



**YOUTH  
MUSIC**

**NEXTGEN**



# NextGen Feedback Survey 2022



## Introduction

The NextGen Feedback Survey is an annual survey to explore how much impact Youth Music are having and what more we could do to facilitate the development of young creatives' careers. Respondents can then opt-in for a follow-up interview with our Insights team.

Interviewees included NextGen that had applied to freelance opportunities, the NextGen Fund and young people that had or were taking part in Youth Music funded projects at the time of interview. There were also young people who are part of the NextGen Community but were yet to have an opportunity with Youth Music.

The survey was live over September and October 2022, with the interviews being conducted in November 2022.

Cover photo by Livy Dukes.

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# Respondent Overview



**Total survey responses = 66**

Total Youth Music opportunities accessed = 75  
 Seven (11%) have had more than one opportunity with Youth Music (e.g., a NextGen fund recipient and a project participant)



**45% of respondents (34) had applied to the NextGen Fund.**

48% were successful applicants.  
 43% were unsuccessful.  
 9% were awaiting an outcome.



**21% of respondents (16) had taken part in a Youth Music funded project.**

They were all previous participants.



**13% of respondents (10) had applied for a freelance position at Youth Music.**

5 were successful and 5 were unsuccessful.

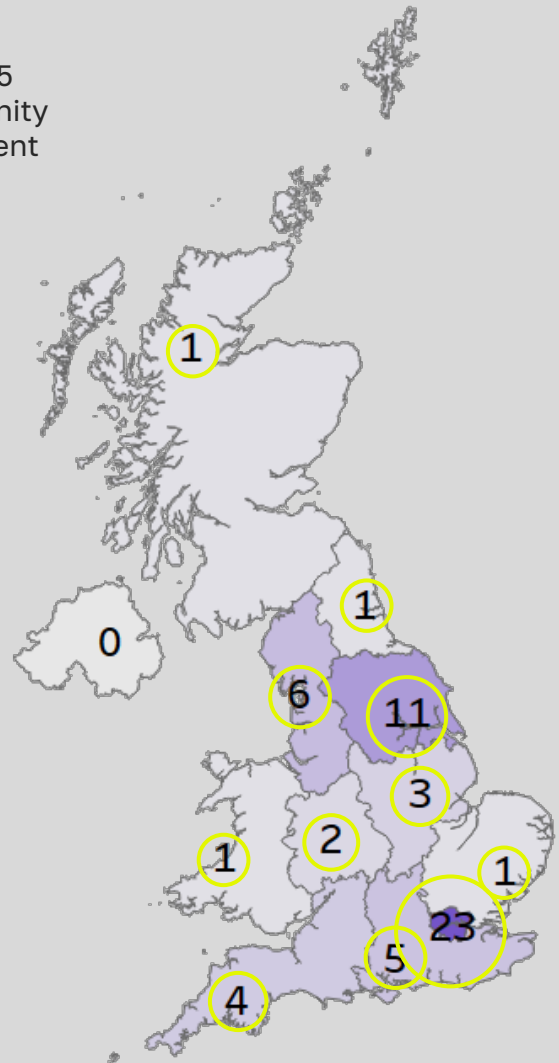


**4% of respondents (3) had taken part in an Incubator Fund project.**

2 were previous participants and 1 was current.



**5%** aged 18 or below  
**83%** aged between 19 and 25  
**12%** aged 26 and above



Which region do you currently live in? (66)  
 8 respondents answered "England"

**91%**

would be interested in taking part in direct opportunities with Youth Music in the future (66)

**100%**

are currently facing barriers while pursuing a career in the music industries (58)

## Case Study: Ola, 23, North East

Currently based in North Manchester, Ola has a wide range of knowledge and experience within the music industries. Originally due to study Music at Goldsmiths University in London, they deferred and moved to Manchester for what was supposed to be a gap year. But having found the freedom to learn and work in multiple spaces, they decided to stay in and explore the different paths available to them.

