansen-Seznec	**Creative Scotland**
Milica Milosevic	**Creative Scotland**
Ashley Smith Hammond	**Creative Scotland**

The individuals met with representatives from studio or co-working spaces that take a range of approaches to flexible childcare including: **Impact Hub Birmingham**, **Mother House Studios** and **Third Door Workhub and Nursery**. The Scotland contingent was looking to learn from this range of experience, explore models that could be implemented locally and for inspiration that will carry through from idea to reality. The Impact Hub hosts were generous with their learning and brought links to more models and research together **on a Tumblr page**, which is a library of relevant materials. On the morning of the workshop, **Leah Black posted a blog on Radical Childcare and working in the open**.

Workshop approach

Given that the project is about removing barriers for access for freelancers and parents working in the creative industries, Creative Scotland took steps to deliver against the spirit which animates the project.

• Co-creation: Clare Mills of **Listen, Think, Draw** was the graphic facilitator for the day. She captured the collective learning from the research trip participants and included the workshop participants who brought their own experience, evidence, and practice to bear.

  - Post-event feedback showed that this methodology was popular. It allowed people to focus and trust in the scribe to capture key points. Some participants reported they were looking to use this model in their own practice in the future.

- Travel support: Creative Scotland provided financial support for those who would struggle to afford travel costs to the Radical Childcare workshop.

- Childcare: On-site childcare for children up to age five was available from **Rising Stars** mobile crèche service. One learning for the future was around ideally also providing support for parents with school-age children who have different needs in terms of care.
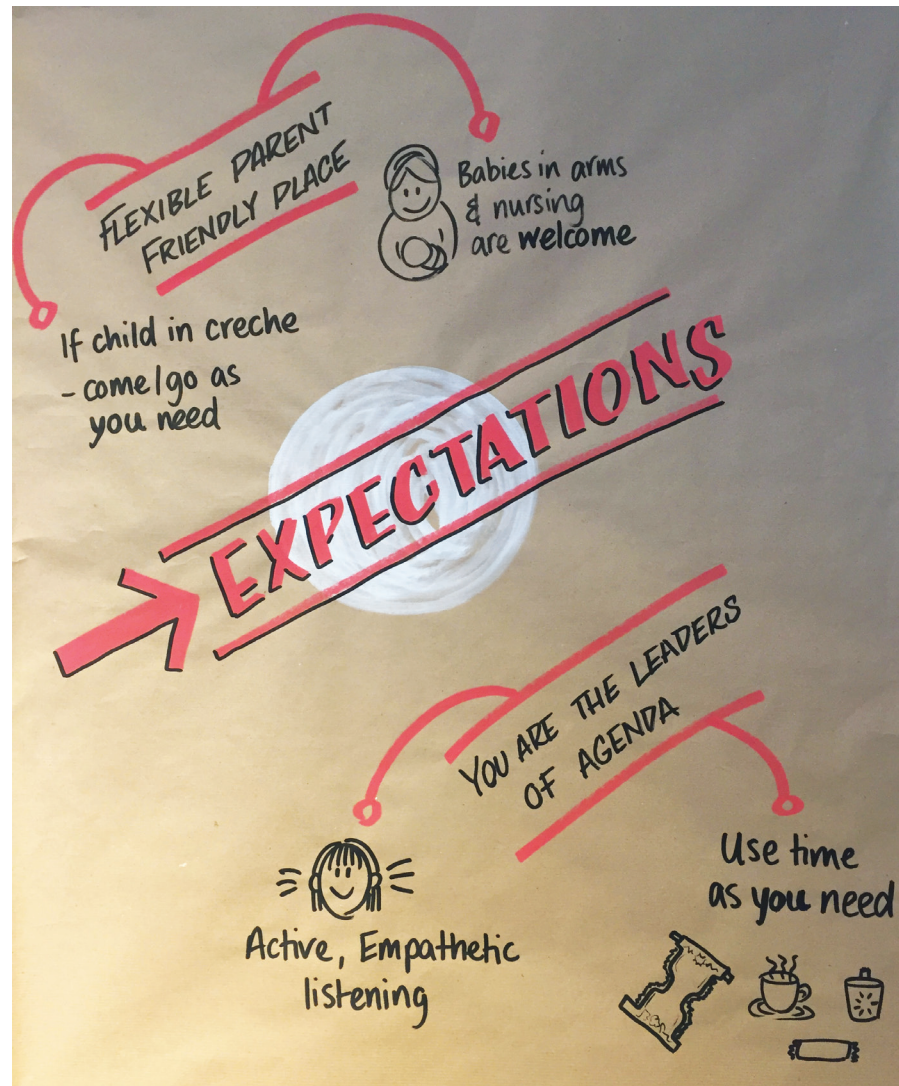
On the day, attendees were assured that the workshop would be a flexible parent friendly space. This meant babies and nursing mums were welcome and participants could come and go as needed. Ashley Smith-Hammond from Creative Scotland acted as the facilitator and looked to participants to lead the agenda. All participants were asked to use active empathetic listening and direct their participation where they could make their best contribution. This approach worked well and was received positively.

