



**\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\***

## **New Report Reveals Demand for more Cultural Activities for Children in East Kent**

Shepway Find Your Talent has announced the findings of its Cultural Audit, one of the biggest, in-depth surveys of young people's engagement in and attitudes towards cultural activity.

The audit, undertaken by 12,000 five to 18 year olds in the East Kent district of Shepway, reveals a high level of cultural engagement, spread quite evenly geographically and across socio-economic groups. The findings show that on average young people are taking part in seven different types of cultural activities on a weekly or more frequent basis with each secondary-age young person spending an average of five hours and 55 minutes per week in and out of school engaged in cultural activity.

The audit has identified a number of significant gaps in the provision of creative activities, which score highly in terms of their perceived enjoyment but which are not being participated in. The most sought-after cultural forms by children not currently participating in them include film making (30%) attending a live music event (30%) attending a theatre performance (25%) creating your own music (24%) and learning and regularly practising a musical instrument (24%). The findings suggest that there is latent demand for these activities, which Shepway Find Your Talent is now focused on addressing.

The findings were published on the day that 1,400 school children gathered in Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall in the largest cultural event yet staged with the support of

Shepway Find Your Talent. Shepway is one of ten areas in England involved in Find Your Talent ([www.findyourtalent.org](http://www.findyourtalent.org)), the government's pilot cultural offer for all children and young people which aims to ensure they have access to the wide range of quality cultural experiences essential to unlocking their talent and realising their potential.

Shepway Find Your Talent, recognised for its best practice in the engagement of children and young people, will spend the remainder of its programme targeting the specific areas identified in the audit. It will provide more high quality opportunities for young people to increase their skills and enhance the flexibility they will need to succeed in later life and work.

Douglas Noble, Shepway Find Your Talent's Project Director, said: "The audit shows that there is an enormous amount of creative activity already taking place in Shepway. Our role is to use the audit findings to inform our decision-making process and to meet the high demand for more opportunities that has been identified.

"We are already doing this in many areas, such as staging events at Quarterhouse, the Creative Foundation's new theatre in Folkestone, and working with young people to develop film making, theatre, dance and music making activity, but there is a great deal more we can do. We are really struck by the creative talent of local young people and their level of interest in culture, which is spread evenly across Shepway. Our job is to make sure our young people are encouraged to further develop their creative talent."

Paul Collard, Chief Executive of Creativity, Culture & Education (CCE), the organisation that manages Find Your Talent at a national level, said: "The Government pledge to deliver a five hour entitlement to cultural activity recognises the impact cultural experiences can have on young people contributing in powerful ways to personal development and raising aspiration however we know that not all children and young people are getting the same access to them. Access to cultural opportunity is too important to be an accident of geography or the privilege of a minority and Find Your Talent, in its first year, is already exploring various ways to overcome the challenges of

in enabling all children to access culture. Shepway Find Your Talent has already put in place a range of cultural offerings for its young people and we look forward to seeing how this further develops following their local audit.”

Shepway Find Your Talent is run by The Creative Foundation in partnership with Kent County Council. For a free copy of Shepway Find Your Talent’s Cultural Audit Report visit the Shepway Find Your Talent section on the homepage of [www.creativefoundation.org.uk](http://www.creativefoundation.org.uk).

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Ends

**Notes to Editors:**

**For further information about:**

Shepway Find Your Talent, please contact Yvette Illsley, Communications Manager at The Creative Foundation on 01303 842 184 or email: [yvette@creativefoundation.org.uk](mailto:yvette@creativefoundation.org.uk)

The national Find Your Talent programme, please contact Sarah Scott, PR & Media Manager at CCE on 020 7420 5423 or email: [sarah.scott@cceengland.org](mailto:sarah.scott@cceengland.org)

**Shepway**

The District of Shepway (population 100.000) includes Folkestone, Hythe and Romney Marsh. The District has experienced several decades of serious economic decline. The contraction of the local tourism industry, the near collapse of fish stocks and the termination of the ferry service from Folkestone to France in 2000 have fundamentally undermined the basis of the area’s prosperity. Shepway shows remarkable contrasts, with the wards of East and Central Folkestone suffering from multiple social problems, and with one of the highest unemployment rates in Kent, seven of the 119 most deprived wards in the South East and high rates of drug abuse and crime. This contrasts dramatically with the relative affluence of wards in West Folkestone and the neighbouring town of Hythe, and the rural and comparatively sparsely populated Romney Marsh.

**Find Your Talent ([www.findyourtalent.org](http://www.findyourtalent.org))**

Find Your Talent aims to help children and young people discover new things, to express themselves, to develop a passion and to make the most of their talent – whether it is music, art, film, theatre, dance, digital media, exploring libraries, museums or heritage. Find Your Talent, managed nationally by Creativity, Culture & Education (CCE), is currently being piloted in 10 pathfinder areas across England and offers children and young people regular involvement with arts and culture both in and outside of school. Find Your Talent is jointly funded by the Department for Culture Media and Sport, the Department for Children Schools and Families, Arts Council England, and the Museum, Libraries and Archives Council

**The Creative Foundation ([www.creativefoundation.org.uk](http://www.creativefoundation.org.uk))**

The Creative Foundation is driving the arts and education-led regeneration of Folkestone and its surroundings. Its linked projects include a Creative Quarter, the Folkestone Triennial, Quarterhouse, Folkestone Academy and University Centre Folkestone.

**Kent County Council ([www.kent.gov.uk](http://www.kent.gov.uk))**

Kent County Council is one of the largest local authorities in the UK, and has recently been awarded "Excellent" status by the audit commission for the 6th year running.

**Creativity, Culture and Education ([www.creativitycultureeducation.org](http://www.creativitycultureeducation.org)):**

Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE) is the new national organisation which aims to transform the lives of children and families by harnessing the potential of creative learning and cultural opportunity to enhance their aspirations, achievements and skills. Our vision is for children's creativity to be encouraged and nurtured in and out of school and for all children to experience and access the diverse range of cultural activity in England because these opportunities can have an enormous impact on their life chances.

**The Cultural Audit**

Using an innovative visual data capture model, commissioned by the Creative Foundation and Kent County Council, and devised by Strange Cargo Arts Company Limited, the Cultural Audit establishes which creative and cultural activities children and young people are currently involved in, and identifies the activities in which they would like to be involved in the future. To see a film about the process of capturing the data in schools please follow this link:  
[www.findyourtalent.org/pathfinders/shepway-find-your-talent](http://www.findyourtalent.org/pathfinders/shepway-find-your-talent)

**Strange Cargo Arts Company ([www.strangecargo.org.uk](http://www.strangecargo.org.uk))**

The audit research tools were designed by Strange Cargo, an award winning artist-led company of carnival makers and celebratory artists specialising in community engagement, based in Folkestone. Strange Cargo collected the information from the children and young people during school time.

**SQW Consulting ([www.sqw.co.uk](http://www.sqw.co.uk))**

The audit results have been analysed by SQW Consulting, a leading independent consultancy in sustainable economic and social development.