Ola was first involved with Youth Music in 2021. They worked on our [Self-Expression Report](#) as a co-researcher. The role involved analysing interview data from interviews conducted with 18-25-year-olds. The themes and discussions from Ola and the other co-researchers were then integrated into the final report.

A call with a Youth Music staff member led to Ola finding their next opportunity in both the music industries and with Youth Music:

“I remember in one of the follow-up calls [after the co-research role], I was like, ‘I wish there were more opportunities like this - like a list of all the opportunities available for young people who want to work in the music industry professionally.’ And she was like, ‘Oh just sign up to the newsletter.’ So I did and then I just saw about the opportunity.”

The opportunity was for an Incubator Fund project with Marsm UK, called the [Young Producers Residency](#), which supported four young people into the music industries through mentorship and guided projects development. Despite challenges involved with remote working (due to Marsm being based in London), Ola was supported in developing their own [podcast series](#) based on the links between music, culture and community. The project helped them develop their production skills, as well as improved their confidence of working within a professional space.

Ola’s mentor has continued to support them past the project finishing. This included providing help during the application process for the role that Ola currently holds as the Festival and Programming Assistant for [Manchester Jazz Festival](#).

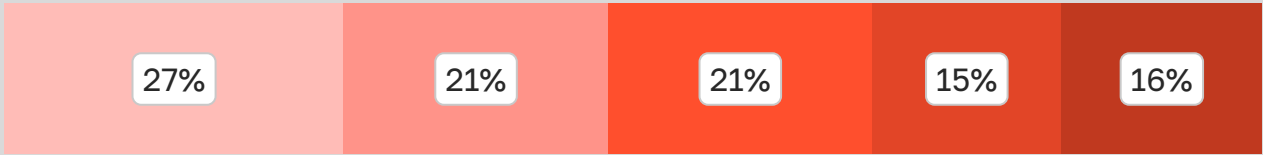
Alongside this role, Ola is continuing to explore and develop in other areas in the music industries, including writing more music, teaching violin and performing in outdoor spaces during community trips that they organise. This exploration plays into Ola’s ultimate goal to “be able to stay within creative roles and progress further”.

Ola is also considering continuing their relationship with Youth Music through the NextGen Fund so they can produce a second series of their podcast.



Ola’s Podcast: ‘Make a Note’

# Youth Music's Impact



■ Not at all ■ To little extent ■ To moderate extent ■ To good extent ■ To great extent

## ‘To what extent has your involvement with Youth Music led you to further progression opportunities in the music industries?’ (63)

When using the data from **respondents who have taken part in a Youth Music opportunity**, the proportion of people who selected **to good/great extent increases to 53%**.



■ Not at all ■ To moderate extent ■ To good extent ■ To great extent

## ‘To what extent do you find the opportunities Youth Music offer have an impact on your career progression?’ (62)

Like the previous question, the proportion of respondents selecting **to good/great extent increases to 65%** when looking at the data from **those who have had a Youth Music opportunity**.

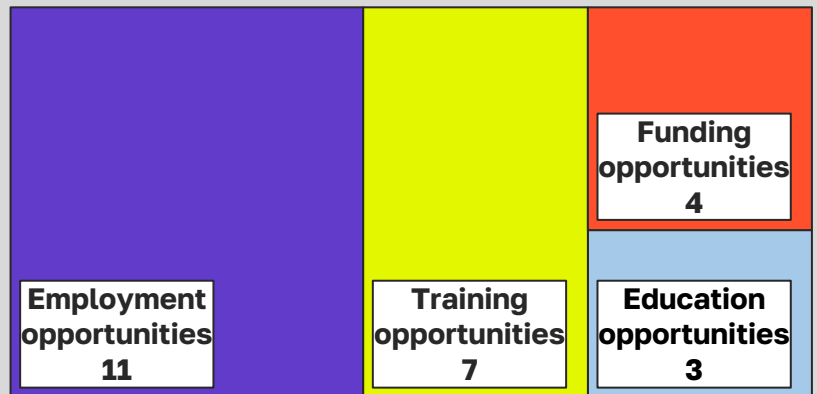
Many respondents used the comment section to praise the work of Youth Music:

“You are giving people [an] opportunity to do what they love”

“Youth music has some amazing opportunities on offer that mean artists have [the] ability to achieve their potential without concern for financial barriers. Also in terms of industry connections, youth music are well connected and have great reach to market the projects of their young people.”