Ashley set the stage with a short introduction from Creative Scotland's perspective. After seeing inspiring possibilities in Birmingham, this event is the first step in articulating the need for workers, makers, and freelancers back in Scotland. It is a space to bring focus to where the opportunities are for organisations to make changes and remove barriers. To that end, we do not know where this process is going, but do know it must be led by the sector. There is some investment available (although not a substantial amount) to unlock opportunities to partner with people in the sector. We will respond to where we see members of the community ready to take leadership on the next steps around these issues. Creative Scotland will look for projects that are time limited, that are sustainable and that have an impact across a group of organisations for this purpose.

Sharing

The core traveller group gathered in the morning to collectively talk through the key learnings from the trip. The discussion was guided by six simple questions.

1. What have we learned?

2. What have we tried?

3. What do we want to learn next?

4. What are we pleased with?

5. What are we not pleased with?

6. What will we do next?

When we were finished, the answers were stretched over about 2.5m of wall and looked like this:

What have we learned?
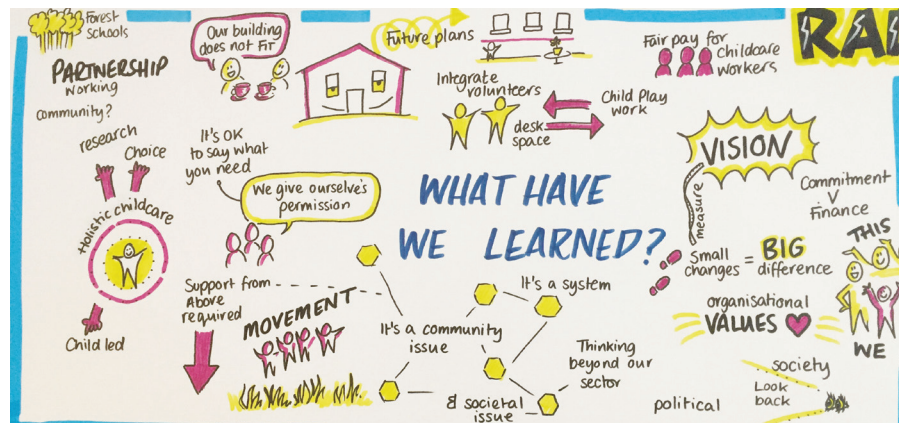
- Partnership working is important. There are already people who are experts in your community that you can learn from and potentially achieve more by working together.

- Good practice has gone before and there are examples from the 1970s and from 100 years ago of more inclusive childcare models that balance better with work. We can look back to find examples and ideas as well as looking around.

  - For example, one participant noted that the **Macrobert Arts Centre** had previously run a crèche. This example might provide a recent example of good practice and learnings around why it was phased out.