Youth Music’s impact can also be evaluated through the progression opportunities respondents have had as a result of their Youth Music opportunity.

There was a **total of 25 further opportunities**. The majority of these were people who have either had a freelance opportunity with Youth Music or have been part of a funded project (16/25).



**‘As a direct result of your Youth Music opportunity, have you progressed to any further?’ (32)**

The 25 opportunities were from a **total of 14 respondents** (who’d had multiple opportunities).

All of the employment opportunities were within the creative sector, including roles in PR, record labels and live performance. Some of the respondents who had taken part in a funded project had also secured a role with the organisation.

## NextGen Fund

For this year’s survey, we introduced a set of questions specifically relating to the NextGen Fund. These concentrated on the application experience. Respondents who had applied for the NextGen Fund were asked **‘To what extent was your NextGen application feedback useful?’ (14)**

Not at all	To little extent	To moderate extent	To good extent	To great extent
21%	36%	29%	14%	0%

Respondents were given the space to provide a comment, with the most common response stating they **found the feedback to be too generic:**

“I’m glad that I got some feedback but it was very generic and I wasn’t too sure which section of my application did it apply to.”

## Case Study: JR, 23, London

JR is a recent graduate and musician currently living in Sutton, South West London. A multi-instrumentalist, he'd been certain from a young age that he wanted to pursue a career in the music industries. He had the opportunity to learn keyboards, drums and the bass, with original ambitions of being a session musician. But when he attended sixth form, he was given the chance to work in a computer lab and developed his production skills.

This would lead to JR deciding to study a degree in Sound Engineering and Production at Point Blank Music School, approaching it with the determination he'd been showing from a young age:

“I only applied to one uni because that's just the one I [wanted]. I didn't have a plan B or anything because that's all I could see myself doing.”

Though the degree progressed their production skills, JR found himself at a loose end upon finishing, unsure how to translate his new skills into work:

“It's like you've got this piece of paper that says I'm a qualified producer. It doesn't really mean much now, so I was like, ‘Okay, what the heck do I do now?’ [...] I don't know what a proper job is in music or a creative field in general. Like, if that really exists. It's tough.”

Having dedicated time to working on other people's music, he decided he wanted to concentrate on his song writing and was successful in applying to an MA Songwriting and Production course at Tileyard Education.

After graduating, JR took some time off to travel before securing a job at the Roundhouse in North London. He plans to release five singles in the next year along with a live performance. As well as music, JR hopes to come “full circle” and support other young people as “people have seen vision in me so I want to see that in someone else.”

When we spoke to JR, he had recently applied for Round 4 of the NextGen Fund with plans for a music video and was waiting to hear back. He spoke about the importance of funding opportunities, especially for those who don't have the time or monetary resources:

“You're working 9 to 5, Monday to Friday, then what time do you have to be making your music? You're earning a lot of money but you sacrifice the ability to make music for yourself. Then when it comes to actually getting music out there, if there's no funding coming through, you've got to settle your creative vision for something that's within budget.”

JR would go on to become a successful NextGen Fund recipient and has since released two music videos, [Care Too Much](#) and [Adrenaline Rush](#), under his artists name, 4 the Brotherhood.


# Accessibility and Inclusion

In this year’s NextGen Stakeholder Survey, we introduced a question that was first used in Youth Music’s report, [A Blueprint for the Future](#). Respondents were asked, **‘What is the biggest barrier you are currently facing while pursuing a career in the music industries?’**. The question used a ranking system: respondents could select any/all options from a list of seven (including an ‘Other (please specify)’ option) and rank them according to their importance.

The three barriers that were most commonly ranked first in importance were:



Lack of financial support to allow you to pursue opportunities  
29%



Lack of access to relevant opportunities that pay enough to cover living costs  
28%



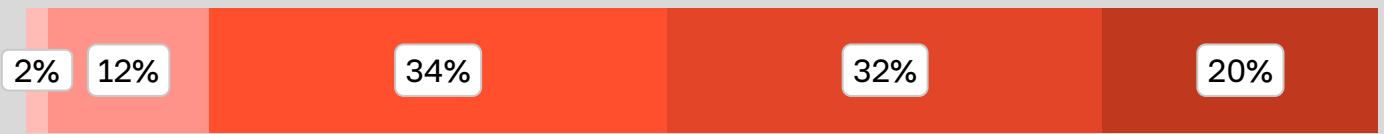
Lack of industry connections  
19%

	Weighted score
Lack of financial support to allow you to pursue opportunities	285
Lack of access to relevant opportunities that pay enough to cover living costs	238
Lack of industry connections	201
Lack of opportunities in my local area	151
Lack of knowledge around the different pathways into the industry	136
Lack of relevant work experience	111
Other (please specify)	32

**‘What is the biggest barrier you are currently facing while pursuing a career in the music industries? Please select all that apply and rank your concerns, with 1 being most important’ (58)**

The weighted score based on ranking indicates the breadth of impact on the NextGen community. The larger the score, the more the effect was selected by respondents.





■ Not at all ■ To little extent ■ To moderate extent ■ To good extent ■ To great extent

### **‘To what extent do you find opportunities Youth Music offer to be accessible?’ (60)**

“I found them to be easy to apply for with excellent contact, and they remain open to any person.”

“Open to all, regardless of demographic, ethnicity or religion. Youth music is a safe space which is why I have become invested in applying.”

The most common theme on where we can improve was to do with **age restrictions**. This was stated by three respondents, with two also going on to explain how the pandemic had impacted, as well:

“The age range is often a barrier as I turned 26 this year. Having graduated during the pandemic I feel myself and other peers missed 2 years of our "18-25" period due to lockdowns and lack of projects”

“The criteria is very narrow. Especially since the pandemic I think 'next gen' people are definitely up to 30 years old. I am almost 26 and lost a good 3 years to covid so I think 26 to 30 year olds are still next gen musicians and maybe struggling even more in this industry”

**70%**

said to a good/great extent



Respondents were also asked how **inclusive** Youth Music is in their approach to creating opportunities, with **the 35% saying we were to a great extent**.

The comment section contained similar content to the accessibility question, with the majority of responses being positive.

Respondents were later asked, **‘How can Youth Music make their approach to creating opportunities for young people more inclusive?’ (37)**. **Nearly half of the responses (43%) referred to creating more opportunities and/or targeting specific groups with these opportunities.**

## Case Study: Claire, 25, Yorkshire and the Humber

Having grown up in areas around North Yorkshire, Claire is currently based in Leeds. Now working in the music industries, Claire wasn't always sure that's where they would end up. Though they knew they wanted to work in a creative role, at a young age they struggled to think of what a job in the arts world is. This was particularly the case as they experienced a bias towards 'talent' roles:

“If you wanted to do something that was creative, it was like you have to be on a stage. It's not like you're doing anything behind the scenes or anything that supports the people that are on the stage. There's a weird lens that is like, 'Oh, you are you're in music? That must mean you're a singer.'”

Claire attended Birmingham University to study English, a decision they regret in hindsight. Though still unsure on what to do long term, this experience confirmed for them that they wanted to pursue a career in music. They've since explored the different routes available to them:

“That's probably why there's such a variety of things that I've been trying, because I've been trying to find what I actually want to do within it all.”

After finishing university, Claire originally struggled finding work due to the impact of the pandemic. They managed to get a voluntary role in community radio, which occupied them for a while. Claire first heard about Youth Music when they took part in a music journalism course with [NYMAZ](#). It was NYMAZ who then suggested Claire take part in a Youth Music funded project with [Music:Leeds](#) called Launchpad. The project helped form a network of young people in Leeds along with providing support and training in industry skills.