- There is good practice around childcare that we can learn from – this is around holistic, child-lead approaches. Scotland is already a leader in some of this practice. Some of these fit with the **Scottish Government's Fair Work initiative** which is, in part, concerned with facilitating flexible working for parents.

- We learned about systems thinking and how the structures that form our experience of freelancing and staff work in the creative industries - access to/cost of/limitations of childcare are tied into bigger structures of how we think and what we value. Including childcare may be a small thing but it calls for bigger changes.

- This is bigger than us. Our personal experiences of the challenge of childcare are not our own individual problems.

- There are different ways to make the finance side work. We saw three models of sustainable co-working with children. Paying the bills (especially costs such as rent) is real and finding a way to stick to the mission as well as cover costs is not easy and there is no single right way.

- Trade value for value – if your community asks for volunteers, give something back of value (eg co-working desk space for offering childcare). This should be balanced against the risk of the onus falling on individuals to give up free time/labour rather than with bigger institutions to change their working cultures, provide funding for childcare etc.

- If we do not want to continue being part of an exploitative system, we will need to pay carers better. This will also add cost but demonstrates our values. How do we get people and/ in organisations to change their thinking around the value of care? (There is a gendered dimension to this in that women are disproportionately affected by caring responsibilities and women's labour has, historically, been under-valued.)

- We can start to make changes from where we are. We do not always need permission to make these changes. Even if our buildings aren't perfect, we can still make use of the space we have. One organisation learned from their users that the main factor seemed to be human support rather than their facilities or set up.

- These small changes can make a significant difference. Every element of our practice – in how we run an organisation or a project – shows our values. It's worth not compromising, even on small things. They show what the mission means in practice.

- We also need to think about how we disseminate these experiences so that others can learn from them, and we can build bigger change.

- Sometimes, however, support from policymakers, leaders and other people in power is needed and can make a significant difference to removing barriers.

- There are good methods for checking how child friendly your space is: for example, put a tape line at 1m height around your studio or office and see what is at eye level for a child. Even if your space isn't perfect, you can find ways to make it work better.

- There is a wider context in Scotland that is also questioning the current approach to childcare, early years learning and social impact - **UpStart** (campaigning for Kindergarden stage before school) and **ACE Awareness**, which features a very cross-sector approach including Education, Health, Justice, Social Work/Care.

- Participants came away from Birmingham inspired about was the whole vision that Impact Hub was working towards which were demonstrated in their values and centering of care. This is a paradigm shift in the systems and values in which we operate.

What have we tried?

- One participant has started trying to work in the open as a model. This means she is trying things and sharing what she learns before a project is officially finished.

- One organisation is offering baby and child friendly meetings. Another is trying a stay and play model for meetings.

- We've been more vocal sharing practice on social media **#radicalchildcare**.

- We've noticed that this isn't just intellectual but part of our personal experience, so we don't just have thoughts about it but also feelings. This shouldn't be forgotten when we try to design sustainable and desirable solutions.

- One organisation is trying to be more proactive about providing better accommodation for parents. Better practice means not making people feel bad for asking if they need extra support. Try to offer support before they have to ask, especially if you're in a more powerful position. This is important because the nature of freelancing in competitive markets can mean that workers are resistant to 'rocking the boat' by asking for help.

- One organisation had a meeting with a representative from the **Care Inspectorate** who was proud that Scotland was a leader in many areas of policy.

- One organisation will offer a once weekly crèche at the Fringe and will bring these ideas to the **Hack the Patriarchy** event this summer.

- Making the implicit explicit – one participant's new tenants are now all told that the co-working space is child friendly and they should expect to see young people, especially around school holidays.

- Another organisation is looking at the long term. They want to build in a commitment to childcare into their five-year plan and figure out what it will take to integrate a crèche into the existing space.

- When offering childcare, we learned that HMRC class support for childcare as a taxable benefit and freelancers are required to include it in their taxes. This is worth knowing for anyone who wants to offer direct support for childcare.

- There are important basic provisions that some buildings don't have – for instance Waverly Gate did not have baby changing facilities in any of the building's toilets. Changing facilities in other buildings often are in women's but not men's rooms, which reinforces a gendered assumption.

- When giving a flexible space over to other users one organisation is watching how parents adapt the space to fit their (and their children's) needs. This is evidence for changes that could be made to the space to build in more flexibility for families.

- One organisation is talking to their landlords about what is possible and trying to influence them to consider some space for a family provision.

What will we learn next?
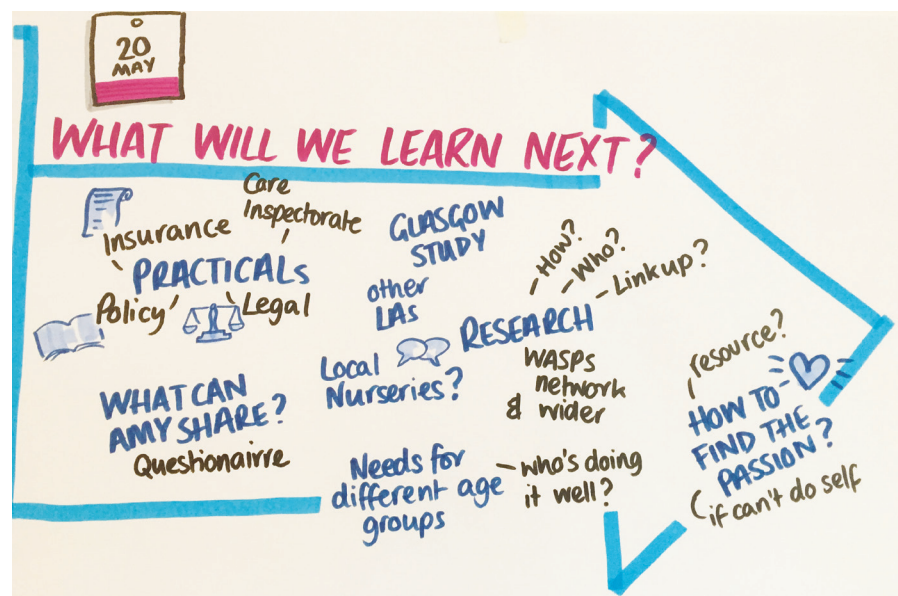
- Practicalities – what do we need to know about the policy structures around children and what are the legal frameworks in Scotland? Are they being consistently enforced? Are there gaps in particular artforms? (Film/TV was raised as an example here.) What is available from the Care Inspectorate. What would offering childcare mean for our insurance?

- Examples of good work for a range of age groups – who are the champions we can learn from not just in Early Years?

- Ask Amy Martin from the **Impact Hub** for the questionnaire they used with their community. We want to survey our own community (both of place and of practice) about their needs and their concerns.

- What can we learn from local nurseries and after school clubs in our area? After all, they've been doing this a long time. What solutions have they found for supporting and including children with additional needs?

- What are the needs of parents with school age children? Often it gets harder to balance work with care when children are older and in school. Children may need parents more emotionally at a later stage in their development. The school day often ends at 3pm and after school clubs etc are often over-subscribed. School holidays present an annual need for temporary, full-time care. How do we design support for this age group too?

- Networks and champions – find out what is happening in our community and who is making it happen. Find a way to publicise best practice more widely. For example, **Raising Films** have recently launched an Awards system to raise this kind of awareness in the film and TV industries.