After finishing the project, Claire secured a job with Music:Leeds as an Events Assistant. But after providing support when Music:Leeds decided to re-launch the project they had been on, Claire was asked to become the Project Co-ordinator for Launchpad+. This led them to supporting talent development for other young people, assisting with releasing music and publishing rights.

Claire has already pushed for someone from the next cohort of Launchpad to take over their role so they can progress the project. For themselves, Claire hopes to progress to a more managerial position, while their focus is to be in a role “which fulfils me, and I'm able to make enough money that I don't have to worry about bills”.

Along with their friend Cheïma, Claire has also worked as a promoter and organised live events. They hope to continue the promotions organisation, having already applied for funding through the Youth Music Incubator Fund. Though unsuccessful in their first attempt, they plan on reapplying in the future:

“We've applied to Youth Music off the back of our experiences with you. We applied for some for some funding, which unfortunately, we didn't get. But we had a great chat with [G&L Officer] about why we didn't get it and what we can do next time that will make it better”

## NextGen Careers

When given a list of 13 potential career paths (plus an 'Other' option), respondents were asked, **'What do you want to do in music?'** (66). They were able to select up to three options. The most selected options were **Artist / Performer, Live events coordination and promotion, and Music PR / marketing.**



**Seventy-nine percent of respondents selected more than one option.** The majority (13/14) of those who only selected one option, selected 'Artist / Performer'.

Utilising a question that was used in the NextGen interviews 2021, respondents were also asked, **'If all barriers were removed, what would your ultimate job title be?'** (54). While many answers to this question correspondent with the above, they provided more detail into the ambitions of the NextGen, including answers such as:

- The Architect that took over the Music industry
- Successful Global Artist
- Owner of a community based music centre
- In-Demand DJ
- International Touring Artist



**'If all barriers were removed, what would your ultimate job title be?' (54)**



## Case Study: Bismark, 20, South West

Bismark, also known as Bizzy, is a 20 year old songwriter and musician currently based in Bournemouth. Though they are yet to have much experience with Youth Music, Bizzy has taken part in other music projects. He was part of the [Homegrown 31](#), which supports 12-30 year olds across the Black Country & Birmingham to be creative and develop new skills. They supported him with studio time and the opportunity to collaborate with a producer.

Bizzy previously applied for the NextGen Fund. They found the application process benefitted them as it helped them to think of the necessary steps for putting a project together. Though they were unsuccessful, Bizzy still takes time to explore the NextGen Newsletter for other opportunities.

As well as an aspiring musician, Bizzy has ambitions of being an architect. He has found that the two ambitions overlap as they both centre around “creativity, people and spaces”. Bizzy also draws parallels between the two being able to overcome barriers:

“Anyone from any background could have built this crazy building, and realistically, it doesn't matter because you appreciate it for what it is. And I feel like a lot of people should also appreciate music for what it is at the same time. It doesn't really matter who's creating the music, if you like the music then you like the music, and that's it.”

Bizzy attended Arts University Bournemouth to study a degree in architecture. But after finding themselves struggling to split their time between their degree and music, they have taken some time out to concentrate on the latter.

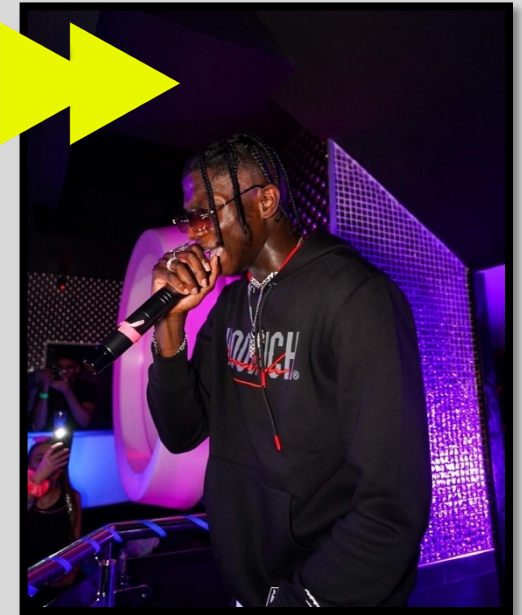
As a musician, Bizzy's aspires to be known as an authentic and original artist, blazing their own path through the industry. Creating a community within the sector is also really important for Bizzy, who is driven by working with others:

“That's one of my biggest drives in music: just being able to work with other people. Get new perspectives, hear new flows, hear new genres, and mix that with mine to create something that's absolutely experimental and crazy.”