What are we pleased with?
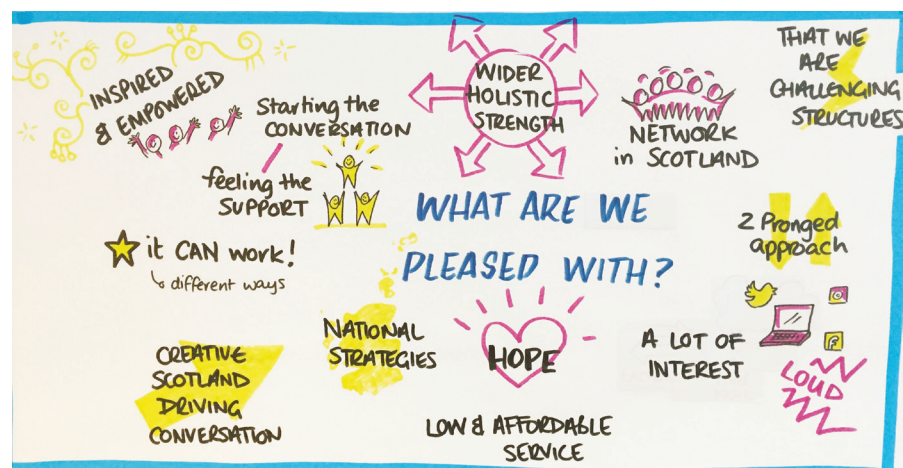
- This conversation has given us a lot of hope that we can help make change.

- The response to this small project has been very positive and has amplified the conversation. That is encouraging.

- We feel like we are seeing the start of a network in Scotland between makers, freelancers and workers in the creative industries and parents who are interested in better options for childcare.

- As the network develops everyone in it gets stronger.

- We see leadership from above and below.

- Creative Scotland's focus is a positive.

- There are different models that work - we can learn from them.

- As we've started this conversation it has snowballed and we are seeing support from unexpected corners.

- The experience of visiting the Impact Hub was inspiring and empowering and we brought that energy back to Scotland with us.

- The conversation isn't located in only one place but is across Scotland in different ways that are appropriate for different communities (of place and of practice).

What are we not pleased with?

- The problem of childcare is not solved for parents trying to make things work right now. There is a feeling that it shouldn't be this hard to make our lives work.

- Parents and freelancers are often working in isolation.

- Isolation is exacerbated in rural areas where the physical distance can add additional challenges to collaboration.

- We need to think beyond buildings as we work on this problem.

- Mindsets are slow to change. It feels like women are still presumed to be the primary caregivers and this habit of mind is institutionalised in our policies and procedures.

- Being the person who raises an issue often means you're the one asked to do the extra work to solve it. How will we get our colleagues to help share the responsibility for solving the problem?

- There are still voices missing from this conversation. No men applied to take part in the Radical Childcare research trip. There was no one from the BAME community in Scotland that has yet fed into this conversation. We are still more urban than rural. How do we reach people?

- The question of how to pay for this still feels really challenging. Should it be publicly funded at all? Should we aim for a financially sustainable model? What are the long-term dividends when we pay it forward?

What will we do next?
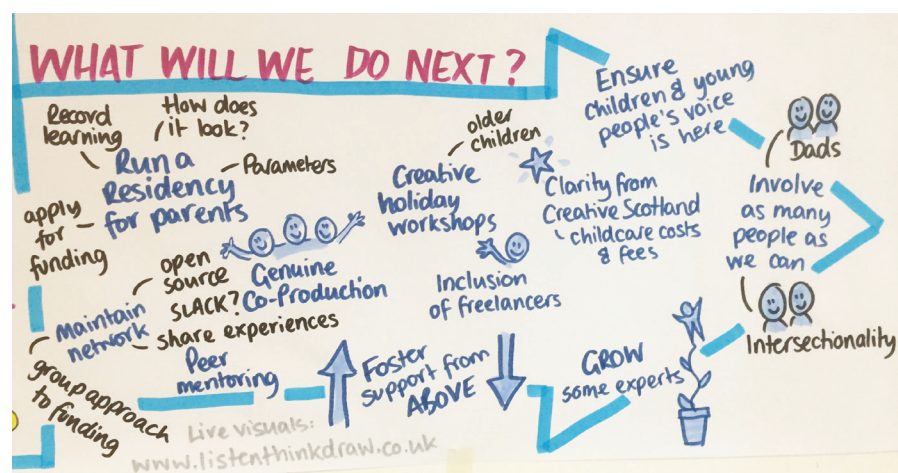
- We are looking for experts that exist in Scotland that can act as mentors and looking to grow experts from within our network.