They also hope to close the gap between established artists and those starting off:

“I feel like there's a separation between artists who have made it and people who are trying to make it. I feel like there should be kind of that sense of community where it's all people who love music, and we all just get together to create it. I'd like to bridge that gap a bit and create a bit more of a community.”

Bizzy is currently working outside of the creative industries to achieve financial sustainability, with the goal of investing into their music.



Bizzy performing at their first live event

## Proud Career Moment

We asked respondents to tell us about a **proud career moment** (39) they'd experienced in the year April 2021 – March 2022. The moment could be a Youth Music opportunity or something they've done since then.

A wide range of types of opportunity were reported by the respondents. The most frequent theme was a **live performance or event** they have taken part in. This included performances to 2,000 people, collaborating with Spotlight and Apple, and supporting bands such as the Petrol Girls.

"In March 2022, we were asked to support Yin Yin at Headrow House. This is a band at the forefront of Neo-psych that we've been following for a while and meant a lot to support. This was not offered through Launchpad but I feel Launchpad made us more visible on the scene in order to get this gig."



Image submitted by respondent

Some NextGen reported that they had a **new job or opportunity in the creative industries**, including becoming an A&R at npm-label and directing a short film. One NextGen said they're opportunity with Youth Music had been their proud career moment as it was their first paid opportunity in the music industries:

Working on the Youth Music Awards! This was my first paid job, not as a musician, within the music industries and helped me gain a huge amount of confidence in myself.

As well as work opportunities, respondents reported **new music** that they've been able to release as EPs, albums and music videos:

Releasing my album Agenda. It's my best body of work so far and without the freedom the funding supplied it wouldn't be possible so thank you!

I'm really proud that I was able to record my project and get it mixed & mastered all this summer.

There were also those who reported **increased exposure** due to the work they had been releasing. This exposure included radio play, featuring in magazines, and being nominated for the Youth Music Awards:

"BBC Radio 6 coverage on a track funded by Launchpad (Youth Music)."

"Youth Music Awards nomination"

"I was thrilled to have my photography featured in gal-dem yearly magazine. It was a core moment helped me to pursue my passion. It was a sort of milestone."



Image submitted by respondent

## Case Study: Hannah, 18, South East

Originally from Portsmouth, Hannah is currently based in Guildford where she is studying at university. Hannah is on the Creative Songwriting course at the Academy for Contemporary Music, having already completed her diploma there. An aspiring artist and songwriter, she has been regularly gigging since her mid-teens, starting off with open mic nights that have developed into paid live events.

One of Hannah's career highlights is that they have performed for five years in a row at the Victorious Festival in Portsmouth. Other artists to have played there include Bastille, Nothing but Thieves and Anne Murray.

As well as working on their own music, Hannah has organised weekly open mic nights at her university. This has helped develop industry skills:

"I've just recently gone into like business, marketing and social media through my open mic night because I'm booking people, making connections. Plus I'm advertising on social media."

These skills were also developed when Hannah created her own magazine called Rogue Music. Targeted at women in the music industries, it explored topics such as the lack of female screamers or drummers. Hannah developed the magazine on their own, including creating the content, photography and graphic designs.

After finishing their course, Hannah hopes to go to a master's degree in music therapy. Hannah's ultimate career goal is to be a music therapist, alongside their work as an artist. They currently already work with two charities, Rant Music and Make, where they run music workshops for vulnerable children and people with learning disabilities.

Hannah has decided to pursue music therapy due to how music has supported them in the past:

"I think because I'm dyslexic, I found music really helpful for me. It's helped me with that reading and everything like that. And mentally, I've just like seen that and then I looked into a lot of mental health and psychology because I find that interesting. I think that's how I found music therapy – just put the two together."

Hannah hopes to combine her ambitions in music therapy and as an artist to create their own business: a live music venue that runs kids clubs and music therapy sessions.

As part of the NextGen Community, Hannah regularly checks the NextGen Newsletter for opportunities along with reading the features we publish on the website. They've also attended Youth Music hosted workshops, and plans to apply for funding in the future when they have decided on their plans.



Front cover of Hannah's magazine



## Where can we improve?

We asked respondents, ‘**What further opportunities could Youth Music provide to help you achieve your career goal?**’ (39). Some respondents asked for **work experience or training experiences** in the music industries, while other wanted more **funding opportunities** like the NextGen Fund. However, the most common request was for **networking opportunities**:

Provide areas to network and meet other like-minded people where future opportunities could become available.

Help with getting connected to other creatives that can help with different aspects of making and releasing music

This was a continued theme from last year’s survey, with networking opportunities also being the most requested. Using this insight, we added a question to this year’s survey about how we could better support collaboration.



said ‘in-person networking events’

We also collected some benchmark data on how Youth Music implements **youth voice** in their decision making:



■ To little extent ■ To moderate extent ■ To good extent ■ To great extent

### ‘To what extent do you find Youth Music involve young people in their decision making?’ (58)

The majority of the comments are positive, saying that our actions indicate that we involve young people in our decision making:

“I think by the way opportunities are created and given to young people - it feels young people lead. I'm not sure if it's because I'm a young person that automatically I appreciate the opportunities youth music give because I know young people are being respected, cherished, included and paid! Might also be because I have been a part of the opportunities and never have a dull time.”

## Case Study: Kye, 26, London

Kye is a 26-year-old currently based in London. Originally from Glasgow, he decided to move south as he felt there would be more creative opportunities for him in London. Before moving, he studied music technology at university. Though he found that the course didn't meet his expectations, he was surrounded by fellow musicians:

“I did music tech and the degree itself was really disappointing. We didn't really learn what we all thought we were going to but you're at a music school full of other musicians so you just sort of do it yourself.”

Kye was also one of the university graduates who graduated during the pandemic. The loss of time, along with aging out of the NextGen Community, has been a barrier for many like him:

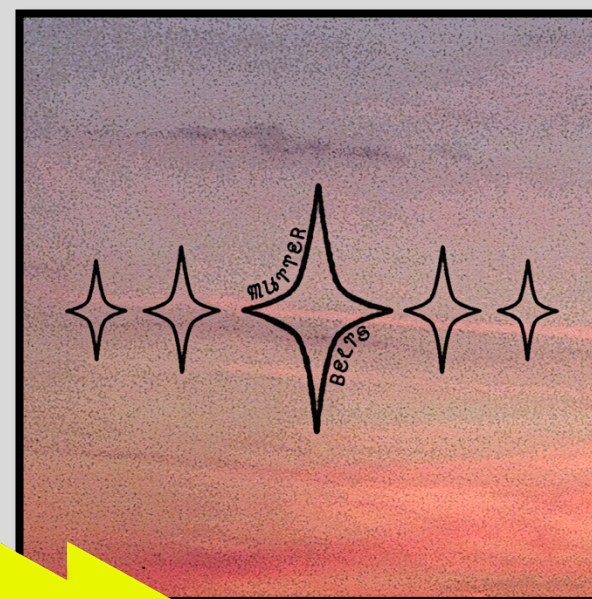
“Someone may have had a situation in their life that meant they couldn't go to uni till they were 24 and then they've graduated when they're 29. In terms of experience for creative outlets. They're in the same position as a 23 year old that's graduated, but all of a sudden they're excluded from all these opportunities.”