- One organisation wants to try running a residency for artist parents. They are not sure how it will look and are unsure if this is something they will apply for funding to do. They are also not sure yet what sort of parameters they will put around it. It's a learning opportunity for the organisation to use this as trial and record learnings.

- Another organisation wants to try offering creative (school) holiday workshops for older children.

- Everyone wants to maintain this network we've started. We are wondering what the best way to share information and learning might be. Is there an open-source solution? What about Slack? We want something that will be a genuine support and not a distraction. Feedback on this was limited but those who fed intended to vote for Slack.

- We will look for advocates to foster support from above as well as below.

- We will make sure to include freelancers' view. We also want to include the young people themselves in the conversation.

- The network is still not fully representative, and we will keep working intersectionally seeking out input from the people who were not in the room today such as, men/dads, BAME parents.

- We are looking for clarity from Creative Scotland on how childcare costs can be included in funding applications – which budget lines? Guidance on fees?

Co-Creation

After the travellers shared learnings with the workshop participants, we asked everyone a question. Based on what you have heard and what you already know, what is most valuable for this network to learn and do over the next year?

Everyone was invited to feed back two ideas on post-its – one thing to learn and one thing to do. First these were clustered into categories at tables. Then they were categorised across all the suggestions in the room. After everything was displayed on the wall, we clustered them into eight groups.

These were:

- **Advocacy** (6 votes)

- Basics (1 vote)

- **Creating Resources** (6 votes)

- How (no votes)

- Pilots (5 votes)

- **Inclusivity and Intersectionality** (22 votes)

- **Research and understanding need** (24 votes)

- **Working locally/Building Networks** (12 votes)

Participants could review the clusters and vote on which ones were most relevant. After the vote, participants broke out into five smaller groups (in orange), each working on one of the topics. We recognised in this clustering that there were elements of the groups that had significant overlap.

Each group was asked to think about three questions in relation to their topic area:

1. What can you do to take this forward?

2. What does the wider network need?

3. How can Creative Scotland help?

Clusters and Voting

Advocacy

The key ideas around advocacy were:

- An audit of existing provision. What is happening where?

- Learn what else is being done in this area in Scotland in other sectors

- How to articulate social value

- Campaign

- Gather evidence locally and nationally

- What is working in the Scottish context

- Ensure the visibility of the network

- Meet with senior executives and try to raise the visibility and get them involved / engaged.

The breakout group on this topic suggested that we should:

- Give consideration with every action or initiative

- Think about flexible working (any employer – for project or FT)

- Where it happens – share and talk about

- Get sector development organisations to consider and advocate for

- Influence up / find champions

- Scottish Government Fair Work framework

- Public Funders to accommodate childcare costs in budgets

- Collectives put into action. Do it and share it = advocacy.

Creating Resources

The clustered ideas around creating resources were:

- Document and share knowledge

- Put information in one place

- Do an FAQ on legislation

    - What can we do?

    - Qualified

    - Volunteers

- Collate information about small and big changes made to create case studies to help make change.

- Create industry standard best practice guide.

The breakout group on this topic suggested that to **take this forward** we should:

- Create a Facebook group to share and talk (an online forum)

- Provide space and resources in my organisation/business (free or discounted)

- Be a guinea pig / open ourselves up for a trial or test

- Understand cultural differences and needs of all in this space

- Lobby internally and share with colleagues at Creative Scotland

- Put aside one hour per month to share/talk/meet

- Creative Scotland provide space/time for people to meet/talk/share

- Creative Scotland be clear where you can help and where you cannot and signpost.

The breakout group on this topic suggested that what the **wider network needs** is:

- Information, where to find it

- A central resource 'library/platform'

- Clarification guidelines for childcare access support costs

- Understand wider landscape and international/national models of best practice

- Understand who we are talking about / who we are supporting

- To understand where the child/children sit in this process – is it child-led?

- An organisation / formal group whose sole purpose is to lead on this

  - at government or policy level

  - advocate on behalf of (a subgroup in Creative Scotland?)

  - act as a link

- Benefit to the child of a design/creative space.

The breakout group on this topic suggested that **how Creative Scotland can help** is:

- Offer resources like:
  - Time (staff)
  - Space
  - Facilitation
  - Funding
- Utilise existing networks and relationships via partnerships
- Be visible as a leader/partner
- Create a dialogue
- Be clear on what you do and do not support
- Myth-bust
- Set the example for other funders
- Run more events like this
- Apportion resource to a sector organisation to take this forward.

Inclusivity and Intersectionality

The clustered ideas around inclusivity and intersectionality were:

- Be more representative
- Plain English
- Ask the men 'where are you'?
- Partnering with other organisations on diversity and inclusion advocacy
- Access costs: childcare, accommodation, travel
- Keep looking for who is not represented
  - Remove barriers
  - Invite and welcome
- Focus groups – structured conversations
- Consult widely
- Learn how to go about changing mindsets and encourage diverse participation
- Listen and learn what is needed in different creative areas
- Actively engage missing groups

- Bring a male friend to the next group

- Change the language

- Meet people where they are (and invite them in)

- What do we need to know? Ask the right questions

- Clarity of what we've done so far

- Hear many voices (disciplines/artforms/special cases/special childcare)

- How to connect with artists in need from various backgrounds and ethnicity

- Inclusivity

Though everyone agreed it was hugely important, the table reported struggling with next steps as it was felt that the group was not currently diverse enough to do full justice to this topic.

Research and Understanding Need

The clustered ideas around research and understanding need were:

- Research into what people need

- Research childcare support needs of artists/practitioners and quantify the problem

- Research and test demand

- To understand what an ideal childcare situation would be. How many people?

- To learn what are the most important needs of parents/carers?

- Understand the variety of childcare requirements

- What do workers/artists want in terms of childcare? (Sector specific)

- Understand need and independent research

- Learn what childcare provisions are currently needed

- Draw together knowledge from cultural and voluntary sectors to share

- Investigate the needs not currently met by structure

- Learn about needs and challenges of freelance workforce (sector specific?)

- Identify beacons of best practice

- Research needs of broad cross section of artist parents

The breakout group on this topic suggested that to **take this forward** we should:

- Survey creation
  - Demographics
  - Challenges
  - Barriers
  - Artforms – survey should focus on artforms ways of working
  - Part time workers
  - Would this childcare impact their work
  - In-flexible childcare
  - Needs of individual children
  - Family situation / support networks
- Investigate best practice
- Understand availability of childcare
- Share in our communities and networks.

The breakout group on this topic suggested that what the **wider network needs** is:

- Partnerships
- Skills to research themselves
- Inclusive research
  - Surveys
  - Findings
- Childcare that looks after all kids
- How to reach people not currently accessed
- Campaign that opens freelance and cost of childcare facts (environmental links)
- Grassroots messaging versus Creative Scotland messaging
- Education of language
- Number of stages for creative responses to the data and accessible language created by artists.

The breakout group on this topic suggested that **how Creative Scotland can help** is:

• Disseminate survey

• Funding for research

• Venue/facilities for focus groups

• Advocate to wider audience through existing networks eg **Bookbugs**

• Understanding long term vision and potential of Radical Childcare

• Speak 'up' to policymakers

• A five-year check to demonstrate accountability.

Working Locally and Building Networks

The clustered ideas around working locally and building networks were:

• Connect and grow the network. Start a movement.

- We talked a lot about the importance of having a name and some clear broad aims, so that we can start to publicise the discussion further and make what we are doing more visible. We also talked about making the value of what we are doing clear – beyond economic value. Consider organising networks by geographical locations.

• Create open community discussions. Reach out to isolated carers.