Leaving university also meant Kye no longer had access to the network of collaborators or university equipment; this added pressure to trying to secure work during the pandemic. However, Kye managed to find his way in the music industry through multiple projects, including hosting a community radio show, interning at the Royal Albert Hall, and DJing in venues around London.

As well as this, Kye has received funding from Wired4Music to work on and release his music. He releases music under the artist name, Mystery Season, and hopes to continue to release music and perform in the coming months. Along with being an artist, Kye is also a music producer. Though this would be his dream job title, due to barriers he's faced, he is hesitant to say so:

“I'll never really say what it actually is because there's always these barriers. It would be music producer, without a doubt. Like making, working in a studio on my own music and with other artists, and putting out original music and re mixing other people's. Maybe touring as part of that. I'd love to get back into performing live because it's not really something I've done it a while.”

Ultimately, Kye hopes he can make a living from his pursuits in music. Currently working outside of the creative industries, he has ambitions to leave this role. This would allow him to pursue his ambitions, both as a music producer/artist and in radio.



Music released by Kye (2023)

## Next Steps

### **1. Consult young people on effective methods to capture data from the NextGen Community.**

As well as continuing to conduct an annual survey and interviews, Youth Music will look to conduct audience research. This will include consulting with young people on the best ways to capture data from the NextGen Community. This is done with the aim of gathering feedback from a larger sample to reinforce our findings, which will help us better support you.

### **2. In-person networking events**

In the survey, we asked ‘What could Youth Music do to help you collaborate with others involved with Youth Music?’ and 89% of respondents selected ‘In-person networking events’. We actioned on this insight and have hosted a series of NextGen Community Events. So far, we’ve had events in [Cardiff](#), [Manchester](#) and [London](#), with more planned!

Make sure to sign up to the [NextGen Newsletter](#) to find out about NextGen Community Events.

### **3. Increase content creation opportunities for the NextGen Community.**

You can access opportunities via Youth Music through multiple channels, including NextGen Funding, project participation or our regular freelance opportunities (such as working at the [Youth Music Awards!](#)). There are also opportunities to create content for us, such as the recent call out for a [paid writing opportunity for Black History Month](#).

If you want to stay up to date with these opportunities, be sure to check out our [opportunities board](#), follow us on [social media](#) and sign up to the [NextGen Newsletter](#).

### **4. Outline our decision-making process for funding opportunities.**

Respondents in the survey told us that they wanted more opportunities that are targeted at marginalised groups. As an organisation aiming to take the lead in inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility, outlining the way we approach decision-making will help demonstrate how reaching underrepresented groups is a core component of our process. It will also help to display how we involve young people in our decision-making. Watch this space for updates on this recommendation.

### **5. Review our feedback process for the NextGen Fund.**

At Youth Music, we recognise the importance of feedback. So when we created the NextGen Fund, we decided to be different to most funders in the sector and include a feedback process. However, we understand that some have not found it as helpful as we’d hoped during their application, so we will look to review the process.



## 6. Support for over-25s.

While turning 26 years old means you're no longer able to access opportunities such as NextGen Funding or project participation, there's still plenty you can get out of being a member of the NextGen Community (which you still are!).

It's also important to note that those aged up to 30 can still apply to the [NextGen Fund](#), if they identify as neurodivergent, d/Deaf and/or Disabled.

Head over to our [resources page](#) to access a wealth of advice on pursuing a career in the music industries. If you're looking for funding, we have a [guide to other funders](#) who may be able to support you; use 'Individual' as a keyword search to find the appropriate ones for you.

## Want to get involved?

Are you aged 18-25 and chasing a career in music, but finding it tough, closed off and hard to break in to? Start finding your way in with Youth Music's NextGen Community. By signing up you'll be the first to get information about our funding for young creatives, freelance work, as well as job and training opportunities. [Join our NextGen community here.](#)

Thanks to players of People's Postcode Lottery for supporting Youth Music's work with young creatives.

Find out more information about our different grant programmes [here](#), and our funded partners [here](#).



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STUDIO LG01, THE PRINT ROOMS  
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REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1075032  
LIMITED COMPANY NUMBER: 3750674