- We talked about needing to really understand the diverse needs/ desires of parents and carers rather than assuming a one-size-fits-all model. For example, Vanessa from Cove Park was talking about the possibility of facilitating residencies for artist-parents, where they could bring children along – but the same time, we talked about how not all artists would want this, and some would appreciate time away from caring responsibilities to concentrate fully on their work. We need to find out what research is out there at a community level. Can we build case studies on what has come before? How to use existing technology to create digital platforms to collaborate.

• Create a solid network that can meet regularly and work together.

- We talked about achieving a balance of having a core network with a small number of diverse people who can practically meet up regularly, but also making sure that these people were able to represent and voice concerns/ideas of a wider body of people. Even if this core group is based centrally to allow for regular meetups, we noted the importance of thinking about the specificities of geographical location.

- Local network situation. Create clustering through organisations.

  - Have appointed champions within organisations that can take this forward and contribute to monthly meet ups. Perhaps events where an artist can lead a talk?

- Start local

  - Consult - we talked about the importance of consulting widely, but also paying attention to the specificities of sectors, recognising for example that filmmakers might have different needs around care than performers etc.

  - Map

  - Barriers - how do we access people who aren't already part of our networks?

  - Diversity

  - Spaces

  - Opportunities.

- Identify where/how we have power

- Establish a steering group

- Create community - support each other

- Know your skill base. Build on it by using partnerships past immediate context.

- Make connections with others in Glasgow (and beyond) who are trying things out. Establish best practice. Learn from the past, such as the 1970s playgroup movement; look to social enterprises outside of arts; what existing research is out there on other models?

- Learn about each other and building a voice

- Keep momentum up

  - Regular meet ups?

  - Check ins?

  - Conversations - we talked about finding ways to meet with people in more senior, decision-making roles in the sector and encourage buy-in plus get a sense of any reservations they may have so that we can work to address them.

Working Locally

The breakout group on this topic suggested that to **take this forward** we should:

- Expand the network

  - Core working group representative geographically, artform, kinds of caring needs (ages and stages)

  - Research individuals outside of structures (independent artists etc)

  - Involving other sectors (perhaps social enterprise?)

- Name, Aims, Reasons – short and long-term goals. This would help with building visibility to the issue/movement.

- Tracking changes/improvements. If organisations receive seed funding from Creative Scotland, there needs to be robust monitoring. Further, for sustainability, commitment to the issue needs to be embedded within organisations.

- Create local clusters

- Networks with similar structures.

The breakout group on this topic suggested that what the **wider network needs** is:

- Leadership

- Plan

- Structure

- Funding

- Show value of initiatives

  - Close the gap

  - 'Mum' / carer friendly

- Connect to **PIPA** (some will apply across artforms) and **Raising Films**

- Connect to the childcare industry.

The breakout group on this topic suggested that **how Creative Scotland can help** is:

- Embed Radical Childcare values in RFOs (Regularly Funded Organisations) (like environmental reporting to feed into EDI).
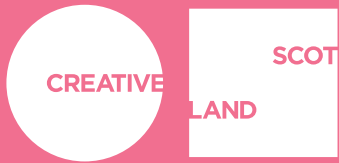
Finally

The session ended with each group allocated a few minutes for sharing back to the room. After this, Ashley thanked everyone for their generosity in giving their time and care to the day's discussions.

She reflected on Creative Scotland's view that a diverse workforce is a stronger workforce and that we see this project within that frame. Ashley made two initial commitments for next steps:

1. An internal blog post raising what we learned today about inconsistent advice from staff around the interpretation of childcare as access costs in funding applications and suggesting a consistent approach.

2. To type up the notes from this workshop and share them as a first draft to the workshop participants. Until everyone has had the opportunity to input into the notes, they will not be considered final.

The notes were initially drafted by Ashley and shared with all event registrants on 30 May 2019. Participants were given two weeks to read and feed in changes by 14 June 2019. This document represents a final version and will be used as the basis for decision making around the next phase of the project. Thanks to everyone who took time to read and feed in.

This document represents a re-designed version of the final report. No changes were made to the text. This version was created by Creative Scotland in November 2021 to coincide with the launch of the Radical Care project that month.

November 2021